

NORTHERN TERRITORY OF AUSTRALIA

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

Second Assembly

Second Session

Parliamentary Record

Friday 8 September 1978
Tuesday 12 September 1978
Wednesday 13 September 1978
Thursday 14 September 1978
Tuesday 19 September 1978
Wednesday 20 September 1978

Part I—Debates
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Editor's note: The bills introduced will no longer be printed in the Parliamentary Record. Should readers require copies of particular bills they may obtain them on application to the Legislative Assembly office.

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PART I

DEBATES

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NOTICE PROROGUING THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY AND
FIXING THE TIME FOR THE NEXT SESSION OF THE
LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

I, JOHN ARMSTRONG ENGLAND, the Administrator of the Northern Territory of Australia, pursuant to section 22(1) of the Northern Territory (Self-Government) Act 1978 of the Commonwealth by this notice -

- (a) prorogue the Legislative Assembly of the Northern Territory of Australia; and
- (b) appoint the hour of 2 o'clock in the afternoon of Friday, 8 September 1978 as the time for the next session of the Legislative Assembly of the Northern Territory of Australia to be held in the Legislative Assembly Chamber, Darwin.

Dated this sixth day of September, 1978.

J.A. ENGLAND
Administrator

SECOND ASSEMBLY - SECOND SESSION

On Wednesday 2 August 1978 the Assembly adjourned. The Assembly was prorogued by His Honour the Administrator under the provisions of the Northern Territory (Self-Government) Act on 6 September 1978 until 8 September 1978. The second session commenced on that day.

Friday 8 September 1978

The Assembly met at 2 pm pursuant to the notice of prorogation and appointment made by His Honour the Administrator.

Mr Speaker MacFarlane took the Chair.

The Clerk read the notice of prorogation.

Mr SPEAKER: Honourable members, it is the intention of His Honour the Administrator to attend the Assembly forthwith to make a statement concerning the declaration of the causes for calling the Assembly together.

His Honour the Administrator took the Chair, with the Speaker on his right hand.

ADMINISTRATOR'S STATEMENT

The ADMINISTRATOR: Mr Speaker and honourable members, normally at the opening of a new session of this Assembly after a prorogation, I would at this time declare the causes of my calling the Assembly together. However, as you are aware, this Assembly and the Territory is to be honoured today by the presence of His Excellency the Governor-General, the Prime Minister and a delegation from the Commonwealth Parliament. I propose, therefore, to delay my declaration of the causes for calling the Assembly together until the resumption of these sittings on Tuesday 12 September 1978.

DELEGATION FROM COMMONWEALTH PARLIAMENT

SERJEANT-AT-ARMS: Mr Speaker, I have to report a delegation which has come from the Parliament of the Commonwealth to make a presentation to the Assembly. The members of the delegation are the Honourable Condor Louis Laucke, President of the Senate; the Right Honourable Sir Billy Snedden, Speaker of the House of Representatives; Mr S.E. Calder; Senator B.F. Kilgariff; Senator E.A. Robertson, and the Honourable D.N. Everingham. The delegation is accompanied by Mr K.D. Bradshaw and Mr D.M. Blake.

Mr SPEAKER: I propose to the Assembly that, with the concurrence of members, the delegation be received at the table.

MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr SPEAKER: Honourable gentlemen, please be seated. It is with great pleasure that I welcome once again in this Chamber a delegation from the Parliament of the Commonwealth. I have thought it appropriate for the Assembly to receive you at this time so that you may share with us the honour of His Excellency the Governor-General's presence and so that His Excellency, as he has requested, may be afforded the opportunity to witness your presentation.

ATTENDANCE OF PRIME MINISTER

Mr SPEAKER: Honourable members, the Prime Minister, the Right Honourable Malcolm Fraser is within the precincts. I propose, with the concurrence of honourable members, to invite the Prime Minister to take a seat on the floor of the Chamber.

MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

The Prime Minister took a seat on the floor of the Chamber.

ATTENDANCE OF GOVERNOR-GENERAL

His Excellency the Governor-General was escorted into the Chamber by the Serjeant-at-Arms. The Governor-General took the Chair with the Speaker on his right hand.

SPEAKER'S WELCOME

Mr SPEAKER: Your Excellency, Mr Prime Minister, Your Honour the Administrator, distinguished guests, I was chosen by this Assembly as its Speaker but it is my belief that today I speak for the whole Territory when I say thank you for being here. Your Excellency, very soon after you assumed your office, your interest in the Territory led you to come among its people on an extended tour. The Prime Minister, too, visited us in recent months and now you have both returned to make an historic occasion even more memorable. All arms of government, state governments and neighbouring countries are represented here today and this Assembly will surely find the interest displayed in our constitutional advancement an inspiration to ensure that the responsibilities now entrusted to it will be exercised in the most responsible way.

On behalf of the Assembly and the Territory, I assure you all that your presence is most appreciated.

ADDRESS BY GOVERNOR-GENERAL

The GOVERNOR-GENERAL: Mr Prime Minister, Your Honour, Mr Speaker, honourable members, distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen, it is a great thing to take part in historic national occasions and this is certainly one of them. We are assembled in this Chamber to celebrate the establishment of self-government in the Northern Territory and I am very happy to accept your invitation, Sir, and the invitation of the Chief Minister to participate in today's events in this Chamber in which the tasks of self-government will be undertaken.

I am no stranger to the Territory. Until my last visit earlier this year, my knowledge of it was confined to the Top End. I first came to Darwin late in 1941 as a very junior naval officer and I remained here for some months until early 1942. That meant that I was here when the war with Japan began. On the night of Pearl Harbour I was duty officer and, as the signals came in, I had to make up my mind whether to wake the captain to inform him. I must say that there was no man with whom or for whom I have worked and of whom I was more frightened than Captain E.P. Thomas. I woke him up, handed him the signals which he took calmly and meekly enough and then, presumably, for I know not what went on in the houses of frightened captains, went back to bed.

I was here when the air raid took place on 19 February 1942. I have vivid but fragmentary recollections of that difficult day on which substantial damage was done to Darwin. I did not come again, except to pass through the airport on a number of occasions until early 1974 when, as Vice Chancellor of the University of Queensland, I came to participate in the ceremonies associated with the opening of the Darwin Community College. On that occasion, I had fruitful discussions with the council of the college and we planned a relationship between the college and the University of Queensland which might have produced some good results. However, the great wind of Cyclone Tracy blew those plans away along with much else.

Then, as I have already said, we came on a more comprehensive official visit earlier this year. It was a great pleasure to come to the Territory as Governor-General to meet with His Honour the Administrator, with Mr Everingham and his ministers and with many others, office holders and citizens, who will bear their various responsibilities in the time ahead. On that occasion, we came to Darwin and travelled to Elcho Island, to Gove and to Groote Eylandt and then to Katherine, Tennant Creek, Alice Springs and out to the Docker River and Ayers Rock. We saw some of the great mining ventures of the Territory, very many people and the great expanse of the Territory. It gave us some understanding of the land and of its human and material resources and problems. It is good to be back again.

On this occasion, I think it is fitting that I should traverse some of the history and I shall do so very briefly. The Territory has changed hands more than once. Captain Bremmer took possession of the northern Australian coastline for Great Britain as part of New South Wales in 1824. Almost 40 years later in 1863, the Colonial Office gave control to the then colony of South Australia. In the years that followed, the people of the Northern Territory were represented in the South Australian legislature and then in the federal parliament. Following somewhat protracted negotiations between South Australia and the Commonwealth, the Territory was transferred to the Commonwealth under the terms of the Northern Territory (Self-Government) Bill on 11 May this year, that the people of the Territory lost the political rights which they enjoyed in common with other Commonwealth citizens. As he said, and I quote his words: "In a very real sense, the constitutional history of the Northern Territory since that date reflects the endeavours of the people of the Territory to regain rights which they lost in 1910".

It would be wearying and it is not necessary to traverse in detail the events which have led up to self-government which we celebrate today. The first step to representation in the federal parliament came in 1922. Today, and since 1968, Northern Territory members of the House of Representatives have had full and unconfined voting rights and, since 1974, there have been two senators from the Territory. Within the Territory, a legislative council first met in 1948. It has evolved and the elected strength has progressively grown with steps in 1959 and 1968, culminating in the establishment of a fully elected legislative assembly of 19 members in 1974. Correspondingly, there have been developments in the executive branch of government.

In 1910, with the transfer of the Territory to the Commonwealth, legislation provided for an administrator. There have from time to time been changes in administrative patterns. Between 1927 and 1931, there were two administrative areas of central and northern Australia but the administrative unity of the Territory was restored in 1931. Since that time, the relationship of the Administrator to the Commonwealth minister has been legislatively prescribed. As legislative institutions were established, as I have related, the Administrator's place within the constitutional structure has changed. In 1965 he was replaced as President of the Legislative Council by an elected member. In 1974, with the coming of the fully elected Legislative Assembly, the Administrator's Council was reconstituted to comprise the Administrator and five elected members. Under the Northern Territory (Self-Government) Act of this year, the Administrator is charged with administering the Territory in respect of transferred matters on the advice of his Northern Territory ministers. The act establishes the government of the Northern Territory with ministers appointed by the Administrator and an executive council of the Northern Territory to advise the Administrator on the government of the Territory in relation to matters in respect of which the ministers of the Territory are vested with executive authority under the act.

I have recited the bare bones. I think it is necessary to have an understanding of the significance of the events which have led to the establishment of this new constitutional status for the Northern Territory.

There are other things to tell, again very briefly. There were moves to establish settlements in the Top End from 1824. Palmerston, which became Darwin, was surveyed in 1869 and a government resident was appointed in 1870. The population of the Territory has risen and fallen and risen again. Gold brought it to 5,000 in the early 1880s. It declined slightly and was 4,850 in 1933. But it grew rapidly after the second world war. In 1947 it was almost 11,000 and about 100,000 when Cyclone Tracy struck. It has risen again and it now stands at about 105,000.

The Territory has had its tribulations and Cyclone Tracy was an appalling disaster. We have only to look at Darwin today to see how massive an effort was called for to make good the terrible damage. No doubt in the rebuilding of Darwin we have learned from experience. I think it was fitting that the Commonwealth minister, in his speech on the second reading of the Northern Territory (Self-Government) Bill, should have pointed out that successive federal governments of differing complexions have promoted the development and changing constitutional status of the Territory.

He also drew attention to the economic development of the Territory and once again, I quote: "During the period," he said, "there has been a burgeoning of the Territory's mineral production and an increased realisation of the very great potential of the mineral wealth which as yet remains untapped". That is very important; the Territory's economic resource is an important factor in

giving reality to constitutional development to this point and for the future. In introducing the bill, the minister expressed confidence in the political and economic future of the Territory and said he had no doubt that the processes of responsible government set in train would operate for the benefit of the Territory and, through it, the Commonwealth. I am sure that we all share that view.

It was my pleasure earlier in the year to meet and to come to know the Chief Minister and his ministerial colleagues. He and they accompanied us on the various sectors of our travel throughout the Territory. They were warm and generous hosts. We talked of many things, of problems and of aspirations, and these young men - and they are young men - have a great and a complex responsibility for a vast Territory of comparatively small population and there will be many problems to be faced. It seems to me that they are approaching these with vigour and with a sense of commitment and of proportion, and we wish them well.

They, with their continuing burdens, and we as fellow Australians celebrating today with them, have the rare privilege of being present at the creation - for that is what self-government is - of the history of the Territory. And I have no doubt that I speak for all Australians when I express to all of the citizens of the Northern Territory our heartfelt wishes for the peace, the welfare and the good government of the Territory. I wish all honourable members well in their deliberations in this place and in their endeavours on behalf of the people of this Territory.

The Speaker resumed the Chair.

MOTION OF THANKS

Mr EVERINGHAM (Chief Minister): I seek leave of the Assembly to move a motion without notice.

Leave granted.

Mr EVERINGHAM: Mr Speaker, I move that this Assembly place on record its profound appreciation of the presence here today of Their Excellencies the Governor-General and Lady Cowen, and thank His Excellency for the speech he has been pleased to deliver.

In support of my motion, Mr Speaker, could I address these few remarks to you, Sir. I am sure that all the people of the Northern Territory are grateful that the Queen's representative in Australia was able to be here today to grace this historic occasion with his presence. His Excellency has referred to his earlier associations with the Territory and it is very appropriate that a person with those previous associations should by chance happen to be Her Majesty's representative in Australia at this time. His remarks to us, Sir, have been kind and gracious. We appreciate them.

We will work to ensure that we are worthy of the trust that has been placed in us by the people of Australia through the devolution of self-government on this Assembly. We must work always to reflect the wishes of the people of the Northern Territory because this is an assembly of the representatives of the people. We must act responsibly and we must discharge the task that we have been given by His Excellency's government in respect of the government of this Territory. We must live up to the expectations of those Territorians who went before us and who worked so hard to achieve the goal of which we see the culmination today. His Excellency has outlined some of those expectations; on Tuesday His Honour the Administrator will outline how we hope to set about achieving some of them. We are young, Sir; we hope that we are vigorous. We certainly will not

spare ourselves in endeavouring to realise the aspirations of the people of the Northern Territory.

Finally, Mr Speaker, may I say that the loyalty of the people of the Northern Territory to our sovereign is never in doubt, and certainly not on my side of the House.

Mr ISAACS (Opposition Leader): Mr Speaker, I rise to second the motion moved by the Chief Minister.

It is very significant, as the Chief Minister said, that the Governor-General has had a previous association with the Northern Territory. It is also significant that the Governor-General is a person who in the past has written prolifically on the Constitution of Australia and therefore understands very well the constitutional context and significance of the move to self-government of the Northern Territory. I believe the speech he delivered to the Assembly today was, if I might say, Sir, one of the best delivered from that Chair which you occupy. Maybe it is because the author of that speech is the person who delivered it.

Mr Speaker, I take great pleasure in seconding the motion moved by the Chief Minister for the excellent address given by the Governor-General and, most certainly, it has the complete support of the opposition.

Motion agreed to.

ADDRESS BY PRIME MINISTER

Mr SPEAKER: Honourable members, with your concurrence, I invite the Right Honourable the Prime Minister to address the Assembly.

The PRIME MINISTER: Your Excellency, Your Honour, Mr Speaker, honourable members, distinguished guests and ladies and gentlemen, it is an honour to be able to take part in an historic occasion. There are many occasions in our history that in one way or another are repeated but this is one of those occasions in the development of self-government that cannot be repeated. The step forward is made and it cannot be repeated.

It is an exciting day for the Northern Territory. Just three months ago, the Commonwealth Parliament passed the historic Northern Territory (Self-Government) Act 1978. That act established this Territory as a distinct body politic within the Australian federation. It vested in the new government of the Northern Territory executive authority over a wide range of matters. The powers of this government will be further enlarged next year when, on 1 January, health and, on 1 July, education also become its responsibility.

Mr Speaker, in the Territory you are embarking on one of the noblest adventures open to any people - democratic self-government. It is one of the hardest systems in the world to run but it is certainly the best. Democratic self-government involves the building of a consensus of policies and actions, on maintaining mutual trust and confidence, on protecting the rights of minorities, on enhancing individual freedom and tolerance for alternative life styles and on recognising that there is the public interest in which we all share. This is a complex and challenging task. The fact that you are embracing it with such enthusiasm, determined to surmount the problems which inevitably confront you, is to be applauded. You are choosing the only form of government that truly represents the people and that is truly responsible to the people, the only system that provides the ultimate guarantee of freedom and good government - the right of people to change a government merely by casting a vote.

But democratic self-government is much more than just a method of exacting responsibility from government, it is of the most fundamental importance to peoples' development, to allowing people to realise their potential through political participation, to enhancing their initiative, enterprise and responsibility. John Stuart Mill wrote: "The most important point of excellence which any form of government can possess is to promote the virtue and intelligence of the people themselves. The first question in respect to any political institutions is how far they tend to foster in the members of the community the various desirable qualities, moral, intellectual and active". Democratic representative government is an institution which does foster these qualities and there lies its ultimate justification - the freedom and responsibility that it makes possible and that it requires.

For decades, ultimate authority for the administration of the laws governing the Territory's day-to-day affairs was held by people thousands of miles away, people who did not always comprehend the Territory's special needs. Mr Speaker and honourable members, the remedy now lies in your hands.

I do not wish to speak today in any detail of financial matters and no doubt honourable members are already well acquainted with the Memorandum of Understanding signed by your Chief Minister and by myself, but there is one observation about the new financial arrangements that I do wish to make. In negotiating these arrangements, we were determined that there should be direct relationship between expenditure determined by the citizens of the Territory and the taxes and charges levelled in the Territory. By so doing, we were all seeking to put responsibility where it should be. In the absence of such procedures, self-government would have fallen short of responsible self-government and power without responsibility is the antithesis of our democratic system. The new arrangements still provide for considerable financial support from the Commonwealth and leave wide scope for your Treasurer to put into effect your government's policies in accordance with its own priorities.

To all honourable members of this House, I wish you well in the great tasks and opportunities that await you. Inevitably, you will attract criticism and that in itself is healthy but you will also attract, whichever party is in power, something else to which you should not succumb, the great disease of knocking. Too often Australians have concentrated on purely destructive criticism, on trying to pull things down without thought of the consequences and without seeking to put anything in its place. The only criticism really worth listening to is that which presents a constructive alternative. We all have an obligation to work together to build on those great values which we all share as Australians. The things that unite us are far more important than any differences that we might have. By breaking down the Australian tradition of knocking, by working together to create a strong sense of national purpose and cooperation, there is nothing that this nation cannot achieve.

The Commonwealth will give every assistance it can in the years ahead working to maintain the close consultation and cooperation between our two governments which has been established during the two years of planning and negotiation that were needed to bring self-government to reality. I have confidence that, with concerted effort and the support of people, the future for the Northern Territory is secure and I look forward to the day when the Northern Territory finally becomes the seventh state of Australia.

Mr SPEAKER: Mr Prime Minister, on behalf of the Assembly, I thank you for your speech.

MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

PRESENTATION OF PARLIAMENTARY DELEGATION

Sir BILLY SNEDDEN (Speaker of the House of Representatives): Mr Speaker, the delegation from both Houses of the Commonwealth Parliament is glad to be here. We are glad to be here because it is not an ordinary day. You don't dress up like this every day in Darwin. Apart from that, it does usher into the north of Australia self-government which has not been here in the past. In many ways, it is quite unique. His Excellency the Governor-General set out how state rights once possessed were lost in 1910. I am not aware of any great protest at the time but I am aware of considerable protest as the ensuing 60 years went on. Now it has been reversed. There may be, in the Territory somewhere, a person living who was divested of his state rights in 1910 and who will live long enough for statehood to have them reinvested. It is therefore a day of significance.

When we were here before, we undertook to bring a gift to celebrate this day and that gift was two dispatch boxes. Those hidden items are the dispatch boxes and those two boxes are not things which one can buy at a store. They had to be made through the agency of a parliamentary officer of the House of Representatives, Mr Ferguson, who was formerly a member of the senior service, I think it is referred to. He undertook, through friends he knows in high places, admirals in fact, to have them built. They were built at Her Majesty's Australian naval dockyard at Williamstown. They are made of oak and ebony. They were made under the supervision of a man named Max Vines, foreman joiner and master craftsman as anybody who examines them can see. They are in fact an exact replica of the dispatch boxes which stand on the table of the House of Representatives in Canberra. Those dispatch boxes were presented to the parliament by the Duke of York on 9 May 1927 as a gift from his father King George V. They, in fact, were exact replicas of the dispatch boxes which stood on the table of the House of Commons.

During the war in 1941, the House of Commons was bombed and two major items of destruction to the building internally were the loss of the dispatch boxes and the loss of the Speaker's chair and canopy. Since then the House of Commons has had the dispatch boxes built again and so the oldest existing dispatch boxes are those which are now in the House of Representatives. The next in order of longevity are those in the House of Commons - we have done a switch with them - and the third are those here, in this Legislative Assembly of the Northern Territory.

The history of dispatch boxes is that, in the days before lightweight cases were invented, people carried their goods in boxes and privy councillors brought their dispatches and their filing system, really, into the House of Commons in case they were needed for debate. They were carried in by the handles by attendants and put on the table of the House of Commons. Privy councillors spoke from the House of Commons table at the dispatch box. On both sides of the House senior people spoke from the dispatch box. They became part of the scenery. They represented for their 350 years of existence in the House of Commons the right of members of the parliament to speak the truth and to demand the truth without fear of retribution or hope of favour. And so they represent, for every member of the House, his obligation, his duty and his right at all times to speak freely without fear or favour.

Mr Speaker, you know the Assembly will shortly be given a mace. The good news is that it is coming; the bad news is that it is not here yet. That is because the coat of arms has not yet been formally decided but the order is placed and so the good news is that we hope another delegation can visit you next year and present the mace to complete the table and the Chamber. The mace

represents in an even more significant degree the freedom expressed through you, Mr Speaker, of the independence of the parliament from monarchical direction. The mace represents parliamentary democracy - it is the very fulcrum of it - but the dispatch boxes represent the standard of speech and behaviour of members within the Assembly.

I now ask my distinguished colleague, the President of the Senate, to assist me in the unveiling.

Written inside are these words: "Except for this inscription, this box is a replica of the dispatch boxes which stand upon the table of the House of Representatives in Canberra. These boxes were presented to the House of Representatives by His Majesty King George V on the occasion of the opening of Parliament House Canberra in 1927. They are replicas of the boxes which stood on the table of the House of Commons at Westminster and which were destroyed when the House of Commons was bombed in 1941".

Mr Speaker, I formally ask you, on behalf of your parliament, to accept these dispatch boxes as a gift from our parliament, the Commonwealth Parliament.

Mr SPEAKER: On behalf of the Assembly, I am honoured and proud to accept this magnificent gift.

Mr EVERINGHAM (Chief Minister): Mr Speaker, I move that the following resolution be agreed to.

We, the members of the Legislative Assembly of the Northern Territory of Australia, express our thanks to the Senate and the House of Representatives of the Parliament of the Commonwealth of Australia for the dispatch boxes which they have presented to the Assembly.

Their interest in the development of the Territory and the aspirations of its people have been evidenced by successive enactments of the Commonwealth Parliament which have brought this Assembly to its present constitutional status and we accept this generous gift as a further earnest of their continuing concern.

We are proud to receive the members of the delegation by whose hands the presentation was made and were glad to welcome them in Darwin. We ask them to convey our greetings to their colleagues in the Commonwealth Parliament.

Mr Speaker, I was going to say something of the history of dispatch boxes myself but, unfortunately, Sir Billy Snedden has pre-empted me. I think the only particular piece that he did not mention was something that I turned up in an old edition of Webster's Dictionary that dispatch boxes were boxes carried by gentlemen to carry their effects in. This apparently was an American dictionary of the last century. Dispatch boxes first appeared in the House of Commons some time during the 17th or 18th century. They certainly were not there in the 16th century, at least according to contemporary engravings. Presumably, that was because in those days gentlemen did not carry anything other than swords and cloaks for ladies to walk over. It certainly would be an inconvenient type of box to carry your effects about in today. However, the workmanship is most beautiful and Mr Vines is to be congratulated on this.

Mr Gladstone, the Liberal leader and Prime Minister of Great Britain several times during the 19th century, spoke with such force that, during the course of his oratory, he repeatedly bashed these dispatch boxes with his signet ring and produced gouges and tears in the woodwork. I am quite sure that I would not want

to bash this dispatch box myself because I do not think it would be the box that would come off the worse. To me, they are the symbol of parliamentary integrity. Sir Billy Snedden used some other simile but I think they represent the integrity of the member addressing his colleagues in parliament.

We are certainly most grateful to the distinguished delegation for bringing these gifts to us from the Commonwealth Parliament. We will attempt to maintain the integrity for which this House today, and the Legislative Council of the Northern Territory before it, is at least renowned - if it is not renowned for any greater fame.

Mr ISAACS (Opposition Leader): I second the motion moved by the Chief Minister.

I suppose I am the second person now to speak at the dispatch box. When one has to second such a motion and when one knows the sort of gift that we are to receive, one is able to do a bit of research. It is a funny thing how little information there is on the subject of dispatch boxes or how remarkably few people have commented upon them. Nonetheless, the dispatch boxes, when they were in the House of Commons, apparently contained items which on the government side differed from the opposition side. I do not know whether it is a reflection on government and opposition, Mr Speaker, but it is interesting to note what was in each of them. On the government side, the dispatch box contained two oath cards, an affirmation card, a Hebrew Testament bible, an Authorised Version bible, a Douay bible, which happens to be a translation of the Vulgate used by Roman Catholics and two New Testament bibles. I do not know how they all fitted into the dispatch box.

Mr Everingham: They were little ones.

Mr ISAACS: In the dispatch box on the opposition side, there was simply a New Testament bible and an oath card. At the opening of this Assembly, I recall that five people on the opposition side made affirmations rather than oaths. We may have to set a new precedent with these dispatch boxes in so far as the swearing in of members is concerned.

The Chief Minister referred to the use of the dispatch boxes by Gladstone. Indeed, Eric Taylor's fine work on the House of Commons at work describes it even further. It is with some fear that I look at these dispatch boxes after reading Mr Taylor's comments on the use to which they have to be put. If I could just quote from his book, it might give some indication of why I feel somewhat scared of them: "Frontbench members have the privilege of anchoring themselves to the dispatch boxes on the table while delivering their speeches so that they can clutch, smite and lean upon them". I will be doing none of those things.

Motion agreed to.

Mr SPEAKER: Sir Billy Snedden and President Laucke, you will be furnished with a written copy of the resolution for the records of your respective Houses.

The Governor-General and the Prime Minister retired from the Chamber.

The parliamentary delegation retired from the Chamber.

Mr SPEAKER: Honourable members, the sitting is suspended until 10 am on Tuesday 12 September 1978.

Mr Speaker MacFarlane took the Chair at 10 am.

ATTENDANCE OF ADMINISTRATOR

Mr SPEAKER: Honourable members, it is the intention of His Honour the Administrator to attend forthwith to declare the reasons for his calling the Assembly together.

ADMINISTRATOR'S SPEECH

The ADMINISTRATOR: Mr Speaker and honourable members, I have called you together for the despatch of business. On this historic occasion, we meet to enable me to outline to you the legislative program of my first government responsible to the people of the Northern Territory. The Northern Territory's advance to self-government is a milestone in the history of Australia. It represents a recognition of the coming of age of the Territory and its people. It is a landmark in our constitutional development as a nation. The most basic tenet of the political structure of this country is that people have a right to be consulted in the decisions made by governments on their behalf. The creation of a Northern Territory government responsible to you, the elected representatives of the people, places a great responsibility on you.

I wish to pay tribute to the efforts of the many people who have assisted in bringing about the conditions necessary for the achievement of self-government in the Northern Territory, to the many Commonwealth officers who have served the Territory since the transfer of responsibility for its administration from South Australia and to the local people whose efforts have shown that the Territory was capable of governing itself. It is unnecessary for me to remind you of the names of those Northern Territory men and women who from the 1920s until the present time devoted so much of their time and energy towards achieving for the Territory the right to determine its own future.

My government believes that there is no room for complacency merely because of the achievement of self-government. There is need in many areas for the provision of basic legislative furniture and much to be done in the field of review and reform. The program that is proposed for this session of the Legislative Assembly is directed towards these ends and towards meeting the expectations that the people of the Territory have of their first government. My government is committed to the development of our great economic resources for the benefit of the people of the Territory because, without economic development, its objective of attracting a greater population to the Territory is unattainable. It has already introduced legislation to establish a Territory development corporation to encourage and assist private development consistent with the best interests of the residents of the Territory. The government is anxious to improve the administration and use of land, to promote investment and encourage permanent residence in the Territory.

The rapid pace of change has displayed the weaknesses and inflexibility of present town planning legislation. New legislation has been devised to provide simple yet more effective measures for planning and development in the Territory and its early introduction is expected. A total review of land administration is continuing. Particular attention will be paid to assisting the growth of the major industries in the Territory - fishing, mining, tourism and the beef industry. Potentially rich resources such as fisheries will be given every encouragement.

The need for a review of the laws regulating mineral exploration is recognised by my government and legislation resulting from such a review will be in-

roduced in this session. Amongst other things, it will provide greater security for holders of exploration licences who wish to proceed to extract minerals discovered in the areas covered by their licences. The new measures will be related to the current technology of the mining industry and to modern labour and other requirements associated with minerals extraction.

My government will cooperate with the tourist industry, through the Tourist Board and local tourist promotion associations, to encourage visitors to come to the Territory and to develop the facilities available. In particular, the Petermann Road between the Stuart Highway and Ayers Rock will be sealed and the proposed Yulara tourist village near the site of the Uluru National Park will be built as quickly as possible. The tourist industry will also be provided with up-to-date legislation and this will be presented during the next twelve months.

Tourism will also be assisted by the establishment of casinos in Darwin and Alice Springs and legislation to permit the regulated operation of gambling establishments, catering particularly for visitors, will be introduced. My government has made a careful examination of the operations and social impact of the Hobart casino and will introduce legislation to enable the appointment of a gaming commission and to update the current provisions of the laws relating to gaming. My government will closely scrutinise the operations of the casinos and licences will be granted only after stringent conditions have been met.

The Northern Territory pastoral industry has suffered severely during the beef industry crisis of the last four years and more especially as a result of the discovery of blue tongue virus in Territory cattle in late 1977. Fortunately, at this stage, there are definite signs of recovery in the industry. Stock prices have increased in the Alice Springs district and greatly improved the prospects of the continuing viability of properties in that area. In addition, a more optimistic outlook in overseas markets for manufacturing beef from the remainder of the Territory gives greater hope for the future.

The effects of the crisis, however, have left behind daunting problems with high stock numbers and the threat of over grazing should poor seasonal conditions return. Debt levels, particularly on owner-operated properties, are a matter of concern and have seriously retarded essential disease control programs. My government has recognised the nature of these problems and has moved to relieve the financial stress on cattle producers. The beef cattle freight subsidy will be continued and financial assistance will be provided to producers affected by blue tongue. A new virological laboratory will be established in Darwin to assist in the treatment of the disease. The rural adjustment schemes and the tuberculosis and brucellosis eradication campaigns will be maintained.

Earlier this year, trade delegations from the Northern Territory visited Southeast Asia and the Middle East in search of markets for local products, particularly those of primary industry. The reports of those delegations have been evaluated and it is my government's intention to build on the work already done and to provide assistance to Territory enterprises in finding markets in these areas.

One of the most important aims of my government in relation to industrial development is the creation of a stable, skilled workforce and the provision of opportunities for local school leavers to find rewarding employment in the Territory. To this end, new legislation covering apprenticeship training will be presented.

My government will act to protect the natural heritage of Territorians by presenting legislation to create a conservation commission which will take in

the current responsibilities of the Territory Parks and Wildlife Commission, the forestry section and the land conservation section in anticipation of which these bodies have been combined into one administrative unit. The Conservation Commission will be responsible for administering new legislation dealing with management of the environment which will bring the Northern Territory into line with developments in other parts of Australia.

It is hoped to introduce legislation aimed at controlling litter by requiring payment of a deposit on all beverage containers sold in the Territory. The effectiveness of similar measures elsewhere is currently being evaluated with the view to determining the most suitable scheme for the Northern Territory. While this legislation will no doubt cause some inconvenience, it will assist in preserving the Territory environment from the ravages of a throw-away society. Nevertheless the particular circumstances of remoteness of many Territory communities will be borne in mind.

Pending the transfer of responsibility for the administration of health on 1 January 1978, my government is reviewing current legislation in this area. Proposed measures dealing with mental health and the regulation of liquor sales have already been circulated for discussion by the community. New liquor laws will be introduced during this session and new mental health legislation will follow. Amongst other legislation dealing with the administration of health, which will be introduced as a result of this review, will be a proposal to grant greater administrative autonomy to hospitals as part of my government's policy of devolving more responsibility for local decisions to authorities at the local level.

A review of the whole ambit of social welfare policies in the Northern Territory is currently being conducted and it is expected that recommendations will be made which will lead to improvements to existing legislation being proposed by my government in this House.

My government is concerned that the education system in the Territory, when it is transferred to local control on 1 July 1979, will require considerable attention. An advisory group is currently studying the options for the administration of education after transfer and, following consultation with parents, teachers and the community generally, legislation will be introduced where necessary to improve the standard of education and its administration. While the review is currently proceeding, it is expected that one of the aspects that will see legislative implementation is the placing of more responsibility on local school councils and provision for more direct involvement by parents in the education of their children.

Local government will continue to receive close attention from my government. In the same way as the Northern Territory is a political unit responsible for its own decisions, local government offers the residents of individual communities the opportunity to be consulted in the decisions affecting them. Amendments will be introduced by my government to enable greater flexibility of local government organisation and structure so that each community can choose the system that best suits its needs. This will extend to Aboriginal communities and will assist in the implementation of the policy of self-management as well as in provision of essential services to remote communities.

My government believes that there are many other areas in need of urgent attention in this the first session after responsible self-government. Legislation which, in large measure, will implement the recommendations of the Australian Law Reform Commission with respect to land acquisition has already been circulated and will be presented for your consideration in this session. It is expected that this will be the most up-to-date legislation of its type in Aus-

tralia. In the field of general law reform, there will be a total review of the criminal law and legislation to enable it to more accurately reflect the demands of modern society. Legislation probably in the form of a codification of the criminal law will be placed before you as soon as possible.

To assist in the enforcement of the law, new police administration legislation will be introduced to enable the Northern Territory Police Force to fulfil the ever-increasing demands placed upon it. In addition, every effort will be made to ensure that the force is provided with the most modern equipment available to enable it to adequately carry out its functions in this vast Territory.

My government recognises the problems faced by Aboriginal people in coping with a system of justice which is alien to their traditional way of life. The current inquiry into these problems which is being conducted by the Australian Law Reform Commission is expected to provide a great deal of useful information. Pending the results of that study, legislation to establish courts for Aboriginal communities comprising Aboriginal justices of the peace advised by a stipendary magistrate will be drafted in consultation with the people most vitally concerned. These courts will have the same powers as any other courts comprised of justices and an additional power to impose traditional penalties in certain circumstances. Legislation will be introduced to recognise tribal marriages for specific purposes under Territory law and to deal with other problems created by the cultural adjustment being faced by thousands of Territory citizens.

The achievement of self-government has meant that the operation of the democratic system now has an even greater significance for the Northern Territory. My government believes that electors throughout the Territory are entitled to the opportunity of casting their votes without undue inconvenience. Legislation will be introduced to ensure that all electors have an equal opportunity to express their views through the ballot box in the most fair and practical manner possible.

My government supports the efforts of the Standing Committee of Australian Attorneys-General to introduce uniformity into Australian laws dealing with issues that extend beyond state borders. Legislation dealing with the regulation of consumer credit transactions, harsh and unconscionable contracts, defamation and commercial arbitration will be introduced in this session arising from the deliberations of the standing committee. My government is actively seeking participation in a national effort to achieve uniformity of companies and securities industry legislation and hopes that it will be able to bring forward legislation compatible with that in other Australian jurisdictions.

In the general review of existing legislation in the Northern Territory, particular attention will be paid to those provisions of the South Australian law which still apply in the Northern Territory. Where appropriate, legislation will be introduced to re-enact, with appropriate modifications, those measures which have retained their relevance.

New legislation is being prepared to clearly define the rights and obligations of both lessees and lessors of residential and commercial properties in the form of a completely new tenancy law. Provision will be made for appeal against excessive or unrealistic rentals and statutory provisions included to deal with trespass and the recovery of premises. Legislation will also be presented for the regulation and control of land and business agents.

The general conditions of employment for persons not covered by industrial awards and agreements have been reviewed and legislation will be presented covering such matters as annual holidays, long service leave and sick leave.

Specific law reform measures covering the abolition of the status of illegitimacy and related matters will be introduced in this session and the implementation of the Australian Law Reform Commission's report on human tissue transplants is under consideration.

My government is also preparing a total review of the current provisions dealing with the regulation of fire-arms in the Territory, with a view to presenting new legislation.

The dramatic rise in third party insurance premiums caused by the high accident rate and the ever-increasing amounts awarded to victims of road accidents has demonstrated the disadvantages of the present system. A study is being made of alternative systems which, while protecting the victims of road accidents, would shield the motorists from unbearable increases in the rates for compulsory insurance. It is hoped that legislation can be introduced in this session to give effect to a realistic compensation scheme. 1

The budget for 1978-79 will be placed before you and you will be asked to provide for the public services of the Territory. A carefully planned program of services and capital works is being drawn up and estimates of expenditure will be presented for your consideration. The budget will make provision for completion of capital works currently under way and for the construction of much-needed community assets. My government proposes to proceed, subject to the provision of a satisfactory environmental impact statement, with the development of a land-backed wharf at Darwin to be located between the existing Stokes Hill and iron ore wharves. This facility will fulfil a long-recognised need for improved port facilities in Darwin.

Negotiations have been entered into with the Corporation of the City of Darwin with a view to constructing, by way of joint venture, a performing arts complex for the people of Darwin. Steps are also being taken to assist in the provision of cultural facilities in Alice Springs.

My government is mindful of the important part that sport plays in the lives of Territorians. Programs will be introduced to upgrade existing facilities for competitive sport and passive recreation and new facilities will be constructed where appropriate. My government welcomes the growing recognition of the Territory as a separate entity by national sporting organisations and will continue to assist representative teams from the Territory to participate in interstate competitions. Coaching programs for junior sport, organised through nationally recognised sporting authorities, will also be undertaken.

Preparatory work for the construction of the Mary Anne Creek Dam near Tennant Creek is already underway and the project will proceed with dispatch. Investigations into a possible site for a recreational lake in Alice Springs have been continuing for some time with little success. It is hoped that a suitable site will be found in the near future. 1

Concern has been expressed about the standard of the water supply in Darwin and Katherine. The recommendations of a study conducted earlier this year into the problems in relation to the quality of Darwin's water supply are being progressively implemented and it is hoped that the improvements that have already been noted will continue. The problems caused by the excess lime content in the Katherine water supply are proving far more difficult to solve. Nevertheless, it is hoped that residents of Katherine will see the benefits of work being undertaken before too much longer.

It is expected that work will be commenced on the upgrading and, where necessary, realignment of the Barkly Highway and the bridging of the Rankin and James Rivers. The reconstruction of the King River bridge on the Victoria Highway remains a high priority of my government. In addition, a survey of major multipurpose rural roads in the Territory is being conducted with a view to determining a program for their improvement. This will be of great benefit to tourists, primary producers and remote communities. In the next financial year, as a result of the recent increase in motor vehicle registration charges, my government will be able to take advantage of funds provided by the Commonwealth under the national roads program. My government will continue to press for the speedy completion of the sealing of the Stuart Highway between the Territory border and Adelaide, and for the construction of a rail link between Alice Springs and Darwin.

The needs of urban communities for adequate public transport are recognised by my government. As a result of a review conducted prior to the transfer of responsibility for this function, new arrangements have been made to improve the efficiency of the bus service currently provided by the Department of Transport and Works. Further developments are planned, including the erection of shelters at major bus stops and the creation of interchanges at strategic locations which will assist the flow of passengers carried on the system.

My government has undertaken a comprehensive program of legislation which will lay the basis for the future of the Northern Territory as a self-governing political entity. My advisers believe the financial arrangements that have been settled with the Commonwealth government will underwrite the progress that the future promises for the Territory.

I commend for your consideration the wide-ranging program of legislation I have outlined and leave you to carry out the important duties entrusted to you by the people of the Northern Territory.

Mr SPEAKER: Honourable members, I have received a copy of the Administrator's speech.

Mr ROBERTSON (Manager of Government Business): Mr Speaker, I move that consideration of His Honour the Administrator's speech be made an order of the day for a later hour.

Motion agreed to.

MESSAGE FROM THE ADMINISTRATOR

Appropriation Bill (No. 1) 1978-79

Mr SPEAKER: Honourable members, I have received a message from His Honour the Administrator which I shall read:

I, John Armstrong England, the Administrator of the Northern Territory of Australia, pursuant to section 11 of the Northern Territory (Self-Government) Act 1978, recommend to the Legislative Assembly a bill entitled the Appropriation Bill (No. 1) 1978-79.

J.A. England
Administrator

APPROPRIATION BILL
(Serial 150)

Bill presented and read a first time.

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

It is my pleasure to present the Northern Territory government's budget for 1978-79. Mr Speaker, there has been great constitutional change in the Territory since this Assembly passed its first budget and the key part of that change has been the gaining of the right for Territorians to determine their own priorities for a broad range of state-like activities. This budget reflects that change. It shows quite dramatically the increased level of financial responsibility now placed with this Assembly. For the previous financial year, the Assembly appropriated \$52m for the transferred functions under the control of the Northern Territory executive. As a direct consequence of the grant of self-government on 1 July 1978, budget proposals now before this Assembly cover expenditure appropriations totalling \$350m. This budget should dispel any lingering doubts about self-government. Today, those who forecast that self-determination would bring disaster will know their charges ring hollow. Self-determination of our revenue and expenditure priorities will ensure that the economic prospects for the Territory are more favourable now than they could ever have been under the fragmented and distant control exercised over the Territory's financial affairs before 1 July.

The Northern Territory government which came into being on 1 July began its life with financial guarantees from the Commonwealth which underpin our security as a government. Those guarantees have allowed the government to point the Territory towards a future of exciting opportunities for economic progress and the direct involvement of Territorians in such development. The budget now before this House translates the end result of months of negotiation and research and months of planning into a blueprint for Territory government activities during this financial year.

The budget provides incentive for economic development and confidence for the future. It is a document which expresses the government's concern to motivate greater private sector growth and lessen the dependency of the Territory's economy on government-sponsored activities. Measures contained in the budget will start the Territory upon a new development course. We want to see a greater percentage of the workforce in the private sector, we want to see population growth and we want to see an expansion of commercial and industrial activities. This and proceeding budgets will reflect that policy. By way of example, the government recognises the dependency Territorians have on transportation and this budget provides in excess of \$18m for new road works and \$12.126m for road maintenance works.

The construction industry can look to competing for contracts involving almost \$22m in government buildings alone. \$8.4m will be provided for primary industry in disease control, freight subsidies, back-up services and administration. Fisheries development will benefit through an outlay of \$1.2m with a similar amount for industrial development and \$4.2m for the Territory Development Corporation. \$1.1m will be provided to the Northern Territory Tourist Board and related to tourism, of course, are the affairs of the Territory Parks and Wildlife Commission. \$8.9m is to be provided for the development and control of our parks and wildlife.

The importance of the mining industry to our economy is reflected by a \$4.2m allocation to the Department of Mines and Energy. I pause here, Mr Speaker, to mention the government's expectations of the added impetus to our economy that will stem from the mining of uranium. I advise that government infrastructure costs associated with uranium development will be an addition to this budget as agreed costs will be met by the Commonwealth. Even though actual mining will not commence for some time, the development of the support, communications and service facilities in the uranium province will result in a significant injection of capital resources to the Territory. The direct effects on employment, service industries and the retail and commercial sectors will also be beneficial to the Territory.

The various government developments now in hand and proposed could collectively be described as assistance and encouragement to private sector development, transportation, fishing, tourist, pastoral and mining industry development. The government, of course, has other major functions to perform, not the least of which is the service function - the provision of facilities to Territorians to allow them to live at a standard not appreciably below that enjoyed by other Australians. Water and sewerage services will be funded by an appropriation of more than \$19m. \$35.7m is to be appropriated as a tied grant to the Electricity Commission for the provision of electricity services throughout the Territory.

Health services will be supported and maintained by the provision of \$43m. This will be for the last six months of this financial year. Honourable members are aware that the government will not assume responsibility for this function until 1 January.

The provision of essential services to Aboriginal communities is a very important new function and responsibility of this government. \$13.4m, by agreement with the federal government, has been set aside for the provision of these services.

\$46.6m has been provided for the construction and restoration of dwelling units by the Housing Commission. \$17.2m will be provided for community development including \$3.8m on correctional services and \$8.7m for local government activities. Fire services will receive \$2.9m and \$13.7m is to be appropriated for police services. These functions were under the control of this Assembly in 1977-78 and the comparative expenditure for that year was \$2.3m and \$10.4m respectively. Small but vital allocations were made in this budget for the role of the Auditor-General who will oversee government expenditure and for the office of the ombudsman.

Mr Speaker, the government is pleased with this budget. It has been framed with careful regard to many problems and priorities of the Territory. This budget will generate and maintain activity in the private sector, continue the provision of essential services to all Territorians and start a concerted and planned assault to make the Northern Territory a preferred place in Australia in which to both live and invest. The Appropriation Bill now before honourable members is presented to this House in accordance with the Financial Administration and Audit Ordinance and the Northern Territory (Self-Government) Act both of which paved the way for this moment.

At this stage, I invite members' attention to the format of the schedules of the Appropriation Bill. They will note that the schedules do not contain comparison figures for the last financial year. Functions previously administered by the Commonwealth cannot be accurately cost identified in relation to their current functional location in the Northern Territory Public Service. Comparisons of each item would therefore mislead the House but, where possible,

comparisons have been made and these will be reflected in other papers and in the course of this speech.

This budget is of special significance in that it covers both revenue and expenditure proposals for what is referred to as the transitional year. It is a budget which falls between the Commonwealth's previous method for funding Territory expenditures and the now agreed state-like general and specific purpose grant method for funding our state-like functions and services. Thus, the next financial year 1979-80 will require the preparation of budget proposals reflecting the various Commonwealth grants. Implementation of the state-type model in 1979-80 will include the appropriate grants for the fully transferred health and education functions.

Funds provided in this budget for health and essential services to Aboriginal communities will be carefully monitored in association with the respective Commonwealth departments. This will ensure that, between us, the transfer of responsibility is achieved with the best possible result. This government is well placed to secure the proper utilisation of these appropriations. If, however, inadequacies become apparent, we have the Commonwealth's assurance that it will meet agreed and unavoidable net budget deficiencies through supplementary grants.

Expenditure overview - the simplified summary of expenditure covering our 1978/79 budget is as follows: firstly, the tied subsidy by the Commonwealth for the trading loss of the Electricity Commission is \$23m. A further \$12.7m has been provided by the Commonwealth for completion of electrical cyclone reconstruction works. The provision for essential services to Aboriginal communities is \$13.4m. \$43m will be provided for the operation and funding of health services under the Department of Health from 1 January to 30 June 1979.

In respect of capital debt remissions to the Commonwealth, the budget provides for an appropriation of \$13.9m. These remissions cover housing, electricity and water and sewerage assets transferred to this government. The remainder of the budget proposals are directed towards the requirements of the various arms of government. This amounts to \$244.6m.

The revenue budget - the revenue available to the Northern Territory government for its expenditure program totals \$350.603m. Examination of the sources of that revenue requires some care because of the ease with which misrepresentations can occur. I say that, Mr Speaker, because the government is aware that some sections of the community still remain confused or concerned as to the costs to them, as individuals, of self-government. I want to take the opportunity in this speech to demonstrate to them that the cost has been a very small price to pay. In fact, close examination of the estimates of revenue indicates that additional contributions by Territorians will be relatively a very small part of the total budget. Members will be aware that prior to 1 July all revenue collections in the Territory went direct to the Commonwealth Consolidated Revenue Fund. These collections now form part of the Territory's own budget proposals and comprise taxes and charges of which this Assembly is aware. Various tax measures recently approved by the Legislative Assembly, together with charges for services and the natural growth in areas where revenue is raised, have enabled the Territory to play its part and contribute to the success of self-government. In this context the Territory's contribution to self-government is \$37.049m. By comparison Territorians contributed approximately \$30m to like revenue items prior to self-government. No new revenue imposts are proposed in this budget.

I now detail the sources of revenue. The Commonwealth in the federal budget

is providing \$280m to the Northern Territory government. Additionally, the Territory will receive an estimated \$8.4m from the Commonwealth to meet half the estimated approved running costs of public hospitals from next January. Loan repayments by statutory corporations will add another \$19.5m to the treasury and internal departmental recoveries by the Department of Transport and Works a further \$5.3m. The remaining \$37m of the revenue budget relates to Territory taxes, charges and miscellaneous receipts.

The details are as follows: land sales, leases and rents will contribute \$3.2m; water, sewerage and health rates, \$2.4m; payroll tax will add \$12.7m. I point out, Mr Speaker, that more than one third of the payroll tax estimation of \$12.7m will be met by the government itself - some \$4.7m.

Income from motor vehicle registrations is expected to reach \$3.5m and the combined returns from stamp duty charges, racing taxes and fees, soccer pools, tattsлото and liquor licences and fees is \$5m. Interest earned is estimated to amount to \$2.5m.

There are other areas of revenue-raising amounting to an estimated \$4.7m which I have not specified. These are detailed in budget papers and include fees collected by the Registrar-General, sales of government property, departmental revenues and minor miscellaneous receipts.

By agreement with the Commonwealth, the Territory in its own right will now receive royalties from mining within Aboriginal reserves. It is expected that this will result in additional revenue of \$2.5m out of the total of \$3m from mining.

Mr Speaker, to summarize the revenue position, the Northern Territory budget for 1978-79 totalling \$350.603m will be funded from the following sources: Territory taxes, charges and miscellaneous receipts - \$37.049m; inter-departmental recoveries and loan repayments by statutory corporations - \$24.994m; receipts from the Commonwealth subvention grant - \$280m; other grants - \$8.670m.

I now turn to some of the major proposals in the budget and explain to honourable members the background to the relevant appropriations.

Development corporation - the government's policy of encouraging greater public sector growth will in large measure be carried out by the Department of Industrial Development and the Territory Development Corporation. Members will recall that recent legislation provided for the creation of a development corporation which is charged with a responsibility to assist the development of industry through provision of finance, resources and advice. This budget provides the board with \$2m to carry out its development function and \$1.8m for various forms of assistance to the rural sector, including the rural adjustment scheme for carry-on finance and the provision of loans.

Primary industries - the funding of the Primary Industries Division of the Department of Industrial Development will receive an increase of some \$2m to \$8.4m or 33% up from last financial year. The increase makes provision for special assistance to producers affected by restrictions imposed on the movement of cattle in blue tongue declared areas and provision for operational costs and equipment associated with the eradication of blue tongue virus. As well, the budget provides for the construction of a virology laboratory for this purpose. The extra support for the Primary Industries Division will also allow for substantial upgrading of the range of services it provides for the man on the land. The budget continues to provide beef freight subsidies and the outlays necessary to maintain the progress achieved to date in the brucellosis and tuberculosis eradication campaign.

Fishing - various inquiries have examined the potential of the fishing industry in the Northern Territory. Prior to this budget, little was done, due to staffing and other restrictions, to either follow up or implement the recommendations arising out of these inquiries. The government considers that the potential of Northern Territory fisheries, particularly that of the 200-mile zone, will ultimately contribute substantially to the Territory's economy warranting greater investment of public and private funds. For this reason, the government has allocated an expenditure priority to this sector of the economy.

This budget, by the provision of the substantial increased funding of \$1.267m, representing an almost 200% increase, demonstrates this government's confidence in the future of the fishing industry. The funding will see the beginning of a staged implementation of recent recommendations made by Mr B.H. Bowen of the Western Australia Fisheries and Wildlife Division. Staff will be trebled and funds will be provided for the acquisition of patrol vessels and other equipment necessary to carry out regulatory, enforcement and development functions. Our fishing resources in both inland waters and territorial waters within the 200 mile zone must now be secured and protected.

Tourism - the importance of tourism to the social and economic development of the Territory is accepted by this government. Tourism is one of our major industries providing direct and indirect benefits to all sectors of the community and is currently estimated to inject \$40m annually into the economy of the Territory, with a subsequent turnover value exceeding \$100m. The continued development and expansion of the tourist industry is essential for the overall economic benefit of the Northern Territory and the government in this budget has provided \$1.1m as an incentive to stimulate further development of the vast potential of this industry. The overall increase in funding is \$387,000 or 54% above last year's level. This will enable the Tourist Board to effectively expand its essential activities, particularly in the professional marketing and promotion of the Northern Territory, and the establishment of a tourist bureau in Brisbane to attract an increasing share of the Australian and international tourist market. To achieve its objectives in this direction, the Tourist Board will increase its promotion and advertising expenditures by some 70% to a total of \$356,000.

The Northern Territory Parks and Wildlife Commission - this restructured commission now incorporates the former Reserves Board, wildlife, forestry, land conservation and environmental units. This budget provides a total funding of \$8.979m to the commission. Probably, the most important aspect of the operations of the commission in 1978-79 will be the expenditure of \$1.329m to overcome the substantial backlog of capital works on parks and reserves in the Territory caused by funding restrictions in previous years. The increased funding does not include any provisions for the Ayers Rock and Kakadu National Parks which are to be funded directly by the federal government.

The government intends to proceed with the construction of the Yulara tourist village as soon as possible, following completion of the detailed planning operation currently being undertaken. Negotiations with the Commonwealth are being undertaken to determine the financing of expenditures associated with the construction of the village.

Significant items within the provision of capital works include the erection of houses for rangers on reserves, the permanent staffing of three additional reserves and the provision of \$60,000 for building restoration work at Arltunga and the Alice Springs Telegraph Station. Almost \$500,000 is provided for parks and reserves in the northern region with special attention being paid

to the Berry and Howard Springs Reserves to provide additional public facilities to these areas much used by the people of Darwin. \$185,000 has been provided for the Katherine Gorge Park. The Devil's Marbles reserve will not be permanently staffed to protect and improve this important scenic area.

A significant proportion of the operational costs of the former forestry unit is now being directed to expansion of parks and gardens development operations in Darwin, Alice Springs and other communities with particular attention to the landscaping of road approaches to all towns.

Museums and art galleries - this budget provides for an increase of \$140,000 last year to \$550,000 in 1978-79 for the operations of the Museums and Art Galleries Board. This will permit the board to fill staff vacancies necessary for extension of its collections and research.

Mining - this budget provides \$4.276m for the functions of the Department of Mines and Energy representing an assessed increase of approximately \$1.5m or 35% over the previous year. The improved funding will facilitate the up-grading of services to the mining industry and wider investigation of the Territory's mineral potential through geological surveys, drilling and improvements to the batteries of Tennant Creek and Mount Wells. In addition, there have been associated related increases in the general administrative, operational and capital funding of the department.

One of the crucial issues, Mr Speaker, facing the Territory is its dependency on imported fuel. It is therefore appropriate that this budget provides for an urgent assessment of the potential of known coal deposits which could be of significant importance to the cost structure of generating electricity.

The Northern Territory Electricity Commission - this came into being on 1 July this year as an independent, autonomous body charged with a responsibility for the generation and distribution of electricity in the Northern Territory. The financial arrangements with the Commonwealth recognise the special problem in relation to the operation of the commission and \$23m has been provided by the Commonwealth to meet the estimated operating losses of the commission this financial year. In addition, some \$12.736m has been provided as a non-repayable grant to complete reconstruction of electrical works in Darwin which were carried over from the DRC and the Department of Construction. Loan Council approval has been given for this government to raise \$8.1m on behalf of the Electricity Commission's capital works program for 1978-79.

Capital works program - government outlays on capital works and housing programs have a very real impact on employment and the maintenance of economic growth in the Territory. Following the winding-up of the Darwin Reconstruction Commission, a downturn in construction activities took place compared with the immediate post-cyclone years. This government is very conscious of the problems arising from constant variations in government programs. Full details of the proposed capital works program for 1978-79 are set out in Budget Paper No. 4.

The value of works in progress as at the 1 July 1978 was \$54m. In 1978-79, the government will put out to contract new proposals valued at \$59m making the total value of works in progress during the course of the year \$113m. It is estimated that the cash required for this program will be in the order of \$53m. It is equivalent to the amount expended last financial year excluding restoration work and capital works programs of the Electricity and Housing Commissions.

In addition to the above works, the Housing Commission will be implementing a new housing program in the order of \$37m.

I will now set out for the benefit of honourable members the geographical impact of the new works proposed for this year and detail the more significant items of the proposed program.

A regional summary - the new program of \$59m is to be spread through the Northern Territory as follows: Darwin region - \$24,481,100; Gove - \$127,000; Katherine - \$10,677,400; Tennant Creek - \$5,761,200; Alice Springs - \$10,250,200; all centres, minor works - \$1,933,800; and remote Aboriginal settlements - \$5,796,700.

The more significant works programmed for 1978-79 include sealing of the Jay Creek to Glen Helen Road, stage 1 of the Tanami Road, the Petermann Road from Eldunda to Angus Downs and stage 1 of the Daly River Road. In addition to the sealing program, construction will commence on a Fannie Bay connector road and the King River Bridge on the Victoria Highway.

Major improvement works to the value of \$8.5m will also be commenced on several sections of the Stuart and Barkly Highways which, together with works currently in progress, will mean that constructions totalling some \$18m will be under way on these important links in 1978-79.

Other major proposals include stage 1 of the development of a land-backed wharf for Darwin, a new fire station in Parap, a community health centre at Nightcliff, a recreation lake for Tennant Creek and subdivisional works at Malak. There is also an industrial subdivision for Katherine. Police complexes will also be established at Avon Downs, Barkly and Elcho Island and work will commence on a police training centre.

Housing - the Northern Territory Housing Commission this year has the additional responsibility for the provision and management of dwellings required by the government for the Northern Territory Public Service. This is in addition to the program of housing for the general public as in previous years. It has also taken over responsibility for the administration of various government housing loan schemes. The government will provide total outlays of \$46.6m in this financial year for the extended range of activities of the Northern Territory Housing Commission.

Housing for the general public - \$23.8m has been provided in this budget for housing for the general public including \$4.299m for the restoration of the last remaining cyclone damaged dwellings. This level of funding will result in the completion of 515 dwellings and complete the restoration of 200 units during the year. This will more than match the level of completions achieved in 1977-78. Of the funds for public housing, \$460,000 has been set aside to assist those tenants of the commission who cannot afford the current rentals.

As a result of increased expenditures over the past three years, the waiting time for a three-bedroom house in Darwin has been reduced to nine months, the lowest it has been for five years. In other areas, the corresponding waiting time is now approaching six months. It is the government's intention, Mr Speaker, that these reduced waiting times will be maintained if not improved.

Public service housing - this budget also provides \$13.3m for staff housing for the Northern Territory Public Service. These funds will result in the completion of some 290 new and restored units. The Housing Commission will also receive in respect of government housing some \$1.7m to compensate for non-receipt of rents from certain employees under special awards, for major repairs at Batchelor and the additional costs associated with staff housing in remote areas. The government will also meet the administrative costs of loan schemes

recently transferred to the commission until alternative arrangements are finalised.

Concerning the various housing loan schemes, this budget provides \$2.2m for the Home Finance Trustee type loan (9%) and \$5m for the 6% cyclone concessional loan. In addition, the Northern Territory government has Loan Council approval to borrow \$4.4m for the Home Finance Trustee type loans. This will enable housing loans to be maintained at least to the 1977-78 level.

Health - responsibility for the health function will transfer from the Commonwealth to the Northern Territory government as from 1 January 1979. Based on estimates prepared by the Commonwealth Department of Health, in accordance with the budgetary policies of the Commonwealth, \$34.7m has been provided to the Northern Territory government as part of the \$280m general purpose grant. \$8.4m will be provided separately under the provisions of the Health Insurance Act. The estimated combined outlays on health during the last six months of the financial year will therefore be \$43.1m, of which \$32m is to be expended on the operations of the department, \$2.8m on maintenance of health facilities and \$8.3m on capital works and furniture, the major item of which will be the Casuarina hospital.

Provision of essential services to Aboriginal communities - functional responsibility for Aboriginal affairs will not be transferred to the Northern Territory government. However, the Commonwealth has agreed to transfer the responsibility for essential services to Aboriginal communities to the Northern Territory government. In addition to the supply of water and power and the provision of sewerage and drainage for these communities, the Northern Territory government has accepted the responsibility for the maintenance of roads, wharves, barge landings and airstrips on Aboriginal settlements. The Commonwealth government has provided an amount of \$13.4m to the Northern Territory government to enable it to supply these services to Aboriginal communities.

It is important that disruption and confusion in the Aboriginal communities be avoided during the transfer process and for this reason the Department of Aboriginal Affairs will act as agent for the Northern Territory government during the transitional period. In developing future budgeting programs for these communities, they will be visited by officers from the Department of Aboriginal Affairs and relevant Northern Territory government departments. At the same time the transfer of other services which are properly a state-like responsibility, such as municipal and other services, will be discussed with each community.

Police - funding for the police has increased by \$3.271m or 32% to a total of \$13.756m. The additional funding will provide for an overall increase of 57 in the establishment of the Northern Territory police of which 53 will be uniformed personnel, some of whom will be assigned to strengthen the drug squad. Pay adjustments including penalty rates, promotion conditions approved and paid in the previous financial year and a recent 9% pay increase will add to police salary expenditure levels during the current financial year.

Emergency services - \$436,000 has been provided for emergency services in 1978-79, an increase of approximately \$180,000 or 75% over the previous year. \$30,000 has been set aside for the purchase of a rescue craft to be stationed at Gove, the scene of a number of boating tragedies and mishaps of late.

Correctional services - the standard of correctional services in the Northern Territory has been of concern to this government and, over recent years, a number of investigations and reports have been critical of the standard of

facilities and services. This budget provides substantial support for the upgrading of services providing as it does some \$3.805m, an increase of 66% over last year. In conjunction with the completion of the new Darwin gaol in March 1979, there will be greatly improved training and education facilities. The need for trained staff to allow these programs to be implemented is recognised in proposed funding arrangements. The government proposes that prison industries will be developed as part of the rehabilitation program and also as a means of reducing the cost of maintaining prisoners. A further thrust in this program will be the development of vocational skills to enable inmates to integrate into the community workforce after their release. Increased funding will also enable upgrading of services to the Northern Territory Parole Board and the courts.

Social welfare - the Social Development Division of the Department of Community Services provides a range of community welfare services to those in need, ethnic groups and others. The cost of these services for 1978-79 is estimated at \$4.6m. This makes provision for a number of new services including a Homemaker Service \$100,000, concessional benefits for pensioners \$200,000, delivery of welfare services to remote localities \$100,000 and immigration and ethnic affairs \$100,000.

The office of ombudsman - the new office of ombudsman recognises the needs of members of the public to have a forum of review and appeal in relation to administrative action or inaction. \$305,000 has been allocated for the establishment of the ombudsman's office. It is interesting to note that the first debate in an Australian parliamentary institution on the setting up of such an office took place in the Northern Territory Legislative Council in 1966. It is a shame Mr Speaker that Territorians have had to wait all these years until self-government for such an office to be realised.

Office of Auditor-General - provision is made in this budget for the office of Auditor-General for the Northern Territory. The Commonwealth Auditor-General has been appointed Auditor-General of the Northern Territory and the assessed costs of services to the government this financial year is \$200,000.

Staffing - implementation of the new departmental structure which became effective on 1 July 1978 has raised a requirement for additional staffing above the numbers transferred with the new functions. Excluded from this requirement and from this budget are the staffing needs of the Electricity and Housing Commissions and the Port Authority. These are separately funded. Also excluded are the health and education staff which have yet to transfer. The allocation for salaries to departments and the other statutory corporations provides for 4,355 staff at an estimated cost of \$75m. This represents an increase of 440 or 11% over the numbers employed by both the Commonwealth and Northern Territory governments prior to 1 July. The estimates for the Department of Health to be taken over from 1 January provide for 2,609 staff for six months, an increase of 39 over the 2,570 presently employed. Additional information on salaries is contained in the attachments to the budget. The government is concerned that staffing resources are utilised in the most effective way possible. It has directed that a major review be undertaken, giving special attention to areas where unproductive or irrelevant work is currently being performed.

Remissions to the Commonwealth - the Northern Territory government, under the financial arrangements, is required to make remissions of principal and interest to the Commonwealth in relation to certain assets and advances transferred to it from the Commonwealth on 1 July. Remissions totalling \$13.974m will be made in the current financial year. These are in respect of advances to the Housing Commission, advances to the former Home Finance Trustee and

assets transferred in respect of electricity, water and sewerage undertakings and staff housing.

Economic outlook - concerning uranium developments and their impact on the Territory's economy, although actual mining will not commence for some time, the way seems clear for the development of facilities in the uranium province. It is anticipated that this will result in the flow of many millions of dollars into the Territory with significant related benefits on employment and on services to be provided by Northern Territory industries. These developmental expenditures will also provide indirectly revenues to the Territory government by way of local taxes and will precede the royalties which will flow to the Territory following the commencement of production.

Under the financial arrangements, the extent of the General Assistance Grant provided by the Commonwealth for 1978-79 will guarantee the maintenance of our existing level of service. This will assure Territorians and potential Territorians that our economic prospects are more favourable now than they could ever have been under the fragmented arrangements which have existed in the past. Our finances are sufficient to enable the public service of the Territory to provide the level and standard of service as is experienced in the states. This government is also in a position to improve its services by re-arrangement of priorities.

In conclusion, the grant of self-government on 1 July has provided a unique and very special opportunity to us all. The 1978-79 budget provides for the priorities of the Territory, having regard to the special problems and needs of this new self-governing area. I believe that our revenue proposals, together with a guaranteed financial assistance from the Commonwealth, will provide a sound economic basis for the development of the Territory but all must recognise that it is a developing Territory and requires continuing assistance and solid financial support. I have referred to the many responsibilities of the government and am satisfied that, with our total allocation of \$350m, we have given proper attention to the many competing needs within the community.

So far as revenue-raising is concerned, I believe that Territorians can now judge that the exercise of self-government has not been the crippling financial burden that some expected it to be. As a result of our new status, there are tremendous opportunities ahead and this budget is the first one which exploits those opportunities.

Honourable members will be aware that the Territory's equivalent share of the national income tax pool will be set during this transitional year. The experience of this budget will be used in framing decisions as to the level of Commonwealth assistance from 1979-80 onwards. The budget now before you implements the constitutional change of recent months. It provides for the continuation and expansion of the services of government expected by the community and sets the course for the encouragement of investment and a broadening of our economic base. This government is confident that the budget is a realistic plan for the development of the Territory and I commend it to honourable members.

Debate adjourned.

MESSAGE FROM THE ADMINISTRATOR
Withholding of assent - National Parks Ordinances

The CLERK: The following message has been received from His Honour the Administrator:

I inform the Assembly of the following action taken pursuant to section 8(1) of the Northern Territory (Self-Government) Act 1978. His Excellency the Governor-General of the Commonwealth of Australia, acting with the advice of the Federal Executive Council, did on 18 August 1978 declare that he has withheld assent to the proposed laws entitled: National Parks Ordinance 1973, National Parks Ordinance 1974, Public Parks and Gardens Ordinance 1974, Crown Lands Ordinance 1974. The statement of reasons for withholding assent to these proposed laws, and copy of the relevant order by the Governor-General, are attached in pursuance of section 10 of the Act.

J.A. ENGLAND
Administrator

TABLED PAPER
Executive Member's Order

Mr PERRON (Treasurer): Mr Speaker, I table the Executive Member's Order relating to the Allocation of Funds (Appropriation) Ordinances (Nos. 1, 2 and 3) 1977-78.

STATEMENT
Coastal surveillance

Mr EVERINGHAM (Chief Minister): Mr Speaker, the unauthorised arrival of refugee boats from Vietnam, the number of foreign fishing vessels entering prohibited waters and the apprehension of an aerial drug smuggler have during the past 12 months drawn attention to the deficiencies in coastal surveillance in the Northern Territory. During the same period, an outbreak of blue tongue virus in Territory cattle herds has been reported. In addition, new exotic termite species have been found in the Vietnamese boats in the Darwin harbour.

The particular concern of the Northern Territory government is the introduction of exotic plant, animal and human diseases which would affect the whole of Australia but would particularly affect the pastoral and agricultural industries in the Northern Territory. In addition to the blue tongue outbreak which restricted the prospect of cattle sales, the Territory also suffered when the oriental fruit fly was discovered here a few years ago. Refugees and fishermen often bring livestock with them on their voyages and infestations of winged insects are reported to have been observed on their boats. They may make their first landfall well away from quarantine facilities so there is a very real possibility of introducing exotic diseases. Not so long ago, a ship came ashore on Wessell Island in Arnhem Land; certainly it was far off course as it is believed it was heading for Darwin. There is a definite quarantine threat from a vessel like this. There is also a defence risk as it was beside an automatic weather station which would have defence significance in war time.

In November 1977, I underlined the urgent need for increased surveillance of north Australian waters and asked for Orion aircraft to be based at Darwin

instead of Edinburgh in South Australia. This has been followed by other requests during 1978. Our basic surveillance facilities still consist of people squinting out from Darwin with their bare eyes.

There has been an apparent reluctance by the Commonwealth to increase surveillance by the use of the armed services although the stationing of navy Tracker aircraft from Darwin and the recent decision to increase the patrol boat strength in north Australia from 7 to 9 is welcome. It is significant that the Commonwealth government's Foreign Affairs and Defence Committee, after a visit to northern Australia in April 1978, recommended consideration of the setting up of a "viable and effective coastguard service comprising civilians, local police and reserve units of the defence forces". This need is self-evident to those who live here and has been accepted by committees of inquiry which come on visits but, until the announcement by the Minister for Transport, Peter Nixon on 9 July 1978, of upgraded civil coastal surveillance and enforcement capabilities, there had been no evidence of any action by Commonwealth authorities.

There is concern amongst the small number of residents in isolated areas in the Territory regarding the unexplained intruders whom they see and hear, usually at night. Making allowances for exaggeration and realising that some sightings and noises have logical and lawful explanation, there are still grounds for concern regarding unchecked violations of northern Australia's sea, land and air space. Concerned citizens have written to the Northern Territory government making suggestions regarding the setting up of coastguards, coast watch and patrol organisations. One of these proposals is to use bushmen and Aborigines as a patrol service and is well worth further consideration. This has been commended by us to Commonwealth authorities.

A further concern of the government is the lack of adequate communications in outlying areas which makes the reporting of unusual incidents difficult. Along the whole of the Northern Territory coastline only two places, Darwin and Nhulunbuy, have facilities by which any telephone subscriber can make a telephone call of commercial quality to anywhere in the Australian telephone network. In the future, there will be a small number of telephones on Groote Eylandt connected as subscribers to the Nhulunbuy exchange over a privately owned radio link and at Milingimbi where the repeater station on the Darwin-Nhulunbuy radio telephone system is located. It is possible to make a call from the Telecom installation although this is not a public facility.

The rest of the coastline depends for communication on a wide variety of radio services which are subject to variable atmospheric conditions and technical failures. The best of these are the few links to the public telephone network through the Katherine radio-telephone exchange and the extensive connections to VJY, the Telecom Australia outpost radio base station in Darwin which sends and receives telegrams but not telephone calls. Otherwise, the radio links are the base stations operated by the many different private and public organisations, usually with schedules at restricted times each day. The Northern Territory government, Mr Speaker, itself has one of these radio networks giving as good a service as possible in the circumstances. These stations are at police, health, Aboriginal affairs, forestry, wildlife and similar installations. There are also a number of mobile stations in government vehicles and with field camping parties. These facilities could be made available to assist surveillance activities to the extent that they are suitable.

The government has made a submission to the taskforce examining the need for a communications satellite for Australia. Such a facility would make good

quality communications available continuously in isolated areas and would make effective surveillance on land much more practicable. Even if a satellite is provided, it will be many years before it is operational and other means to improve communications are needed quickly, as you would only too well be aware, Mr Speaker.

The number of airfields in northern Australia is not precisely known but it is a cause of great concern. Some of these are disused wartime strips which are still of reasonably high quality, others are licensed airfields controlled by the Commonwealth Department of Transport but many are unlicensed bush strips used by pastoralists, missions and Aboriginal communities. They constitute an easy means of illegal landings by light aircraft and must be included in any surveillance plan. There will be very great problems in maintaining effective surveillance. It is understood that there is no completely accurate record of such airstrips and little information regarding the serviceability of many of them.

It must be clearly recognised that the problem of illegal entry into north Australia is the responsibility of the Commonwealth. The role of the Northern Territory government is one of bringing these matters to the notice of the Commonwealth authorities. The attitude of the Northern Territory government can be summarised as follows: firstly, the government is concerned that there is only limited surveillance of Australia's northern coastline and welcomes the recent statement of the Commonwealth Minister for Transport that the standard of surveillance is to be upgraded. Secondly, although recognising that completely effective surveillance is probably not possible, the government believes that more effective measures are necessary than those announced by the Minister for Transport. There is a widespread public demand in the Territory for better surveillance and a need for better protection of Australia against exotic diseases. Thirdly, surveillance will be much improved by better outback communications and the government will continue to press for improvements in this area. Fourthly, the limited government radio network is available to assist surveillance communications.

The major concern of the government is the risk of introducing plant, animal and human diseases through uncontrolled entry into northern Australia. The government is willing to cooperate with Commonwealth authorities in the apprehension of any persons or goods illegally entering Australia via the Northern Territory. The government recognises that smuggling, quarantine breaches, immigration, fishing within the 200 mile fishing zone and aviation operations are Commonwealth functions and therefore the funding of coastguards, coast watch and other preventative measures is the responsibility of the Commonwealth within certain limitations.

The government believes that the Aboriginal populations of the northern coastal regions have an important part to play in surveillance activities and commends to the Commonwealth the suggestion that it institute a patrol service using Aboriginals and bushmen. Because the surveillance activities are basically a law-enforcement function, the Northern Territory police will be appointed to coordinate Territory resources in support of Commonwealth coastal surveillance. Liaison on policy issues relating to surveillance between the Commonwealth and the Territory will be maintained by the Department of the Chief Minister and the government will participate in the proposed Commonwealth-state ministerial conference on surveillance. The Department of the Chief Minister will represent the Territory at that conference.

Today I received a telex that evidence had been given to a select committee of the United States Congress indicating that the firm opinion of a taskforce

appointed by that congress was that the Australian government had no effective control of entry along the north coast of Australia. Now, when that evidence can be given to the congress of a foreign power, there is surely something wrong with the state of Australia. I believe the Commonwealth must take urgent action to rectify the situation and to place Australia's national integrity beyond doubt.

Mr COLLINS (Arnhem): Mr Speaker, I move that the statement be noted.

The Opposition supports wholeheartedly the concern of the Northern Territory government in the whole question of coastal surveillance. I wish to speak briefly on a number of points that have been raised by the Chief Minister, particularly on behalf of the people in my electorate.

As the Chief Minister would be aware, recently a combined community meeting was held at Galiwinku where 19 Aboriginal communities were represented by 42 delegates. What impressed me particularly about that meeting was the amount of time that was spent discussing this very subject. Aboriginal people in Arnhem Land are very concerned about the vast expanse of coastline which people seem to be using with greater and greater frequency these days.

I was interested, just the other day, to land on an excellent bush airstrip that had a small number of people living only five minutes drive away. Our arrival in a twin engined aircraft evinced no interest whatever from the people who were living near this strip. The strip is connected by road to Darwin but it is quite isolated. We actually had to take off again, buzzing the people who were living near the airstrip - in fact, we eventually had to go so low that the lady living in the house said afterwards that she thought we were spray painting her roof - and when they finally came to pick us up, the comment made was, "So many aircraft land on that strip that we do not bother paying any attention any more when people do". This particular airstrip was located near a beautiful waterhole, obviously well used by people for weekend camps. On the occasion that I was there, the place was deserted but it was obvious that light aircraft dropping into this particular airstrip was such a common occurrence the people living nearby did not even bother investigating it. Certainly, the Territory is wide open and I think that is something that everyone accepts.

One of the particular concerns that was expressed by the Aboriginal people at this conference was that they certainly had the ability to locate these airstrips and to regularly visit them, to check them for use. At Galiwinku a number of people stated that aircraft flying overhead was quite a regular occurrence. No one was curious any more and no one bothered worrying any more where the planes were coming from or where they were going.

A resolution was passed at that conference asking the authorities to consider placing a number of coastal surveillance boats at a number of Aboriginal communities and appointing Aboriginal people as fisheries inspectors under the ordinance so they could control some of the illegal fishing which is going on out there. Of course, the idea was extended to the area of watching for drugs. It was interesting for me, Mr Speaker, to listen to the great concern that Aboriginal people had over drugs. It has now become obvious to some Aboriginal communities in my electorate that young Aboriginal people are using drugs and in particular marijuana. Whatever else your ideas on the subject are, whether you are for it or against it, there is no doubt that the Aboriginal people who spoke at that meeting in Arnhem Land are certainly concerned about it. Their attitude was that, "Our people are having enough problems with alcohol, we just don't need anything else". Certainly, the concern was that something

positive should be done and, if the government was prepared to initiate such a move, it would receive the wholehearted support of Aboriginal communities in Arnhem Land.

As I said before, it seems to me the only major deficiency of such an idea of setting up a service of Aboriginal people and bushmen that would make it unacceptable to the government, at least to the federal government, is that it makes too much sense. I think that using such a service is so obvious, particularly when you consider the small amount of money that would be needed to set it up, that it should be proceeded with immediately.

One of the great advantages of using Aboriginal communities to provide such a service would be the very low infrastructure that would be needed. I am not quite sure, Mr Speaker - you would probably have a better idea than I would - but I am told that as far as the army is concerned, to put one man into the field you need ten clerks somewhere to ensure that that man can stay there. Of course, this would not be necessary with such a patrol service. Also, they would not need any sophisticated equipment to move around or camping gear; they are quite happy to lie down on the ground at night around a camp fire. They do not need truck loads of gear to accompany them or blow-up mattresses or tents or anything of that sort. They would be a highly mobile, efficient force of men.

I thoroughly commend the idea of using such a service. The greatest deficiency, of course, as the Chief Minister has pointed out quite correctly, is one of communications. The communication problems in my electorate - and this is something shared in many other places in the Territory - are appalling. People cannot even pick up the ABC radio clearly at night. It is almost impossible simply to sit down and listen to the national news. This is something the Territory government should look at and I am very pleased to see they are going to look at it. I applaud the initiative of investigating the use of a communication satellite to improve the communications in the Northern Territory because it is certainly one of the greatest disadvantages from which this place suffers. Radio-telephones are not always efficient because often there is only one telephone in a large community. For example, at Maningrida, there are a thousand people in the community and the outlying districts yet there is one telephone to serve the whole community. As a result, there is usually a queue of about 10 deep to use it. Quite often atmospheric conditions make it impossible to hear what is being said. Communications certainly need to be improved.

The Chief Minister has mentioned how easy it is to make illegal landings by light aircraft. As I have said, it was demonstrated to me the other day just how easy this is. The frequency of light aircraft going into Arnhem Land is so great these days that it does not even raise an eyebrow from people living five minutes drive from the airstrip.

The statement indicated that the government believes that the Aboriginal population of the northern coastline regions have an important part to play in surveillance activities and commends to the Commonwealth the suggestion that it institute a patrol service using Aboriginals and bushmen. Again, I have been asked to advise this House that such an initiative by the Northern Territory government would meet with the greatest enthusiasm and cooperation possible from the people in my electorate.

Mr DOOLAN (Victoria River): The Opposition wholeheartedly endorses what the Chief Minister has said in regard to coastal surveillance. Nobody could possibly deny that it is of the utmost importance to increase the degree of

surveillance on our isolated coastline. Mr Speaker, there are 2 things that I would like to speak on briefly. It has been said that the government intends to spend something like \$11,000 or \$13,000 per day on surveillance aircraft. The Opposition Leader and myself were at Port Keats some time back and we were approached with a proposition by the manager of the Murin Association. As a result of that, we suggested that he write to Mr Nixon. I also wrote to Mr Nixon saying:

I have received a copy of a letter to you from the Murin Association Incorporated at Port Keats Mission NT concerning the use of their own aircraft as one of the aircraft which you propose to use in assisting to patrol the northern coastline. This proposal to use the Murin Association's Piper Seneca was discussed at length with Jon Isaacs Leader of the Opposition and myself and, on our advice, the president and secretary wrote to you.

The stretch of coast covered by this regular service is a particularly isolated area of approximately 200 miles of coastline which has no other normal air traffic and a minimal amount of sea traffic and would therefore be an ideal area for the illegal entry of either aircraft or ships. In fact, a Vietnamese boat arrived on the beach near Port Keats a month ago and the Murin aircraft reported an unidentified aircraft as recently as 2 weeks ago.

As the Murin Association has pointed out, in all probability they could provide the kind of service that you are looking at at far less cost than any other charter organisation because they are already operating in this area. As well as this advantage, I believe that the presence of the Murinjabin people along the coast between the Murin River and the Daly River, particularly as the local Port Keats coast-watch is prepared to co-ordinate their coastwatching activities, could be of great value. I feel that you would already be aware that Aboriginal people were used to some extent by army units as coastwatchers and were extensively used as coastal pilots by the navy during World War II.

It would be greatly appreciated by the people at Port Keats and by myself if you would give the Murin Association's proposal your most serious consideration as I believe that not only could they result in a considerable saving on the proposed plan to charter aircraft but it would also offer an excellent means of protection to an extremely isolated part of our northern coastline.

Mr Nixon replied briefly saying that he had received my letter and that my points with regard to providing a daily air patrol in this particular area is noted. This is a far more isolated stretch of coast than is the Arnhem Land coast. It has very little traffic and, in fact, Connair no longer goes there. The Murin Association plane can no longer cope with the business; they have to get another plane. They employ two full-time pilots and another part-time pilot. The minimum number of trips they do to and from Port Keats in a day are two and they have done up to five. They fly seven days a week. I would commend this service to the government and I think that it should be looked into. It is a very isolated coastline and there is already a service which flies along the coast all the time.

The other thing I would mention is the use of Aboriginal people as coast watchers and their use during the war. About 1966-67, my wife and I had the pleasure of entertaining Lord and Lady Casey at Snake Bay where he was to

open a hospital. Before the celebrations, I was approached by some elderly Aboriginal people who suggested that they might form a guard of honour and wear their war medals. They did this. These fellows were inveterate gamblers and they gambled just about anything but there was no way they would lose their war medals; they were very proud of them. They resurrected from somewhere immaculate long white pants and shirts and lined up and formed a guard of honour complete with ribbons and campaign medals. I think that Lord Casey was so intrigued and so interested that he spent more time talking to these fellows than he did opening the hospital.

That is not an isolated case. There was one Aboriginal at Garden Point, by name Charlie Two, who once prevailed on Father Leary to put his war medals in the safe. I asked Charlie what he did in the war and he astonished me by saying that he served on an American submarine. I thought: "Dream on Charlie". I checked it out later on and I found in fact this was correct. When the 2/2nd commando regiment was in Timor, Charlie played the role of accompanying an American submarine to the coast of Timor. They would surface at night and let Charlie ashore in an inflated dinghy. He would paddle ashore, deflate the dinghy, conceal it and have a look around the area to see if it was safe to come ashore. At times, it appears it was quite unsafe and he managed to obliterate his tracks, live off the land and nobody knew he was there. At one stage, after nearly a fortnight, the coast was clear and he signalled the submarine that it was okay to land stores. Most people would laugh at this and they would say "Don't be silly". It was in fact correct and I verified this with Jack Slade, the medical pilot who was involved in the project and who knew something about it.

I just told that little story because not a lot of people know that the Aborigines did in fact play a very important part during the war. I know Dr Donald Thompson had an Aboriginal unit in Arnhem Land which did extensive and valuable work. I believe that Professor Stanner had a unit under his command when he was a major and he used Aborigines extensively in this kind of work.

Mr Speaker, I could not commend this more. As I say, the only thing in the Chief Minister's statement which I could not go along with is that blue tongue was introduced by the Vietnamese people coming in here. It was first discovered through a routine check by CSIRO in 1974 and I do not think we had the Vietnamese then. But that is beside the point. The Opposition does wholeheartedly endorse what the Chief Minister has said. I think it is an excellent idea and nobody could dispute that we are badly in need of coastal surveillance.

Mr TUXWORTH (Mines and Energy): Mr Speaker, I would like to support the comments of the Chief Minister concerning the proposed coastal surveillance operation. Although the constituents in my area are well removed from the coast, they do have a very genuine concern about the amount of traffic and the interest that is taken in our northern shores, particularly in the Gulf area. I will just mention a few incidents that happened which concerned me but did not seem to concern anyone else at the time.

When I was involved with the fisheries portfolio some two years ago, I was getting reports from fishermen working the gulf and east Arnhem Land area that foreign boats were sailing up our rivers with the tide, generally of an evening, fishing at night and heading back into the international waters during the course of the day, then waiting again and coming back up on the next tide. This information was duly conveyed to a federal committee which at the time was overseeing the matter of coastal surveillance and their response was, "Well,

it is a bit airy-fairy. Can you send us photographs and statutory declarations and the names of the boats". That was a little difficult to do. Although people in these regions do have a concern about what we might regard as an illegal intervention over our shores, they do not take it to the degree of getting photographs for the people concerned.

Another report we received was from the fishermen operating down the west coast who said they believed that foreign people who were servicing the Taiwanese fleet at the time had in fact set up a little camp on the shore and two or three guys were running a chook and pig farm on the coast. Again, it was very quickly denied by the responsible authorities but at the time I had a distinct feeling that the denial was designed rather to allay the fears of the people concerned rather than a denial of fact.

Just recently, the Chief Minister and myself were flying across the Barkly Tablelands and we were advised by a flight service unit from Katherine or Tennant Creek or Mt Isa to keep our eyes open for an unidentified aircraft that was believed to be in our area and heading south. That again was just a further instance of how much movement there is across our shores and how little we know about any of it.

Mr Speaker, I believe the great value of this proposed coast watching and surveillance operation is going to be that, for the first time probably since our country came into being, we will have some knowledge of what is going on along our northern shores. I think the reality is that we have been living in a fool's paradise for the last 20 or 30 years, believing that nothing was going on up here because it did not interest us. Now the truth is about to come out, Mr Speaker, and I believe that once this project gets under way, we will be getting reports very regularly of activity on our shores that we do not condone and that we would like to stop and that we will be able to stop because we have identified it.

Motion agreed to.

ADDRESS IN REPLY

Mr EVERINGHAM (Chief Minister): Mr Speaker, I present an address in reply to His Honour the Administrator's speech in the following terms:

May it please Your Honour, we, the Legislative Assembly of the Northern Territory of Australia, in Assembly 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.

The moving of this formal motion, Mr Speaker, marks an important milestone in the constitutional development of the Northern Territory Self-Government which came on July 1 and which was represented by a flag-raising ceremony here in Darwin and other ceremonies throughout the Territory with something in the nature of a people's celebration of self-government. This session of the Legislative Assembly is the legislature's independence celebration.

We have received His Excellency, the Governor-General, and we have heard his address. Now we have heard His Honour the Administrator's outlining of the policies of this first Territory government, administered by Territory ministers, attuned to Territory needs and arranged in Territory priorities. It is certainly a day of great pride for myself, Mr Speaker, as the member of the Legislative Assembly for the seat of Jingili which I am proud to represent and to be here as Chief Minister of the first Northern Territory gov-

ernment. We have waited a long time for the day here in the Territory when such a wide range of functions would be under our local control. We will not have control of the area of health until 1 January next year and education, which perhaps is the most important area that we will ever control as a government, will not come across to us until 1 July 1979. We are still arguing the toss with the Commonwealth about why the Territory Parks and Wildlife Commission should not control national parks such as Uluru which it has administered to the best of its ability for several years. I notice, Mr Speaker, that many prophets of doom about the Territory Parks and Wildlife Commission said one of the reasons why the Australian National Parks and Wildlife Service should administer Uluru and Kakadu was that the Commonwealth has more money to provide the sort of facilities that are needed in these national parks. What have we got from the Commonwealth for Uluru this year? From memory, I think it is \$200,000, and it was \$500,000 last year. It is going to be impossible for any substantive work to be done at all within the Uluru National Park this year with the funds provided by the Commonwealth government.

The Northern Territory government, were it to take over the administration of the Uluru National Park this year, would be more than happy to provide the approximate \$900,000 which the Territory Parks and Wildlife Commission estimates is needed this year to provide the sort of facilities that are needed to see that the environment around Ayers Rock is not damaged by tourists - facilities such as toilets, water supply, rubbish dumps and the like.

The road to self-government has not been easy. There have been many obstacles and pitfalls but we have at last attained this very important goal. I think one thing I would say about this particular government of mine, Mr Speaker, is that we are prepared to put in solid hard work to achieve our goals. Before going on on that theme, may I pay tribute to the pioneers of constitutional development.

First of all in the 1920s and even before that, there was Harold Nelson, the father of Jock Nelson, who was for many years the member for the Northern Territory. Harold Nelson went to gaol on the principle of "no taxation without representation". To Dick Ward and Tiger Brennan who, to use his own words, "fought the blinking idiots in Canberra" for so long and so well, we pay tribute - to Goff Letts, Bernie Kilgariff, Ron Withnall and many others too numerous to mention - many people, men and women of the Territory since the first world war. His Honour the Administrator has said that the creation of the Northern Territory government, responsible to the honourable members of this House as the elected representatives of the people, places a great responsibility on this Assembly. Indeed it does, but I accept this responsibility and so, I am sure, do all members of my government and all backbenchers likewise. We are pledged not to let the Northern Territory down.

The legislative program that members heard outlined this morning is extensive; it is urgent and it is all important. We have to do a lot of catching up in the legislative field and I call on the Assembly to address itself to considering wisely the bills that come before it, to debating them fully but not delaying them unduly. There is a need, as His Honour said, for the provision of basic legislative furniture in many areas in this Northern Territory. It is our task to provide the people of the Territory with this legislation as quickly as possible. There is one advantage, however, of our arriving at self-government at this late stage. It gives us the opportunity to profit from the past mistakes of others, to provide apt and timely modern legislation and to innovate on our own account. You will notice, Mr Speaker, that our legislative program contains a number of matters that come within my portfolio of Attorney-General and may I say that it gives me great pride

to stand here not only as Chief Minister of the Northern Territory but as the Northern Territory's first Attorney-General.

I will not list all these areas of legislation but they include acts in relation to law reform generally and such matters as company law, securities, industry, consumer credit, contracts, defamation and commercial arbitration. A lot of these items are cooperative legislation that we will be entering into in conjunction with the states and the Australian Capital Territory. It is very important in these days of fast transport to protect the people of the Territory from border hopping and shady dealings, and this will be done in a framework of modern social values.

Another series of bills will update and streamline the application of the laws of South Australia to the Territory. These laws still apply in many cases because they were in force when the Commonwealth accepted control of the Northern Territory from South Australia in 1911. As I said, we still need provision of a lot of legislative furniture and a great number of these laws have not yet been superseded - for instance, our partnership legislation is still the Partnership Act of South Australia, as is the Sale of Goods Act. Where they are no longer appropriate, they will be amended or replaced. The public and the legal system need consolidated and codified laws of the Territory so that our law is clear and unambiguous. His Honour the Administrator foreshadowed this morning the possibility of a codification of the Northern Territory criminal law. Whilst I certainly would not say that it is absolutely certain that our criminal law will end up in the form of a code, as it is presently found in Tasmania, Western Australia, Queensland and New Guinea, there are advantages which do commend themselves to me in having the criminal law all in one volume where it can be found readily. There are advantages, of course, of using a code because there are many cases on code provisions which can be found readily in the standard text book for criminal code states, that is Carters Criminal Law of Queensland.

My government is committed to improving facilities and amenities in this Territory. We are constantly seeking to improve the quality of life for the people of the Territory. This will help our economic base by producing a population whose lives are rooted here and who look on themselves as Territorians and no longer as former residents of Western Australia, South Australia or whatever. Our quality of life program includes assistance to sport, construction of recreational lakes in inland areas, improvement in water quality, upgrading roads and bridges to reduce flooding and isolation, and reviews of social welfare legislation. We have an agreement with the Commonwealth that we propose to rely on a great deal, and that is the agreement that the standard of services in the Northern Territory will be maintained at a level not appreciably below that enjoyed by the citizens of the standard states, Victoria and New South Wales.

We will constantly review our industries and our resources. We will promote the Territory vigorously in every possible way, seeking to broaden our economic base and make us a more viable community and thus increasing our prosperity. My colleague, the Minister for Industrial Development, will have an announcement to make during the course of this sittings in relation to the field of trade promotion which I am sure will give great pleasure to you, Mr Speaker, as a person who is particularly interested in that field and I am sure will be appreciated by all members of this House.

In difficult economic circumstances, we are looking for growth and expansion. We have the potential; we have the will to work hard and achieve the potential. As I said earlier, we are a government of hard work. We do not believe we can get anywhere in this Territory without all Territorians applying

themselves to the job and putting in their share of the hard work. Without increased productivity, Australia will languish in the doldrums. The Northern Territory will do likewise.

Since self-government, I have travelled widely throughout the Territory. I intend to continue to do so and have my ministers and the senior civil servants, the administrators, travel as frequently as possible. In this way, we will continue to remain aware of the needs and problems of the people and do everything possible to meet those needs. I have seen at first hand, as I referred earlier in my statement, the need for better communication by telephone, radio, road and air. Within the resources of the government, we are taking positive steps to meet those needs. I am arranging for the Commonwealth Minister for Post and Telecommunications to visit the Northern Territory so that he can see those needs at first hand. I have staff working on communications problems, finding ways that we can affect improvements and ways that we can better inform Commonwealth authorities of the things that are within its power to achieve. I mentioned earlier the great improvement in Territory communications that could be achieved by the use of a satellite. This may be some years away but it is certainly a long-term aim of this government to improve Territory communications by the use of satellites.

In my travels, I have seen the need for new industries. The existing pastoral industry, agriculture, mining and tourism can do with a great deal of promotion and incentive. The government is already taking steps to develop industry. You have seen the creation of the Department of Industrial Development, the establishment of the Territory Development Corporation and that corporation has already begun its task. We also owe a great deal of thanks to you personally for leading the Northern Territory's first trade delegation to Asia and part of it, of course, went to the Middle East.

I am sure this will be only the first of many such thrusts to improve our trading position. It is clear to me, and I think it would be clear to all honourable members of this House, that in many ways the economic future of the Northern Territory lies with Asia rather than with the rest of Australia. In some ways - if it is possible to speak almost without prejudice on this subject - the Northern Territory could perhaps be better served economically by being part of the federation of Malaysia than the federation of Australia.

We have also seen the needs of our Aboriginal communities. These communities are an important part of the Territory and I support the general concept of self-management for Aboriginal communities and the government will work with the Aboriginal people in achieving their aspirations. We now have the responsibility for delivering essential services to Aboriginal communities. We take that responsibility seriously. We certainly hope that the Aboriginal people will see improvements in the system by their greater contact with us at the local level.

However, the most important aspect of my travels, I believe, has been meeting the people of the Northern Territory. I have been very proud of the Territorians that I have met. Many of them live in a less than kindly environment but they almost always meet you with a cheerful smile; they give you their point of view straight from the shoulder and they invariably have a determination to succeed. If this is the sort of stuff the Northern Territory is made of, I am sure we will succeed because this government aims to keep in touch with those people in a personal way, not as distant administrators but as friends.

Finally, Mr Speaker, getting onto the nub of this debate, the presentation of a loyal address to His Honour the Administrator to convey to His Excellency

the Governor-General, then to be passed to our sovereign lady the Queen, might I say that we on this side of the House certainly are unwavering in our loyalty to the person of our Queen. I certainly would not be sure whether the same can be said of our honourable friends opposite after the opening of this Legislative Assembly last Friday.

Mr ISAACS: A point of order, Mr Speaker! I refer you to Standing Order 55 which says in part: "All imputations of improper motives and all personal reflections on members shall be considered disorderly". I suggest that the comment just made by the Chief Minister is precisely in these terms and ought to be ruled out of order.

Mr SPEAKER: The honourable Leader of the Opposition, are you objecting to an imputation of disloyalty?

Mr ISAACS: Yes.

Mr SPEAKER: In that case, I must request the honourable the Chief Minister to withdraw that imputation.

Mr EVERINGHAM: Mr Speaker, could I just ask whether an imputation of "an improper motive", I think the standing order says ...

Mr ISAACS: A point of order, Mr Speaker! I understood that you just ruled on the point of order. If the Chief Minister wishes to quarrel with it, let him move a motion of dissent.

Mr SPEAKER: I take an imputation of improper motive to cover disloyalty. I again request you to withdraw that imputation.

Mr EVERINGHAM: Mr Speaker, the red flags that we saw on the other side of Mitchell Street ...

Mr ISAACS: A point of order, Mr Speaker! Perhaps if the Chief Minister would accede to your request and withdraw it then we might be able to continue the debate. He has not withdrawn the imputation.

Mr SPEAKER: I request the honourable the Chief Minister to withdraw the imputation unreservedly.

Mr EVERINGHAM: Mr Speaker, could you tell me the imputation so that I could withdraw it.

Mr SPEAKER: The imputation was one of improper motive, namely disloyalty, against the honourable the Leader of the Opposition.

Mr EVERINGHAM: Mr Speaker, I am happy to withdraw the imputation of disloyalty against the Leader of the Opposition. I am pleased to hear that he is loyal.

Mrs O'NEIL: A point of order, Mr Speaker! I believe that the honourable the Chief Minister referred to all members of the opposition when he originally made his allegation and not just to the Leader of the Opposition.

Mr SPEAKER: I request the honourable the Chief Minister to withdraw the imputation of disloyalty.

Mr EVERINGHAM: I am pleased, Mr Speaker, to hear that all of the opposition are loyal too.

Mrs Lawrie: Just withdraw it.

Mr SPEAKER: Will the honourable the Chief Minister withdraw the imputation?

Mr EVERINGHAM: I withdraw the imputation, Mr Speaker.

It was interesting though, Mr Speaker, to see the red flags on the other side of Mitchell Street and to note that those same red flags were at the meeting which the honourable Leader of the Opposition addressed a hundred yards down the road ten minutes beforehand together with his colleague the front-bencher, Doug Everingham, the spokesman on northern Australian affairs for the opposition as well as the ALP Senator for the Northern Territory, Senator Ted Robertson. All those three prominent members of the Australian Labor Party addressed this same meeting of people who carried those same red flags a hundred yards down the road. I was booed when I arrived and that was fair enough. It actually made me rather proud to be booed by scum such as that. When the Prime Minister of Australia arrived, he was booed as well. When those sort of people groan and carry on, you know that you are on the right track. When His Excellency the Governor-General arrived and those people set up the sort of noise, interference, swearing and carrying on that they did, I was ashamed that I had any association with the people that I have mentioned just before in this debate. There were words ...

Mr ISAACS: A point of order, Mr Speaker! I am not too certain to whom the Chief Minister is referring but, if he is referring to myself, then I ask him to withdraw that. I understand the imputation to be that I was associated with the catcalling and booing of the Governor-General as was Dr Everingham and Senator Robertson. If that is not the imputation, then I would ask the Chief Minister to say so. If it is the imputation, I request his withdrawal of it in the same terms as I requested beforehand.

Mr SPEAKER: There is no point of order.

Mr EVERINGHAM: There were words that came from those people that would really curl your hair. Can I quote some words which I understand an ABC reporter managed to get onto tape from one of the demonstrators over round the red flag. This was whilst His Excellency the Governor-General was inspecting the guard of honour and eggs were being thrown by those yobs at the Governor-General and the servicemen who were standing there stiffly on parade under instructions to hold fast and wishing probably with every fibre of their being to turn round and hoe into those cowardly demonstrators who threw eggs at them. These are the words that came from the crowd to the Governor-General: "You little mongrel Jew bastard" and "Why don't you get your foreskin cut off?" Those are the sort of people who were demonstrating here in front of this Assembly last Friday. They are the same people that the Leader of the Opposition spoke to only minutes beforehand. I think it is time that some of the hypocrisy and cant went out of politics and we just heard the frank views of the opposition when they spoke in this address in reply debate.

Mr ISAACS: Mr Speaker, I second the motion of which we may have lost track and seek leave to continue my remarks at a later hour.

Mrs LAWRIE (Nightcliff): Mr Speaker, I want to rise to speak to the address in reply because I may not have the opportunity next week. I take great exception to what I believe were imputations in the closing remarks of the honourable Chief Minister. The honourable Chief Minister used words in this Assembly which bring no credit to the Assembly even if he says that he was merely reflecting other people's views. He called certain citizens of

the Territory "scum" and "yobs". I do not think that he did his service proud at all in using those dreadful terms and I think he disgraced the Assembly in using them in that way.

The Chief Minister went on to talk of a remark apparently passed to the Governor-General "You little mongrel Jew bastard". Mr Speaker, may I say that remarks such as that are not the prerogative of any particular party or any particular section of the community. In fact, I have had similar remarks addressed to me, which I chose to ignore, by the most conservative elements of this community. I do not say that the Country Liberal Party for a moment subscribes to those views or the issuing of those remarks. One member of the party may say such a stupid thing. I did not get upset about it at the time. I am upset at the tone of this debate though. To say that a particular party or a group of people are all to be damned because of one fool's outburst ...

Mr Robertson: Weren't you there.

Mrs LAWRIE: ... does the Chief Minister little credit, Mr Speaker.

The Manager of Government Business is constantly interjecting as he is wont to do. Yes, I was there. I was there with probably more right than he was. He may be a minister at the moment but I have served longer in this parliament and I am a loyal subject of Her Majesty. I know that there are many loyal citizens of Australia who are not necessarily monarchists. There are many loyal citizens of this country, professors amongst them, who lean towards republicanism. We don't lock them up. Perhaps the Chief Minister would like to or his Manager of Government Business would like to but we recognise so far in this country that people have the right to hold these views and, within reasonable bounds, to express them.

Mr Speaker, not for one moment would I say that all people attending the guard of honour the other day behaved within perfectly reasonable grounds. However, many of them were under some provocation, weren't they? They were being addressed by a Prime Minister of Australia for whom many people have lost respect. I am not talking about the Governor-General at the moment. The Prime Minister, however, paid this house the courtesy in coming here for that official opening. Whether I like his policies or not, it is incumbent upon me to express courtesy towards him in recognition of the fact that he is the present Prime Minister of this country, like it or not. Other people were more vociferous and under provocation. It was the right of those citizens within reason to express their displeasure with that man or with me or with any of us. It is totally expected at a political opening that people will express political views. If it had been Gough Whitlam there, you would have had a crowd saying, "You big fool, down with you Gough!" Anybody who puts himself into public office can expect that kind of treatment. It is not necessarily disloyal, but it is very democratic. It is only when we get the odd, unfortunate person that it gives a ready-made platform for the ultra-conservatives in our society to say, "Ban them, garotte them, kill them. They must be all bad". That is rot. No group or class of people is all bad, whether they be communist or even Country Liberal Party. There is good and bad in all groups.

I am furious, Mr Speaker, that the honourable Chief Minister, because of the stupid actions of a couple of individuals, should try to cast a slur on the hundreds of people who exercised their right in being there. The honourable member on my right - it is a funny position for him to be, I suppose - the member for Arnhem says they did it in a perfectly restrained way. The vast majority of them did indeed. There were flimsy barricades, a few policemen and no great problems.

Mr Robertson: Booring and hissing the national anthem.

Mrs LAWRIE: Again interjections from the Manager of Government Business. This is setting a very poor example to the House. He is talking about booring and hissing of the national anthem. Mr Speaker, some people boored and hissed. There were other people there who remained silent and who were obviously less than happy with the Prime Minister. This calm assumption that everybody who exercised his legitimate right to be there is somehow disloyal, somewhat a lesser citizen, has to be nipped in the bud.

I spoke a moment ago of my pleasure at the Prime Minister being here in the exercise of his office as Prime Minister. Let us look at a few of the other people who came and did a disservice to this Assembly. The Prime Minister of Queensland - the Premier, I'm sorry; a Freudian slip - whilst this Assembly was engaged in its official functions and whilst we had groups of people here as our invited guests, without any permission to my knowledge, called a personal press conference in the members' commonroom in the precincts of this Assembly. Mr Speaker, I don't believe that that was proper. You will notice that I am using slightly less emotive language when I describe these acts than that used by the Chief Minister. I feel that it was wrong, improper and an insult to this Assembly for the Premier of Queensland to have behaved in that way. We have heard nothing about it. Is it because he is the leader of the National Party in Queensland and the Country Liberal Party here is affiliated with the National Country Party in Canberra, not with the Liberal Party?

If we are going to start apportioning blame as to the actions of people who should have known better, let us mention a few others. The honourable Chief Minister said it is time to get rid of the hypocrisy and cant in debate and get down to basics. I think he should put his own house in order before he so calmly imputes hypocrisy and cant to all members on this side of the House who may or may not be at opposition on all issues. As I said when I opened, stupid remarks, anti-semitic remarks, disloyal remarks are not the prerogative of any particular party. Unfortunately, they are right across the spectrum of Australian society. The vast majority of us know there are a few odd nuts and we ignore them. That is what should happen to them.

Mr Speaker, the address which His Honour the Administrator gave this morning and to which I am honoured to reply mentioned a couple of interesting points. One of them is the possibility of codification of the criminal law in the Northern Territory. I was rather surprised to find the Chief Minister attracted to codification. I would ask him - and he and some of his cabinet colleagues have done this in the past - if it is his intention to go ahead with codification, to ensure that the greatest time possible can be given to all honourable members of this House to discuss the bill. I would ask that draft proposals be circulated, not necessarily for public use if the Chief Minister wished them kept more privately, but at least to all members of this Assembly because it is a very complex area and one which has excited the attention of the best lawyers in this country.

There was also a mention of land acquisition. We saw a bill introduced before the proroguing of this Assembly which was subsequently withdrawn. We are apparently to have legislation more in line with the recommendations of the Australian Law Reform Commission. Again, this will need the most careful review as it is something which touches the hearts and minds of all citizens, particularly in the Northern Territory which has a most unfortunate and unhappy history when it comes to land matters.

He also spoke of the consolidation of the national park and wildlife service, fisheries and land conservation into a general conservation commission - that would be one of the most exciting proposals of which we have heard and one that 80% of the people of the Northern Territory would have an interest in. Unfortunately, they may not necessarily express that interest; it is very difficult to get people to comment on legislation.

I thank His Honour for the way in which he clearly and concisely outlined the government's program. Until we see the actual bills before us, it is difficult to say whether the proposed legislation will be for the better or for the worse. I shall leave precise comments on the proposed legislation until such time as the bills come forward.

I wish to finish my remarks by saying that I am deeply distressed at the tenor of the remarks of the Chief Minister. I think they were most unfortunate and should never have been made.

Mr COLLINS: I am not rising to speak on the address in reply but to ask you a question for my information. Is it correct that the address in reply and all the remarks made in the address in reply will be sent to the Governor-General after Hansard has completed its work of compiling it.

Mr SPEAKER: That is so and I intend to have the direct references deleted by Hansard.

Debate adjourned.

ADJOURNMENT

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

In moving the adjournment, I would just like to say that I welcome the two members of the inquiry into the welfare needs of the Northern Territory. As circulated to honourable members of the House, these gentlemen will be available - that is Mr Brian Martin, chairman, Mr Keith Maine and the Director of Welfare Services in the state of Western Australia will be available for honourable members to meet with informally in the commonroom, provided some premier does not come along and interrupt and have us thrown out. Incidentally, if that did happen, I am somewhat distressed about it myself. Mr Martin and Mr Maine will be available to honourable members in the commonroom at the rising of the House which I would imagine will be in some 15 to 20 minutes time.

Mr HARRIS (Port Darwin): It seems to be a day where people are going to be ashamed of certain things but I would like to relate specifically something that has happened in my electorate over the past week.

First of all, we had an incident which made me feel ashamed of Darwin itself because of all the rubbish building up in bins and in the parks. Then we had the situation at the opening ceremony and yesterday we had the painting of graffiti on public buildings and a monument in the city of Darwin.

I want to speak today on the writing of that graffiti on those two particular buildings - the Post Office and the pedestal of the John McDouall Stuart memorial. To me this is scandalous. The visitors who come to our city see this type of thing going on and wonder what is happening in Darwin. I know it only involves a few people but our children also see these things and often reflect what is happening to the adults in our community. The cost to remove

these particular writings off the wall is quite considerable. This will be borne by us; it will be borne by the public. The same stupidity has happened before in relation to the East Timor affair. Most of these actions are carried out during the early hours of the morning because, I feel sure, the public would not allow such happenings to take place during the day.

Society has chosen to relax certain laws to come into line with the modern way of life. I think it is necessary for us to look quite seriously at bringing back police patrols if this is to continue. I do not deny people the right to protest; it is the manner in which that protest takes place that I am concerned about. I feel these types of protests do nothing for their cause and in fact go against their cause. Why should the majority of people be subjected to the stupidity of so few?

Mr COLLINS (Arnhem): Rising in the adjournment this afternoon, I would just like to refer briefly to an article which appeared in the Northern Territory News on Monday 11 September. The article which, I trust, correctly reported the Chief Minister's address to Territorians on Sunday started off by making the allegation that the ALP imported southern stirrers for Friday's demonstration against the Prime Minister, Mr Fraser. I would like to assure the honourable Chief Minister that at the moment the ALP could not send me on a ferry trip to Mandorah, let alone pay \$400 a head to bring southern stirrers to Darwin. I was rather amused to see that in print. The Chief Minister obviously thinks we are far more financial than we are.

However, the remark that really incensed me was the Chief Minister's reference to the people who attended the demonstration as "scum". Mr Speaker, I have the advantage of the Chief Minister; I was at the demonstration against the budget which was held in the park myself, as a member of a rather large crowd of rather conservative people - a great many of them were simply public servants having their lunch - who had come over to listen to the speeches that were made. I listened to both Dr Doug Everingham and the Leader of the Opposition. It was probably one of the most restrained gatherings of people that I have seen in Darwin for quite a long time to protest about something as atrocious as the budget. Both speakers were listened to in complete silence. Although I was standing at the back of the crowd, I was able to hear every word clearly. There were no suggestions in either person's speech that would have suggested any untoward action by the people there. The majority of the people who were at that meeting were in fact the ordinary working men and women of the Northern Territory. I am very definitely working class myself, and not ashamed of it. On behalf of the other working class men and women that comprised, for the information of the Chief Minister, the vast majority of the people who were at that budget demonstration, I protest intensely at being referred to as "scum" by the Chief Minister, as I am sure most of the people at that demonstration would protest.

The Chief Minister went on to say that he did not like to think they were in fact Territorians. Let me assure the Chief Minister, and again I have the advantage of him in actually being there myself, they were in fact mostly Territorians. Perhaps if he had gone through them selectively and screened them all, as he seems to want to do with people, there would have been one or two he would have weeded out and transported out to Leanyah dump or whatever other plans he has for people like that, but the majority of the people there were just ordinary men and women of the Northern Territory.

The Chief Minister went on to make a categorical statement that they were southern stirrers who came up here to cause what trouble they could. He then went on to say that the ALP had a predetermined plan that they had made long

before the Fraser budget was introduced to set up just this sort of civil disorder. There are two features I would like to clear up for the sake of this House. I would not describe myself as a heavy within the ALP by any chance - only physically - but, I am privy to most of what goes on in the ALP and I can assure you that there was no predetermined plan of any sort to set up civil disobedience.

Mrs Lawrie: Hear, hear!

Mr COLLINS: The other feature I would like to refer to, Mr Speaker, is the very term "civil disobedience". I refer to the remarks made by the honourable member for Nightcliff. I personally did not hear the remarks referred to by the Chief Minister and I join him heartedly in condemning them. I am certainly disgusted at any sort of blatant racism such as was expressed in those remarks and I condemn the idiot who uttered them. To link a person like that with the Northern Territory Australian Labor Party is a disgraceful interpretation by the Chief Minister. We certainly had nothing whatever to do with it.

As far as speech is concerned, the Chief Minister himself has been responsible for uttering some of the most unfortunate remarks about people I have personally heard in this Chamber. I was present in this House when the honourable Chief Minister referred to the honourable Leader of the Opposition as a "political harlot" and I would consider that to be most intemperate language to use within this Chamber. He went on to describe the honourable Leader of the Opposition as a "poltroon". He has since described him as a "political huckster" - a "political harlot", a "poltroon", a "huckster". The Chief Minister seems to be making a rather tiresome habit of scraping the barrel for personal remarks to fling at this side of the House. The Chief Minister then went on to say that the honourable Leader of the Opposition came up here on a union ticket to see what he could get out of the place.

Mr Speaker, I personally am appalled that the chief executive member of this new government could stoop to using such insensitive language towards another member of this House. I have recently been corrected by another member on the opposite side and accused of gross discourtesy for arranging for a group of Aboriginal school children to come into the House and sit in the public gallery to listen to question time - and arrangement which was made, Mr Speaker, in a totally amicable way personally between the headmasters of the two schools involved. Because I had neglected to mention it to the honourable Treasurer, because it never occurred to me to do so, I was accused of the greatest discourtesy to another member of the Legislative Assembly. Mr Speaker, with the greatest tolerance possible extended to the other side of the House, I would suggest when the leader of the other side of the House and the chief executive of this state refers to the honourable Leader of the Opposition as a "political harlot", a "poltroon", a "political huckster" and a man who came up here on a union ticket to see what he could get out of the place, the complaints that are being made against me by the honourable Treasurer pale into insignificance.

From the remarks I have heard, this paper refers to people ringing up the Northern Territory News and complaining about the demonstration. I join those people wholeheartedly in condemning the words of that person against the Governor-General but there is one thing I want to make very clear: the barricades that were across the road were the flimsiest possible. There were a handful of policemen walking up and down in front of those barricades but no one attempted to perform any act of what I would call civil disobedience. If it is civil disobedience in this country to express

your disgust at a budget which imposes extra income tax on the working man from the same government that decided that profits from uranium mining were not going to have a resource tax applied to them, if that is civil disobedience, then this country has come to a sad end.

Certainly, if you refer to the remarks made in this House earlier by the Treasurer of the Northern Territory government when he commended the strong-arm division of a Sydney police squad and said we should have more of them, and you link that with the sentiments of the Chief Minister, then I would suggest that citizens of the Northern Territory are in for a very hard time indeed.

As far as I am concerned, leaving aside those disgraceful remarks - and I condemn the Chief Minister for including them in a debate on the address in reply - leaving those unfortunate remarks aside, I consider that what happened was one of the healthiest signs that we live in a democracy: when people can speak out, when they have the right of assemblage, when they have the right of free speech and when they can speak out and do so without fear of being arrested by the police. I commend the police; they behaved in the most commendable way on that day, not a single arrest was made and none was necessary. Both sides recognised that. The police were not heavy and nobody else was either. That is a healthy sign that democracy is working in this country and I condemn the Chief Minister for his referring to those people as "scum". For the one or two idiots who made those disgraceful remarks against the Governor-General and booed and hissed when the national anthem was played, certainly I would condemn them as being people who should not have been here. However, to lump in the 500 people who went to a completely orderly demonstration against a disgraceful budget and against certainly the most disgraceful Prime Minister and the most insensitive Prime Minister that this country has ever had, to condemn them is an attack on the democracy that exists in this country and the freedom of speech and the freedom of assemblage, and I condemn the Chief Minister for it.

Mr DONDAS (Casuarina): Mr Speaker, I will start my adjournment speech this afternoon on a different subject. There has been enough about demonstrations, although I might finish up on it.

I would like to bring to this Assembly's attention what I consider the corporation's blatant waste of taxpayers' money. There appeared in yesterday's paper an advertisement to change the Town Plan of Darwin, lot no. 4084, for a temporary period of twelve months to allow the Corporation of the City of Darwin to put a demountable out at Casuarina shopping centre for a citizen's advisory bureau. Whilst I think it might be a good idea to have a citizen's advisory bureau in the northern suburbs, especially in my electorate, the method by which the Corporation of the City of Darwin is attacking this particular situation is quite wrong. They have put an application in to amend the lease; they have permission from the Casuarina shopping centre to put a demountable there but the worst part of it is that the demountable can only be there until 28 March 1979 when stage 2 of the Casuarina shopping centre opens. We are now in the middle of September. In another 28 days time, when the town planner hears the objections if there are any, we will be in the middle of October. By the time they move the demountable onto the site, have electricity connected, have telephones connected, we will probably be looking at the end of November. For a vast sum of money, many thousands of dollars, the corporation is putting an advisory bureau out there for December when everybody leaves town on holidays, January when everybody is still away on holidays and February when everybody is just getting their kids back to school.

I do not know how much this particular exercise is going to cost the ratepayer. In my own personal opinion, the ratepayer does not get enough for his money now. We have two garbage collections a week and that's about all we do get. You ring up to complain about a park in your electorate that has been neglected. "We are sorry, it is not our responsibility; it has not been handed over". I have been hearing that about Tiwi for three years and longer. The poor old forestry unit will still have to look after it because it has not been handed over. It is still a park. The Corporation of the City of Darwin is giving away other parks that have been handed over. It does not want the responsibility for them.

The Alawa ovals have been given to the hockey association. I know the honourable member for Nightcliff is very involved with the hockey team but that is not the point. The point that I am trying to make is that they have given 4% of my electorate to a private organisation, to one sporting organisation. In that area, we have hardly any parks and the little park that we do have across the road from the Alawa shopping centre has not had a sprinkler on it in seven years.

They want to spend \$8,000 or \$9,000 to put in a citizens' advisory bureau at the Casuarina shopping centre so our people can find out what is happening within the corporation. We have elected representatives of this place within that area and we have six members of the council living in that area too. If they have a problem, most people will either go to their alderman or they will go to their member of the Legislative Assembly or they will go to the newspapers. They have somewhere to go. It was different after the cyclone when the Darwin Reconstruction Commission set up an office out in that area. It was a much-called-for thing because people were walking around this town not knowing where to go and not knowing where to get information. In 1978, four years later, I am wondering what exercise the Corporation of the City of Darwin has in mind to put in a public relations organisation out there. It must have staff, and the staff must be paid; it must have telephones and you must pay for the telephone service. As I said, it comes back to the poor old ratepayer who is getting nothing of value for his money at the moment.

I commend the management of the Casuarina shopping centre for at least agreeing to allow the land to be used for one year. However, these negotiations have been going on for six months. All of a sudden, we see the ads in the paper now. I really do not know.

I will briefly get into another area that concerns me - the Tracy Village complex. As most members are aware, the Tracy Village complex was built by the Darwin Reconstruction Commission after the cyclone to house building contractors and workers. The land belonged to the Defence Department which loaned it to the DRC for a period of five years. The DRC presumably made an error and spent too much money out there, much to the disgust of the Defence Department. My particular complaint concerns the Tracy Village complex itself.

The Tracy Village Social Club was set up by the Darwin Reconstruction Commission using taxpayers' money - beautiful bars, beautiful furnishings, beautiful everything. We paid for it in the long run and today I have found that a manager of the Tracy Village Social Club has done a bolt with \$35,000 owing. Not only has he bolted with the cash, there are also creditors all over the place. I will mention his name in this House. It is John Quinn. I believe that some investigations are being carried out at the moment.

The question now is that the Defence Department is arguing with the Housing Commission which wants a piece of the land for some further development.

They are also having some discussions with the Corporation of the City of Darwin who want to take over the core unit. What I am asking, and unfortunately the Minister for Community Development is not within these chambers at the moment, is for a full-scale inquiry into the operation of the Tracy Village Social Club. The treasurer said it would be very expensive. I don't know; there are many cheap ways of having an inquiry. It is a matter of calling in the committee, asking them what the financial situation is, and perhaps getting a few police reports. Something should be done.

There is \$1.25m worth of buildings out there for which nobody is getting anything. The YMCA are allowed to use certain quarters out there and they are doing a very good job. There is a doctor situated out there and also a bookmaker still out there. There are several good community things in operation out there, and it is a pity that this Tracy Village Social Club has met the fate that it has. I think the main reason why it has met such a fate is because of bad management both through the Corporation of the City of Darwin and through Administrative Services.

Everybody has had a few words to say regarding the demonstration. When you look around the town, you see poor old Mr Stuart standing there in Rain-tree Park daubed with graffiti, the Post Office daubed with graffiti and a car at City Motors has "Ban Uranium" on the front bonnet - a car in a used car yard! Where is it going to finish? What are we going to do? Perhaps in the near future, we will have a look at control through legislation. If anybody wants to paint a sign on the Assembly, as was done not so long ago, throw them in the clink for six months or twelve months and see how quickly they get around with a paint brush after that. Perhaps it is time to go back to the Russian days. I don't know; bring out the long sword and chop their heads off or something. Anyway, it is costing us money. It will take some poor bloke a week to get that off the post office.

Mr Collins: It is already illegal to do it, Nick.

Mr DONDAS: It is illegal but perhaps we should hit them a bit harder. We talk about litter fines and everyone gets up in arms when people throw things off the back of trucks or they "fall" out of cars. Why shouldn't we be indignant and have some penalty that will stop the graffiti artist. We are not living in America; we are in Australia. America is the home of graffiti. Let us start thinking seriously about trying to curb it.

In relation to the demonstration, I only want to make one very small comment.

Mr SPEAKER: The honourable member for Casuarina will remember Standing Order 53: "No member shall allude to any debate at the same session unless such allusion be relevant to the matter under discussion".

Mr DONDAS: In that case, all I will say, is that I did read in the paper yesterday that a lady who had been an ALP supporter for 27 years has said that she will never vote for the ALP again because of what happened here last Friday.

Mrs LAWRIE (Nightcliff): Mr Speaker, I thought that letter was going to end up "Disgusted" from somewhere. Most of those letters that are signed "Disgusted" are written in the editor's office. I am always fascinated by the letters which say, "I have been an X supporter for 30 years but never again" - and then they do not sign their name. That is a strange conflict in my view. Until the honourable member for Casuarina started about the graffiti, which

is an Italian word, not American, I was going to invite him to take his seat on this side of the Chamber. He seemed to be espousing so many causes for the betterment of the people.

For example, he said parks are for the people. That is a charming phrase and one in which I believe and I am delighted that a member for the government party shares my view. I fought a rather rearguard action a couple of years ago when, alone it seemed, I was trying to stop the Corporation of the City of Darwin handing over all the public parks to various private and vested interests. It is still on, Mr Speaker. The Corporation of the City of Darwin claims that it cannot meet the maintenance and water charges on these public parks and therefore shall unload them onto some sporting body or other. They forget that those parks are vested in the corporation as trustees of the people of Darwin and they are public parks. On certain occasions, parks such as the Gardens Oval can be leased during the football season and an admission charge levied. No one can complain about that. What the public do care about is that, when there is not a football match, the kids can fly their kites, they can go for a run, they can practise hockey or any of the many sports that abound in Darwin without fear of some adult coming up and saying, "Listen sonny, this belongs to such and such sporting club, move off". We do have to safeguard the interests of the public when it comes to public recreation areas. I am delighted that I have a comrade in this - the honourable member for Casuarina. Moves are still very definitely afoot to filch from the public their recreation areas.

The honourable member for Casuarina took to task various members of his Cabinet. He was displeased that the Treasurer will not have enough money for the inquiry which is to be handled by the Minister for Social Development. I thought it would have been handled by the Chief Minister, having a regard to his portfolio of Attorney-General and Law.

Mr Collins: Off with his head.

Mrs LAWRIE: I must say concerning the member for Casuarina's remarks about going back to the days of Russia, striking off the heads of people who deface public buildings and private property that, whilst I do not agree we should go back to those days, I acknowledge we have legislation already which makes this an offence. It has to be said again that, if there is an imputation in this regard, it has to be made quite clear that the members of the conservation movement are equally appalled.

There are many people in Darwin who have fought long and hard for the preservation of national parks, for the declaration of national parks let alone their preservation. There are people such as the ex-majority leader, presently chairman of the committee of inquiry into feral animals, who must be regarded as a strong conservationist - these people would not welcome the thought being bruited abroad that they were responsible for the senseless and stupid acts of vandalism, the spraying of public and private property with slogans which can only work against the cause they are supposed to be espousing. I do not believe the people who have been working so hard for the declaration of our parks and the people who have a conscience, which makes them work against the production of uranium mining, would be the people to senselessly and wantonly deface Darwin or any other public place. Mr Speaker, I want that on the record and to be understood quite clearly. Again, let us not for one minute assume that a class of people is responsible for the irresponsible actions of a couple of extremists.

Mrs O'NEIL (Fannie Bay): Mr Speaker, there has been much talk this afternoon about things said and done in the last few days in Darwin that perhaps should not have been said and done, certainly not by members of the Legislative Assembly inside or outside the Chamber, but I think we can be proud that at least some of our members have spent a slightly more constructive weekend.

The honourable member for Port Darwin referred earlier to rubbish lying around our parks and streets for the last few weeks as a result of a serious industrial dispute between the Corporation of the City of Darwin and the staff of that corporation. I happen to know the honourable Leader of the Opposition spent many hours of his time voluntarily on the weekend, at the invitation of the various parties to the dispute and, as a result substantially of his efforts, I understand the dispute has now been solved. The people are now back at work and our streets and parks will be cleaned again. I think we should all be proud that we have, as one of our members, a person who can constructively work in a voluntary capacity for the betterment of our community.

Mrs PADGHAM-PURICH (Tiwi): Mr Speaker, other speakers before me have spoken about the demonstration that occurred outside the Assembly on Friday. I would like to speak about a certain section of the community that I saw near this demonstration on Friday. I have lived in Darwin for a few years and I have never seen a sadder day than I saw on Friday when these demonstrators upset for most of the people there what should have been a very happy and historic occasion. I know these demonstrations go on down south from what one sees and reads ad nauseum on the radio, on TV and in newspapers, but it was my first experience first-hand with one of them. Standing out the front of the Chamber, we saw everything that went on. I did not see these demonstrators waving any Australian flags; I did not see them waving any Northern Territory flags. What I did see were a few Eureka Stockade flags and I saw a lot of red flags. I would like somebody to tell me the significance of why these red flags were being waved.

Ms D'Rozario: Workers' flags.

Mrs PADGHAM-PURICH: Well, I wondered. I wondered if they were red to catch the eye so that one's eye was diverted to the placards which were a disgrace to any educational system, if one could read them. I wondered if they were red for the colour of blood they hope to have flowing in the streets - being very melodramatic. I wondered if they were red for danger and they wanted the other people to keep well clear of the red flags. This is what one usually has red flags for on the back of vehicles. I wondered if they were the red flag of a foreign country with some insignia left off. In all this ugliness and unpleasantness, one section of the community was completely forgotten and I consider this section of the community was victimised by these demonstrators.

Mrs Lawrie: Stray dogs.

Mrs PADGHAM-PURICH: No, not dogs this time. I refer to the little children who came along with their parents to see this happy, historic occasion. When I was a child, some many years ago, I remember being taken along on occasions like this with my parents or my grand-parents and I waved a flag in peace. I had my rights as a child to do what I wanted to do without harming anybody. This small section of the community could not be very vocal on Friday, certainly not in that situation. They had about 40, maybe 50, feet of effective space where they could view the situation because no parents in their right mind would take small children where they thought there was going to be trouble, where those demonstrators were.

Next year is International Children's year. I wonder if these demonstrators are going to demonstrate for the children next year, like they seem to be demonstrating for certain things this year. Are they going to make sure that these children have their Australian rights to be in a public place, minding their own business doing no harm to anyone? I wonder.

Mr DOOLAN (Victoria River): Mr Speaker, I rise to talk about the unemployment situation on Aboriginal settlements and missions. In particular, I refer to the mission at Port Keats. I spent a week or more down there recently and I did a survey of the situation. The figures available were only for 30 June this year. I have a whole mass of figures here but I will be as brief as possible.

On the total unemployment rate for adults over 16, and not including those on age and invalid pensions, the percentages I worked out are 47.58%. Adult males over 16 total 227. The population of the settlement is 1,042. Adult males over 16 - employed were 119, unemployed 108, jobs available nil. There are 238 females over 16 - employed 130, unemployed 108, jobs available nil. The number of males on unemployment benefits is nil. Not one. The number of females on unemployment benefits - none. In fact, of a total workforce of 465 people over 16 years, there is nobody on unemployment benefits. Amongst the adult males over 16, there are 30 on invalid and age pensions, and 26 females. There are also 46 supporting mothers on pensions. The overall total of people on social service benefits, those on age and invalid pensions and supporting mothers is 102. The total population is 1,042. Out of those 460 adults - that is people over 16 years of age - there are 238 employed, 216 unemployed, jobs available nil, on unemployment benefits nil. So much for all those lazy, indolent, bludging Aboriginals lying under trees, living on the fat of the land.

Mr Speaker, it seems the general public cannot or will not be convinced that the majority of Aboriginals in the Northern Territory are not dole bludgers. The idea is fostered by a certain section of the public because of their racist feelings. I think, for an example, we could look at Mr Jakeman, despite his claims that he is not a racist. There is conclusive proof there is nobody - but nobody - on unemployment benefits at Port Keats, and I assure you that Port Keats is not unique.

The position since 30 June this year has worsened; there are fewer people employed, considerably fewer than at the end of June and further cuts are expected. There is no CDEP scheme in operation at Port Keats and my understanding is that DAA does not intend to implement any such further schemes. I have very detailed reports on this, if anyone cares to have a look at them. I went to some trouble and effort to work them out and if somebody can find a flaw in there, I will be surprised.

Recently, there was a letter to the NT News concerning the subject and a little part of it says, "The statement that Aborigines have easy money available to them is an emotional statement. The only benefit Aborigines receive in monetary terms which white Australians are not entitled to is the Aboriginal Secondary Grant. Other than this, Aborigines receive exactly the same monetary benefits, like social security bonus, as every other Australian". I have just demonstrated it at Port Keats and that is not the only place; they do not even apply for unemployment benefits.

This letter was in answer to Mr Joe Fisher and I think most people will agree, if we can judge by his articles in the NT News, he is bordering on the paranoid whenever Aboriginals are mentioned. Personally, I have never agreed with the Aboriginal Secondary School or ABSEC scheme as it is called.

I have felt that it should have been an across-the-board payment to all secondary school children and, if it is confined to people of Aboriginal extraction, I have always thought there should be a means test on it.

Nevertheless, what Mr Haynes - the letter was written by a Mr Barry Haynes - said is perfectly true and apart from the secondary school grant which he mentions, Aborigines receive exactly the same monetary benefits, like social security payments, as every other Australian. I suppose there are those Australians, and there are many of them around, who do not really feel that Aborigines are people and consider this to be totally unfair. However, I believe that to any reasonable person the figures I have read in relation to unemployment at just one Aboriginal community are fairly conclusive and I would assure the House that the situation at Port Keats is, as I said, not unique. Surely, with our new state-like set-up, we can do something to alleviate this situation and look at it as a matter of urgency. The employment rate up here for Europeans is dreadful and I could not describe what it is like on settlements.

I believe the matter of the Chief Minister's extraordinary outburst in the media has been more than adequately covered by the honourable member for Nightcliff and the honourable member for Arnhem but there is another recent example of his inimitable style. In a bold statement following the meeting of Aboriginal people from 13 different coastal centres at Elcho Island - a meeting which, incidentally, he did not bother to attend and did not delegate any other minister to attend; he did send along two public servants to represent him and thereby disappointed the people extremely - he said, "It is time Mr Isaacs and the Opposition Party stood up to be counted on this issue when referring to Aboriginal control of access to Northern Territory waters".

Mr Speaker, I am standing up to be counted on this issue and I am certain my colleagues would be happy to do the same. The ALP policy has been published and is available for the general public's perusal. They can read it any time they like. What we say is that waters adjacent to existing Aboriginal reserves should be closed to the extent of two kilometres off shore and I stress "existing" Aboriginal reserves. That has been our policy for the last two years. We have made no secret of it; we have published it. Why in the hell say stand up and be counted and say what we want? We have said that we want the waters closed to the extent of two kilometres off existing reserves. That's it.

The Chief Minister is certainly running up a remarkable track record for a lawyer with his wild and stupid statements to the press, a writ for libel from the receiver of Scott Creek-Willeroo, a threatened writ from the Attorney-General of South Australia and New South Wales and he had to retract a false statement made in Perth and an unwarranted attack on the Leader of the Opposition's integrity. As I said, I think enough has been said about that. Not very long ago the Chief Minister was extolling the virtues of one Harold Nelson. I wonder what Harold Nelson would have done if he had been here on Friday? He would have been in the vanguard of the demonstrators. He would have been yelling his head off - I don't know if he would have been waving the red flag but by cripes he would have been in the demonstration itself. You may recall that Harold Nelson was instrumental in giving Administrator Gilruth and Secretary Carey the "bums rush" out of Darwin and out of the Northern Territory. I am certain his son, Jock Nelson, would have done likewise. A former Administrator himself but always a good Labor man, I am sure Jock would have been in the vanguard of the demonstrators and I am sure he would have been big enough not to be worried about someone like the Chief

Minister referring to him as "scum". But of all people to pick on to extol his virtues, Harold Nelson - he wants to do his homework.

I saw an extraordinary exhibition myself in front of the Legislative Assembly on Friday. It happened to be the dramatic entrance of Joh Bjelke-Petersen. The member for Arnhem was on one side and the Commissioner of Police on the other, and the Premier of Queensland sneaked in like a frightened rabbit around the door. He was pale, looking for demonstrators. He put his hand over his face, doubled up and sneaked like a mongrel dog across the back of the seats. . .

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The words "mongrel dog" are unparliamentary and I request you to withdraw them.

Mr DOOLAN: I did not call him a "mongrel dog". I said he sneaked like a mongrel dog.

Mr SPEAKER: I request you to withdraw the reference.

Mr DOOLAN: I withdraw that.

It was terrible; he sneaked over to the chair, hid his face and dropped his head down low behind somebody else.

Anyway, one of the high points of my day was when I was introduced to the Governor-General in the members' bar. When the premier extended his hand, I took a great deal of delight in side-stepping him.

Mr STEELE (Ludmilla): The difficulty I have this afternoon is that there are just not enough members in the House. When you really want to get out of the House and get away from the place, you are forced to stay here by virtue of numbers. It is an extremely difficult proposition to have to contend with every time that you are in this Assembly, particularly if you do not want to listen to someone whom you have sat here and listened to ranting and raving for 12 months and he really bores you to tears. You find that you have to stay here by virtue of your position as a representative of an electorate of the Northern Territory.

The only person that I would like to tip a little bit of a bucket on today - I hope that style of language won't be as offensive as perhaps that person might perhaps like to put it into print at some later time but it is the working man's style - the person I would like to tip a bucket on today is the honourable member for Arnhem who, with three more lessons, would get his acting diploma. I have sat here for a year now and not made a speech in the adjournment. I think the honourable member for Stuart Park is probably the only one who might have missed out on an adjournment speech - no he had one. I have had to put up with this pontificating and raving that goes on every adjournment and I feel like being sick.

Motion agreed to; the Assembly adjourned.

Wednesday 13 September 1978

Mr Speaker MacFarlane took the Chair at 10 am.

PETITION

Electricity rebates for pensioners

Mrs O'NEIL (Fannie Bay): I present a petition from 175 citizens of the Northern Territory requesting the introduction of a rebate scheme to low income pensioners thus reducing the cost of electricity supplied to the dwellings of those people concerned. The petition bears the Clerk's certificate that it conforms with the requirements of Standing Orders. I move that the petition be received and read.

Motion agreed to; petition received and read.

To 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 pensioners on low fixed incomes are unable to meet the same electricity charges as salaried consumers. Your petitioners therefore humbly pray that this Assembly supports the introduction of a rebate scheme thereby reducing the cost of electricity supplied to the dwellings of Northern Territory pensioners, and your petitioners as in duty bound will ever pray.

NOTICE OF CENSURE MOTION

Mr ISAACS (Opposition Leader): Mr Speaker, I give notice that on the next sitting day I will move that this Assembly censure the government over its handling of the proposed Willeroo-Scott Creek purchase and call on the Minister for Industrial Development to resign for misleading the Assembly.

Mr ROBERTSON (Manager of Government Business): Mr Speaker, the government acknowledges the notice of a motion of censure against it and asks you to seek the will of the House as to whether or not this motion should be brought on forthwith in accordance with parliamentary practice.

Mr SPEAKER: Is it the will of the House that this motion be now taken?

Leave granted.

CENSURE OF GOVERNMENT - WILLEROO PROJECT

Mr ISAACS (Opposition Leader): Mr Speaker, I move the censure motion outlined to the Assembly a few moments ago.

The opposition does not take this course lightly but in the event of circumstances and evidence which we have available to us, there is no other course open to us. Indeed, in listening to the notices given by the Minister for Industrial Development this morning, it is quite obvious that further action is proposed in regard to the Encouragement of Primary Production Ordinance, an ordinance which has played a key role in the events leading up to this censure motion.

We all know the censure motion hinges on the proposal by the Northern Territory executive in November-December last year to purchase the properties of Willeroo, Scott Creek and Dry River. At the time members on both sides of the House from the government, or the executive as it was then, and the opposi-

tion concurred that such a proposal had a great deal of merit indeed but also that a great deal of work had to be done on it to test out the viability of such a proposal. It was vaunted at the time that perhaps it was simply an election gimmick. I have some thoughts now, Mr Speaker, some nine or ten months later, that in fact some people may have thought the matter of Willeroo-Scott Creek was a gimmick; others pursued it with certainly the purest of motives. But nonetheless, that is the background.

In February of this year the Executive Member for Industrial Development told the Assembly that documents still had to be worked out and formulated and agreements finalised, but in any event he guaranteed to this Assembly that the government would act according to law. It will be very interesting to take part in the debate after this censure motion which relates to a validation bill which the minister has said he is going to introduce.

In April of this year a problem arose when the member for Victoria River was informed by constituents of his that they had not been paid by the Primary Producers Board for the month of March. The member for Victoria River investigated the complaints and raised it in a newspaper article. Investigations were made and, indeed, it was found that those people had not been paid and ultimately action was taken by the Industrial Relations Bureau and the Executive Member for Community Development, as he was at that time, following those investigations and those payments were in fact made.

In late April the Majority Leader, as he then was, indicated in a press statement that a solution had been found to the impasse - an impasse brought on by the executive itself due to its failure to comply with the terms of an agreement reached between the Majority Leader and the receiver in December of last year. To settle that impasse in a practical and realistic way the Majority Leader issued a press statement saying that a cash advance had been made to the receiver of NADC to ensure that those people who had not been paid - various creditors supplying goods and services - would be paid. At that stage, the opposition started to ask questions about the whole proposal in relation to Scott Creek-Willeroo.

It dumbfounded us that the reputable receiver, H.V. Quinton and Co, who acts for the Bank of New South Wales, a very large and respected institution in Australian business, could have been at odds with the then Majority Leader. We asked a series of questions in relation to it. It took until August this year, at the sittings of the Assembly after the self-government celebrations, for those answers to trickle through - answers which had been on the notice paper since December last year. It took nine months for the minister to answer the questions. The charge that we have dragged it out can only be seen as hypocrisy. The person who dragged it out was the minister himself.

The specific charge which the opposition lays at the feet of the government is this: we censure the government for its actions over Willeroo for two precise reasons. Firstly, they advanced \$150,000 as a cash advance through the receiver of NADC without security. Despite their protestations, despite statements made to the public and in this Assembly that the amount had been secured by a crop lien, the fact is there is no lien; \$150,000 was advanced without security. Our second reason for censuring the government is because all eyes are on this government. It is a fledgling government; it is a fledgling entity in the whole federal-state setup. It is very important that the decisions it makes are made correctly and judiciously. It seems to us that very great damage has been done to the credit of the Northern Territory government and future Northern Territory governments. It is the opposition's hope that the government learns from the mistakes it has made. It ought to admit to them; it

ought to own up to them; it ought to learn from them. I hope and trust that it does, for the sake of the future of the Northern Territory.

The specific request for the minister to resign is based on accepted parliamentary practice. The minister has in fact wilfully misled the parliament on no less than five separate occasions to cover up the involvement of the Northern Territory government in the Willeroo-Scott Creek purchase. In question No. 593, the Minister for Industrial Development was asked on what basis a cash advance of \$150,000 was made and what the interest rate was. I read from my question and the answers given by Mr Steele - I asked: "Under what provisions of the Encouragement of Primary Production Ordinance has the \$150,000 advance been made to the receiver of the Willeroo-Scott Creek properties?" The answer was section 9(4). "What is the interest rate on the \$150,000 advance to the receiver of the Willeroo-Scott Creek properties?" The answer was 2%. Just to ensure that the charade would continue, on 30 June an officer of the Primary Producers Board wrote to the receiver of NADC requesting the first payment as required by the Encouragement of Primary Production Ordinance on the interest rate of 2%. I say "to continue the charade" because in fact there never was an interest rate.

On 20 April this year the Majority Leader, as he then was, wrote to the receiver - reference ML83, dated 20 April 1978. His letter sets out the terms and conditions under which the cash advance was to be made to the receiver of NADC. The proposals included in item 3:

The cost is to be met by the Primary Producers Board by an advance to Northern Australian Development Corporation (Receiver Appointed) on the clear understanding that any profits or losses from the sale of farm produce will accrue to the Primary Producers Board in repayment of the advance which will be secured by a crop lien.

They have already indicated there is no such crop lien but I leave that aside; the member for Arnhem will deal with that matter.

It is quite clear from the letter setting out the terms and conditions of the cash advance by the Majority Leader that there was never intended to be a 2% interest rate. It is quite clear that, in the confirmation given by the receiver on 28 April, he accepted the terms and conditions as outlined on 20 April by the Majority Leader. It is quite clear that the Minister for Industrial Development has misled the Assembly in his answer to the specific question concerning the interest rate. His answer was 2%. In the Majority Leader's agreement on 20 April, there is no interest rate. My belief is that, when the Majority Leader knew of the answer given by the Minister for Industrial Development, he should have sought his resignation there and then. He knew the terms and conditions of the agreement between the executive and the receiver. I do not know whether the Minister himself knew; I am sure he must have. I cannot understand why he misled the Assembly so palpably on that particular matter.

The second matter on which the Minister for Industrial Development has misled this Assembly is in relation to the involvement of the receiver himself. The defence given by the minister in regard to the Primary Producers Board was that they acted with the full concurrence and knowledge of the receiver. As part of the series of questions asked by the opposition, the member for Victoria River, in question No. 553, asked Mr Steele: "Did the chairman of the Primary Producers Board have written authorisation from the receiver or secured creditors of NADC to buy and sell assets on the Willeroo-Scott Creek properties? To what extent did the chairman of the Primary Producers Board

sign cheques and order seed for the Willeroo-Scott Creek venture?" The answer: "As part of the arrangements made with the receiver, the chairman was one of the signatories for cheques drawn on the special bank account established by the receiver to finance the cropping program and general management of the property. He was also involved in the ordering of seed for the cropping program. In assuming those responsibilities, he acted with the full knowledge and concurrence of the receiver".

Another question asked was question No. 580, from Mr Doolan to Mr Steele: "Who ordered the planting of the trial crops at the Scott Creek-Willeroo complex?" Answer: "The receiver, with the agreement of the chairman of the Primary Producers Board". A further question, No. 591: "On what authority did Mr Jettner charge approximately \$70,000 worth of goods and services to the Northern Territory Producers Co-op?" Answer: "See the answer to question No. 553". Question No. 598: "To what extent did the chairman of the Primary Producers Board sign cheques and order seed for the Willeroo-Scott Creek venture?" Answer: "See answer to question No. 553". Question No. 599, from Mr Doolan to Mr Steele: "Did the chairman of the Primary Producers Board have written authorisation from the receiver or the secured creditors of NADC to buy and sell assets on the Willeroo-Scott Creek properties?" Answer: "See the answer to question No. 553". So great store was placed in the receiver - in fact, the answer given by the Minister for Industrial Development was that the chairman of the Primary Producers Board acted at all times with the full knowledge and concurrence of the receiver.

Mr Speaker, I am authorised by the receiver of NADC to say that the answer given by the Minister for Industrial Development, specifically on question No. 553, is completely untrue. The receiver or his agent left the property in early December, paid off all the staff and knew nothing more about it until problems arose in March. The answers given by the minister are completely untrue.

The third matter on which the minister has misled the parliament relates to the purchase of equipment. I might say, Mr Speaker, that on this occasion the minister cannot have it both ways. If he told us the truth in May - which I believe he did - then he misled the Assembly in August. If in fact he was correct in August, he must have misled us in May. Because in May he told the Assembly that, of the amount of \$115,000 which had been expended by the Primary Producers Board, \$11,900 had been expended on capital equipment which was now the property of the Primary Producers Board. However, in reply to question No. 711 - an answer given by the very same minister to a question from myself, which was: "As a result of its involvement in the Willeroo-Scott Creek properties, what are the assets which have been acquired by or come under the control of the Primary Producers Board?" The minister answered: "No assets have been acquired or come under the control of the Primary Producers Board as a result of the involvement in the Willeroo-Scott Creek properties, beyond an interest in the harvest of produce by virtue of a crop lien". Two bobby dazzlers in that one! There is no crop lien - we know that; the government knows that. But there are two items of equipment sitting on Willeroo Station at the moment, a peanut planter and a boom spray - brand spanking new pieces of equipment. The honourable member for Victoria River was on the properties recently. He can inform the Assembly of what he saw, and who owns those pieces of equipment. The fact is the minister was telling the truth in May but he has unfortunately misled the Assembly in August to try and cover up the government's involvement in the Willeroo-Scott Creek venture.

The fourth matter on which the minister himself has misled the Assembly relates to the employment of personnel. Again, the honourable member for Victoria River will deal with this particular aspect. But there is a certain coy-

ness in the answers given by the minister in relation to employment. I cannot say he has specifically told an untruth to the Assembly but he has most certainly misled us in relation to the actual situation regarding employment. As I say, the member for Victoria River is going to deal with that specific matter.

The fifth matter on which the minister has misled the Assembly relates to the crop lien. There is an interesting saga about the crop lien. As we all know, large sums of money are given to primary producers and other people in need on the basis that they put up a certain collateral or that a mortgage is placed over a certain item of equipment or property. And similarly, quite sensibly and rationally, the NT executive made it known that it was going to secure the \$150,000 advance by a crop lien. That is a perfectly proper and sensible thing to do. If they had not done it, they knew they would be open to criticism. They knew it was the correct and proper thing to do.

Now, we do know this much, that a document signifying a crop lien was sent to the receiver. But there was a problem with that particular document: it contained that magical figure of 2% - a figure never mentioned in the letter from the Majority Leader to the receiver nor in the letter from the receiver back to the Majority Leader in late April this year. Of course, when the receiver saw that, he properly set up an alarm. There was no agreement relating to 2%. What was it doing in this draft document?

So the document has not been signed. The money was advanced without security and the crop has now been harvested. I am not quite sure just how you can have a lien, even if it were signed today - a lien over something which does not exist. This government has acted not only irresponsibly in not having a crop lien but the minister has misled the parliament by saying, as he did in May, that in fact the Primary Producers Board had secured the crop by a lien. The member for Arnhem is going to approach that subject.

Mr Speaker, we have the position where the minister has misled the parliament in five significant instances - not just in five separate answers but on five significant issues which run right through the gamut of the answers given to questions asked by the opposition. I remind you of his statement early in February that the purchase of Willeroo would go ahead according to law. Quite obviously that was not the case. The misleading of the parliament warrants the minister's resignation. If he understood what parliamentary practice was about - and I will give him some instances in a moment - he would realise that that is the proper thing to do. He has, on those five very significant occasions, misled the parliament. The censure motion is appropriate because the government has advanced money without security and that is deserving of censure in itself. The government has done great damage to the credit of future Northern Territory governments and for that it is also deserving of censure. As I said at the outset, I hope the government learns from these very serious mistakes.

In moving this motion, and in moving it seriously, as I do, because of the grave allegations made and the evidence which we have, I do so with greater authority than my own - the authority of other people who have played their part in the parliamentary system of Australia. Perhaps I might quote from the Chief Minister's statement in thanking the Governor-General for his speech on Friday. He said:

We will work to ensure that we are worthy of the trust that has been placed in us by the people of Australia through the devolution of self-government on this Assembly. We must work always to reflect the

wishes of the people of the Northern Territory because this is an assembly of the representatives of the people. We must act responsibly and we must discharge the task that we have been given by His Excellency's government in respect of the government of this Territory. We must live up to the expectations of those Territorians who went before us and who worked so hard to achieve the goal of which we see the culmination today.

In a press release issued on 30 August, in a statement regarding the minister, the Chief Minister said: "I do not believe there has been anything improper in the Willeroo negotiations. If I did, I certainly would have asked for Roger Steele's resignation before now."

I will quote from another statement made on 12 March 1978:

My government has demonstrated again and again our fundamental commitment to restoring integrity to public administration in Australia. Our record in this regard is one without parallel in our history. As long as I lead the government, there is no way known that anything less than the highest code and practice of public administration will be tolerated.

The only thing I cannot do, Mr Speaker, is to read that with the sneer of the person who made the statement - Malcolm Fraser.

On 15 August 1978, the Prime Minister said:

The community rightly demands a high standard from the ministers of the government. The judgments on ministers are more exacting and sometimes more harsh than the judgments which might be passed on those outside the sphere of public life. If these high standards are not upheld, the people's confidence in government, a confidence that is fundamental to Australian democracy, would be undermined. The government has an obligation to uphold them even though the cost can be and is, in this instance, a high one.

He was referring to the dismissal of Senator Withers.

On 21 July 1975, Malcolm Fraser stated:

A minister has failed to meet appropriate standards of ministerial responsibility. The Westminster tradition is that a minister bears the political responsibility for major blunders and misdeeds of his underlings. A precise and fundamental principle of parliamentary government is at stake here. The principle is that the parliament must be able to accept assurances given to it by a minister. If those assurances prove to be misleading, the minister concerned must be held responsible. It is a principle on which the integrity of parliament itself depends. It is a great and fundamental parliamentary convention that must be upheld. Party loyalty must not be allowed to come before private conscience and public responsibility. All of our questions could easily have been answered from the government's own files. What he has done strikes at the very integrity of our political institution.

We know the instance on which that statement was made by Malcolm Fraser on 21 July 1975.

Mr Speaker, it is the opposition's view that the answers given by the Minister for Industrial Development breach those very parliamentary conventions which that right honourable gentleman spoke about in July 1975 and this year as well. There can be no doubt on the evidence available that the minister misled the parliament.

There can be no doubt either that the Chief Minister, when he knew of the answers given by the Minister for Industrial Development, knew he had misled the parliament. It is some four weeks since the Chief Minister was quoted at a press conference as saying that, if he thought there was any impropriety, he would have asked for the minister's resignation and that he would inquire into the legality of the transactions which took place surrounding Willeroo-Scott Creek. The Chief Minister has known for four weeks that his minister has misled the parliament. He should have acted as soon as he was aware of that fact.

This Assembly is a new Assembly in terms of responsibility. It is not a good start when the minister, in our view, on the evidence presented, has so palpably misled it. The evidence is there. The minister has contradicted himself; he has contradicted the Chief Minister's own letters to the receiver, and he has contradicted the words of the receiver himself. I do not believe he can withstand those sorts of allegations which, I believe, are founded in substance. There is evidence to say that all the allegations I have made are correct. The minister ought to resign.

Mr EVERINGHAM (Chief Minister): Mr Speaker, I move that the motion be amended by deleting all words after the word "censure" and inserting in place thereof the words "the opposition for its destructive tactics over the proposal to encourage closer agricultural settlement at Willeroo-Scott Creek".

Mr Speaker, I think we could turn with some advantage to some of the facts of this situation and I would like to restate a few of the basic facts. Firstly, the then Northern Territory executive was interested in buying Willeroo-Scott Creek for the purpose of encouraging closer settlement and stimulating primary production. We are still interested, but so far have been unable to reach agreement with the receiver. The matter has now been referred to the Territory Development Corporation for its consideration.

Secondly, the money spent at Willeroo was for cropping. This was in the nature of a pilot project to assist us in determining whether or not the government should proceed with the purchase.

Thirdly, from previous debates in this House, the inescapable conclusion is that the receiver agreed in the first place to provide sufficient funds for the cropping program and, upon that basis, money was spent and debts were incurred. Having paid \$32,000 into a bank account in evidence of his agreement to pay for the cropping program, the receiver refused to pay further funds unless we committed the future Northern Territory government to buy the properties. This is the word of the receiver that we are asked to accept. At the stage that the receiver refused to pay further funds into the Scott Creek farm account at Katherine, debts had already been incurred in the expectation that the receiver would continue to finance the project as he had agreed to do. Honourable members know that there were debts owing to the Adelaide River Cooperative and to various people who were owed wages. I understand the returns lodged with the Deputy Commissioner of Taxation will show that the wages were paid on behalf of the NADC receiver appointed. The Leader of the Opposition at that time stridently demanded to know what action would be taken to see that these people were paid. We saw that they were paid. He now stridently criticises us for making those payments possible.

The Leader of the Opposition has said to the press that there is a cover-up over Willeroo. If it is a cover-up, it is the strangest cover-up that I have ever been associated with because, if we had wanted to cover up any mistakes that we might have made in relation to the purchase of Willeroo through the Primary Producers Board, then the obvious course for us was to proceed with the purchase and everything would have been buried under the rug and there could have been no further notice taken of it. Instead of that, we have haggled with the receiver about the interest rate. We are still concerned about the viability of the project and the Leader of the Opposition has the side to call this a cover-up. This motion amounts to a want of confidence in this government in the matter of its handling of Willeroo. My amendment condemns the opposition for its destructive tactics which have wrought harm to primary industry in the Northern Territory.

Let us examine the grounds for the opposition's attack. For some weeks now, the Leader of the Opposition has been claiming that the loan to the receiver was illegal. I think it was in this House in May that the Leader of the Opposition said that the receiver was a man of the highest probity. The Leader of the Opposition has claimed that the loan was illegal under section 9(4) of the Encouragement of Primary Production Ordinance. He claims that the receiver could have obtained the loan from another source. The receiver himself indicated that he could not obtain money from a bank and it was perfectly obvious that the Primary Producers Board was the only body which would be able to assist. After all, Mr Speaker, we are talking about the receiver of a bankrupt corporation which has spent \$16m on developing this Willeroo project and had then had its mortgagees move in on it. The opposition wanted to know what action was being taken to pay those people. We have paid the debts through the Primary Producers Board and now the opposition criticises that.

The Leader of the Opposition says that the minister should resign. There is no way that the minister in this case should resign. On a matter of ministerial responsibility, the people for whom the minister answers must be responsible to him. As you know, Mr Speaker, we have already repealed the Encouragement of Primary Production Ordinance and replaced it with the Territory Development Corporation Ordinance. One of the major reasons for that action was that, under the Encouragement of Primary Production Ordinance, the Primary Producers Board was only responsible to the minister in so far as he had to approve loans in excess of \$20,000, and determine an interest rate.

It is claimed, Mr Speaker, by the Leader of the Opposition that the minister furnished false information to the Assembly. If he did so, I know it certainly was not intentional. I know that because the fact that there was not a lien signed over this crop only came to my notice within the last few days and it came to my notice in a most unusual way. He supplied an answer saying that the Primary Producers Board had acquired certain machinery and this answer was provided from information supplied by the Primary Producers Board. Subsequently, the Territory Development Corporation supplied information which indicated that no records could be found to evidence ownership of the assets by the Primary Producers Board. This I believe, Mr Speaker, evidences the minister's honesty by answering the questions on the basis of the information provided to him at the time. At all times the minister has acted honestly in this matter; he has not, unfortunately, always been as well served.

As for the crop lien, as I said, I found out myself only the other day that it was unsigned. It certainly is unfortunate that the lien is not signed. Nevertheless, as the Leader of the Opposition has said, there was the exchange of letters between myself and the receiver of NADC which constitutes an agreement and the basis of that agreement is that the Primary Producers Board was to

have returned to it the proceeds from the sale of the crop. The Encouragement of Primary Production Ordinance required for an advance to be made that a rate of interest had to be set and, therefore, the minister set what he believed was a purely nominal rate of interest which did not increase in any way the receiver's liability under the crop lien because he had a fixed liability to return the amount of money that was recovered from the crop.

As far as I can see, Mr Speaker, the Leader of the Opposition and the opposition itself appears to be in league with the receiver in attempting to impose the purchase of Willeroo on this government on terms determined by the receiver against the interests of the people of the Northern Territory. The minister should only accept responsibility where he has direct control over the people who are answerable to him. And as we know, Mr Speaker, the Primary Producers Board was a Northern Territory statutory authority, established in the days when people were attempting to drag responsibility away from the Commonwealth government, and there was no responsibility in the board to answer to a minister. On that ground alone I am not prepared to accept the call of the Leader of the Opposition.

I call on members of this House, Mr Speaker, to support my amendment. At the outset the Opposition's support for the Willeroo-Scott Creek project was lukewarm at the best. They saw it as a great project which, if we got it off successfully, could prove a further nail in their coffin. Their constant criticism since, because of the involvement of people such as Rex Jettner who certainly has the interests of the Northern Territory at heart - more at heart I would say, Mr Speaker, than the Leader of the Opposition - the campaign to get us to pay the debts which we regarded as rightfully those of the receiver - and I might say, Mr Speaker, that the opinions that the Leader of the Opposition has been asserting all along as fact are quite disputable legally and, in fact, I believe the proper view is as we have put it forward all along.

The facts support what I say. The receiver agreed to undertake a cropping program; he paid \$32,000 into a bank account towards that and at some stage after the commencement of the cropping program, he reneged on the agreement. And this is the word of the man that we are supposed to take as gospel because the Leader of the Opposition said so. We advanced these moneys so that innocent people would not be harmed, so that the Adelaide River Cooperative would remain sound, so that many primary producers' interests would not be adversely affected. We made the best arrangements possible to get as much money back and now we are told it is all illegal. The opposition is using destructive tactics in an effort to destroy confidence in this government. Their whole record, Mr Speaker, is to sow fear and apprehension in the people of the Northern Territory. I instance their campaign against the cost of self-government which I think was set at rest yesterday in this House when my colleague, the Treasurer, brought down the budget.

I call on all honourable members to support my amendment. This government will act responsibly. We certainly will not knuckle under to the destructive tactics of the opposition. We will go ahead and purchase Willeroo if we believe, after investigation, it is in the best interests of the people of the Northern Territory. We will not do it beforehand and we will continue to maintain that stance.

Mr DOOLAN (Victoria River): Mr Speaker, the Chief Minister speaks about facts. So I will stick to facts, and give him some real facts.

In speaking to the censure motion, I would like to look at just five of the numerous questions asked about Willeroo and to demonstrate to this House that the answers to these five questions given by the Minister for Industrial Development have been either untrue or misleading. And that is really what this is all about - not the trivialities which have been introduced by the Chief Minister.

The first question I will deal with is question No. 553, from myself to Mr Steele: "Did the chairman of the Primary Producers Board have written authorisation from the receiver or the secured creditors of NADC to buy and sell assets on the Willeroo-Scott Creek properties?" Secondly: "To what extent did the chairman of the Primary Producers Board sign cheques and order seed for the Willeroo-Scott Creek venture?"

Mr Speaker, I will not dispute the honesty in the answer to the first question. However, if that answer is correct, then Rex Jettner acted without authority because equipment was purchased. And I will demonstrate to this House in a few minutes that it was. With regard to the answer to the second question, I have serious doubts. Did the receiver have the full knowledge and concurrence of the actions of the chairman? The receiver has denied this, Mr Speaker. In any case, he did not have the full knowledge and concurrence of the Adelaide River Co-op in charging \$70,000 worth of seed and fertiliser to their account. In fact, the Adelaide River Co-op had no knowledge whatsoever of this transaction until they received the bill from the creditors.

The second question is question No. 593, from Mr Isaacs to Mr Steele: "Under what provisions of the Encouragement of Primary Production Ordinance has the \$150,000 advance been made to the receiver of the Willeroo-Scott Creek properties? What is the interest rate on the \$150,000 advance to the receiver of the Willeroo-Scott Creek properties?" Mr Speaker, I have not bothered to check section 9(4) but the answer to the second part, claiming 2% interest, is untrue. The interest rate of 2% was never part of the agreement. The agreement was that profits went to the PPB and losses be covered by the board. There was no mention of interest then. The first mention of interest was when the PPB sent documents relating to the crop lien to the receiver and those documents were never signed.

Question No. 594, from Mr Isaacs to Mr Steele: "On what date did the Primary Producers Board agree to appoint a resident manager to the Willeroo-Scott Creek complex?" Answer: "The Primary Producers Board did not employ a resident manager at Willeroo-Scott Creek". Mr Speaker, clearly the Primary Producers Board did employ a resident manager at Willeroo-Scott Creek. His name is Mr Doug Taylor. He is now working on Elizabeth Downs. He came to Scott Creek as manager of the property when the Primary Producers Board took control from the receiver and he left when the enterprise folded. This is so easy to prove that I am at a complete loss to understand how such a ridiculous untruthful and certainly misleading answer could have been given.

Question No. 610, asked by Mr Perkins of Mr Steele: "Will he confirm that a number of Aborigines who worked at the Willeroo project between December and March were not actually paid by the Primary Producers Board?" The answer to that one is: "No outside persons were employed by the Primary Producers Board on the project". The answer to this question is evasive in that the question seeks information about Aborigines employed at Willeroo and the answer does not even mention Aborigines.

The statement that no outside persons were employed by the Primary Producers Board on the project is completely untrue. I presume that outside persons can only mean persons other than those employed by the receiver after the Primary Producers Board took over the place. To my certain knowledge a number of such outside persons were employed by the Primary Producers Board. I have seen the time sheets for some of them and verified the facts. I am able to give the names of most of them. They are Mr Paddy Heatly, Mr Ralph Blythe, Mr Doug Taylor, Mrs Violet Horner and Master Andrew Jettner, aged 15, employed during his school holidays. Andrew Jettner's rate of pay was \$3.50 per hour which is the award rate for an adult farm worker and I have personally seen his time sheets.

Not only did the Primary Producers Board employ people but they also sacked some of them. Lawrence Carter, employed as a mechanic, commenced duty on 3 December 1977 and was terminated by Mr Arch McGill on 3 March 1978. I have seen his time sheets and the notice of his termination. The manager of Willeroo started a stock camp and employed a cook and a couple of ringers. He was ordered by Mr McGill to sack them as he had no authority to employ. These people were paid only through the generosity of other employees who had a whip around to give them a few dollars to get off the place.

At least two former employees have volunteered to make statutory declarations to the effect that outside people were employed by the Primary Producers Board on the Willeroo-Scott Creek project. In his answer to this question there is no doubt that the minister responsible has misled this House. As a matter of interest, I believe there were six Aborigines employed there.

Question No. 711: "As a result of its involvement in the Willeroo-Scott Creek properties, what are the assets which have been acquired by or come under the control of the Primary Producers Board?" The answer was: "No assets have been acquired or come under the control of the Primary Producers Board as a result of the involvement in the Willeroo-Scott Creek properties, beyond an interest in the harvest of produce by virtue of a crop lien". There are two inaccuracies in this answer, Mr Speaker. One is in regard to assets and the other in regard to a crop lien which it seems never existed, except as a figment of imagination.

In the matter of assets, last Saturday 9 September I spent some hours inspecting farm machinery at Scott Creek. Included with this machinery is a peanut planter and a boom spray, both of which look new to me. The manager of Willeroo who has been employed for six years on the property - originally by NADC, then by the receiver, Mr Quinton, then by the Primary Producers Board and now he is again employed by the receiver - was absolutely certain that these farm implements had not been at Willeroo when the Primary Producers Board became interested in the project and took over the management. They were never purchased by either NADC or by the receiver. He is positive they were purchased by the Primary Producers Board. Yet in answer to the question which the minister has given in writing, he says that no assets have been acquired or purchased by the Primary Producers Board.

Mr Dondas: They might have been borrowed.

Mr DOOLAN: Could be. Well, okay, you work it out. The answer is incorrect, to say the least, and the House has been misled.

Mr Speaker, the letter to H.V. Quinton, the receiver, constitutes questionable legal practice. There was no authority to enter into an agreement. The advancing of money without security was an act of impropriety. It has

been frequently stated that there was a lien on the crop. In fact there was no lien on the crop. The Encouragement of Primary Production Ordinance requires a rate of interest to be stated before a loan is advanced. No rate of interest was stated. The 2% was first mentioned in correspondence after the event.

Is it any wonder, Mr Speaker, that I have received phone calls and telegrams from owner-operators on properties who have been battling their guts out trying to keep from going under and trying desperately to obtain carry-on finance, asking me how Willeroo-Scott Creek could obtain an immediate unsecured loan from the Primary Producers Board in such a hurry when many of them had been treated in cavalier fashion by this same body? I detailed some of these complaints in early debates but I will read just one telegram which I read before and which is pretty much to the point. This was sent on 4 May and says: "My application to the PP Board lodged 19 February 1977 yesterday deferred for the seventh time to 10 May. This information supplied only by reply-paid telegram. How come Willeroo can obtain a loan overnight? Unable to make any working arrangements till definite answer received my application". His name is in the earlier debate; I will not embarrass him by quoting it again.

The government claims that the receiver was at all times aware of what was happening and yet, Mr Speaker, the receiver denies this absolutely.

Ever since this affair began, claims have been made that the Primary Producers Board did not employ workers on the Willeroo-Scott Creek project and that the workers were not paid by the board. I believe I can dispel any lingering doubt on that issue right now. I have a photocopy of a hand-written letter from Mr Lindsay Mulder, accountant to the Primary Producers Board, addressed to Mr and Mrs Peter Weldon employed at Scott Creek. It says: "It appears I have made an error in calculating your wages for February. I worked on the weekly rate rather than the calendar month basis. The difference is approximately \$50 per calendar month in your favour. I will make the necessary adjustments next pay. I apologise for the error and trust that it has not caused you any inconvenience". A very polite letter, Mr Speaker; it is signed by Lindsay Mulder of the Primary Producers Board.

Also, Mr Speaker, when the group certificates were issued, there appears to have been some disagreement between the Primary Producers Board and the receiver as to who would sign the certificates for the period from 3 December 1977 to 31 March 1978. Mr Gary Hilt, the receiver's agent, refused to sign the group certificates for this period and he sent them back to the board. Eventually some of the employees, not all of them - I do not know why, but some at least - have received their group certificates. Mr Rodney Roberts, for instance who is still working at Scott Creek, has group certificate number 8S1932207, gross earnings \$3,750.34, tax \$486.09. The group certificate is headed "NADC, Receiver Appointed" but it is not signed by Gary Hilt; it is signed by Lindsay Mulder. Incidentally, the Primary Producers Board has not yet paid holidays for the period of four months when they were in control.

The Chief Minister issued a press statement to the NT News on 11 April headed "NT Farmers Used as Pawns" and a further statement in the same newspaper on 12 April headed "7 Misled on Share Farms". In fact, I think the boot was on the other foot, and that the NT executive was misleading the share farmers and using them as pawns.

When an officer of the Industrial Relations Bureau and myself interviewed the share farmers at Scott Creek they blamed the government through its agent, the Primary Producers Board, for the unhappy plight in which they found themselves. Those who had worked there for the receiver before the board took over

its management had nothing but good to say for the receiver and little but curses and imprecations to heap on the collective heads of the Primary Producers Board, which sentiment was also expressed by the people who had been employed by the board after it took over. All employees, from the two managers down to the farm labourers, were united in this because nobody had been paid for a period of more than a month.

The receiver, Mr Quinton, reacted predictably for a person of integrity who acts for, among other institutions of impeccable repute, the Bank of New South Wales by issuing a writ for libel against the then Majority Leader and now Chief Minister. It is rather surprising that he had not done so earlier after being referred to as a "carpet-bagging financier".

Mr Speaker, I frequently attend cattlemen's meetings; I go to bush races and I spend a lot of time, as much as I possibly can, in that country of Victoria River. Pastoralists, as you would well know, like to talk to their local member when the opportunity presents itself. So it will probably come as something of a shock to the Chief Minister to learn of the gut reaction of pastoralists in the Victoria River District to the whole sorry fiasco of the Willeroo-Scott Creek affair. The honourable Minister for Industrial Development is quite a popular man in that district, and so he should be because he grew up there and worked there for a long time and people who have lived there have known him for a long time. They like him and respect him. What the bush people are saying now is "poor old Roger got a lousy deal. Everingham mucked the lot and left him to carry the can". It is my belief that there may be a great deal of truth in this rumour.

Eye witnesses to the now historic meeting between the Chief Minister, the Treasurer, the Minister for Industrial Development and the receiver say that the unfortunate Minister for Industrial Development played a very minor role in the whole affair and was quite some distance in the background when the equally historic handshaking took place under that celebrated tree.

I believe the Chief Minister has focussed the whole odium of the affair on his minister through the misleading answers that his minister has given this House and that the minister has been the dupe rather than the deceiver. It would be only justice that, if there is to be a scapegoat, it should be the whole government and not just one man. The fact is that the Minister for Industrial Development, because of his portfolio responsibility, has been the person who has given misleading answers and he has, as his friends suggest, indeed been left to carry the can. Because of the amateurish and bungling attempts and duplicity which marked the progress of the now infamous Willeroo-Scott Creek project, I do not believe it was ever intended as a genuine attempt to provide share farms for people of the Northern Territory. It had its genesis as an electioneering gimmick prior to the December federal elections and its demise when the Northern Territory government lost interest in it after the Fraser government had a victory at the polls.

Mr Speaker, the question should now be asked: were the government's dealings and procedures in these affairs so unusual as to be disreputable or even damaging to the interests of the Northern Territory? The complete truth will have to be told, including the unpleasant parts and the people of the Territory be allowed to judge the issues on the basis of fact and not on the basis of smear and innuendo which the Chief Minister has directed against the receiver and the opposition in an effort to cover up the whole affair.

No doubt my colleagues and I will again be branded as wreckers and knockers but could anybody, in his right mind, expect an opposition to drop an issue

which at the very least suggests gross incompetence on the part of the CLP government. It is my understanding that a bill to validate what has transpired at Willeroo will be introduced in this House. Mr Speaker, I ask this House and the people of the NT: "How can you possibly validate a tissue of lies?"

Mr COLLINS (Arnhem): This is not a particularly pleasant job but it is a very necessary one. I do not have any personal knowledge of Willeroo; I do not have the same personal knowledge that the honourable member for Victoria River has. All I have before me - and this is the reason I am speaking in this debate - is the collection of written evidence which the opposition has before it and the answers given to questions on notice and without notice by the honourable minister himself.

There is not the slightest doubt at all that an opposition, in bringing the facts of government before the people of the Northern Territory, should not have to resort to documents that have fallen off trucks. That is a much used phrase but it is a disgraceful thing when, in order to bring the truth before the people of the Northern Territory, anyone has to resort to that sort of practice. The reason it should not be necessary is very clear. Answers to questions that are made in this House are sacred and there is no doubt about that. The people of the Northern Territory have the right to expect honest, straight answers to questions that are asked in this House. As Malcolm Fraser has so clearly put it, the responsibility that devolves upon ministers is far greater than on any other person. The buck stops there. Those people are answerable for the people who are working under them. The final responsibility rests with the ministers. That is why they are sitting on the frontbench; that is why they get the extra salary, and that is why they have the responsibility of being in charge of a department. They are responsible and to seek to evade that responsibility is certainly an act which should result instantly in the dismissal or the resignation of the minister.

Mr Speaker, I was appalled at the response of the Chief Minister. I noted it down very carefully. I think that all members of this House and all people in the Territory should make a careful reference to the Hansard of this debate because I am sure they will come to the same conclusion. Before I go on, I want to make that point.

These are the answers to questions given by the honourable minister himself; this pile of papers contains only the questions and answers which are untrue. Every single answer on every piece of paper here is untrue. The single defence that was placed before this House by the Chief Minister, I have noted here. In point number five, which deals with the misleading and untrue answers to questions given in this House by the minister, the Chief Minister says that they were not intentional.

The Chief Minister started off by saying that the government was currently negotiating with the receiver. He then went on to talk about the \$32,000. Mr Speaker, that is an interesting thing in itself. The Chief Minister's entire basis for assuming that an agreement took place was this \$32,000 that was put in a bank account.

Mr Dondas: What more do you want?

Mr COLLINS: The fact is that the \$32,000 was covered by receipts that had been received by NADC and, without a legal or proper agreement, the receiver - and he is no mug; I do not think the representative of a firm that is the official receiver for the oldest banking institution in this country, the Bank of New South Wales, is a complete fool - was not prepared to commit himself beyond

an amount of money which had already been collected in receipts from that project. He was not prepared to advance one dollar beyond that sum, because he had no reason to.

I was interested this morning, when notices were being given, to hear that there will be an Encouragement of Primary Production Validation Bill presented tomorrow. As the honourable member for Victoria River has so clearly pointed out, I do not think the people of the Northern Territory will accept that it is proper tomorrow to validate actions which were completely wrong and incorrect in months past. The retrospective validation of untruths is not a pillar of parliamentary democracy in this country.

The other interesting thing was the fact that the Chief Minister referred to the fact that the Primary Producers Board was defunct. I draw the attention of all honourable members in this House to the fact that all these answers were given in August this year, months after that took place.

We also heard the allegation that the ALP was in league with the receiver. We heard allegations that were made in this House yesterday that the ALP flew up demonstrators from down south to take part in demonstrations and now we are in league with the receiver. I can assure ...

Mr DONDAS (Casuarina): A point of order, Mr Speaker. There is an amendment to the motion and none of the opposition is speaking to it.

Mr COLLINS: I can speak to the motion.

Mr SPEAKER: You are entitled to speak to both the amendment and the motion but you must keep to the subject matter.

Mr COLLINS: Mr Speaker, I was merely replying to something which was raised by the Chief Minister.

Mr SPEAKER: I realise that but you are alluding to an earlier debate.

Mr COLLINS: The crucial point is that this government, which is supposed to be so careful about managing the financial affairs of the Northern Territory, is basing its supposed fact that the receiver entered into an agreement with it on this sum of \$32,000. I say again that this amount of money had already been received and the receiver quite properly was not prepared to go beyond that sum of money and did not.

The Chief Minister then went on to speak of what I consider to be just completely irrelevant material. He introduced self-government for the Northern Territory and the budget and a whole lot of other waffle. When honourable members in this House read the Hansard tomorrow, they will see clearly that not once did the Chief Minister offer a proper defence for the fact that the minister has misled this House. If, as the Chief Minister says, the single defence is that it was not intentional - and that is the single defence he has put up - then, at best, the honourable minister is responsible for the most gross incompetence in handling his portfolio. That should be obvious to anyone. If the best defence that the Chief Minister has come up with - and Hansard will show it tomorrow - was that it was unintentional, the incompetence reflected in giving untrue answers to this mass of questions alone should be sufficient to demand the resignation of that minister and to place a more competent person in charge of the portfolio.

I want to talk about two things in detail. One is this guarantee that the taxpayers of the Northern Territory had the lien on the crop. I will talk about that now because the honourable minister himself talked about it in this House in a completely categorical and unambiguous way. He said on 2 May in this House:

To end this deplorable politicking with peoples' lives and livelihoods, the Primary Producers Board has now agreed to lend the receiver sufficient funds to pay all expenses to date and harvest the crops on Willeroo. Money from the sale of the crops is to be repaid to the Primary Producers Board and this provision has been reinforced by the Primary Producers Board taking a lien on the crop.

Mr Speaker, no such lien exists. There is a piece of paper which purports to be a lien but there are no signatures on it. It has no legal standing whatever. The minister told this House and told the Territory on 2 May that the provision has been reinforced by the Primary Producers Board taking a lien on the crop. I do not know how much more positive you want to make that; no such lien exists. That statement was untrue.

I would also draw the attention of members to an interjection from the honourable member for Casuarina in reference to the machinery at Willeroo. He said it could have been borrowed from somebody. Unfortunately, that conflicts with the statement made by the minister earlier this year in the House when he categorically stated that those two particular pieces of machinery worth \$11,900 belonged to the Primary Producers Board. It is in Hansard. Then, strange as it may seem, in August this year he himself denied that that was true. Reference to Hansard by any interested member of this House and indeed members of the public - and I hope they are interested enough - will show that to be the case. Not only has the minister misled this House in answers he has given to questions, he has woefully misled this House in statements he has made on the subject in the House. If the best defence - and I wait with great anticipation for the honourable minister's reply - if the best defence that the Chief Minister can come up for all of that is that it was unintentional, then gross incompetence in handling his portfolio should be sufficient cause to remove the gentleman from his office and replace him with someone more competent.

Mr Speaker, other speakers have gone on at length about the 2%. I also want to mention that briefly because I think it is worth noting again. The honourable minister did give a categorical assurance to this House that interest was being charged on the advance of \$150,000 of taxpayers' money to the receiver. He stated in answer to a specific question that it was 2% interest which, of course, is not a particularly large sum of money. The truth is that there was no interest at all. Correspondence which we have - and, unfortunately, we had to get this correspondence because of this mass of misinformation from questions on notice and without notice - shows clearly that there was no interest and there was no lien on the crop. An interest free gift, call it whatever you like, of \$150,000 was advanced to the receiver without any security for the sole purpose of pulling the government out of a hole that it had put itself in. How much confidence can Territory taxpayers have in that kind of business arrangement? I do not know. And the fact is - and I have to say it again - we were assured and Territorians were assured that such security did exist. The fact is that the crop has been harvested; it has probably been marketed - I do not know, nobody knows, the minister may know. Who knows where the money is going to go from that crop? I know. It is going to go straight to the receiver, with no strings attached. The receiver, being an honourable gentleman and the head of a very large and reputable firm, of course cannot afford to do otherwise but to pay that money back. But there are no strings attached to

that money, no security whatever. There is no lien; that lien is a piece of paper with no signature on it.

Let us detail the questions. Look at them! The 2%, that's untrue. "Did the chairman of the Primary Producers Board have written authorisation from the receiver?" - untrue. The receiver himself has authorised the Leader of the Opposition to make a categorical denial of the assertion by the government that he was consulted at every step of the project. He asserts categorically, Mr Speaker, that he or his office knew nothing whatever of what was going on at Willeroo and yet the government asserts in these answers that he was consulted at every step of the way.

A question was asked: "What is the estimated value of the Scott Creek-Willeroo project crop which was used as a lien on a loan?" The answer was: "The crops have now been harvested but marketing is not complete. As yet we have no firm indication of total value". Again, Mr Speaker, the answer to that question which specifically mentioned the lien gives us, by inference, an assurance that such a lien exists. And of course, as I have said, it does not.

We have discussed at length the denial by the minister that people were employed by the Primary Producers Board on the project. It has been shown clearly, and again we have evidence to prove it, that that is a massive untruth.

Mr STEELE (Industrial Development): A point of order, Mr Speaker.

Mr SPEAKER: What is the point of order?

Mr STEELE: The point of order is that the honourable member is becoming very repetitious on the debate already offered by the other two members. It is getting very dull. If he cannot do better than that, he should go back to school.

Mr SPEAKER: I would ask the honourable member for Arnhem to introduce some fresh matter.

Mr Steele: If he has any.

Mr COLLINS: Certainly, Mr Speaker.

Mr Steele: A bit of fresh wind.

Mr COLLINS: And if that is the best criticism of what I have presented before this Assembly so far, if that is the best criticism of what I am saying to this House that can be made by the honourable minister, then I would expect his resignation before lunch.

Mr Steele: We've got all day yet. Your turn is coming.

Mr COLLINS: Mr Speaker, what has this exercise cost the Northern Territory taxpayer. It is interesting to see some of the statements made in this House by the honourable members opposite. The Minister for Mines and Energy: the whole concept of this executive being involved in Willeroo was to bring some value and benefit to the Territory. What has it brought to the Territory? What it has brought to the Territory is an expenditure in excess of \$200,000 of taxpayers' money - \$150,000, I do not know what you are going to call it, a gift, an unsecured loan; \$2,700 for salaries; \$1,500 in fees; \$1,000 in over-

time; thousands of dollars worth of damage to machinery; \$11,900 worth of capital equipment - it goes on and on and on. It has cost in the vicinity of \$200,000 already and I say again, if the substance of the reply to this censure motion in this debate is going to be restricted to personalities and personal criticism then I would expect the honourable member to resign today.

Mr DONDAS (Casuarina): A point of order, Mr Speaker!

Mr SPEAKER: What is the point of order?

Mr DONDAS: I would refer you to standing order 66 - debates not otherwise provided for: the mover is allowed 30 minutes, any other member 20 minutes. In my opinion the honourable member for Arnhem has been speaking for 21 minutes.

Mr COLLINS: You are not the time keeper on debates; the Clerk is.

Mr SPEAKER: There is no point of order.

Mr COLLINS: I seem to detect - maybe I am oversensitive but I seem to detect - a rather concerted effort to sit me down and shut me up.

Mr Speaker, the honourable minister made a comment yesterday that staggered me when he got to his feet in the adjournment debate and criticised me for taking the opportunity to speak on every occasion that is made available to me to speak in this House. I am quite sure that when his electors refer to Hansard over that, they will not take any comfort from the fact that he himself admitted yesterday that it was the first time he had spoken in the adjournment debate in twelve months and he used that five minutes simply to drop a bucket personally on me, with no reference to the substance of the debate whatever.

Mr Speaker, to conclude I would say again that these questions asked on notice and without notice in this House have received untrue and misleading answers from the minister, something which we have categorically proven. The one and only denial of this evidence which has come from the Chief Minister has been that this misleading and untrue information which we have received from the minister of the Crown was unintentional. If that is the case, Mr Speaker, then the man's staggering incompetence should be sufficient reason for demanding his resignation.

Mr STEELE (Industrial Development): Mr Speaker, I was given some advice not so long ago that there are two ways to get kicked out of parliament: one is to drink your way out and the other is to talk your way out. The honourable member for Arnhem has just given a good example of that.

This censure debate was brought on on very short notice. We were not unaware that the opposition would be angry with some of the things that are supposed to have been going on and that the record needed setting straight in a few areas of concern. I responded to the Leader of the Opposition's call for my resignation - that was on the ABC - where he stated that I wilfully misled the House, by calling again for all the papers concerned with the matters that had gone before. Contradictions were discovered and that was the reason today that we gave notice that we would be introducing validating legislation. In my second-reading speech on the legislation, I will be offering certain specific replies to a lot of these specific allegations. It would not seem practical for me to offer them twice in a very short space of time.

This attack by the opposition will be rejected by the House. I have every confidence that the debate here today will show the opposition for what it is - more interested in political opportunism than anything else. There is no

doubt in my mind that I have not wilfully misled the House. If I had wilfully misled the House, I would have automatically resigned, as per tradition.

The Leader of the Opposition has waged a long campaign on the Willeroo affair - a campaign I am sure we must all be getting very close to wishing to see the rear end of. We had a long debate on the subject in May and we have answered dozens of questions. The opposition seems to be bereft of ideas; it clings to this because it has nothing else to do.

Mr Speaker, we have an opposition which did its best to halt the constitutional advance to self-government and I have to feel that they feel slighted that self-government occurred for, at the heart of their attack today, is an attempt to discredit myself and this government just 14 weeks after self-government.

Mr COLLINS (Arnhem): Mr Speaker, a point of order.

Mr SPEAKER: What is the point of order?

Mr COLLINS: The honourable member is not speaking to the substance of the debate; he is introducing irrelevant material.

Mr SPEAKER: There is no point of order.

Mr STEELE: To me, Mr Speaker, it is downright destructive. Yesterday the Treasurer brought down a budget which has merited acclaim throughout the Northern Territory. It has proved self-government was a goer, a good thing for Territorians. Today, in an effort to take public attention away from the budget and the very good initiatives of this government, the opposition has embarked on a course designed to discredit this government. It is a wilful exercise in destruction.

Honourable members are aware that another debate on this subject will be brought on at an early time by this government; I have already given notice of a bill to be introduced. It is my intention in my second-reading speech on that bill to address myself to the many claims by the Opposition Leader that I have been inconsistent and that I have wilfully misled the House.

Mr Collins: Answer them now.

Mr STEELE: As I said earlier, I did not wilfully mislead this House and that is the nub of the opposition's argument. In the second-reading speech I mentioned I intend to lay once and for all the basis of the opposition's persistent attacks. I give this House that undertaking and I would hope that after that debate, the opposition will wake up to itself and get onto doing something positive for the Northern Territory.

Mr Speaker, the opposition's efforts in this matter have done nothing for the man on the land. By its attack on the government it is undermining confidence in the Northern Territory primary industry and that is the object of the censure motion ...

Mr Collins: You are reading your speech, Roger.

Mr STEELE: ... by trying to convince people that the government is incompetent. Nothing could be further from the truth. More particularly, the Leader of the Opposition has set out to destroy confidence in the concept of small-holder agricultural development, despite that some work is still going on.

Unlike any other state, the Northern Territory has no agricultural base and this government is dedicated to building one on the basis of the small farming unit. The opposition, through this whole affair, has been the mouth-piece of the receiver, despite their protestations, and their efforts have been designed to destroy all this to ensure that this concept is still born.

What kind of representatives of the people are they? They have no policy for rural industry in the Territory. They are causing needless concern. Let me give you an example, and I quote from a press release issued by the Leader of the Opposition on 18 July when he commented on the economy. He said then, and I quote: "He" meaning the Prime Minister "has not forgotten his powerful friends though he has paid them off by refusing to introduce a resources tax on the super profits of mining companies and by giving big business the investment allowance and attractive stock valuation tax allowances".

Mr Collins: This is more waffle than the Chief Minister's.

Mr STEELE: That is what Mr Isaacs said, and his claim is extremely strange because he has said ...

Mrs O'NEIL (Fannie Bay): A point of order, Mr Speaker!

Mr SPEAKER: What is the point of order?

Mrs O'NEIL: Mr Speaker, I draw your attention to an instruction you gave to honourable members, I believe at the last sittings, that members should not read their speeches.

Mr SPEAKER: It was only a suggestion and I failed to take advantage of it when the member for Victoria River was reading his.

Mr Doolan: From notes, Mr Speaker.

Mr SPEAKER: Yes, from notes.

Members interjecting.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I prefer that honourable members do not read their speeches but the suggestion, as in the case of the honourable member for Victoria River, can be ignored.

Mr STEELE: Mr Speaker, I would love to just read from notes like honest Jack over there but it is a little difficult at times not to have speeches prepared. When I make my second-reading speech on the proposed legislation, obviously it will be a long one because it has a lot of explanations and that is what the opposition has been after. That is what they have been yabbering on about.

Mr Perkins: Why don't you answer the allegations now?

Mr STEELE: Well, that's the first words you've said all day.

Mr SPEAKER: Order, order!

Mr Collins: We get criticised for speaking and criticised for not speaking.

Mr SPEAKER: Order!

Mr STEELE: The Leader of the Opposition generally advocates policies like his political masters in Canberra who have a record of electoral bankruptcy designed to increase inflation, and that is the last thing that our export-oriented primary industry needs at this stage. We have enough problems competing on international markets as it is. So maybe I was a bit off the mark earlier when I said the opposition had no policy on rural industry. It seems it does have one, and it is designed to kill it - certainly, to shackle it with fresh burdens. It is my intention to go into this matter in some detail during my second-reading speech on the bill to be introduced.

Mr Collins: Is that it!

Mr TUXWORTH (Mines and Energy): Mr Speaker, in an effort not to disappoint the honourable member for Arnhem, no, that is not it; I am going to defend the minister.

Mr Speaker, I had not intended to speak on this particular debate today but it has degenerated into an exercise of scalping somebody for a little bit of political momentum and I believe the basis of the exercise is not in the interests of the Territory and that the Labor Party has done a lot in the last several months with this particular cause to bring discredit to the Territory as a whole, rather than try to heap discredit upon ourselves as a government.

Mr Speaker, I am particularly cross about the whole exercise. In fact, I am as mad as hell about it because I believe that people are sick to death of all the carping and hollow criticism we are getting from the opposition. And we are sick of all the noises that come from the other side. Not only is the government sick of them, Mr Speaker, but the people outside are sick of them because in all of this hoo-ha and debate and the smoke screen they have been setting up, the opposition has not come up with any tangible criticism at all ...

Mr Collins: Do you want to come over here and read some letters.

Mr Isaacs: What are you talking about?

Mr TUXWORTH: Mr Speaker, the honourable members may go on, if they wish, while I am speaking. I sat and heard them in silence. If they want to sit and hear me in silence, I would be grateful; if they do not, I will stop each time they want to prattle and they can get on with it.

I believe the degree of criticism that is starting to come from the other side of the House at this stage is not just bad politics, not just bad for the development of the Northern Territory; I believe it is becoming anti-Territorial to the degree that it is going in its own way to stifle a lot of confidence that has been building up in the community over the last six months.

The tactics of the opposition in this particular exercise, as in others, has been to make as many half statements as it can about particular circumstances. It has selectively leaked parts of documents and information that it purports to have and suggests should be tabled. This morning the honourable Leader of the Opposition got up and advised the House that he has the authority to speak on behalf of the receiver, Mr H.V. Quinton, in relation to a particular aspect. I do not think it is unreasonable, Mr Speaker, that that authority be tabled for the benefit of honourable members.

I believe the opposition is trying to instill into the community fear by innuendo. They have no interest in the Northern Territory getting itself into

gear and becoming a viable entity in its own right. They conceive the only way they can get into office is to knock, knock, knock and while they continue this practice, Mr Speaker, they are destroying the confidence of investors both inside and outside the Territory. The CLP government has gone to a lot of trouble to try and justify confidence for investments in the Northern Territory and we have tackled it on many fronts, least of which is Willeroo.

The opposition has made some pretty unreasonable, I believe, criticisms of Willeroo. The honourable member for Arnhem stands there with all his portly disdain ...

Mr Collins: If that's the best you can do, then ...

Mr TUXWORTH: ... and says he believes the minister should resign because of his incompetence. Mr Speaker, I would just like to remind the honourable member for Arnhem of a little dissertation he gave earlier, on which occasion he advised this House that he had been associated with every disaster in the Northern Territory. I think he went from rat plagues to crop destruction. But I think he eclipsed that performance, Mr Speaker, with his effort in joining the Labor Party. However, I do not believe his experience and knowledge of disasters gives him the capacity to stand up and undermine the work that has been done by the honourable Minister for Industrial Development in this particular exercise.

There has not been one grain of evidence from the other side of the House proving that the minister has been dishonest. In the eyes of the opposition the honourable minister may appear to be dishonest because he did something in good faith with which they do not now agree. But, Mr Speaker, I do not accept that the honourable minister has been dishonest in any way at all. In fact any effort by the opposition to try and cast this aspersion on the honourable minister would only do them harm.

The opposition has not given us any indication or proven in any way at all that there was any intent to deceive by the minister. The opposition has tabled no evidence to suggest that the honourable minister did anything with any intent to defraud. The honourable members opposite have tried to bring discredit upon the character of the honourable Minister for Industrial Development with their debate and I am trying to bring to the attention of the honourable members of this House that these points have not been covered by the opposition nor have they brought to light anything that would infer that the honourable minister has done anything that would bring himself personal gain.

Mr Collins: We didn't suggest that.

Mr TUXWORTH: All right, Mr Speaker. What are the honourable members on the other side of the House on about? They do not have any tangible arguments against the honourable Minister for Industrial Development. They did not acknowledge ...

Mr ISAACS (Opposition Leader): A point of order, Mr Speaker. The point of order is the same as the minister himself raised and that is that the member is being tediously repetitious. He ought to introduce new material.

Mr SPEAKER: Would the honourable Minister for Mines and Energy please introduce some new material.

Mr TUXWORTH: Mr Speaker, I am only too pleased to.

One of the very valid points of this exercise that I believe the opposition has intentionally overlooked in their effort to discredit the minister and my colleague is that the minister sponsored a proposal that was brought to our notice, a proposal which the Northern Territory government believed would encourage rural development in the Northern Territory, a proposal that had previously not been successful but which, given some new thinking and some new approaches, could well work out. No credit has been given to the honourable minister for the effort he made to try to introduce this to the Northern Territory, only criticism for the things that have happened since. No honour or credit has been given to the minister for the moves that the government made in paying the people who had been left holding the bag, and I particularly refer here to the Adelaide River Cooperative. Mr Speaker, the opposition has not given any tangible reason for this particular project to be dropped. They have not, at any stage, come out and said they think the whole thing is bad news and that the government should wipe its hands of it. The truth is that the project does have some potential but that potential will not be realised overnight. I think all honourable members of this House would acknowledge that every primary industry that has been developed in this country has been developed after a lot of trial and hardship over many years.

Mr ISAACS: (Opposition Leader): A point of order, Mr Speaker! I find it very difficult to relate the remarks of the minister to either the motion or the amendment. I would ask you to draw his attention to the substance of the debate.

Mr SPEAKER: There is no point of order.

Mr TUXWORTH: Although there has been a hitch in the program to date, there is a lot of merit still left in it and it should not just be abandoned. What I am alluding to is that the continued campaign by the opposition to denigrate the minister and the program has done little to enhance our efforts. I believe they should redirect their attention to something more positive like suggesting how the program could move on in the future.

Mr Collins: Why don't you buy the place?

Mr TUXWORTH: The honourable member for Arnhem is inclined to jump in where angels fear to tread. He has just been criticising the minister and the government over the expenditure of \$150,000 which he believed was unwise - an amount of money which is probably .004% of this year's budget. From the top of his head, the honourable member now says, "why don't you buy it". If that is the type of financial responsibility that we could expect from the opposition, I believe they will be on the opposition benches for a long time because that particular style of government will not go down very well with the Northern Territory people at all.

Mr Collins: Neither will this.

Mr TUXWORTH: In fact, the very slow and methodical approach that we would have rather seen would probably bring more benefits in the long term. The ALP is not doing itself any good with its continual knocking campaign; it is not doing the Territory any good and it is probably sinking the Willeroo project quickly. I would ask them to bear that in mind when they get on to their personal vendettas against the minister.

Mrs O'NEIL (Fannie Bay): Like the honourable Minister for Health I also had not intended to speak in this debate but his speech this morning, which is one of the worst I have ever heard him give in this Chamber, prompts me to reply

to some of the matters he raised. I have listened with interest to this debate. I have heard fact upon fact introduced from this side of the Chamber. I have heard from the government side nothing in defence of the minister, nothing from his colleagues except perhaps that he did not mean to do it. In fact, I was rather amazed to hear the Minister for Health himself introduce questions suggesting personal dishonesty. Dishonesty is not the charge of the opposition. Intent to deceive is not the charge of the opposition and intent to defraud is not the charge of the opposition. Personal gain has not been mentioned by the opposition; that has only been mentioned by the Minister for Health. The opposition charge is that the minister has misled the parliament in his statements to it and in his reply to questions. That is the charge in relation to four matters: the interest rate, the question of the lien, the question of the employment of personnel and the question of the ownership of equipment.

Mr Speaker, I can distinctly remember when the question of the interest rate was first introduced into this parliament. The Minister for Industrial Development said that the rate would be 2%. I was flabbergasted by that - a 2% interest rate to a group which consists, I understand, of the Bank of Tokyo and the Bank of America, as well as the Bank of New South Wales. To find out that in fact there was no interest at all is just simply beyond belief. That is one of the areas where the minister misled the House.

We also have the charge against the government collectively that it acted illegally. I believe the government is admitting this because it says it will introduce a retrospective validating bill tomorrow so that the actions which were taken illegally in terms of this ordinance will suddenly become legal several months after they happened. We have had nothing from the government side in defence of the minister except a bit of hollow rhetoric. Some of the hollowest rhetoric heard in the last few months has been about responsible self-government. Where is this responsibility if they are not prepared to stand up and admit the minister misled the parliament and then act in accordance with the Westminster tradition and the actions that requires?

Mr Speaker, your presence there in that Chair and those beautiful dispatch boxes which we received so happily the other day are all symbols of the long and valuable Westminster tradition. That tradition demands that, when ministers mislead the parliament, they must resign. It is an unfortunate thing personally and we know that. There have been no personal reflections from the opposition on the minister's own character this morning but the long and valued Westminster traditions and the principles of responsible government demand that action must be taken. When this question comes to a vote, I hope to see members such as the Manager of Government Business who always claims to feel so strongly about the valuable traditions that we have and the honourable member for Casuarina who spoke so eloquently about his visit to the Westminster parliament and the traditions there voting in accordance with that principle - voting to say that the minister, however unfortunate it may be, must resign.

Mr PERRON (Treasurer): Mr Speaker, at the beginning of the saga that is before us at the moment, the ALP seemed to support the Willeroo project. A number of statements were made here and there indicating a muffled support of the program but now they see that there is a possibility for a political point to be scored and so they are taking every possible advantage of it. When reflecting on some of the debate here this morning, I was reminded of a few words that the honourable member for Sanderson used on 6 December 1977 when she said: "It is not simply our right to oppose, it is indeed much more - it is our duty". It seems to me that they are quite happy to oppose for the sake of opposition. This is the typical destructive attitude we have had from them right from the start; very little, if anything, is ever put forward that is truly positive.

We are looking at a part of the saga of Willeroo where the receiver agreed to provide funds for a cropping program of which certainly the Northern Territory government was in support. Halfway through the cropping program, when debts had been run up in the top half of the Northern Territory, the receiver refused to pay any more unless the Northern Territory government committed itself to purchasing the property.

The honourable member for Arnhem said the receiver was quite right in refusing to put one more cent into the deal. If that is not an unqualified endorsement of the receiver's action, I do not know what is. They are hardly reputable tactics in my mind. The opposition regards the receiver quite clearly as an impeccable source of information and totally indisputable. They are indeed strange bedfellows. The Leader of the Opposition mentioned that he had authority on behalf of the receiver to raise these matters here today. They are in fact serving each other's aims quite clearly. The opposition is trying to score a political point and the receiver is still trying to get us to purchase the property on his terms.

When the facts came to light that there were these debts throughout the Territory, the executive member of the day was faced with a very difficult decision. The opposition was screaming that people at Willeroo were facing hardship and that others like the Adelaide River Cooperative faced debts which could ruin them. In addition to that, the executive member knew that, if the Northern Territory government was to proceed with purchasing the property notwithstanding the scruples of the receiver, we wanted to see the cropping program completed to test the viability of the project. He was faced with a difficult decision. He had to temper that decision with the thought that the advance may not be recovered if the cropping program was only partially successful. He was faced with an unevitable decision. Time was paramount at that moment and the matter could not be let drag on. The executive member could not call for studies and reports on ranges of options to be put to him to decide what to do; the whole project would have collapsed if it had just been left to run on and no action taken.

What happened, Mr Speaker? The executive member, and I give him credit for this, in the light of all the facts which were available to him, acted decisively and he approved an advance. He did not procrastinate; he did not take the negative attitude that if we do nothing we can do no wrong. He acted positively and, in all the circumstances, he acted rightly. It would be interesting to know what any individual member of the opposition would have done in the same circumstances. I suspect he would have done the same. The Leader of the Opposition said about the time that these events were occurring - and this is recorded in Hansard - that there is no doubt that there is unanimity on both sides of the Assembly that people were not paid and arrangements had to be entered into to pay them. He said it again today. In other words, he was really endorsing what the executive member did at the time. Yet now they argue that the action was improper and badly handled. The whole thrust of the opposition's motion is merely one of political point-scoring.

Let us look for a moment at what would have happened if the advance had not been made. The Adelaide River Cooperative would possibly have been bankrupted. The effect on other primary producers throughout the Territory who were involved with that cooperative would have been severe. The people at Willeroo would have remained unpaid. The crops that had been planted at that time would obviously have been ruined and there would be no clear practical demonstration of the viability of the property and therefore little on which to base any decision on the purchase of the property if that decision is ever to be taken. We would therefore have seen a complete mess which would have

been the subject of loud cries by the opposition to step in and assist these people who have been the unfortunate victims of the whole circumstance. We would have been asked to step in and help them financially. On what sort of guarantees and liens could that assistance have rested? I suggest none at all.

On the subject of the lien, the receiver, upon receiving documents relating to the lien, suddenly pulled a pedantic stunt because it contained an interest rate of 2% which he was not aware of before. He well knew that any sum he had to repay would have been the proceeds of the cropping program. Was he really concerned that, if the crops realised more than the moneys invested, he would be required to pay 2% out of the profits? This wealthy man, who seems to be regarded as some sort of a wiz at interest rates on the international and the Australian scene, was supposed to be so concerned at the prospect of paying 2% if the crops were profitable. I believe the receiver was really upset at not achieving the objective of compelling the Northern Territory executive at that time to commit the Northern Territory government to purchase the property on his terms. The actions of the opposition in this whole deal have merely been to assist and support his aim.

I believe that all the actions in this situation have been taken in good faith by the executive member and the Northern Territory government. The option we had to purchase the property would have been an easy out. As the Chief Minister said, if we had wanted a massive cover-up, we would have purchased it, buried any loan that may have been made or advances that may have been made in the purchase price and the whole thing would have been forgotten. That would not have been in the interests of the Northern Territory and that was not done. The second option would have been just to let the crop fail and the creditors go yelling. That also was an unacceptable option. The third option was to advance money to complete the cropping program and to assist those persons who at that stage had money owed to them. This assistance was given under an ordinance entitled the Encouragement of Primary Production Ordinance. Surely, it is a fitting way to go about helping the Northern Territory's primary industry. In all the circumstances, I believe the right thing has been done. That is what is important and I support the amendment moved by the Chief Minister.

Ms D'ROZARIO (Sanderson): Mr Speaker, one of the crucial aspects of this censure motion, in my opinion, is that of parliamentary integrity. Unfortunately, the frontbench on the other side has completely missed the point. It was with some dismay that I heard words fall from the deputy leader's lips to the effect that this censure motion was an attempt at political point-scoring. I have some respect for the Westminster parliamentary tradition and I find it a great pity indeed that an attempt to uphold the established tradition of that system is regarded by the deputy leader of the government to be nothing more than an attempt at political point-scoring.

There are many members of the public who, despite the exposition of this whole sorry affair, are not well aware of the details of the Willeroo affair. However, the point of parliamentary integrity is well understood in our community and it behoves us all to uphold it no matter how unpleasant the circumstances are. I find the remarks by the deputy leader to be extremely disconcerting for a new legislature. We have heard much grandstanding, much politicking about this great event, many laudable and many platitudinous speeches about this self-government that has been bestowed upon us. Yet we find, on the other side, this absolute contempt for parliamentary tradition.

The deputy leader referred to a "pedantic stunt" that had been pulled by the receiver, Mr H.V. Quinton. The only thing I have to say to that is, if the deputy leader were to give as much attention to detail as the receiver did, he would not find himself in the position of having to explain to this House how an appropriation occurred outside the accepted rules. It is not a pedantic stunt to refer to the sudden appearance of a 2% interest rate which had not appeared in the previous agreement. It is not a pedantic stunt and it would not be considered a pedantic stunt if the Treasurer ever found himself in a position of having to accept a 2% increase in an interest rate if he were dealing with another party. At least, we would hope he would not regard it as such. I wonder whether the bill which is going to be introduced tomorrow by the minister, whom I hope will not be the minister for long, will also be regarded as a pedantic stunt. It seems to me that there have been a number of errors made in this and that the deputy leader is now accusing the opposition of pendency in seeking to get this matter rectified.

The Chief Minister also made some remarks which I find not only contrary to the parliamentary tradition known to us but indeed quite at odds with it. It is not at all a happy situation where we, a new legislature, have to find ourselves in a situation which is diametrically opposed to the practice in other parliaments. He said, "At all times the minister has acted honestly in this matter; he has not, unfortunately, always been as well served". Mr Speaker, I am not quite sure what the Chief Minister meant by that remark but I interpret that remark to mean that the Minister for Industrial Development did not always get the right response from his public servants. The Chief Minister also said: "On a matter of ministerial responsibility, the people for whom the minister answers must be responsible to him". The minister in turn must be responsible to the parliament. There is no getting around that fact and I think that any deviation from that principle bodes very ill for this new parliament.

We have seen in recent times that a number of ministers have been forced to step down in circumstances which have never been pleasant. However, it has come to be an accepted tradition in the Australian parliament and in all parliaments which follow the Westminster principle that this practice must be upheld at all costs. The Chief Minister enlightened this House by saying that, if the minister had provided incorrect information to this Assembly, he did not do so intentionally. I can remember not so long ago in the infamous loans affair that one Dr Cairns was supposed to have signed a letter and he offered a similar explanation. It did not save his position on the frontbench nor should it save the position of the member for Ludmilla on the frontbench.

There have been many such incidents recently which the Leader of the Opposition has outlined. Whilst the members of the frontbench, to my dismay, to the dismay of the people in the gallery, to the dismay of the people of the press, have offered absolutely no defence of the minister's actions, none at all, they are equally happy to show contempt towards the traditions of the parliament. The Chief Minister said this morning that there was no way that the minister would step down. I suggest to him and to all his ministerial colleagues on the other side that that is not good enough for this legislature and it is not good enough for the people of the Territory.

Mrs LAWRIE (Nightcliff): Mr Speaker, I think it is true to say that members on all sides of the House would wish to see the original concept of Willeroo brought to a successful conclusion - that is, acquired in a most proper manner and share-farming undertaken for the benefit of the Territory. The question under debate in the House today is whether or not proper procedures were followed in all the attempts and acquisitions of the property

and, more fundamentally, whether the House was kept fully and honestly informed of the moves undertaken by the Majority Party. I did not look forward to this debate with any pleasurable anticipation. I was rather dreading it and, having listened closely all morning to the points raised by the opposition and the statements in defence by the Chief Minister and his cabinet colleagues, I must say that I agree there has been a breach of the Westminster tradition.

It appears to me that we have been seriously misled and that there is no other course open, unfortunately, but for one of the more pleasant of the CLP ministers to resign. I do not say that with any pleasure. The Chief Minister assured the House that the minister responsible had been apparently misled by those advising him. I will accept that at face value but I take the point made by the Prime Minister, Malcolm Fraser, that unfortunately the head that must roll is not the adviser but the minister and that is the basis of our Westminster system. Interestingly, two earlier speakers have homed in on that point - the honourable members for Fannie Bay and Sanderson.

I was appalled at the manner in which the Minister for Mines and Energy addressed himself to the very vexatious question before the House at the moment. The Chief Minister did not, in my view, offer any reasonable excuse for what has happened. Answers have been given to the House which have been found to be untrue. The information went to the minister for the giving of the answers and the answers were in fact untrue. The Treasurer made an attempt to blame some of this on the background of the transactions but the Minister for Mines and Energy, by inference, suggested that the opposition were accusing the minister responsible for all kinds of improper things including personal gain. That appalled me. In the debate in this House, in the press and in questions on notice, there has been no such attempt by anyone to personally attack the integrity of the minister opposite. In fact, if there had been such an attack, I would have defended him.

The point of the opposition's attack today was the fundamental one of ministerial responsibility in advising the House of matters under their control. For the record, I wish to repeat the quote from Malcolm Fraser read by the Leader of the Opposition because it was the most pertinent point made in the debate to date. I quote:

The minister has failed to meet appropriate standards of ministerial responsibility. The Westminster tradition is that a minister bears the political responsibility for major blunders and misdeeds of his underlings. A precise and fundamental principle of parliamentary government is at stake here. The principle is that the parliament must be able to accept assurances given to it by a minister and, if those assurances prove to be misleading, the minister concerned must be held responsible. It is the principle on which the integrity of parliament itself depends. This is the great and fundamental parliamentary convention that must be upheld. Party loyalty must not be allowed to come before private conscience and public responsibility.

I find it difficult to believe that there is a member on the floor of this House who would not echo those sentiments. I rise today to make it quite clear that I know, and I believe some members of the Australian Labor Party know, that there is no suggestion that the minister who has provided answers which have been found to be incorrect did so from a personal motive or any of those motives which were imputed by the Minister for Mines and Energy. Until he spoke, I did not feel it would be necessary to rise from my seat but I really feel that the statements he made were clouding the issue and were trying to impute improper motives to this side of the House.

The honourable member for Arnhem said that, at the very least, the minister responsible had shown inefficiency and inability to handle his portfolio and that someone more efficient and with more ability should be promoted to his job. When I look around, Mr Speaker, I do not know how that could possibly happen.

I must also oppose the amendment because I do not believe the ALP has been deliberately destructive nor is it trying to kill Willeroo. I know that at least one member, the honourable member for Victoria River, has his heart and soul in backing the primary producers of the Northern Territory and particularly the small producers. He represents a large number of them in his electorate and he represents them very well in this Chamber.

Mr Speaker, the honourable member for Stuart is muttering over there and asking is this a policy speech. I do not feel it necessary to try and make a policy speech on behalf of any of the parties but when I hear the integrity of certain members attacked, I will defend them if I feel it is necessary and I do not need any advice from the honourable member for Stuart as to how to conduct myself in this Chamber.

Mr Everingham: You haven't defended any of our members.

Mrs LAWRIE: The honourable Chief Minister says, "you never defend any of our members". That is untrue, of course. He himself said that I was the one member not of his party to spring to his defence over an issue involving Aboriginal affairs. He is quite right. I defended him publicly and while he does the right thing I will continue to do so. And I have defended other members of his party. But unfortunately for the Chief Minister and others of his ilk, I cannot be categorised as neatly as he would like and I will judge things on the facts presented before me.

Mr Speaker, it is not a happy occasion to stand and support a call for the resignation of Roger Steele from his ministry because I think that, like the honourable member for Victoria River, he puts a great deal of heart into his attempts to help primary producers in the Northern Territory. Unfortunately, in his ministry he has given to this House information which was found to be misleading and untrue; under our system there is only one course open and that is his resignation.

Mr ROBERTSON (Community Development): Mr Speaker, I think it is about time we made a little analysis of what has happened here today. I think the first thing we ought to analyse is what the charges are and how much substance there is in them. Certainly, I would agree that that has not yet been done with any sort of force.

So, what are the charges? I take it that the principal concern of the opposition is related - and indeed the Leader of the Opposition made great store of it - around an accusation that my colleague, the Minister for Industrial Development, misled the House on the question of who was responsible at Willeroo-Scott Creek area and whether or not the receiver was in concurrence with what happened at that place.

I think the second point which has been raised was the question of whether or not there was a lien and no one has denied that there was not a lien, but that was attached of course to the accusation that the taxpayers' money had been spent without there being any security. What then do we define as being security

He also raised the question of capital equipment. The minister is alleged to have told the House on one occasion that the Primary Producers Board had purchased equipment and on another occasion he had informed the House that, on his information then, it had not. So let us have a look at that in due course.

The further question has arisen as to who was in overall control of the cropping program and the disposition of that cropping program and what happened as a result of that. Another question was that of employment - who was responsible for employees and, of course, a more significant point I suppose was what was the motive of the government in its whole exercise of trying to get into Willeroo-Scott Creek and the exercise of the opposition in bringing this thing forward.

Let us deal with whether or not there was an agreement in respect of the moneys advanced by the Primary Producers Board to the receiver on behalf of the corporation in receivership. Of course this stemmed, as we all know, from what the Leader of the Opposition has described earlier, if I might go back to my notes, as being of the highest and purest motive. Then we come to how the whole thing really started to come to a head and we look at motive again. The facts of the matter are that the motives on this side of the House have been acknowledged by the opposition as being of the highest order. I deny that the opposition had those same motives. It is true that the honourable member for Victoria River first brought this matter to a head and that indeed is his task. But let us see how he did it. And let us examine, in questioning how he did it, whether or not his motives were as pure as the Leader of the Opposition attributed to this side of the House.

The Leader of the Opposition pointed out that he carried out that exercise in a specific manner. He did not approach the minister; he did not approach the department, as is his right - we have this arrangement with the opposition whereby they can approach anyone on a senior level, anywhere in any department of the Northern Territory, provided they are at divisional level. That is the arrangement between the Chief Minister and the Leader of the Opposition. Did he do that? No, he did not. The Leader of the Opposition informed us he did it by a press article. Now we cannot help, therefore, asking the question: what was the motive - not at the debate stage where we are now but right from the very first day.

We have a number of people who are alleged to have been disadvantaged by the actions of the Primary Producers Board and by the actions of the receiver, who were having difficulties making certain payments. The Leader of the Opposition quite rightly has pointed out that I had an investigation conducted and officers were sent to determine the truth of that accusation. Of course, in reality it turned out that the inflammatory and scare tactics, the emotionalism and the emotive way in which the member for Victoria River went about it - not through the normal channels, not as a normal person would who was interested in the welfare of the people down there - oh, dear me, no! He went about it in the most emotive, public-display manner possible by using the press - and those are not my words; those are the words, of course, that the Leader of the Opposition used in this Chamber today. So let us not fool ourselves about motive and about good intentions. Let us recognise wreckers for what they really are.

Let us look now, Mr Speaker - having dealt with motive - at the second question on the lien, on the security. It has been admitted on this side that there was no lien ever signed but, of course, the whole business goes back to the matter raised initially in this improper manner by the member for Victoria

River where attention was drawn not so much to the plight of the people involved because, indeed, their position was nowhere near as serious as he outlined. The fact of the matter is that debts had been run up with a cooperative which was owned wholly by citizens, not by companies, not by anyone who could rely upon the law to avoid debts as a proprietary or limited company can but by people of the Northern Territory in that region who had put their money into it.

Fully recognising that, in the words of the Leader of the Opposition previously, something had to be done about it - money had to be paid to discharge those debts in order to maintain the credibility of the Primary Producers Board, the credibility of the receiver; if ever credit was to be obtained again for any further experimental crops or whatever, those debts had to be paid - on 20 April this year the Chief Minister wrote to the receiver, Mr H.V. Quinton, outlining an offer. On page 2, under item 3 of that offer, the words are as follows - and I will not read the lot of it but half way down it says: "... on the clear understanding that any profits or losses from the sale of farm produce will accrue to the Primary Producers Board in repayment of the advance which will be secured by a crop lien". Mr Speaker, that was a letter of an offer, a normal half of a normal contract in normal civil law - no argument about that.

Then by telex and by letter, under the hand of Mr LeHane of Allen, Allen and Hemsley, this distinguished - and I accept that - experienced and competent firm of solicitors and receivers, we have a reply. By letter under his hand, they accepted the terms of the offer of the Chief Minister which included a lien and made another condition which is very, very significant in terms of who managed what when. The wording of paragraph (a) is: "The receiver will cooperate with the Primary Producers Board" - cooperate, not be subservient to it - "in harvesting, storing, marketing the crop, but the receiver's decision on all of those matters will be final and not open to any dispute". So it is quite clear that we have an offer and an acceptance of the offer. A normal contract has been formed. Following this, a letter was received from Mr G.A. Hilt on 28 April which followed on from the acceptance of that offer, forming a contract. This was an application by that gentleman to the Primary Producers Board on behalf of the receiver for the purposes of securing a loan under the conditions normally applicable to Primary Producers Board loans.

Now what are those conditions and who would we expect, above all, to understand those conditions? We have heard of the pre-eminence, the experience, the knowledge of H.V. Quinton and Company as receiver, as a member of the firm Allen, Allen and Hemsley. Mr Speaker, here is the legislation in my hand. Right throughout it mentions the words "interest rate". What experienced person - as we accept - would enter into negotiations with the Primary Producers Board, accept money from the Primary Producers Board, having full regard to the legislation I have in my hand, without knowing damned well that it carries automatically in normal business practice - of which he is an expert - an interest component?

So what is the interest component that they would expect in the normal market place? I suppose we would talk in a deal like this of something like 8½%, 10%, 11%. No, it is not that at all. It is a totally nominal interest rate offered to the receiver in terms that he would have expected anyway in normal circumstances. He would have expected a component of interest to apply but it is 2%, not the normal going rate. Good heavens! What sort of a businessman is this, unless he had some other motive like dropping documents off the back of trucks, in holding up this particular enterprise, this loan, this lien.

In other words, he had accepted, based upon an exchange of letters and a formal application following this exchange of letters, an offer of the Northern Territory government, via the Primary Producers Board which the Chief Minister has already indicated to the House did not have direct ministerial control at that time. He must have gone into that with his eyes open.

The honourable Minister for Industrial Development knew the documents for the lien had been prepared; he knew they had been despatched; he knew the contents of these letters; he knew the receiver, knowing an interest component was necessary in any transaction from the Primary Producers Board because it is riddled throughout that legislation as being a requirement, a normal business practice - knowing all of that and acknowledging it in writing, of course the Minister for Industrial Development would have had every right to automatically assume, after that time lapse, that the matter had been properly dealt with. In other words, Mr Speaker, it was not an attempt to mislead the House at all. It was acting on what he, with all the evidence available to him and having regard to all the advice available to him, would have expected to be the normal course of a business transaction, particularly having regard to the high reputation of the people with whom he was dealing. Certainly, to make an accusation that this man has set out to mislead the House in that matter fails before it gets off the ground.

Let us now look at the question of the capital equipment which it has been alleged has been a source of misrepresentation in this House. When we talk as ministers about advice from officers in the public service, it is the last thing - and I have said this to my colleagues and I have indicated it to my department - as a minister, I will always back the officers of my department. I might go crook at them in the office but the whole fundamental basis of the way this system of government works is for a minister to support the officers of his public service, and members of boards are the same. What a cowardly act to place my colleague in this position!

Let me give an example of how the Australian Labor Party reacts where an ordinary minister, as a result of information given to him, has to retract. That is indeed what my colleague did. Initially, he said, "The information I have received indicates that plant and equipment has been bought". The honourable Leader of the Opposition has explained what those items are and, to the best of my knowledge, he is quite accurate on the information then available to the honourable minister. Subsequent information provided to the minister indicated that that information was incorrect, that there was no record to be found anywhere of the purchase of those items. What does the minister do? He investigates it further. He calls for further inquiries. He asks them to research it further and the advice comes back to him that, to the best of the knowledge of the Territory Development Corporation, there are no documents to support the contention that any equipment has been bought. My honourable colleague, the Minister for Industrial Development, having given advice to this House based upon the information available to him at the time, then quite properly had to correct that advice based upon information subsequently given to him. That is the reality of it. That is the admission, and since when does that constitute any great breach of the Westminster system?

On the advice available to him at the time, he answered the question honestly and truthfully. When he was provided with information which contradicted it, he did not duck for cover, as would be the want I would think of cowards. No, far from it. What he did was to come out in the open and say, "My information now is that there is no evidence of it. This plant and equipment has not been purchased". And not satisfied with that - if we are talking about the

man's sense of responsibility - he is still asking for further investigations to be carried out into that very issue. After all, that plant is there and someone must own it. The minister is as concerned, I think, as any other member of this Chamber to learn who does own it, particularly considering it involves taxpayers' money and, of course, he should be concerned about it.

What is the normal attitude that we would expect? The opposition says that because of instances like this, because of an honest attempt to keep the House informed, because of answering questions as honestly as his information would permit, he is to resign. What did the honourable Premier of South Australia do when on three separate occasions he misled the House on information supplied by a senior officer, a most eminent senior officer within the police system of that state? He misled the House. Further, he misled the public on repeated occasions outside the House. What did he do? Did he resign? No, he sacked the man who provided the information. Now, let us get this into perspective. Let us balance up those two issues and let us look at whether or not this man's resignation should be forthcoming. On that alone, on the actions as practised by the opposition, I would suggest indeed it would not.

It seems to me, if I have any difficulty in going further, it is because I have answered all the queries raised by the other side. What really have we talked about? We have talked about the 2% interest rate. We have talked about the lien. We have covered the role, the active knowing role of the receiver. And incidentally, on that role of the receiver, at no time did my colleague indicate to the House that the receiver would have known everything that happened at Willeroo at all times. Of course, he would not suggest that. What he was saying was that there was no full-time manager appointed. How on earth, when the receiver lives in Sydney, could he know exactly what is happening at all times at Willeroo? That was not the suggestion of my colleague. It was a wild, free-wheeling construction placed on it by the Leader of the Opposition.

Mr Speaker, in doing any examination of an inquisition like this - a Spanish inquisition, ALP-style - we really want to look at what the merits of those who dare to cast stones are and what is their definition of honesty, compared with the definition of honesty as applied by this side. If we examine the role of the Leader of the Opposition, in terms of integrity and factuality in the public forum, then I think on a quick glance back through newspapers some utterances of his would probably indicate the merit of the person who is making this accusation. Whether or not it is worth going through these in legion I do not know, but we will all recall quite recently the Leader of the Opposition - and it is relevant when we are talking about the amendment, in case someone jumps up and says I am not speaking to the motion, because we are talking about a general philosophy of knocking, of misdirection, of misleading the public, which is exactly what the opposition is accused of by this side of the House. We can start off with his role as an economist, so-called, in treasury matters. We heard an accusation recently that the Northern Territory government, via some leaks incidentally - and not only is he giving out false information, he is denigrating the office of the Treasurer and the integrity of the Department of the Treasury in leaking this false information - we hear that the Northern Territory government has overspent - not that he believes it has, "has overspent" - by \$700,000. Of course, the truth of the matter was it had underspent for that year, as is quite often the case, by \$39,000.

Let us get a little bit closer to home. We are talking about integrity...

Mr Collins: This is all ...

Mr Doolan: What about Willeroo?

Mr ROBERTSON: I am talking about the way you people go about knocking everything by falsehoods and I am questioning the veracity and the legitimacy of the other side to dare to bring forward a motion for the dismissal or resignation of a minister on this side on the question of honesty.

Mr Isaacs: The Treasurer admits he overspent.

Mr ROBERTSON: In one area only. You said it was an overall expenditure on the budget.

Mr Speaker, let me come to an example a little bit closer to home when we are questioning the opposition and its right to bring forward this type of motion and the reason for the Northern Territory government questioning it through this amendment.

I recall very clearly, and I raised this matter in the House before, when the Leader of the Opposition claimed in Katherine - speaking particularly to the people of Katherine but also for the consumption of the people of Tennant Creek - that the people in those municipalities would be paying rates four times as high as the people of Darwin. That comment was made after my staff had hand delivered for his personal attention a detailed statement and analysis of exactly how the rating would work.

Mr COLLINS (Arnhem): A point of order, Mr Speaker. The amendment specifically states that the government censures the opposition for its destructive tactics over the proposal to encourage closer agricultural settlement at Willeroo. For the last five minutes this debate has been totally irrelevant.

Mr ROBERTSON: Mr Speaker, in order to make out a case for that, it is necessary to look at the history of the opposition and its record in terms of destructive attitudes and carryings-on.

Mr SPEAKER: I consider the honourable minister is a bit wide of the mark and I think he could confine his remarks more to the motion and the amendment.

Mr ROBERTSON: Mr Speaker, I accept your ruling without question at all times.

Let us then look at the basis of the substantive, in inverted commas, evidence offered by the opposition in its accusations about my colleague, the minister. Do you know what it is based on? It is based on what they have been told by the official receiver. The official receiver through his mouthpiece, the honourable Leader of the Opposition, has indicated in this House today that he was not aware of what was going on and what work was being carried out. The fact of the matter is that the entire evidence of the opposition attack - and this was the great storm made by the Leader of the Opposition - was that the official receiver had assured him personally that he was unaware of what was happening at Willeroo. I do not see the official receiver in this place. What the honourable members opposite are asking us to do is to condemn a minister on their unsubstantiated words, based upon information given verbally or in writing, on information as to an opinion given by the official receiver to the honourable Leader of the Opposition. There is not one other scrap of evidence before this Assembly to support those accusations.

Mr Collins: What about the Chief Minister?

Mr ROBERTSON: There goes that tin bucket rattling again. I withdraw that, Mr Speaker. I was just waiting for you to leap to your feet, Bob.

Mr Everingham: A plastic bucket.

Mr ROBERTSON: There is no reason why I should call the receiver anything other than truthful but the fact of the matter is that he is not here to give that evidence. We have the word of the Leader of the Opposition, second-hand words from the receiver as interpreted by the Leader of the Opposition. There is not one shred of evidence to support the major allegation of the Leader of the Opposition, which took up three of his five points, that the receiver was not aware of what was happening at Willeroo-Scott Creek. The whole thing is founded on hearsay and interpreted for his own political purposes by the Leader of the Opposition and therefore, by any yardstick of natural justice, must fail before the consideration of any reasonable person.

It seems to me that the amendment to the motion explains the attitude of the opposition to perfection. When you really examine each and every issue, the allegations made are full of water; they have no substance. The only thing I have heard here of substance is the amendment moved by the Chief Minister.

Mr PERKINS (MacDonnell): In entering into this debate I am interested to get back to the motion and the amendment and hopefully to some of the facts which have been outlined earlier in this debate by the Leader of the Opposition. It is facts about which we were talking and it is facts in which we are interested. Evidence has been given by the Leader of the Opposition whom the public would regard as a man of responsibility, honesty and integrity and the information he has provided is based on answers to questions which have been provided by the honourable minister in this Assembly.

The opposition has been accused of destroying agricultural development in the Northern Territory. I would hotly deny that. The opposition is not in the business of destroying agricultural development in the Northern Territory but rather in ensuring that agricultural development takes place on a proper basis. I would say the opposition is more concerned about the manner in which the Willeroo project has been handled and the incompetence and bungling which has occurred. That has been revealed in the answers to the questions which have been provided by the honourable minister under dispute.

The facts were ably given by the Opposition Leader. I do not need to elaborate on those facts because they were so eloquently given in this House this morning. The opposition is alleging that the honourable minister has misled the House on information we have received in answers to our questions. Further, there is the other allegation made by the opposition which has credibility and which is based on the evidence that \$150,000 was advanced to the receiver without any security. I am talking about facts. I am also saying that, in view of what has happened, there has been damage to the credibility of the Northern Territory government and future governments because of the woeful handling of the Willeroo project. This fact has been made clear today in the information and the evidence which the opposition has provided. The opposition has also made the point that the purchase of the Willeroo project did not go ahead according to law.

I was amazed to hear the Chief Minister refer to trust and to responsibility and to integrity in reply to the Governor-General's speech. As I understand it, those kinds of remarks are only empty rhetoric. I was even more amazed to hear the replies of the Chief Minister and the poor defence which he offered in reply to the allegations made by the Opposition Leader. He endeavoured to criticise

the Opposition Leader over the payment of wages to personnel on the Willeroo project. That was most inaccurate because the Opposition Leader did not at any time even attempt to criticise the payment of wages to those people who had not received any wages on the project.

I was further amazed to note that the Chief Minister said that, if the minister did give any false information to the Assembly, then it was not intentional. I find that response really amazing. I would interpret it as an admission on his part that the honourable minister has in fact actually misled this House. This is precisely the point which the opposition is making, Mr Speaker.

I was even further amazed to note that the Chief Minister went a bit further to say that the minister, when information has been provided to him by his advisers, is not always well served by those advisers. I would interpret that as an attack on the public servants and the advisers who are responsible for giving the information to the honourable minister under dispute. I would also interpret that statement as an attempt to sidestep the issue and to evade the point about this minister having responsibility. Whether you like it or not, the minister is responsible and he must be responsible if we are to have any credence for self-government, self-rule and self-responsibility. That is the point the opposition has harped upon in the debate today.

It is interesting to note that the Chief Minister is endeavouring to blame the public servants and advisers for providing the misinformation. I would regard that as a cowardly act in order to pass the buck and to transfer responsibility. It is also interesting to note that the Primary Producers Board went out of existence in June. I wonder who the Chief Minister is referring to when he talks about all those people who were responsible for providing the information to the minister.

I was also amazed to hear the Chief Minister allege that the opposition is in league with the receiver. I would hotly deny this. I do not believe this is the argument. The argument concerns the allegations, supported by evidence, which have been made in this House by the opposition. I thought the Chief Minister would be interested and also concerned with knowing the facts. I want to put it to you and to honourable members that the opposition has provided the facts and the evidence in this debate today. Unfortunately, those facts have been evaded. We have not received any adequate response to the claims which we have made. An extraordinary situation has occurred whereby fact which were presented in these debates by the honourable member for Victoria River have not even been denied by the members of the government opposite. I am referring specifically to the fact that outside persons were employed on the Willeroo project, including Aboriginals of which we understand there were 6. I do not see the members of the government denying that particular fact.

I would like to place on the record of this Assembly that the opposition is only concerned with trying to bring out the truth in this matter to the people of the Northern Territory. We are concerned that the facts ought to be known. We would like to see a situation - and I am sure other people in the Northern Territory would like to see it - whereby the answers provided to our questions are in fact honest answers and are not designed to mislead the House.

I was amazed to hear the poor defence by the minister who is under attack. All he could say was that the opposition was embarking on a course of political opportunism. Of course, he went on to talk about aspects of self-government, the budget and the criticism thereof. I would deny that the opposition is on

a course of political opportunism. We are trying very hard to ensure that there is an effective opposition in the Northern Territory. When we hear of the Willeroo arrangements and such matters, we are interested, as the public is interested, in knowing the facts and the truth. We want honest answers.

I was amazed to hear the response of the honourable Minister for Mines and Energy when he said the people are sick and tired of the carping and hollow criticism from the opposition in the Territory. He had the cheek to go even further to suggest that the criticism from the opposition is anti-Territorian. Who is he to speak on behalf of all Territorians? Opposition members here also represent interests and people in the Northern Territory and their concern has been expressed to us about these matters, in particular the matters that are involved in this debate. I would hotly deny that our criticism is in any way anti-Territorian.

I would also deny that we are trying to create, by innuendo, fear and apprehension in the Northern Territory community. I have not seen any evidence which suggests that the allegation made by the Minister for Mines and Energy in this respect is true. I was interested to note that, towards the end of his speech, the Minister for Mines and Energy admitted that there had been a hitch in the Willeroo proposal. I interpret that as an admission that there has been bungling in the Willeroo project and that it was handled badly. That is one of the points about which we are concerned.

As I have tried to indicate, the purpose of the opposition is to try to get to the truth and the facts on the way in which the Willeroo project has been handled. It is not our business to undermine agricultural development in the Territory; it is our business to provide an effective opposition to ensure that the people of the Northern Territory are aware of what is going on and what their government is doing.

Unfortunately, in the responses which have been given today by the honourable members opposite, there is very little indication that their answers have been adequate and that they have in fact properly answered the charges which have been made by the opposition. I would hope that this whole affair would be a lesson to the new Northern Territory government. I would hope they would have the guts and the decency to admit they have made a mistake and they are prepared to learn by that mistake. I am reminded of a cliché which has been used by a colleague of the member opposite - and I am referring to the Prime Minister of Australia - when he was referring to another gentleman on the national political scene. He claimed that that particular gentleman was caught with his pants down. In this situation, the Northern Territory government has been caught with its pants down and it is about time it did something about it to rectify the manner in which it is running the government of the Northern Territory.

The Assembly divided:

Ayes 12

Mr Ballantyne
Mr Dondas
Mr Everingham
Mr Harris
Mr MacFarlane
Mr Oliver
Mrs Padgham-Purich
Mr Perron
Mr Robertson
Mr Steele
Mr Tuxworth
Mr Vale

Noes 7

Mr Collins
Mr Doolan
Ms D'Rozario
Mr Isaacs
Mrs Lawrie
Mrs O'Neil
Mr Perkins

Amendment agreed to.

Mr ISAACS (Opposition Leader): Mr Speaker, I think it is somewhat unfortunate that the amendment has been put in the way it has but nonetheless I will reply to the various answers given by the ministers opposite. It is interesting to note that not one backbencher from the government side saw fit to defend the minister. Indeed, in the paltry answers given by the ministers opposite, not one of them really put his mind to the question of defending the minister. The only exception to that perhaps was the minister who spoke last. I will deal with his criticisms in a moment.

The Chief Minister made an extraordinary attempt at trying to pass the buck. We are used to that but we did think that responsible self-government meant that ministers would be held responsible for decisions taken. Of course, they are very keen and eager to take credit for all sorts of things over which they have absolutely no control and say that these are a result of the wonderful philosophy of the Country Liberal Party. When it comes to accepting the hard knocks of government, they duck for cover. It is typical of the Chief Minister that he would blame everybody bar himself. Who is at fault in relation to the muck-up at Willeroo and admitted by members opposite as being a muck-up? Not the Chief Minister! After all, he only wrote the letter to the receiver telling him what the conditions of the advance were. However, it is not his fault; it is not the Minister for Industrial Development's fault that he ...

Mr DONDAS (Casuarina): A point of order, Mr Speaker. The honourable Leader of the Opposition is not speaking to the motion.

Mr SPEAKER: The honourable Leader of the Opposition is speaking to the motion as amended. If the government members persist with this attitude, they will be refusing the honourable Leader of the Opposition any right of reply.

Mr ISAACS: I am addressing my mind to the remarks made by the members opposite. I thought that was my right under Standing Orders.

Mr SPEAKER: The motion has been amended now and you are speaking to the amended motion.

Mr ISAACS: I am trying to address myself to the arguments put up by members opposite. They spoke to the amendment and surely, if I am addressing myself to their comments, I can respond.

It is very easy to shelve responsibility and to shelve it onto somebody who cannot respond. The Chief Minister is a member of this Assembly, as is the Minister for Industrial Development. The head of the Department of Industrial Development is not a member of this Assembly and he cannot respond. I wonder how other public servants feel when they see the blame for what obviously is a palpable misleading of this Assembly being sheeted home to public servants.

The Minister for Industrial Development says he is not going to respond to the criticisms made by the opposition. He has to wait for somebody to write his second-reading speech for the validating legislation so that he can answer them. However, he told us that there might have been a few mistakes here and there - just like the handshaking - and that is why they are introducing the validating legislation. There is a problem of logic with that kind of proposition. Validating legislation can validate acts but it cannot validate lies.

Mr ROBERTSON (Community Development): A point of order, Mr Speaker. The reference is directly to the honourable Minister for Industrial Development

and the word "lie" was used in reference to that member. I ask that it be withdrawn.

Mr ISAACS: I withdraw the word "lie", Mr Speaker.

As I say, validating legislation can certainly validate actions but it cannot validate untruths; it certainly cannot validate statements made by the minister which we have proved to be misleading. But there was his only defence - a few untruths here and there, like handshakes, and that is why we are introducing validating legislation.

Now the Treasurer had a much cuter way of looking at the proposal. He said everything was going swimmingly until the receiver pulled a bit of a stunt. The Treasurer was concerned that the receiver was worrying about a mere matter of 2% interest rate, a mere bagatelle. What is 2% on \$150,000, after all? In any event - as he nods away there - in any event, he says it is all going to be covered. So what is the receiver worrying about? I would have hoped that the Treasurer would take a slightly different view, certainly in describing, as he did, the receiver of the Bank of New South Wales. But I will tell you what the receiver is worried about and why he pulled, as the Treasurer called it, this stunt. If you read section 16 of the Encouragement of Primary Production Ordinance, you find out the obligations of people who are receiving loans under the terms of the ordinance, especially remembering that the receiver believed he had made an arrangement with the Majority Leader - not with the Primary Producers Board but with the Majority Leader - in relation to the cash advance. So how do you think he felt when he received a letter, a proforma letter, after 30 June signed by somebody purporting to be acting for the Primary Producers Board, seeking the first instalment of interest as required under section 16(4) of the Encouragement of Primary Production Ordinance? A mere bagatelle, but it was totally contrary to the agreement reached, not between the receiver and the Primary Producers Board but between the receiver and the Majority Leader. That is what concerned the receiver and so it ought to. I am amazed that the Treasurer should pass that off as something like a pedantic stunt.

Mr Robertson: The application was made to the Primary Producers Board, not to the Chief Minister.

Mr ISAACS: The only person who made any attempt at all to rationally consider what the opposition was saying was the Minister for Community Development. I see the Minister for Mines and Energy on the edge of his chair; I have missed him out for obvious reasons. The Minister for Community Development at least attempted to handle the questions and to look at them, and to try and explain them. I would have thought it was the responsibility of the relevant minister but he is waiting for somebody to write his speech on the validating bill. At least the Minister for Community Development did us the courtesy of trying to answer those questions. He tried to say there might have been a few mistakes but who are the opposition to talk anyway? Look at the way they behave when they are under attack - and he produced the chestnut about Premier Dunstan and the police commissioner. I am sure the Premier of South Australia is going to be impressed when he reads what the minister had to say in that regard. There is obviously no parallel. In fact, it is totally irrelevant. The simple fact was that the police commissioner in South Australia determined that he was above the parliament and, quite obviously, from what he said in this Assembly today the Minister for Community Development does not believe that that ought to be the case.

Mr Robertson: I have never argued that he should not have been dismissed.

Mr ISAACS: The point is this: in relation to the words of the receiver, the Minister for Community Development says it is only my saying it; it is hearsay. The Minister for Industrial Development never said that they told the receiver everything that went on. Well, that is what he says. But let us read the answer which the Minister for Industrial Development gave, in answer to question No. 553. Let me quote from it. He is referring to the chairman of the Primary Producers Board and said: "In assuming those responsibilities he" - that is the chairman - "acted with the full knowledge and concurrence of the receiver". I do not know how you can get away from that - "full knowledge and concurrence". As I said this morning, I am authorised by the receiver to say that is completely untrue. It is a bit silly to say, "We do not know about that; the receiver is not here to say it". Well, he is not a member of this Assembly. But if you want to call him to the bar of the Assembly and ask him the question, do so. I am sure he would provide you with the very same answer.

The simple fact is that the opposition has raised five significant matters in relation to the minister misleading the parliament. He said there was a 2% interest rate. There was no interest rate. He mentioned in May that there was a lien on the crops. The Chief Minister informs us that he found out just a couple of days ago that there was not a lien. That not only shows complete incompetence on the part of the government but it shows that the Chief Minister himself knows that the Minister for Industrial Development misled the parliament.

Thirdly, on the question of whether or not the receiver had full knowledge of and concurred with what was going on, it is quite clear that he did not. There is the matter of assets, with all the gobbledegook that went on from the Minister for Community Development that there were no records, no bits of paper - there seems to have been a surfeit of pieces of paper as to what went on in this whole Willeroo fiasco, and that perhaps is the whole problem. But let me again remind you of the answer given by the minister himself to question No. 711. The answer does not say that they could not find the bits of paper or that they were wrong in May. The answer is very simple - and I quote: "No assets have been acquired or come under the control of the Primary Producers Board as a result of the involvement in the Willeroo-Scott Creek properties, beyond an interest in the harvest of produce by virtue of a crop lien". He cannot get away from that. I did not write it. Presumably it came under the hand of the Minister for Industrial Development. It seems to us, in those areas which we have pointed out, the evidence is so inescapable. There is no question whatever that the minister has misled this Assembly.

Let me go one step further. It sets a most distressing precedent for this Assembly. It means that when we ask questions, not just of the Minister for Industrial Development but of all the ministers opposite, do we have to ask them whether or not the answers they are going to give are the truth or unintentionally incorrect, or half the truth, because that is the whole point of parliamentary procedure and the fact that ministers must take responsibility for the answers given. This whole sorry incident is sorry not just because the minister has clearly misled the parliament but because members opposite seem to be able to shrug it off, to tough it out. Tomorrow is another day.

The whole crux of the issue comes in what is going to happen immediately something happens to this motion. The next item of business is going to be a piece of validating legislation introduced by the minister under question himself, attempting to validate actions taken by the government. What we have said is not only that the minister has misled the parliament but the government itself has acted in a way which deserves censure. They are admitting that.

They are accepting that. They are going to pass validating legislation, something which they do in Queensland but something which the Minister for Community Development himself has said he does not particularly approve of. So if ever we need justification for the motion, if ever the logic of what we have said is to be there, it is provided by the government itself. But of course there is an infallible logic in the numbers in this Assembly - twelve on one side and six on the other, and one independent. The independent has indicated today that, on the evidence before her, the case has been made out that the minister ought to resign.

Mr Speaker, it is a sorry day. May I reiterate the view of the opposition in relation to the Willeroo purchase - it is a proposition which, of course, we would like to see go ahead; but it is the sort of thing which, in the words of the Minister for Industrial Development himself, if it goes ahead it has to go ahead according to law. It is quite obvious that the government has handled it in a most unfortunate manner. There is no doubt that it will reflect badly on Northern Territory governments of the future.

I would have hoped that when the government realised the mess it had made, it would have been big enough to admit it, to say so and then get on with the business of government. But instead, what has happened? If you follow the arguments which have gone on in relation to Willeroo, it has been one cover-up after another, one untruth after another, and a misleading of the parliament in order to cover up another unfortunate happening, an unfortunate bungling. It may be unintentional but, nonetheless, a bungling and a misleading of the parliament has occurred.

Mr Speaker, it is most unfortunate that members opposite have sat there, stone-walled it, tried to say that really it is nothing. The question of misleading the parliament is a most important one. It is somewhat frustrating on this side of the House to see the attitude adopted by members opposite. It sets a most unfortunate precedent in the business of this Assembly.

Mr Robertson: They ought to canonise you.

The Assembly divided:

Ayes 12.

Noes 7

Mr Ballantyne
Mr Dondas
Mr Everingham
Mr Harris
Mr MacFarlane
Mr Oliver
Mrs Padgham-Purich
Mr Perron
Mr Robertson
Mr Steele
Mr Tuxworth
Mr Vale

Mr Collins
Mr Doolan
Ms D'Rozario
Mr Isaacs
Mrs Lawrie
Mrs O'Neil
Mr Perkins

SUSPENSION OF STANDING ORDERS

Mr ROBERTSON (Manager of Government Business): Mr Speaker, I move that so much of Standing Orders be suspended as would prevent - (a) the withdrawal of the notice of intention to present the Encouragement of Primary Production (Validation of Actions) Bill 1978 on the next sitting day; (b) the presenta-

tion of the same bill without notice today; and (c) its passage through all stages at this sittings.

Motion agreed to.

ENCOURAGEMENT OF PRIMARY PRODUCTION
(VALIDATION OF ACTIONS) BILL
(Serial 167)

Bill presented and read a first time.

Mr STEELE (Industrial Development): Mr Speaker, I move that the bill be now read a second time.

The object of this bill is to set at rest any doubt there may be as to the legality of the advance of \$150,000 made by the Primary Producers Board to the receiver of Northern Agricultural Development Corporation Limited.

The Leader of the Opposition has claimed that the loan was illegal and that the transaction breached the Encouragement of Primary Production Ordinance. These are claims that we must treat seriously. Further, the Leader of the Opposition in his public campaign of denigration of myself and the government has accused me of misleading and lying to this House. Mr Speaker, I have a lot of difficulty in understanding the opposition as it swings and changes its approach to Willeroo. The allegation that the loan was illegal contrasts greatly with the Leader of the Opposition's earlier stance on this affair. In this House on 3 May H.V. Quinton and Company, the receiver, was described by the member as a reputable company. And a day earlier the honourable member for Victoria River said, in reference to H.V. Quinton and Company and their lawyers, Allen, Allen and Hemsley, and I quote from Hansard: "are two of the most reputable and astute firms in Australia". Is the Leader of the Opposition now suggesting that the companies praised by his colleague and himself have now been guilty of being involved in an illegal transaction. For it is clear to me, even if it is not clear to the members opposite, that it takes two parties to enter into a transaction.

The allegations are serious because they were designed to strike at my credibility. My resignation has been publicly demanded by the Leader of the Opposition and to that I replied, no. I do not want to rehash all the questions and answers which have been given on this subject. Nor do I wish to canvass the lengthy debates which have already occurred in this Chamber on this matter. However, to defend myself against the public charge of having lied and of having wilfully misled this House - and I note that they did not use the word "wilfully" today, Mr Speaker; they insisted on just "misled" - reference will have to be made to past events to keep things in perspective. It seems they have one side of their face for public declarations and the other side of their face for some of the other rubbish they go on with in this House.

If errors have been made on the government's side, then the members opposite are not free of inconsistencies themselves. The opposition has collected a mass of documentation on this issue. I think it is timely that I should refer them to some of it to refresh their memories. Their documentation no doubt comes from the receiver who is happily supplying the opposition, hoping to spur the government into buying Willeroo. It is interesting to note that on 3 May the Leader of the Opposition spoke at length in this Chamber about the \$150,000 advanced to the receiver. I had the impression on that day that he was fully in support of the loan having been made. Let me quote again from the Hansard record of the Opposition Leader's speech: "There is no doubt that

there is unanimity on both sides of the Assembly that people were not paid and arrangements had to be entered into" ...

Mr COLLINS (Arnhem): A point of order, Mr Speaker. Most of the speech so far - and I think we have been very patient - has referred to an earlier debate in this House which finished not five minutes ago.

Mr Tuxworth: This is a bill.

Mr STEELE: Don't be a clown.

Mr SPEAKER: This is the second-reading speech on a bill validating events which members have been complaining about. There is no point of order.

Mr STEELE: Let me repeat those final crucial words: "arrangements had to be entered into to pay them". To me, that sounds very much like approval for the action he was aware of at the time that the government had taken.

Later on, on that same day 3 May, the Leader of the Opposition said, and I quote: "We certainly approve of the actual purchase, given of course the various assessments which had to be made". I put it to you that an experimental crop was very much a part of that assessment and the costs of that crop are really what we are talking about today.

The opposition has raised a fresh barrage of innuendo and allegations in the public media, not the least of which is the claim that the loan to the receiver was illegal. And let us remember that the claim of illegality was made after the opposition had been given an answer which specified the relevant section of the ordinance under which the loan was made. I cannot help but come to the conclusion that the opposition has kept changing ground in its tactics on the Willeroo issue for political reasons. Obviously, they would not get much out of the budget.

The opposition claims, in respect of the whole sheaf of papers, that many of my written answers are untruthful. They have got the receiver's so-called version of the facts. I have got the facts as supplied by the Primary Producers Board. The receiver's mouth-piece, the member for Arnhem, claimed that the correspondence fell off a truck - the receiver's truck. The Four Corners reporter investigating Willeroo who must have been following the same truck admitted, inadvertently, the source of his information. The Leader of the Opposition is not so coy. He proudly proclaims his association with the receiver - as my honourable colleague, the Minister for Mines and Energy said, "strange bed-fellows", more like bed-bugs. Who are these people working for - the receiver in Sydney or the people in the Northern Territory?

I recall that the members opposite made great play in this Assembly during the debate on 2 May ...

Mrs O'NEIL (Fannie Bay): A point of order, Mr Speaker. The honourable minister is clearly referring to the debate earlier in this House which has just been resolved. It is contrary to standing order 53.

Mr Dondas: You mean bed-bugs.

Mr SPEAKER: There is no point of order. The debate that has just gone on is entirely relevant to this validation bill.

Mr STEELE: I recall that members opposite made great play ...

Mr ISAACS (Opposition Leader): If I could just speak to that point of order, Mr Speaker, I think the honourable member for Fannie Bay is correct. Item 3 in the bill talks about validating actions not of the opposition but of the NT executive and the Primary Producers Board. I fail to see what relevance the comments of the minister has to do with the bill.

Mr SPEAKER: I think the first matter brought up was the \$150,000 which is one of the subjects of the censure motion which you introduced earlier. I cannot fail to see that that is very relevant to the debate and the second-reading speech. Standing order 53, allusion to earlier debate, reads:

No Member shall allude to any debate of the same session unless such allusion be relevant to the matter under discussion.

Do honourable members agree that the matter is relevant to the matter under discussion or not? I do.

Mr STEELE: I would like to speak to the point of order. I believe that you have made a ruling and the opposition is trying to dissent from that without doing so in writing.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I think the honourable member, in his endeavour to be kind to me, is reflecting on the ruling I made and that breaches standing order 2. The honourable Minister for Industrial Development may resume his second-reading speech.

Mr STEELE: I recall that the members opposite made great play in this Assembly during the debate on 2 May and 3 May that there were problems on this project, that people had not been paid, that organisations like the Adelaide River Co-op had been billed around \$70,000 for seed, fertilizer and transport. I recall all that clearly. In the light of the continued and latest misconceived criticism of the government by the Leader of the Opposition over the Willeroo transaction, I should like to restate a few basic facts.

Firstly, the executive was interested in buying Willeroo and Scott Creek for the purpose of encouraging closer settlement and stimulating primary production. None other than the honourable member for Victoria River used similar words in this House on 2 May, and I quote part of his speech from Hansard: "I am sure that every member of this Assembly had high hopes that it would provide an avenue of employment which is so badly needed here, as well as giving an opportunity to permanent residents of the Territory to operate share farms". Those were exactly the sentiments of the government. And I might add that we are still interested but so far have not reached agreement with the receiver as to the terms of purchase.

The second point is that money spent at Willeroo was for cropping which is in the nature of a pilot project to assist us in determining whether or not the government should proceed with the purchase. The cropping program also provided employment.

Thirdly, the receiver agreed in the first place to provide sufficient funds for the cropping program and upon this basis money was spent and debts incurred and having paid \$32,000, the receiver refused to pay further funds unless we committed the future Northern Territory government to buy the properties. At this stage debts had already been incurred in the expectation that

the receiver would continue to finance the project, as he had agreed to do. Honourable members will well know that money was owing to creditors in the Northern Territory, including the Adelaide River Co-op. The executive intervened to provide money to ensure that Territory creditors were not left lamenting. I make no apology for paying out money to protect Northern Territory people. We saw that they were paid.

It would help, Mr Speaker, if the Leader of the Opposition could decide just what it is he thinks he is criticising. But I am doing my best to clarify the issue. The honourable gentleman has made great play of the fact that he believes me guilty of inconsistency on this issue. His own guilt of that charge has been demonstrated here today. His inconsistency is based purely and simply on taking cheap political shots at a government which is getting on and doing something for the Territory when he himself is bankrupt of ideas and policies and is on record as paying lip service only to the principle of self-government.

Let me turn to some of the other allegations that the Leader of the Opposition has made in public about his accusation that I wilfully misled this House. The Leader of the Opposition has claimed that I had asserted in a written answer that at all times the receiver was aware of what was happening on the properties. Apart from the fact that he deliberately misquotes me, such a claim would obviously be ludicrous as, for the most part of the time, the receiver was in Sydney. What I did say was that, in assuming certain responsibilities, the chairman of the Primary Producers Board acted with the full knowledge and concurrence of the receiver. In particular, he claimed that I said on 2 May that the Primary Producers Board had appointed a manager and later had contradicted this. What I did say and continue to say is that the Primary Producers Board did not employ a full-time manager. In fact, the Leader of the Opposition has misquoted my answer to the question on notice.

As I have previously said, the Primary Producers Board and more particularly the chairman were acting in a management capacity with the agreement of the receiver. I regard that as being very different ...

Mr SPEAKER: Order! Has the rest of your speech anything to do with the Encouragement of Primary Production (Validation of Actions) Bill? I think you are straying pretty wide from the intention.

Mr Collins: Do it off the top of your head, Roger.

Mr STEELE: By way of explanation, Mr Speaker, the allegations were made in a newspaper outside the House and obviously, if I am to satisfy the requirements of the second-reading of this validation bill, those accusations have to be answered in this speech. I seek your ruling.

Mr SPEAKER: Your explanations really have nothing to do with the Encouragement of Primary Production (Validation of Actions) Bill 1978 and I feel they are out of place in your second-reading speech. However, you have gone so far that I think you should finish but I would hope this occurrence is not repeated.

Mr ISAACS (Opposition Leader): Mr Speaker, can I just seek your ruling on this, that ...

Mr SPEAKER: I have just given my ruling.

Mr ISAACS: In relation to that and in relation to the matters introduced by the minister, does it mean that other people can respond to the statements he made or will they be confined to the terms of the bill?

Mr SPEAKER: Well, I have just stated to the honourable minister that I hope there would be no repetition of this, using a second-reading speech for something which probably should be made more as an explanation and should take some other place in the business of the House.

Mr ISAACS: I appreciate that, but what I am asking is this: the minister is raising matters which have been alluded to elsewhere and making statements which have not been made before. Can other members, in particular myself and other members of the opposition, respond to the specific statements he makes in his second-reading speech, notwithstanding that they are irrelevant to the bill before us.

Mr SPEAKER: Certainly. Yes, I will give you a wide field to cover. And when you get too wide, as my adviser tells me, I will pull you up the same as I am pulling up the minister.

Mr STEELE: Mr Speaker, I really need your help.

The Leader of the Opposition has also said that the receiver did not know what was going on between 2 December and 31 March. I am advised that during that period his representative, Mr Hilt, visited the property and I understand that from time to time there were telephone conversations between Primary Producers Board officers and Mr Hilt who was at all times a signatory to the Scott Creek farm account. This account was opened by the receiver.

I must apologise to the Assembly about the question of ownership of machinery. On 2 May as a result of departmental advice, I stated that the Primary Producers Board owned equipment to the value of \$11,900. That answer was given on the basis of advice from officers of the now defunct board. At that stage, I doubt if the equipment had been paid for by the receiver, as it may have been that invoices in respect of Scott Creek farm account had been mistaken for those of the Primary Producers Board by its officers in preparing my reply. I have subsequently stated, on the advice of the Territory Development Corporation in answer to a written question, that no asset was owned by the Primary Producers Board and that no payment has been made by the Primary Producers Board. Although I have had instructions issued to the Territory Development Corporation requiring that they further search their records, they are still unable to prove any record of ownership of machinery on Willeroo.

The corporation has made inquiries of the receiver asking the outcome of the cropping program but to no avail. We have even telexed the receiver in an effort to inform the Assembly today. We have been advised that, as his manager is in New Zealand, he is unable to provide any information at an early time. However, I am advised that the following crops have been delivered to the NT Producers Co-op by the receiver: sorghum - 158.82 tonnes at \$98 a tonne inclusive of freight giving a value of \$15,563.44 which has been sold; mung beans - 21.9 tonnes of good quality seed of which 1500 kilograms have been sold for \$840; and 8.6 tonnes of mung bean screenings were sold as stock feed at \$107 per tonne, worth \$923. I understand that about a further 100 or more tonnes of sorghum have been harvested.

As the receiver has not answered our request for information with facts, I cannot provide any more concrete information. I am informed that the receiver's manager was unable to harvest about 30 acres of maize and just under 100 acres

of peanuts. I am also advised that the receiver's manager at Willeroo turned cattle onto a further 400 acres of sorghum. Conservatively, if an area that size had been properly harvested, it could have yielded 300 tonnes of sorghum, at approximately \$98 a tonne, which would have been worth about \$29,000.

The Primary Industry Division has had visitors to Willeroo to observe the progress of the cropping program. They advised that the equipment used for harvesting the crops was totally inadequate for the job. Also, there was evidence of loss of yields of up to 30% due to insect infestations. Good management could have avoided this. Part of our agreement was that the receiver would be responsible for the harvesting and marketing. It would seem that some of the management left much to be desired.

In written answers based on departmental advice, I have stated that there was a lien over the crop. Indeed, when I approved the loan this approval was conditional upon a lien being secured. I am now advised that there is no formal document to this effect. The receiver, through his legal advisers, has advised the government that he will not sign such a document. It would appear that this advice never reached the officers responsible for preparing my answers to a question in which I stated there was a lien. As I have previously stated, I determined under section 16A of the Encouragement of Primary Production Ordinance that the interest rate should be 2%. Indeed, what rate could have been more nominal? It contrasts most generously with the receiver's demand for 11% in negotiations on Willeroo with the government. It is, however, quite clear that the receiver, through his representative, agreed that an advance from the Primary Producers Board should be secured by a lien to the extent that there was an intention to enter into legal relations. I believe there is still a charge over the crop in favour of the Territory Development Corporation. There is correspondence to evidence this, copies of which are in the hands of Four Corners reporters and I presume the opposition has them as well.

The Leader of the Opposition claims to act with the receiver's authority. Why did the receiver renege? I suspect he did not have the authority under his charge as receiver to agree to the terms under which his agent, Mr Hilt, had applied for the money. Nevertheless, he took the money and he certainly took it on terms. It was later that he advised the Department of Law that he would not sign a crop lien for a loan provided under the Encouragement of Primary Production Ordinance. No doubt, under normal circumstances, moneys would not have been advanced until the lien was returned. However, one of the main purposes of this advance was to alleviate the real hardship caused by the receiver failing to meet his commitment to advance further moneys. As a result, the Primary Producers Board immediately advanced money when I had approved the advance without waiting for the receiver to honour his part of the agreement.

Another of the Leader of the Opposition's specific criticisms is that the Primary Producers Board should not have advanced money to the receiver because he could have obtained assistance of equal value on reasonable terms from another source. In this regard, he was referring to section 9(4) of the Encouragement of Primary Production Ordinance. Again the criticism is misconceived. As honourable members were advised in this House on 2 May, the receiver was endeavouring to arrange loan funds from the Bank of New South Wales and it should be perfectly obvious that the Primary Producers Board was the only body willing to assist. But more significantly the receiver thereafter said that he was not going to make any further payments to creditors in any event unless the executive entered into a firm contract to buy the property.

I reiterate that the receiver would not pay the debt and that we were forced to make the money available in the interests of local creditors.

Mr Speaker, we have been criticised for making the advance to the receiver as though we were involved in some ordinary, commercial transaction. As far as the creditors of the receiver were concerned, it was a situation of emergency. They had to be paid and the executive responded accordingly by doing what had to be done in a situation not of our making. The serious allegation has been that the loan was illegal. I have addressed myself to that question and ranged over some of the background.

Honourable members will recall that the House was advised of the transaction on 2 May and I then told the House that the Primary Producers Board was to be repaid money from the sale of crops harvested at Willeroo. Because the transaction was unusual in nature due to the circumstances which led up to it and because the functions of the Primary Producers Board have now been largely assumed by Territory Development Corporation, this bill is necessary to put the legal validity of the transaction beyond doubt. I stress "beyond doubt" because I fear the stories and claims the leader and his team in the opposition will generate to further confuse and mislead the public on this matter should we not take this legislative step.

I have referred to the transfer of functions between the Primary Producers Board and the Territory Development Corporation and relate that fact to other areas of concern that the Leader of the Opposition has in regard to his claims of inconsistency in information provided on this side of the House on Willeroo. In any administrative change, either pending or in progress, there is potential for an element of confusion to creep in. The Leader of the Opposition has demanded my resignation and accused me of lying to this Assembly. To quote from the same ABC news interview where he made those claims on 29 August, he said, "The misleading, in my view, is wilful". He is not going to get my resignation because I completely refute his charge that I wilfully misled this Assembly.

There is much in the Willeroo issue which I regret. I deeply regret that the original version of the plan has failed. I regret that our relationship with the receiver is degenerating into a political dog fight. I regret that the latest claims by the Opposition Leader of an illegal loan, of inconsistency and that I wilfully misled this Assembly will in turn work against the government's hopes of resolving the issue in the way it was originally intended. I commend the bill.

Mr ISAACS (Opposition Leader): I suppose there are two things that I can say about this particular piece of validating legislation - one relates to the substance of the legislation and the second relates to the question of validation. In relation to the substance, I think we have been through the arguments. I do not want to traverse all the arguments we have been through although I think it is somewhat a shame that the Minister for Industrial Development did not choose the appropriate time to give us his apologia. Nonetheless, an apologia it was and it ran through the whole gamut of the problems encountered in Willeroo-Scott Creek. I do not intend to go through the arguments again and stir up the same emotions that we went through during the last 3 hours or so. However, to use the minister's own phrase, he wants to put the question of legality beyond any doubt. I am not going to misconstrue that but I wonder what the legal advising was to the minister which prompts him to introduce this bill without notice and seek to push it through all stages of the Assembly today.

Of course the transaction has some legal doubt. Given that the documents which I have in relation to the letter from the Majority Leader, as he then was, and the receiver are authentic, our legal advice is that there is legal doubt and perhaps it could even be stronger than that. I wonder if the minister would be so kind as to show us the legal advising from the Department of Law which prompts this particular piece of validating legislation. Having read the Encouragement of Primary Production Ordinance - the sections which the minister himself refers to: 9(4), 16 and 16A - I am convinced that, under the terms of that ordinance, a loan of zero per cent, the terms and conditions of the Majority Leader's letter would have been invalid and contrary to law. That being so I am sure that, to ensure that payments can be made valid, this sort of legislation is required. I would hope that the Minister for Industrial Development would produce the legal advising which has prompted this legislation.

In the course of his dissertation the Minister for Industrial Development said they are still interested in the purchase of Willeroo. He is echoing, of course, the sentiments of his chief, as the newspapers refer to him, who said some time ago at an ABC interview that the government was still interested in the purchase of Willeroo. The simple fact that the government had not spoken to the receiver for about 3 months and the fact that the receiver had not spoken to them for about 3 months did not change their interest. I find that somewhat hard to believe. Nonetheless, there is no way out but that legislation of this type is required. It certainly verifies the statements we made in another debate.

Mr Deputy Speaker, I want to refer also to the question of validation acts of this kind generally. We went through an exercise in relation to the city council elections in Darwin which brought no credit on anybody in that we had to validate actions taken by the returning officer at the time. I recall the concerned comments of the then Executive Member for Community Development. He was genuine in saying that validating legislation did not bring great credit to the Assembly. The same is true of this particular piece of legislation. To have it brought on without notice, to seek to validate actions taken by the executive and the board brings no credit whatever to this parliament and certainly none to the executive itself. Had the minister offered his resignation, as I believe he ought to have done, people would have been able to see this Assembly as a parliament which is able to hold its head up high as one of the parliaments of Australia. That has not been done and it reflects not just on the minister but on the Assembly as well.

Quite obviously, we cannot oppose this piece of legislation. We can deplore the fact that it has been brought in; we can say that it does not bring credit to this Assembly. But in order to ensure that people are paid and no one has redress about that, it would be silly and wrong of us to oppose this piece of legislation. For that reason, and that reason alone, we will support it. For all the reasons which have been expressed before on both sides of the Assembly, it is most unfortunate that legislation to validate action taken months ago has to come before this Assembly and pass through all stages without any kind of scrutiny at all.

Mrs LAWRIE (Nightcliff): I simply rise to ask questions of the honourable sponsor of this bill because clause 3 of the bill is fairly wide. I do not like validating legislation. I particularly do not like it when it has retrospectivity such as this has. Clause 3 states:

The actions taken or purported to have been taken on or after 2 December 1977 by, on behalf of or in the name of the Board or the Executive Member ...

The board, of course, is the Primary Producers Board. There has been fairly severe criticism of the actions of members of that board in relation to the Willeroo-Scott Creek fiasco.

It is a pity that the presentation of the bill and the explanation in the second-reading speech became confused with the previous debate. In my view not enough attention was paid in the sponsor's speech to the bill itself and to clause 3 in particular. For example, he said that, before signing the loan, he made it clear that the loan was conditional on the lien being put on the crop. We now know that there is no such lien. We also know that, under the terms of the Encouragement of Primary Production Ordinance, it could not have been granted without interest being charged. On two counts it would seem the action of granting that money by way of loan needs validation. I ask the sponsor of the bill if those are the two specific points which he is seeking to validate or are there more? If so, would he please inform the Assembly so that we know precisely what it is we are about to validate. The honourable sponsor did say that it was to remove any possibility of illegality. Besides the two points I have made, there may be others which he is seeking to validate by this bill. I want to know what they are.

The honourable sponsor said he still looked with favour, given that conditions are acceptable, on the purchase of Willeroo but they had not yet reached agreement with the receiver. Mr Deputy Speaker, given the remarks of the Chief Minister about the receiver, that is hardly surprising:

Mr COLLINS (Arnhem): Mr Deputy Speaker, I think that, when this Hansard report is gone over later, today will rank as one of the saddest days in the history of the Legislative Assembly. I have been accused of grandstanding and playacting and taking the opportunity to speak too often in this House, when it is offered to me. Perhaps that is because I take the part of my job which requires debate in this House too seriously. But I think the standard of debate today in this Legislative Assembly has reached a new low. I would ask all honourable members to consider what session of this Assembly is in fact taking place at the moment. By passing this piece of legislation perhaps they will be making it right, not because it is right but by simply saying it is right. It is an unfortunate affair. I would ask all members of this House to have a little historical feeling and to consider how this entire day's proceedings will fit into a place in history in years to come when people are reading the Hansard of today's debate.

Like the member for Nightcliff, clause 3 of this piece of legislation takes my breath away. When I was younger, I read a book called "Animal Farm". If this is not the most classic example of "Animal Farm" legislation, then I have never seen any. It is the first real experience I have had with something as broad as this and it would not hurt to read it out again:

The actions taken or purported to have been taken on or after 2 December 1977 by, on behalf of or in the name of the Board or the Executive Member, and relating to the payment of moneys to, or the repayment of moneys by, the Northern Agricultural Development Corporation Limited (Receiver Appointed) shall be held to be, and always to have been, valid, effectual and not beyond power.

I think it has been mentioned in this House before that retrospective validating legislation is not something which brings credit on any parliament. The broadness of the scope of this particular validating legislation is disgraceful and it boggles the mind to read it. I echo the sentiments of the honourable member for Nightcliff when she said the legislation is broad. I do not personally see

the parameters of it; the banks of this particular river are very far apart indeed. I wonder what else there is to discover that we have not discovered.

The honourable minister stated that this legislation has been introduced into the House without notice today to place beyond doubt the legality of the deals entered into with the receiver. I am sorry now that we attempted to stop the flow of words from the minister by points of order, because in his speech the minister only opened his mouth in order to change feet. He gave this House the most interesting information about the productivity of the project which that \$150,000 of taxpayers' money was invested in.

Again it is very interesting to refer to the principal ordinance and that much quoted section which lays down the guidelines for granting such financial assistance. It says:

The Board shall not grant assistance to a producer, whether by way of advance of money or otherwise, unless it is satisfied that the producer has a reasonable prospect of successfully carrying on primary production if the assistance is granted.

Perhaps they should validate that retrospectively in the light of the figures that have just been given to us by the honourable minister. As this day will prove, Willeroo has been a complete and utter disgrace for the new government of the Northern Territory. I say that that amount of money was advanced not in the terms of section 4(b) of the ordinance which says that money can only be invested if there is a reasonable chance of its being returned; I say that money was invested in the sure knowledge that it would not be returned, simply to get the government out of a stinking hole that it put itself into.

I think all members of this House will have cause - perhaps not tomorrow or next month or even next year, but at some time - to regret what has taken place in this House today. Considering the charges laid and proven in this House today, personally I have been appalled by the flippant behaviour of ministers of the frontbench in relation to those things - like smiling Ian opposite. As a result of today's proceedings I will feel rather strange at question time tomorrow morning.

Mr Deputy Speaker, this is a disgraceful piece of legislation. It is a necessary one, obviously, and we are not going to oppose it because it has to be done. It is the second piece of validating legislation that I have seen in my short time here. It is certainly the broadest piece of retrospective legislation that I imagine I will ever see. I feel exactly the same way about this matter as the honourable Leader of the Opposition. Before the response of the honourable minister as to how he was going to handle this day, only the credibility of the minister himself was involved. Since his response, the credibility of this parliament is at stake.

Mr PERRON (Treasurer): Mr Deputy Speaker, I rise briefly to speak on the bill now before the House. The opposition members seem to be doing their best to rake over what few old coals are left. They have said there is a necessity for this piece of legislation. Without referring to earlier debates, I have in the back of my mind that the Leader of the Opposition said that arrangements had to be made to pay the people. Yet they are trying to keep this thing alive for as long as they possibly can and say what a terrible thing it is that we have to validate this loan. What they are really trying to do is to extend this issue for as long as they possibly can when they know the wisest move is to validate the loan that was made to the receiver. Obviously, no one would want to see any possible legal moves made to recover any of the money if it was not a completely legal loan. That would be

absurd and it would not be within the intentions that have been expressed in this House on this matter. I think they are just wasting time by putting up token opposition to this validating legislation which they have all admitted really has to go ahead and be processed.

Mr DOOLAN (Victoria River): I have spoken at length about the whole Willeroo scandal and I do not intend to go into it any further except to say that the events of today have sickened and disgusted me. In my opinion none of the charges of misleading this House through the answers given by the Minister for Industrial Development have been answered by any member of the government, with the possible exception of the Minister for Community Development and his was a pretty weak effort. No other minister, including the Chief Minister, has given anything remotely resembling a satisfactory answer to the questions raised by the opposition.

The Minister for Industrial Development stated very piously that the government went to the aid of the people of Willeroo. What rot! They could have starved to death so far as this government is concerned. It was not until I hit the press, for which I have been condemned, that anyone took any interest. And then it was remarkable how much interest there was, with welfare characters and everyone else running round trying to make good fellows of themselves. The government was not interested in the workers there at all, I can assure you. Why don't you ask them and find out?

This Encouragement of Primary Production (Validation of Actions) Bill which is being presented now, Mr Deputy Speaker is the greatest piece of blatant hypocrisy which anyone could ever possibly imagine and if it is passed - and I am sure it will be - I would say that this government and the Northern Territory Legislative Assembly is going to be a stink in the nostrils of anybody who supports the Westminster system of government.

Mr ROBERTSON (Community Development): A point of order, Mr Deputy Speaker. If ever I have heard anything in any House that casts such discredit upon the parliament of which he is supposedly an honourable member, I have yet to hear a worse example of casting discredit on his own House than that. I ask that it be withdrawn and struck from the record.

Mr DOOLAN: Mr Deputy Speaker, what I am saying is this: if this bill is passed ...

Mr ROBERTSON: Mr Deputy Speaker, I have raised a point of order. I would like a ruling on it.

Mr DOOLAN: Mr Deputy Speaker, what I am saying is that if this bill is passed in this House, it will be a stink in the nose of anyone who supports the Westminster system of democracy.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: There is no point of order.

Mr DOOLAN: Mr Deputy Speaker, it is nothing but an open admission of their guilt on the whole affair of Willeroo. What is the reason for its dramatic introduction and the unseemly haste to push it through today? To use a good Australian saying, Mr Deputy Speaker, I think this government would come at raw prawns, after watching this one, and I also think we might go back to Abraham Lincoln - you can fool all the people some of the time and some of the people all the time, but for God's sake you won't fool all the people all the time.

Mr HARRIS (Port Darwin): Mr Deputy Speaker, I am a little upset about the honourable member for Victoria River's last comments. I wish to speak about the validating legislation. We all realise that it is not something that we take lightly and, as the honourable Leader of the Opposition mentioned, it was done before with the Local Government Ordinance to validate an election. I would, however, like to make just a few comments about agriculture in the Northern Territory which to me relate to this particular piece of legislation.

I have been involved with agriculture in the Northern Territory for a number of years. Actually, when I came back here after doing my schooling, I was going to join the then Agriculture Branch. I have also had practical experience and I must admit, like the member for Arnhem, I have also been party to a disaster. My disaster occurred when a few million ants ate down a thousand banana plants that I had and these white ants were probably just about as big as the member for Arnhem's rats. But unlike the member for Arnhem, I actually lost financially on that venture.

I bring this point up to show that the people of the Northern Territory have distinct disadvantages because of climatic conditions and also the disadvantages of living great distances from southern states. It makes success very difficult and I believe any government that tries to help any industry or venture under difficult circumstances should be applauded. To give assistance is a must if we are to see it succeed and make this Territory develop. I believe there will be other occasions, Mr Deputy Speaker, when we will have to look at giving assistance to an industry or a project in need.

I personally deplore the attack by the opposition today on the Minister for Transport and Works because I have known this person for many years and I have never known him to wilfully mislead anyone, let alone this Legislative Assembly. Perhaps they are upset because he is, in my opinion, a person of the people and of the Territory. I know we do not like validating legislation but it is something that we have to do to make it legal, that these people who were in need have received this money.

Motion agreed to; bill read a second time.

In committee:

Clause 1:

Mr ISAACS: Mr Deputy Chairman, I wonder if the minister would be so kind, as I asked him in my second-reading speech, to give an indication as to whether or not the government is prepared to table the legal advising which prompted the action of validating the actions taken?

Mr DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Clause 1 is the short title. Perhaps you should make your remarks on the relevant clause.

Mr ISAACS: Well, I do not mind when I say it but I would have thought now was appropriate. However, I accept your ruling.

Clauses 1 and 2 agreed to.

Clause 3:

Mr ISAACS: Mr Deputy Chairman, I hope you do not tell me that I should have raised this on clause 1. I asked the Minister for Industrial Development whether he or the government would table the legal advising which prompts the action of introducing this piece of validating legislation.

Mrs LAWRIE: Mr Deputy Chairman, I have a query of the honourable sponsor of the bill, too. If he remembers, I spoke actually to the bill, not to the rest of the happenings of the House today, and I raised two points with him which were: are the actions to be validated beyond doubt, those of the loan being given without any interest and there being no lien on the crop, as he did say that he signed the loan conditional upon that lien being imposed? If they are the two actions, specifically, would he advise the House if there are others which he wants to put beyond doubt? Would he also advise us of those, too, as it is a catch-all phrase and I want to know what I am voting to validate.

Mr COLLINS: Mr Deputy Chairman, as I also raised this point I simply want to reinforce what the honourable member has said. The broadness of the scope of clause 3 is frightening. The honourable Treasurer stated just a few moments ago that this, of course, was a necessary piece of legislation which both sides of the House agreed to in order to validate the loan. That is what he said, but what else are we validating at the same time? The wording of clause 3 of this piece of paper brings up in the mind of everyone the thought of just what else is there that has not been talked about?

I mentioned previously my reservations about section 4, paragraph (b). I remember, Mr Deputy Chairman, the honourable minister making a quite remarkable statement at the time that a crop of sorghum would have returned in excess of \$20,000 if only someone had not turned the cattle onto it. Well, I would have won \$1m the other night if my number had come up in Tattsлото too. I really consider remarks like that to be quite fatuous and incredible in a second-reading speech.

The broadness of clause 3 in this piece of legislation is frightening. I cannot see the banks of the river at all. I would also like the honourable minister to give this House a firm assurance as to exactly what we are validating and what we are not validating.

Mr EVERINGHAM: Mr Deputy Chairman, I have listened to a fair bit of humbug today but the best I have heard so far is the broadness of this particular clause 3, and that the banks of the river cannot be seen. The clause is restricted to one particular transaction:

The actions taken or purported to have been taken on or after 2 December 1977 by, on behalf of or in the name of the Board or the Executive Member, and relating to the payment of moneys to, or the repayment of moneys by, the Northern Agricultural Development Corporation Limited (Receiver Appointed) ...

If that is more than one transaction and if it relates to more than one specific matter, the payment of moneys or the repayment of moneys, then I think these people had better go back to school.

Mr STEELE: Mr Deputy Chairman, I think it is quite fair that the Chief Minister should offer the explanation. After all, he is completely well trained in these matters of legislation and law, and I do not profess to have that sort of training. In fact, when I go to the football on Sunday night and tell all the fellows that the honourable Leader of the Opposition reckons you should not make it to the front bench because you cannot write, well, there will be some glee about that I should imagine.

As far as tabling documents in this House, Mr Deputy Chairman, I think the whole matter has been fairly carefully gone over from all sides now. I see

this government as a government which wants to get on with the job. I am not prepared to make officers available to go rehashing all the files on Willeroo. As far as I am concerned, we have put our case fairly and squarely. The information is all out and there is nothing to be gained from any further tabling of documents and debate on those documents. Certainly, I have got a job to do. There are something like \$184m to get on with and I will not be tabling any documents myself. I think the other question has been quite adequately answered by the Chief Minister.

Mr ISAACS: I did not quite catch the answer to my question, Mr Deputy Chairman. I wonder if the Minister for Industrial Development would let me know whether he has an answer, yes or no, to the question I asked him which was, will his government give consideration to tabling the legal advising prepared by the Department of Law?

Mr EVERINGHAM: Mr Deputy Chairman, I can answer that question quite easily. There is no legal advising in respect of this validation bill. The bill has been introduced at my instance by the minister because I believe the tactics of the opposition were proving destructive of public confidence in relation to the whole transaction in respect of Willeroo and I thought that, once and for all, the matter should be laid at rest. That is the purpose of this validation legislation so that the actions are placed beyond doubt once and for all.

Clause 3 agreed to.

Title agreed to.

Bill passed the remaining stage without debate.

ADJOURNMENT

Mr STEELE (Ludmilla): Mr Deputy Speaker, I move that the Assembly do now adjourn.

Mr VALE (Stuart): Mr Deputy Speaker, last year in this Legislative Assembly I made a number of serious accusations about the activities of a number of officers of the Central Australian Aboriginal Congress based in Alice Springs. I accused them of using government funds for the benefit of a certain political party and I stand by those accusations. Some officials of the CAAC then denied, and in fact are still denying, that such misappropriation occurred. This is despite statements by their own auditors that certain discrepancies had occurred in their expenditure during the last twelve months. Since then, the CAAC has been split right down the middle and the deputy leader of the opposition, and member for MacDonnell, Mr Perkins, has been named as the main destroyer of this organisation which was set up, primarily, to assist Aboriginal people in Central Australia.

Mr Perkins: That's not true and you know it.

Mr VALE: Many people in central Australia, including prominent spokesmen for Aboriginal people, believe there should be a judicial inquiry into the allegations of gross misuse of government funds by these members of the congress. I am certain that the Australian Labor Party has always been the main beneficiary of this misuse. The deputy leader of the opposition has benefitted most of all and the Aboriginal people this money was intended for have suffered severely because of this blatant abuse of trust. He has in the past, and in

fact is still using the Central Australian Aboriginal Congress for his own political purposes. The honourable member for MacDonnell has in recent months constantly denied that government funds directed towards the CAAC have been misused. In fact, in a recent press statement in the Northern Territory News, and I will quote that part: "The Deputy Opposition Leader, Mr Perkins, today denied allegations that he had misused public funds from the Central Australian Aboriginal Congress during the Legislative Assembly elections last year".

Mr Deputy Speaker, Mr Perkins has been misusing the funds of the congress since 1974 when he, on behalf of the organisation, signed hundreds of letters which were on Central Australian Aboriginal Congress letterhead and were circulated to electors in the Stuart and MacDonnell electorates urging them to vote for the Australian Labor Party and not to vote for the racist Country Liberal Party. Who paid for those letterheads?

I would like to know how much has been spent in the past twelve months in the purchase of petrol, printing, air travel and other publicity designed to push forward the policies and platform of the Australian Labor Party. Last year, for example, they had a total budget of \$518,000 and today they are up here talking about misappropriation of funds which the government is alleged to have done.

Mr Deputy Speaker, the honourable member for MacDonnell is a justice of the peace and he has also said ...

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! If the honourable member wishes to reflect on a member, he should make it in the form of a substantive motion. We cannot accept reflections on a member. You cannot reflect against a member this way.

Mr VALE: Can I reflect against the attitude of an organisation?

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Yes.

Mr VALE: Mr Deputy Speaker, the Central Australian Aboriginal Congress and some of their members have continued to misuse and abuse that trust. During August last year one of their members broke the law of the land when he took oranges from the congress farm at central Australia and presented them to Aborigines at Areyonga and Papunya. The person who did that admitted it to me in a radio debate. In fact, he might not have been aware that, at that time, there was a fruit fly embargo in central Australia.

Mr Deputy Speaker, to prove that the accusations I have made in recent years and particularly in the last twelve months are not false, I would now like to read from two statutory declarations which I recently forwarded to the Prime Minister:

I, Graham Henry Howard of 7 Elliott Street, Alice Springs in the Northern Territory of Australia, driver, do solemnly and sincerely declare as follows:

1. That at all times during the month of August 1977 I was an employee of the Central Australian Aboriginal Congress in Alice Springs aforesaid and I was assigned to various tasks at premises owned and operated by the Central Australian Aboriginal Congress known as the rehabilitation farm, located on Emily Gap Road, Alice Springs.
2. During the said month of August 1977, I received certain telephoned instructions from officers of the Central Australian Aboriginal

Congress. I collected some money from a person named Frank Murray whom I understood to be the Central Australian Aboriginal Congress accountant. I have been informed and I believe that this sum of money came from the petty cash fund of the CAAC.

3. That I purchased from a firm known as the Alice Springs Timber and Joinery in Alice Springs a quantity of plywood and timber batten- ing for the purpose of manufacturing election campaign signs for Mr Neville Perkins, then an officer of the CAAC and a candidate for the election of the Legislative Assembly for the Northern Ter- ritory for the electorate of MacDonnell. In respect of the said purchases, I obtained and transmitted receipts therefore to the said Frank Murray of the CAAC. That I used a vehicle, the property of the CAAC, to pick up the said material from the said Alice Springs Timber and Joinery.

Mr COLLINS (Arnhem): A point of order, Sir.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: What is your point of order?

Mr COLLINS: The honourable member is again introducing material into this House that directly reflects on the character of the honourable member for MacDonnell. He has just done so.

Mr VALE: Mr Deputy Speaker, I am referring ...

Mr ROBERTSON (Gillen): At this stage, Mr Deputy Speaker, what the honour- able member for Stuart is saying is not reflecting on the character of anyone. What he is doing is making statements of fact contained in a statutory declar- ation. No impropriety has been levelled at all at this stage; it is merely what has happened and on whose behalf it happened. No accusation has been made nor that it is improper or any other accusation. I suggest that until such time as the honourable member does reflect upon a person's character, then there is no point of order.

Mr COLLINS: In talking to the point of order, Mr Deputy Speaker, perhaps your attention was not on the reference. Perhaps the honourable member could read the reference containing directly the name of this honourable gentleman again for your ruling, Sir?

Mr ROBERTSON: But there is no impropriety attached to it as such.

Mr VALE:

That I carried out the said instructions, including the manufacture of the election signs within the electorate of MacDonnell. That I laid a number of these said election signs in a Toyota motor vehicle, the property of the CAAC, which vehicle was driven by Mr Perkins and which I believe was used by him during the course of his election campaign.

And I make this solemn declaration, conscientiously believing the statements contained herein to be true in every particular and pursuant to the Statutory Declaration Act 1959 and subject to the penalties therein contained for the making of false statements in statutory declarations.

It is signed by G. Howard and witnessed by a justice of the peace.

The second one is another statutory declaration. It reads as follows:

I, Robert Liddle of 4 Jarvis Street, Alice Springs in the Northern Territory of Australia, unemployed administrative officer, do solemnly and sincerely declare as follows:

That from the 16th November 1977 to the 7th day of July 1978, I was employed by an organisation known as the Central Australian Aboriginal Congress, Alice Springs ...

Mr ISAACS: (Opposition Leader): A point of order, Mr Deputy Speaker. I understand, if I read the press correctly, that there is a legal action between the same gentleman the member for Stuart is talking about and the member for MacDonnell and I think that, given previous rulings made by Mr Speaker MacFarlane, perhaps the matter would be sub judice and the honourable member for Stuart ought not to proceed.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: The honourable member for Stuart is only reflecting ...

Mr ISAACS: If I might say, he is repeating the allegation made by Mr Liddle in newspaper articles which are the subject of legal matters and therefore he ought not to proceed.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Do any honourable members have any knowledge of a writ being issued?

Mr Collins: It has been in the press.

Mr Everingham: There is a writ for defamation.

Mr VALE: Mr Deputy Speaker, I am not commenting on anything pertaining to the possible legal action between the member for MacDonnell and Mr Liddle. I believe that has something to do with his dismissal. My comments do not relate to that in any way.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: If there is any legal action pending, then I would ask the honourable member for Stuart to drop all reference.

Mr VALE: That from the 16th November ...

Members interjecting.

Mr ISAACS: Mr Deputy Speaker, all I would ask you to do is to uphold your ruling.

Mr VALE: Is it a ruling?

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Yes, drop any reference to ...

Mr VALE: Mr Deputy Speaker, I believe you said "if". No one has proved that there is a writ.

Mr Isaacs: It is stated categorically.

Mr VALE: Then I cannot read this statutory declaration. Is that what you want?

Mr Isaacs: Forget about quoting Bobbie Liddle.

Mr VALE: Mr Deputy Speaker, in summary, I sent both these statutory declarations, together with a covering letter, to the Prime Minister. For many years down there in central Australia this money has just not been spent on the intended recipients and despite all public service buck-passing in Canberra, what many people in Central Australia want is a judicial inquiry set up to find out exactly where the money has been spent in the past and to make recommendations to the federal government ...

Mr COLLINS (Arnhem): A point of order, Mr Deputy Speaker. The subject of this legal action is the very matter of disposal of funds which the honourable member persists in discussing. That is what the legal action concerns.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: There is no point of order.

Mr VALE: In summary, Mr Deputy Speaker, what we are attempting to do in central Australia is to ensure that those funds are properly spent on their intended recipients. The Prime Minister's reply to me on 21 August said - and I quote: "I am concerned about the contents of the declarations and I have asked the secretary of the Department of Aboriginal Affairs to investigate and report to me". So there is, at last, some positive hope for the future that we will get the organisation straightened out.

Mrs LAWRIE (Nightcliff): Mr Deputy Speaker, many years ago when we had Mr President Grotorex presiding over the Legislative Council, a matter arose on a possible conflict of matters being discussed in this House with full privilege, of course, whilst there was a case being discussed in the court. I would just mention the fact that we have discussed this at a previous session and the ruling of Mr President Grotorex has been reinforced by Mr Speaker MacFarlane. It is certainly unseemly, at the very least, to discuss in this House under privilege matters which are either directly a matter of court action and sub judice, or are very likely to be.

Having perhaps disposed of that for the last time, I am going to raise a subject which, after the heavy matters of today, might sound frivolous but it is causing distress to a fair number of people, myself included. Let me declare my self interest because the subject I am about to speak about is the dreaded dog catcher of the Darwin City Council who "knapped" one of my two dogs. Boxers, of course, are those friendly large lumbering dogs who love everybody and, given the slightest opportunity, will be led easily into the back of the dog catcher's car wagging what is left of their tails.

I did raise this in an earlier session but I have a little more information for honourable members. The dog catcher, having grabbed my dog, was subjected to a severe cross-examination by one of my children. It started off along the lines, "Hey, you can't take him. He's Samper; he's my dog". "He was sitting on the footpath outside the house", said the dog catcher. "He always does", said the younger member of my family. Discussion ensued during which she said to the dog catcher, "Why don't you come in and grab the other one". Fortunately, the dog catcher did not avail himself of her kind invitation. However, she subsequently informed me that, on looking through the louvres at a quarter to seven in the morning, she had seen the dog catcher with one of our dogs and had seen him calling the other dog out of the yard. It is not funny. It is \$40 a time.

I then asked my daughter to approach the local alderman and make a complaint. She did this but she was told it was her word against the dog catcher and nothing could be done. I have complained very bitterly about this and the

results have been interesting. I expect to have in my hand tomorrow night a statutory declaration from a lady - no court action is ensuing, unfortunately - who witnessed the dreaded dog catcher calling another dog out of a yard. She is prepared to swear to that. The owner of the dog who was taken in this case does not have much money. It is a struggle for her to raise the \$40 to get the dog back and it is \$10 for every day the dog remains in the pound.

I am fairly critical of employees of agencies who act in that manner. It is not a light affair to pay \$40 to recover a loved pet and it has not gone without notice in this city and its environs that the dogs which are habitually picked up are indeed the family pets. They are easy to catch. If they do not walk up to the dog catcher, they are still easy to catch without much fear to the person concerned. Secondly, of course, people will pay to get them back. I wonder if the minister responsible for local government could ascertain whether in fact the Corporation of the City of Darwin is trying to clear Darwin of the menace of the wild dogs which are about in the far northern suburbs or whether they view dog-catching as a cynical money-making exercise. If they continue to entice dogs from their owners' yards, I must say that I only view their policy as being the latter.

Motion agreed to; the Assembly adjourned.

Mr Speaker MacFarlane took the Chair at 10 am.

TABLED PAPER
Third party insurance in NT

Mr STEELE (Transport and Works): Mr Speaker, I table a report from the Commonwealth Actuary on third party insurance in the Northern Territory.

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

Leave granted.

STATEMENT
Expenditure in 1977-1978

Mr PERRON (Treasurer): Mr Speaker, I seek leave to make a statement to the House on financial matters of the previous financial year.

Leave granted.

Mr PERRON: Mr Speaker, the Northern Territory executive last year spent \$52,498,120 of the total global allocation of \$52,537,200 made available by the Commonwealth government. In fact, it had underspent its allocation by \$39,080. Honourable members may recall a statement by the Minister for the Northern Territory, the Honourable A.E. Adermann MP just twelve months ago on 16 August 1977, the day that the Commonwealth Budget for 1977-1978 was presented. He said:

Possibly the most important single item was the budget appropriation of \$50m to the Northern Territory executive to be allocated on those state-type functions which were transferred to the Northern Territory Legislative Assembly, with effect from 1 January this year. The actual allocation of these funds, as between individual functions, was wholly at the discretion of the Northern Territory executive and details would be announced at the next sitting of the Legislative Assembly when the legislature introduced its first budget.

Honourable members may also recall the statement by the then Minister for Finance and Treasurer, Mr Lynch, which is recorded in his budget speech under the heading general government expenditures. He said:

With the movement towards self-government in the Northern Territory, a global allocation of \$50m has been included for expenditure on those functions transferred on 1 January 1977 to the Northern Territory Legislative Assembly.

The \$50m global allocation was the amount offered to the Northern Territory by the Commonwealth as a result of negotiations to secure adequate funding for the functions for which this Assembly was then responsible. It was not what we sought but it was what we were allocated. We were then told to adjust our needs within this figure to accommodate our various priorities. This we did. However, before the ink was dry on our revised budget, the Commonwealth informed us that cabinet had approved an agreement with the states in relation to the rural adjustment scheme, that the scheme would be extended

to the Northern Territory and, for this purpose, cabinet approved the expenditure of \$600,000 for the Northern Territory. We asked for the \$600,000 in addition to the \$50m and were informed by the Minister for the Northern Territory, whom I quote:

I have now received advice from the Treasurer that your proposal for the additional sum of \$600,000 must be refused and that the Northern Territory executive must determine the allocation of this provision of \$0.6m from the \$50m global vote and within the context of its own expenditure priorities.

In order to extend the benefit of the scheme to the primary producers of the Northern Territory, we were required to once more re-determine our budgeted priorities and to re-allocate the \$50m against these priorities. This re-allocation was presented to this Assembly in the form of the Allocation of Funds (Appropriation) Bills Nos. 1 and 2.

In providing the \$50m in the form of the two appropriation bills, the Commonwealth stated purposes identical for each appropriation, namely "in respect of matters specified in determinations made under section 4ZE of the Northern Territory (Administration) Act 1910, being expenditure in accordance with an ordinance or ordinances of the Northern Territory making provision with respect to the expenditure of moneys appropriated by the parliament by virtue of this item". The form of the appropriation, therefore, reinforced the concept of a global allocation.

The Minister for the Northern Territory, in advising us of the global allocation, said that we could re-allocate funds to suit our priorities and for that reason both Northern Territory money bills I have referred to contained a clause 5 which gave the Executive Member for Finance and Planning, and the Executive Council in certain cases, authority to effect transfer of funds. In accordance with this authority, a number of transfers were approved prior to the additional estimates, details of which were tabled in this Assembly.

In May 1978, I presented in this Assembly a bill, the Allocation of Funds (Appropriation) Bill No. 3, in which, on the basis of advice given, both ordinary and capital services were combined in the one bill. That bill which was complementary to the two bills in the Australian parliament also provided for additional allocations and offset savings, and incorporated the transfer orders that I had previously made. This bill was passed by the Assembly and received the necessary assent.

One of the significant features of the bill was the allocation for the second time of \$600,000 for the rural adjustment scheme as the Commonwealth had changed its attitude and had decided to appropriate \$600,000 to the Northern Territory. In order to reinstate our priorities, the second funding was then offered as a saving to reinstate the allocation of expenditure on proposals removed from the original budget. The Treasurer had said we had a global allocation. The Minister for the Northern Territory said we could allocate between individual functions wholly at our discretion. The Commonwealth appropriation required the moneys to be spent in accordance with the law of the Northern Territory, and that is what was done. Prior to 30 June, I approved a number of transfers in accordance with section 5 of the Allocation of Funds (Appropriation) Ordinance No. 3 which for convenience sake were recorded in the one transfer, each of which were within my authority.

My Department of Finance was supplied only with computer print-outs of expenditure against the allocations for the Northern Territory. We were not informed of expenditure against Commonwealth division 457 nor division 899,

under which our expenditures were recorded in the Commonwealth's ledger system. As far as I can determine, no one in the Northern Territory was ever aware of the expenditure recorded against division 899. It was only after 30 June that information was provided showing division 457 as being over-spent. However, this was inevitable because the re-allocation of \$600,000 for the rural adjustment scheme from capital to ordinary services made in our bill No. 3 was not reflected in the same manner in the Commonwealth's legislation. It appears, therefore, that an unintentional technical breach of the Commonwealth's legislation occurred. In the event, expenditures against division 457 were in excess of the Commonwealth's appropriations but there was a similar under-expenditure against division 899. As I said before, there was a net under-expenditure of \$39,080.

I have made reference in this statement to a number of authoritative statements by responsible federal ministers which I feel sure had established in the eyes of this Assembly and in the eyes of the federal parliament the validity of a one-line appropriation to be allocated according to the priorities of the Northern Territory. I say this also because the Minister for the Northern Territory recommended to the Administrator that bill No. 3 be assented to. I say this because not only did the Department of the Northern Territory, which was responsible for the funding of our functions, fail to recognise that our bill No. 3 required a form of executive action in accordance with established procedures, sanctioned by the Australian parliament, but other federal departments with responsibilities in this area also believed in the expounded philosophy of a one-line appropriation.

While I frankly acknowledge that a technical breach of the Commonwealth's appropriation procedures occurred, I refute any suggestion that the breach resulted from irresponsible or evasive action by the Northern Territory executive who acted at all times with the utmost good faith. The executive believed that Appropriation Bill No. 3 was perfectly in order and did not infringe Commonwealth legislation. That belief was apparently shared by all who were concerned with the bill from its drafting to its assent by the Administrator. In fact, had the conflict between the bill and the Commonwealth's appropriation been brought to notice at the time, the appropriate action to remedy the situation would have been taken by the Commonwealth by the use of the appropriation for advance to the Minister for Finance. This Assembly's bill would have remained intact. The charge of irresponsible financial management on this executive is unfounded.

Mr ISAACS (Opposition Leader) (by leave): Mr Speaker, I move that the statement be noted.

The great tragedy of the statement just delivered by the Treasurer is that he just does not understand it. That must have been obvious by the way he read it. Nobody has suggested that the government has been guilty of irresponsible, financial management. If members opposite would only read carefully statements that I make, they would know what I have said. I said that the matter of over-expenditure of \$700,000 on \$27m and not \$50m as stated by the Minister for Community Development yesterday, bordered on incompetence. Having heard the Treasurer, I think that certainly must be so. I do not think that they have been irresponsible; I simply believe they do not understand.

The Australian government did allocate to the Northern Territory executive \$50m to be split up according to their priorities. The priorities determined by the Northern Territory executive were an appropriation of \$25.2m for capital expenditure and \$26.8m for operating expenditure for the Northern Territory Legislative Assembly. The simple fact is that the allocations between operation and expenditure were determined by the Northern Territory executive prior to

the last budget. It is true that the Australian government did say that how they wished to allocate the moneys within their priorities could be done by the Northern Territory executive.

The simple fact is that \$50m is a global figure to be divided in 2 ways, one for operations and one for capital expenditure. That was assessed by the Northern Territory executive and it advised the Australian government of its needs. Therefore, we had Appropriation Bill No. 1 and Appropriation Bill No. 2 from the federal parliament exactly reflecting the Allocation of Funds Bills determined by this executive last year. In so far as the two bills themselves are concerned, the two items of rival expenditure were determined by the NT executive and the Australian government appropriated \$50m in their budget to be split up according to the desire of the NT executive.

There is a very quaint slip in the Treasurer's statement when he refers to budgets and global allocations in budgets. There is no doubt that a global allocation was made in the budget but the budget is different from the appropriation bills as the Treasurer must certainly know. The appropriation bills determine expenditures on operations and on capital expenditure. When the Treasurer says, "In providing the \$50m in the form of the two appropriation bills, the Commonwealth stated purposes identical for each appropriation", he is incorrect.

Let me read to you what the wording was in each of those two cases. In relation to Appropriation Bill No. 1, the wording was this: "Northern Territory Legislative Assembly - for operating expenditure in respect of matters specified in determinations made under section 4ZE of the Northern Territory (Administration) Act 1910 being the expenditure in accordance with an ordinance or ordinances of the Northern Territory making provision with respect to the expenditure of moneys appropriated by the parliament by virtue of this item". If you read the statement of the Treasurer, it differs in one very small and insignificant matter, the first three words of the item - "for operating expenditure".

What does Appropriation Bill No. 2 say because, according to the Treasurer, it says the same thing? It says: "A capital expenditure in respect of matters specified in determinations made under section 4ZE of the Northern Territory Administration Act 1910 being expenditure in accordance with an ordinance or ordinances of the Northern Territory making provision with respect to the expenditure of moneys appropriated by the parliament by virtue of this item". Again it differs only by three small words from the words used by the Treasurer. Quite obviously, when you compare the two allocations, they are quite different. Appropriation Bill No. 1 was for operating expenditures and Appropriation Bill No. 2 was for capital expenditure. I will repeat that the Northern Territory executive itself determined the amount it wanted for operations and expenditure and, within those two allocations, it determined its own priorities.

What has happened in terms of the two bills is this: the government has over-spent on operations and it has under-spent on capital expenditure. Quite proudly, the Treasurer says, "We have under-spent overall so what is the hoo-ha?" There are two grounds for the hoo-ha. First, if it is their view that they can over-spend on one and under-spend on another, the hoo-ha is that they have chosen operations to be the one they were to over-spend on and capital expenditure to be the one that they would under-spend on. We all know that the Northern Territory suffers a very high unemployment rate and that it is capital expenditure which gets employment going. They under-spend on capital and they over-spend on administration, dinners and stuff like that - very important, I suppose.

The second objection has much more weight. The Territory's first law officer has berated the opposition for talking about mere legalisms and technicalities. I suppose he will berate me also for talking about legality and section 81 of the Australian Constitution. The simple fact is that the Northern Territory executive has breached it. I do not suppose that is a matter of terribly great moment; the Chief Minister will tell us that it is simply "illegalism". There is no doubt that section 81 has been breached.

I am not saying that the Treasurer has wilfully done this; I do not believe he has. I do not believe it to be the case that they knowingly flouted the Constitution. There is no doubt the Treasurer is an honest man and he certainly does his job honestly. The simple fact is that he does not understand because it is quite clear that he has not understood the first principle of public administration in accounting. The statement given by the Treasurer is not all that it ought to be. I am pleased that he has frankly admitted a mistake. I am somewhat concerned, though, that he has gone through all this technical hurly-burly which he found difficulty in saying, which everybody else found difficulty in understanding. The simple facts are as I have expressed them. As I say, we note the statement and certainly there has never been a question of gross irresponsibility. I do believe, though, that the over-expenditure on operations, the \$27m odd which I referred to in a press statement, certainly does border on incompetence.

Motion agreed to.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

Mr EVERINGHAM (Chief Minister): Mr Speaker, I claim to have been misrepresented and seek leave to make a personal explanation.

Leave granted.

Mr EVERINGHAM: Mr Speaker, in the edition of the Northern Territory News, Wednesday 13 September 1978, I am reported as having told the Assembly yesterday: "He blamed public servants for supplying incorrect information to the Minister for Industrial Development, Mr Roger Steele". Not only am I wrongly represented there, Mr Speaker, but in the following paragraph: "Mr Everingham decided to introduce validating legislation to the Encouragement of Primary Production Ordinance after learning early this morning the opposition would move a censure motion against the government". I had decided that quite some time ago.

In relation to the first paragraph, I have been carefully through my speech in Hansard and the speech of the Minister for Industrial Development, and the only possible reference I believe that statement could be drawn from in the Hansard report of either of our speeches yesterday is my words on page 12: "At all times the minister has acted honestly in this matter. He has not, unfortunately, always been as well served". The sentence comes at the end of a paragraph in which I refer to the Primary Producers Board not being responsible to the minister. In that particular sentence, I was referring particularly to the board ...

Mr ISAACS (Opposition Leader): A point of order, Mr Speaker! The Chief Minister has said what he has to say. He is now proceeding to debate it.

Mr EVERINGHAM: I am making an explanation, Mr Speaker.

Mr ISAACS: He is allowed to say where he has been misquoted and leave it at that. He is not allowed to debate the matter.

Mr SPEAKER: The honourable Chief Minister was given leave.

Mr EVERINGHAM: The whole paragraph of which that sentence comes at the end relates to the Primary Producers Board. There is no reference to the public service whatsoever in my speech, Mr Speaker, and I say that that is the basis of the misrepresentation.

FINANCIAL ADMINISTRATION AND AUDIT BILL
(Serial 142)

Bill presented and read a first time.

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

The purpose of the proposed amendment is to correct a drafting oversight when bill No. 2 of 1978 was introduced in this House. That bill inserted section 70A relating to powers of a prescribed statutory corporation. Section 4 of the principal act indicates which provisions apply to a prescribed statutory corporation and it is necessary to add section 70A to those provisions. I commend the bill to the House.

Debate adjourned.

CRIMINAL LAW AND PROCEDURE BILL
(Serial 144)

Bill presented and read a first time.

Mr EVERINGHAM (Attorney-General): Mr Speaker, I move that the bill be now read a second time.

This bill proposes the abolition of the common law rule that there is a presumption that a wife who commits a crime in the presence of her husband was coerced by him into doing so. In the absence of evidence that a wife was principally instrumental in the commission of a crime, or at least that she was acting independently, she must at present be acquitted even though there is no evidence that she was acting under threat, pressure or instructions from her husband. I understand, Mr Speaker, that the presumption originated in the 8th century when a wife's subjection, we understand at any rate, to her husband was extreme. Some male members of this Assembly may claim that the shoe is now decidedly on the other foot. The rule is clearly an anachronism. The presumption has been abolished in all states of Australia as well as England, Canada and New Zealand.

I foreshadow an amendment to this bill in committee. Printing difficulties have made this necessary. The amendment deals with the prerogative of mercy. Section 385A of the Criminal Law Consolidation Act and Ordinance presently provides that the Governor-General may remit any sentence of imprisonment, fine, penalty or forfeiture due or accrued to the Crown in respect of offences against Territory law. It is inconsistent with the principles of self-government for the Governor-General to exercise the prerogative rather than the Administrator. A bill has been introduced repealing section 385A of the Criminal Law Consolidation Act and Ordinance. The amendment I foreshadow will propose re-enactment of that section in the Criminal Law and Procedure Ordinance but with the Administrator substituted for the Governor-General. I commend the bill to honourable members.

Debate adjourned.

POISONS BILL
(Serial 152)

Bill presented and read a first time.

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

The purpose of this bill is to enable preparations containing small quantities of the substance dextromethorphan to be sold over the counter by pharmacists. This substance is an effective cough suppressant and is a constituent of a number of proprietary cough mixtures now on the market. Some time ago, the National Health and Medical Research Council recommended that preparations containing 1% or less of this drug be made available from pharmacists without prescription by a medical practitioner and that recommendation has since been adopted by the various states.

In the Northern Territory dextromethorphan is included in part III of the first schedule of the Poisons Ordinance and consequently preparations containing any proportion of the substance are available only on prescription. The bill now before us amends the principal ordinance by placing preparations containing 1% or less of the drug in part II of the schedule, thus enabling sale over the counter by pharmacists. Preparations containing more than 1% of this particular drug will continue to be available on a prescription basis only, as is the situation in the various states.

I have previously advised honourable members of the intention to completely review the existing legislation relating to poisons and dangerous drugs and I am now pleased to advise that I will be tabling a paper outlining a complete new act during the course of these sittings. I mention this now because, under the proposed new legislation, this substance would be removed from the prescription only by schedule. However, because of the fact that specific representations have been made concerning the particular substance, it has been decided to introduce this interim bill rather than wait on completion of a new act. I commend the bill to honourable members.

Debate adjourned.

REGISTRATION OF BIRTHS, DEATHS AND MARRIAGES BILL
(Serial 146)

Bill presented and read a first time.

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

This bill proposes an important amendment to the Registration of Births, Deaths and Marriages Act. The bill seeks to give parents a wider choice of surnames for their children. The act presently provides that children born in wedlock must be registered in the surname of the father.

Earlier this year, the Leader of the Opposition drew my attention to a case in which a Darwin couple of Spanish or Mexican origin had been unable to register a child in their combined surnames in accordance with the traditional custom of Spanish-speaking people. I undertook to examine the problem as a matter of urgency. The Department of Law informed me that the problem area was wider than at first envisaged and that the whole question of naming of children merited close examination. I gave instructions for that examination to be carried out. Some ethnic groups, particularly those from Spanish-speaking

countries, traditionally give their children the combined surnames of their parents. Others have naming customs that differentiate between male and female children, for example the orthodox Sikh community. The provision of a choice of using either the father's or the mother's or combined surnames will enable most ethnic groups to follow their traditional naming customs. Ethnic groups - and I believe there are 49 different races or nationalities represented in Darwin alone - do much to enrich our community. Their traditional customs should as far as possible be respected and preserved wherever we can.

I draw members' attention to the special position of Aboriginal people. The name by which an Aboriginal is traditionally known may be that of a particular skin or other social group or place. Distinctions are drawn between male and female children. This bill has the important effect of giving recognition to some but not all Aboriginal naming customs. Further research is being undertaken and I foreshadow further legislation.

It may be said that section 17 of the principal ordinance presently discriminates against women. At common law, the surname of the children of a marriage was not necessarily that of the father. I see no reason why the wider choice available at common law should not be revised for all parents. The bill before this House provides that all parents have a choice of giving to their first child the father's surname, the mother's surname, if that is different from the father's, or the surnames of both parents in combination. Provision is made for those parents who have in the past been obliged to register their child in the father's name, contrary to their traditional custom, to retrospectively amend the register.

I believe the family unit is important, especially where children are involved. Any provision which tends to weaken the parent-child relationship is undesirable. The bill does not enable parents to give their children a surname wholly unconnected with their own. Further the bill provides that, except in cases of bona fide traditional custom, all subsequent children of the marriage must be registered with the same surname as the first child registered in the Territory. Disagreements and difficulties may arise with respect to the naming of children both within and outside the marriage situation.

The bill proposes that a new and most important general right of application to the Supreme Court be given to any parent of a child. The application may be made either in conjunction with other proceedings or independently. The court is given power to make any order it thinks fit with regard to the surname of that child.

This bill proposes a freedom of choice unique in Australia. I do not propose to seek urgency for the bill nor would I propose to suspend Standing Orders to see that it is passed through all stages at this sittings. If I were approached by members of the opposition and the independent member for Nightcliff, then I would certainly be prepared to go along with them if they wished to see it passed through all stages at this sittings. I commend the bill to members.

Mrs LAWRIE (Nightcliff): Mr Speaker, I am rising to indicate my support for the legislation as presented by the honourable Chief Minister because I have had several enquiries from people who have been distressed by the present provisions prevailing in the Northern Territory - that is, that the child has to be registered in the father's name.

We also find that increasingly upon marriage women are not taking - which is only custom and not law - the name of their spouse. To further confuse the issue, some women hyphenate their own surname with that of their legal spouse and have wished to register children born of that union accordingly. I believe under the provisions of the legislation before us people will now be able to do that simply and I can assure the Assembly that this is in full accord with the many representations I have received on the subject. I support the bill.

Debate adjourned.

LANDS ACQUISITION BILL
(Serial 145)

Bill presented and read a first time.

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

Members will recall that in the June sittings of this Assembly a draft bill was tabled to provide for the acquisition of land by the new Northern Territory government. The bill was drafted in a hurry and required considerable refinement. Members subsequently should have received a long list of proposed amendments. The bill and the amendments were the subject of lengthy discussions with the various interested parties, with the end result that it was decided not to proceed at the August sittings of this Assembly. The matter lapsed with prorogation. Since that time, a considerable amount of drafting work has been undertaken to produce a much more refined bill, without greatly altering in any substantial way the principles in the earlier draft as read with the circulated amendments. The result is the bill that I am now introducing.

Members will be aware that the Australian Law Reform Commission has a current reference on this topic and has circulated for public comment a paper on that reference. In addition members will recall that several commissioners visited Darwin and held a public hearing, as well as having private discussions with members of this Assembly. These discussions, together with subsequent comments by the commission on the earlier draft, have been of considerable assistance.

Members should have received a copy of a letter dated 2 June from the commissioner having responsibility for this project, Mr Murray Wilcox. Most of his points have been incorporated in this bill. In fact it is true to say that the bill substantially reflects the tentative conclusions of the Law Reform Commission. There is no doubt that, if this bill is passed, we will have the most up-to-date, progressive piece of legislation in the whole of Australia. At the present time, the Territory has no powers of compulsory acquisition of land. It can only acquire by agreement. The Commonwealth Lands Acquisition Act continues to apply in the Territory but it only empowers the acquisition of land on behalf of the Commonwealth.

It is generally recognised that a sovereign government must have some reserve powers of acquisition where the government is satisfied that acquisition is necessary in the public interest and where it is not possible to acquire by agreement on reasonable terms. The Northern Territory government is a sovereign government in its own right under the Crown and its operations would be impeded without wide powers of acquisition. The difficulty with legislation of this nature lies in ensuring compensation on just and reasonable terms.

Mr Deputy Speaker, as pointed out by the Law Reform Commission, this is where the legislation in the various Australian jurisdictions is defective.

The Northern Territory government accepts the principle that compensation for compulsory acquisitions should be just and reasonable. If any additional reason is necessary to support this view, it can be found in section 50 of the Northern Territory (Self-Government) Act. In my view, this bill reflects this principle. It strikes a balance between the public and private citizens in a way that no other legislation does. It is a fairly revolutionary piece of legislation.

The bill establishes a land acquisition tribunal of three persons to be drawn from a panel of persons with a wide range of experience. The tribunal will have a dual function. Firstly, it will consider proposals of acquisitions before they affect upon the request of any affected person. The tribunal may have regard to environmental and other factors. The concept of having a pre-acquisition hearing results from a recommendation of the Law Reform Commission. It will place government acquisition proposals under public scrutiny.

Following acquisition, the tribunal has the further function of assessing what is reasonable in the way of compensation. The tribunal is required to give effect to the formula in a schedule to the bill in carrying out that function. It must also have regard to the need to provide for just terms as set out in clause 5. The scheduled formula is basically the same as that recommended by the Law Reform Commission.

The tribunal has the responsibility of assessing compensation for the abandonment of an acquisition proposal or if land is not acquired within the time prescribed in the bill. The tribunal may also assess compensation for damages resulting from temporary entry into land prior to acquisition. Where an offer of monetary compensation is made by the government, the offeree is automatically entitled to 90% of that offer forthwith, the balance being payable upon agreement or upon assessment by the tribunal. The bill also provides for offers of resettlement on other land with or without monetary compensation as an alternative to monetary compensation only. There is a general right of appeal to the Supreme Court in relation to assessment of compensation and or damages and the Supreme Court is given wide powers.

The question of compensation for injurious affection payable to persons other than those whose land was acquired has not been dealt with in this bill. This is in accordance with the recommendations of the chairman of the commission. The matter will be considered further when the commission has concluded its deliberations.

As I mentioned when the Lands Acquisition Bill was not processed at the August sittings, I propose to seek the suspension of Standing Orders during the course of these sittings in order to process this bill through all stages. The Northern Territory government does not have powers of compulsory acquisition at this time and has not had such powers since 1 July. It is necessary that we have those powers to proceed with government business. I commend the bill.

Debate adjourned.

INTERPRETATION BILL (Serial 165)

Bill presented and read first time.

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

This small bill is designed to deal with several problems that have only recently emerged and which were not recognised at the last sittings. As the principal ordinance presently stands, a reference to a minister in any Territory law where that reference is spelt with a capital "M" is a reference to the appropriate minister specified in an administrative arrangements order. Difficulties will arise when new laws are passed but no amending administrative arrangements order has been made. This bill will make it clear that, in those circumstances, such a reference is a reference to any Territory minister. This will avoid any arguments as to the legality of actions taken by a minister in the interim period.

Secondly, since the transfer of powers exercise, it has been noticed that there are several continuing references to the Administrator-in-Council in various Territory laws. With the repeal of the Administrator's Council Ordinance, some problems of interpretation of this phrase have arisen. This bill seeks to make it clear that such references are deemed to be references to the Administrator. In accordance with section 4 of the new Interpretation Ordinance, this in turn will be a reference either to the Administrator on the advice of the Executive Council or the Administrator sole depending on the context.

Lastly, the principal ordinance contains a new general delegation provision whereby powers and functions in legislation can be conferred on another person. I refer members to section 46 of the principal ordinance as recently amended. The Department of Law in a recent opinion has pointed out that there is a minor drafting error in the section and this bill seeks to correct that error.

None of the matters in this bill are of any great importance other than for purposes of legal interpretation. The need for the continuing amendments is regretted but members will appreciate that, in a measure as complex as this and given the very limited time within which the principal ordinance was drafted, such corrective measures are largely unavoidable. I commend the bill.

Debate adjourned.

EXPLOSIVES BILL (Serial 155)

Bill presented and read a first time.

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

This change is to exempt mines from the provisions of the Explosives Act so that the mine managements will have to comply with only one set of regulations specifically appropriate to mining operations and enforceable by inspectors of mines operating under the Mines Regulation Act. Under that act, inspectors of mines already have the powers of oversight to regulate the use of explosives on mines. However, because of the special expertise possessed by inspectors of explosives, it is intended that in practice inspectors of mines will closely cooperate with inspectors of explosives to ensure uniform standards throughout the Northern Territory.

Inspectors of mines will specifically take the advice of inspectors of explosives before approving the siting or construction of surface explosive magazines, and also in testing possibly defective explosives. As a further assurance of close cooperation, it is proposed that, when the present Mines Regulation Act is superseded by a mines safety control act in the near future, the special provisions of this latter act will be used to have inspectors of explosives appointed as special inspectors.

The second portion of the amendment relates to the Ports Act and the Fire Brigades Act. It merely reaffirms existing provisions of the Explosives Act and will not result in changes in its operation. I commend the bill.

Debate adjourned.

CRIMINAL LAW CONSOLIDATION BILL
(Serial 160)

Bill presented and read the first time.

Mr EVERINGHAM (Attorney-General): Mr Speaker, I move that the bill be now read a second time.

This bill proposes the repeal of section 385A to which I referred earlier. That section presently vests the prerogative of mercy in the Governor-General. It is intended that section 385A be re-enacted in the Criminal Law and Procedure Ordinance with the Administrator substituted for the Governor-General. I commend the bill.

Debate adjourned.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY (REMUNERATION, ALLOWANCES AND
ENTITLEMENTS) BILL
(Serial 166)

Bill presented and read a first time.

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

The object of this bill is to enable His Honour the Administrator to determine the remuneration, allowances and other entitlements to be paid to members and ministers or, alternatively, to enable him to request the Remuneration Tribunal to inquire into and determine what remuneration, allowances and entitlements should be paid to them. The bill is intended to give expression to the intention of section 21(2) of the Northern Territory (Self-Government) Act, that members and ministers should be paid pursuant to a Northern Territory law. In addition, section 54 of that act empowers the passing by this Assembly of laws to confer jurisdiction on the Remuneration Tribunal.

This bill is also intended to overcome a difficulty created by both subsection 21(2) and section 65 of the act. In this regard, I draw attention to the Northern Territory Remuneration and Allowances Act which was passed by the Commonwealth parliament and became law on 30 August. It may be of assistance to members if I briefly outline the circumstances that gave rise to the need for that act.

Paragraph 21(2)(e) of the self-government act reads as follows: "He takes or agrees to take directly or indirectly any remuneration, allowance or honorarium for services rendered in the Legislative Assembly otherwise than in accordance with an enactment that provides for remuneration and allowances to be paid to persons in respect of their services as members of the Legislative Assembly, members of the Executive Council and ministers of the Territory". The period of transition was intended to be provided for by section 65 of the act which reads as follows: "Notwithstanding the repeal of the previous act, until a person receives remuneration, allowances and other entitlements in accordance with an enactment, he shall receive in respect of his services as a

member of the Legislative Assembly, a member of the council or a minister of the Territory, as the case may be, remuneration, allowances and other entitlements in accordance with the relevant determination by the Remuneration Tribunal in force immediately before the commencing date. Paragraph 21(2)(e) does not apply in relation to remuneration, allowances and other entitlements so received".

It will be seen that the act envisages that members will be paid according to a Northern Territory law but, until such a law is passed, they should be paid according to the relevant determination of the Remuneration Tribunal in force on 30 June. After 30 June, the Remuneration Tribunal has no power to determine salaries and allowances payable to members. For reasons which escape me, the Remuneration Tribunal went ahead on 18 June and made a determination in respect of our salaries and allowances purporting to have effect from 1 July. The determination was invalid but it was made and published like any other determination and, during July and August, members were paid according to its terms. The invalid determination marginally increased salaries and allowances above those fixed by the determination in force on 30 June. Technically, therefore, members were overpaid during the 2 months and the Commonwealth legislation was passed to validate the payments and to ensure that there was no doubt as to the position of members.

It remains for this Assembly to take the necessary action to facilitate payment of remuneration, allowances and other entitlements to members and ministers in respect of the period since 1 July this year. Having regard to the provisions of section 54 of the self-government act, it is felt that, as a matter of law, the current Legislative Assembly Remuneration of Members Ordinance was totally inadequate. For example, it does not deal with entitlements other than remuneration and allowances nor does it deal with the position of ministers. It does not confer jurisdiction on the tribunal sufficient to comply with section 54. The only reasonable option available is to re-write the ordinance in a form that is legally correct. This bill seeks to do this.

It is envisaged that initially the Administrator will make a determination fixing salaries, allowances and other benefits at a rate in accordance with that paid since 1 July. The determination can, by virtue of a provision in the new Interpretation Act, be back-dated to 1 July. For future years, it is envisaged that a request will be made to the tribunal to make an annual review in the same way as it does for other parliamentarians and statutory officers.

Debate adjourned.

TERRITORY PARKS AND WILDLIFE CONSERVATION BILL (Serial 143)

Bill presented and read a first time.

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

The original Territory Parks and Wildlife Ordinance largely copied the terms of the federal National Parks and Wildlife Act 1975. Although at the time that form of legislation seemed to be necessary, it did not show itself to be well adapted for Territory law. Honourable members will recall that the original ordinance has been extensively amended. The purpose of this bill is to further amend the principal act so that it conforms with the general pattern of Territory law.

Section 116 of the principal act directly copies section 67 of the federal act. It relates to prosecutions and provides, in essence, that the consent of both the defendant and the prosecutor is required for a proceeding to be dealt with in a court of summary jurisdiction. This type of provision does not exist in any other law of the Territory. In respect of all other matters heard before a court of summary jurisdiction, section 120 of the Justices Act details those matters which may be dealt with summarily while section 121A provides for other matters which would not otherwise be dealt with summarily to be so dealt with the agreement of the defendant. In other words, it provides that the defendant's right to be heard by judge and jury is maintained but enables less important matters to be dealt with by a court of summary jurisdiction.

The Justices Ordinance provisions are adequate for all matters which are to be dealt with by a court of summary jurisdiction. The Territory Parks and Wildlife Commission does not require this provision in the act and would not wish to exercise it. Its repeal will put prosecutions under this act on a footing similar to that applying to other prosecutions under Territory Law. I commend the bill.

Debate adjourned.

ADDRESS IN REPLY

Continued from 12 September 1978

Mr ISAACS (Opposition Leader): Mr Speaker, it is with some pleasure that I speak to the motion for the address in reply which I formally seconded on Tuesday. There are two matters that I want to speak about that were mentioned by the Administrator in his speech. The first relates to electoral legislation and the second to compulsory third party insurance. Although I am mindful of the fact that the Minister for Transport and Works has tabled a paper today in relation to this specific matter, I would be in order in pursuing the matter because the Administrator mentioned it in his speech.

In relation to electoral legislation, the opposition is somewhat concerned at the attitude adopted by the government. You will recall that, in the Administrator's first speech to the Second Assembly, he mentioned that electoral legislation would be introduced late in the life of the Assembly and again we had a very waffly statement about electoral legislation in this speech by the Administrator.

I believe the people of the Northern Territory require a great deal of notice about the sort of electoral legislation which is going to be serving them in relation to elections, the distribution of electorates, the number of people who will be in the Assembly and so on. I believe, therefore, that it would serve a great use if I were to outline the opposition's view in relation to electoral legislation and the sorts of principles which ought to be followed. I believe that the principles of electoral legislation ought to be enunciated early so that people know what they have in store for them and there can be proper debate about it. It is true. On the last two occasions of Legislative Assembly elections, electoral legislation was introduced very late. That applied both to Minister Paterson and Minister Adermann. In that regard, I believe it was quite wrong that the new principles should have been brought in so late, without in any way reflecting on the justice of the type of legislation introduced.

The principle of electoral legislation which we would seek, and I would hope it would be endorsed by members opposite, is one vote one value and that, as far as possible, electorates have the same number of people in them. Of

course, it is a question then of what sort of tolerance from an average will be adopted. Federal legislation adopts a 10% tolerance on electors. For some unknown reason, the self-government act provides a tolerance no greater than 20%. That does not mean that we have to slavishly have a 20% tolerance from the mean. It is well within our bounds to have a 10% tolerance. I would hope that the government would adopt the federal legislation in regard to the size of electorates or variance of electorates from the mean, and would adopt a 10% tolerance. We know what part of the coalition opposite would adopt a 20% tolerance and what part would adopt a 10% tolerance. If it is a 20% tolerance, we know that the Country Party holds sway; if it is a 10% tolerance, we know that the Liberals would hold sway. It will be very interesting to see just which one comes out. Quite obviously, the 10% tolerance is accepted by both major parties in the federal scene; it ought to be adopted in this case as well.

I also believe that it ought to be compulsory for all citizens of 18 years of age and over to be enrolled. Currently, we have a crazy situation where all non-Aboriginal citizens of 18 years of age and over have to enrol but it is optional for Aboriginals. In my view, this is an absurd situation. It ought to be that everyone of 18 years of age and over ought to be enrolled. In other words, there should be compulsory enrolment. The only state that I know of which has optional enrolment is South Australia but, in that case, it is optional for everyone. Once you do enrol, then it is compulsory to vote. It is my view that in so far as electoral legislation is concerned in the Northern Territory, enrolment ought to be compulsory for everyone of 18 years of age and over - that is, of those people who are eligible to vote.

I would also like to refer to a number of other matters which I believe the government ought to consider in relation to the framing of its electoral legislation. I believe the optional preferential system of voting is the best one and the one most suited to the Northern Territory. I know we have been through this argument before but the authority that I have for saying that optional preferential voting is best for the Territory is, of course, the former chief Australian electoral officer, Mr F.E. Ley, who in giving evidence to the Joint Parliamentary Committee on Constitutional Development for the Northern Territory said that, in his opinion, optional preferential was the system best suited for the Northern Territory. When you think about it, the optional preferential system does have a great deal in its favour.

Very many people say to me, and I am sure to other people, that when they cast their vote they do not wish to vote for a certain person. I can understand people having some pretty hard-held views about me, say, or other members of the Assembly and they may feel that no way in the world would they want to vote for Isaacs or for Robertson. In my view, those people sometimes ruin their vote simply by not voting for them. In other words, they get into the polling booth; they see my name which might cause stars in their eyes or whatever; they say, "no way in the world am I going to cast a vote". They do not vote or they write some silly comment on the ballot paper which ruins it also. There are people, Mr Speaker, who do not wish to fill out all the squares. It seems to me that the most sensible system is one where people have a choice. They can either mark one box or they can mark two or as many as they wish. It is a system advocated by the former chief electoral officer of Australia.

Also there ought to be, in my view, simplified voting procedures. We ought not to be putting barriers in the way of people recording a formal vote. After all, the important thing with adult franchise is that people who are there and willing to vote have as much chance as possible to record their vote validly. The sorts of barriers that can be put in the way of a person voting validly ought to be removed.

It was a most revealing experience for me to have taken part in the by-election for the seat of Kimberley in Western Australia a week after the last federal election and to have heard the sorts of comments which were made about the previous state election which was subject to a court of disputed returns and a decision was taken to overturn the decision of that election. When you hear the sorts of tricks and misdeeds which were pulled by people and commented upon by the judge, it would be a great shame and a great blot on our development, and certainly a great blot on the democratic system, to have that sort of thing open to people in an election. People who were eligible to vote were actually denied their right and I am quite sure that members opposite certainly would not tolerate that. Voting procedures ought to be simple. They should allow a person who wishes to cast a vote an opportunity to cast it validly.

We ought to be encouraging the Electoral Office to actually go out and enrol people. It may mean that more staff will have to be put on. It may be that the Northern Territory government will have to make special arrangements to get people enrolled because the Commonwealth Electoral Office may not feel that they have to do the job themselves. If you had a statutory body doing the enrolment, it would take away the nonsensical allegations made by the member for Stuart and others of his ilk who have nothing better to do than to go muck-raking around in other organisations. There ought to be an active enrolment drive and it ought to be carried out by a statutory body. In the absence of that statutory body carrying out an active enrolment drive, obviously it is up to people interested in the political system to go out and enrol people.

There ought to be also voter education programs so that people understand the system and know how it operates. I am sure some people just do not know what it all means. They do not know what an electorate means; they do not know how they elect their member. In order to uphold the sorts of traditions of which we are now a part, it is important that voter education programs be introduced. Another matter relates to the manner in which they can get people to a polling booth. I am quite sure that the government will have a look at this question of postal voting whereby people who live more than 8 kilometres from a polling booth are automatically given a postal vote. Many people are somewhat concerned at the way that system operates. In the past, the Labor party screamed loud about the abuse of the automatic postals. The reason given by ALP members was simply that people who lived on pastoral properties were going to vote the other way and there might be some shananigans. In more recent years, the boot has been on the other foot and members opposite have complained about the automatic postal system because they think that we somehow or other rig the vote towards Aborigines. Probably there is some little truth on both sides but the fact is that the automatic postal vote system does have its problems. One way to get around it would be to adopt a system which applies in the National Aboriginal Congress elections where they have mobile polling booths. It has been a part of the ALP platform for some time now that such a procedure ought to be implemented.

One other matter which I believe ought to be looked at in relation to electoral legislation is the question of the financing of the actual campaigns themselves. I do not believe that it is the sort of thing which we can go into immediately. It probably should not occur in a coming election within the next 2 years but it is the sort of thing which governments in Australia ought to be considering. There is a great deal of money expended on campaigns and, in my view, the system which operates in America has a great deal of merit. It is the sort of thing we ought to consider. I do not believe it would cost a great deal of money in relation to the sort of expenditures which occur. I was very interested to read when the ALP made an announcement about this some time ago, that the Majority Leader, as he then was, and the Australian Democrats made

some favourable noises towards it. I think it is important in relation to electoral legislation that we know what form the electoral legislation is going to take and we know it early.

The other matter I wish to speak about in relation to the address in reply is the matter of third party insurance. I have made some comments about this because recently the government announced a 54% increase in compulsory third party rates and, of course, that drew a tremendous amount of reaction from the public.

I have suggested that the answer lies in establishing a Northern Territory insurance office which would not only carry compulsory third party insurance but would compete directly with the insurance companies in other areas of insurance as well. I was somewhat pleased when about a week after I made that statement I was visited by a "heavy" from the Insurance Council of Australia giving me all the good oil on why a government insurance office was not the answer. To my surprise I saw in the paper about a week after that, both the NT News and the Star, full page advertisements by the Insurance Council of Australia and I heard a statement by the Chief Minister indicating that he too would not favour a Northern Territory insurance office. Let me say quite simply that I favour this and the opposition does and, given government, we would establish a Northern Territory insurance office.

Of course, we would not be so silly as to say that a Northern Territory insurance office of itself can bring down the rates immediately. It can, and it would, because it could subsidise losses from compulsory third party, which are significant, by the obvious profits we or any insurance office could make in other areas of insurance. I doubt that it would make a profit in its first couple of years but no doubt, given the evidence of other government insurance offices around Australia, over a period of time it would certainly make a profit and have a very great impact on the financial world of the Northern Territory, as indeed it has in Queensland, New South Wales and South Australia.

Something else has to be done in relation to compulsory third party to bring down the cost to the community of motor car accidents. It is not good enough in my view to boldly state, as the Insurance Council of Australia did, that we pay more because we crash more. It is a pretty simple slogan but it does not really tell the whole story. It is true that our accident rate in 1976 was greater than most, if not all, other states. But, let me give you these figures which came from the Australian Law Reform Commission report into alcohol, drugs and driving and you will see that, however bad our accident rate may be, it is getting better. For example, in 1973 there were 57 fatalities per 100,000 people in the Northern Territory; in 1974, there were 52; in 1975 - 56; in 1976 - 47; and in 1977 - 44. You can see there has been a steady decline in the number of fatalities per 100,000 in the Northern Territory. In relation to injuries per 100,000 people, the story is the same. In 1973 there were 1,055 injuries per 100,000 people; in 1974 - 939; in 1975 - 891; in 1976 - 800; and in 1977 a slight increase to 830. Over that five year period, you can see a steady decline in those two vital statistics in relation to motor car accidents, fatalities and injuries.

When one has a 54% hike in our compulsory third party insurance rates, it is not just good enough to say that we crash more, therefore we pay more. The fact is that those figures I have shown compare reasonably with New South Wales and are slightly better than South Australia. That is still not enough. We all know the very heavy cost to the community of motor vehicle accidents, both fatal and non-fatal. Quite obviously, in addition to the establishment of a Northern Territory government insurance office, which we as a government would introduce, we have to do something more in relation to the public. It has been shown that driver education programs have little or no impact on motor vehicle

accidents. A study in America has shown that there is no appreciable impact on that statistic. Although driver education programs are laudable, they cannot be used to bring down the accident rate.

We have to do other things. Quite clearly, we have to eliminate some of the danger spots. That is expensive but, on the other hand, you have to weigh that cost with the cost of the accidents themselves. Eliminating intersections and building underpasses, overhead footpaths etc is expensive but these things eliminate accidents. It is true that seat belts save lives. They have a dramatic impact on the cost of accidents and therefore anything which can be done to force people to wear seat belts ought to be done. In this matter, I am quite happy to support a denial of liberty by forcing people to wear seat belts and to implement the on-the-spot fine system for the non-wearing of seat belts. I know that we have such legislation but I know also that it has never been implemented.

Without question, the biggest single factor in relation to motor vehicle accidents and cost to the public is drink. I want to make it quite clear that I do not wish to say to people, "You must not drink". I did that once before. In 1976, I organised a strike at the brewery and was rung up by many people, mostly trade unionists, who told me I was trying to bring prohibition to the town. I was not and I am not now. What I am saying is that, if people drink, they must be convinced that they must not drive. In doing that, we have to take some very positive, responsible and unpopular steps. I am one person who is quite happy to publicly announce that I am in favour of it. We have to take preventative action to stop from driving those people who do want to drink.

In New South Wales, I understand, they have established a system of what is known as pub monitoring. Pub monitoring means that police stand or monitor hotels around closing time when seemingly inebriated people come out of them. The heavy hand of the law is put on his shoulder and the person is told, "You look as though you would not be able to drive safely, don't!" He is not arrested but he is told in very simple terms that the condition that he is in means that he would be a very great risk on the road and that he ought not to drive.

I would agree with the introduction of random breath tests. As hideous as that might sound, I would favour it. I understand that it has been introduced in other states. I would not apply it with crazy prison sentences or mandatory prison sentences. That is going overboard. People would immediately lose any kind of faith in the system. However, I do believe that if people are made aware that the combination of drink and driving is expensive, not just for them but for the community at large, then we might do something about this very great problem, this very expensive problem as we all know it to be. Somehow or another we have to convince people that, if they are to drive, they must not have been drinking beforehand. If they want to drink - and nobody is suggesting for a moment that they should not - then they ought not to drive.

I would favour a system where I would encourage such operators as the "You drink, we drive" people. Where such operations could not operate viably in small communities, the insurance office ought to subsidise an operation which will carry out those very same functions. It may not run at a profit but it certainly would be running very profitably for the community if it saved just one life.

I know the sort of things I am saying right now are not popular things to be saying. I would hope, though, that members opposite would support me in the sort of propositions that I am putting up. There is no doubt we have to reduce the cost to the community of accidents and the single greatest factor in motor

vehicle accidents is driving after drinking. I know there is currently in the Northern Territory a committee, comprising I understand the Department of Health, St John Ambulance people and the police which does gather statistics on fatal accidents. I believe that committee could be the basis for collecting further statistics in the Northern Territory. I am suggesting to the minister that perhaps its charter should be broadened to take a far deeper look into the problems of accidents: what causes them, what we can do about them. As I said, these sort of things are not popular. I am not advocating them in opposition simply because I know I will not feel the electoral backlash if I implement them. I would say quite clearly to the government opposite, if they wish to introduce that sort of program, comprehensive as I believe it is, without going overboard, it would certainly have my full support.

Mr BALLANTYNE (Nhulunbuy): Mr Speaker, it gives me much pleasure to speak on the address in reply to the speech by the Administrator. First of all, I would say it was a personal thrill for me to be here at the opening ceremony on Friday. It is unfortunate only that a lot of my constituents could not be here to witness that occasion. His Excellency the Governor-General's speech, I believe, was a magnificent one and I think all the dignitaries and the visitors were impressed by its content. I am sure the MLAs were impressed by the content of his speech. I would hope, too, that the TV tapes and photographs taken on that occasion will be kept safely stored for posterity.

There was one incident which was upsetting and marred the whole day and that was the demonstration outside this Chamber. It was evident that the demonstrators had complete disregard for the historic occasion. I do not think anyone denies the right of people to demonstrate in their own way but they could get away from the scene which was not even relevant to the type of demonstration they were holding. There is nothing worse than listening to raucous voices yelling in your ear when you are trying to watch a ceremony and, as I said, it was irrelevant to the whole scene. I do not think we should have to put up with that. I think the young children and the people who were there were quite disgusted by their behaviour. Some of the language was not in the best interests of children and, for that matter, was quite disgusting and appalling to me. To demonstrate in front of politicians is not unheard of but I believe it was an insult to the Governor-General when he was there representing the Queen on that auspicious occasion. I think it was not only demonstrating against the Governor-General but also an insult to our Queen.

I can remember quite clearly in the last sittings that the member for Arnhem expressed his concern about a demonstration he was involved in at King's Cross. I am sure we all remember the words he said at that time, that it was the last demonstration he would go to. I am not saying that the content of this demonstration was in that same vein but things do get out of hand where there are a lot of people, particularly when they are trying to impose themselves on other people.

Turning to the Administrator's address, it did spell out some good news. The Administrator outlined the future legislative program and other initiatives which cover a large field - issues relating to litter, land, apprenticeship, local government, police force, fisheries, Aboriginal people, companies, performing arts, national sports and so on. I would just like to talk about a few of those initiatives and proposed legislation.

I feel that tourism is something we really have to get moving in the Territory if we are going to look to that as a secondary industry. Our mining is perhaps our greatest money spinner but tourism is one that we can build up. We only have to look back to the very successful "Back to Darwin" promotion. Full compliments must go to the people who organised that, not only for the

promotion for the local people here but for those tourists who did visit. The response was quite remarkable. On the other hand, we did have good response to tourism in Central Australia with that advertising campaign which was saturated for certain times in South Australia and other states. It shows that there are people interested in coming to the Territory.

We also have to make them welcome and we must have a place fit for them to come to. There is only one thing that could disturb us in the Territory, and that is the beautification of certain areas. There is nothing worse than coming into a place where there is litter strewn everywhere. I believe the litter laws in the Territory should be much harsher than they have been in the past. I believe the on-the-spot fines are a bit successful but I also believe we could do a lot more. It is also up to the individual to behave in the proper manner instead of throwing cans everywhere. I drove down the Stuart Highway to Berry Springs on Saturday and the amount of litter on the sides of the road was absolutely appalling - the number of cans that were there. They did not get there by themselves; they were thrown there. I am very pleased to hear in the Administrator's address that we are looking at putting a deposit on beverage cans. People are just dumping them everywhere. You go around the side streets of major towns in this Territory, including Nhulunbuy, and you can see cans and other litter everywhere. It is a big eyesore. If we want to smarten ourselves up and look for tourism, that is one area where we can smarten ourselves up - and I mean everybody.

One of the interesting parts of the speech referred to police administration. I would like to see a lot of tightening up in the administration of the police. There are a lot of flaws there. Just recently, it was announced that registration of motor vehicles was to be taken out of the hands of the Nhulunbuy police. I have been trying now for two years, through questions and representations to various people, to obtain some relief for the police at Nhulunbuy from the registration of vehicles. We should have the inspector of vehicles announced very shortly and this will take a lot of the load off the police.

There is also the review of the type of equipment and vehicles needed for the Territory. They could even look perhaps at having an aircraft to be used in certain areas in emergencies, such as searches, in this vast area of ours. We could look at upgrading the office procedures, particularly those relating to the licensing of pistols and rifles. I see that legislation will be changed to introduce a new system next year. I would like to see the licensing of persons rather than the guns in a similar way that the Victorian government does.

It is very pleasing to see that the Law Reform Commission is proceeding with its report on the system of justice for the Aboriginal people. This is something in which we all will be playing a part. They have visited many communities to get a feeling of the types of laws that Aboriginal people need. I would hope that each member of this Assembly who lives in an area where there are Aboriginal people will express himself in a proper manner so that we can get a proper legal system to help the Aboriginal people.

One of the main things that does concern me is the youth of this Territory. I can see that there is a great avenue for helping the sports and recreation bodies in the Territory. I believe that Northern Territory sportsmen, whether they are youths or adults, can hold their own in any quarter. However, there is only one way that we can reach the standards of other states and that is to have proper coaching facilities, proper venues for holding these sports and proper administration. There is also the matter of sports medicine and we could be helped in this area through the national scheme.

I believe that there is a coaching scheme and this should be implemented immediately. We should make an assessment of all the things that we need. The other states do it and they get their share of the cake. There is no reason why the Territory cannot look to that now. I have spoken to the Minister for Community Development and I think that his feelings are very genuine on this too. He understands many of the problems because he is a sportsman.

There is a well-known sportsman in Darwin by the name of Klaus Bomberjack. He is in junior soccer and his dream is that there should be a stadium built in Central Australia for holding all national competitions. This would be a stadium where every facility could be built. There would be training programs with live-in camps run by the most highly-qualified people even if we have to go overseas to get the right people, to attract people from the other states. It is a dream which I believe could eventuate. I am sure that the Minister for Community Development will be looking at something like this. There is nothing like having a central area where sports people can gather. I would sincerely hope that one day that dream could come true.

There is another area which has to be looked at very quickly. This has been thought about for some time but, during the changeover, we have not had much time to think about it. I refer to apprenticeships. I believe that the present legislation is quite outdated and we must streamline that as soon as possible to give the disadvantaged young people in this Territory some help towards their future in the workforce. We ought to encourage young people to enter into apprenticeships and, the sooner we do that, the better.

The Administrator also spoke of legislation to cover employees who are not covered by any industrial award or agreements. This is something that the Leader of the Opposition would probably be more interested in than most people. Legislation should be brought in relating to annual holidays, long service leave and sick leave to help those people who are less fortunate than people in occupations where they are covered by awards and agreements.

Other speakers will probably be speaking on other issues but those are the ones that I was impressed by. I have much pleasure in supporting the motion.

Mr TUXWORTH (Mines and Energy): Mr Speaker, I do not find it a particularly pleasant task this afternoon to rise and to speak in reply to the Governor-General's address because I do not believe the aspects that I want to touch on have left a very pleasant taste in the mouths of Territorians generally but I believe they are matters we should pursue to make sure they never happen again.

I refer particularly to the activities that went on from the sideline during the ceremonial occasion of the Governor-General's visit to this Assembly. It is with very great sorrow that I believe members of this Assembly played a very great part in the activities of the mad mob that careered around in the streets prior to the opening. As far as I am concerned - and I know I have the support of many people in the electorate - the members of the other side of the House, the opposition, were responsible for organising the demonstration that was held in the adjacent park prior to the opening. I believe they are also to be held responsible for the activities that went on during those proud moments of the Governor-General's presence. I believe it was a deliberate attempt, sponsored by the opposition, to destroy the ceremonial opening. Without any doubt whatsoever, I believe it was an affront to the House and I believe it is the height of hypocrisy for the members of the ALP to ---

Mrs O'NEIL (Fannie Bay): A point of order, Mr Speaker! I believe the honourable minister is making personal reflections on members of the House which is contrary to Standing Orders.

Mr SPEAKER: The honourable member said that he "believed".

Mr Collins: That we organised the demonstration.

Mr SPEAKER: He believes this.

Mr TUXWORTH: I don't believe it; it is true.

Mr Collins: Mr Speaker, it is a reflection on our integrity as members of this House, Sir, every one of us.

Mr Robertson: There you have a guilty conscience at work.

Mr Collins: Not at all.

Mr ISAACS: May I speak on the point of order, Mr Speaker. The minister has claimed, as I understand it, that we showed contempt to this Assembly. I would have thought that, if he thought that, he would have made it a matter of some point and brought it to the Privileges Committee immediately. He has not done that so he is obviously casting personal reflections upon us without any substance at all and he ought to withdraw them.

Mr SPEAKER: It is a moot point. The minister says he believes these things and he is making a statement. It is a matter of his opinion against other people's opinion but I would ask him not to be contentious. If he feels strongly about these things, I believe he has the right to state his opinion. He is saying clearly that he believes this. That is what this place is about. It is a parliament for people to express their opinions.

Mr TUXWORTH: Mr Speaker, the reason I believe it is an affront to the House for the honourable members opposite to have been involved at any stage of that whole procedure, starting with the park episode at noon or whatever, is simply this: the honourable Leader of the Opposition made great noises yesterday about responsibility and duty of office. We have responsibilities and duties in office, everyone of us in this House, Mr Speaker, and one of those responsibilities is not only to be seen to be respecting the honour of this House but to act in a manner that is also upholding the prestigious position of this House. I believe the involvement of the opposition in this particular melee and whatever followed was a disgrace not only to themselves but it brought this House into great disrepute. I believe the ALP and the honourable members opposite, in particular, have been trying to do with mob activity in the streets what they have not been able to do on the hustings...

Mr Collins: It's a lovely address in reply.

Mr TUXWORTH: ... in the ballot box and in Assembly debate here. Very simply I believe their whole exercise has been to undermine the issue of self-government. I believe they have tried everything they possibly could to undermine self-government. They have entered into operations of leaking information, providing false information, trying to frighten people with rumours. I believe their last-ditch effort was to be involved in this particular exercise.

The honourable members opposite take exception to the remarks I am making but don't worry, Mr Speaker, the people of the Northern Territory have taken particular exception, irrespective of politics, they have all taken exception to the involvement of the other side of the House in this exercise because of the discredit it brought us - not just the Assembly; it has brought the whole of the Northern Territory into discredit.

Mr Collins: Yesterday did that.

Mr TUXWORTH: Mr Speaker, that was no meeting perchance. The time and the place indicated no chance meeting. It was a well organised meeting, Mr Speaker, organised by the ALP with the full knowledge of the disruption which would follow, and there is no doubt about that.

Last Tuesday or Wednesday, I was walking through the Casuarina shopping centre when a young lady came up to me and zapped a notice into my hand. I stood back and read it. It said there would be a protest meeting in the park, "come along and protest against Malcolm Fraser and the budget". I said to the young lass, "What time is that?" She said, "Twelve noon, and then we will go to the Assembly". Mr Speaker, that did not sound to me like the actions of a responsible political party to be involved in that particular exercise.

Mr Collins: She was a member of the ALP, was she?

Mr Doolan: What was her name?

Mr TUXWORTH: Mr Speaker, that particular meeting in the park was called by the ALP. It was addressed by the honourable Leader of the Opposition and by the opposition spokesman on northern affairs, Dr Everingham, and by Senator Robertson.

Mr Collins: That is untrue! He did not speak at the meeting.

Mr TUXWORTH: Mr Speaker, I withdraw that.

Mr Collins: And the rest of it!

Mr TUXWORTH: I withdraw the last remark.

Mr Collins: That's how much you know about it.

Mr Robertson: I can assure you that Doug Everingham was.

Mr Collins: It's Ted Robertson I am talking about.

Mr SPEAKER: Order!

Mr TUXWORTH: Mr Speaker, it is all very well for the opposition to be upset and well they may be. They were well aware of the disruption that followed and there is no need to pretend they were removed from the incident or that they had nothing to do with it. They were very much a part of it and the whole exercise was to flow on and to try to disrupt the opening of this Assembly.

The honourable member for Arnhem has said at an earlier time that people have the right to protest against the worst budget brought down in the history of this country. I do not deny that right. It was an unpleasant budget for everybody in this country; nobody has said that it was not. If the people had protested in the park and gone home, that would have been fine. That was not the exercise. The exercise was to have a reason for a gathering that could come down here to disrupt the proceedings in this place. The members of the opposition may not particularly like the financial policies of the government; in fact, there are not very many people who do.

Mrs Lawrie: True.

Mr TUXWORTH: The reality is that this country is getting a dose of medicine that it has been due for for about four years. Whether they like it or not, they have to take it.

Mr Collins: Thank you, Doctor Tuxworth.

Mr TUXWORTH: The other fact is that the people well knew they were in for a dose of medicine because on two separate occasions they threw out the most financially irresponsible government in this country - "out" in such a resounding fashion that there was no doubt about whose financial policies the people wanted even though they knew they were not going to be very pleasant. For this reason, I believe the ALP and particularly the members opposite should stop carping about how bitter it is. Everybody knows how bitter it is and it is not going to get any better until we have had our medicine.

The honourable member for Nightcliff made the point at an earlier time that you cannot blame people that are present in a mob for the idiocy and madness of one or two ratbags, and for the things they do and say. Mr Speaker, that is just a lot of hogwash. If you organise a demonstration and madmen turn up, then you have to take the consequences of the people that you have summoned to the call. If a farmer stands in the barnyard rattling a bucket and he is surrounded by pigs, he expects to be, because that is what it is all about.

Mrs Lawrie: That's about your level.

Mr Collins: We are surrounded by pigs. Pig styres would be something you would know something about.

Mr SPEAKER: Order!

Mr TUXWORTH: Well, Mr Speaker, there is no point in the honourable members of the opposition taking their wrath out on me. I am quite happy for them to take it out on me and I would have preferred that rather than them taking it out on the Governor-General.

Mr Collins: Being the martyr.

Mr Robertson: I hope that went in Hansard.

Mr Collins: So do I.

Mr TUXWORTH: I do not think very many people were terribly proud of all the activity in the street and I am not going to go through it all verbatim. What I think is particularly relevant is the fact that the honourable Leader of the Opposition, one of the people who addressed the meeting and who was quite happy for them to adjourn to the celebrations down here in the way that they did, did not have any control over them when they threw eggs or when they heckled the Governor-General in the manner that they did. He could not stop them from drowning out the national anthem. He did not try; he did not use his influence as a member associated with that group by saying to them, "You can get up Everingham and you can get up Fraser, but leave the Queen and the Governor-General out of it, because they are above it". There was no sign of the opposition member then. He just could not be seen. The reason was that he was quite happy for that particular activity to go on at that time.

I believe the honourable member for Fannie Bay paid a quite insipid tribute earlier to the honourable Leader of the Opposition as the Northern Territory's own home-grown industrial trouble-shooter. The honourable member

for Fannie Bay gave her leader special mention in dispatches for working on Sundays to solve the garbage dispute, and well he may have, Mr Speaker. On Friday, he was openly condoning civil disorder. On Sunday, he is solving a garbage dispute. I do not believe the honourable member for Millner and the honourable the Leader of the Opposition is a Jekyll and Hyde, but I do believe that things went so badly for the honourable Leader of the Opposition on Friday, with his association with that mob and the havoc they caused during the opening celebrations, that he was trying to save face with his involvement in that particular exercise on the Sunday, and it was a pretty weak effort to try to square off with the public by keeping himself out of the public eye.

It is with very deep regret that I say I am sorry the Governor-General was subjected to the abuse that he was subjected to during his visit to the Northern Territory, particularly on such an auspicious occasion. I think it is a moment of sadness that will go down in history and I would like to take this opportunity of affirming to the Governor-General and to the Queen my own personal loyalty and the loyalty of a great many of the constituents that live in my electorate and other people that I know throughout the Northern Territory.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

Mr ISAACS (Opposition Leader): Mr Speaker, I wish to make a personal explanation.

Mr SPEAKER: Does the honourable member claim to have been misrepresented?

Mr ISAACS: I claim to have been misrepresented, Mr Speaker. The Minister for Mines and Energy indicated that the ALP organised the demonstration on Friday. That is not correct. I, as Leader of the Opposition and leader of the Australian Labor Party in the Northern Territory can give the categorical assurance that not only did the parliamentary wing of the Australian Labor Party not organise it, but neither did any other organ of the Australian Labor Party organise it. I might say that I find it not just offensive but somewhat incomprehensible that a person with my obvious forebears could somehow or another be accused of stirring up the sort of anti-semitic sentiments which were apparently used in the demonstration.

Mrs Lawrie: Hear, hear!

Mrs O'NEIL (Fannie Bay): Mr Speaker, having cognisance of the historic and loyal nature of an address in reply, the opposition has refrained, despite considerable provocation, from joining into the muck-raking, the nastiness and the revolting anti-semitic statements that we have heard in this debate. I believe, and I think many people agree with me, that the most outstandingly offensive moment was when the Chief Minister unfortunately repeated loudly in this Chamber those statements which were allegedly made on Friday. Mr Speaker, I would have thought that he might have had the decency to apologise to the Governor-General, to the Administrator, to this Chamber and to the people of the Northern Territory who are represented by us, but he has not. I think that is most unfortunate. It demonstrates a complete lack of any rationality in the accusations of the government, a complete lack of reason in their thinking that they could possibly try to insinuate that the Labor Party - led as it is in this parliament by a person of obviously Jewish descent, with the very Jewish name of Jonathon Isaacs - would be actually producing anti-semitic statements against the Governor-General. It is complete nonsense; it is known to be nonsense. All the government is trying to do is to smokescreen its financial incompetence which was highlighted in the last couple of debates in this Assembly this week.

The protest was merely against Malcolm Fraser. I did hear some statements chanted to the Governor-General. What they were saying was: "Sack Fraser". I heard that repeatedly. I did not hear any anti-Jewish remarks. They may have been said or they may not, but I certainly heard "Sack Fraser". Apparently, the precedent has been set that the Governor-General can sack the Prime Minister who has an elected majority in the House of Representatives. That apparently has the support of the CLP and the government of this House so they should not object to the people suggesting - as they have the right to do - to the Governor-General how they feel he should do his duty. I do not believe the Governor-General was deeply upset. He seemed to be happy when I saw him. It is an attempt by the government to hide its incompetence over Willeroo and its incompetence over the budget that we have seen demonstrated here in the last couple of days.

As I said when I started speaking, I want to be productive and to speak as one would always like to be able to speak to an address in reply about the policies of the government as an expression of loyalty to Her Majesty. The area I wanted to speak about is health. As the Administrator mentioned, the transfer of responsibility for the administration of health will occur on 1 January 1979. Health is an important area. It is a very large area in budgetary terms and it affects all of us intimately at many stages of our lives. It is most important to our quality of life. It has been unfortunate that, up until now, we have had very little if any constructive debate on the sort of health services and policies which we would like to see implemented in the Northern Territory.

I would have hoped that when the government made the announcement that it was breaking its election promise to have a health commission and instead was going to retain the departmental system, that would have been the opportunity. At the time, the announcement was made in a brief statement by the federal minister from Canberra and was not relayed to this House except by myself. However, I hope that, now that we are to have this transfer on 1 January, the opportunity will once again be grasped by us all, and particularly by the government whose responsibility it is, to stimulate discussion on the sort of health services that we want to see in the Northern Territory and the direction that we would like it to take. I refer not just to specific areas such as liquor laws and mental health legislation, which are important, but to the general, broad direction.

I note that about the only aspect that was covered in the Administrator's speech was greater administrative autonomy for hospitals. Of course that has our support but it is a very limited thing. It is an unimaginative thing; it is something that happens in most places and it has happened in most areas of Australia over many years. The opposition and many people with concern for health believe that the time is right to increase autonomy, to increase regionalisation, to increase decentralisation and, most importantly, to encourage community participation in the aspects of government not only of hospitals but of all areas of the health service. I certainly believe that, taking note of the Territory's diverse multi-racial population and the problems of delivery that do occur, that we should be putting more emphasis on community-type health services rather than on traditional hospitals. Undue emphasis on hospital services is one of the reasons why health costs in Australia are soaring so much. It is the hospitals that are costing us so much, not the community health services which have a preventative role and an educative role. I certainly hope this government, when it puts its mind to health legislation, will not only consider granting administrative autonomy to hospitals but generally to expanding the whole area of community involvement in health services.

I am a bit disturbed this afternoon. As I said, I did not want to speak in the vein that I had to speak in reply to the Minister for Health. Let me once again repeat that I am proud to speak in this address in reply as an expression of loyalty to our sovereign and as an expression of our recognition of the constitutional arrangements which exist in Australia. I hope that, in future, we will never hear from any person in this House the sort of statements that were repeated earlier this week.

Mr OLIVER (Alice Springs): It is with pleasure that I rise to speak to the proposed address in reply to the Administrator's speech. I want to deal with one aspect of that speech. I quote: "The government is anxious to improve the administration of and the use of land to promote investment and encourage permanent residents in the Territory". For quite some time, I have been very unhappy about land legislation in the Northern Territory. I do not think that the present situation is exactly one that would promote investment or encourage newcomers to take up permanent residence in the Northern Territory. We do not have one land legislation but many land legislations.

The major land legislation naturally is the Crown Lands Ordinance. This covers pastoral leases, agricultural leases, town land leases and miscellaneous leases together with miscellaneous licences, occupation licences and grazing licences. Then, we have the Special Purposes Leases Ordinance which relates to purposes not covered above and which are outside town areas. We also have the Darwin Town Area Leases Ordinance which is peculiar to Darwin. Finally, we have the Church Lands Leases Ordinance. Above and beyond that, we have the Freehold Titles Ordinance, but I will confine my remarks to the leasehold ordinances.

This is a bewildering array of legislation with which to confront any newcomer and, believe me, it is equally bewildering to any long-term resident who has to deal with land legislation. More is yet to come because some of these ordinances have various divisions within them. Relating to the residential leases in the town land leases section of the Crown Lands Ordinance, we have two leases - the restricted and the unrestricted. Miscellaneous leases are not issued just as miscellaneous leases but for a prescribed purpose ranging broadly from horticulture, silviculture, nurseries, animal stud, holding-paddocks for abattoirs and so on.

One of our major problems is the restrictiveness applied to leases by these ordinances. A lease issued under an ordinance for a particular purpose is very difficult to alter. Times change and situations change but the terms of the ordinance are such that there is little flexibility in allowing the purpose of the lease to change in harmony with the changing situation. Another major problem is the availability of the land at the appropriate time for the persons concerned. At this time, I will refer mainly to the town land leases.

What I would like to discuss, Mr Speaker, is an overall principle that we should be looking at in relation to land administration in so far as town land leases are concerned. As I said earlier, we do have the restricted lease and the unrestricted lease. The restricted lease is essentially a home builder's lease. At auctions, when these are initially issued, the bidder commences the bidding at a quarter of the price, and any difference between the price bid and the reserve price is payable over a number of years. If the particular lease is passed in at auction then it is available over the counter but at the full reserve price. To assist in the development of the Territory through permanent residents, I would most certainly advocate that these restricted leases be made available at all times over the counter, but on a down-payment of one quarter of the reserve price and the balance payable over a number of years at a moderate interest. I do know of the frustrations and disappointment in Alice

Springs of quite a few young people who have turned up to land auctions hoping to buy a block of land so that they can build their own house. They have been unsuccessful and generally we have lost many of those people. If they can get a block of land at a quarter of the price then, on a \$6000 block, they will be saving quite a bit for the house that they eventually want to build.

I have another point in relation to the restricted blocks, Mr Speaker. These apply to anybody who has not held a lease of land in the Territory for the previous 5 years. Several times people have come to me and said, "Look, I have an industrial block which has no residential covenant yet I am not eligible for a restricted block". Quite often, these people are starting out with an industry; they have probably started it on a shoestring. They don't have all that much money yet they have to compete on the open market for a block of land. I think that, if the block of land has no residential condition or residence is forbidden on it, then these people should be eligible to apply for a restricted block.

Turning to the industrial lots, I would express some dissatisfaction. Industrial lots are offered at auctions generally when the demand appears appropriate to hold an auction of such lots. I have just one area of concern in relation to these: the development conditions placed on industrial lots. It seems that the development conditions placed on industrial lots are based generally on an average of the cost of buildings placed on previously issued industrial lots. Basically, it comes down to so many dollars per square metre which is maximised out to the size of your block and that is the value of the buildings you put on your block. I do not favour that of course. Some industries naturally require a high degree of development while others require only an absolute minimum. There was a case in Alice Springs where somebody wanted a shed about 20 ft by 30 ft open all round so he could put heavy machinery in there to work on it. The conditions of the block required about \$50,000 to be spent so he just did not go on with it.

Finally, I think that the land administration must and will be simplified. Land must become more readily available, with more flexibility of use and without too many restrictive conditions and covenants.

Mr Speaker, I would refer briefly to the demonstration that occurred at the opening of this session of the Assembly. Whilst I do not deny any person the right to protest and indeed I would defend that right with all my vigour, I do deplore the manner in which that was carried out. The entire occasion was marred. Unfortunately, we cannot look back on that historic opening with pride but only with shame, and with more shame to those people who perpetrated the demonstration. I would support the remarks made by the honourable Chief Minister when he spoke of this demonstration. I realise they possibly might not be parliamentary, Mr Speaker, but this occasion was so hideous, so disgusting that it is only right and natural that this should be brought forcibly to the attention of the Assembly.

Mr COLLINS (Arnhem): Mr Speaker, I too am pleased to be able to speak in this debate in reply to the Administrator's speech. In fact, I am very pleased to have been able to scrounge a copy of the speech in order to reply to it. Members on the other side of the House are quite happy to talk about discourtesy and so on. It was with some degree of frustration, when the Administrator presented his speech to this House yesterday, that I watched Mr Farrell from the Chief Minister's Department handing out copies of the speech to all and sundry. I sat here in my seat watching everybody in the public gallery happily following the Administrator's speech with copies of it and yet not one single copy of the speech was delivered to this side of the House. I have managed to scrounge a copy of the speech from one of the people who was

sitting in the public gallery; he very kindly donated his to me.

Mr Speaker, I think this certainly must constitute one of the most outrageous debates in reply that has ever been heard in any parliament. People on the other side of the House have been continually talking about how much the opening of this very historic parliament was marred outside the House. I quite categorically say that this occasion has been marred in a much worse and much more disgraceful way inside this House.

On the occasion itself, when this Chamber was packed with visitors, I remember the Chief Minister's speech at the dispatch box, on an occasion which was supposed to be such an historic and state occasion, when he made a totally uncalled-for remark during that statesman-like speech which cast discredit on the loyalty to the sovereign from this side of the House. Speaking for myself and not on behalf of the Labor Party, I am quite a maudlin, emotional supporter of the monarchy. Her Gracious Majesty Queen Elizabeth represents an unbroken line of English monarchs 1,000 years old. Things like that I find very valuable and worth preserving - a 1,000 year reign which is represented now by Queen Elizabeth. This country is so tied historically and racially to England that, even should one day it become a republic, our links with England and with the royal family will never be really broken.

I have been personally hurt and deeply insulted to hear the Chief Minister make that totally gratuitous remark that the loyalty to the Queen was firm at least on his side of the House. I felt, personally - perhaps I am being over sensitive - but I felt that totally political remark marred that very historic occasion far more than whatever else happened outside this House. I thought that set a new low for speeches in the Chamber but I was wrong, because the Chief Minister out-did himself yesterday in the address-in-reply speech where he used the most disgracefully racist and disgusting language in his speech. I do not think any reasonable person would excuse the Chief Minister on the grounds that he was simply quoting what someone else had said. It was a disgraceful contribution to make to that speech and I was delighted to hear that it is your intention to have it deleted from the Hansard.

May I say I had a speech prepared for this address in reply and I did not want to talk about this at all, but I am really disgusted when a minister of the Crown spends the entirety of his address-in-reply speech, every single word of it, not in supporting his own program of legislation presented by the Administrator but to abuse of the Labor Party. I would have thought, even if he had felt it necessary to spend part of his speech talking about that - he had 25 minutes in which to speak - he might have used only a short time of that 25 minutes, yet not a word was spoken by that minister of the Crown supporting his own government's legislative program. I think that certainly even tops the honourable minister's performance yesterday.

It was interesting when he mentioned Senator Ted Robertson as being a speaker at this demonstration, thereby clearly identifying his source of knowledge of that demonstration as the NT News which incorrectly reported that Senator Ted Robertson spoke at the meeting. The honourable minister, in those outrageous remarks that he made from such close personal knowledge about the Australian Labor Party organising that demonstration, showed clearly to this House and everyone else that he had no personal knowledge of that demonstration at all. He was simply basing his criticisms on something he read in the newspaper which happened to be incorrect.

I would like to go on record also as categorically denying that the Australian Labor Party had anything to do with the organisation of that protest. Members of the Labor Party certainly spoke at that protest in a very responsible

and restrained manner. I was there when they did. They spoke only of budget issues, something which affects - and I say this again, Mr Speaker - the very ordinary men and women of the Territory who made up the vast majority of the people at that demonstration. People talk in this House about demonstrations. The honourable member for Tiwi said it was the first one she had ever been to. Let me assure the honourable member for Tiwi that she has not been to one yet. That was a picnic.

I have an Indian friend who works in the Education Department, in the adult education section. He is a man very interested in politics and very experienced in Indian politics which I am sure members opposite will know is the largest democracy working on the Westminster parliamentary system in the world. That gentleman is just one of the many people that I know in the Education Department. I find it somewhat strange that in all the visits I have made to that department and in all the visits I have made to schools, both in my electorate and outside my electorate, and all the visits I have made to senior officers of the Education Department, including meetings with the Director of the Education Department which are now on a regular monthly basis, I have never on any one of those occasions seen the Minister for Education. This gentleman is a man well experienced in Indian politics and it is quite fascinating hearing some of the stories he tells about attending sittings of the parliament involving hundreds of thousands of people in one demonstration, more people than there are in this entire Territory of ours. That happens at every sittings, routinely. It is a large parliament with many members. This gentleman personally has witnessed on two occasions ministers of the Crown being chased out of the Chamber by irate members of the opposition, up to fifteen in one case, and the member running for his life out through the door. Routinely, Mr Speaker ...

Mr Robertson: We have it easy, don't we?

Mr COLLINS: Indeed we do, which is the very point I am making. In the Indian parliament, they have the same system for recording speeches in Hansard that we have - microphones in front of each speaker and the proceedings recorded on tape. This gentleman has also routinely witnessed outraged members of the opposition race across the floor, tear the microphone out of a minister's desk, rip the lines up out of the floor and disconnect the speaker from the recording system.

Mr Robertson: Are you advocating that system here?

Mr COLLINS: Not at all. I was merely relating it for the interests of the House.

Mr Robertson: I just thought you might have been justifying ...

Mr COLLINS: If the Speaker's little helper could restrain himself for just a moment, I am merely saying to all members of this House that they do not know what a demonstration is if they were worried by what took place here the other day. The honourable member for Nightcliff has already quite correctly brought forward the fact that this Chamber was protected by the flimsiest of barricades, a few pieces of wood, and a handful of policemen. I go on record again to commend the way the police behaved on that day. They stayed out of sight, a mere handful stood in front of that enraged crowd of civil disobedient people behind a few sticks of wood and there was no untoward incident at all of a violent nature on that day. I felt it was a very restrained gathering, a very restrained gathering indeed.

Mr Speaker, in speaking to the address in reply itself, one of the first points the Administrator made was this: "The creation of the Northern Territory government responsible to you, the elected representatives of the people, places a great responsibility on you". The first subject I would like to dwell on is that whole question of parliamentary responsibility as laid out by the Administrator in his address to us. This particular session is a very historic parliament. I feel it has been marred badly by some of the worst speeches I have heard made in this House, with language which I consider to be at least unnecessary, and that is the kindest thing you could say for it.

Many political commentators have written concerning the particular system of government which we enjoy in this country and on one point most of them seem to agree - that is, that after the elections, in a large parliament at least, most of the backbenchers could go home as the government then really rests in the hands of the frontbench, the ministers. This is certainly not the situation in this parliament because of its size but, certainly in a large parliament, backbenchers, particularly if there are a large number of them on the government side of the House, do find it difficult to actually enter into the business of government. The people are represented by their members; the members who constitute a majority represent the government, and the government is represented by its executive arm, the ministry. Therefore this great responsibility which the Administrator talked about in his speech devolves, in the final analysis, on ministers of the Crown. The responsibility on those men is very great indeed, and it is the basis on which our Westminster system of parliament rests. The integrity and the credibility of those men must remain above question; their reputation must be stainless.

Mr Speaker, the dispatch boxes which rest on the table represent the integrity of the ministers, as was explained to us when they were presented to this House. I have discovered that there are volumes of material available on the customs and the history of responsible government and the comments that have been made about it. I could spend hours simply quoting from this volume of material. I will not do that; I will take a contemporary example. Talking about responsibility of the Westminster system of government, I will take a contemporary example - our own Prime Minister, Mr Malcolm Fraser, who summed up in a quite categorical way the responsibility of this parliament and the ministers that represent the government when he said in the House:

The community rightly demands a high standard from ministers of the government. The judgments on ministers are more exacting and sometimes more harsh than the judgments which might be passed on those outside the sphere of public life. If these high standards were not upheld, the people's confidence in government, a confidence which is fundamental to Australian democracy, would be undermined.

The honourable Prime Minister then went on to say:

The Westminster tradition ...

The very tradition, Mr Speaker, that the Administrator talked to us about in his address -

The Westminster tradition is that a minister bears the political responsibility for major blunders and misdeeds of his underlings. A precise and fundamental principle of parliamentary government is at stake here. The principle is that the parliament must be able to accept assurances given to it by a minister and, if those assurances prove to be misleading, the minister concerned must be held responsible. It is a principle on which the integrity of parliament

itself depends. This is a great and fundamental parliamentary convention that must be upheld. Party loyalty must not be allowed to come before private conscience and public responsibility.

I am sure that all Territorians are looking towards this government to put forward in practice the legislative program that the Administrator has laid before us. We all have aspirations for our government. We all wish it well. Territorians, however, are no different to other Australians when, as well as wanting a program put into operation, they basically want the same thing from their government that electors anywhere in a Westminster democracy want and demand and have the right to demand, and that is credibility and honesty. I believe that people in the Territory are no different in that respect.

The honourable Leader of the Opposition spoke about something which I also have great concern about, and that is the electoral legislation which is to be placed before us. I believe the electoral legislation that we have in the Northern Territory is badly in need of an overhaul and one of the fundamental things that any change in the legislation should rest upon is the fact that at least 60% of the Territory's community use English as a second language. The Chief Minister himself has spoken today of the multiplicity of cultures represented in our society - 49 in Darwin alone. It is an enormous number and I know from statistics that 60% of the Territory's population use English as a second language.

Another fundamental tenet of democracy is that everyone, 18 years of age or over, should have the facility to cast a vote for the person he wishes to vote for. Our system should be structured to make that as easy as possible. Whilst maintaining strict standards, legislation should facilitate voting, not legislate against voting.

The honourable Leader of the Opposition spoke in detail of some of the things that concern him, and they also concern me. I would like to go on record as saying that I would like to see a 10%, not a 20%, tolerance in electorates in the Northern Territory. I also believe that compulsory enrolment is absolutely necessary. It should be one thing or the other. Either we are all exempt and all of us can choose not to enrol or all of us must enrol - one or the other.

We did enjoy for a short period of time what I consider to be the most balanced method of casting a vote - that is, optional preferential voting which unfortunately was removed. The honourable Leader of the Opposition has already mentioned that that system of voting for the Territory, in view of the particular structure of population we have here, is definitely the best system to employ according to the chief electoral officer of Australia. Optional preferential voting satisfies all critics of the voting system. I believe that first past the post is not the best system of voting because it may be that some people want to exercise a right to vote for a second preference just in case the man they want should not get in. One of the things that has always annoyed me about voting in compulsory preferential voting is that, simply to get the vote counted for the person I do want to vote for, I am compelled to vote for somebody that I would not vote for in a fit if I had the choice. That seems to me to be the most outrageous system of voting ever invented. We should not go into details of which party supported it in the past and which party will support it in the future - that is totally irrelevant for the Territory. We should structure our electoral legislation to suit us and compulsory preferential voting certainly does not, even though there is one member of this House who is enjoying a seat by virtue of that system alone. As far as I know, there is only one; there could be more.

The system of voting used in New Guinea and the system of voting used in the NAC elections is a useful model that could be looked at and considered. I have very bitter memories of the controversy which surrounded postal voting in my own electorate. I might add that the people who carried out postal voting in my electorate made two personal representations to the chief electoral officer begging him to send official Electoral Office staff out to the area to take the postal votes. Although that gentleman was most sympathetic, he was not permitted to do so by the electoral regulations. I would advocate the government considering the very proper system of mobile polling booths so that all votes are absolutely without question. The collection of votes would not be carried out by anyone, as is the current system with postal votes, but by officers of the Electoral Office itself.

One of the basic responsibilities that needs to be funded is to carry out a wide program of electoral education in the Northern Territory. That education should not be carried out by the Labor Party or the Liberal Party or any other party but by a disinterested body of men from the Australian Electoral Office. I understand that, at the last elections, an officer was employed purely for that purpose by the office here in Darwin, a class 5 officer. However, he was never sent into the field and could not be sent into the field because of staff shortages within the Electoral Office. He was compelled to do desk work when his job specifically was to go out and teach people how to vote. That is something that badly needs to be done in the Territory.

The other thing that I would put forward is the use of photographs of candidates. This is something which would have to be looked at quite closely and carefully. I am not suggesting people jump into it but it would certainly do away with this iniquitous system of how-to-vote cards which are the bane of everybody's life. I do not see how this system could be abused if it was done in the proper manner. It is used in New Guinea and it was certainly used in the elections for Aboriginal candidates in the NAC election. I would suggest that for consideration by the government.

The government has already introduced legislation to establish a Territory Development Corporation to encourage and assist private development consistent with the best interests of the residents of the Territory. We have discussed that. "Particular attention will be paid to assisting the growth of major industries in the Territory - fishing, mining and tourism". Briefly, I would like to talk about tourism. There is certainly an enormous potential in this country for tourism and I believe that we are certainly not looking after our tourists. There are some very obvious ways and I would suggest the improvement of access roads into sites of greatest tourist interest. One particular place - and I am continually lobbied about this by tourist operators - is Obiri Rock. Obiri Rock is the largest Aboriginal art gallery of rock paintings available to public inspection in Australia. The access road into Obiri Rock is disgraceful. Band aid work has been applied to it. I have approached the local director on the subject and he has responded by sending people out to fix it up. It is still badly in need of repair. It is an outstanding site of Aboriginal art which attracts a great many tourists. The people who operate those big expensive buses are consistently annoyed by the fact that it is such a disgraceful road. They also complain continually about the overgrowth around the road and the rock site itself. People are getting their clothes torn and their socks full of burrs and return suffering from skin rashes. I would suggest that they could start by fixing up Obiri Rock.

I did have all the points covered in my original speech but I will not have time for them now. However, I am pleased to see that the government intends to improve the bus services. With the continual increases of private cars in the

Northern Territory, every encouragement should be given to people travelling by public transport. To ease the congestion on our roads, to reduce the expense and pollution in the city, all encouragement should be given to people to travel by bus. I would make one specific suggestion here and, again, this is something that I have been lobbied about. I have spoken about this gentleman previously in the House, a hard working private enterprise gentleman, the manager of the Bloodwood Caravan Park.

Mr Steele: The bus goes out there now.

Mr COLLINS: Tremendous. I would like to go on record as commending the minister for fixing up the bus service to the Bloodwood Caravan Park. It always intrigued me that that bus which continually comes back to town empty stopped exactly 1 mile short of where all the people are. I have never been able to understand that and I am delighted to hear that it has been fixed. Perhaps I can have a few nights at home in peace because I live half a mile down the road from the Bloodwood Caravan Park.

I would like to discuss the question of mining. I hope mining goes ahead in the Northern Territory. I personally am not prepared to forgo any of the benefits that mining brings to me and I think it is possible to have mining and Aboriginal communities together. I think a place that has proved this is Groote Eylandt. I am totally opposed to the way that mining is going to go ahead in the uranium province - utterly and totally opposed. It is the most dreadful example of outright greed that will ever be witnessed by this country. The way in which the development is to occur cannot be economically justified. Justice Fox made some very stringent recommendations, which had enormously powerful economic and social arguments attached to them, that the mining should be sequential. I believe it should be. I believe there is no reason economically why it should not be and certainly the social reasons are overwhelming. The way in which this mining development is to occur will destroy Oenpelli completely. Despite all the assurances from people that promote this mining venture that it will not affect Aboriginals in the area adversely, I know from 12 years of working with that particular community, that it will destroy Oenpelli if it is proceeded with in the manner in which it is being proceeded with at the moment.

What upsets me about this is I know from personal experience that it is possible to have the mining and to have the Aboriginal way of life maintained at the same time. Groote Eylandt is a shining example of that. I commend BHP Gemco for the way in which they conduct themselves at Groote Eylandt. They have a profitable mine there and there are also two Aboriginal communities on the island that manage to live quite happily together with the miners. The mining company is carrying out a responsible program of mine restoration work which I have been over myself personally and I commend them. They have excellent relationships with the Aboriginal people on Groote Eylandt. Of course, there are problems. Aboriginal people over there do have problems with alcohol, the same as they do everywhere else, but there does seem to be a rational balance between the needs of the mining company and the needs of the Aboriginal people which has been met successfully by that company.

The other area where Gemco is outstanding is in the employment of Aboriginal people in its operation. On the establishment of Gemco, even though it is a relatively small company, there are places for 53 Aboriginals. They do not employ that many at the moment, but the places are there should they want to be filled. I know that Gemco's policy at Groote Eylandt is they will give a job to any Aboriginal person who asks for one. I commend them for it.

With that successful example of harmonious relations existing between miners and Aborigines, I cannot understand why that could not have been used as some sort of model for the kind of development we are to have in the Alligator Rivers region. I am personally opposed to uranium mining. I was intrigued to hear the Chief Minister referring to our lack of policy on the subject. I personally read it into Hansard. I thought he was merely resting his eyes when I did but I see that I was mistaken. I stated my own views on uranium. I am totally opposed to it for numerous reasons but that has nothing whatever to do with the view I put in this House on behalf of my electorate. I say there is no reason why the uranium mining cannot go ahead at Ranger and harmonious relations be established with the Aboriginal people at the same time. If we have a government that will not be satisfied with that particular method of development, if it wants to take this boots-and-all approach of every mine all at once, then I believe that the mining will be a complete and utter social disaster, not just for the black people of the Territory but for the white people as well.

Mr DOOLAN (Victoria River): Mr Speaker, I am also unprepared for this address in reply, but there are some comments I would like to make. Some of the things that have been said are quite disgraceful and I do not intend to elaborate on them nor to say such bitter and nasty things as have been said. However, there are some observations that I would like to make. As has been said, it was really a very mild demonstration. The barriers were quite flimsy. There was some mild catcalling when the police marched out and I endorse the member for Arnhem's remark that the police behaved very well. In fact, at times, they were grinning at some of the witty remarks that were made. The crowd appreciated it; there was no rough stuff and nobody was pushed around. It was most significant that no arrests were made at all. I was standing alongside Commissioner MacLaren and he was quite relieved at the fact that things did not get out of hand. I fail to see how anyone can say it was a terrible demonstration - a noisy one perhaps. I heard none of the anti-semitic remarks. Perhaps there were but, as a couple of members have already pointed out, for God's sake fancy the ALP being associated with anti-semitic feeling when our leader's name is Jonathon Isaacs.

When the police walked out there was a bit of mild catcalling from the public. I think they were referred to as Paul's army which drew a bit of a laugh. A great deal of capital has been made out of the egg throwing. If it keeps going, it will be as famous as the Warwick egg that was thrown at Billy Hughes. If a mob of trained soldiers are going to flinch at an egg, God alone help us if someone starts firing bullets at them.

The Minister for Health and Resources made the point that the demonstration had received adverse comments from the general public and perhaps that is true. It was not a particularly pleasant sight, I will admit. I did not hear the racist comments from the very small minority of ratbags who usually turn up at any demonstration. If it is true that they were made, then I, for one, thoroughly disagree with them. After today's Star is published and the exact words of the Chief Minister are quoted, if the honourable Minister for Health listens to talk around the place as I have done in a very brief time, he will find that the adverse comments that have been made about the Chief Minister's remarks are far more serious than the adverse remarks about a few dills who made a noise at a demonstration. The people who made those remarks are hardly responsible people and I would presume the Chief Minister is supposed to be a responsible person and why on earth he had to repeat them in the House and prolong the agony and get it in headlines all over the countryside, I would not know. Apparently, he has done it for reasons of his own.

The thing that particularly irks me is the questioning of the loyalty of the ALP. I speak for myself. On the wall in my lounge is a picture of my eldest son shaking hands with the Queen when Saint Marys were runners-up in the football final. We were very proud of that and there is no anti-loyalty in our place. Also Mr Speaker, I take it as a personal affront. I never at any stage had any kind of an outstanding war record but I volunteered at 17 and turned 18 in New Guinea. I think it was a reasonable sort of an effort. If that was not enough, I turned around and volunteered again and served in Korea. So much for loyalty if someone wants to have a crack at that. I am very sorry that honourable gentleman is not here because I would like him to repeat that I am disloyal outside.

There were two things in the Administrator's address that make me particularly happy and one of course is that the King River bridge will be constructed. That will make a lot of people happy. Also, there is almost \$1m to be spent on constructing and bituminising the road from Survey Creek to Daly River. As I said before, that area has enormous tourist potential. The people there badly need the road. Its potential is not only for southern tourists but for locals in Darwin because of the Daly's proximity to Darwin.

I was disappointed that, at no stage, did the Administrator mention assistance to children in isolated areas. I will just briefly say what I said before about this. Assistance to isolated children who have to attend boarding schools under Commonwealth grants is a basic allowance of \$500 per annum per child. There is a further allowance of \$456 subject to cost of board not being less than \$450 and no school in Australia could support a child for less than this amount. Therefore, all children will be eligible for allowances amounting to \$950 per annum per child. There is also a supplementary allowance available for the first 3 years which amounts to \$450 and an allowance of up to \$550 for the last 2 years of secondary school.

The supplementary allowance is, however, subject to a means test which is entirely unrealistic nowadays and surely must have been arrived at half a century ago. Children whose parents are in receipt of an annual income of less than \$3,500 per annum are eligible for the full supplementary assistance of \$450 for the first 3 years secondary school and \$560 for the final 2 years. The assistance works on a sliding scale so that, if parents are in receipt of \$5,674 per annum, they receive a benefit of \$15 per annum and, if the income reaches \$5,675, they are ineligible for any allowances. This is a ridiculously low income. Most people get that. If the children are in receipt of the basic allowance of the possible maximum of \$950 per annum, they are not eligible at all for the supplementary allowance which is obviously designed for children having long distances to cover to attend school rather than children attending boarding schools away from home.

Isolated children attending boarding schools in the state of Queensland are eligible for all or any of the above allowances plus state allowances. Other states have similar schemes. There is a Queensland student allowance, again subject to a means test, which is slightly more realistic but not much more, ranging from incomes of \$3,935 to \$7,460 per annum. The maximum allowance is \$220 per child. There is a remote area allowance available in Queensland which is free of a means test. Children in grades 8, 9 and 10 are eligible for an amount of \$360 per annum per child and, in grades 11 and 12, \$450 per annum.

Again, there are 250 scholarships available in Queensland which amount to \$1,000 each. These are awarded on the basis of academic proficiency and family income and are on a sliding scale ranging from the maximum \$1,250. There are also state, apart from Commonwealth, text book allowances which could assist

parents. Disregarding text book allowances, it is possible for at least 250 children in remote areas of Queensland to be entitled to a maximum allowance of \$2,620 per child per annum and a minimum of \$1,870 per annum per child as against the total possible allowance for isolated children in the Northern Territory of \$950 per annum.

This is unrealistic, and I would suggest that, now that we have our state-like responsibilities, the Cabinet should look to an increased allowance for children in isolated areas.

Mr STEELE (Transport and Works): Mr Speaker, I am very pleased to join with others in saying what a great opportunity it was for me to be involved with the historical opening of the Assembly following the move to self-government on 1 July 1978. I thought that the self-government day celebrations had a truly wonderful atmosphere that will be long remembered by me although I do recall reading in the Centralian Advocate a week later that we had spent some \$400,000 on fireworks for the occasion. I am honoured to belong to the government that gave Territorians that basic right. I think the expectations of people from this government are very high. The challenges are many and the workload on the government and the opposition is greater than one would find on the state parliaments established so many years ago.

The very structure to support government in the Northern Territory is in its infancy. It will take some months to stabilise the Northern Territory public service and effectively meet the service requirements of the general public. Much progress has been made and I am delighted with the responses from officers involved in this complex and rewarding process of being one of the decision-makers. Their attitude is really great when you go through the departments and talk to them. The legislative program with the government is exhaustive and progressive. This is not a conservative government and, in many areas, we will adopt a radical approach but at a pace that the community can keep up with. We do not believe that we have a mortgage on all good ideas and constructive criticism is welcome from representatives in this Assembly. The government has tailored its development policies to meet the social needs and the economic requirements of Territorians. Time alone will tell, but I predict future satisfaction with the policies outlined to the Assembly in the Administrator's speech.

A proper climate for investment is being established and many inquiries about financial opportunity have been received by the new Territory Development Corporation. To date, the corporation has received some 23 applications and is actively considering these, together with 4 applications handed over from the Primary Producers Board. The corporation is undertaking its functions in a responsible manner and will only approve applications after thorough investigation. Accordingly, to date, the corporation has approved only two applications and has recommended one further application to me under the powers vested in me under the Territory Development Ordinance. I think the opposition might know which one that is. These three applications total some \$215,000.

Encouragement will be given to many Northern Territory industries. I recently announced that a price preference of up to 5% will be applied to Territory businesses in deciding government tenders and contracts and that an additional 5% will apply in respect of the local manufacturing content of government purchases.

The links between tourism and road development are complementary aspects of my portfolio. My great wish is to develop intra-Territory, all-weather access and, at the same time, maintain regular representation to the federal, Queensland and South Australian governments on interstate access. The

honourable member for Stuart and many others have made continual representations to have the Stuart Highway upgraded. Other representations are made regularly to have the highway between Camooweal and Mt Isa upgraded and for the reconstruction of the bridge across the Georgina River because, without that, it would seem fruitless if we were to reconstruct the Rankin and the James bridges and then be prevented from journeying further east.

Mr Collins: What about the King River crossing?

Mr STEELE: The King is on the next year. We will commence a bit of it this time.

There are other access problems that I am not aware of and I am delighted to hear from the honourable member for Arnhem about one of his particular access problems. I will ask the department to read all the debates from Hansard to find any questions implied or asked directly or any statements that may need following up.

The great beef industry of the Northern Territory has suffered immense hardship in recent years. Fortunately, good rains have prevented the disaster of over-stocking and avoided the dire financial consequences of having to move stock under drought conditions. Prices have now commenced to move upwards and the industry desperately needs several good years ahead to allow it to recover from below costs of operation returns and seriously high debt levels.

I am concerned that in certain circles there is a move afoot to remove from Northern Meat Exporters the US export quotas held by Alice Springs, Katherine and Wyndham abattoirs - quotas so vital to the maintenance of viability in the beef industry. No subsidy provided by government will return this industry to viability without market opportunities and any such moves to take away northern quotas from abattoirs will be strongly resisted by this government, indeed by this Assembly.

The supply and maintenance of services to isolated communities and the townships along the track will not be without some day-to-day headaches for the administration. However, where possible, the government will encourage communities to tender for contracts dealing with the supply of services, such as road-works, by local councils. In this way taxpayers will be spending money in a realistic fashion to provide employment in areas where employment opportunities are few and far between. Even at this time, I believe that some communities have accepted some tenders and some work is progressing in some of the more isolated communities.

The sorry story of accidents on our roads is brought home to us by recent statistics revealing deaths and injuries. I will be supporting the government by recommending complementary legislative measures in a campaign designed to reduce accidents and thereby reduce insurance premiums. I look forward to debate from concerned members of this House when the Australian Government Actuary's report is debated next week.

Finally, as this is an address in reply, I would like to take this opportunity to express my loyalty to the sovereign. Mr Speaker, to my mind, loyalty is a consistent desire to serve the people and increase their welfare.

Mrs PADGHAM-PURICH (Tiwi): Mr Speaker, this afternoon it gives me great pleasure to speak in this address in reply and, in speaking to it, I would like to comment on several things His Honour the Administrator said in relation to my electorate.

He spoke about town planning. He mentioned three things: the rapid change, weakness and inflexibility. There has been a rapid change in the number of

people living in the rural area since the cyclone. There were two plans put over the area in June and December 1976. The first one was the second Pak-Poy report. Both of these showed those two things: weakness and inflexibility. I think the reason is because these plans were put out by planners without any reference to the people who would be affected. The important thing is that, if planners are going to make plans for areas, they should consult the people whom the plans will affect. I am very pleased to say today that the Minister for Lands and Housing has already done something constructive and helpful in my electorate by consulting in several meetings with representatives from progress associations in the rural area. All these meetings have been fruitful and they will continue until the honourable minister has all the details from the people about what they want.

The second point on which I would like to touch is that of the total review of land administration. I know this is in response to a plea for rationalisation of land legislation and land use by a number of people - home owners, people in towns, people in the country, property owners, farmer groups and individuals.

The next item is the Administrator's reference to the recent downturn in the pastoral industry and the consequent overstocking. I think this should be tied in with the trade delegation that went to Southeast Asia and future trade delegations that go up there. We must sell more beef and more cattle and more buffaloes to help the Northern Territory get out of this position. With the trade delegation, it is not only meat that we must sell but other things that we produce in a small way now but, if we could be assured of ready markets, they could be produced in greater quantities.

The next subject that affects my electorate is the legislation aimed at controlling litter. I am very pleased to see this and I do not think that anybody would disagree that littering has to be stopped somehow. I am very concerned about a special sort of litter that the town people dump in the country. I am not referring to builders supplies that are dumped along country roads in my electorate, as they can be identified; I am not talking about the contents of rubbish bins; I am not talking about the trailer loads of garden rubbish which can also be identified; I am talking about a special form of litter for which I would like to see the most serious penalty imposed, both for littering and for cruelty. I am talking about the dumping of unwanted kittens and puppies which is increasing along the roads and the tracks in the rural area.

The next subject I would like to speak about is the legislation regarding the police. I am pleased to see that further legislation will be introduced to make their job easier in the Northern Territory and they will be getting more funding for more modern equipment to keep them one step ahead of the people whom they are there to apprehend. Also, I think it will help them in their emergency work with the ordinary people of the Northern Territory. I would also like to see the police give consideration to putting more men on the beat. It is a pretty old-fashioned but effective way of keeping law and order and, to get on to my pet hobby-horse, I would like to see consideration given to the reintroduction of a mounted police attachment.

Regarding firearms, I think this legislation is well overdue. I know there are specialist groups of gun, rifle and pistol clubs interested in this. Farmer groups in the country are interested in the firearms legislation being reviewed.

The next is bus services. It is all very well talking about bus services for the towns and municipalities but I would like to see some consideration

given to a bus service out in the rural area, and I am not talking about the bus service to which the honourable Member for Arnhem was referring. Like him, I am very pleased to see this has been fixed up. I am referring to a bus service which was in operation about two years ago in the rural area but was stopped. I was never able to find out the reason why it was stopped. This was a bus service that started and finished, depending on your point of view, from the Humpty Doo hotel. It was of service to the workers in the area and also to the shoppers and, from my information, it was used comparatively more than the city buses were.

Connected with the bus services is the matter of bus shelters. I hope we do not go to the expense of putting up bus shelters which I understand the Department of Construction did after the cyclone to the tune of \$3000. This may be necessary in town but we have quite effective bus shelters out in the rural area put up by courtesy of that great organisation, Apex, for less than \$200.

Finally, I would like to comment on self-management by and for isolated communities. I look forward to seeing this come about. It is a great step forward in government decentralisation, in giving power to these communities to assess their own needs and subsequent assistance to help them fulfil these needs.

Mr HARRIS (Port Darwin): I have much pleasure also in rising today to support the motion by the Chief Minister.

We have now at long last reached the stage where we do have self-government and, of course, with our reaching that stage, we give to the people of the Territory the opportunity to have their say in their own affairs. Some of the benefits I can see from self-government will hopefully be in the form of reducing the waiting time for the processing of building permits and the approval of subdivisions. It will also reduce the waiting time for housing allocations.

I am also pleased that local government will continue to receive close attention by our government because, despite the feelings of some of the members in this Assembly, local government is there to play a very important part in our system. I know those members were probably only relating to the lack of carrying out those duties which the city council is supposed to carry out but we must try to assist our councils and, if they need assistance, we should be ready and willing to give it to them.

I am also pleased that new police administration legislation will be introduced into this House because, in line with the government's policy to encourage visitors and the development of the Territory, our police force will have an increasing demand placed upon it and legislative review will be necessary to enable the police to carry out those particular increased duties. It is also the government's aim to carry out a review on various other out-dated legislation. This can only lead to benefit to the community as a whole.

The realisation of the need to provide our local school leavers with the opportunity to find rewarding employment, the inquiry into the social welfare services which is taking place at this moment and the continued encouragement and assisting of sporting organisations are to be commended.

Another major problem, in the Darwin area particularly, is the increasing and pressing problem in relation to parking. On many occasions, we have mothers with their children walking miles with purchases from stores in the city area. I hope that, if we look at this public transport problem and try to ask those people who can to support that transport, this will help alleviate that problem.

In closing, I would just like to mention three other points of enormous value to the people of the Territory. The first is the land-backed wharf which at last would appear to be going to get off the ground. The second, as mentioned by the Minister for Transport and Works, is that of the all-weather road link to the southern states. The third is of major concern, particularly to my electorate, and it should be of major concern to others - the future of our historical buildings. At the present time these buildings, such as HMAS Melville and the old museum, are ruins and, with the approach of the oncoming wet season, they could be destroyed beyond any repair. I think a decision must be made now on the future of those particular buildings.

Mr Deputy Speaker, the outline given in the Administrator's speech of the government's legislative program will enable us to continue developing. I support the motion.

Mr PERRON (Treasurer): Mr Deputy Speaker, the Administrator's address to this House referred to the programs of this government. He referred also to the short history leading up to the formation of this government. I think all honourable members should look carefully at the role of members in this House now that it is no longer a debating society without any powers at all. We all have serious new responsibilities and must carry them out with the dedication and integrity that the various offices deserve. I see the role of government as one of facilitating others getting on with the job of creating an environment in which we can all live in peace, without fear or intimidation, with security for ourselves and our families, with health care when it is needed and education and religion of our choice. Everybody should have the opportunity to work and the right to play. In short, government as I see it should assist and let others get on with living.

In the Northern Territory, we have a rather unique opportunity, seeing we have got to the barrier fairly late in the history of this country, to learn by the mistakes of others - other governments, authorities and corporations. We should learn from their mistakes in the past and there have certainly been many of them demonstrated in this country. Whether we are designing a school, planning a town, implementing local government, encouraging industry, almost any activity of government, it has all been done before over the 70 years of federation and, if we make the same mistakes as have been made elsewhere, more fool us for not paying a little more attention.

Mr Deputy Speaker, we have the population to expand in the Northern Territory; we have population in Australia to expand the Northern Territory. We have industry to develop and we have resources to exploit. In the right balance, we will build on what we already have in the Northern Territory and make this place somewhat unique in Australia - somewhere to experience, somewhere to live and, I believe importantly, somewhere to die. We must create an atmosphere of security, a plan for the future drawn up by people of vision who have faith in what can be achieved.

Mr Deputy Speaker, only when we whittle away this stigma which unfortunately exists about living in the Territory, particularly in the tropics, can we achieve some of these things. We should dedicate ourselves to removing the reasons and the mentality which now drives some people to reject, for example, our schools as being good places to send their children and the reputation which makes some people go south for health services because they will not wear what is provided at the present time. We have to work to remove the mentality that one has to have a break from the Territory regularly otherwise some serious harm will be done. Only when we have done these things will we build a population of people who do not refer to some other place as "home".

In working for and building a better place to live, we must be mindful of the importance of our democratic Westminster system of government. We must preserve the status of the parliament, of history and tradition. All of these are more important to the preservation of our freedom than many people realise. Those who seek to destroy all those things, like the rabble who rose from the gutters last Friday to hurl vile abuse at the Governor-General, are to be condemned. Protesters and placard carriers are a healthy sign of our freedom but those who behave like animals deserve to be treated as such. Despite the attempts to dissociate themselves from some of the events of last Friday, the ALP remains tainted nonetheless, whether they like it or not.

We in the Territory face a number of very difficult problems in the forthcoming decade. They are, firstly, the adjustments required both by European and Aboriginal Territorians to enable us to live and work together in harmony as we must, with understanding and compassion which unfortunately is lacking in some quarters at present. I believe that different races with different aspirations and needs can live side by side very well and we should all work for that goal. I believe this is going to be an area of some concern to us over the next ten years.

The second area of difficulty which we face in the Territory and which is also going to test our minds and ingenuity is our lack of a large reliable energy source other than uranium. We need an energy source very badly, one that we can harness and exploit for local demands. We have some quantity of oil and gas near Alice Springs and that in time, without question, will be developed. There are seeming indications of sizeable gas reserves in the Joseph Bonaparte Gulf and I guess that will be tapped again one day, but whether it will be for the Territory is another question. We are moving to examine the extent of known coal deposits in the Northern Territory. Unfortunately, from my knowledge of the subject, the indications are that they may not be very extensive reserves. However, we will have to do all in our power perhaps to conserve energy and make what we have got go as far as we can because it will cost us a lot of money as people and as a government to put up with the situation we are in.

The third area is freight costs - air, sea and road. We are a long way from anywhere in this country and I do not really see an end to high freight costs, particularly when one considers the fact that petroleum prices without question are going to escalate dramatically over the next few years. I understand the prediction is we will be paying for petrol at least double what we pay today before 1985 and that is going to have a severe effect on places like the Northern Territory which has to bring most of their manufactured products from afar. Perhaps the long-term answer in the Territory is rail and I believe that, looking at it in the longer term, rail transport will come back on a world-wide basis in a fairly big way, as it is one way that you can move many thousands of tonnes fairly cheaply. In the past few years, railways have been notoriously uneconomic in this country and, in fact, the United States as well and they went through a severe decline. I believe that, as fuel prices rise dramatically, rail will come back and I foresee a day in the Territory when we certainly do have a rail link right through the centre and hopefully branching from the centre towards Queensland as well.

I have pleasure in expressing my loyalty to the Queen through the address in reply and I express my gratitude to both the Administrator and the Governor-General for their attendance within this Chamber and their respective addresses to honourable members.

Debate adjourned.

ADJOURNMENT

Mr PERRON (Treasurer): Mr Speaker, I move that the Assembly do now adjourn.

Mrs O'NEIL (Fannie Bay): On speaking in this adjournment debate this afternoon, I will be brief. I am usually brief, more so than some of my colleagues in this Assembly.

I would like to speak about the petition which I presented yesterday on behalf of some of my constituents and draw its existence to the attention of members and, particularly, of the honourable minister responsible for the Electricity Commission. I was approached by two residents of my electorate, asking that I give them assistance in getting a petition properly drawn up which I did. They then took the petitions away and acquired 175 signatures on them. If honourable members look at those signatures they will note that almost all of them are, in fact, from my electorate and very many of them from the Housing Commission flats.

This is not the only question concerning electricity which constituents have brought to my notice in the last few weeks. I have had very many representations from people concerned about the electricity bills that they have received from Elcom - or is it NTEC, it doesn't seem to be able to make up its mind? Let me make it perfectly clear that I applaud the way in which the new Electricity Commission is taking its financial responsibility seriously. It contrasts very favourably with the mess that electricity accounts were in under the Department of the Northern Territory. There can be no doubt about that.

I had a recent electorate example of that. One of my constituents whose ownership of his house goes back to October 1975, twice in 1976 and 1977 approached the department and said, "I believe my bills are too low." He paid to have his meter checked, as a result of which in April 1977 he received a bill which said he was about \$140 in credit. That was the last bill he received until August this year when he got a bill for about \$140 that allegedly went back until September 1975.

We hope that sort of thing will not happen - and I am sure it never will - with Elcom, Elecomm or NTEC. Nevertheless, the zeal with which the Electricity Commission has been pursuing accounts has been of some concern to people on low incomes, particularly as the rate has gone up. For those people who did benefit from one of the good schemes from the Department of the Northern Territory - the time-payment scheme - it was a bit of a shock, while they were still paying off their last Department of the Northern Territory account, to be asked to pay their new Elcom account immediately. Of course, while the commissioner did offer the scheme of paying so much in advance - it is not strictly in advance, but the effect is of paying in advance - per week, it did not get over that immediate hurdle of people having to pay a new account immediately, while still paying off an old account. They have been faced with considerable financial problems. I am told that some of them were in fact referred by Electricity Commission officers to the Social Security Department. This seems a bit like robbing Peter to pay Paul. Nevertheless, there has been some disruption for them.

This petition which was the idea of the residents themselves requests that, at least for pensioners and other people on fixed low incomes, there should be electricity rental rebates. I think it is a good one; I think it deserves the consideration of the government and the minister and I hope they do give it serious consideration in the near future.

Mr PERKINS (MacDonnell): Mr Deputy Speaker, in rising in the adjournment debate this afternoon, I would like to take this opportunity, I hope in a calm and reasonable manner, to answer the untrue and scurrilous allegations which were made in this House yesterday afternoon by the member for Stuart. No doubt honourable members would be aware of what the member for Stuart said in the adjournment debate yesterday. I would like to take up a couple of those points and to give my replies.

I think the House was told yesterday that the member for Stuart wants to stand by the allegations he made last year in respect of the operations of the Central Australian Aboriginal Congress and their particular accounts. I would say, Mr Deputy Speaker, that the Central Australian Aboriginal Congress itself has responded adequately and properly to the untrue accusations that have been made by the member for Stuart, I do not really have to defend them in the Assembly because they are quite able to defend themselves.

However, I would like to point out that there are some facts which ought to be brought to the notice of this Assembly. I would like to point out, in response to the wild accusations made by the member for Stuart, that the auditors of the CAAC accounts have reported, as at 5 October 1977, that they had audited the accounts and obtained all the information and explanations required. I would like to state categorically that the auditors did not mention any irregularities associated with the use of the CAAC funds for ALP or my electoral or political purposes. I would like to give a categorical assurance to this House that there was no such abuse of funds, particularly government funds, in the manner suggested by the member for Stuart. I would categorically state that all funds which have been used for electoral or political purposes, and those of the ALP, are funds which were raised independently of the Central Australian Aboriginal Congress and which come from independent sources, including the ALP itself.

On 31 March of this year, the member for Stuart was invited to a full council meeting of the Central Australian Aboriginal Congress to discuss his allegations. He attended rather reluctantly. He was given a copy of the auditor's report on CAAC accounts and he was widely criticised at this meeting for making his false and malicious allegations in the media about the congress operations and accounts without any discussion or without any reference to the members of the congress.

At the same meeting, the member for Stuart agreed to publicly state that, having discussed this matter with the CAAC officials, having seen the audited report, he was satisfied with the CAAC accounts and operations. My authority for that is the minutes of the Central Australian Aboriginal Congress of that same meeting. In fact he said, and he went on record as saying, that there was no misuse of the funds of the Central Australian Aboriginal Congress but he thought there might be a bit of bad book-keeping. My source for that information is again the minutes of those meetings. I want to be able to bring these facts to light because they are relevant to what I am saying in response to the wild and scurrilous accusations of the member for Stuart.

I would also like to point out that both the Minister for Aboriginal Affairs and the Department of Aboriginal Affairs have accepted the auditor's report and continue to fund the operations of the Central Australian Aboriginal Congress on that basis. It is interpreted by the Central Australian Aboriginal Congress that that is evidence in itself of the satisfaction of the government with the accounts and the operations of the congress. In that respect, I would like to refer also to the announcements made in public by the Minister for Aboriginal Affairs that the internal operations and problems of the Central Australian Aboriginal Congress are a matter for the congress itself, and

are matters which have to be resolved by the congress and the Aboriginal people themselves under the government's policy of Aboriginal self-management and their own responsibilities in their internal matters. Unlike the member for Stuart and the Country Liberal Party of the Northern Territory, they do not want to meddle in the affairs of Aboriginal organisations.

Honourable members will also remember that, in the adjournment debate yesterday, the member for Stuart called for a judicial inquiry into the operations of the Central Australian Aboriginal Congress and its accounts. He tells us that prominent people of Central Australia have called for an inquiry of such a nature. He failed, of course, to give any indication as to who these prominent people are. I would very much doubt whether in fact there is a strong feeling amongst Aboriginal people in Central Australia or amongst other people that I have spoken to, that there should be a judicial inquiry into the operations of the Central Australian Aboriginal Congress. On the basis of the auditor's report, which is a public document, or on the basis of the way in which the Central Australian Aboriginal Congress itself has handled its problems, or on the basis of the statements by the Department of Aboriginal Affairs and in particular the minister, I believe there is no need to have a judicial inquiry into the operations of the Central Australian Aboriginal Congress.

Honourable members will also remember that yesterday there were personal aspersions cast on my character, my integrity and my honesty as a member of this Assembly. I would completely, utterly and categorically reject any aspersions in that respect by the member for Stuart. In particular, he had the indecency to allege that my activities in the Central Australian Aboriginal Congress and in Central Australia were a blatant abuse of the trust of Aboriginal people. I would categorically deny that statement, Mr Deputy Speaker; it is false and really malicious. I have never abused the trust and responsibility which has been placed in me either as a member of the Central Australian Aboriginal Congress or in any other capacity or office which I have held since my involvement in Aboriginal affairs. I would say that there would be Aboriginal people throughout the Northern Territory and particularly in Central Australia who would be able to back up that statement. I have not been responsible for any divisions in Aboriginal communities, Mr Deputy Speaker, as claimed by the member for Stuart in the adjournment debate yesterday.

Honourable members will remember that in the adjournment debate yesterday the member for Stuart also read out a declaration which he claimed was made by Graham Henry Howard. I would like to state to this Assembly that I believe that that particular declaration is utterly false. I would like to give a categoric assurance to this Assembly that Mr Howard, who is a former employee of the congress, volunteered to prepare material on election posters and the money which was used in respect of that material was not out of the petty cash of the Central Australian Aboriginal Congress; that money came from campaign funds which were raised independently of the Central Australian Aboriginal Congress.

Mr Howard was at one stage employed by the Central Australian Aboriginal Congress; he was employed in fact as a caretaker at the congress farm. I would say, Mr Deputy Speaker, for the interest of this Assembly, that because he got drunk one night and threatened his wife and children and other residents with a gun and because he damaged the property of the congress, his employment had to be terminated. This is the kind of man whom the member for Stuart uses as an authority and the source, as he alleges, of truth. I know for a fact that the information contained in the whole declaration is false and malicious. I understand also that there is a penalty involved for people making declarations of this kind and, therefore, I will be taking up this matter with the appropriate

authorities. In my opinion, Mr Howard, the person who is referred to in the declaration, is none other than a liar, an alcoholic and a troublemaker, and in no way can anyone regard his information as being reliable or true.

Honourable members will also remember that the member for Stuart was about to read a declaration of allegations by a Mr R. Liddle. I would imagine they would concern the Central Australian Aboriginal Congress and myself. I want to state to you, Mr Deputy Speaker, that allegations made by Mr Liddle are now the subject of legal proceedings. I have sued for defamation. I have sued Mr Liddle, the Northern Territory News, the Centralian Advocate and the commercial broadcasters of Alice Springs, 8HA. I am not able to comment on the allegations in this House, except to say that I categorically deny any allegations of impropriety and misuse of government funds in the election campaign of last year.

At this stage, I would like to seek the leave of the Assembly to incorporate into Hansard a statement of denial of the allegations which have been made.

Mr PERRON: A point of order, Mr Deputy Speaker! I recall yesterday the opposition raised points of order against the member for Stuart who was speaking on a similar topic which we were informed was the subject of legal proceedings. The member for Stuart was advised by the Chair that he should not proceed on that particular course of discussion. It seems that the honourable member for MacDonnell is engaging in exactly the same tactics.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: If the honourable member has taken such writs out against various organisations, it would not be proper to incorporate that into Hansard.

Mr PERKINS: Mr Deputy Speaker, I respect your decision but I am only seeking leave to have incorporated into Hansard a public statement of denial of the allegations. I am only seeking to have it incorporated in Hansard as a record.

In my opinion, the member for Stuart and other members of the Country Liberal Party are bent on a course of dragging up red herrings for cheap political motives. I do not believe that they are interested in the welfare of Aboriginal people. They are interested only in Aboriginal bashing, undermining Aboriginal organisations and even dividing Aboriginal people for racist motives. I think that the member for Stuart ought to be ashamed of himself. I find it rather extraordinary that he is a political bedfellow - and a strange one at that - with a discredited and a dishonest man.

I wonder whether the CLP would object to a public inquiry into operations, for example, of mining companies, the Master Builders Association and the Magellan Oil Company to determine what funds are given to the CLP for electoral and political purposes. Would they agree to an inquiry of that nature? I am sure they derive support from those kinds of organisations and companies.

Mr Perron: Are you talking about taxpayers' funds?

Mr PERKINS: I would like to place on record a stern warning to the member for Stuart and the Chief Minister that, if they are in the business of undermining Aboriginal organisations for cheap political gain and Aboriginal bashing and casting aspersions on other people in the community by making all sorts of scurrilous allegations, let them be warned that Aboriginal people have a way of being able to let their feelings be known and reflect their feelings. I am sure this will come. I only hope that all the destructive tactics which the member for Stuart and the CLP have adopted in respect of the Central Australian Aboriginal Congress and the Aboriginal people in central Australia

will rebound on them.

Mr VALE (Stuart): Mr Speaker, there are a couple of points I must take up. The first one relates to a comment of the honourable member for MacDonnell when he said that I reluctantly attended a meeting recently of the Aboriginal congress. I was late, yes but reluctant, no. The office of the congress phoned my office, left a message and said a meeting was to be held at the Malanka Hostel and I arrived there on time. Fifteen to twenty minutes later I returned to my office and was then advised the meeting had been transferred to the offices of the congress. I attended on time and in good faith. I don't even remember the honourable member for MacDonnell being there.

The second point relates to ABC comments that I made following the issue of the audited statement of the congress' books. On the front page was the auditor's statement that certain discrepancies had occurred. On my return to Alice Springs from Darwin, the ABC contacted me and said there was a rumour that several hundred thousand dollars were missing and asked if I wanted to make a comment. I believe my comments were very restrained. I said that I had only just returned to Alice Springs and I had not heard the rumours. In fact, I said that the remarks of the auditors that certain discrepancies occurred may have only related to bad book-keeping. My statement, in fact, was followed by the then director of congress in his follow-up statements some days later.

The honourable member for MacDonnell also commented that prominent Aboriginal people in central Australia do not support my stance but support his. I would suggest for his benefit that he should stay home a little bit more often instead of jet-setting. I can remember in recent months a letter to both newspapers in Alice Springs signed by 45 people of Aboriginal descent who expressed their concern at the funding and the activities of the Central Australian Aboriginal Congress. I believe that concern is widespread across the whole of the electorate amongst black and white people.

Mr BALLANTYNE (Nhulunbuy): I would like to speak about the Good Neighbour Council Organisation in the Territory. I have had a long association with this organisation over the years but it was not until recent years that I have had more internal operational association with them. There was a recent report by Frank Galbally on the Good Neighbour Councils and ethnic groups. He looked at all the problems of migrants in Australia. I do not want to go into the Galbally report but it has been decided that they will phase the Good Neighbour Councils out in two years. Certainly, there are quite a few problems associated with the operations of Good Neighbour Councils. They may not have the scope to supply all the services. However, what I did object to was the idea of phasing out the Good Neighbour Council as it is functioning.

They did give some credit to the Territory organisation to which I am attached as the branch president. I would like to give you an idea of the types of services that the Good Neighbour Council supplies in Nhulunbuy. This is only a branch of the Northern Territory Good Neighbour Council. Since 1973, there have been 441 people naturalised in Nhulunbuy. For a population which has fluctuated from 5,000 to 4,000 people, I would say that is 10% of the population. Surprisingly, we have more nationalities in Nhulunbuy than you have here in Darwin - something in the order of about 56 to 58 nationalities. In 1977-1978, we had 5 public ceremonies at which 40 citizens were naturalised and privately we had 5 ceremonies for 15 citizens.

Turning to the types of operation that we have had over these years, we have had a liaison with the migrant teaching organisation which conducts evening classes. We have a home tutor kit which we can supply to anybody wishing to help somebody learn the English language. We have an information booklet which has been designed and built up over the years giving information

to new people coming into the town. Although the Good Neighbour Council has in the past mainly looked to helping migrant people, we have some eight contact workers who visit every new citizen who comes to that town if it is possible to obtain their names. Every family is visited and a booklet is given. The visitor has a sheet which is brought back to the office and recorded. They do not like anyone to escape them and, in most cases, they catch up with new citizens. Sometimes people who have returned have complimented those contact workers for making the contact because, after being away, they felt coming back was a bit strange and this made them feel more welcome.

The office is open 2 days a week. Because it relies on voluntary help, this has had to be cut down over the years. However, they do give a lot of information to people, particularly those with problems. Different ethnic groups have relations overseas and elsewhere in Australia and volunteers make contact for them. These volunteers give their services free. In Darwin, there are some paid servants but they have other services for volunteers who are not paid. We also have a translation service. If people want something translated, we do the best we can. I believe that the local Telecom wanted a translation to be put into the phone booth. Telecom saw fit to use those translations elsewhere so that was a feather in their cap. We also have an interpreter list of some 36 people. We have some 36 languages which can be interpreted for people who have problems.

The main reason I am speaking about this group is that I believe that, by the end of the year, the Good Neighbour Council could be phased out in the Northern Territory. I would like to place in Hansard my disapproval of the decision to phase out the Northern Territory operation because it is a viable operation. If they are going to bring in new resource centres and new ideas into the services as recommended by Galbally, I believe that we can add to the already existing services. We must not allow the volunteers to be phased out at the end of the year because it is very difficult today, particularly in small communities, to find volunteers. It is bad enough in football groups or political parties. If we phase these Good Neighbour Councils out now, we will lose forever people who are doing an honest job.

There have been some letters written to the Prime Minister. I believe the philosophy of the Galbally report can probably work but there are many things recommended in the report which are as yet untried. It is going to come under Immigration and Ethnic Affairs. I have spoken to my minister about this and I am hoping that the immigration department in the Territory will help these people to perhaps continue on under another name. What is in a name? In some cases, it does not mean a thing to a person. However, a person who has been associated with an organisation for a long time feels that he has lost something when it loses its name.

I would like to express my appreciation to all the people who are acting in a voluntary capacity in the Northern Territory branches or sub-branches and the people of the Northern Territory organisation itself. I only hope that some sense will reign when a decision is made at the end of this year.

Mr ROBERTSON (Gillen): After what I have just heard from the honourable member for MacDonnell, I don't think that anyone on this side could let it go without some form of challenge. I find it very distressing and somewhat difficult standing here to refute the total assassination of a man's character under privilege by a man who is prepared to sue someone else for words he may have uttered in another place yet that same person is prepared totally to destroy every vestige of name that a citizen of this country has. I think that, if there is any smattering of decency on the other side of the House, they will let me proceed with an analysis of what I understand to be the facts

surrounding this matter. I will try not to breach the accepted rules of sub judice and I will try not to bring direct discredit upon a member of this House. If I go outside of those guidelines, Sir, I have no doubt you will draw me to order.

What are the facts as we know them? They are contained in 2 statutory declarations declared in accordance with the Commonwealth act. The opposition is prepared, on the word of mouth of another person, to seek to destroy a minister in this place. I would think - and I call those facts - I would think it reasonable that myself as a minister on this side should interpret what I have in front of me as facts. It certainly would be consistent with what the opposition regards as being facts.

What have we heard from the Australian Labor Party as a branch organisation in this matter through one of its members? We have heard that certain vehicles were indeed used and those vehicles were the property of the Central Australian Aboriginal Congress. We have had this admitted. It has been said that this funding came out of ALP campaign funds. We have been told that the extent of that contribution to the Central Australian Aboriginal Congress was \$100. The information I have been provided by officers who were in the Congress at that time quite clearly states that they have been entirely unable to find any record of that money having been paid. I do not say that is necessarily the case. I am willing to accept the word of the honourable member for MacDonnell that it has been paid. After all, he has said so and we are in the business of believing members in this Chamber.

Let us accept that \$100 has been paid and let us see what that \$100 bought. We have the statement of Mr Howard that a vehicle was used by him during working hours while he was being paid. I do not give a damn whether that is called voluntary or not; the fact of the matter is that it was not on week-ends but during the week while he was being paid by the taxpayer through the agency of the CAAC. Further, we have a statement that that vehicle was used to travel many miles throughout an electorate on behalf of the Australian Labor Party, Alice Springs branch. We have a second statutory declaration which relates to vehicles, again on behalf of the Australian Labor Party and again using vehicles of the Central Australian Aboriginal Congress and vehicles belonging to Aboriginal Hostels Limited.

Let us look at the circumstances surrounding the use of those vehicles referred to in the second statutory declaration. We have a person declaring according to law that the Australian Labor Party had instructed him to use a vehicle to go to a place called Maryvale. Indeed, we have more than that. We have a statement that a senior officer of Aboriginal Hostels Limited had in fact instructed an employee of Aboriginal Hostels Limited that he was to assist in a candidate's campaign. We have that statement of fact declared according to law in this document before me. We also have other people mentioned, including a student from South Australia, involving themselves in both CAAC vehicles and Aboriginal Hostels Limited's vehicles. By any geographical understanding, those vehicles were used for several thousand kilometres during the course of an election campaign on behalf of the Australian Labor Party, those vehicles being the property of publicly funded organisations. We have the grand contribution from the campaign fund of one hundred miserable dollars. For heavens sake, that would not even have paid for the tyres! We have a person being instructed while employed by both the Aboriginal congress and Aboriginal Hostels Limited to participate in an election campaign on behalf of the ALP.

I bring these things forward not because I really wish to. I had no intention of intervening in this until certain attitudes were attributed to the

Country Liberal Party by an honourable member in this place. I figured that it was only right and just that the truth be brought out, that we examine some of the facts as we know them, particularly having regard to a deliberate, concerted and cowardly attack on a person's character who is in no way able to defend himself in this place at this time nor is he able to defend himself and his good name, which has been here destroyed, in a court of law because the gentleman chose to do it under privilege.

Mrs PADGHAM-PURICH (Tiwi): Mr Deputy Speaker, I would like to speak on two things this afternoon. I have written a letter to the honourable Minister for Community Development after a request was put to me by several women in the rural area. They would like a mobile library to come out to the rural area. I have canvassed this idea in the rural area and it has received a lot of support. The minister has promised that he will have this looked into. I hope it is in a positive way. Many years ago when we lived in Tasmania, I was able to avail myself of the services of a mobile library. We lived in the highlands about 100 miles from Hobart or Launceston and we very rarely went to town. I could read magazines or my own books but it was a great joy to me to avail myself of this library service.

The sort of thing that the women in the rural area had in mind was not elaborate. First, I will touch briefly on their reasons for putting the request to me. To travel into town from Humpty Doo, Howard Springs or Noonamah takes a good part of half an hour if not more. It takes the same time to come back, so there goes an hour. The women who approached me all have young children, many of them preschool children. If they have children at school, they must be home to pick the children up or be at home when the children come home. If they have preschool children with them, their shopping trips to town are usually as short as possible. They do the things that are necessary first and then leave the little luxuries, the book for themselves, till last. If you are picking a book to read in the library, it is not conducive to a happy choice if you have tired and cranky children with you. I know this from personal experience.

A mobile library need not be elaborate but it would fill quite a large need. I see something of the style of a Kombi van fitted out with boxes of books - several basic titles and perhaps non-specialised sections for a start. The vehicle would make trips out to certain points, say, once a fortnight. It would stay for a certain time in these areas and then perhaps travel on or come back to town. I do not see that it is necessary to have a professional librarian for the job, just an ordinary, sensible person who knows and loves books and who likes people. This mobile library could stop at about two or three points in the rural area and then possibly go onto small towns and settlements outside the immediate rural area - Adelaide River, Batchelor, Jabiru, Jabiruka and perhaps to the South Alligator - as these areas do not already have library services.

The second point that I would like to talk about this afternoon is a happy occasion: the opening of the Pularumpi Club at Garden Point on Melville Island. This club was opened more than a week ago by the Chief Minister. To Europeans, it may not seem very important that the Chief Minister should open a sporting club. This club was not an ordinary sporting club; it was a highly significant club. Together with the club on Bathurst Island, it shows to those who want to see that the Aboriginal people recognise that drinking to excess can bring a problem. They like their can of beer as many of us in this House do but they recognise that drinking to excess can bring problems. They have looked at this problem and they have done something about it. In this new sporting club, the drinking will be regulated. This club at Garden Point demonstrates in a concrete way that the Aboriginal people have recognised a

problem. They have considered it and have decided on a sensible solution. They have not said there will be no drinking in their areas. They have decided they will allow a certain sort of drink at a certain time in a certain place. With the building of this club, they have shown a sensible approach to drinking and it is a pity a few more people in the Northern Territory do not have this regulatory good sense.

Mr ISAACS (Millner): Like the Minister for Community Development, I did not wish to enter the adjournment debate about that particular matter but I feel that the remarks he made certainly do warrant answering. He raised three matters in relation to the argument between the Deputy Leader of the Opposition and the honourable member for Stuart. He criticised the Deputy Leader of the Opposition for character assassination of a citizen of the Northern Territory by way of attacking a statutory declaration made out by that person. He criticised the Deputy Leader for an amount paid to the Central Australian Aboriginal Congress for the hire of a vehicle and, in typical fashion, he got stuck into the Australian Labor Party for having all sorts of influences on the Central Australian Aboriginal Congress. I want to have a look at each of those three statements that he made.

The person to be criticised and blamed for the character assassination - if that is the word that the minister wants to use - of a citizen is none other than the member for Stuart himself. If you use a person's name, then you are stuck with it. In the same way, I used the receiver's name in a debate yesterday and I am stuck with it and happy to be so. I suppose the member for Stuart observed the same courtesy that I observed, that was to check with the person first. The member for Stuart checked with that person as I am sure a man of propriety would. The gentleman that he quoted concurred that his name could be used. In that case, the Deputy Leader of the Opposition was completely and utterly warranted and entitled to challenge the veracity of what was said, and so he did. If the minister believes that a citizen has been destroyed - or "assassinated", to use his term - the person that citizen has to thank is none other than the member for Stuart himself.

In relation to the second matter raised by the minister, this nonsense about \$100 being used to somehow or other cover thousands of kilometres, the simple fact is on the public record stated by the member for MacDonnell: he entered into an arrangement with the Central Australian Aboriginal Congress to hire one motor vehicle for his personal use. To go from that situation and that agreement which was entered into between the organisation and the member - rather the person who subsequently became the member - and then draw the conclusion that that \$100 paid for thousands of kilometres of travel by umpteen numbers of congress vehicles is simply absurd. It has never been suggested that congress vehicles were in some way bought or hired by the Australian Labor Party or by the member or the prospective member himself; it was simply said - and it is on the public record - that the Deputy Leader of the Opposition, then a candidate for the seat of MacDonnell, entered into an agreement with the congress to hire a car for personal use and that transaction took place and was recorded.

To go overboard as the minister did is, of course, to make a complete misrepresentation of the position. I would have thought that had there been any substance in the allegations made by members opposite, by the shrill way the member for Stuart carries on, I suppose one would then be entitled to look at the auditor's report to see what the auditor says. Because of the bally-aching that has been going on from the member for Stuart and occasionally by the Minister for Community Development...

Mr Robertson: That was the first time that I have made reference to it.

Mr ISAACS: ... you would have thought that the auditor would have made some comment about it. As recounted by the member for MacDonnell, the member for Stuart was satisfied at a meeting of the congress that the funds had not been used for political purposes. He was satisfied after reading the auditor's report. I do not know why the government carries on in this extraordinary fashion about taxpayers' funds being used for political purposes. I would have thought that, if the auditor had made a statement which made no reference to the use of the organisation's funds for political purposes, surely to goodness that ought to have put it to rest.

Of course, it goes a bit further than that because the government will not even believe its federal colleagues. The congress to this day is funded by the Australian government; it has the support of the federal Department of Aboriginal Affairs. As a result of the bellyaching and ballyhoo that went on from the member for Stuart, the Minister for Aboriginal Affairs was forced to make a statement. This was recounted by the member for MacDonnell and it clearly showed that the congress had the full support of the Australian government - a government of the same political colour as the government of the Northern Territory. I would have thought that that should have been enough for members opposite.

The third point made by the Minister for Community Development - not in any significant way but simply, I suppose, an inference - was that the ALP had some hand in the operations of the Central Australian Aboriginal Congress. It is an allegation not only made by himself - although it certainly was not made specifically in this adjournment debate - it was a statement that I was accosted with when I went to Alice Springs some time ago. It was put to me that the member for Stuart and members of another parliament had made comments that the Australian Labor Party somehow or other ran the congress because the Deputy Leader of the Opposition was an office bearer in the Central Australian Aboriginal Congress, because various people who were known to be members of the Australian Labor Party were members or employed by the Central Australian Aboriginal Congress, that therefore the ALP ran the congress and organised it.

Mr Deputy Speaker, I pointed out - not facetiously but simply to point out the ridiculous logic in that argument - that the Alice Springs Show Society which is a reputable public organisation had as its chairman a person none other than the honourable member for Alice Springs who we all know is a member of the Country Liberal Party and good luck to him. Nobody in their right mind would suggest the Country Liberal Party ran the Alice Springs Show Society and it is equally absurd to say that because the Deputy Leader of the Opposition is an office bearer in the Central Australian Aboriginal Congress that the ALP runs it.

I hope that that has put to rest the absurd arguments put up by members opposite. They do not want to believe the auditor; they do not want to believe the federal minister, their own colleague. I do not know what it is that can satisfy them. It is quite obvious that the member for MacDonnell was placed in a position today where he had to answer the scurrilous charges raised by the member for Stuart. Do not talk to us about coward's castle the honourable Minister for Community Development was hinting at. These allegations were raised not by the member for MacDonnell; they were raised by the member for Stuart.

Mr TUXWORTH (Barkly): Mr Deputy Speaker, I had not intended to speak today or on this particular matter but the Leader of the Opposition has raised some points which make the thing a little more interesting.

I am not aware of and I have not paid a lot of attention to the particular points at issue but honourable members mentioned previously that there was \$100 worth of hire recorded for the rent of a vehicle and the honourable Leader of the Opposition was saying that perhaps \$100 was quite a respectable figure. From my experience in the hire-car game, Mr Deputy Speaker...

Mr Isaacs: I didn't say that at all.

Mr Collins: He didn't say that.

Mr TUXWORTH: I may have misconstrued it, but...

Mr Isaacs: Just don't impute statements to me that I didn't make.

Mr TUXWORTH: The point I was going to make, Mr Deputy Speaker, is that \$100 worth of hire for a vehicle worth \$5,000 or more would be worth about four days' hire if it was not driven one kilometre. I found that in itself interesting.

The other thing that I felt was interesting was the legality of hiring a vehicle. I believe most people in the Northern Territory who hire vehicles have to go to great lengths to get that privilege. That was another question that came to mind as the honourable Leader of the Opposition spoke.

One other point the honourable Leader of the Opposition mentioned was that the auditor made no reference to the use of funds for political purposes. Perhaps the auditor did not, but that does not particularly mean that it did not happen...

Mr Isaacs: Hey? You are challenging the auditor?

Mr TUXWORTH: ... and one way of ascertaining whether this in fact happened was to ask the auditor to say definitely that it did not happen.

Mr Perkins: Are you challenging the auditor's report?

Mr Isaacs: Did he talk about them not spending it on golf balls?

Mr TUXWORTH: I am not casting aspersions on the auditor at all. It is quite easy for the auditor not to say anything because he may not have felt it was necessary. On the other hand, he may not have said anything because he was asked to.

Mr Isaacs: What!

Members interjecting.

Mr TUXWORTH: This is a reality of life.

The other point that I would like to make on this issue, for the benefit of all of us here, allegations were made...

Mr Isaacs: Tell Richard Morris about it.

Mr TUXWORTH: ... in the statutory declaration. They have been refuted by a statement. If the honourable member for MacDonnell wishes to maintain credibility, all he has to do is refute the allegations on a similar statutory declaration and then something has to be done about it because one of them is wrong.

Mr COLLINS (Arnhem): Mr Deputy Speaker, this has certainly been a heavy week. It was with some interest that I listened to members on the opposite side of the House talk about character assassination. I think the Chief Minister of this government has set a number of records - I have mentioned a few of them before - and he has certainly set a record in this particular department too. Thus, it was with some interest that I heard the plaster saints on the other side of the House talking about character assassination. Members will recall earlier in this House a heated debate on town planning and the matter of axe handle subdivisions - in the previous session, just to set your mind at ease; it was the previous session. At that time, the deputy leader of the government, the Treasurer, did a very substantial job of assassination on the character of two very reputable people. He...

Mr EVERINGHAM: A point of order! I refer to standing order 55, Mr Deputy Speaker:

No member shall use offensive words against the Assembly or any member and all imputations of improper motives ...

Mr COLLINS: What? I am referring to a previous Hansard debate.

Mr Everingham: You imputed the motive of character assassination to the deputy leader.

Mr ISAACS: Mr Deputy Speaker, I would like to help you rule on that. The Minister for Community Development himself...

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Are you speaking to the point of order?

Mr ISAACS: Yes I am. I am helping you to come to a decision on it as to whether or not character assassination imputes improper motives. The Minister for Community Development used that precise phrase in relation to the member for MacDonnell and it was used by myself. We were both allowed to use it. I suggest that the member for Arnhem be allowed to continue.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: There is no point of order.

Mr COLLINS: Mr Deputy Speaker, during the debate in the previous session of this Assembly, the honourable Treasurer referred to two people, Mr Chin and Mr Geoff James, and stated their involvement in what he considered to be outrageous subdivision. He did not tell the House then and under subsequent questioning failed to tell the House, as the Hansard clearly shows, despite the fact that he was asked repeatedly, why he had selected those two individuals. He never answered that question subsequently. Of course, it would have had nothing to do with the fact that Mr James, a respected member of the legal practice in Darwin, had publicly criticised the honourable member's town planning legislation and Mr Ernie Chin, by some strange coincidence, happened to have campaigned against the honourable gentleman in his electorate as an independent.

However, this was stopped again by the Chief Minister himself in a subsequent debate and he set a standard of personal abuse of individuals outside this Chamber from within this Chamber that will never be exceeded, when he stated in this House in a subsequent debate - and I remember it only too well - that the aforesaid Mr Geoff James does not have the morals of a tom cat. After listening to that outrageous statement from the senior minister in our government, about an individual outside this House - and it was faithfully recorded in Hansard - I fail to see how any member on the other side of the House could criticise any other member of the House for character assassination because I do not think anybody could follow that particular act.

Mr Deputy Speaker, despite the fact that it is going to come as somewhat of an anti-climax, I intend to devote the rest of the adjournment debate to some problems in my electorate. The honourable Minister for Transport and Works alluded earlier to somebody reading something out of the daily Hansard and I remember the same minister bringing the subject up at a Publications Committee meeting. I believe that the most useful purpose to which the daily Hansard can be put, Mr Deputy Speaker, is for officers of the ministers' departments to go through these dailies as they come out, to check them for references which affect their particular department that they can then follow up without any further reference from the member concerned. This is a small parliament; it has been brought up here again today that the workload on every single member is very heavy. I cannot spend as much time looking after my electoral responsibilities as I would like to. Unfortunately, I have an electorate of 31,000 square miles which is difficult to get over and the Chief Minister himself knows the problems with communication. Unfortunately, I do not have the luxury of travelling around in charters; I do all my travel, or most of it, by Connair.

Mr Everingham: You don't have 19 electorates to cover either.

Mr COLLINS: I am not suggesting that there is anything improper in travelling by charter; I am simply saying - in response to that interjection - that we all have difficult jobs to do and trying to save the taxpayers' money by travelling on ordinary airlines around my electorate is one way I save taxpayers' money. However, it makes it difficult to get around; we all have a lot of work to do.

The use of the daily Hansard by the minister's staff is a very useful short-cut if subjects can simply be brought up in the House and then automatically followed up by the Minister's department without any further reference to the members concerned. In this respect, I would like to talk about the problem of the road to Umbakumba on Groote Eylandt. There are many isolated communities in the Northern Territory, but that particular community is greatly disadvantaged in that it does not have the facility which most small communities and many tiny communities and Aboriginal outstations have, and that is an airstrip. One person at Umbakumba has already died after a motorbike accident because they were simply not able to get him to help in time because, during the wet season, Umbakumba is completely cut off from the outside world for anything up to a month. Depending on the severity of the wet season, it could be for several months. This being the case, you can imagine how the 300-odd souls that live in Umbakumba feel during the wet season when they are totally and utterly cut off from the outside world and someone is seriously ill. The road is in a shocking condition; it is certainly one of the worst roads I have travelled on and I have been on some bad ones. During the wet season it is cut in numerous places and I would ask the honourable minister, along with his many other responsibilities and problems in this respect of providing access to isolated communities, to consider the plight of Umbakumba. I am particularly worried about the aspect of personal safety. There have been many incidents recorded in the past where people have become seriously ill, including one through appendicitis and the one I have just mentioned through a motor bike accident. I have no doubt the law of averages will ensure that there is bound to be someone else in that position in the next 12 months or 2 years. I would ask the honourable minister to pay some attention to that particular problem.

The other point I would like to raise is whether some attention could be paid to Aboriginal apprenticeship in the new apprenticeship legislation which is going to come before the Assembly. One of the most serious problems in Aboriginal communities is that they have very few young people skilled in carpentry and, in particular, mechanics. Kormilda College and Dhupuma College

are turning out a large number of young people. Those colleges are fitting them for many occupations but certainly, in the short term, one of the most useful occupations that an Aboriginal could employ himself in is in the field of a skilled trade. Just recently - and it was with a great deal of pleasure that I saw it - a young Aboriginal man at Maningrida became apprenticed as a mechanic. It does not happen all that often but I would like to see the government give its earnest attention to the encouragement of Aboriginal apprenticeships.

Mr EVERINGHAM (Chief Minister): Mr Deputy Speaker, the honourable member for Arnhem said I had used strong language to describe a solicitor in this city - one Geoff James. It is true that I used those words and since the honourable member for Arnhem has dragged up the particular offending words again this afternoon, I think it only fair that I should once again recount the circumstances as to how those words came to be used.

Mr James phoned my deputy, the honourable Treasurer, and offered - from memory, to use his expression - not to pour a bucket on a number of other people, including my former legal firm, if Mr Perron would apologise to him for naming him in this House. Certainly, those were the worst sort of tactics that any person could have used as far as I was concerned because once the name of my legal firm came into the matter - my own name - there was no possibility that I could advise my deputy who came to me to speak about the matter to withdraw because it was intimidation, and it was intimidation of the worst order. You may recall, Mr Deputy Speaker, that the honourable Leader of the Opposition was the chosen vehicle of the intimidation. In the House, he duly pulled out various transfers of land lodged by my former law firm. None of that land was owned by me, neither was I the vendor nor the purchaser. In fact, I have never been associated with a subdivision of any sort at any time and I think that that might go some of the way towards explaining the reason why I used those words at that time. I believe that was intimidation of the worst sort against a member.

We have heard the honourable member for Arnhem mention the Umbakumba road. I had understood, and I have just checked this out with the Minister for Transport and Works, that the Umbakumba road is on the program for upgrading this year. The people of Umbakumba, whom I hope to visit myself in the not too far distant future, should see the services to their centre improved soon. I would hope that, with a decent road, Umbakumba would be able to avail itself of the first-class airstrip that is situated on Groote Eylandt because that strip is capable of accommodating jet aircraft. Even on the bad road that exists at the moment, Umbakumba is still only an hour or so drive from that side of the island. It would be better if we improved the road to give Umbakumba the connection to the western side of the island. The people there, with that good connection, would then not need a separate airstrip which would have continuing maintenance problems because, obviously, it would not be a bitumen strip; it would be just an earth strip. That would be my idea. It is a matter that will have to be taken up by the Department of Transport and Works and considered. It seems to me that, where there is a first-class airstrip on the island an hour's drive away, why not give them access to that airstrip all the year round?

I agree with the honourable member for Arnhem about vocational training for young Aboriginal people. It seems to me that it is one of the most important aspects of education in July 1979. What concerns me is that the Commonwealth government which professes its concern for the Aboriginal people - Commonwealth governments of whatever political persuasion, certainly they are concerned but some of their policies amaze me - goes to great pains to put Aboriginal children through primary school. It builds what can only be

described as first-class hotels for Aboriginal secondary schools. In fact, when you are in them, you feel some of the schools are too good to touch. I do not know how I would feel if I were an Aboriginal child and plucked up - and I say this in no demeaning way - from near-squalor in many circumstances out in the bush and plonked in Kormilda or Yirrara. Dhupuma on the Gove Peninsula is the only one where Aboriginal children might have a chance of feeling at home because they can knock around in that one. It is a bit old; it is made of demountables and it is still quite good but they could paint on the walls as kids these days seem to want to do. My kids do, and Aboriginal children seem to. They paint and it causes no damage. However, if you painted on a wall out at Kormilda, it would be vandalism of the first order.

This is diverting from the point. These children are sent back to their communities having completed, in many cases, their secondary education. The ones who do not get to the secondary education stage are left in their communities and they are left with nothing to do; there are minimal facilities for vocational training, minimal facilities for apprenticeships. That is one of the most important tasks that we have to undertake. We have to provide vocational training for these young Aboriginal people whom I feel, from visiting these communities, are often very frustrated young people.

Mr Doolan: Hear, hear!

Mr EVERINGHAM: I was rather sad to hear the remarks of the honourable member for MacDonnell this afternoon - forgetting about the car - over the Central Australian Aboriginal Congress and who paid who for what. The honourable member for MacDonnell delivered a stern warning to me to keep my hands off the Aboriginal people. He said it was my policy to divide the Aboriginal people.

I have been here in the Territory for 12 years and, as a lawyer, I have had a fair bit to do with Aboriginals - perhaps not as much as some, but more than many - and the sort of hit-or-miss policies of the government towards the Aboriginal people have always concerned me. The big cry for the last 8 or 10 years has been land rights and land rights have now largely been achieved. It seems to me - and it should be apparent to any thoughtful person - that Aboriginal people are just not going to pull themselves up by their boot straps on land rights alone. Since the Commonwealth government took over responsibility for Aboriginal affairs in 1967, it should have realised that Aboriginal people need other vehicles for self-expression. What have they done about it, Mr Deputy Speaker? They have done very little about it in this Territory.

Since I unexpectedly found myself in this office in September last year, I found myself with an opportunity to do some things that I have really wanted to do for a long time. I will tell you what this government has done to attempt to improve the lot of Aboriginal people in the 12 short months that we have had. We have formed a committee to improve Aboriginal and police relations. On that committee, we have involved the police, the Department of Law through the Solicitor-General, my special adviser on Aboriginal affairs and the Department of Aboriginal Affairs. We have not left out the Aboriginal people or their representatives. We have not made it a government committee; we have involved the representatives of both Aboriginal legal aid groups and the representatives of the Northern Land Council. I think the Central Land Council has been involved in a committee that met in Alice Springs. I do not say that that committee is going to solve everything, but at least we have got off to a start. That was an initiative that was open to the Commonwealth for the last 20 years but it did not take it.

We passed the complementary legislation in accordance with the recommendations of the Bonner Report. Whatever anyone says, that complementary legislation follows those recommendations. We have prepared liquor legislation which has been circulated. The Commonwealth could have been working on that for as long as it liked. We are working on legislation for community courts. We do not know that it will work; we have to ask the Aboriginal people about it but at least we can give it a try and we can attempt to give them the power to enforce such of their traditional mores and penalties as they wish.

Local government legislation is another area where the honourable member for MacDonnell seems to think I am pulling the three-card trick. You cannot pull the three-card trick. A community has to want to accept local government; it cannot be imposed on the community. If the community does want local government, I believe that the ability to make its own bylaws and to impose its own disciplines within the community will back up the effects of land rights and the degree of pride that Aboriginal people should now begin to feel in themselves. I certainly hope that this attempt to give them local government does spread. From what the Minister for Community Development tells me, I am sure that there are a couple of communities interested and I do not think that we should move too fast. If a couple of communities are interested, let them try it out to see if it succeeds and then other communities may take it on.

The Associations Incorporation Ordinance under which the community councils have been established is totally inappropriate for that purpose but it is the only vehicle at the moment. Three associations have been trying to be incorporated for over six months in Central Australia and, up until 1 July, they have had no success because of a view of the Registrar of Companies. Since we have taken over the administration of the Companies Office, I have certified that these three associations are proper to be incorporated under the ordinance.

All these things should have been done years ago by the Commonwealth. It has had the ball in its hands for so long and what has it really done? We are at least trying. I do not say that we will succeed but we are making a genuine effort. We have attempted to involve the Aboriginal people by putting them on boards such as the Tourist Board, the Parks and Wildlife Commission and the Territory Development Corporation. We hope, by this sort of involvement, that there is communication and I believe that that is what is greatly needed in this Territory - a bridge of communication between the Aboriginal people and Australians of other extractions. I cannot say European extraction in the Northern Territory because there are Australians of all sorts of extractions in the Northern Territory. It is that bridge of communication that is needed. I do not want to divide the people; I want to bring them together. I believe it is the only way that a relatively small community such as ours can ever really properly express itself. There is no future in division.

Mr DOOLAN (Victoria River): I did not intend to speak, Mr Deputy Speaker, but I have listened with interest to the Chief Minister and I appreciate that his government is trying to do something for the Aboriginal people. I would just like to suggest that all the hopes and the aspirations and the things which his government is trying to do for Aboriginal people will be in vain unless something is done about the dreadful situation of no job opportunities at all on settlements and missions.

Motion agreed to; the Assembly adjourned.

Mr Speaker MacFarlane took the Chair at 10 am.

MESSAGE FROM THE ADMINISTRATOR

ACTING CLERK: The following message has been received from His Honour the Administrator:

I inform the Assembly of the following action taken pursuant to subsection 8(1) of the Northern Territory (Self-Government) Act 1978: His Excellency the Governor-General of the Commonwealth of Australia, acting with the advice of the Federal Executive Council, did on 30 August 1978 declare that he has withheld assent to the proposed law entitled the Prices Regulation Ordinance 1975. A statement of reasons for withholding assent to this proposed law and a copy of the relevant order by the Governor-General are attached in pursuance of section 10 of the Act.

J.A. England
Administrator

TABLED PAPER

Darwin Cyclone Tracy Relief Trust Fund Report

Mr EVERINGHAM (Chief Minister): Mr Speaker, I table the Darwin Cyclone Tracy Relief Trust Fund Report for May, June and July 1978.

Mr ISAACS (Opposition Leader): Mr Speaker, I move that the paper be noted and seek leave to continue my remarks at a later date.

Mr EVERINGHAM: Mr Speaker, if it is the desire of the opposition to move that the paper be noted, I would be happy to move that the paper be noted and seek leave to continue my remarks at a later hour.

Mr SPEAKER: The Leader of the Opposition, the motion is that of the Chief Minister. He tabled the paper.

STATEMENT

Commonroom - used for press conference

Mr SPEAKER: Honourable members, in the address in reply debate last Tuesday, the member for Nightcliff referred to the use of the members commonroom for a press conference by the Premier of Queensland. The honourable member repeated her remarks in a newspaper column and the editor of the newspaper reprinted the same matter elsewhere in his paper. Neither the honourable member nor the editor of the newspaper checked the facts with me nor with the Clerks of the Assembly.

The facts are as follows: on the conclusion of the ceremonies in the Chamber on Friday 8 September, a request was made at the Assembly office by someone believed to be a member of the Queensland press for a room where the press could interview Premier Bjelke-Petersen. On the understanding that the premier was prepared to be interviewed, a member of the staff said that the commonroom could be used. In view of the limited facilities which this Assembly has for such purposes, I fully agree with the steps taken by the staff member. Indeed I congratulate him on his initiative exercised at a time when neither I nor the senior staff were available for consultation. He extended a courtesy which I would expect to be extended to me or the Chief Minister if the need arose at any other legislature in Australia.

I apologise to the Queensland premier for the unfortunate and ill-informed comments made to this Chamber, for in no way did he insult this Assembly. I am honoured that he thought so much of the Territory that he came as the representative of a neighbouring state to be with us on an historic occasion.

SUMMARY OFFENCES BILL (Serial 162)

Bill presented and read a first time.

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

This bill is consequential upon the Police Administration Bill being introduced and I anticipate that that bill will be introduced tomorrow. At present, the Police and Police Offences Ordinance has provisions dealing both with the administration of the police force and with petty offences. In view of the provisions of the Police Administration Bill, a number of the parts of the Police and Police Offences Ordinance must be deleted in toto. In fact, all that is left of substance in the Police and Police Offences Ordinance once this occurs will be parts VI, VII and VIII.

Each of these parts deals with specific petty offences. Part VI deals with offences in relation to stock. Part VII deals with offences generally and part VIII deals with offences in proclaimed localities. It is therefore convenient to rename this part as the Summary Offences Act. Penalties within these three parts have already been reviewed and it is intended in the course of the current review of criminal law to undertake, as time permits, a thorough review of these petty offences. It has not been possible to conduct this review to date but I regard this as a high priority. Any review of the criminal law is, of course, extremely complicated and great care is essential in framing new offences.

The bill proposes one change of substance to the substantive criminal law. Section 47 of the Police and Police Offences Ordinance presently contains four categories of offences against the public peace. Since the repeal of drunkenness and vagrancy offences, it has become increasingly evident that certain sections of the community are getting away with social conduct of an unreasonable nature without any adverse consequences. This situation cannot continue. The average citizen must be permitted to go about his affairs without unreasonable interference. If the law does not guarantee this, it will fall into disrepute.

Accordingly, it has been decided to seek the introduction of two new categories of offences in section 47. In both categories there will be an objective test as to whether the conduct is unreasonable. In the first case it must be conduct that is a substantial annoyance to another person. In the second case it must be conduct that disturbs the privacy of another person. The interpretation of these new provisions will be a matter for the courts and I will watch closely these developments. Depending on the results, I will consider whether further legislative action is necessary. I do not consider that either of the new provisions goes too far in seeking to control anti-social conduct.

In relation to the other provisions of the bill, I would be pleased to offer further comments should any member wish me to do so. The new section 73A is taken from section 99A of the Police and Police Offences Ordinance. The new definition of "the public" seeks to include Aboriginal land. The amendment to section 62(1)(c) is merely to correct an error in the amending ordinance passed earlier this year. I commend the bill to honourable members.

Debate adjourned.

STAMP DUTY BILL
(Serial 174)

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

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

The Stamp Duty Ordinance provides, in item 197 of the first schedule, that the rate of duty on policies of general insurance is \$5 per \$100 or part of \$100 of premium. This item has its origin in the South Australian legislation. However, in South Australia the insurance companies are all able to pay stamp duty by annual return. Thus the \$5 on fractions of \$100 becomes so insignificant in impact that the overall effect of the provision is very nearly 5% of premiums. The strict wording and design of our legislation does not allow such a system to be adopted in the Northern Territory. With the minimum duty of \$5 there is a harsh effect on people taking out policies which have a premium of only a few dollars. Examples are travellers insurance, baggage insurance and insurance of goods in transit.

Mr Speaker, the bill is to amend that item so that the duty is a straight-out 5%. Insurance companies now register and submit their assimilated duty on premiums monthly and such a charge is quite practical.

I foreshadow that a certificate or urgency will be sought for the passage of this bill through all stages during these sittings. As the principle involves a reduction in taxes collected by the Northern Territory government, I do not believe that honourable members would have strong objection to this particular course of action. I commend the bill to honourable members.

Debate adjourned.

ABORIGINAL SACRED SITES BILL
(Serial 172)

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

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

The Aboriginal Sacred Sites Ordinance is part of the package of complementary Aboriginal land rights legislation passed by the Assembly and awaiting action. An examination of this particular ordinance was made by the Commonwealth Attorney-General's Department and doubt was expressed as to its validity. The reason for this stems from the empowering provisions of the Aboriginal Land Rights (Northern Territory) Act which provides in section 73(1)(a):

The powers of the Assembly to make laws extend to the making of ordinances providing for the protection and the prevention of desecration of sacred sites in the Northern Territory and include sacred sites on Aboriginal land and in particular ordinances regulating or authorising entry of persons at those sites so that any such ordinances shall provide for the right of Aboriginals to have access to those sites in accordance with Aboriginal tradition and shall take into account the wishes of Aboriginals relating to the extent to which those sites should be protected.

Section 31(2) of the Aboriginal Sacred Sites Ordinance provides that sub-section (1), the committing of an offence by entry on a sacred site, does

not prevent Aboriginals from entering or remaining on a sacred site in accordance with Aboriginal tradition. The view is expressed that this was not an adequate statement to cover the requirements of section 73(1) of the land rights act and, accordingly, subsection (2) has been omitted and a new section 31A inserted in terms similar to those in the land rights act, providing that entry on such terms is not an offence under the ordinance.

Section 26 of the ordinance is an attempt to find the wishes of Aboriginals on the extent to which sacred sites should be protected. The person from whom the advice was to be sought was "a custodian of sacred sites" which would seem to be proper in terms of Aboriginal tradition. However, the Commonwealth act requires the taking into account of the wishes of Aboriginals generally and that can only mean the wishes of all persons who are members of the Aboriginal race of Australia without qualification. To meet this requirement the new section 28A is proposed to be inserted in the ordinance providing that, before any action is taken by the authority or the Administrator, they shall take into account the wishes of all Aboriginals as is required under the Commonwealth act. Both of the above actions are necessary to enable the Aboriginal Sacred Sites Ordinance to operate with unquestioned validity. And the second one, Mr Speaker, seems to me to verge on the sublime.

A further amendment is proposed in this bill to amend the present commencing clause which ties the commencement of this ordinance with the commencement of the Aboriginal Lands Ordinance and to provide instead that the ordinance shall come into operation on a date to be determined by the Administrator by notice in the Gazette. The reason for this is that the ordinance cannot operate until an authority is established and it would be meaningless to commence the Aboriginal Lands Ordinance without an authority being established. It is desirable that this bill be passed so that it may be assented to, together with the principal ordinance, so that assent to the principal ordinance will not be further delayed.

It is my intention to seek the suspension of Standing Orders to permit the passage of this bill through all stages at this sittings. I commend the bill.

Debate adjourned.

ADDRESS IN REPLY

Continued from 14 September 1978

Mr PERKINS (MacDONNELL): Mr Speaker, in rising to speak on the address in reply, I would like to place on the record of this Assembly my appreciation to His Honour the Administrator for his speech. I listened with interest to his speech and the outline of the government's program for legislative reform in the Territory. I would like to get away from the humbug which was created last week by the members opposite in relation to demonstrators and protests, and home in on the important points which were outlined in the speech by His Honour.

In the first instance, Mr Speaker, I was impressed with the statement by His Honour that people have a right to be consulted by governments about the decisions made on their behalf. His Honour informed us that this is a fundamental tenet of our political structure. I agree wholeheartedly with this principle. I believe it is an important principle which ought to be adequately and properly carried out by a government.

I also believe in the principle that in any democratic society we ought to have a government by the people, of the people and for the people. Any government that has regard for this principle ought to take into account the interests and wishes of all sections of the Northern Territory, including

protesters and demonstrators. I believe the Northern Territory - and its people as a whole - has the right to determine its own future. And this, of course, was the theme underlining the Administrator's speech. I believe the Northern Territory means all Territorians, whether we are black or white. We have a right to determine our future and elected representatives in this Assembly and in other places ought to take notice of this particular right.

I would like to say to this Assembly that I think that, up till five years ago, we were espousing policies of Aboriginal self-determination and this was a doctrine which had been pursued and pushed on the part of Aboriginal people and supporters for many years, particularly in central Australia. I am pleased to see that the present Northern Territory government is actually pushing for the same doctrine for the whole of the Northern Territory, and I would hope they may have been inspired in some way by the policies and the objectives which were pushed in recent times by Aboriginal people in asking any government, whether it is the federal government or the Northern Territory government, for their own self-determination.

Unfortunately, Mr Speaker, I think there are two basic areas which were covered in the Administrator's speech on which the people of the Northern Territory have not been adequately or effectively consulted. I would like to take up those two particular areas. In the first instance, I believe the people of the Northern Territory have not been adequately consulted on the question of casino operations in the Northern Territory. Honourable members will be aware that the Northern Territory government has already announced that casinos will be established in the Northern Territory and we heard this morning the announcement by the honourable Treasurer that he will be facilitating legislation to enable that aim to be achieved.

Mr Perron: Do you oppose it?

Mr PERKINS: I think that people generally can appreciate the arguments that casinos can boost the tourist trade and the Northern Territory economy in the long run. However, I do not think enough consideration has been given to the social consequences and in particular the social damage that can arise as a result of the establishment of casinos. I believe we as legislators ought to be mindful of the cost of casinos in human and social terms, and the misery that could result to individuals and families who gamble away their incomes and end up on the scrap heap of society.

I understand that individuals in various groups in the community in the Northern Territory, in particular the Uniting Church, have expressed their opposition, in fact their total opposition, to the establishment and operation of casinos in the Northern Territory. No doubt honourable members opposite and our members here in the opposition would have received the statements of objections which have been put in circulation by the Uniting Church in North Australia.

As I have said, Mr Speaker, I do not think there has been enough consideration by the public of this question of the establishment of casinos. In my view it is an issue of concern to many Northern Territorians and one about which the people of the Northern Territory ought to have been consulted. I do not believe this government has a mandate to establish casinos in the Northern Territory and I would urge the Northern Territory government to consider the call by the Opposition Leader that there ought to be a referendum in the Northern Territory on this very question in order that the Northern Territory government may allow the people of the Northern Territory themselves to decide about the whole question of casinos and whether, in fact, they would like to see casinos in operation. If this Northern Territory government is genuine about consulting the people of the Northern Territory, then I believe the democratic gesture would be to allow them to decide by referendum whether they

would like to have casinos or not.

I understand that at the August meeting of the Darwin City Corporation there was a motion that there ought to be a public inquiry into casinos in the Northern Territory. So it is not just the opposition which is making a call for some kind of inquiry or rather for a referendum on the question of casinos. We have the situation where the Darwin City Corporation has called on the government to have a public inquiry into casinos. We also have the situation where the Uniting Church in North Australia has come out openly and has asked the government to consider the social damage which could result from the operation of casinos and has indicated its total opposition to the establishment of casinos.

I think that is fair enough indication that there is general concern in the Northern Territory on the question of casinos and I think that, more importantly, it ought to be an indication to the Northern Territory government that it ought to consult adequately and effectively with the people of the Northern Territory, and allow them to decide whether they would like to have casinos.

I mentioned two areas on which I believe there has been a lack of adequate and effective consultation with the people of the Northern Territory. I would now like to turn to the second area. This concerns the proposal of the Northern Territory government which was covered in the speech of His Honour to establish Aboriginal local government councils in communities in the Northern Territory.

I believe that to date there has not been adequate consultation with Aboriginal people in regard to this proposal. I have seen evidence that Aboriginal people are, in fact, confused and are concerned about the proposal, I think in much the same way as they are concerned about the original proposal that the Northern Territory government would have responsibility only for essential services in Aboriginal communities. I believe the Northern Territory government should take into account this confusion and should make a genuine gesture to consult Aboriginal people on the question of whether they want the Northern Territory government to be responsible for their essential services and, secondly, whether they want to establish Aboriginal local government councils under the proposed amendments to the Northern Territory Local Government Act.

On the first point, Mr Speaker, I mentioned that there was a great deal of confusion in Aboriginal communities as to the proposal for the Northern Territory government to have responsibility for essential services. I would say without doubt that there are Aboriginal people who already feel that they are in a position themselves to have responsibility for essential services and they are confused and bewildered by the proposal of the Northern Territory government to come in and take control of their essential services. I would also say - and I have had considerable discussion with Aboriginal people on this particular issue - that Aboriginal people are wondering why the Northern Territory government wants to have control over essential services in Aboriginal communities and why there is no actual proposal at this moment on the part of the Northern Territory government to provide for the education and training of Aboriginal people to have the responsibility themselves for controlling and operating their essential services. No doubt there are Aboriginal communities already in the Northern Territory which are quite capable of controlling and operating their essential services.

On the second issue, the proposal of the Northern Territory government to establish Aboriginal local government councils, again there is confusion. In the areas that I have travelled, Aboriginal people have indicated that they already have councils and incorporated bodies and that they are operating under a policy of self-management. They cannot understand why the Northern

Territory government wants to come in over that and endeavour to impose a system of local government councils under Northern Territory law. I do not believe there has been adequate consultation on this issue. There should be, because Aboriginal people and any other people in the Northern Territory have a right to be consulted about decisions which affect them directly. In this case, I do not think Aboriginal people have been directly and adequately consulted, nor have we seen any indication at this stage that there is a general support on the part of Aboriginal people to establish these local government councils.

I have discussed this matter previously and I have taken it up with the Chief Minister in the press. It is a matter which we shall continue to pursue until such time as we are able to get a firm indication of the real intentions of the Northern Territory government and a firm indication that Aboriginal people themselves are happy with the proposal. Unfortunately, in the discussion which has gone on about the proposal to establish local government councils, I have heard it suggested that it has been put to Aboriginal people by representatives of the Northern Territory government that the only way they can control the liquor problem and the litter problem in their communities is to accept this proposal. Unfortunately, that is the kind of story which is being pushed around Aboriginal communities and Aboriginal people have not been offered any other options or alternatives to consider. By options or alternatives, I mean options or alternatives to the local government council proposal. In many Aboriginal communities there is already a policy of self-management operating and it would be an imposition on Aboriginal communities to try to impose another tier on top of that.

With respect to those two areas, the Northern Territory government ought to take up the suggestion in His Honour's speech that the people of the Northern Territory have a right to be consulted about decisions which affect them directly if they are to have any credibility for a government in the Territory which acts in response to the needs and the wishes of all Territorians.

In closing, I would like to turn to some of the specific points which are on the legislative program of the Northern Territory government. In His Honour's speech there is mention that a conservation commission will be established in the Northern Territory. I welcome this particular initiative. I believe it is important to have an effective commission which is charged with power to protect our natural environment and which is composed of members who are genuinely interested in preserving and protecting the environment from uncontrolled progress.

I would also like to welcome the proposal in the Administrator's speech in relation to Northern Territory liquor laws. On this particular matter, I would like to call for a bipartisan approach to the liquor problems as they occur in the Northern Territory. I am sure that other honourable members and other people in the Territory regard the liquor problem as an important social issue to be reckoned with and not a party-political issue.

I would like to place on record my appreciation to His Honour for his speech and I hope that, in respect of many of the legislative proposals, it is not an exercise in empty rhetoric but the Northern Territory government is concerned to see that all sections of the Northern Territory are consulted about the proposals and its program and that people have a say in the decisions which affect their lives.

Mr DONDAS (Casuarina): Mr Speaker, in rising to speak on this address in reply, I also wish to express my loyalty to Her Majesty the Queen and, at the same time, express my appreciation to His Honour the Administrator for making his address to this House. Before doing so, I would like to pick up a point that the honourable member for MacDonnell has made in relation to casinos. I would like to take a few moments to elaborate on what other people are thinking

in relation to the casino operation at Wrest Point in Tasmania.

A Major Botsford, who is the officer in charge of the Salvation Army welfare operation in Tasmania, has stated that she has played an active role in the Salvation Army campaign to keep casinos out of Tasmania. However, after four years she admitted that there had been no cases of hardship brought to her attention which were attributed to casino gambling. She said, in fact, there had been a decline in persons seeking welfare assistance from her organisation in the four years.

I have another quote from Mr Daniels, the Tasmanian Director of Welfare Services. He is also associated, I believe, with Father C. Kilby, the priest in charge of the Catholic Family Welfare Bureau. Mr Daniels said he had opposed the introduction of the casino but he had had little or no evidence of the casino being the cause of welfare problems. Father Kilby said he had opposed the introduction of the casino but he could not fault its operation in the four years it had operated. He said his organisation had not received any complaints from people nor had he or the bureau been called to provide welfare assistance to families as a result of gambling excesses or indeed any matter relating to the casino operation. Later, the ACT inquiry quoted Tasmania's Minister for Tourism, Mr Michael Barnard. He had said that the opposition to the casino had ceased because none of the problems forecast had eventuated.

The honourable member for MacDonnell has outlined his fears of what a casino operation would do to us socially in the Northern Territory. This particular comment about casinos had been referred to for over a year now yet not one member of my electorate has approached me with a view to seeking a deferment of the issuing of a casino licence. Not one private member of my electorate has contacted me and said, "Look I do not like the idea of a casino, please do not go on with it".

I would like to refer to a letter that has been sent to all members of the Assembly by the Treasurer. He states:

The Territory government is pledged to assist and encourage development in the Northern Territory to thereby create jobs for our unemployed and for our young and to reduce the transient factor in our population. Tourism is one of the industries which can meet this aim and the casinos are seen as a launch point for spurring that industry towards real growth. A great tourist flow through the Territory means greater stability for every Territory centre. This policy would have dangers if the government were prepared to throw open the doors and allow complete freedom of operation in the casino area. This is not the position. The government sees the advantages which will accrue from licensing a casino operator but is well aware of its responsibilities to the community to ensure that such an operation merits the same observations and conclusions as the Tasmanian example. I might point out that a rigid investigation is currently under way into those corporations which have applied for licences and that we have stipulated that a casino in the Territory will be of international stature and strictly controlled.

So much for what the honourable member for MacDonnell had to say. He is asking for a referendum. A referendum costs money and one thing the opposition must take into consideration is that, since self-government on 1 July, we have a new ball game. We have to start generating our own income. Very reliable sources have stated that the Wrest Point operation has not been to the detriment of the people.

If I may refer to the Administrator's speech, I would like to draw attention to what an historic occasion the opening was. I would like to quote from the Payne-Fletcher report on the Northern Territory. It was presented on 10 October 1937. I quote from page 84, section 5:

Activity - then stagnation. The initial years of hesitation and delay in the settlement of the Territory were followed by a period from 1870-1889 of fitful development and delusive booms - the telegraph line, gold mines, plantations, railways, Chinese and stock. Throughout this time one great scheme succeeded another, and there was always a hope that some permanent development might take place. From 1890 to 1910 almost complete stagnation prevailed. The condition became more marked in the latter years of this period when transfer of the Territory to federal control had been prognosticated and the tendency was to wait and hope for better things in the future.

We are now in the future, Mr Speaker. However, on page 86, paragraph 14, the report goes on:

Negotiations for the transfer of the Territory to the Commonwealth by South Australia were of a protracted nature and extended over a period of years. They opened in 1901 and, in the intervening years until agreement was finally reached between the Commonwealth and the state, the question was one of great public interest in South Australia and the subject of much debate in the State Houses of Parliament. Amongst the reasons which were advanced in favour of the transfer was the contention that, in taking control of customs and immigration the Federal Parliament had virtually deprived the state of the indispensable instruments of development and that, from the state's point of view, the authority which possessed the key of the building should be made responsible for the care of the premises. Supporters of the movement in favour of the transfer further pointed out that, after 40 years of management by South Australia, the land remained practically uninhabited and undeveloped, and that the debt of the Territory compared with the population was steadily increasing year by year. South Australia had her own troubles to face. It had loans to renew and liabilities to meet. Further there was a likelihood that, if they were successful in developing the Northern Territory, secession would take place.

Eventually, in 1908, the State Parliament consented to the Northern Territory Surrender Act. During the 45 years which South Australia had control of the Territory, there had been 36 separate governments and no less than 43 different ministers in charge of the Northern Territory. In 1910, the Commonwealth passed the Northern Territory's Acceptance Act and, in January 1911, the Federal Government assumed control.

In 1974, Mr Speaker, as you know, we had our first fully elected legislative Assembly - history, in itself, again. On 1 July 1978 we had self-government - history, in itself, again. Also for the first time, after serving under three flags, we obtained our own flag for the Northern Territory. We also obtained our own coat of arms - history once again. We are in the throes now of organising and investigating the possibility of building a new Parliament House on this site - history once again.

In the Administrator's speech, Mr Speaker, he spoke of development. Development, of course, is the key to our future prosperity in the Northern Territory. He spoke about the tourist industry and it was very pleasing to hear that in this year's budget allocation over \$1m has been made to the

Tourist Board for tourist promotion and operation in this financial year. Never before has so much money been invested in the tourist industry and I certainly hope it is only the start, because without a good viable tourist industry, it is going to take us a lot longer to get where we want to go. In fact, if I might make a point, Mr Speaker, in other parts of the world the emphasis placed on the tourist industry is absolutely out of magnitude. For example, in Hong Kong the textile industry, which you would think would be the biggest industry, is second to tourism. But in 1962 and 1963 that was not the case; textiles were No. 1 and I think tourism was running about No. 3. Today it is No. 1. But the Hong Kong authorities, that is the British government, spent a lot of money in promoting Hong Kong to what it is today. So if we are going to succeed with tourism we have to invest an awful lot of money.

His Honour the Administrator spoke about the mining industry. We are in an exciting period. I believe the agreements have almost been negotiated. Mining in the Northern Territory is certainly going to play a very, very important part in its future development. He also spoke about the fishing industry. The creation of the new 200-mile zone limit will give our local producers a wider field to canvass and open up new fishing fields.

The Territory Development Corporation set up by our government will also assist and in this year's budget I believe there is a figure of almost \$5m to be given to local people to promote and develop their products and also to develop the Territory. Development is the key, as is land. We must release more land if we are going to succeed. Land is also a keynote for prosperity and our government is looking at ways of releasing land so that we can encourage people from other parts of Australia and also other parts of the world to come here.

Last year, Mr Speaker, you were prominent in organising an overseas trade delegation. The success of that delegation is still not being realised but from all reports and accounts, it will not be long before other delegations will be going overseas, members of this House, members of the government, to see if they can open up other fields and carry on the work that was begun by that first trade delegation. To date we cannot really say that it has been successful but at the same time we cannot say that it has not been successful. Only time will tell.

One point which His Honour the Administrator made in his speech related to the litter problem. Quoting from his speech, he said: "It is hoped to introduce legislation aimed at controlling litter by requiring payment of a deposit on all beverage containers sold in the Territory". I find that a little disturbing. Whilst we know that litter is an enormous problem here and throughout the Territory, my mind goes to work and I wonder how we are going to impose the use of such a deposit in isolated areas, how they are going to bring these empty cans back for recycling, who is going to be responsible for repayments, who is going to be responsible for the transport and so on. The Administrator did refer to the fact that organising such legislation might be a particular problem because of remoteness. I believe this scheme has not worked too well in South Australia. So we are going to have to look seriously at any legislation that might come before us in that particular area.

Education was another topic mentioned by the Administrator. Myself, I feel we are getting into an exciting period so far as education is concerned, especially when education is coming over to this Assembly on 1 July next year. At the moment we have some parents who are not happy with our education standards in the Northern Territory and they send their children to other parts of Australia and in some cases to other parts of the world. Why? Is it because our school standard here is not good enough for them or is it because they lack confidence in the system? It is hoped that by about 1980 or 1985, no matter how long it takes, we as a government will be able to engender a little bit of confidence in the education system in the Northern Territory so that parents will not send their children elsewhere. We need to have a little bit

of pride in our education system. I certainly hope we can.

He also spoke of new equipment for law enforcement. I only hope that in this new equipment the Chief Minister, who is sitting there smiling, does buy for the police force some modern airconditioned, super pursuit cars. Air-condition their vehicles for them, because they are living and working in extreme climatic conditions, especially in isolated areas. Give them some air-conditioning.

The Administrator also spoke about an updating and review of legislation. That is very, very important because in some cases we are working on ordinances and laws that are sixty years old. One that comes to mind is the Pawn-brokers Act of South Australia which we are still working on. We would certainly hope that the Chief Minister will arrange a complete new ordinance for that in the very near future.

The Administrator also spoke of assistance to sport. Sport in the Northern Territory is a way of life. There is hardly any family that is not touched by sport of some kind. I certainly hope the minister responsible for sport opens up the purse strings and allows these sporting organisations to travel and compete with other organisations throughout Australia. It is certainly a way of life and most people are involved in sport. It is a good way of life and I think that any person who can participate in sport has got a lot to gain.

If I might digress a little in this speech, Mr Speaker, I would like to make mention of a sporting activity which the Leader of the Opposition and myself participated in on Saturday night.

Mr Isaacs: I'd rather you didn't.

Members interjecting.

MR SPEAKER: Order, order!

MR DONDAS: Mr Speaker, the honourable Leader of the Opposition was asked to participate in an event with myself for the purpose of raising funds for a gentleman by the name of Dowsett who has been in the sporting fraternity of the speedway for many years and is suffering an illness. We both consented to participate in what they call an outfit race. My understanding of the invitation was that it would be in fun and that they wanted us to go along and help promote the evening. We did, happily. We went along and they gave us leathers which we wore and helmets and so on. Before I talk about the race, I might mention, Mr Speaker, that the lap record is about 55 seconds and normally, I believe, on a Saturday night the races run between 58 to 60 seconds and with that time a person would win the race. Well, Mr Speaker - and all credit to the Leader of the Opposition, even I say it myself - we went around in 60.5 seconds which was not bad for novices. We were hanging on like grim death and since then, I have been thanking the good Lord every hour that I am still alive.

Anyway, in closing my remarks to the Administrator's speech, I would like to make mention and thank the various organisations and also the officers of this Assembly for the very, very hard work they put in in arranging the opening of the Assembly and all the other functions that took place. I would also like to make special mention of the hospitality of the Chief Minister's Department for all the very hard work they put in in meeting our guests who came from interstate and overseas, and looking after them for the period they were here. Once again, Mr Speaker, I would like to thank His Honour the Administrator for the words he spoke in this House last week.

Members: Hear, hear!

Ms D'ROZARIO (Sanderson): I take some pleasure in rising to speak on this motion. I, too, would like to pick up some specific points which were made by His Honour the Administrator in his speech for which I thank him.

One of the matters which the Administrator mentioned was an improvement in the administration and use of land, to promote investment and encourage permanent residence in the Territory. The honourable member for Alice Springs gave a very detailed outline of the current situation of land laws of the Territory and I commend him for that outline which he gave to members because it was an extremely complicated matter and, as he is a member of the backbench committee of the government, I look forward to his recommendations for the review of these land laws.

His Honour the Administrator make reference to the weakness and inflexibility of present town planning legislation. With respect to the statement that he made, I would like to say that the weakness and inflexibility of that legislation cannot be attributed to the rapid pace of change which has occurred in the Territory urban centres. Rather, Mr Speaker, I believe they are the result of years of neglect in comprehensive regional planning and of the absence of a well-developed notion of what functions the Territory urban centres are expected to discharge, either at present or in the future.

I might say, Mr Speaker, that this deficiency has even yet not been rectified, for there are no studies of employment, no studies of economic base or prospective economic base for Territory subregions, no studies of housing demand and other factors which contribute significantly to the identification of a planning base. All this, I might say, Mr Speaker, leads to a notion that Territory towns are static phenomena, coloured pictures on a piece of paper. For the weaknesses of the current town planning legislation is that it has not recognised this problem and there are no mechanisms at present within the legislation to cope with the dynamic nature of urban centres. I hope, Mr Speaker, that the new legislation that we are promised will have regard for some of these factors and will be based on a more scientific assessment of the functions that Territory centres are expected to discharge.

Another matter which interests me, Mr Speaker, and which has been taken up by two members already this morning is the question of casino development to assist tourism. I have no view one way or the other on the merit of casinos in the Northern Territory simply because I think that not enough is known about the prospective demand for these sorts of enterprises. However, I would like to say, in relation of the letter which has been circulated by the honourable Treasurer, that the comparison of proposed Territory casino operations with Tasmania could well be misleading. If casinos are expected to give an impetus to tourism, then the prospective market must be clearly identified.

I believe that in the identification of this market, we should be looking at the Southeast Asian regional context. We cannot expect large numbers of Australian tourists from South Australia, New South Wales and Victoria to flock to the Territory because to them the development at Wreath Point is far more accessible. Not only that, but we have this problem of extremely high internal air fares. Also, in my opinion, the success of the Tasmanian venture is largely due to the presence of very large populations in the southeast of Australia. The proposed development in Darwin certainly does not have this advantage, although the disadvantage of distance is significantly mitigated if we look at the proposal for Alice Springs.

Potential tourists from Southeast Asia have access to casinos in other parts of their own region, for example in the Philippines and in Taiwan. They

are unlikely to come to Darwin for the sole purpose of indulging in casino games. I think we would have to offer something more than just the prospect of being able to participate in casino games, especially as I say when I look at the internal air fare structure for which the Chief Minister is making some representations on behalf of Territory travellers.

So with those few remarks, I appreciate the work the honourable Treasurer has done in assessing the success of the operations in Tasmania, but Tasmania is a long way from the Northern Territory and, as I mentioned, it has the advantage of access to high population areas in the southeast of Australia.

Mr Speaker, I welcome the proposal for a new tenancy law and in this respect, I would like to commend the following suggestions to the prospective sponsor of that bill. So far, we have heard only that the current provision to accept and offer bonds is to be made legal and that there will be an appeal to a magistrate in the event where a lessee thinks his rent has been set too high.

I believe there already exists in Australia a very good system of tenancy law and that is to be found in New South Wales. The operations of the Rental Bonds Board, as it is known in that state, is a fairly recent occurrence in New South Wales. It was set up by a new act of the New South Wales parliament which took effect on 1 October and indeed the board has been operating only since 28 February. However, significant advantages of the operation have already come to light. For the benefit of members opposite, I might just outline how this system operates.

Instead of an exchange of bond money between lessor and lessee or landlord and tenant, the bond is paid into the Rental Bonds Board and the money obtained from this bond accumulates interest. As you can imagine the number of these transactions in a state like New South Wales is quite enormous and I do not for a moment suggest that the same volume could be generated in the Northern Territory. However, the money that is earned from these investments is put to very good use in that state. Some of the uses are: financing the entire Rental Bonds Board staff and establishment and the setting up of a rental advisory scheme whereby any landlord and any tenant can ring up the advisory service and put to them any problems that they have and they will obtain assistance free of charge. They have also managed to accumulate sufficient funds to be able to afford low interest loans to low-income earners; they have been able to consolidate large tracts of land for the construction of low-income housing.

I do not say that, if we pursued such a scheme here, the volume of transactions would be sufficient to undertake all these projects that I have just outlined. However, I do think the individual transactions between landlords and tenants ought to be set aside in favour of the constructive use of those funds for the benefit of the community at large. I commend that suggestion to the honourable Minister for Community Development.

I was pleased to note also that the present government recognise the need for adequate public transport in Territory urban communities. I would like to say that this matter has been taken up on an Australia-wide basis in a recent report prepared by the Australian Institute of Urban Studies of which I am a member. This report, about which quite some publicity has been given in the press, has said it is absolutely essential that transport planning, and in particular the planning of public transport, takes place concurrently with land use planning. Of course, it is not just we in the Northern Territory who are feeling the effects of rising petrol prices. The era of cheap fuel and cheap transport is fast coming to an end in the whole of Australia but it is fair to say that the Northern Territory suffers from these effects much more heavily because of distance. I welcome the proposal to upgrade and to review the operations of public transport services within the Northern Territory and

I add my support to that of the honourable member for Alice Springs in extending these services to the smaller Territory centres.

Mr Deputy Speaker, I believe it is traditional in the address in reply to say something about one's electorate. I would like to take this opportunity to speak at some length about the electorate that I represent and which I am proud to do so. As most members will be aware, the electorate that I represent consists largely of an area which was rebuilt as a consequence of Cyclone Tracy. There is, of course, an older suburb - that of Wanguri - in which I believe two honourable members from the other side reside and I commend them for their good taste in the matter. This area was very severely damaged during the cyclone. I am pleased to say that this particular suburb of Wanguri, which was much slower to rehabilitate itself because resources were being channelled into the building of the suburbs of Anula and Wulagi, is looking very much better than it did even 12 months ago.

The people that I represent in that district have brought to my attention several problems concerning public housing. I intend to take this up at greater length with the Minister for Lands and Housing but I do say that, because of the concentration of public housing in my electorate, this matter is a source of great preoccupation and sometimes dismay among the tenants of these houses.

I am pleased to say that I have also two clubs in the district which represent large numbers of immigrants in our community. I am referring to the German Club and the Italian Club. The Italian Club has only recently commenced operations and I congratulate the members of the Italian community for the effort they have put into the building on that club site which was a barren piece of land before they got hold of it. I would like to record my appreciation to the Chief Minister and his colleagues for having waived further repayments on that site for the Italian Club.

I consider it my duty to be informed about what my electors are thinking and I extend that statement to say that it is the duty of any elected member in this House to be aware of what the community at large is thinking. Therefore, I make no apology for being present at the demonstration on 8 September about which so much acrimonious debate has already taken place in this House. That demonstration was directed against a federal budget about which there is a consensus that it is a most unpopular budget. Leaving aside the merits of whether or not that budget is indeed as bad as people say it is, the point that I wish to make is that, if this is a subject that is of concern to my electors, I consider it my duty to be present on these occasions and to find out what the electors are thinking. I think it is also the duty of any member who sits in this House and purports to be in touch with the Northern Territory electorate. I do not wish to add anything further about that particular occasion but I simply want to say that it is not the intention of the Labor Party in the Assembly or the branch of the Labor Party outside the Assembly to stir up "civil disobedience" - I think that was the term used. We do, however, acknowledge the right of people to make their views known in a peaceable way. I hope the members on the other side can appreciate that point.

In conclusion, I thank His Honour the Administrator for the speech he delivered to this House at the opening of this session. I look forward to participating in the debate on the bills which will be presented in this House during this session.

Mr VALE (Stuart): It is my pleasure to rise to speak on the address in reply to His Honour the Administrator's speech. I would just like to touch briefly on some of the points associated with the Governor-General's speech before the Administrator's address. In particular, I found the Governor-General's comments particularly interesting when he referred to his past association with the Northern Territory and so did other Northern Territorians.

My first association with the Governor-General goes back many years in Victoria. I was very fortunate to hear the Governor-General, then Professor Zelman Cowen, speak at one of the speech nights at the school at which I was a pupil. I had a reputation for going to sleep at speech nights and the only time I did not do that was when Professor Cowen spoke.

I think the demonstration which took place outside here was unfortunate for a couple of reasons. Many people and children who came to attend the Assembly were out the front to observe, hear and participate in a very historic occasion. But they were unable to hear because the proceedings were drowned out by a very small section of the Northern Territory - less than 0.4% attempted to drown out part at least of that official occasion. Further, many other Territorians who were not in Darwin were unable to listen to part of the radio broadcast on commercial and ABC stations. I think Australia is very fortunate in having a Governor-General of Zelman Cowen's standing. He is a fine Australian and, on behalf of all Territorians, I would apologise to the Governor-General and his family for those unfortunate remarks.

Turning now to the Administrator's speech and some of the comments made about casinos by both the honourable members for MacDonnell and Sanderson, I would think the legislation that the Treasurer has announced he will introduce will not force people into casinos. You would wonder sometimes from the comments of the honourable member for MacDonnell whether that is not his impression. I would think from his comments and the comments of other members of the opposition that they cannot make up their minds on quite a number of issues and tend to want to refer them to referenda. If and when they ever get into government, they will probably spend most of their money on holding referenda to determine what the people want. They will not have much left for capital works.

I would particularly like to congratulate the government on its decision to proceed to determine the site for the recreation lake in Alice Springs, an area which needs something like that. Recently, we had a bridge opened which requires water to rush under it and we are to get a recreation lake which requires water in it. I am just a little bit worried that we may go into a 10-year drought period and have no need for them. If a recreation lake opens, I hope it will include facilities to allow for fishing, yachting, camping, boating but hopefully no "free" waterholes such as the beach which you have up here.

I turn now to the mineral, crude oil and natural gas exploration to which the Administrator referred and which it is the government's intention to re-activate and encourage. In many instances governments, and particularly national governments, have created at least part of the world energy crisis. Past federal governments have particularly helped to do that in relation to the Australian energy crisis and the mineral and crude oil reserves that we have in the Northern Territory. In central Australia, one small oil field has the potential to supply Alice Springs and Tennant Creek area with at least 40 years supply of certain petroleum products. There is also the fact that companies down there have spent many millions of dollars on geological and geophysical work in upgrading undrilled prospects. Those prospects, given cash flow from the already discovered oil in central Australia, would allow them to go back in and re-drill and re-evaluate those prospects. The Northern Territory government initiative to encourage exploration companies to re-activate and develop the Territory's untapped petroleum wealth is to be applauded.

The Territory government is also to be applauded on its desire and initiative to upgrade the internal road system, particularly Ayers Rock, Yuendumu, Hermannsburg, Glen Helen and others. It is a pity that the commencement of construction of the Stuart Highway into South Australia has not been announced because, with the upgrading of that road, obviously our internal road

system will need a lot of work done. It is unfortunate that, although the South Australian government has received from the federal government in the past four years \$66m for national highway construction, it has not seen fit to spend one cent of that on the Stuart Highway, or South Road as we know it.

The announcement that the government will give some consideration to deposits on throw-away containers is one of concern, particularly as the South Australian legislation, while well intended, is not having its desired effect. I think the government has a difficult decision and must examine existing legislation and all options before it reaches a final decision.

The announcement also that we must prepare electoral legislation will obviously encourage very wide debate. The opposition commented on the full preferential voting system - if one, two or three candidates stood and they did not like the third candidate, they would not vote for him. I do not think they fully understand the system because if people mark their ballot paper 1, 2 or 3, they are not voting for the third candidate. I think the government needs to examine, and examine closely, the possibility of incorporating in the legislation optional enrolment and also optional voting. Both those systems need a very, very close scrutiny before they are discarded. I, for one, would support at least the right of all Territorians to have the option of enrolling. I think the electoral officers must take on a very active duty in the enrolment of voters, if that step is undertaken, and in voter education. I think the system which the New Guinea government uses is one that we could examine much more closely and possibly adopt here in the Northern Territory.

Some members opposite, and I think some members of the government, commented on electoral figures. I think these figures might be of interest to all members. They are effective as of the last federal election in December last year. The Northern Territory total land mass is 1,347,522 square kilometres and as of December last year there were 44,636 people on the roll. That gives an average per electorate - for each of the 19 electorates - of 2,349 people. The average of the 6 ALP electorates is under that average - their average is 2,339 - while the CLP 12 electorates average 2,350. The smallest electorates in area are those held by the Chief Minister, Jingili, 2 square kilometres and by the Opposition Leader, Millner, 2 square kilometres, and also the electorate of Nightcliff, 2 square kilometres. The largest electorate in population is that held by the honourable member for Sanderson, 2,927; the second largest in population is Stuart, one short of the Sanderson figure. The largest electorate in land mass is Stuart, 325,420 square kilometres, followed by MacDonnell...

Mr Isaacs: I knew there had to be a reason for your giving these figures.

Mr VALE: ...261,400 square kilometres, followed by Victoria River 254,100 square kilometres. Overall, of the 12 electorates held by the CLP, their land mass represents 54.7% and in those 12 electorates is represented 63.2% of the voting population, whilst the ALP electorates represent 31.4% of the voting population or 45% of the electorate. I think if you examine these figures and survey the electorate sizes very closely, you would find it would be very difficult to come up with a 10% tolerance which the ALP has spoken of.

Mr ROBERTSON (Community Development): Mr Speaker, I rise to speak in the address in reply to His Honour the Administrator's speech. For once, I had determined that I would not make reference to anyone else's speech but that was dashed by the honourable member for MacDonnell once again. What I would do, first, is get rid of that little bit of concern. What a contrast there was between his speech and that of the honourable Leader of the Opposition. The Leader of the Opposition touched on matters contained in His Honour's speech as he saw them. I would have described the Leader of the Opposition's speech as one of honesty, frankness and, quite frankly, political courage.

It was rather refreshing to have someone stand in this place, particularly on the other side, and express views that he really believed in and which he knew might not necessarily be electorally popular. He touched on his attitude to new electoral laws; he touched on the appalling carnage which occurs on our roads and the appalling cost to the community which results from it.

The only thing about his otherwise accurate dissertation on the third-party increases was the omission of the matter of quantum of damages being awarded by the courts in the Northern Territory. I think it would be improper really for me to pass direct criticism on what the courts are doing. They are following international patterns of a tremendous increase in the amount of damages being awarded. I suppose a court does have a very difficult job in trying to work out how you assess the pain, suffering, the loss of pleasure and enjoyment, the loss of livelihood of a quadriplegic caused by someone else's negligence. I suppose it is a very difficult thing to measure. If we look back through the history of third-party awards in Australia and elsewhere, we find a very disturbing and very rapid increase. In the United States, of course, \$1.5m has become quite common. For very serious injuries in the Northern Territory we have found extremely high awards. I think that is a subject which we should consider along with all the things raised by the honourable Leader of the Opposition.

I will not canvass or try to give my views on whether or not random breath tests are appropriate or whether or not a rigid enforcement of seat-belt-wearing is appropriate. It certainly seems to me, though, if I might make the observation with respect of seatbelts, that our police force has a difficult enough job getting the good will and cooperation of the public without carrying on with exercises which the public, for one reason or another, genuinely believes is nit-picking. I have certainly, in respect of a couple of prosecutions quite recently in Alice Springs, particularly for passengers not wearing seatbelts, had representations made to me by those people that that seemed to them to be a little bit harsh, a little bit outside of what they expected their police force to do. So the police force finds itself in a position of having members of parliament insisting that it do certain things, including the enforcement of those rules, those laws which already exist, and the public reaction against the enforcement of them. If our police force finds itself in any difficulty at all, it is in trying to satisfy anyone, much less everyone.

In Alice Springs which, of course, I too intended to speak principally about in this address in reply, we have matters which the mayor down there deems to call "law and order difficulties". Of course, that makes a particular demand upon the police force itself. I think, Mr Speaker, that I get more representations from my electorate in respect of the question of law and order, of vandalism, of break and enter, of malicious damage than all of the other representations put together. There seems to be a tremendous proliferation of wanton damage for one reason or another and I feel, as minister responsible for welfare or more particularly community development, that a large part of what is happening in a place like Alice Springs - and I suppose these occurrences are no stranger to you, Sir - that it is a primary function of the Department of Community Development. A brief program outline has been made by the Administrator in this place on the role my department intends playing in trying to alleviate these unfortunate occurrences.

Mr Speaker, I believe that welfare and community development must not have a philosophy of rather picking up the pieces after the damage is done but must rather have a philosophy of preventing the disintegration before it occurs. It is for this reason that some members on this side of the House have referred to programs of youth sport and recreation, culture and the arts, coaching programs, the encouragement of sporting bodies to travel interstate. The Administrator referred to a proposal of the government having coaching programs initiated throughout the Northern Territory.

The arguments I receive when I visit places like Browns Mart, particularly for the compass series of lectures, the seminar, is that there is something of a conflict in young minds between traditional or competitive sport and what the child really wants to do by way of recreation. It has been argued with some force that we take children from far too young an age and force them - and we do - into competitive sport, so that by the time this child, who commences grade 1 in primary school probably at the age of five, reaches the age of 12 or 13, which is a critical age, he is so fed up with people telling him he has to try hard, he has to train, he has to compete, he has to fight for everything he is going to get out of recreation, that it no longer becomes recreation. So what we must do, Mr Speaker, in the interests of our young people in the Northern Territory is find alternatives in competitive sport where alternatives are desired.

Not only does this apply, of course, in the urban communities; it applies equally in the rural communities, in the outback, on remote locations, on Aboriginal settlements. We must try to assist the communities to overcome the difficulties they have with their children. We, on this side of the House, travel extensively - despite what the honourable member for MacDonnell might indicate - around Aboriginal communities with various proposals which they may or may not be willing to accept.

One of those proposals, Mr Speaker, is local government on these communities in the Territory context and I might hasten to point out that the legislation which I will be introducing tomorrow in this place is not designed for Aboriginal communities at all. They may participate in it - and the operative word is "may" - in the same manner as less populous European or non-Aboriginal communities throughout the Northern Territory. Between us, the Chief Minister and myself have visited 12 communities with this program to date. The Chief Minister has written to just about every major community in the Northern Territory outlining this proposal.

We have heard from the honourable member for MacDonnell the word "impose". Mr Speaker, let me assure the House, the public in general and the Aboriginal communities in particular that that sort of destructive distortion - indeed, destructive and mischievous distortion - is not the attitude of this side of the House at all. It is an offer we will lay before the people in all communities in the Northern Territory - a proposal, a sequence of events which they may seek of their own will to follow. There will be no compulsion whatsoever. They may continue in the present form of incorporation, either federally or as we would prefer it, but not be compelled through the Associations Incorporation Act of the Northern Territory. They may elect to become part of this nation's system of local government through the Local Government Association. Unlike the federal parliament, we are not bringing in a separate law but combining the law which applies to municipal incorporations and town councils right throughout this nation - a unified piece of law for all people. Let us make it quite clear: we are not imposing anything; and we have been consulting.

I might point out, Mr Speaker - while the address in reply is not perhaps the place to do it - that while I was at Papunya and discussing this very proposal with the community, which is very receptive to it and very keen to know more about it, very keen to talk further with us, while I would have spent perhaps half of my time talking about this particular issue, I spent the other half of the time being asked to make excuses for the honourable member for MacDonnell for his gross desertion of his electorate. And he tell us he spends all his time travelling around his electorate, and being so pious and sanctimonious and seeking the views of people. The view of the people, Mr Speaker, when I was there, was that they had not seen him and they wanted to get rid of him - and that came from the community, 140 or 150 of them, sitting in front of me.

Mr Speaker, he refers to confusion, to concern among the communities. That, of course, occurs when people like he and his ilk go charging blithely around the Northern Territory, concocting falsehoods in the manner in which he has been, suggesting that we are imposing anything. An officer of the Central Australian Aboriginal Legal Aid, a guest of mine on these visits to these communities, a guest of my department on our aircraft, turns around and makes statements both to Aboriginal Affairs and to the communities after we have delivered him safe and sound at home that, in fact the whole proposal is that, unless they accept local government, there will be no money given to them whatsoever. Mr Speaker, if the word "lie" was not inappropriate, I would use it. That is just another way around it.

The Alice Springs region at the moment is a source of great encouragement to myself as a resident for only ten years. The work of the Alice Springs town council needs recognition in this place for its efforts. Quite frankly, they have the place looking a picture and it is getting better every day. The work program they have developed in conjunction with the Department of Aboriginal Affairs for Aboriginal industrial trainees is an outstanding success. We are seeing grotty old footpaths turned into fine concrete footpaths. We have seen a street which would not have seen one more wet season without completely disintegrating turned into something of which the entire Alice Springs community can be proud.

I might make one tiny criticism and this reflects a criticism which tourists have given me. After all, with the depressed state of other industries, they are our bread and butter. I refer to the menagerie of signs. This is a criticism that is well meant. There must be some way the council can get together with its engineers to rationalise the use of signs in that region. I am quite sure the honourable member for MacDonnell will have no hesitation in agreeing with that.

Other than that, as I indicated in the address in reply debate last year, Alice Springs has been well served by governments of all colours, particularly in public works and public buildings. It will continue to be served, of course, by this government. It is rather a difficult task to identify the capital works that are necessary now in Alice Springs. We are well off for schools. With the opening of the new Sadadene High School, Alice Springs will have no difficulty in placing its secondary students during the foreseeable future. What we must ensure is that the quality of education matches the quality of buildings. We are well served in primary schools; we are well served in a magnificent hospital; we are well served in parks and gardens, in sporting and recreational facilities with perhaps the exception of a performing arts centre.

Mr Everingham: I would not mind going back to live there if that is true.

Mr ROBERTSON: I would always welcome the honourable Chief Minister back to live in Alice Springs. It would be good to see him in the best place in the Northern Territory again. He spent many years there and indeed was active in the first town council of Alice Springs.

In respect of Alice Springs - and I take my ministerial hat off here - we now have to identify those areas which need further development. I think there are two areas that we can look at. One is - to pick up pork-barrel argument used by the honourable member for Nhulunbuy - that we should be building a great sporting complex for winter training in Nhulunbuy. That is a fine idea. However, I would suggest that Alice Springs is probably more appropriate and I will be putting a certain amount of pressure on my cabinet colleagues to see that that is done. I think baseball would probably be the most logical start, and not because I used to play it. Actually I would say that, if there is any sport now that I would be disinclined to encourage, it would be baseball because I so resent not being able to play it any more; I am far too old.

However, there has been a national demand for some time for a winter training area for baseball. There is a demand right throughout the Northern Territory from that particular sport for the establishment of a Territory centre for it.

I have heard arguments that Darwin could be used for the same purpose with Australian rules football. It does require quite a bit of capital expenditure. I am quite sure the honourable member for Casuarina would forcefully argue for a major sporting complex for rugby union. Certainly, such a nucleus does exist out at Richardson Park. What we have to do is to identify what roles Northern Territory centres can play in the promotion of national sport as well as sport within the Territory itself.

The last point I would like to touch on, in case there is some misconception among my colleagues and to pick up a couple of points from the honourable member for Nightcliff, is the matter of loyalty to Her Majesty the Queen. His view of loyalty was fairly well expressed by the honourable member for Victoria River. He clearly and irrefutably outlined his loyalty as he saw it and I am quite sure we could all do that. I would just like to express the attitude that one does not necessarily have to actively support or even actively believe in a system of monarchy to be loyal to the Queen. The fact of the matter is that Her Majesty the Queen is the titular head under the Constitution of the Commonwealth of Australia. It is my belief that, as long as that Constitution stands, we are all morally and legally bound to be loyal to Her Majesty.

That does not in my view mean that a person cannot, by rational debate, seek a change in the Constitution of this country. I think that is perfectly proper, perfectly reasonable. It does not mean, of course, riotous behaviour; it does not mean denigrating the Crown or the Australian flag which bears the Union Jack which is the British national flag. It does not mean that at all. At no time will you ever hear me accuse anyone of being disloyal purely because that person argues in all conscience for change. I do not think that that is what it is all about at all. I think it is perfectly reasonable for people to argue for change if that is their wish or their belief.

But while the Constitution of this Commonwealth recognises the Queen as its head, then due courtesy should be paid to the Queen, to the monarchy and to that system. I suppose it can be very validly argued that you can maintain a Westminster system of democracy without a monarchy. I doubt really that the Westminster system would have the same emphasis, the same feeling for people unless the monarchy was at its head. If the system of the Queen or a king presiding over a Commonwealth country has any single effect, it is the effect of stability. I do not know and I do not think historians know of any system better serving stability than the system of monarchy which we have. Mr Speaker, I would like to pledge my loyalty to Australia and, as such, to the Queen.

Mr EVERINGHAM (Chief Minister): Mr Speaker, in rising briefly to close the address in reply debate, may I say that I thank all honourable members for their comments on the government's policy, as outlined by His Honour the Administrator and the suggestions various members have made for perhaps improvements in the objectives that the government will seek to attain.

I only wish to comment briefly on one point that was raised specifically in the debate and that is the matter of local government for Aboriginal and remote communities. I thought I had outlined the government's views on this fairly clearly at one stage last week but it does not seem that what I said sunk into the consciousness of various people. The position is that the government will be introducing, as my colleague, the Minister for Community Development said, legislation which will make it possible for smaller communities, not necessarily Aboriginal communities - and this has already been pointed out - to seek to attain local government status. There will be absolutely no compulsion on any of these communities to take up local government status. It will be a matter for the communities to decide for themselves.

At the present time many of those communities are seeking to attain self-management under the type of council that they can set up by incorporating themselves as a charitable organisation, virtually, under the Associations Incorporation Ordinance. To me, this is an entirely unsuitable vehicle. This government seeks merely to provide legislative machinery whereby these communities can, if they are interested, set themselves up as properly constituted local government bodies with some hope, by establishing their own bylaws, of enforcing the will of the majority of the community reflected through the council on the community.

I would hope that there will not be any further to do about any compulsion on any of these communities to take up local government status. I cannot emphasise too strongly that it will be entirely up to the communities concerned. I doubt that the program will proceed very speedily because I would rather see a few communities try talking on this status and see how it works out with them. If it works out satisfactorily, well and good, but I believe that probably there will be need for a review of whatever we bring in here. But certainly, I will not be deterred from this by the innuendoes cast by some honourable members. I believe the only way we can assist the Aboriginal people of this Territory to aspire to self-management is by providing them with the vehicle to enable them to do so. As I said last week, the Commonwealth had all the time in the world to do this; they have not done it, but I believe this Assembly will recognise its responsibility in this regard.

Mr SPEAKER: Honourable members, the Chair would like to associate itself with the re-affirmation of loyalty to Her Gracious Majesty, Queen Elizabeth by honourable members.

Motion agreed to.

APPROPRIATION BILL (Serial 150)

Continued from 12 September 1978

Mr ISAACS (Opposition Leader): Mr Speaker, the budget of any government is a blueprint, not only of what the government itself intends to do but also of the leadership which the government is giving to the business community. It ought to set out, in clear and unmistakable terms, not just a program for the coming year but also the aspirations of the government over a bit longer period than that. It ought to indicate to business not just its short-term aims and expenditure but also the expenditure priorities of government for years to come.

When one looks at the budget speech given by the Treasurer and the Appropriation Bill which goes with the budget papers, and the various departmental allocations, one is left with the feeling that "plus ça change, plus c'est la même chose" and for my illiterate and uninformed friends opposite that means "the more it changes, the more everything stays the same". One could be mistaken, Mr Speaker, for saying that the budget papers and documents were drawn up by the very same department that has drawn up the same guidelines that have covered the Northern Territory for years past. There is not one initiative in this budget which indicates that this government has any sense of the requirements and priorities of the Northern Territory. Indeed, one's impression - certainly my impression - is that the government opposite does not have the capacity to handle the money which it has been given to allocate, that it does not say that the money from the Australian government is of any great significance or that the money, of itself, is a particularly good deal or not a good deal. It is simply a comment on the capacity and competence of the government of the Northern Territory.

Mr Speaker, I would just like to make one point as an illustration of that before I go on to say how I regard the budget, what I think it ought to have done and what sort of initiatives it should have taken, which would have given the people of the Northern Territory a feeling that, "yes, this government knows what it is talking about; it knows the needs and aspirations of the Territory". In the Treasurer's speech he mentioned an allocation to the Health Department of \$43m. The only problem is that in the Appropriation Bill it is \$33m, but the gentleman who wrote the speech for the Treasurer - I am sure he did not write it; he has shown us his incapacity to do that in the past...

Mr Dondas: A typographical error.

Mr ISAACS: Well, it is a bit more than that. I thank the honourable member for Casuarina for his assistance but, of course, if you tot up the figures in the Treasurer's speech, if it was a typographical error, then there would be an excess of \$10m in the totals in that speech. But there is not; the figures add up exactly. So whoever it was who wrote the speech for the honourable Treasurer did not have a clue what he was talking about because he compounded that error by talking about the residue of \$240-odd million for the rest of government services. In fact, the figure is \$250-odd million. I just give that as an illustration of the incompetence of the members opposite.

I do want to applaud, if I may, the determination of the government to proceed with the wharf. I make that point very quickly: It is about the only thing they have done which I do applaud. I applaud it wholeheartedly but, having said that, I want to get down to some constructive criticism of this budget and the philosophy behind it.

As I said at the beginning, Mr Speaker, the budget ought to indicate the direction of government in its program not just over the coming year but for years ahead. It ought to give a lead to business as to just where the Territory is heading, where it should be investing and in what industries it should be investing. It should give a rolling plan of what it proposes to do in the building industry, in road works, construction - as I say, not just on an industry basis but on a geographical basis as well - to know what townships are going to feel the effect of an injection of government funds, so that business can attune itself to what is going on. Business needs to know the sort of priorities that the government has so it can gear itself up for that. There is nothing in this budget which gives people any indication. Indeed, the way the Treasurer jiggles around with figures, with this magnificent system of executive orders, the budget frankly means nothing. We have seen him jiggle them around like a performer in a circus, so that the allocations which appear in the budget paper bear absolutely no relationship to the actual expenditure at the end of the year. All one has to do is look to the Auditor-General's report tabled in the federal parliament last week to know that that is the case.

Business does look for that lead from the government; I am afraid it will look in vain in this particular budget. It looks for competence in management from the government; it wants to feel that, having made the budget, the government is going to stick to that program and is going to stick to it efficiently. Let me remind the people of the Northern Territory what an independent commentator has said on this government's handling of its allocation last year. I refer to that gentleman, the Auditor-General, in his comments on page 295 of the report brought down in the federal parliament last Wednesday. He refers to this particular matter that I described, Mr Speaker: the Treasurer's juggling tricks between subdivisions and divisions. He instances expenditures which exceeded the amended allocations given by executive orders by the Treasurer - very small, insignificant amounts: division 13.1.01 of the 1977-78 allocation - \$549; division 16.2.01 - \$325; division 26.1.01 - \$298; division 31.2.01 - \$100; division 35.2.02 - \$3. Not significant amounts at all. But let me quote the Auditor-General's report, page 295:

In monetary terms these amounts are relatively insignificant but in principle they represent a serious breakdown of overall financial control.

Thus sayeth the Auditor-General of Australia.

The people of the Northern Territory want to look to the budget and documents with some confidence that the government knows what it is doing. I do not think it stretches the statements of the Auditor-General too much to say that he does not have a great deal of confidence in the competence of this government. Indeed, as I say, when one looks at the budget statements and the figures supplied therein, it is very difficult to understand just where this government is heading - especially given the Treasurer's propensity to transfer funds from division to division and from subdivision to subdivision.

I might add just one point on this: that I believe the Assembly requires a far better system of scrutiny in relation to the transfer of allocations. Perhaps the Treasurer might care to consider a parliamentary committee similar to the committee established in the federal parliament, the Public Accounts Committee, to somehow or other supervise or at least oversee the various transfers which do occur. Quite honestly, when one looks at this budget and sees the amounts allocated, one can have no confidence that at the end of the year the amounts actually spent are going to bear any relationship whatever to the figures in the budget. That must give the business community or anybody in the Northern Territory some doubts as to just where this government is heading. The Treasurer made great play of the fact that there were to be no tax increases in this budget. He certainly made no mention of them. Of course, it was a bit of a shame for his overall argument that, in the week before he presented his budget, the business community received their electricity accounts and, in many cases, they were double those of the previous quarter. To convince them that there were no increases in taxation or government revenue-raising efforts would be a somewhat difficult task.

I believe the government is being just a little mischievous in the way it has approached that particular subject. Certainly, we saw all the taxes and charges increased in the sittings prior to 1 July. I believe it is a good practice, and this is followed by the Australian government, to notify at budget time all the charges that the government intends to raise in the ensuing year. It gives business an idea of what sort of costs it can anticipate even if the costs are not to be brought in immediately. It does give business a chance to modify and assess its own operations in light of known charges. In this light, I think the government ought to be honest. I would be delighted to hear from the Minister for Transport and Works or the Treasurer himself in reply on what is intended in relation to electricity charges, given the recent increase in fuel price. I am not a betting man but I suggest that, if people want to take odds on an increase in electricity charges from 1 January next year, they had better whack their money on it. It is my betting that this is what we will see. It is important that, when governments present their budgets, they present not just the goodies but also their total economic package. The business community and consumers want to know just what they are in for in the ensuing year.

When one considers a budget given by a government or given by anyone for that matter, it is always useful to be able to compare it with last year's expenditure. What seemed to be a difficult task for this government, proved to be a relatively easy task for the Auditor-General. Where this government was unable to provide comparisons for last year, magically the Auditor-General was able to supply those very comparisons. If you look at pages 291 to 294 of the Auditor-General's report, you will notice that the 1977-78 figures are there. Obviously, he cannot tell us what the 1978-79 figures are, but he can tell us what the 1977-78 figures are. This government cannot or did not. It is my opinion that they refused to do so simply because they knew that, if they were

to show a comparison, their allocations this year would not come out very well at all. I will deal with that in specific terms.

It is all very well for the Minister for Community Development to say, "Stick around and I'll show you". I am quite certain that he can show me areas where there have been significant increases but I could show him a few areas where there are some significant decreases. I simply point to the fact that, in comparing this budget with what happened to the Territory last year, it is almost impossible to make comparisons because of the paucity of figures supplied by the government. If the Auditor-General could do it, why in the Lord's name couldn't this government do it?

The layout of the various departmental budget papers left a great deal to be desired in so far as uniformity is concerned. One of the features of the government's financial package of legislation introduced towards the end of the last financial year was the emphasis placed by the Treasurer on the fact that he, as Treasurer, and his department could have their finger on the pulse of expenditure in all departments and that there would be an uniformity in the financial system. That certainly has not applied in the present budget papers. There seems to be no overall plan as to how the documents should be made out. Some lay them out in one way; some put them in another way. The department which really showed it knew what it was doing and was able to put out a very good document was the Health Department. I do not propose to go into that because the member for Fannie Bay will apply her mind to that particular area. However, there seems to be no uniformity of presentation. Nobody seems to have told the departments the way the papers were to be presented.

Commentators on the Australian budget have said the figures are "rubbery". Certainly, that would apply in this case as well. There are some really strange figures in this budget. Close examination shows that the figures bear no relationship to what is really going to happen. Perhaps I might just comment on the question of public service salaries as an indication of where the figures are at best "rubbery" - probably "elastic" is the best word you could use for it. In my calculations, the public service wages bill has been adjusted for increases in the cost of living index and CPI movements of somewhere between 3.5% and 4%. It is my understanding of the Treasurer's speech in the federal parliament that the likely increase in average weekly earnings next year is something of the order of 7.5%. There seems to be an underestimation in this budget of some 3.5% to 4%, probably in the area of \$2.5m to \$3m. On the question of the authenticity of the figures supplied in the budget, frankly I just do not think the figures are believable.

In some areas where you are able to make comparisons, the comparisons are not very good at all. It is very easy for the Treasurer to pick out some of those where there have been dramatic increases, and I do not disparage those dramatic increases, but it is important to find out where those increases are, why they are and where the increases are not so dramatic - in fact, where there are decreases.

One of the distressing features of the increases is in relation to the increased number of people employed directly by the Northern Territory Public Service. That in itself is not a bad thing and, before the Chief Minister gets out his old book which talks about the Tory opposition, let me qualify what I mean by that. Nobody on this side of the House will object to a government employing its own workforce. The concept on this side of the House of day labour is well known. But it seems to us, on the basis of an analysis of who we are going to employ within the public service, that the bulk of the increase is going to be in the upper echelon area. That is, we are going to be increasing the public service with more first and second division people. In my view, that is not a good thing. Indeed, it must be quite frustrating to business to see this government, which puts itself forward as a so-called free enterprise government, stacking its own public service with senior people,

senior public servants who are not producing any more of a service. It must be very frustrating for them, indeed, to see large amounts of money being expended in this way.

In the capital works area which, of course, is an important area of government involvement and government stimulus to industry and government leadership for industry, there is a very sad tale to tell. The Treasurer covered the position up somewhat. Let me make it a bit more open and see what the figures do reveal. It is very difficult to find from the budget papers, if I could just make this point, how much was spent last year on capital works programs compared to this year. But these figures are certainly factual; they come from the Treasurer himself.

Last year in new projects there were \$105m and this year \$73m. It is quite correct, as the Treasurer himself says, that a large amount of the capital works program for last year was taken up with DRC allocations. So obviously, you cannot count all that. The Treasurer says in his speech that, excluding the DRC, the capital expenditure for this year is on a line ball with last year. Let us examine the truth of that. Although it is true that some \$56m was spent by the DRC for 1977-78, it is also true that only \$20.5m of that was for cyclone restoration work - the balance was for new work within the 40-kilometre radius of the post office. Given that figure, the position is that in 1977-78 the figure, including the amount of \$36m from the DRC, amounts to \$84.5m. The figure for 1978-79 on the Treasurer's own statement is \$73m. It seems to us that there is a reduction in actual terms of \$11.5m. In real terms - that is, taking into account inflation - there is a reduction of \$18.1m or 21.4%. It seems to me that if that is what has happened, then this government has its priorities completely back to front.

It seems that in compiling this budget we are faced with ten government departments and a host of statutory authorities each pursuing its own pet schemes, each building up its own empire with no real direction given by the political masters. It seems to me that the public service has already taken over this government. The government does not understand just where the Territory ought to go and they are certainly not giving a lead to anybody in the private sector or anywhere else. There seems to be no individual Territory stamp on this budget.

As I said last week, at first blush in hearing the budget it seemed to be a jiggle of figures, with nobody able to work out just where we were going. I felt somewhat sorry for the honourable Treasurer's comrades who were sitting to my right in the Speaker's gallery and in the public gallery, who waited with baited breath and listened to the Treasurer give his budget for almost an hour. I watched them as they left the Chamber, somewhat miffed as to just what had gone on or where it all was. As I say, "plus ça change, plus c'est la même chose".

But I think it is important to determine what the government ought to have done, where it could have taken the initiative as a Territory government. The Chief Minister is so fond of saying that he is in tune with the views of Territorians; he is a Territorian, so he knows what is good for Territorians. In my view the government had an ideal opportunity to take the bit between its teeth and to allocate the money in the interests of Territorians - not just in the interests of the various empires of the public service. I am sure members will recall last year the debates surrounding the first-home buyers in the Territory, a \$15,000 loan from the government. We all knew that the ACT offered a scheme providing \$20,000. Reluctantly, the Minister for the Northern Territory at the time increased ours from \$15,000 to \$20,000. We all know that that is unrealistic for first-home buyers in the Northern Territory. Why didn't this government take the bit between its teeth and increase it to a realistic figure of, say, \$30,000? Why didn't it do that? Because it does not have a clue about the needs of the Northern Territory, that is why.

This government had a great chance to look at the problems and the plight of pensioners in the Northern Territory and to really do something for them. It could have allocated some money to assist pensioners in a real way. I am not suggesting that it has sufficient money in its hands to introduce immediately a district allowance scheme for the couple of thousand-odd pensioners who live in the Northern Territory. But I do say this government ought to have attended to that particular problem of pensioners and allocated money in this budget for it, to show the people that they know the problems of the Northern Territory and are prepared to do something about them.

On Thursday, I discussed the question of the Northern Territory insurance office. I have had nothing but praise about the Labor Party's proposal to establish a Northern Territory insurance office. What is the government doing about the extraordinary high cost of third party insurance and the high cost of motor accidents? This government could have done something for the Northern Territory. It could have established in this budget the framework for a Northern Territory insurance office and allocated its money to go ahead and bring down the cost to the people of the Northern Territory, not just in cash terms but also in terms of lives. It did nothing.

The government could have used the money it had available to it. It is throwing it around like drunken sailors anyway. It could have used the money in a rational and sensible way to alleviate the problems of the Northern Territory. This government pays lip service to youth unemployment. Every now and again the words filter off the lips of either the Treasurer or the Chief Minister, and occasionally from the Minister for Community Development. But this government could have attacked the problem of apprenticeships in a real and meaningful way for employers. I applaud the moves to streamline the apprenticeship system. I have always felt in the time I have been here that it is an archaic system and it needs urgent overhaul. We will be waiting with anticipation to see what they do with that. But simply overhauling the apprenticeship system is not going to assure young people of jobs.

In New South Wales the state government uses its powers of allocation of money to give incentives to employers by introducing payroll tax concessions as a means of giving assistance to industry. When we debated the Payroll Tax Bill introduced into the Assembly towards the end of last financial year, I made the same comment. This government could have done something positive for the employment of apprentices in the Northern Territory and offered to employers of apprentices payroll tax exemptions for those apprentices. We hear nothing from the government in relation to that. I do not know whether they say it is not a problem. I am sure honourable members opposite do believe it is. They just do not have the imagination or the initiative to implement the appropriate policies for it.

For many years now people have recognised the problems of energy and the way the people of the Northern Territory use their energy resources, that government offices and so on use a tremendous amount of electricity for air-conditioning. We know the demands this places on our power station. For many years now people have talked about solar energy research and development. This government could have made a start on that. It could have set aside funds to investigate the use of solar energy. I am sure I do not have to go through all the arguments about the ideal position the Northern Territory has in relation to the tapping of solar energy. Everybody knows it. I think I even recall reading a press release from the Chief Minister some eight or nine months ago which showed he endorsed the use of the Northern Territory as some kind of laboratory for solar energy use. This government could have done something about it. It has chosen not to.

If I might just throw in another initiative which I believe the government could have taken - and perhaps incur the wrath of members opposite for a bit of pork-barrelling - it could have built an overhead footbridge in my electorate,

at the Rapid Creek shopping centre. I know the Minister for Transport and Works has said that he likes the idea. He wants to do something about it. The government could have done something about it. They could have allocated some money in this budget.

Mr Speaker, there are initiatives which the government could have taken and in my view should have taken which are geared to the needs of the Northern Territory, which would show that this government knows the needs of the Territory and is prepared to do something about them. My own view is that this government already - it is only 2½ months old - shows signs of being a tired and unimaginative government, a government unfit to govern because it does not understand the needs of the Northern Territory.

Mr EVERINGHAM (Chief Minister): Mr Speaker, I did expect to hear some substance of criticism of this budget from the Leader of the Opposition but he has had to seize on nit-picking by referring, for instance, to an arithmetical error in a speech to bolster this argument against the budget. He makes elitist French quotations; a man who must rely on quotations, as the Leader of the Opposition frequently does, has no words of his own.

He apparently opposes the concept of fiscal flexibility because he talks about the transfer of allocations within the overall allocation. Does he want the flexibility of local financial control where the Treasurer reports any changes that he makes within the various divisions to this Assembly and where the Leader of the Opposition has the opportunity to criticise any of these variations, as he so frequently does in his superior, supercilious manner? Or does he want the stultification of Canberra inflexibility in relation to our finance here?

He makes criticisms, Mr Speaker, of form and style about the budget, not of substance. He criticises the number of public servants being employed in addition to the present establishment and yet we have heard so many criticisms from the opposition in this House of the staff ceilings of the public service when it was under the administration of the Commonwealth. Now that we are bringing the public service up somewhere near to its true establishment and providing the positions for people to make executive decisions to formulate policy, to plan for the future of the Northern Territory, we are to be criticised for that. We are to be criticised, Mr Speaker, because we are attempting to formulate policy in Darwin where it was never formulated before.

I regret to say that I do not think whatever we do we will ever please a supercilious sneerer such as the Leader of the Opposition. He has not told us he believes the money should be allocated, except for a solar research institute and perhaps to increase the housing loans and to provide a footbridge. But he said we cannot do it the right way. He has told us about a few minor areas where the sum total of an allocation would not exceed half a million dollars but he has not told us how we should better allocate the funds that we propose to allocate under this budget. He has criticised us for not providing funds for pensioners. Yet this year the Northern Territory government has provided \$208,000 for pensioner subsidies. Last year the Department of the Northern Territory, I understand, provided \$7,000. That is an increase of \$201,000 in 12 months, Mr Speaker, and I am quite prepared to make that comparison.

We listened to the Leader of the Opposition tell us that under this budget we should have set up a government insurance office. That is how far the knowledge of the Leader of the Opposition extends. When the Territory government moves to establish a government insurance office, if it moves to establish a government insurance office, it will be after close financial investigation to see that such an insurance office will not be a major financial drag on the taxpayers of the Northern Territory for whom the Leader of the Opposition pretends such a great concern. We will not rush in so blindly as he did and say a government insurance office will solve all our problems because I know, from my

personal experience, that the problem with third party is the fact that the sky is the limit in relation to damages claims. This government will look at the whole third party scheme; it will look at the general insurance situation and, if we decide that the Territory can best be served by the establishment of a government insurance office, then we will so establish it. But at the present time it seems to me, Mr Speaker, that we would be better off - and we are - looking at providing a scheme of compulsory insurance for motorists that can be paid for by them at prices they can afford.

The Territory's economic growth can only be assured if we move to boost its major or its potentially large industries, and I think those industries come under the categories of tourism, mining, fishing and primary industry generally. In all those areas there have been substantially higher allocations this year than in any previous year. To back up these industries we are providing a great amount of money for roadworks and bridgeworks so that these people engaged in industries such as tourism and mining will not suffer the inconvenience of the seasons of the Territory. We are establishing a land-backed wharf, as you know, Mr Speaker. Funds have been allocated for that and the Leader of the Opposition was kind enough to say a good word about it. Only by boosting these industries can employment opportunities in private enterprise be increased in the Territory. And when these industries grow, so will employment opportunities in the government sector.

I am very concerned about employment opportunities in the Territory and I am particularly concerned - and it is a concern that is apparently shared with me by the honourable member for Victoria River - about employment opportunities in Aboriginal communities. But there are moves being made elsewhere that will not assist Aboriginal people to achieve the sort of employment opportunities that I would wish for them and that I am sure all honourable members would wish for them.

The younger people who have secured a good education but who are in many cases left to their own devices to seek suitable employment just will not be helped by a certain case that is going on before the Conciliation and Arbitration Commission at the moment. It is essential in creating employment opportunities for these people that their basic conditions of employment do not exceed those that currently apply to the general workforce and, as I said, there are actions being taken elsewhere, I understand, by the Central Australian Aboriginal Congress which will seriously jeopardise employment opportunities for Aboriginal people if the action proposed succeeds and is universally adopted.

I would like to let you and honourable members know, Mr Speaker, that this case that is presently going on before the Conciliation and Arbitration Commission has reached a stage where apparently the Miscellaneous Workers Union and the congress have reached agreement on certain conditions of employment which exceed the standards currently applying not only in the public sector but also in the private sector throughout Australia. Surprisingly enough, these conditions have been included at the request of the Central Australia Aboriginal Congress. In particular, the agreement reached between the parties contains provisions relating to the recognition of National Aboriginal Day as a public holiday and the granting of up to one week's special leave with pay and a further three weeks' leave without pay to enable Aboriginal employees to attend tribal ceremonies. In respect of the leave to attend tribal ceremonies, there is no restriction currently provided for in the proposed award as to how many times such leave can be taken in any one year.

My government is concerned about the employment situation of Aboriginals in the Territory and, for this reason, we see the introduction of these conditions in the current climate as a backward step in the creation of employment opportunities for Aboriginals. Quite frankly, if an attempt was made to extend

these types of conditions into other awards in the Territory, which I understand may already be the case, unemployment among Aborigines will not improve but can only increase.

I am very proud to speak in support of the budget that was brought down by my colleague, the Treasurer. It is a good budget. It does not give everybody everything they would like, but no budget can do that. It gives the Territory direction; it points up our major industries; it shows us where we should be going and we will head in that direction. What it does do is illustrate that a responsible, locally-elected government can negotiate a better deal for the Territory than the crumbs-off-the-table deal that we are so used to receiving in the past. It also shows that, having received as much money as we were able to negotiate, the local executive has allocated funds in such a way that the citizens of the Northern Territory will receive the best possible value for money with priorities in accord with local needs.

On the surface, a budget is about money - what will be received and how it will be spent. That is something of an illusion though, Mr Speaker, because a budget is really a social document. It relates to the economy of the Territory the needs, the hopes and aspirations of its people and the philosophies and priorities of the government. People's lives can be affected by the budget and this is a heavy burden on the shoulders of any government. Australia is going through a period of serious economic adjustment. The control of the national economy is in the hands of our federal colleagues but the effects are well and truly felt by the government and people of the Territory. Even though we have been shielded here from some of the worst austerities, we are not completely protected from the economic recession that is occurring in Australia. I do not believe that Australia will recover from its present economic problems until the rate of productivity increases. In simple terms, we must produce more for a given input of men, material and money than we are now doing. It is only when we face up to this fact and do something about it, that we can expect the economy to improve. For too long, unfortunately, salaries and other costs have increased proportionately more than our productivity and this had left us with inflation and a lack of confidence in the economy.

Mr Speaker, I know you share my concern about tariff barriers. There is a general move throughout the world to break down tariff barriers and to allow imports and exports to flow more freely between countries. I am disturbed that the reverse is occurring in Australia and I deliberately raise my voice here to oppose what is going on in this country. We are locking out the exports of countries which desperately need our markets. In retaliation, we see our exports, mainly our primary products but also our mineral products, being penalised in their access to overseas markets. This is one of the causes of our present economic problem. In the Territory our vast and important cattle industry is reduced to its knees. This is a disastrous and disgraceful waste of resources and I hope that many city people now appreciate the problem and are aware of the plight of the pastoralist and the farmer.

There is a need for a close examination of Australian industry. There is a clear case for the restructuring of industry and for the lowering of tariff barriers so that cheaper goods can flow into Australia in selected cases. There must also be support by government for the industries in which Australia is efficient. International planning is needed to help Australian and other primary producers to obtain access at fair prices to the markets of the developed countries. I call on the Commonwealth government to cooperate to find markets for Territory producers and to allow the products of Southeast Asia to find a greater market in our country. In so doing, I also call on the Commonwealth to involve the states and particularly the Northern Territory as full partners in this task.

I was impressed recently to hear the remarks of the former Governor of South Australia, Sir Mark Oliphant, the distinguished nuclear physicist,

humanitarian and distinguished Australian. His belief is that Australia is going bankrupt. He says that Australians are wanting more and more of things that they cannot afford and have been depending totally on exports to support an extravagant way of life. When our exports can no longer support our extravagance, then our economy will be in real trouble. I like our way of life and I want to see it continue and improve but we must live within our means. Within the limitations of my government's powers, this budget gives prominence to maintaining and improving our way of life in the Northern Territory.

Mrs O'NEIL (Fannie Bay): In speaking in this budget debate today. I particularly want to do something which I feel I must do as the member for Fannie Bay and that is to examine the allocation for roadworks in the Darwin area. There are two particular appropriations. In the civil works program, budget paper No. 4, there is the construction of the Coconut Grove-Ludmilla-Fannie Bay connector for which a sum of \$1,487,500 is allocated. The other appropriation which must be seen in conjunction with this is in the Department of Community Development's budget paper No. 3: local government and community services - construction of roads, footpaths and drainage for local government authority, which allows for a payment of \$1,202,000 to the Corporation of the City of Darwin this year for the reconstruction of East Point Road, Gardens Road and McMinn Street West. So you can see that these are particularly significant to my electorate and I feel I must look at them closely.

The proposal to build a road in this area linking Nightcliff to Fannie Bay is not a new one. It is certainly not a new initiative. I will review briefly the history of similar proposals in Darwin in the past. The idea was first introduced in 1972. At that time the Commonwealth government department responsible said in its paper that the road was necessary because Darwin had been growing at an extremely rapid rate. This growth was expected to continue and because of the locational pattern high urban arterial traffic flow would be created between the northern suburbs and the city. They said a second major arterial link was needed for that flow and they proposed what was known as the Palmerston arterial freeway. The statistics they were looking at at the time were quite different from the ones we know exist today. When they proposed that second road, they were looking at a population for the greater Darwin area - and members will realise that greater Darwin in those days was a considerably smaller area than greater Darwin today - of 68,800 in 1977. They were looking at a growth rate in the early 1970s of over 11%.

That was the initial justification for the introduction of the proposal but it received many complaints and objections. Two public hearings were held by the Public Works Committee of the federal parliament and substantial objections were voiced by many eminent people as well as by local citizens. The city council, whose mayor at that time was Alderman Brennan, spoke particularly against the proposal to take the traffic up through the gardens area which is very beautiful. Alderman Stack and Mr Tom Lawler spoke before the committee opposing the proposal for this road. The Royal Australian Institute of Architects and many others also gave evidence.

Then, of course, we had the cyclone and we all breathed a sigh of relief. We thought that we would be free of that problem for a while. Lo and behold, the plans cropped up again in the second planning proposal of the DRC in March 1975. Once again, this brought objections from the Fannie Bay Parap Residents Action Group and other people. My predecessor in this House, Mr Grant Tambling, said in his submission to the DRC opposing the building of this road: "The re-introduction of any form of arterial road resembling a route of the former Palmerston Freeway with links to Ludmilla, Nightcliff or the northern suburbs is absolutely rejected. It is unnecessary and certainly harmful to the interests of Fannie Bay. Any major road constructed in this area will automatically create immense social problems by dislocating part of the community - residential and commercial - and sever the citizens from adjoining recreation and foreshore areas". I applaud those sentiments and I believe he was acting in the

interests of his constituents when he wrote them. Fortunately, like many other DRC plans, that one was laid to rest and we breathed yet another sigh of relief.

However, there were powerful proponents of this plan within the public service and it cropped up again in the DRC in 1977. At that stage it was called something different. It was a rural standard road. They were somehow going to be able to construct it for about \$1m and it was proposed to carry up to 1,200 cars per hour. In Fannie Bay we called it the "Palmerston Cheapway". It was opposed by the residents of the Fannie Bay area and by the city council once again. It was supported by CLP members who thought they might get a few votes out of it in the northern suburbs but, being badly planned and badly designed, it did not get off the ground either.

Now it is back again with us. It is certainly a very hard thing to kill but we will keep trying. We wonder why we need this road now. When it was originally proposed, the planners were looking at a much larger Darwin and a Darwin that was growing very much faster. They were projecting 68,000 in Darwin in 1977 and a growth rate of around 11%. In fact, what we have according to the 1976 census is 45,262 people in Darwin and I am told that the recognised growth rate which was being used by the Department of the Northern Territory and accepted by the Bureau of Statistics as being reasonably accurate is 3½% - certainly not a very large figure. We wonder why we need this road which was first proposed when the town was growing very fast indeed.

It seems a bit like a sledge hammer to crack a nut, doesn't it? There are problems for various people with regard to traffic flow, particularly in the Ludmilla area. People would be foolish to deny it; I certainly would not. The residents of Ludmilla north have a problem getting onto Bagot Road. The residents of Wells Street and those in the part of my electorate adjacent to Wells Street, in the lower end of Playford Street and adjacent streets, have a problem with too many cars using Wells Street for which it clearly is not designed. The people who use Bagot Road have a problem basically because they do not like using it, because it is not a very nice road to use.

I am not a traffic engineer so I can only throw up a few ideas and small solutions to small problems which I think should be looked at by traffic engineers. I do not know whether they have. A year or so ago, one of the residents of the Wells Street area suggested the the Hudson Fysh Avenue entrance to Bagot Road should be opened and the Wells Street entrance closed and that would solve the problem of people using Wells Street as a freeway. I was in Tasmania last Christmas. In Launceston particularly they are using a system which is constantly used by traffic engineers to stop people using unsuitable roads for through traffic. They reverse the direction halfway through. It is very confusing if you are a tourist happily driving along a one-way street and suddenly it changes direction; you have to turn left or right. Certainly, it stops people using it as a through road when it is not designed for that. If the Wells Street direction was reversed in the centre section, people would be so discouraged that they would stop using it and yet people would still have access to Richardson Park and the Scouts Club and the residents could still get to and from their homes. I do not know whether they are practical solutions but I believe they are the sort of things we should be looking at to solve small problems.

Bagot Road is not very popular either. However, I spoke last night at a social function to some newly arrived residents. I asked them where they were living and they said they were living in Wagaman, in the Chief Minister's electorate. Then they said quite spontaneously to me, not knowing I had an interest in this matter, "We do not know why everyone complains about living in the northern suburbs and driving along Bagot Road because, compared with the Parramatta Road, it is a dream".

Mr Tuxworth: It would want to be.

Mrs O'NEIL: And it would need to be, right. And then they suggested that one of the reasons that people dislike it so much is simply that it is aesthetically so disastrous, and certainly it is not a great pleasure to drive along. For a start I would like to see a few trees here and there or perhaps many trees along the road to make it more pleasant to drive along, at least in the short term.

So I question the need for this road. It certainly is not going to provide access to the northern suburbs. I can only say this with reservations because, obviously, I have not seen the plan yet. But it is called the "Coconut Grove-Ludmilla-Fannie Bay connector". I do not know how a connection - if indeed any - is going to be made with the northern suburbs and I suggest perhaps that it will not. But as I say, I say that with reservations. We can pre-suppose a certain route that it will take from things that have been said and things that have been done. It starts off in Coconut Grove, then proceeds presumably across Kulaluk - and we have seen advertisements in the paper encouraging those people to come and have a look at the plan. I received in the mail yesterday a statement which I would like to read into Hansard. It is entitled "Aborigines object to Fannie Bay connector road" and it reads as follows:

On March 30 this year the Minister for Aboriginal Affairs made an announcement that an area of vacant Crown land between Ludmilla and Nightcliff, known as Kulaluk, was to be returned to the Larrakia tribe. This was in part following the recommendations of the Interim Land Rights Commissioner, the late Mr Justice Ward. Since Mr Viner's statement the Larrakia have been consulted on a proposal to build a connector road between Nightcliff and Fannie Bay. The plans show the so-called road or freeway slices across Kulaluk. At a meeting with heads of departments in Darwin recently the Aborigines rejected the connector freeway, objecting that it would spoil the rural nature of the land, that it will alienate much of the land and that it would be a dangerous speedway to the people who use Kulaluk, as well as causing great environmental changes completely changing the nature of the area. Not satisfied with this firm rejection of the proposal, the NT government arranged an on-site inspection where they were told quite bluntly "as far as the Larrakia are concerned, there will be no road through Kulaluk". The Bagot people are also involved because the highway will have them surrounded on both sides by high-speed roads and, make no mistake, the Fannie Bay connector road is designed for high speeds, quite unlike the road planned a few years ago. The people are shocked to hear that \$1.4m has been allocated in the NT budget for this road because it shows that the consultations were deceitful, as this road had already been approved by the government, despite Mr Viner's statement.

So we start off with what seems to be a pretty major problem with this road because it is starting off where the people do not want it to start off. Even if the government is successful, which I doubt myself, in convincing the people of Kulaluk by offering them other services as the minister suggested the other day as consolation, there is going to be a land acquisition problem. It is going to cost more money. So the cost of this road is going to be considerably more than \$1.4m, plus the \$1.2m. There is also going to be the cost of the land acquisitions, if indeed it gets off the ground.

From there I suspect the road is going to career off across the swamps at Ludmilla and I also suspect, Mr Deputy Speaker, that it is going to be presented as a scenic drive, as an option to nasty, ugly Bagot Road. This is

how its predecessor roads have always been described. So it runs across the swamps - and swamps are important ecologically but most of us do not really like looking at them all that much. We then go past the old dump and past the stables at the racecourse - and the Minister for Transport and Works will know what the residents think of those stables at the racecourse. They are described to me as being dirty, ugly, smelly, old and generally disgraceful. Having negotiated that obstacle on the scenic road, you then go past the sewerage treatment plant. Then finally you wind up next to the architectural masterpiece, the Kurringal flats.

So having negotiated all that, if you are still brave enough to keep going - you have left beautiful Nightcliff, let us not forget - you do end up in beautiful Fannie Bay. East Point Road is delightful and the area is lovely; we all love it who live there and we are very happy to see it being used by other people. It is used quite a lot. Tourist buses meander along East Point Road and they take the tourists to see the famous sunset, and the local kids cross the road and go fishing off the rocks and the local residents and other people who choose can use the clubs down there. It is a delightful area. But now it is apparently going to be turned into a high-speed road. We are not going to be able to get across that beautiful East Point Road; we are going to have to risk life and limb crossing this major road which is going to be reconstructed. We are not very happy about that.

You then go past the Darwin High School...

Mr Robertson: Some people make this into an adjournment debate.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order!

Mrs O'NEIL: Well, unlike the Chief Minister I did not talk about the Conciliation and Arbitration Commission and I am not giving lectures to the federal government about how they can conduct overseas trade. I would have thought this was much more relevant. It is about allocations in the budget.

But I will talk about Darwin High School briefly. My colleague, the Opposition Leader, talked about an overhead bridge in Millner. We are certainly going to need one outside the Darwin High School if this road gets going because the school is going to be completely cut off.

Then presumably we go down Gardens Road and I hope the city council object on the same basis as they did before, as I think anybody who would suggest ruining any of those beautiful rainforests in an effort to build a road ought to have their heads chopped off. And where do we end up but in McMinn Street. Then the crunch comes, because we are back where we started. In order to avoid the very big problem which arises when the Stuart Highway traffic meets the Bagot Road traffic where it does - and there is a problem - we are going to have the same traffic meeting the Stuart Highway traffic a little further in, at the junction of Daly and McMinn Streets. So we do not seem to have solved many problems, having spent \$2.5m.

There are all sorts of disadvantages. There is a lack of initiative shown by the government in proposing a road, not a new road as we have seen but one that has been kicking around for six or eight years, at a time when all other large cities are saying, "We are not solving problems building freeways. All we are doing is taking more people in private cars into overcrowded cities and creating parking problems and noise pollution and air pollution and accidents and road maintenance problems and land acquisition problems and all sorts of problems of that nature". Of course, this argument is doubly strong when your city is on a peninsula. You cannot send them out on the other side into the harbour. We are apparently proposing to bring more and more private cars into this little peninsula of a town where there is nowhere for them to park.

I think one of the principal objections to this road is the fact that it does not do anything else. It is a road for private vehicles. There is, as we know, also in this budget the proposal to build a land-backed wharf and I am sure we are all very happy to see that. I wonder what sort of roads are going to service that wharf. I would much rather see the Frances Bay arterial road being built and the reason, of course, is not just that it is not going to affect my electorate - I would not deny that that is obviously a salient point and I am sure the member for Stuart Park would argue equally in the other direction...

Mr Perron: No way.

Mrs O'NEIL: ... but one of the great advantages of the Frances Bay arterial road is that it is not just bringing people into town in private cars; it would serve as an industrial road, linking the wharf - and the proposed new land-backed wharf particularly - with the industrial area at Winnellie. And it can, as we know - the proposal is there - be linked to the Bagot Road by an overpass. It is a more expensive proposal but I believe it is more justified because it has that industrial use. You can see a financial return from what you are doing.

Mr Perron: And it is not in your electorate.

Mrs O'NEIL: Well, it is not in my electorate but it is also not going to go through the middle of the residential area of Stuart Park either, as I understand it; it is going to go right on the outskirts of Stuart Park.

There are all sorts of little things that can be done, as I said before. There are things that I would like to see this government doing, completely disregarding the question of road construction. I would like to see more emphasis on staggered working hours. I would like to see improved public transport. I would like to see bikeways. I would like to see perhaps a feasibility study as to whether we can re-use the railway track. I do not know whether it can be done; I think it is worth investigating. I can remember when the federal government closed it down and the minister at the time, Mr Nixon, said that he would keep it maintained. And if he has not - and I believe he has not - then I think we would have an argument to get some money back out of him to maintain it and see if we can use it to bring people in from the Darwin rural area.

There are all sorts of initiatives in the area of transport. But there are not any of them in this budget. I find it very distressing indeed. Mr Deputy Speaker, the government will say I am opposing this road because I am a resident of Fannie Bay and because it is in my electorate, and that is true, perfectly true. It is a valid reason. If I was not prepared to do this, I should not be here in this Assembly as the member for Fannie Bay. But I think there are very many other strong reasons for opposing this road. As yet I have not seen the plan. Perhaps my visual impression of where it is going to go is not quite accurate but, looking at the allocations in this budget and other things that have happened, such as the discussions with the Kulaluk people, it is very hard to see where else it is going to go. I oppose the road; I think the people of Fannie Bay will continue to oppose the road. I think the government, quite apart from that, is going to have a great deal of trouble getting it done. So perhaps in the end they might save several million dollars to put to some constructive use.

Mr TUXWORTH (Mines and Energy): Mr Deputy Speaker, in rising to support the budget brought down by the honourable the Treasurer, I would like to take this opportunity of expanding on a few of the things which have been mentioned in the budget papers but which have not been alluded to in detail by the Treasurer. I will take this opportunity to do it and with your concurrence, Mr Deputy Speaker, I will use notes for this.

As honourable members know, the responsibility for the health function will transfer from the Commonwealth to the Northern Territory on 1 January. I would just like to make the point that the exception to the rule within the Department of Health will be the following areas: quarantine will not be coming across; the National Acoustics Laboratory, the Commonwealth Medical Officer services and pharmaceutical benefits will be remaining outside the control of the Northern Territory government. A small Commonwealth staff will remain to administer these functions and pharmaceutical benefits will stay under the control of the Commonwealth Department of Health in Adelaide. The functions transferring to the control of the Northern Territory government are the hospitals, health services, pathology laboratories and tuberculosis control.

Due to the transfer occurring midway through a financial year, it is not practical to compare the 1978-79 budget with the previous year's expenditure. However, I will take this opportunity to elaborate on the comparative half-year figures which will relate to the budget for the first half of 1979, compared to the first half of the financial year of 1978 which we are in now.

On hospital operations, in the six months until December the budget will expend \$13.976m. For the second half of this financial year the expenditure will be \$17.574m. There is an increase in the expenditure here during the second six months of 26%.

On health services operations, including grants in aid and the liaison unit, the first half-year expenditure will be \$9.437m. The second half of the financial year will see an expenditure of \$10.975m, an increase of 16%.

On plant and equipment there is a very considerable increase. In the first half of this financial year, under Commonwealth control we will see \$459,000 expended. In the second half of the financial year the figure will rise to \$3m which shows an increase of 500%. But I would point out to honourable members that this will allow for the furnishing of the Casuarina Hospital which will begin to take place in the first six months of next year.

Plant and equipment for health services show \$948,000 will be spent in the first half of the financial year. The second half of this financial year will see \$740,000 - a variation of minus 22% by the Northern Territory government in the second half of the year.

On plant and pathology equipment, in the first half of this year the federal government is expending \$15,000. There will be no expenditure during the second half of the year. On the pathology laboratory, the expenditure in the first half of this year will be \$732,000. The second half of the year will see an expenditure of \$683,000 - a variation of minus 7%.

Tuberculosis control has stepped up considerably over the past few years in the Northern Territory. The first half of this financial year will see an expenditure of \$148,000. In the second half of the financial year we will be spending \$191,000.

The budget allocation for hospitals operations, as I said, includes provision for initial operations at Casuarina such as the operation of the central laundry facility, power, telephones and ground maintenance. For meaningful comparisons to be made it is necessary to divide the financial provision into proposed and current expenditure and capital expenditure. Funding for the operation of hospitals will rise from \$13.976m in the first half to \$17.574m in the second half. Although the current allocations for the operation of laboratories show a fall of 7% during the first half of 1979, the total allocation for the financial year 1978-79 shows an increase of a little over 2%.

There will be big increases in expenditure and capital equipment throughout the year to furnish new establishments coming on-stream, such as the Casuarina Hospital and the Tennant Creek Hospital and the improvements that are going to be done at the Katherine Hospital. These are a natural follow-on from the buildings that will be built.

One area that has not been covered in detail in this particular paper or by the Treasurer is the area of conveying health services to remote communities, particularly Aboriginal communities and communities which I do not believe have a satisfactory level of health services. It is the intention of the government to make a bid to the Commonwealth for funds where we can identify the areas which, because of their isolation or their special disadvantages, are missing out and in the event of the government being successful in getting additional funds for these projects, an announcement will be made to the House during the course of the year. But I would like to point out that we do not believe all is rosy in the garden, so far as health care services in remote areas is concerned, and we will be diverting a lot of our energy to this area to try to improve the situation.

I will just make a few explanatory comments on the paper prepared, to explore some of the expenditure in the mines branch section and explain to honourable members on both sides of the House the functions that the branch will be particularly involved in with its expenditure.

The functional area of the Department of Mines and Energy could possibly be described as being responsible for controlled and orderly exploration and development of mineral resources in the Territory, for the environmental impact of these operations, the maintenance of mining and industrial safety standards and for research into and planning of development of alternative sources of energy for the future.

The department's organisation comprises two divisions. Operational functions of the mines division were transferred on 1 July 1978 from the Department of the Northern Territory as an on-going activity. At the same time the department's overall responsibilities were widened through the addition of a new energy division, with the planning and development unit, and through the inclusion of management services functions. In addition, the Department of Mines and Energy will have a major role to play in respect to mining operations in the uranium province. Honourable members will be aware that the Department of Mines and Energy will be an agent for the Commonwealth government and responsible for supervision and regulation of mining operations and environmental controls in the uranium region.

Speaking briefly on the main functional areas and activities of the Department of Mines and Energy in relation to the fund provisions of this budget, one of the important functions of the department which is necessary for the maintenance of orderly and controlled exploration and development of mineral resources in the Territory is the mining registration function. The budget provisions on pages 11 and 24 reflect on the operating costs of the unit responsible for this function. The budget makes provision for a moderate expansion due to an increase in the workload on the unit following recent policy changes.

One other change relates to the issue of permits for the removal of sand, soil and gravel. Earlier these permits were issued by a number of authorities without coordination and in some cases without any consideration of the possible resultant environmental damage. Administrative arrangements have now placed this particular function with mines and the department has been upgraded to cater for it.

Another policy change which represents a departure from the federal policy is the granting of mining leases over vacant crown land for which no formal

land claims have been lodged. This change resulted in a considerable increase in the issue of mining tenements which have already exceeded 200.

The operating cost of the geological survey and mines inspection and environment units was shown on pages 13, 15, 26 and 29 of the departmental budget papers and reflects the department's and the government's policy for an expansion of mining development in the Territory.

Mr Deputy Speaker, the one unit which provides perhaps the greatest amount of physical and financial assistance to the small prospector is the mines services unit which operates two oil crushing batteries at Mount Wells and Tennant Creek and four drilling rigs in the field. The drilling rigs, in addition to providing assistance to mining operations, also carry out work on behalf of the Territory geological survey. The equipment in the Mount Wells battery is currently being upgraded to increase the processing capacity of the plant which in turn is expected to reduce the cost per tonne of ore crushed. The operating costs of the batteries and drilling activities are shown on pages 18, 33 and 40 of the departmental papers.

The Northern Territory government is anxious that every alternative source of energy available to the Northern Territory be investigated and efficiently utilised to offset the problems of the current energy crisis. The role of the new energy unit will be focussed mainly on the investigation and development of existing resources and the formulation of policy with respect to energy conservation and research and development in those areas in which the Territory, by reason of geographic and other considerations, might most profitably be engaged. At present the unit is small, comprising four positions. However, it will be gradually expanded as its work is considered critical to the development of the Territory.

The departmental budget papers provide for an allocation of salaries amounting to \$2.696m. This represents an establishment of 185 employees, including 25 new positions. A recruitment program is currently underway to fill 25 positions that were already in store, plus several other positions, I think, and a number that are directly related to the oversight of operations in the uranium province.

The administrative and operational costs of the department are estimated at \$1.3m and the greatest single expense in this allocation is for travel which amounts to \$381,000.

The total provision for general operational supplies, such as tools, ropes, pickets, chemicals, etc amounts to \$241,000. The mines services and industrial safety unit is the major consumer here, with an allocation of \$172,000 of this amount.

The cost of maintaining the department's vehicles is estimated to be \$130,000 a year. However, this cost does not reflect the capital cost of vehicles which falls under the responsibility of my colleague, the Minister for Transport and Works.

Plant and equipment required for drilling operations of the geological unit will consume \$280,000 in this financial year.

Revenue - in 1978-79 the Department of Mines and Energy expects to collect just over \$3m, in fact \$3.049m, in revenue of which \$2.850m is estimated to come from royalties.

Mr Deputy Speaker, members of the House would be aware that a review of the existing outdated mining legislation had commenced some time ago. The first draft of the proposed new legislation has been recently distributed to

mining companies and other interested parties and comments were invited. When passed, the new legislation will streamline the legal aspects of mining in the Territory and bring our law into line with other existing modern state legislation. If implemented in this financial year the new legislation could affect the revenue items, particularly those related to licence fees and royalties.

To discharge the responsibilities of the department, it will have to provide for all the necessary planning, supervisory and regulatory services associated with uranium mining. Agreement has been reached in principle that the cost of this agency will be reimbursed by the federal government. The details of reimbursement are currently being negotiated between the Territory and the federal treasury. As there is no provision for these costs included in the Territory budget, funding will come initially through the Treasurer's advance.

In conclusion, I would like to mention one section of the department's budget which, strictly speaking, has nothing to do with the operations of the Department of Mines and Energy - that is, the provision of funds for the liquor licensing commission which represents a part of this portfolio. Honourable members will recall that a draft of the proposed new Licensing Bill was notified to the House this morning. To administer the act, a liquor commission is proposed rather than the plethora of government agencies each with its particular responsibility for licences under the existing ordinance. As the commission will not be operational for a year, a provision of \$120,000 was allotted in this year's budget to provide for salaries and operations in the first year.

Mr Speaker, I would like to comment on a couple of points raised by the honourable members on both sides of the House relating to the budget. The Leader of the Opposition made a comment about the different manner in which the financial papers had been presented by the various departments. I can only say, Mr Speaker, that with the two areas with which I deal, there is a very great difference in the manner of presentation and preparation of the financial papers. I would have been very deeply suspicious if they had been similar because the responsibilities of the respective departments vary widely and would have little in common with each other. In fact, I think an exercise in trying to prepare budgetary papers that were alike simply so that people like ourselves could understand them might hide more of what is going on in government than it would expose.

The Leader of the Opposition also proposed that the Northern Territory government could have taken the initiative to set up an energy research institute. I would just like to say that I would reject, at this stage, the concept of setting up such an institute without any detailed thought or planning. One of the great traps in the energy research world at the moment is the amount of work being done by so many people throughout the world and so much of it being duplicated. In fact, the amount of duplication has reached such a level that, at the last meeting of the minerals and energies ministers in Darwin, it was decided that the states and the Commonwealth would set up a review committee amongst themselves to analyse the amount of work so that the states and the Commonwealth should not in fact duplicate it.

The type of research that we would be moving into is very extensive and there is no point in duplicating work that other people are doing. Apart from the time factor involved in the research, we would be much better off to buy information that has already been collected by other people throughout the world if it is of particular interest to us. I think it would be irresponsible of us to jump in at this stage, boots and all, into the establishment of a research institute until we have examined the areas that we want to get into and set a program and a course for the expenditure of funds in this area. I would hope that, in the next budget which this government brings down, we will have for the inspection of members a program and a sum showing just where we are heading in the world of energy research but I cannot support the concept

of jumping in and spending a few bob simply for the sake of being in the race.

The honourable member for Fannie Bay raised the issue of the northern suburbs connector road. I would just like to make this point: I have the misfortune of having to drive along Bagot Road perhaps three or four times a fortnight, sometimes more often, and I regard it as a harrowing experience. If Parramatta Road could be worse, then I have no ambition ever to go onto Parramatta Road. I do not believe that people living in the northern suburbs can be expected to live with the existing situation for any indefinite period, simply because people in one suburb or another think the road will upset their own environmental setup. I could see how people living in Fannie Bay, or Stuart Park for that matter, might be upset about the concept of a connector road running through their suburb from the northern suburbs to the city but I just cannot believe that anybody would accept that the northern suburbs can be bottled up for very much longer in the way they are at the moment. Surely something has to be done and I believe it will be done. I do not have any doubt in my bones about it because, in terms of political reality, the people living in the northern suburbs just will not tolerate the existing situation for very much longer.

The honourable member for Fannie Bay also raised the concept of transport initiatives and I believe the Leader of the Opposition touched on it also. Again, we are coming back to the need for a public transport service that satisfies the needs of the commuter and takes off the roads the great amount of traffic that we have on them today. The fact is that we are talking about human nature. People are not interested in modern commuter services. The average man wants to drive to work in his own car. He will not change his habits because the traffic problems are becoming worse or because we think it would be ideal to spend a great deal of money on transport initiatives and provide an alternative for him. We might cite our own case here. How many of us working in this building and in this House bother to come to work on a bus? Many of us have the opportunity but none of us take the opportunity because we prefer to come to work in our own cars and have the independence that our own cars give us. I feel that talking about transport initiatives and upgrading public transport to overcome the problem is really barking at the moon.

There has not been any criticism of substance about my colleague's second budget introduced into this House. I commend him for it. I think it will serve the Northern Territory well.

Mr HARRIS (Port Darwin): In rising to support this budget, I am quite amazed actually that there has not been a great deal of comment on it. I must say that I am pleased with the initiative of the Northern Territory government because I feel they have not only looked after the immediate needs of the people of the Territory but they have looked ahead to the future needs of the Territory and areas which will affect future budgets. I speak specifically about the inquiry into the welfare needs of the people of the Northern Territory. This inquiry will cover all needs from childhood up to old age and the government should be commended for the \$129,000 which has been allocated for this inquiry. In future years, on the recommendations of this inquiry, we will be able to spend money in the right areas. The inquiry into welfare needs will point out to us the various areas which we must look at and where we should be pushing our allocation of funds.

I would have thought that the member for Fannie Bay would have touched on the area of community welfare because I know she is deeply involved in that. I know the Northern Territory government is obviously looking closely at this area. As I have already mentioned, the setting up of the inquiry into welfare services shows that our government is concerned. The concession to pensioners of \$208,000 includes concessional benefits and, apart from the

bus passes, all these concessions are new. We only have to look down the list in the community welfare area: family homes - \$120,000; miscellaneous relief which includes generally amounts paid to destitute persons to provide for food, clothing and accommodation - \$200,000; maintenance of children in other than state wards; subsidies to social workers employed in community work; subsidies to homes for children established by missions - \$300,000; handicapped children's toy library; supporting parents benefits; homemaker service; delivery of welfare services to remote localities; and the international year of the child. All of these things are relevant to this budget and need to be looked at. This government has done exactly that.

The greatest thing in this budget which concerns my electorate is the land-backed wharf, stage 1 of which will cost nearly \$5m. The land-backed wharf is perhaps one of the soundest propositions that this government could have put forward. I have always believed that this is the opening for reducing the enormous freight costs in the Northern Territory. I believe the future of the Northern Territory does depend on that particular development. Provided our land-backed wharf is serviced efficiently, freight costs must be reduced. As the member for Fannie Bay has pointed out, we do need to consider very carefully the access to our land-backed wharf. With the increased tonnage related to uranium mining, we will need a better access out of the city. It is pointless to have trucks going up McMinn Street, turning at traffic lights and creating havoc in the main city areas. If the land-backed wharf is to be successful our government will have to look very closely at having a better access to that area and, of course, this does relate to the Frances Bay arterial road.

In closing, I feel this is a good budget. The executive has negotiated well to have sufficient funds to be able to spread them as well as it has. The funds are evenly distributed and I support the Treasurer's second budget.

Mr STEELE (Industrial Development): After last week's revelations and true confessions, the protestations of loyalty to the sovereign and the honourable member for Victoria River's offer to step outside, I think my remarks might just about send you all to sleep, or at least not cause too much excitement. I would like to expand on the measures contained in this budget that are designed to encourage industry and develop the Territory's economic base. Pardon me if I labour this point throughout my speech.

The expenditure of the Department of Industrial Development in 1978-79 is estimated at \$10.896m. The government has previously expressed its determination to expand the Territory's economic base and this budget reflects that determination. The Treasurer has drawn attention to some of the programs to be carried out through appropriations for the Department of Industrial Development, the Territory Development Corporation and the Tourist Board. Expenditure by these last two organisations will involve \$5.3m, additional to the departmental appropriation.

Dealing more specifically with these measures, this budget confirms our intentions that the Territory Development Corporation will play a major role in assisting the development of Territory industry. Members will remember that the Territory Development Corporation was established on 1 July 1978 under the provisions of the Territory Development Corporation Ordinance passed earlier this year. The corporation replaced the Primary Producers Board and extended the form of government assistance to industry from the limited charter of the former Primary Producers Board which was restricted to pastoral, agricultural, horticultural and fishing activities to include other forms of industry, particularly tourism and secondary industry. The allocation of \$4.2m to the Territory Development Corporation provides \$400,000 for the administration of the corporation's activities, \$1.96m for the continued operation of the rural adjustment scheme and \$1.84m for the provision of direct loan moneys for industry development. The corporation is further able to assist industry

by the provision of government guarantees. In this budget, it has not been necessary to include provision for contingent liabilities by way of these guarantees but such provision will be necessary in future years.

In addition to its responsibilities to provide assistance to industry by way of finance, resources and advice, the corporation is responsible for the administration of existing loans provided by the former Primary Producers Board and through the Darwin Business Relief Loan Fund Scheme. Over 400 loans are involved. It is estimated that some \$319,800 will be collected from the former scheme. In addition, some \$285,500 will be collected from other business loans at present being transferred for administration from the Treasury to the Territory Development Corporation. These moneys collected by the corporation will be paid into the Consolidated Revenue Fund. The total allocation of \$4.2m to the Territory Development Corporation is significant in encouraging Territory industry.

This budget provides for a substantial increase in our support for the Territory's rural section. For some years, the beef industry has suffered depressed prices during a time when production and operating costs had risen dramatically. This the budget recognises. It provides \$800,000 for a subsidy on cattle transported for sale to encourage turnoff in beef production. For those producers affected by blue tongue control restrictions, the budget provides \$800,000 in special assistance to be administered under the States and Northern Territory Grants (Blue Tongue Control) Act 1978. The assistance is in the form of mustering grants and payments for movement, survey and surveillance tests. The primary industry division will continue the campaign of eradicating bovine tuberculosis and brucellosis from Territory beef herds. The allocation in this budget of \$800,000 for compensation and field operations reflects our commitment to eradicate these diseases in line with a national goal of provisional freedom by 1984. In addition to these specific measures this budget provides for a substantial increase in general services for the rural sector by the primary industry division.

Tourism is of crucial significance to the Northern Territory economy and currently is estimated to be second only to mining in gross value. The \$1.1m appropriation for 1978-79 announced by the Treasurer in the annual allocation to the Tourist Board is an increase of 54% on the 1977-78 figure. This increase emphasises the importance the government places on further growth of the industry. The proposal to open a bureau in Brisbane and the 70% increase in promotion and advertising is expected to give added impetus to the tourist trade.

Tourism in the Northern Territory faces many problems, not the least of which is the cost of getting to the Northern Territory. This cost is excessive and we are doing all within our power to seek a remedy to the situation. We are determined to encourage the provision of top-class tourist facilities. To this end the commencement of the sealing of the Ayers Rock Road and a start on the Ayers Rock Village represents a significant contribution.

The tourist industry is labour intensive and therefore has potential for generating employment. By promoting this industry, improving transport facilities and services, and through the assistance now available to tourist operators and developers via the Territory Development Corporation, the government is providing the necessary stimulus for the economic and employment needs of the community.

Tourism is, of course, a national industry and the Northern Territory government is determined to meet its commitments to the industry in parallel with developments and encouragements throughout Australia. The prospects of casino developments in Darwin and Alice Springs, properly developed and controlled, provide added attractions for both domestic and international visit-

ors to the Territory.

Added to the foregoing measures are those we plan for the fishing industry. The fishing industry in the Northern Territory has enormous potential, particularly with the proclamation of the 200-mile territorial limit. The prospects of joint venture arrangements for the development of this potential are exciting and represent real potential growth in the Territory's gross product. The existing Territory prawning and barramundi industries have an annual value of over \$10m, providing a stable base on which to build fishing development.

Past government expenditure on fisheries development has been low and this government is determined to ensure a rapid escalation of both developmental and control measures, comparable to the significance of the industry concerned. Accordingly, the budget allocation of \$1.267m, representing an increase of about 200% on 1977-78 expenditure, is a first step to a sound and effective fisheries administration. As announced recently, the fisheries division of the Department of Industrial Development will participate in the control of new territorial waters fishing activities. A new control vessel, the cost of which is estimated at \$110,000 will enhance the present limited capacity of the division to provide effective monitoring and control of the industry.

The government has established a small division within the Department of Industrial Development to promote interstate and overseas trade, to attract industry investment and to seek markets for Territory products. The full potential of industrial development has in the past been frustrated in the Northern Territory by a lack of market development. Agricultural developments, for instance, have often failed despite produce being grown. Currently, producers are reluctant to try new developments and to invest further money as marketing prospects are not sufficiently well defined. The trade mission sponsored by the Northern Territory government earlier this year identified potential markets for Northern Territory produce and products in Southeast Asia and the Middle East. Considerable ongoing follow-up work in respect of that mission and more recent developments are actively being pursued.

Turning now to the Department of Transport and Works, the 1978-79 expenditure is estimated at \$132.622m. In addition there is an appropriation of \$35.735m for the Electricity Commission. The largest segment of the department is engaged in administering the civil works program. The magnitude of this task can be understood when I explain the main units of administration doing this work.

One is the roads division of the department which will spend \$18.414m on new works and \$12.126m on repairs and maintenance. The buildings division will expend \$26.963m on new works and \$8.143m on repairs and maintenance. A third unit, the water and sewerage division which includes water resources investigation has \$7.674m for new works and \$4.639m for repairs and maintenance. I will refer to these items later.

Funds appropriated for that department play an important role in maintaining the existing economy of the Territory. Nearly all of the new works programs and a large part of the repairs and maintenance programs are carried out by contractors in the private sector. Indeed, an increasing proportion of the design work is also being performed in the private sector with the department engaging engineering, architectural and other consultants for this work.

My colleague, the Treasurer, has already informed the House that works in progress at the beginning of the financial year totalled \$54m and that contracts for new works valued at \$59m will be let during the year. I think it appropriate that I should assist honourable members in their consideration of the budget for this department by explaining briefly the difference between the

value of the contracts let and the cash flow required by the new works program. Many projects take several years to complete. The best local example of this is the Casuarina Hospital which was commenced before the cyclone and will still not be completed for a considerable time after the government accepts responsibility for health matters on 1 January 1979. There is, therefore, a fundamental difference between the value of projects in hand and the cash flow required in any one year.

In 1978 we will take over and initiate projects worth \$113m. The cash flow during 1978-79 will be \$53m, leaving \$60m as a revote for 1979-80. This is a large revote and the government hopes that in future years it could reduce this by allocating more money to the new works program. However, it is also a healthy sign for the construction industry in future years. They already know that \$60m is earmarked to come to them in future budgets.

The new Government Printing Office will be occupied this year and it will be better equipped to print the large volume of parliamentary and administrative printing that modern government requires. A government must have its own printing establishment for the confidential printing of bills to be presented to this Assembly and for the speedy printing of the Parliamentary Record. We have adopted procedures to ensure that the private printers in the Territory still receive at least the same volume of printing as before. Indeed, with the control of printing in the hands of our own government, we will ensure that government printing that previously went outside the Territory will be retained here as a further boost to our economy.

The House has been informed of the geographical breakup of our new works program. It will be noted from this that we are not a Darwin government and all centres in the Territory are receiving a fair share of the government's civil works program. Mr Speaker, I direct honourable members' attention to budget paper No. 4. This government will continue to reconstruct and upgrade the Stuart and Barkly Highways as part of the national highways system as a continuation of the programs which were initiated by the Commonwealth government.

Bridges and associated roadworks will be constructed over the James and Rankin Rivers near the Queensland border at a cost of \$2,187,500. A bridge over Warlock Ponds south of Mataranka for \$1,802,500, a bridge over the Adelaide River at a cost of \$1,006,200 and a bridge over Bonny Creek near Wauchope at a cost of \$656,000 will eliminate the present hazards involved in using the single lane wartime structures which cause disruption to traffic during times of flooding on the Stuart and Barkly Highways. The construction of the remaining section of highway between Hayes Creek and Pine Creek at a cost of \$2.835m will be the last link in the Stuart Highway to be upgraded between Adelaide River and Katherine.

Other major road projects throughout the Northern Territory include a bridge over the King River and associated roadworks on the Victoria Highway at a cost of \$1,509,400. This will reduce traffic delays previously caused on the existing crossing. A number of people have been drowned trying to cross this river when trapped between flooded streams. The first stage of development of the road to the Daly River crossing will be between Survey Creek and the police station at a cost of \$994,900. The road to Ayers Rock will be sealed between Erldunda and Angus Downs at a cost of \$3,071,200. The Jay Creek to Glen Helen road will also be sealed for \$2,515,600 and the first 83 kilometres of the Tanami Road will be sealed at a cost of \$2,471,900.

Urban roads and streets will also be constructed in town areas of the Northern Territory. The construction of the Coconut Grove-Ludmilla connector at a cost of \$1,487,500 will reduce traffic congestion on Bagot Road. I will address some further remarks to that when I complete my address. Some minor

improvements will be carried out to the McMillans Road-Bagot Road intersection. Makagon and Hidden Valley Road will also be reconstructed. In Alice Springs, Railway Terrace will be reconstructed as part of the north-south arterial road system of the town.

The government recognises the need to provide additional serviced land in Darwin and Katherine. The construction of the remainder of the Malik subdivision at a cost of \$5,206,000 will provide 409 residential blocks for further development. In Katherine, an industrial subdivision will be provided at a cost of \$1,006,200. In Darwin, the Gardens Hill subdivision costing \$222,000 will complete existing roads and services to subdivisional standard.

The general policy of upgrading water supply and sewerage systems to improve or augment existing services is to be continued. Major water supply projects proposed for Darwin 1978-79 are valued at nearly \$7m and include the construction of a 35 million litre tank pump station and associated pipe works which will result in improved water supply to the northern suburbs.

Other works to be implemented in the Darwin area will reduce the algae content of the water and improve fluoridation. It is also proposed to carry out works to augment the water supply in Katherine and Alice Springs, and to upgrade the system at Elliott.

Sewerage works totalling almost \$3m include the construction of a major sewerage scheme in the Berrimah-Coonawarra area of Darwin and the provision of an effluent disposal scheme in Alice Springs which will involve the use of effluent for seed and fodder crop irrigation. Other sewerage works will be carried out in Tennant Creek and Batchelor.

It is proposed that the program for drilling and testing bores to establish, extend or rehabilitate ground water supplies for centres throughout the Northern Territory will continue. Work proposed includes the extension of the Mereenie bore fields near Alice Springs to ensure adequate water is available to the town into the 1980s. Other activities proposed under the drilling program include the drilling of a number of bores on reserves operated by the Territory Parks and Wildlife Commission which will enable the development of tourist amenities. The cost of operating and maintaining the water and sewerage systems in the main centres throughout the Territory during 1978-79 is estimated at \$4.6m.

As the Treasurer has informed members, new police complexes will be constructed at Elcho Island, Avon Downs and the Barkly Highway. In addition the new police training centre and extensions to the barracks will be built in Darwin.

A new virology laboratory will be constructed at Berrimah. Following the detection of blue tongue virus and with the recent influx of refugees from Southeast Asia, it is essential that the Northern Territory government has its own facility to detect and isolate viruses potentially dangerous to the livestock industry of the Northern Territory.

Extensions to the mill building and improved storage facilities will be provided at the Mount Wells battery. A new core store will be constructed for the Mines Department in Darwin and we will also be providing a new office, an assay area and drillstore at Tennant Creek for that department.

It is proposed to build a dam costing approximately \$400,000 at Tennant Creek to provide a recreation lake. Besides providing an amenity for the local people, the lake will also serve as a tourist attraction.

A new toilet block and septic system will be provided at Gunn Point

prison farm. Six new married quarters will also be constructed at Howard Springs for the correctional services division. A new fire station will be constructed at Parap as part of our policy to upgrade fire services in Darwin.

The budget makes provision for stage 1 of the new land-backed wharf in Darwin at almost \$5m. This is part of the Northern Territory government's commitment to upgrade cargo facilities for the port of Darwin. In order that the first stage be completed by 1981, it is necessary that construction is commenced immediately. During this financial year \$1.1m will be provided through budget appropriations. This will enable preliminary design work to be completed by the end of the year and delivery of pilings in April 1979.

The government assumes the responsibility for health matters on 1 July 1979 and in addition to those ongoing works which will be transferred from the federal government this budget provides for a new community health centre at Nightcliff.

The budget also includes provision for the establishment and upgrading of water, sewerage and power services in Aboriginal communities throughout the Territory. In addition to a new air strip proposed for Peppimenarti, existing air strips of Maningrida and Yuendumu are to be upgraded to Department of Transport specifications. The barge landing at Goulburn Island will be upgraded and a new building with bulk fuel facilities will be constructed at Croker Island to enable unloading of barges to be carried out at these communities irrespective of tide or weather conditions.

The Northern Territory Electricity Commission's funding from government sources can be divided into two parts. The first is to complete the restoration work planned by the Darwin Reconstruction Commission. Estimated expenditure in 1978-79 for the purpose is \$12.736m. The second part of the budget provision for the Electricity Commission is a subvention of \$22.967m to meet the expected trading deficit of the commission. I might add that since the commission's budgetary program was drawn up, changes in the oil price structure and cancellation of the oil subsidy by the Commonwealth government have increased the estimated size of the trading deficit by a further \$1.6m. The commission has also been authorised to raise \$8.123m in semi-government loans to fund its capital works program.

I think I should draw attention to the Opposition Leader's remarks about his idea that electricity costs would increase. I think that is a fairly reasonable assumption for him to make. Certainly, when you look at the cost of fuel that has just hit the commission - as I said, after they had planned their budget for this year - there will be some difficulty on their part in not recommending an increase in electricity charges during the coming months.

I said I would refer again to the road that seemed to be the member for Fannie Bay's main budget fetish. I think the honourable member may be painting herself into a corner in respect of this road. Certainly, there are some difficulties with negotiations and acquisitions, and I suppose if the worst comes to the worst the road could be dropped and scrapped altogether. I do not think that is really what the community wants. I believe the people north of Ludmilla north, including Ludmilla north, would prefer that this additional access was made available to them and I think it would be a very useful facility. I think we are going about the negotiations with the Kulaluk people in a reasonable manner and I think we can get along with them in due course.

Just a final point I would like to make to the honourable member. She referred to getting rid of the stables. I think I am now faced with living with one of her election promises because I keep getting told that I promised to get rid of the stables, but that was never my intention.

I commend the Northern Territory budget to honourable members.

Mr BALLANTYNE (Nhulunbuy): I have pleasure in making some comments on this budget. When the Leader of the Opposition started off today, he was going to tear into the government with all his new ideas and expound new theories on what he would do and what he would not do but, with all his dialogue and rhetoric, I could sense a touch of sour grapes. I believe some of the things he came up with in another part of his speech were irrelevant: the long-term program of research into solar energy; looking at government-type insurance offices, and looking at the apprenticeship scheme. Those areas have been looked at, reviewed and checked out before any step is made. He also referred in one part of his speech to the honourable member for Fannie Bay but during her Fitzpatrick travel talk, I think she forgot to mention about health. However, it was very enjoyable going from Coconut Grove to Ludmilla to Fannie Bay, with the sun trickling through the valleys like pools of molten gold.

Getting away from that, I would like to compliment all ministers on the work they have done in their preparation with their various departments, in getting this budget to the state it is in now. Some of the ministers went into full detail of what the progress will be. I am sure it is a progressive budget and we are looking forward to the new programs and new works that will come out of this. I am looking forward to seeing the fishing industry expand. I believe, with the development and the increase of 20% or more in the fishing industry, fishing is one area in the Territory which we can expand and develop as a viable industry.

I was very pleased to see \$1.1m given to the tourist industry. We know this could be a second major industry here for us. Mining is our biggest industry and that will expand beyond all proportion, unknown really in some ways. Most of the figures for that expansion are arbitrary but I believe that, with the opening of the Ranger mine and the other mining areas in the Territory, we will see a larger number of people coming into the Territory and the opening up of new areas will itself attract tourism. I only hope we can expand tourism in my electorate, in some small way. The tourist promotion board there is looking to do just that.

I was very interested to note that the Housing Commission's allocation of funds is in the order of \$46.6m for construction and restoration of some of the homes damaged during the cyclone and I am very pleased to see that another 10 houses will be built in my electorate during this next financial year. They are already building 20 houses at this stage which will be finished in something like 40 weeks and, along with those 20 houses, already 5 other houses are being built for public service accommodation. My only regret on this is that the two houses differ by one thing: one has a car port but the Housing Commission houses do not have one.

I was very pleased to see that Yirrkala has been allocated some \$231,000 for upgrading their water supply. I believe this is to be done in stages. This is one area that needs to be upgraded. There are quite a few other problems there, on the sewerage side of things, which I have had discussions on in recent times. However, one cannot have everything one wants and priorities have to be met.

There is also an additional amount of money for the high voltage reticulation. Up until last year they had their own power station. Now they have reticulation from the Nabalco power station - something in the order of \$400,000 - and they are going to spend another \$46,200 on other works to install new equipment for that reticulation.

In the last budget there was an allocation of \$3.2m for the Yirrkala School. I am pleased to say that school is just about completed and should be

in operation hopefully before the end of the year or for the new school year in 1979. Moreover, I am very pleased to see that, in the federal budget this year, there is an allocation of \$3.5m for the new high school to be built at Nhulunbuy to overcome the problems with Nhulunbuy area school which has been literally bursting at the seams since it was first built. I am very pleased to say that the people in my electorate got behind this move to have this school built. The contract should be let for that school new year. It will be better than having nine demountables which we have surrounding the school grounds now, upsetting the aesthetic value of that area. I believe there will be two more demountables and another office installed there to overcome the crowding at that school.

I was somewhat disappointed to see that the Yirrkala road is not on the road program. However, I do know there are problems in that area with regard to obtaining materials to surface roads and to make it an economical project. I am pleased to see that, under the proposed new allocation for access roads in rural areas, provision is made to construct roads to recreation centres. In the past, most of the people in my electorate had to go by four-wheel-drive. If they did not have a four-wheel-drive, they could not go to these places. Hopefully, we are going to upgrade some of those tracks so the people can get away from the township and enjoy their recreation in areas which are to be set aside for this purpose.

I would hope too that all this work being carried out on the new school, the construction of housing and the finishing of the Yirrkala school will offer some employment. This does bring new people to my electorate and it does stimulate the business in the town. There is an expansion program going on with Nabalco organisation at the moment on the alumina project. This has also greatly boosted the intake of new people to the town. There are quite a lot of new faces around these days and all these projects, even though some are only short-term, do help to reduce the unemployment figure in my electorate which is very low. We hope it will help the Territory in some way as well.

One final thing I would like to talk about is the decision to allocate \$30,000 for the purchase of a rescue craft to be located at Gove. This will come under the emergency services people. The recent tragedies there and other mishaps that we have had in that area have brought this to fruition. It is something for which I have been continually asking for the last couple of years. Hopefully, that boat will be there very soon.

I believe the Northern Territory will see much expansion over the next few years as a result of this budget. One cannot always look at a budget and say what it will do until it has been tried. I am sure that, with the expansion programs that are built into this budget, we will talk about those things in a few months' time and perhaps have a look at some of the ideas that the opposition have come up with, which is absolutely nil. At least, our on-going program with tourism, fishing and the development of mining will reduce unemployment which is a big problem in the Territory. We are conscious of that. In the next few months, we will see a big change.

I compliment the Treasurer for bringing in this budget. There has been a lot of hard work done by all ministers and I believe it can only assist us in further development and hopefully stimulate the interest of the business sector.

Mrs PADGHAM-PURICH (Tiwi): Mr Deputy Speaker, speaking to the budget this afternoon I would like to touch mainly on things that affect my electorate. Firstly, I am pleased to see that, with the continuing and future civil works, about \$700,000 will be spent on research and government help to the rural industry by way of buildings etc at Berrimah Farm and the Coastal Plains Research Station. This sum of over \$700,000 must surely be an indication of the

enthusiasm and encouragement the government is giving the rural sector.

The next point on which I would like to touch is something pretty down to earth. I do not have the lyricism for the idealistic discourse of the honourable member for Fannie Bay. I did a little adding up in the old fashioned way and it took me quite a while. I found out that, in the budget, \$2 per head of population in the Northern Territory will be spent this financial year on providing toilets - \$6 per head of people on the roll in the Northern Territory. As regards sewerage, about \$48 per head of population will be spent on sewerage or about \$120 per head of those enrolled in the Northern Territory. Toilets are to be built in five places in the Northern Territory. We, in the Tiwi electorate, are very lucky because toilets are to be built at three places in the electorate: at Knuckeyes Lagoon, at Gunn Point and at Bathurst Island. There is also to be a toilet block built at Batchelor and, for those who have to wait a long time at the Motor Vehicle Registry Office, there is to be one built there. When my car was registered the other day, there was a wait of about 55 minutes.

To turn to things of beauty, I see from the capital works program that there is to be over \$208,000 spent on landscaping roads, schools and reserves. This works out at about \$2 per head of population or \$4 per head of those enrolled in the Northern Territory. The Nguiu Council is to receive over \$200,000 for new works on the island and about \$44,500 for works on the new airstrip. This will be very much appreciated by the people who live on Bathurst Island. At Snake Bay stage 1 of the construction of stormwater drainage will cost \$46,200. That is new works. In progress now is the upgrading of the power house for which a sum of \$27,000 is mentioned.

I would have like to have seen more money made available for some of the roads in the rural area outside Darwin. There are six main roads there that have needed attention for a long time because of the very heavy sand and gravel trucks that use them. Children are thrown around unnecessarily in the school buses because of the very rough road, even though the drivers drive carefully. They are used by ordinary vehicles and by children on bikes who frequently fall off because of the bad surface.

I was pleased to see that some money will be spent at the Mount Wells battery. This is used by small prospectors to crush their tin, gold and to a lesser extent, their wolfram ore. In the past the small prospectors have said they could bet a better return from this crushing. Perhaps this money that is being spent there will give a greater return on their crushing. With the unemployment situation as it is, more people are using the Mount Wells battery so the money will certainly be very welcome there.

The Gunn Point area in the Tiwi electorate has received attention from the budget. At Gunn Point, there will be radio buildings, married quarters associated with Gunn Point and also a toilet block. On this important and necessary subject of toilets, I will conclude my speech on the 1978-79 budget.

Debate adjourned.

LEAVE OF ABSENCE

Mr VALE (Stuart): Mr Speaker, I move that leave of absence for this week be granted to Mrs Lawrie who is representing this Assembly at the 24th Commonwealth Parliamentary Conference in Kingston, Jamaica.

Motion agreed to.

MINING BILL
(Serial 175)

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

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

This short bill is of prime importance to the people of the Northern Territory in clarifying the relative responsibilities of the Commonwealth and the Northern Territory government in relation to the mining of prescribed substances in the Northern Territory. By virtue of the provisions of the Northern Territory (Self-Government) Act, the Northern Territory executive has been given executive responsibility for all matters relating to the mining of minerals in the Northern Territory, excluding those associated with uranium and other prescribed substances under the Commonwealth Atomic Energy Act. In respect of uranium and other prescribed substances, the Commonwealth has retained executive responsibility in that area and is to have continued responsibility for matters associated with the issue of mining titles for those particular materials.

The purpose of this bill is to amend the Mining Ordinance to fully recognise the situation and adequately provide for the Commonwealth's continued interest in respect of prescribed substances while, at the same time, ensuring that the development of uranium deposits can be undertaken under the provisions of the Mining Ordinance. The Commonwealth has the power to authorise mining for uranium and other prescribed substances under the Atomic Energy Act and this provision is, in fact, being used to authorise mining at the Ranger project. However, the use of the Mining Ordinance is considered to be preferable in the case of any other uranium development projects which may eventuate both in the interest of keeping control of mining as uniform as possible and also being more in keeping with the general concept of self-government.

The amendments which I have proposed in clause 3 of this bill will provide that the Territory minister responsible for the administration of the Mining Ordinance shall not exercise any of his powers under the ordinance where a prescribed substance is involved unless he has first obtained advice from the Commonwealth minister for the time being administering the Atomic Energy Act and that the Territory minister shall act in accordance with that advice. This proposal will ensure the Commonwealth's continued interest in respect of prescribed substances in the Northern Territory and provide an appropriate platform of communication between the Commonwealth and the Northern Territory governments on matters affecting the development of our uranium resources in the Northern Territory.

The only other amendment contained in this bill is that to proposed section 147A(1B)(b). This amendment is required to conform with the provisions of the Atomic Energy Act whereby ownership of uranium and other prescribed substances in the Northern Territory is vested in the Commonwealth. Under the existing provisions of this section, any uranium or ores thereof recovered in any unauthorised operation within a mining reserve remain the property of the Territory. The use of the term "Territory" in this section is inconsistent with the Atomic Energy Act and the amendment I have proposed will ensure that the Commonwealth ownership of uranium and ores thereof is fully recognised.

I would just point out to the House that there is no urgency attached to this bill and it will lie for the consideration of the House until the next sittings. I commend the bill to honourable members.

Debate adjourned.

ADJOURNMENT

Mr ROBERTSON (Manager of Government Business): Mr Deputy Speaker, I move that the Assembly do now adjourn.

Mr MacFARLANE (Elsey): Mr Deputy Speaker, some time ago an embryo statesman in the Northern Territory said: "When our next agricultural opportunity comes, it must proceed through some imaginative government structure as an active capital investing and sharing partner whose resolve will not weaken at the first setback or criticism". That is a very fine attitude to take. When you see the crops for the Katherine district as recommended by the Department of Industrial Development's division of primary industry, it would appear that there is great merit in this government doing what it tells other people to do and that is to grow something. It would appear that there are markets for all the food we can ever grow. There are hungry mouths that will eat it. All we have to do is produce it. There is plenty of room for the trouble in between. I will not read the lot of this but this list gives you some idea of what is recommended by this government for other people to do.

Sorghum: state of commercial development - sorghum has been grown commercially for a number of years. Future prospects - sound only if costs can be reduced or yields increased.

Peanuts: state of commercial development - peanuts have been grown commercially in the Northern Territory in the past. Future prospects - and this might shock you a bit - excellent for the large Virginia bunch type. It is of interest to members that not long ago the Queensland Peanut Board was out in the Northern Territory, the Kimberleys and Kununurra and I believe they will take all the peanuts that we can produce.

Maize: state of commercial development - excellent experimental results have been obtained but few successful commercial crops have been produced. Future prospects - probably confined to Northern Territory needs for some time as the world market offers lower prices than local ones.

Mung beans: state of commercial development - some successful crops have been grown. Overall there has been little experience with this crop in the Northern Territory. That is a shocking indictment on a government that has had an agricultural branch for 30 years. Future prospects - appear good but depend on further market research. The world price fluctuates remarkably. Good quality beans are essential.

Soybeans: state of commercial development - experimental only. Some excellent experimental results have been interspersed with disappointments. Future prospects - potentially good, assuming satisfactory commercial deals can be obtained.

Guar: state of commercial development - experimental only. Future prospects - the market is essentially unlimited but we cannot yet be sure that we can obtain economic yields in the Northern Territory.

Cowpeas, lablab and other hay crops: state of commercial development - well established as hay and forage crops. Future prospects - steady for local consumption; possibly some growth for feeding live cattle as this industry grows. Potential for exporting pellets is largely unexplored.

Seed crops - and this is what they were very interested in the Philippines. I do not think we followed up that advantage: limited range produced in the district for some years. Future prospects - good, providing greater diversity and stability of production and marketing.

Horticultural crops: state of commercial development - production in district for many years. Future prospects - good, providing production is efficient and attention is paid to marketing.

Cassava - and this was the subject of a comment on the ABC this morning: state of commercial development - nil and no experimental work yet done. Future prospects - in the future cassava could be an important national crop saving on imported liquid fuels. It must be emphasised that we are starting from basics in the Northern Territory - well, I have seen cassava growing and I have grown it for over 30 years, so it looks like it will grow anywhere if I can grow it.

Leucaena: state of commercial development - a little grown as a house shrub; none has yet been grown as a crop for fodder, energy and paper. Future prospects - prospects for pellets appear good; for energy or paper, heavy capital investment of the order of \$100m would be necessary and so must be considered very much for the future. Leucaena is what they call coffee bush and it is growing on the cliffs and everywhere around Darwin so it will grow whether the agricultural branch predicts it or not.

Other possible crops: a very wide range of other crops could bear investigation if staff resources allowed. This is after 30 years. Some examples are millet: could be a possibility for the lower rainfall areas. Energy crops could well be a growth area in the next 10 or 15 years. Sunflowers, as an oil seed crop, are worth investigation. Crops for essential oils and drugs might be worth at least a look at the literature in the future - well, that has got me a bit stunned; I cannot follow that one.

But I can follow what this paper says, that the future for agriculture in the Top End is wonderful. Let us have a look at what they do say. Sorghum - sound; peanuts - excellent. How do you like that one? Maize - probably confined to Northern Territory needs but excellent experimental results have been obtained; mung beans - appear good; soybeans - potentially good; guar - market is essentially unlimited; cowpeas, lablab and other hay crops - steady for local consumption; seed crops - good; horticultural crops - good; cassava - in the future could be an important national crop, not just a little round-the-corner one; leucaena - prospects for pellets appear good, and so on.

It would appear to me that what this government ought to do is what I have been pressing them to do for a long time and that is go overseas and tie up the markets on a government-to-government basis. Go to Malaysia again, to Singapore - hard-headed businessmen this time, not babes in the woods. Go over there and say, "If we produce 100 or 10,000 tonnes of this that or the other", all these recommended crops in this report, "of a certified quality, at such and such a price, will you buy it?" They are desperate for these things. Then, having established the market, come back to the farmers and say, "Look, if you grow 1,000 tonnes of sorghum, I will buy it at such and such a price". What is so hard about that? Not only does it provide a sound economic base for the Northern Territory's future but it provides employment and this is what it is all about.

We are talking all the time about unemployed people. We hear a lot of talk about unemployed Aborigines. There are a lot of unemployed Europeans too, a lot of kids leaving school with one future: gaol. There is no agricultural college; there is no practical education for them. They do not want academic education; they have shown that. Let us do something constructive; let us promote what this branch of the government says. You can grow these things but this government wants to poke the farmer into it. It does not want to go back on this Willeroo concept and it should, because I believe it has the backing of the opposition. It is a bit hard to understand but I think that is right. Having wrecked it, now they want to resurrect it.

I think we should adopt this sort of program. "When our next agricultural opportunity comes" - and it is there, it is there in what the government says - "it must proceed through some imaginative government structure as an active capital investing and sharing partner whose resolve will not weaken at the first setback or criticism". I commend those remarks of Mr John Waters and the Labor Party to this Assembly. Until we do grasp the nettle I do not think we will proceed. We have dilly-dallied long enough. We are wasting year after year thinking about things. Our employees come up with that - the public servants across the road. Let us implement it.

Mrs PADGHAM-PURICH (Tiwi): Mr Deputy Speaker in the adjournment debate this afternoon I would like to say a few more words following on from a question I asked the honourable Chief Minister this morning, regarding what happens when food is discarded from the emergency services store. I was told that when the food is discarded, it is taken to the local garbage dump and dumped under supervision.

This store of food that the emergency services unit has may not be very great but I think the principle of disposal is highly significant. Disposal down at the local garbage dump seems to me a sort of razed-earth policy which harks back to old biblical times. If humans cannot eat it, well nothing is going to eat it.

The situation as I see it, taken to the extreme, is that there is a certain amount of food which can be eaten but it has a shelf-life which finishes at the end of the month, say on Wednesday, the 31st. On Wednesday the 31st the food can be eaten by humans. On Thursday the 1st of the next month, it cannot. Now when is this cut-off point? On 4.21 pm on the Wednesday, at midnight, or a 7.59 am on Thursday the 1st?

There is an interesting point here, as I understand the relevant law relating to the feeding of pigs. This tinned food can be eaten by humans on Wednesday the 31st. If the shelf-life finishes, then it cannot be eaten and it is disposed of on Thursday the 1st. But under the law at present it cannot be eaten by pigs either. I may be wrong about this; it is rather a grey area but I think I am right - because on Thursday the 1st, that food becomes pig swill.

Surely a more logical way to look at this food store would be that, before the shelf-life runs out, this food be disposed of to humans - either sold by auction or sent for immediate use to government institutions etc. Just by turning this store of food over a little more frequently a great saving of our valuable resources would be made which I think would far outweigh the slight extra cost of labour involved in sorting it out. To dump this food which has outrun its shelf-life seems to me to show shades of the over-reaction which occurred after Cyclone Tracy when one of our boys had the personal experience of - well, to make the story brief, straight after the cyclone I had in my care between 80 and 90 dogs that people had brought out for me to care for. And with the food we had at our place, I would see us all eating damper in about two weeks. We had been told there was a supermarket in town that had been wrecked, to go in straight away and get some food. So one of the boys took the ute in and loaded it up with tinned dog food. As soon as he had taken the ute full away, the front-end loader and the dozers came in to dispose of this food, down the dump. Now that, I thought, was over-reaction and I hope the same sort of thing never happens again. I would ask again that a little thought and reasonableness be given to this situation and other similar situations regarding store food.

Mr DOOLAN (Victoria River): Mr Deputy Speaker, in the NT News of 13 September an article appeared under the heading "Good Look at Coal" which has caused me and quite a lot of other people some concern. It is a very brief article which says:

The NT government will take a good look at the Territory's coal reserves. Mines and Energy Minister Mr Ian Tuxworth yesterday said the government wanted to find out whether the known deposits of coal would be enough for power generation in the Territory. "There are known deposits at Gove and Port Keats", he said. "The potential of these sites has not been fully evaluated. We have decided that a further investigation should be undertaken by the geological survey section of the Department of Mines and Energy". Mr Tuxworth said the Northern Territory Electricity Commission was looking at fuel options for major additions to existing electricity supplies. Local coal, apart from conforming to the government's policy for maximum utilisation of the Territory's natural resources, would be cheaper than imported oil which today fuels the bulk of the Territory's power generation plants. "The joint ventures in the Nabalco bauxite project at Gove recently announced a feasibility study into the possible construction of an aluminium smelter," Mr Tuxworth said. "Such a smelter would require large quantities of power at competitive prices. The use of local coal, unless the proposed Central Australian oil refinery goes ahead, would be the only way to supply cheap power in the Territory for such a project".

Mr Deputy Speaker, there are two reasons for my concern. In the first place, I think it is quite unnecessary to send officers of the geological survey section into the Daly River Reserve to investigate the coal potential because that reserve has been very thoroughly covered, not just by prospectors but in fact by multi-national companies.

The history of coal on that reserve and the finding of coal goes back to 1902 when it was found by a Dr Herbert Basedowe who was quite a remarkable man. He was a master of arts, a doctor of medicine and bachelor of science, an anthropologist and a geologist. He went down into the Daly River Reserve with a government geologist named L.V.L. Brown and they spent some time down there. As a result of that, they did a very extensive survey; they recorded coal and, in fact, they drilled for coal on the coast of Anson Bay and at Cliff Head. They recorded it and Basedowe provided a report to the South Australian government - two reports, in fact; one in 1905 and one in 1908 - carefully detailing the fact that they had sighted coal and drilled for coal, and sent some samples.

Prospectors have gone through that reserve over the years and there have been repeated findings of coal in seams and outcrops. The honourable Treasurer may or may not be aware that one of his ancestors was down there in the 1920s on a drilling rig. That was the father of Boyne Litchfield, at Batchelor, a long-time Territorian and a long-time friend of mine as a matter of fact. It is my understanding that at that time people were very well aware that there was coal on that reserve. Prospectors also made frequent reports of coal sightings.

Following the upsurge of mining in the 1960s, Planet Gold were down on that reserve, plus oil drilling companies, and the relics of their occupation are all over the reserve. They have left cable and stuff from their drilling rigs. Then in 1970 Utah, the notorious multi-national Utah, got into the place and they did not just have an authority to prospect but in fact a licence to mine coal. They had a couple of gigantic swamp buggies running around the reserve and were all set to go. Why it never went, I do not know. They had talked of constructing a railway from the mine site to the coast off Hyland Bay because of the nature of this country; it is swamp country with flood plains. They ran a road from close to the Moil near Tom Turner's Crossing down to the coast and that, in fact, is the track the Peppimenarti people now use for their barge-landing. It runs out at a place called Parida. Utah were ready to go and it looked as though it was going to proceed. People

were so interested in it that in September 1970 the department sent me down there to investigate sacred sites in the area and I spent some weeks between the Moil and the Daly recording sacred sites. From memory, I think I recorded either 24 or 27 sites of significance, map referenced them, gave the stories of the particular dreamings and the way in which they were of importance to the people. But suddenly interest dropped off.

They are not the only people who have been in there. Conzinc Riotinto have done a very exhaustive survey not only of the Daly River Reserve but in fact of all Aboriginal reserves throughout the whole of Australia. I have here part of what they said about the Daly River reserve:

This reserve covers the north-eastern extension of the Halls Creek-Mobile belt where it merges with or flanks the Pine Creek geosyncline. It has potential for diamonds, copper, lead, zinc and uranium.

The area west of the Chalanyi Creek fault (Port Keats sheet) and Tom Turner's fault (Cape Scott sheet) are areas where little or no gold prospecting was carried out, consequently no alluvial diamonds would have been recorded. This would also apply to the fold belt between the Victoria River and Chalanyi Creek faults (Port Keats sheet). The geology is similar to the southern part of the Halls Creek-Mobile belt and unrecognised kimberlite plugs could be present in the area.

The lower proterozoic sequence between the Victoria River fault and the Chalanyi Creek fault offers some potential for base metal and uranium mineralisation similar to the Pine Creek geosyncline. In particular the acid volcanics, Meeway volcanics, Bermka volcanics and the Noltenius formation of lower proterozoic age are well worth investigating. Some radiometric anomalies were recorded in the general area and some work was carried out by Planet Gold in 1968. Although no units equivalent to the Batchelor or Goodparla group have been mapped in the area, the area is still worth looking at for uranium, particularly the Hensche breccia at the head of Tom Turner's Creek which appears to mark a major unconformity between upper and lower proterozoic.

It goes on about Woolwonga Reserve and every single reserve in Australia. I think it would be futile and a waste of time, energy and money to send geological survey officers from the Mines Department. I assure you that the particular reserve has been thoroughly and very carefully marked for all kinds of minerals and coal potential.

The second reason for my concern is possibly more important. Recently, the deputy leader and myself were at Yirrkala at the historic handing over of title deeds to Aboriginal people on reserves. At that meeting the title deeds were handed over to Mr Charlie Arriu of Daly River and Mr Harry Wilson from Peppimenarti and Mr Patrick Narndu from Port Keats. Amidst a great fanfare of publicity the Minister for Aboriginal Affairs, the Chief Minister and quite a large retinue of hangers-on presented them with the titles. I cannot remember what the minister said verbatim but he did say words to the effect that from then on the Aboriginal people had title to the land and nobody could take it from them - they would say who went on and off their land; for the future and ever more, they would control their own land and the destiny of that land.

I believe that this press release is a very clear indication of how much the Minister for Mines and Energy respects Aboriginal titles to land. I think it is a bland and blase press release. For certain, the Aboriginal people have not been consulted and, in fact, yesterday I had a visit from a very

irate and vocal Aboriginal of the reserve. It appears that someone produced this clipping at the Northern Land Council meeting. It caused quite a deal of comment and there were some very upset people. The gentleman who saw me yesterday said, "You've got to stop this nonsense straight away". I advised him that I was not empowered to do such a thing but I certainly will be keeping him informed of the intentions of the government with regard to looking for coal on that reserve.

The federal government managed to secure the right to mine the uranium province against the wishes of the Aboriginal people on the pretext that it was in the national interest. I fail to see what pretext this government or the federal government is going to use to mine coal on the Daly River Reserve if that is the intention. There is no way it could be said that it is in the national interest, considering that there are billions of tons of coal reserves on the east coast of Australia which have not been mined yet.

Mr TUXWORTH (Barkly): Before I get onto the matter I wished to speak on this afternoon, I would like to take up a couple of points raised by the honourable member for Victoria River and perhaps clarify any misconception that may have developed in his mind and explain some of the background to the thinking that goes into mining exploration. Just as a forethought, I would say that I concur with the facts raised by the honourable member for Victoria River about the very early exploration that went on in that region. In fact, the day after the press release went out, a very notable Darwin personality come into my office and said, "Here is a copy of a letter written in 1901". In fact, the paper was so old that it was hard to bend. He had a second copy of the report written in 1907 relating to the mineral potential of the area. These were duly forwarded to the department so that it could be a part of their collation of information.

There are a couple of points that the honourable member may have missed in the reasoning behind the approach by the department to have a look at this particular project and indeed any coal project in the Northern Territory. There is no doubt in anybody's mind that we are in an energy crunch. It is not something that belongs to one community or another; it belongs to all of us and we are all going to be paying the bill and suffering the inconvenience of it in one way or another. Any government worth its salt is duty bound to try to alleviate the impact of the crunch when it comes and this is the effort to which we have been putting ourselves.

I would not dispute for one moment the fact that many exploration companies and prospectors have been operating in that particular region and throughout the whole of the Territory for the past 70 or 80 years. Some of them have turned up a lot of interesting material and others have been unlucky. The reality in mineral exploration is not what you find but how you find it; it is the thinking that goes into your exploration program that makes you a successful explorer.

There are several ways of approaching an exploration program. A man can get a lease and obtain any basic geological mapping and data that may be available to him relating to that land, develop a program and look for any metal that he may be lucky enough to find within the perimeters of his area. Another approach is for a company to say, "We have an interest in an ore body of a certain metal, of a certain size in a certain area that is convenient to ourselves. The geology and the aspects of this region are attractive; we will have a look. If we score, that's fine. But if we don't, we walk away from it".

There is no doubt in my mind that, when people like CRA and Utah move into an area, they are not looking for an ore reserve of coal that will perhaps drive a powerstation for 15 years in the town of Darwin or supply the North-

ern Territory with power over a period of 15 or 20 years. They are looking for a coal reserve that will give them an export capacity of 40 or 50 years, probably a coal reserve that will enable them to export at a rate of millions of tons per year to fit in with the dimensions of their operation. In many cases, these operations are purely for in-house supplies that big companies buy for themselves to keep their own steel works and generating plants going. In other cases, they are purely in the market to sell a raw material to a consumer who needs it to generate power.

Part of the thinking behind the department's approach is that there is no doubt that our needs and objectives are vastly different from the needs of Utah, CRA or any other of the operators that were in there. If we go in looking for a coal reserve, we are looking for a grade of coal suitable to fire generators that will run steam turbines to provide power for the Northern Territory on a large or a small scale for 10 years. That may seem insignificant to the opposition but the crunch is such that, if we can get a supply of coal in the Northern Territory that will give us a 10-years' lead for the generation of power, that would be quite an achievement, particularly given that we do not have any coal resources of note and we are faced with the prospect of continuing to run our powerhouses on crude oil. There is no doubt in anybody's mind that the cost of this is going to escalate out of all proportion. The department is mindful of the various criteria that they have to apply to their operation compared to the exploration techniques used by the companies mentioned by the honourable member for Victoria River.

There is one other consideration to give to this particular exercise. Very often people like CRA and Utah, which have very vast exploration funds available to them, take out an area and say, "This looks attractive, we'll put in a program". The program by Australian exploration standards is virtually a program of wild-cattling. They just stand back and spear 30 or 40 holes. If they do not turn something up in the first 30 holes, it is not big enough to interest them and away they go. By contrast, if you take note of various small Australian companies with limited resources, when they go over a prospect they go over it very meticulously. They are very careful about geophysical and drilling programs. There is no hit and miss testing. If a drill does not go right through the centre where they want it to go, they pull it back, wedge it and they go in again until they get the centre. They cannot afford for a drill hole to miss its target because their information would not be complete. The contrast is that the heavies in the game do not have to worry if their drill misses. They will pull it back, shift it 15 feet and give it another go. If they get it the second time, that is fine; if they do not, they will just call it a part of the percentage game that they are in and walk away from it.

These aspects of exploration, Mr Deputy Speaker, have been considered by the department in their approach to the coal program. We do not have a choice. If we have coal and it is a viable resource to fuel Northern Territory generators for 10 or 15 years, that sort of lead time is important to us and we have to find it. There is only one way to find it and that is to go and look for it. We must look very carefully at what we are going over, not stand back and have a couple of goes at it as though we are shooting two barrels of the shotgun from the hip. We must be careful in what we are doing from the start to the finish.

After we have gone through a meticulous exercise in any prospective region, if we are sure there is nothing there, then we are forced to turn to other areas. With the information available to us and the programs that have been carried out in the past, no one can guarantee that there is no coal available in the Northern Territory. We are sure that coal reserves have been established; we are also sure there has not been sufficient coal reserves, of suitable quality, established to interest people like Utah and CRA. That does not mean it is not of interest to the people of the Northern Territory and

particularly the Electricity Commission which would be the main purchasers of it.

The second aspect of the honourable member for Victoria River's speech was in relation to the government's relationship with Aborigines and the exploration for any mineral on Aboriginal land. I would not support for one moment the contention that the government was riding roughshod over anybody. The fact is that the Aborigines are the freehold title owners of their land. They have rights that must be observed by the Mines Department or any other exploration organisation in relation to that land. There is nothing this government would do to move outside those parameters.

The honourable member for Victoria River may not be aware that the Department of Mines and Energy talks constantly with the respective land councils about mineral activities in the Northern Territory - quietly and on an informal basis - so that the land councils are aware of what is going on. I can assure the honourable member for Victoria River that the departmental officers advise me they had quiet discussions and had informed the land councils of what was going to happen to this stage. Before anything happens now, it is incumbent upon the Mines Department to go to the respective land councils and traditional owners and go right through the whole program of what it wants to do with the people concerned. We will not be appearing on anybody's land, private or vacant crown land, unannounced with a drill and a truck ready to start work. Before anything happens, the whole business of discussion and negotiation with the respective people has to take place. If the honourable member for Victoria River can bring to my attention any cases where the Mines Department has not gone through that exercise, I would be particularly interested to hear about them because the department is very conscious of this and sensitive to the situation. They are determined they will not be caught up in a situation of conflict with traditional landholders or the land councils.

Rather than guess what is going to happen in the future, I would like to leave it at that. I believe we can plead such a case of urgency and need to establish coal reserves in the Northern Territory, or in fact any type of reserve that will give us power at a reasonable cost over the ensuing years, that anybody who consumes power would be only too keen to help us.

I would like to touch on a couple of other points today. The first is to pay tribute to the organisers of the Tennant Creek Gold Rush that was held last Sunday. It could only be described as a formidable success. The number of activities that went on during the course of the Gold Rush festival was quite enlightening for me. In fact, it was the biggest Gold Rush I have seen; I do not think I have seen so many people in Tennant Creek in one spot on any occasion before. The amount of work put in by the Lions Club who organised this festival is really a credit to them and it is a credit to the whole community for the way they supported the activities.

We had a very interesting innovation at the Gold Rush this year. Teams from the west coast of Tasmania, King Island, Mount Isa and Tennant Creek competed in a mine rescue competition that was set out for people to watch. I had always envisaged mine rescues as something that was done with guys hanging on ropes in the middle of a shaft recovering bodies on stretchers. Some of the equipment that is around these days is pretty old and archaic but, after seeing the sort of material and equipment these people are using these days and seeing how seriously they take the whole exercise, I could only say that I believe that mine rescue has now become a technology in itself. It is not just an exercise we go through to save lives. These people had the most fantastic equipment you could possibly imagine; they had equipment that would monitor any sort of gas from the moment they entered the mine until they got to the point where workmen were distressed or disturbed. They had recovery apparatus that has not been seen before. In fact the Mount Isa team took the thing so

seriously that they brought their company doctor along. It was a most interesting exercise and, if anybody has an opportunity to see such an event as this anywhere again, I would recommend it because it is most illuminating.

I have one other point that I would like to talk on today. Members have mentioned the contribution of the Northern Territory government to sport and the value of sport in the Northern Territory to young people. The honourable member for Elsey spoke earlier about the resources of the Northern Territory. I believe our greatest resource in the Northern Territory is in fact our youth and that we should be making every effort we can as a government to try and...

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

Mr VALE (Stuart): Mr Deputy Speaker, there are a couple of points I would like to raise during this afternoon's adjournment debate and both of them, I believe, are related.

The first pertains to a vast area in central Australia which has the possibility or the potential of becoming one of our most popular recreation areas in central Australia but unfortunately the late Department of Construction in the Northern Territory has continued to honeycomb that recreation area, the commonage as it is known, by continually adding sewage ponds in the area. What worries me is that in a few years' time when we run out of recreation land, we are going to look up and find there is nothing left and these ponds are going to be in the way. It is certain that with an expanding population something has got to be done.

I suggest a solution that is probably fairly simple: instead of the primary treatment of sewerage effluent that we use in central Australia, we should go immediately to secondary treatment which would (a) do away with the smell and (b) allow all of that water to be used for irrigation by the Central Australian Racing Club, the Apex Club which runs the gymkana ground, the Pony Club which is there and possibly, with the money they save, instead of every other year having to put \$180,000 or \$200,000 worth of sewerage ponds in, they could use that money to start to develop the commonage: to put in roads, parks, gardens and things like that and again use the water from the sewerage ponds.

The second point I want to raise relates to the Ghan passenger train in Alice Springs and the obvious need to retain the Ghan or at least a portion of the Ghan or a portion of the railway line. I think, from an historical point of view, it would be very nice if we could maintain the line all the way to Oodnadatta but I think costs would prohibit that. What I would suggest - and I believe it is engineeringly possible - is that the old Ghan line would remain inside the wider new line for the 60 to 70 mile stretch south of Alice Springs to the proposed recreation reserve which contains the Ooraminna rock carvings and which is being developed by the Territory Parks and Wildlife Commission. The Tourist Board and the historical groups in the Northern Territory could run this train service and they could also be given the development of the commonage. The train service from Alice Springs could be a valuable asset to move people who want to get out to those reserves during the weekend to relax.

The thing that worries me is that we are really only two years away from the new train arriving in Alice Springs and within a matter of months I would expect the old line would be ripped up and the old trains and locomotives would be packed onto trucks and removed from the Northern Territory. I am not quite sure whether the existing legislation which protects the Kookaburra would also apply to the Ghan train but I think that from central Australia's point of view and maybe from the whole of the Northern Territory's point of view...

Mr Isaacs: A constitutional dilemma, if ever there was one.

Mr VALE: ... it would be a tremendous loss to Northern Territory residents - a loss of part of our history - if that tribute to the Afghan camel drivers, by way of the Ghan, was removed forever from the Northern Territory.

Ms D'ROZARIO (Sanderson): Mr Deputy Speaker, I thought I would take this opportunity in the adjournment debate to tell the honourable Minister for Lands and Housing about a small grievance I have.

It is not a matter of great consequence but as it has now happened to me three times, either at his own hand or by the hand of his officers, I thought I should bring it to his attention. I am referring to the inability of the minister and his staff to address letters to me that will get to me in a reasonable time and which are addressed correctly.

Some months ago I wrote to the honourable minister, who was then the Cabinet Member for Finance and Planning, about a particular matter which I took up with him direct. Several weeks later I received a reply to my letter which came from the honourable minister's office but it had done the rounds as it were, of the Darwin post office because the letter was addressed to me at Box 372, Darwin. I expect that what the minister's staff meant was that it should go to Box 3721 which is the address of this Assembly. But that did not happen. The box holder or the tenant of Box 372 was a little while in notifying the post office that one June D'Rozario was not known at Box 372 and so it was indeed some five weeks later that I received the minister's reply.

Mr Deputy Speaker, I forgot about this incident but something else happened which caused me to wonder again. I had some occasion to correspond with the secretary of the Town Planning Board some months ago. This related to an appearance that I had to make before the board. The notification of the date of the appearance, as specified in the Town Planning Act, has to be within a certain time. So when I had not received the notification within a certain time, I tried to find out what was happening. I was informed by the secretary that a letter had gone out to me. Well, Mr Deputy Speaker, so it had but it did not have a stamp on it. Now, as anyone here who corresponds with people that are tightfisted would know, when a letter does not have a stamp on it, you do not merely have to pay twenty cents, you have to pay forty. So when it came to my attention that there was a letter awaiting me and that on payment of forty cents, I could receive it, I duly sent the courier that picks up my mail to pay out his forty cents. And lo and behold, there it was - the reply from the secretary of the Town Planning Board.

Mr Deputy Speaker, I even forgot that. I let that incident pass. But a few days ago - and you would be very interested in this particular incident, Mr Deputy Speaker - I received a further letter from the office of the Treasurer. This letter was really a circular letter which contained the background to the Northern Territory proposed casino development which we discussed earlier today. This letter was addressed to my private post office box number but was addressed to the member for Casuarina. I thought it was merely an error in the address on the envelope, so imagine my dismay when I opened up the letter and found the error had been repeated and, indeed, there it was - addressed to me, as the member for Casuarina.

Mr Deputy Speaker, I wonder whether perhaps your colleagues are trying to tell you something. This matter is probably not of very great consequence but it does tend to give an impression of inefficiency on the part of the honourable minister opposite and some of his staff. I just bring this to his attention because I would hope that not too many of the members of the public are being corresponded with in this fashion.

What I did want to speak about, Mr Deputy Speaker, is a matter which has been raised in the Darwin area recently. It is a very timely matter indeed. I refer to the conduct of a seminar on natural hazard management organised by the North Australian Research Unit of the Australian National University in Northern Australia. I am well aware that some members of the frontbench opposite had some knowledge that this seminar was in progress because hospitality was extended to some speakers at that seminar. However, I did want to inform other members who might not have known that the seminar was in progress. I could perhaps give them a short run-down on what occurred during this seminar for their own information because it does have some bearing on their electorates.

The people at this seminar were very well-known workers in the field of hazard mitigation and they comprised professionals in practice as well as academics and a number of local people. I might say that I was honoured to be invited to deliver a paper at the seminar which I duly did.

The topics covered would be of some interest to the honourable member for Nhulunbuy and Tiwi and on our own side the member for Arnhem, as well as all those members representing urban electorates in the Darwin area. I might just run through some of the topics: the nature of hazards to which regions in north Australia are subject, and the development of hazard warning systems. There was also a great deal of discussion on measures for the mitigation of damage as a consequence of disasters. The disasters considered, by and large, were floods, cyclones and earthquakes. There were papers given by local people on the handling of a disaster and there were also papers given on reconstruction and research priorities.

As you can see, Mr Deputy Speaker, this seminar was a fairly comprehensive one. It was very timely indeed, having regard to the fact that the north Australian region is just coming into its wet season. I would like to mention to members that these papers will be available later from the Australian National University if they are interested to have the details of what was said.

I would like to place on the public record my commendation of the North Australian Research Unit for having organised this seminar and having brought a number of interstate and overseas guests to Darwin to discuss this matter to which the Darwin area has been subject in the last few years and also to witness the reconstruction of the city that has taken place since Cyclone Tracy.

Motion agreed to; the Assembly adjourned.

Wednesday 20 September 1978

Mr Speaker MacFarlane took the Chair at 10 am.

PETITION

Proposed Concrete Batching Plant

Mr PERRON (Lands and Housing): I present a petition from 50 residents of rural Darwin expressing concern over a proposed development in the area. The petition bears the Clerk's certificate that it conforms with the requirements of Standing Orders. I move that the petition be received and read.

Motion agreed to; petition received and read:

The ACTING CLERK: To the honourable Speaker and members of the Legislative Assembly for the Northern Territory, the humble petition of the undersigned citizens of the Northern Territory respectfully sheweth that we are all residents of the Humpty Doo district who have been informed that a company is considering erecting a concrete batching plant in our area, namely upon lot 32 section 353 Hundred of Strangways. We wish to advise you of our extreme dismay and concern regarding this project. Four grounds upon which we would be seriously inconvenienced by the presence of a batching plant are:

1. the condition of the road in the wet season will seriously deteriorate due to the heavy traffic;
2. the noise of the loader and of the trucks will be of considerable nuisance to some residents;
3. the dust will be a nuisance in the particular neighbourhood which has such a rural residential character about it; and
4. it will be unsightly and completely out of character with the area which, as you may know, is likely to be zoned rural residential under the Town Planning Ordinance of the Northern Territory in the near future.

Your petitioners therefore humbly pray that all Assembly members take whatever steps they can to prevent this project going ahead and your petitioners as in duty bound will ever pray.

STATUS OF CHILDREN BILL

(Serial 170)

Bill presented and read a first time.

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

This is a bill to ensure that the law is in step with community feeling. In the past, the law has always regarded children born outside marriage as of lesser status than children born to married parents. At common law, an illegitimate child was classed as filius nullius, meaning no one's son, and suffered great disadvantages especially in matters of inheritance. In medieval times, this view may have matched social opinion but now the law is dragging behind. Today, a child whose parents are not married suffers no social stigma. Indeed,

in Australia, the term "bastard" is often used as a term of affection rather than an insult. The Territory has already abolished any legal disadvantages suffered by children born out of wedlock. For example, they can inherit property if their parents die without a will and may apply for support if dependent on a parent who is killed. With some of these changes, the Territory was ahead of the states.

This bill is designed to complete this abolition and, once and for all, abolish any discrimination against or references to illegitimate children in the laws of the Northern Territory. Already most Australian states have introduced similar legislation. However, in the Territory it has a special relevance. Statistics for births in Australia show that in 1975 and 1976 the percentage of children born outside marriage in the Territory was double that for the rest of Australia. Approximately 23.5% of births in the Territory were ex-nuptial whilst in the rest of Australia the figure was only about 10%. This great difference is due to the classification of children of Aboriginal marriages as illegitimate. However, these children are the offspring of stable, socially-recognised, traditional marriages. To class them as illegitimate and somehow less than children of legal marriages is an insult to the Aboriginal people. The Territory cannot equate traditional marriages with legal marriages for all purposes as the law of marriage is a Commonwealth responsibility. However, this bill is intended to recognise traditional marriages as equal to legal marriages for the purposes of the status of children.

In clause 3, the definition of "marriage" includes a relationship between an Aboriginal man and woman that is recognised as a traditional marriage by the society or group to which they belong. Read with clause 5, it has the effect that children of such a marriage are, for the purposes of this bill, equal to children of a legal marriage. It is hoped that this will both make it easier for parentage to be recognised as law and act as a symbolic recognition of the worth of traditional marriages. This consideration of traditional marriage is part of the government's policy of introducing legislation to abolish all distinctions in Territory law between traditionally and legally married people and their offspring. Other areas in which legislation is planned to this end are registration of births, the Family Provision Ordinance and the laws of evidence relating to married persons.

Included in the bill are two presumptions of parenthood. The first restates the common law rule that a child born during a marriage or within ten months afterwards is the child of that marriage. The second creates a presumption based on cohabitation and states that, if a man and woman are living together around the probable time of conception of a child, then the child is presumed to be the child of the couple. These presumptions are designed to make it easier for a child to establish who are its parents, especially the offspring of a de facto relationship.

The bill also abolishes one aspect of discrimination against the father of a child to whose mother he is not married. Under the Adoption of Children Ordinance, if a child is born outside marriage, the consent of its father is not required for its adoption. The mother's consent suffices. This may infringe the rights of the father. The bill provides that, if a man is proven to be the father of such a child, his consent is required to its adoption and that adoption can be postponed if he takes steps to prove he is the father.

In summary, the bill abolishes, for all purposes of the law of the Northern Territory, the distinction between children born in wedlock and those born out

of wedlock; secondly, it abolishes the rule of construction that the words "child" and "children" in wills, deeds and statutes means only legitimate child or children; thirdly, it establishes rules for distributing property amongst children of unmarried parents and provides for administrators, executors and trustees responsibilities to those children; fourthly, it provides the types of evidence which may establish parenthood and provides that applications for decrees of paternity and maternity may be made to the Supreme Court - in the past such decrees have not been available; fifthly, it allows courts to order blood tests in actions involving parenthood - such tests will not be mandatory and no person who refuses to have a test on religious or similar grounds will be penalised; and finally, the bill removes all references to legitimate and illegitimate children in Territory law and replaces the references with a description of that child as a child whose parents were not married at its conception or birth or any time in between. To do this, a number of ordinances must be amended. These amendments are set out in the schedule to the bill. This bill introduces a much needed reform and abolishes a senseless piece of discrimination in the law.

I commend the bill to all honourable members.

Debate adjourned.

LOTTERY AND GAMING BILL (Serial 154)

Bill presented and read a first time.

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

This bill seeks to amend the Lotteries and Gaming Ordinance to establish a racing and gaming commission to control those industries in the Northern Territory. In the past, government administration of racing and gaming has been sadly neglected. This is not to say that those officers involved have performed poorly but rather to point to the fact that this is one of those areas where Territory legislation has been found wanting. Honourable members will recall that, in 1977, the Tasmanian Racing and Gaming Commissioner, Mr Arthur Neilson was commissioned to hold an inquiry into our legislation and administration. He concluded that our legislation was inadequate and recommended that the commission now proposed in this bill be established.

Briefly, the system for Territory racing and gaming administration until now can be summed up in two points. First, the police licensing branch has been responsible for approved association and lottery administration and, secondly, we have had a Betting Control Board whose principal function has been directed towards the control of off-course bookmakers. Basic administration association with bookmakers' activities has been handled by a Betting Control Board officer. This bill will see the demise of the Betting Control Board.

It is the government's view that, so far as is reasonably possible, all racing and gaming activities should be controlled by the one authority. As from 1 September, the responsibility of the police licensing branch for lotteries and approved associations was transferred to the lotteries and gaming unit in anticipation of this legislation to establish the racing and gaming commission. Honourable members will appreciate that the bill before them is not a re-write of the Lotteries and Gaming Ordinance. The Neilson inquiry recommended its repeal and the enactment of completely new provisions and

that course will be adopted by the government. The establishment of a racing and gaming commission as proposed in this bill is a step in that direction. The creation of the commission will allow the promised review of existing legislation to be expedited.

It is proposed that the racing and gaming commission have powers of control, administration and research. These are detailed in division 2, powers and functions of the commission, clauses 7M and 7N. Honourable members will note the proposed responsibilities of the commission include the investigation and recommendation of matters relating to the administration and operation of casinos. It will take a direct interest in the gaming aspects of what I may term traditional forms of gambling such as lotteries and horse and dog racing. The commission in fact will bring a new look to the Territory's racing and gaming industries. The government sees it as a necessary body to develop effective and progressive measures in the interests of the adult public, the various interest groups involved and the government itself.

It is the government's intention that the commission would responsibly pursue opportunities for growth in the various codes as well as exerting adequate control. The racing and gaming commission will have the goal of ensuring prosperity of those elements under its umbrella while acting in the interests of the community. It can be expected to address itself to the questions of financial support for the racing industry and to make revenue recommendations to the government.

The bill expressly provides in clause 7D(3) that membership of the commission is forbidden to any person who has a personal interest in the gaming business, a racehorse or a greyhound. The government is concerned to see that there shall be no taint attached to the commission. It will be an impartial body free to take an independent overview of the racing and gaming industry. Honourable members and the community at large should expect nothing less. Through legislation, it is our responsibility as a government and as an Assembly to ensure that the smell of corruption, the smell of crime and the hint of shady deals does not occur in the administration of Territory racing and gaming. This policy will be reflected in the controls we will impose on the operations of casinos in the Territory and it will be a priority task of the racing and gaming commission to address itself to this matter.

The bill provides for a commission with a membership of 3, including a chairman, all of whom shall be appointed by the Administrator. It sets out safeguards for removal from office or disqualification from office and procedures to be adopted for meetings of the commission. I commend the bill.

Debate adjourned.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT BILL (Serial 173)

Bill presented and read a first time.

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

The purpose of this bill is to provide by amendment to the Local Government Ordinance a simplified alternative form of local or community government than that which now operates in the major population centres under the municipal or corporation system. Consistent with the determination of Territory people as a whole to obtain self-government or self-management from federal control, there

remains a determination amongst many communities, both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal, to obtain a greater degree of local control in respect of matters over which they have the greatest knowledge and in respect of which they have the most acute and intimate concern. This government accepts and indeed endorses that determination and in our turn we are happy to offer the greatest possible devolution or handover of those functions of government which are of principal or immediate concern to the residents of those smaller and in many cases remote communities.

As honourable members will be aware, the government has ordered a complete review of the principal ordinance and this is now being undertaken in consultation with the three existing municipalities and with the Corporation of the City of Darwin. Notwithstanding this, the government feels, in response to the views and wishes of remote communities as already expressed to us on this side of the House by many of their representatives during our wide travel throughout this Territory, that we should proceed to formulate legislation offering the handover of local government at the earliest opportunity. I would like to emphasise that the presentation of this legislation at this time is a response to a clear need based on the wishes of communities and is not to be seen in any way as being a onesided affair. There will be no compulsion on any person or any community to accept this offer. This is an offer of localised self-government supported by Territory law which will enable communities to make their own decisions also supported by law. Local or community law in the form of bylaws should best be made by those people who live in and are aware of their own community needs and problems.

Turning now to the need for this amendment, honourable members will be aware that the municipal type of local government is basically designed for cities or large towns and is over-intricate for areas with small or dispersed populations. It is also fairly inflexible - that is, it would impose virtually the same arrangements on every community without regard to their particular circumstances. The government believes that, pending the comprehensive review of local government of which I have spoken, it should now be trying to provide the opportunity for communities outside of Darwin, Alice Springs, Tennant Creek and Katherine to participate in the management of their own affairs. I need hardly mention there is considerable diversity in these other communities in terms of population, isolation, traditions and prosperity. To cater for these needs, the government is formulating a broad and flexible type of local government system which is to be known as community government.

While the proposed legislation is designed to provide maximum flexibility, the government of the Northern Territory stands ready between now and its final passage to respond to any local community initiative or reasonable suggestions and invites the fullest possible input from communities. I and officers of my department will continue to travel to remote communities when we are asked to do so. To date, the Chief Minister and I have between us spoken to 12 communities about this offer and I say that the proposal has been met with universal interest and, in some cases, enthusiasm. These negotiations will, hopefully, lead us to offering a form of local government tailored to meet the community's specific needs. The concept of community government is meant to be flexible in point of time so that the features of a community government can be adapted to respond to the changing conditions or the wishes of the particular community.

Let me now turn to some of the specific conditions of the bill. Arrangements as to funding will be an important part of the package of community government which the Northern Territory government will negotiate with any community wishing to avail itself of the option we are laying before it. Many communities throughout the Territory already receive substantial sums of money from the Northern

Territory government under existing arrangements. This law will allow greater say by the communities in determining how those and other government moneys will be spent in their own areas. This government is not only offering local government to appropriate communities but is offering them the opportunities to fashion their own type of local government. I want to make it perfectly clear once again that there will be no imposition of community government or any other form of local government; there cannot be. The extent and style of this responsibility are matters for the particular community, as is the timing of their attainment.

A feature of the bill is the extensive provisions for consultation at all stages. This has a twofold aim. It ensures that the government responds to the express wish of the community and that there is a clear understanding of the rights and obligations which the community accepts. This is fundamental for a sound and workable relationship between the Northern Territory government and all the communities throughout the Northern Territory. The proposed law makes provision for the communities to formulate and develop a community government scheme for consideration by the minister.

I invite the attention of honourable members and the public to clause 425 which enables communities to express their wishes as to the form, management and administration which they consider to be most appropriate to their needs. The scheme which is worked out with any community would cover not only the question of functions and powers which a community government council would have available to it, but the nature of the council and other features of its leadership, the form of elections, the definition of an elector, the location of boundaries and such other aspects of operations as may seem necessary or desirable in each particular case.

Clause 433 of the bill sets out the responsibilities of the minister to satisfy himself that the community government scheme is appropriate to that community before he approves the draft scheme and that that draft scheme has the support of the majority of people in the affected area. Once the community and the minister have reached agreement on a community government scheme, the minister cannot alter that scheme without full consultation with the people in the community area. The bill is meant to allow for considerable flexibility in what functions and power each community government council will have. Clause 452 and related provisions give a wide range of functions and powers from which, at the time the community government council is established and then as the need arises, the authority of that community government council would be agreed. In approving particular functions and powers of community government councils, the minister must be satisfied that the community supports and is willing to accept the proposals. In contemplating the activities of a community government council, it should be made clear that the community government council would not be able to engage in trading activities. This is a matter which is covered by other legislation to be dealt with by this Legislative Assembly.

As previously stated, the major source of revenue for a community government council will be grants made by the Northern Territory government. The amount of the grant to any community government council would depend naturally on the sort of activities of the particular community government council. Under clause 472 a community government council would have the authority to make bylaws for the purposes connected with its functions and powers, including the power to levy charges for services it delivers. Because of the large amounts of money which a community government council would be handling, there are a number of provisions dealing with financial administration which is standard practice for all local government organisations in Australia. There are also provisions for the auditing and checking of the accounts of community government councils.

Clauses 474 to 479 provide for the steps to be taken in the unlikely event of a community government seeking the minister's agreement to discontinue that council or being unable to fill the requirements of the law for some reason. These steps are also to be taken in close consultation with the council in order to seek a resolution of the problem. In any event, the full Legislative Assembly has the right to overturn the minister's decisions under these clauses. It can be seen that the minister would only take these steps in the most serious and irreversible circumstances. There are also provisions for re-election of a council after the problems have been resolved.

Whilst the provisions of this legislation have general application throughout the Territory, honourable members will be aware that many Aboriginal communities may seek to avail themselves of the benefits of this legislation. Honourable members would also be aware that the federal government has also brought in legislation called the Aboriginal Councils and Associations Act. Members would also be aware of the extreme disquiet of all Australian state governments and the people of the Northern Territory at the time of the federal government's passage of that law. The Northern Territory government for its part believes that the residents of the Northern Territory Aboriginal communities are as much a part of the Northern Territory as any non-Aboriginal community and their citizens are as Territorian as any resident of Darwin, Alice Springs or other towns. It is my firm belief, based on my personal discussions with many of our Aboriginal Territorians, that they wish to associate themselves with our new found Territory independence as much as you and I do. It is for this reason that I believe that those people will look to this future Territory law rather than the one made in Canberra. In any event, it would be clear from reading the two pieces of legislation side by side, that the Territory government proposal offers far more by way of self management than the federal act.

Notwithstanding all of this, however, we now believe the federal government intends to allow the federal act to apply to the Northern Territory. The federal act was designed to apply right across Australia. This legislation was designed to meet the specific and real needs of the Territory. There will be inevitable confusion if the federal act is allowed to apply to the Territory both in Aboriginal communities and in administration. No good can come from an improper competition of the kind which would inevitably result.

The Territory government, through this bill, has clearly demonstrated a desire and ability to recognise the special needs of remote communities. The federal act was brought into being at a time when there was a vacuum of such legislative thinking. There would not now seem to be any reason why the federal act should apply to the Territory. I am sure that our Aboriginal Territorians would agree that their affinity is with the Territory in the same manner as do the people of Batchelor, Pine Creek, Adelaide River and Ti Tree who are currently expressing considerable enthusiasm for an executive role in their own affairs. I commend the bill to honourable members.

Debate adjourned.

TRAFFIC BILL (Serial 168)

Bill presented and read a first time.

Mr STEELE (Transport and Works): Mr Speaker, I move that the bill be now read a second time.

This bill excludes small-powered cycles from the requirements of ordinary motor vehicles under the Traffic Act. A parallel amendment

is being proposed for the Motor Vehicles Act. The amendment does not exclude such machines and their riders from observance of the rules of the road; it merely places them in the same category as ordinary bicycles. It is a very simple bill and I commend it to honourable members.

Debate adjourned.

LIQUOR BILL (Serial 153)

Bill presented and read a first time.

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

During the previous sittings of this Assembly, I tabled a preliminary draft of this bill and invited comments from all interested parties. Since then, comments have in fact been received from a number of sources and, as a consequence, several changes have been made to the bill. The main principles incorporated in the bill remain unchanged - that is, to remove the administration of liquor licensing from the police force and to provide for the wide range of circumstances existing throughout the Northern Territory to be taken into account when issuing individual liquor licences.

The basis of the bill is the establishment of a liquor commission. Honourable members will note that the original proposal to appoint a single commissioner has now been changed. The bill before us provides for a four-member commission. The chairman and deputy chairman will be full-time officials with the chairman being responsible for the day-to-day administration of the act in the northern region of the Territory and the deputy chairman responsible for administration in the southern region. The two other members will be part-time and one of these must be a legal practitioner of not less than five years' standing. Support staff for the commission will consist of a registrar and his deputy, assessors, who will act as advisers to the commission, and inspectors.

The bill provides the commission with wide discretionary powers and selling conditions to apply to individual licences. There will be no specific type of licences such as we have now, only licences and special licences. General licences, if I may call them that, will have such conditions applied to them as the commission thinks appropriate in each case. A hotel in, say, Elliott may be subject to completely different conditions relating to standards of accommodation and the conduct of the licence than would be applied to a hotel in Darwin. However, it is certainly not the intention of this bill to allow all licensed premises to operate as hotels and I would expect licensed stores, for example, to continue to be subject to much the same restrictions as they are now.

Turning to the specific provisions of the bill, I draw honourable members' attention firstly to division 1 of part II which relates to the establishment of the liquor commission. The actual appointment of the members is covered by clause 7. I particularly draw attention to subclause (3) which gives the deputy chairman specific authority to exercise all of the powers of the chairman within the area defined as the southern region in accordance with subclause (2).

Clause 8 provides that the chairman and the deputy chairman are to be appointed for not more than seven years and the other two members for not more

than three years. Clause 9 provides for salaries, allowances etc for members to be determined by the Administrator. The remainder of that division deals mainly with determination of appointments and temporary absences of members. However, clause 14 should be particularly noted as it requires the commission to submit annual reports to the minister.

Division 2 of part II deals with the appointment and functions of assessors. As I indicated earlier, assessors are intended to act as advisers to the commission, particularly in relation to circumstances which may apply in specific communities. Honourable members will note that clause 17 places a definite onus on the commission to seek the advice of an assessor where such advice is relevant to a matter under consideration.

The next division of the bill relates to the appointment of registrars, deputy registrars and inspectors and details the powers of inspectors to enter licensed premises. In this regard, I particularly mention the requirements for inspectors to produce an identity card upon demand by a licensee. In the general section of part II of the bill, clause 21 requires members of the commission and assessors to disclose any financial interest they may have in any matter under consideration and also specifically prohibits any member of the commission from having an interest in a licence. Clause 23 enables the commission to delegate its powers whilst clause 24 precludes any criminal or civil action being taken against anyone concerned in the administration of the legislation for any act done in good faith.

Part III of the bill deals with the licences and it is not my intention to speak at length on these provisions as the basic principles involved have already been explained. Generally, the procedure to be followed is that an application for a licence is lodged with the registrar and the applicant is then required to publish in the Gazette or in a newspaper notice of the application. If no objection to the application is received within 30 days, the commission may proceed to either issue a licence or conduct a hearing into the matter. In issuing a licence, the commission may set such conditions as it thinks fit, particularly relating to matters on which such conditions could apply being specified in clause 32. Factors that the commission may consider are listed in clause 33.

A standard fee of \$200 is payable upon the issue of a licence. Clause 36 prescribes the fee to be payable upon renewal of a licence. Honourable members will note that, in effect, the fees payable in each case are based on the value of sales made and those fees are generally the same as are payable at present. Provision is also made for surrender or transfer of licences, with provision being made for objections to be lodged against licence transfers where appropriate.

Parts IV and V of the bill relate to objections and complaints and the conduct of hearings respectively. Again, I do not think it is necessary to detail these provisions which are generally of a machinery nature. However, I do draw honourable members' attention to the fact that the deposit required to be lodged with the objections and complaints has been reduced from \$100 to \$20.

Part VI of the bill relates to special licences. The intention here, as indeed throughout the bill, is to streamline procedures - in this case, those relating to the issue of licences for special functions or special purposes. In practice, it is envisaged that the commission will lay down guidelines for the issue of special licences and, provided an applicant satisfies those guidelines, there should be no unnecessary delays in obtaining such licences.

The next part of the bill, that is part VII, deals with the commission's powers to enforce compliance with the act and with the conditions to which licences are subject. In essence two separate sets of circumstances are covered: the first to which clauses 66 and 67 relate, concerning the specific circumstances under which the commission may suspend a licence, and the second to which clauses 69 and 73 relate, concerning the specific circumstances under which the commission may cancel a licence.

Part VIII deals with supplies of liquor in areas which may be declared restricted areas under the act. In summary form, these provisions provide for the commission to prohibit the sale, consumption or possession of liquor within a specified area. Application must be made to the commission for that area to be declared a restricted area and the commission is required to hold a formal hearing to ascertain the opinions of the people living in that area as to whether such a declaration should be made. Notwithstanding the general prohibition to apply within restricted areas, the commission is also provided with the power to grant permits to individuals living within such areas to lawfully bring liquor into the area for their own personal use. Specific powers relating to the search of premises, seizure and forfeiture of goods, including vehicles etc have been provided to enable effective policing of the provisions relating to restricted areas. I feel sure that honourable members will agree that past experiences prove that only severe measures will be effective in ensuring compliance with the law in this particular area.

Turning now to part IX of the bill which deals with the obligations of licensees and defines the various offences to be created, there is little here that is not included in the current law. I would point out to honourable members one change that has been made to the original bill following discussions with representatives of the trade. Returns of liquor purchases are now to be required quarterly instead of monthly as originally proposed.

The provisions of part X which deals with alterations to premises have also been amended to now require the commission's approval only to structural alterations and not to alterations of a minor or temporary nature.

In the remainder of the bill, I think it is necessary to draw attention to clause 122 which provides for an order to be issued prohibiting the sale or supply of liquor to a specified individual whom the commission is satisfied is likely to endanger his health or the peace, welfare or happiness of his family through habitual or excessive use of liquor. A similar provision was not included in the draft bill tabled at the last sittings. However, it is in the current ordinance and I am assured that it is used at present to good effect.

Mr Speaker, I indicated to honourable members at the previous sittings that I would be seeking to have this bill pass all stages during these current sittings. Because of the importance of the bill and the fact that a number of amendments have now been made to the original proposals, it is not the government's intention to follow that course. I am confident, however, that the bill represents a major step forward in modernising the Territory's social legislation and that it will generally meet with the approval of all members. I commend the bill to honourable members.

Debate adjourned.

TRAFFIC BILL
(Serial 164)

Bill presented and read a first time.

Mr STEELE (Transport and Works): Mr Speaker, I move that the bill be now read a second time.

The purpose of this bill is to amend section 55B of the Traffic Act which relates to the issue of special licences to drive whilst disqualified. The bill itself removes some of the existing provisions and replaces them with provisions that remove any doubt as to how and when these licences should be issued. I believe they return us to the original intention of the issue of special licences and that was to issue them to a person who earned his living by driving so that loss of licence would not deprive him of his only means of earning a living.

In introducing this bill, I would like to recount some of the history of special licences. Legislation allowing for the issue of special licences was introduced in the former Legislative Council and became law on 7 April 1971. The essence of the legislation was that the defendant required the licence for his employment and that hardship could result if he was deprived of his licence during working hours. The emphasis on hardship as applied to a person's livelihood was, at the time of the introduction of the legislation, expected to be strictly observed and considered at length by the courts. An additional provision, since removed, was that application for a special licence could not be made until half of the disqualification period had elapsed or three months, whichever was the sooner. A more recent amendment gave magistrates the power to order that a person may not apply for a special licence during such time as the magistrate may determine. As far as I know, this power has rarely been exercised by magistrates.

When the original legislation was debated in 1970, the question of hardship imposed on the convicted person, because of loss of licence, became a major issue. In the debate Legislative Council member Mr Williams, later Mr Justice Williams, while supporting the amendments to the bill proposed by Mr Plant, had this to say in relation to the hardship question - I quote from Hansard debates of Tuesday 10 November 1970:

The real issue is whether we are more concerned with the interests of some particular individual or whether we are interested in the protection of society at large. This issue arose in the Supreme Court of the Northern Territory quite recently and a learned judge said: "It is often contended that the person who wholly or in part earns his living by driving a motor vehicle, a professional driver, should, other things being equal, be treated more leniently in respect of disqualification than a non-professional driver. The argument is sometimes based on what is claimed to be unreasonable hardship on dependants also. No doubt it is a serious matter. But it should also be said that it is more serious for a professional driver to commit a traffic offence than for a non-professional driver to do so, since the tendency to commit traffic offences existing in a professional driver is a greater menace to society than when existing in a non-professional driver. If a solicitor steals he is not only punished for larceny but he is also disqualified temporarily or permanently from practising as a solicitor. Why should not a similar principle be applied to protect society from the menace of a professional driver who commits a traffic offence?"

More recently, the former Chief Stipendiary Magistrate, Mr Kirkman, had this to say in relation to the issue of special licences:

Well, I am well aware that there is a feeling around Darwin that licence disqualification on DUI matters really does not matter two hoots. All you have got to do is to go and apply for a special licence. So far as I am concerned, people are not going to get special licences unless they prove they are entitled to them. Now, there is only one way that the number of drink-driving convictions in this Territory is going to be reduced and that is if the Legislative Assembly has got the guts to do what other states have done, and either cut out special licences altogether or at least have a statutory period of three months or six months during which a person cannot apply. It is just a joke up here, in my view, and I am speaking as a judicial officer. It is just a joke that people can be disqualified from getting a driving licence one day, then go and apply for a special licence the next day. Until the law makes us see fit to alter that, they will never cut down the number of cases coming before this court.

It is obvious from both these comments that the concept of special licences is not held in very high regard by either the judge cited by Mr Williams or the former Chief Stipendiary Magistrate. On the one hand, the learned judge implies that a person who earns his living by driving and requires a driver's licence for this reason should be treated no differently by the courts than anybody else when it comes to loss of licence for an offence involving a motor vehicle. On the other hand, Mr Kirkman advocates the removal of special licences from our ordinance altogether.

However, regardless of the comments of Mr Kirkman, it has become patently obvious that special licences have become easier to get over the years since their introduction in 1971. In the first full year that the provisions were in operation, only 19 special licences were issued in the Northern Territory, when there were 27,000 licensed drivers here. In 1976-77, 383 special licences were issued and the licensed population had increased to 29,000 people. The last financial year 1977-78 saw a total of 428 special licences issued, with a licensed population of 32,000. These figures make it again obvious that a considerable amount of time of the courts is taken up with the hearing of special licence applications. Only drastic measures to amend the special licence provisions in NT legislation will remedy that problem.

It is my intention that the bill will set a mandatory period of two months wherein no application for a special licence may be made; secondly, the notice of a special licence application from the court to the registrar will be in writing and delivered to the registrar not less than seven days before the date of the hearing; and thirdly, special licences will be issued only to persons who earn their living by driving and who the courts are satisfied will drive without danger to the public.

In addition, the bill will provide that the courts cannot order the issue of a special licence to a person - (a) to drive a motor vehicle of a class which that person was not licensed to drive immediately before he was disqualified; (b) whose disqualification was related to a conviction for an offence committed during the course of his employment; (c) who was a holder of a special licence at the time of his conviction for the offence in relation to which he was disqualified; or (d) who has been convicted of an offence by reason that he was driving during a period of disqualification.

The setting of a period during which no application can be made is not a new concept. This was part of the original special licence legislation which provided for a non-application period of three months or half the disqualification period, whichever was the sooner. This provision has since been removed. The argument given for its removal was that the magistrates at the time believed their power to award special licences should extend to the whole of the disqualification period and not after the expiration of a certain period, up to three months for example. It is interesting to note that the removal of this provision was not argued on the grounds that it would place hardship on the disqualified person but rather was more convenient for the court at the time. The opinion of the court appears to have changed, as the former Chief Stipendiary Magistrate, Mr Kirkman, indicated in the statement I read previously. I agree with the magistrate that a non-application period be set and, consequently, the amendment sets that period at two months. It is hoped that a reintroduction of this concept will be an added deterrent to committing of offences against the Traffic Act, in particular those involving drink-driving which could result in loss of licence.

The amendment requiring the court to giving 7 day's notice to the registrar is necessary to adjust a situation which has arisen of late and that is that the registrar is often not advised of a special licence application until it is too late for him to collect any evidence which he may wish to present before the court. There have been occasions, for example, when the registrar has been phoned only five minutes before the hearing and, in one instance just recently, the registrar's representative was handed an application just prior to entering a courtroom to present evidence in another case. The application handed to him was scheduled to be heard that same afternoon. In order to afford the registrar sufficient time to research each application, the time of 7 days is included.

The provision that special licences be issued only to persons who earn their living by driving was the original intention of special licence legislation. That intention is now expressed very vaguely in the act and has been interpreted rather loosely on occasions. The act should be amended to make the intention patently clear. This will mean that only those persons whose entire livelihood depends on the possession of a driving licence are eligible to apply for a special licence. It will not extend, as is the case at present, to those persons whose employers require them to drive on occasions as a matter of convenience and not as a condition of employment.

Further to this, the bill provides that no special licence should be awarded to a person who earns his living by driving if that person lost his licence in consequence of a conviction for an offence committed whilst in the pursuit of his employment. The other provisions of the amendment have been included in an attempt to make the intention of the legislation absolutely clear to the various administering authorities. The courts have in fact, from time to time, ordered the issue of a special licence under the circumstances now listed for specific exclusion.

When I was considering these amendments, the question of the issue of a special licence for what might be termed extraordinary compassionate circumstances arose. I consulted with the Department of Law on this subject and the opinion I received was that it would not be possible to readily define the term. I reached the conclusion that it would be unwise to include a term that could not be defined, as that is the basic trouble with the special licence legislation at present: it is too open to individual interpretation. I commend the bill to the House.

Debate adjourned.

CASINO DEVELOPMENT BILL
(Serial 151)

Bill presented and read a first time.

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

This bill has been framed as an interim legislative measure to allow the government to progress its intention to eventually license casino operations of international stature in both Darwin and Alice Springs.

Honourable members will recall that some 7 months have elapsed since interested parties were invited to make submissions on casino development proposals in both Darwin and Alice Springs. The response augers well for private sector confidence in our second most important industry, tourism. From the 18 applications received, 7 corporations have been investigated with a view to proving their bona fides. That assessment is now nearing conclusion. Each company involved is prepared to engage in multi-million dollar developments should its application be approved. Members will appreciate the need to retain confidentiality in respect of the applicants but I can indicate that local, national and international interests are involved.

The bill, of course, is not intended as the final step towards the eventual establishment of casinos in the Territory. It proposes that the Treasurer be empowered to negotiate and enter into agreements with developers and that those agreements will be subject to later ratification by this Assembly. For the information of members, the responsibility for assessing the applicants has been vested in an interdepartmental committee comprising representatives of Treasury, the Law Department and the gaming unit. This panel will make recommendations to the government and I would expect that final selection of applicants will occur well before Christmas. At that time, the company or companies selected will be anxious to proceed with site assessments and development planning and, for that reason, this bill is now before the House.

Before detailing the provisions of the bill, I think it opportune that I should give further background information to honourable members on the casino proposals. The government holds the strong view that their introduction will serve the Territory's best interests. They form part of our strategy to broaden the Territory's economic base and increase both employment and investment opportunities. The industry that casinos directly relate to is tourism, and tourist development is accepted as probably the fastest job creator in any industry. It is a clean industry; it is diversified by definition and geography; it is labour intensive and it is a particularly high employer of women.

The government has noted with interest the five-year history of Australia's only legal casino in Hobart. Passenger arrivals in that state illustrate the impact that the casino has had on Tasmania's tourism industry. In 1971-72, total arrivals in Tasmania were 344,429. Wrest Point opened in February 1973 and in that financial year the figures climbed to 398,250. They jumped dramatically to 486,000 in 1973-74 and soared to over half a million in the next year. For 1977-78 the Tasmanian Department of Tourism estimated a 535,000 total arrival. The advent of that casino created expanding arrivals which in turn generated demand for extra hotel-motel bed space around the island, new restaurants, increases in hire-car fleets and demands on service industries, just to mention a few spin-offs.

Territory tourism today earns some \$35m to \$40m compared with at least \$90m in Tasmania. It is interesting to note that the operators of Wrest Point report spending more than \$2m in promotion campaigns in the five years, advertising both Tasmania and the hotel-motel complex. This is a supplement to the promotional expenditure of government and other arms of tourist industry. Wrest Point also employs some 500 people and, since 1973, its management reports the payment of some \$25m in wages and salaries. A survey of the economic effects of the complex on its host state early this year reports nearly \$10m paid in taxes to the Tasmanian government; \$13m spent by Wrest Point in purchasing goods and services within Tasmania, and that includes foodstuffs; and an estimated \$60m in goods and services bought by residential guests, exclusive of the amount they spent at Wrest Point and on fares. Those figures relate to the five years of operation.

Mr Speaker, it is inarguable that Australia's first legal casino has been of dramatic benefit to Tasmania. It is a unique establishment in this country and has attracted keen interest from this government during appraisal of casinos for the Territory. This government considers that Territory casinos will directly benefit the construction industry, from any decision to build a new complex or expand existing establishments. Tourist numbers will expand; facilities of international stature will do much to attract higher visitation from overseas countries, including those in the Southeast Asian region, Japan and the United States as well as from the rest of Australia. This view is supported by the Tasmanian experience and that of the companies who are seeking licences here in the Territory.

The company or companies which operate casinos in the Territory will be committed to spending large sums on Territory tourist promotion to protect their own investment. The increased visitor traffic which will result will place new demands on existing facilities - restaurants, hire cars, airlines, souvenir shops and in fact the whole retail sector. Casinos in the Territory will create hundreds of new employment opportunities and the resultant economic stimulus will be felt throughout the community.

Territory casinos will be established under strict controls because the gains I have just mentioned could be outweighed by lack of control. The Wrest Point casino has had an unblemished five-year record and the control system exerted by the Tasmanian government and the management has been responsible for that record. We have examined those systems and in legislation which parallels this bill provision will be made for the establishment of a racing and gaming commission. It is proposed to give the commission powers including investigation and recommendation to the government in matters relating to the administration and operation of casinos. Those controls will be strict and, among other things, designed to eliminate criminal activity sometimes associated with the operation of casinos.

So far as questions of undesirable social implications from casinos are concerned, it is my belief that the Tasmanian experience can be repeated in the Territory so long as tight controls are maintained. I might add that early opponents to the Tasmanian casino, including church and social welfare officers, are now on record as stating that their earlier predictions that there would be gambling excesses creating cases of personal and family hardship have not occurred. The government believes that by and large the people in our community are sensible and casino gambling, like other forms of gambling, will be approached by local people on a rational basis.

Mr Speaker, to address myself to the specific provisions of this bill, you will recall that I earlier mentioned that it proposes to empower the Treasurer to negotiate and enter into agreements with developers. Those agreements will not

be enforceable by either party unless and until they have been ratified by an act. This is spelt out in proposed section 3(2) of the bill. The form of agreement proposed specifies in proposed section 4A that no licence will be issued until premises have been satisfactorily completed and that will include substantial hotel development and other amenities to international standards. These facilities will benefit the resident population as well as visitors. By way of explanation, this provision would preclude a developer from constructing a gaming area, opening the doors and then leaving completion of the rest of the required development to a later date. It is my understanding that, in the case of Wrest Point in Hobart, the gaming licence was not issued until the day of the opening.

The requirement to provide substantial hotel development under proposed section 4B is related to the government's belief that casinos in the Territory will play a significant role in the further expansion of our tourist industry. The proposed form of agreement also lays down that games of chance and equipment used in the two casinos will require ministerial approval. The persons appointed as casino managers will also require ministerial approval. The bill provides that casino siting shall be within 30 kilometres of both Darwin and Alice Springs post offices.

Proposed section 5 outlines the type of tax being considered for the casino operations and is similar to the system in Tasmania. The bill provides for a monthly licence fee and a tax on gross profits. These levels are to be negotiated with the successful applicant or applicants. For comparison, licence fees in Tasmania are \$2,500 per month and 25% of gross profit.

At this point, I would like to repeat that agreements which may be reached between the government and interests which are keen to establish casinos in the Territory will be subject to ratification in this Assembly. I would expect a bill incorporating the agreements will be presented to this House during the first sittings in the new year. That legislation, which will be termed the Casino Licensing and Control Bill, will supersede the development bill now before the House and will embrace the terms and conditions under which a licensee will be able to operate. I commend the bill to honourable members.

Debate adjourned.

MOTOR VEHICLES BILL (Serial 148)

Bill presented and read a first time.

Mr STEELE (Transport and Works): Mr Speaker, I move that the bill be now read a second time.

This bill purports to achieve two main goals: firstly, to correct what are seen to be uncertainties in the present hire-car legislation and, secondly, to reform the industry on the owner-driver concept and, in this, to approve leasing under controlled circumstances. The bill also presents the one-licence-one-person ideal but makes provision for existing multiple ownerships and also for circumstances where no other avenue is possible but to allow a person to acquire more than one licence. These circumstances should be extremely rare. Associated with this bill are amendments for hire-car regulations which will come into operation on the same date. I will comment on the general content of the regulations following my appraisal of the bill.

Clauses 1, 2 and 3 are the normal introductory clauses. Clause 4 - in drafting this bill the draftsman has separated the various forms of public transport. The present act refers to public motor vehicles and this term includes not only taxis but also buses. As the reformation action for taxis is not seen as being equally applicable to buses, the two have been separated making a division for public and private hire cars, a division for motor omnibuses and a miscellaneous division to cover areas which may be common to both.

The definition of "owner" is new to NT hire-car legislation and differs from that contained in the general definitions of the principal act. It has the effect of relating the registered owner of a motor vehicle to the licence to ply for hire. At present, it would appear that the licence to ply for hire relates to the vehicle rather than to the owner of the vehicle and this definition and other amendments attempt to correct this. It is, in fact, this very problem which is preventing settlement of the taxi dispute and has brought the question before the courts. The other amendments contained in clause 4, that is new section 26A and section 27, also carry the relationship of registered owner to the licence to ply for hire. Apart from clarifying this relationship within the public and private hire-car laws, and the removal of buses from this part of the act, there is little alteration to the existing wording or intent.

Clause 5 continues the owner licensed to ply for hire relationship in its rewording of the "hire car" definition. Clause 5B is necessary because of the section renumbering in this bill when compared with the principal act. The amendment to 27A(2)(b) merely corrects a long-standing omission - no doubt an error in the original legislation, as surely one of the basic requirements for a person to be granted a licence to ply for hire must be the possession of a licence to drive a hire car. This requirement has always been retained in the section relating to transfers but for some unknown reason was left out of this area. This simple amendment corrects the problem.

As I mentioned earlier, one of the thoughts presented in this bill is one licence per owner with saving legislation allowing for more than one licence per person under certain circumstances. This amendment and that in clause 6 requires the minister to be satisfied that it is not possible or practicable for him to grant or transfer a licence to any other person before he approves of more than one licence. Personally, I would expect that this action would only be taken in respect of licences in smaller centres where it is imperative that licences be kept operative and the demand for licences by persons wishing to enter the industry is very limited. In such areas it may well be that there is only one person or organisation interested in conducting the business, making it expedient and even highly necessary for the licence to be allocated albeit to a person who already possesses another.

The remaining amendment in clause 5 and that in 6 both relate to the owner-licence to ply for hire principle. Clause 7 introduces two new sections - 27C and 27D. Section 27C deals with the new principle of lease control over licence to ply for hire and section 27D makes special provision for the issue or renewal of licences only where the necessary driving licence is held, except under approved circumstances, and makes particular mention of corporate bodies in this regard.

Leasing of licences to ply for hire, to be covered now for the first time in legislation, has been in practice for some time and in fact sparked off the current dispute. To date, there has been virtually no control over leasing which has been working as a hotchpotch of agreements ranging from a gentleman's

handshake to a formalised legal document and, seemingly, all possible forms in between. This section does not seek to abolish leasing altogether but it does propose to control it and, at the same time, retain the stated intention of creating a largely owner driver industry. The section requires a lease to be formalised so that all lessors and lessees are bound by the same conditions except for the terms relating to payment which are to be kept open and included in the lease as a binding agreement.

There will be a fee for the registration, renewal or alteration of the lease and both the fee and the form of the lease will be incorporated in the regulations. The term of any lease is to be for 12 months but can be subject to renewal. Leasing will only be permitted under limited circumstances, these being where the owner is on leave, ill, dead or has been imprisoned for an offence not related to the hire car in any way or where the minister is satisfied that the licence is not able to be operated by the owner for acceptable reasons. In case of a licence to ply for hire owned by more than one person or by a company, it will be necessary for all parties to the licence to be each unable to operate the licence for one or more of the reasons stated.

In order to serve the best interests of the public, a six month limit has been placed on the leave period to discourage long-term leasing by owners who wish to spend a large portion of their time holidaying in the south or even outside Australia. The amendment allows existing leases to remain effective for a period of 12 months from the commencement of the act but will then be automatically terminated and have no legal status unless renewed in the prescribed form and in accordance with the act. Existing leases which terminate during this 12 month period may only be renewed in accordance with the prescribed form. No lease will be approved by the registrar if the proposed lessee already holds a lease, a licence or an interest in a lease or licence. This means that the one person one licence concept will extend to the leasing arrangements. The act will not permit subleasing under any circumstances and will be binding upon lessee and lessor alike. If a lease is to be varied in any way, that variation must be approved by the registrar and the prescribed fee paid.

New section 27D lays down conditions of driver licensing which must be observed by the registrar before he grants or renews a licence. All parties to a licence to ply for hire must be eligible to obtain a grant for renewal by virtue of possession of a hire car driver's licence. This idea is not new but is strengthened in this section. Exemptions may be granted by the registrar and these are specified. The registrar must also be satisfied that all parties to a licence to ply for hire are fit and proper persons in the terms of the act to receive that licence.

Clause 8 amends section 28 so that it conforms to the stated intention of attaching the licence to the owner rather than to the vehicle. All the amendments under clause 8 do just that. Clause 9 refers to division 2 for omnibuses and to miscellaneous division 3 which I mentioned previously. New section 28AA, whilst the wording has changed slightly, in no way alters the intent of the present act. This section has simply been extracted in order to differentiate between hire car and buses. Division 3, miscellaneous, now heads up both sections in the principal act which are common to both hire cars and buses alike.

Clause 10 amends section 102 in two ways. Firstly, it amends section 102E by ensuring that the owner licence concept is carried on. New subsection (7) is quite clear in its intent to ensure that no compensation, particularly relating to the value of a licence will be payable to a person who loses the

licence to ply for hire and consequently his business because of some action of his which breaks the law. That is the intent of this bill. You will notice that there has been no amendment which removes the value from licences. In this regard, I intend that licence values will be retained and, in this way, I will be honouring the spirit of the amendment made to the act some years ago.

In conclusion, I would like to mention briefly the content of the regulations. A number of matters will be covered by the regulations, none of which are inconsistent with the stated intentions. The matters covered are: a requirement for licensees to keep records of drivers and hours driven; a requirement that taxis be available for hire and be driven by the owner for a minimum period in each week and year - the period here is 5 days and 40 hours per week for 46 weeks of each year; and a requirement for number plates to be affixed and kept affixed to the vehicle unless the registrar approves of their transfers to another vehicle. The regulations also contain the pro forma of the standard leasing agreement. I commend the bill.

Debate adjourned.

MOTOR VEHICLES BILL (Serial 169)

Bill presented and read a first time.

Mr STEELE (Transport and Works): I move that the bill be now read a second time.

This bill, and one with identical provisions to amend the Traffic Act, simply excludes small-powered cycles from the requirements of the act for motor vehicles to be registered and insured and a driver rider licence issued. These small units are basically little different from ordinary bicycles and are capable of only marginally greater speeds under ideal circumstances than bicycles. It appears unreasonable that these machines should be subject to the same conditions of registration etc as are ordinary motor cycles. I commend the bill.

Debate adjourned.

ABSCONDING DEBTORS BILL (Serial 149)

Bill presented and read a first time.

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

The purpose of this bill is to introduce comprehensive new legislation dealing with persons who seek to abscond from the Northern Territory to defeat their creditors or who seek to transfer property out of the Territory for the same purpose. The present law in this regard is somewhat obscure. There was an old South Australian act which was repealed by the Supreme Court Ordinance Repeal Ordinance but that ordinance has a provision that states the repeal will not affect the continued operation of any principle or rule of law, established jurisdiction or rule of practice or procedure. There is, in addition a part in the Local Courts Ordinance dealing specifically with absconding debtors but the extent of the jurisdiction of the local court under that part is not clear. The matter was considered at some length by the Northern Territory Law Review Committee which recommended the repeal of the relevant part of the Local Courts

Ordinance and its replacement with a new general provision.

This bill gives effect to the committee's recommendation. The important feature of the bill is that it applies to any debt of a specific amount in excess of \$500 or, in the case of wages, a debt of any amount. The bill seeks to adopt a simple procedure while at the same time ensuring adequate guarantees against abuse. In particular, it has to be proved that failure to arrest the debtor would in some substantial way affect the creditor's prospects of recovery. There is an obligation to bring the debtor, once arrested, before a magistrate or judge promptly. The magistrate or judge has wide powers to deal with the matter and to order the release of the debtor conditionally or otherwise. He may, if the parties agree, deal with the question of liability to pay the debt or he may require the creditor to take civil proceedings for recovery. The debtor has a general right of appeal to a judge for his release. The appeal can be by telephone in urgent cases at the discretion of the judge.

There is a heavy penalty for abuse of the legislation and I am informed that the compensation provisions of the new Criminal Law and Procedure Ordinance would be applicable upon conviction. The provisions dealing with the removal of property from the Territory are new. The basis on which they operate is that an order of the judge must be obtained and, in making an order, the judge has to be satisfied the failure to make the order could substantially impair the creditor's prospects of recovery.

Given the transient nature of much of the population of the Territory, this legislation should prove to be a considerable aid to those persons genuinely carrying on business in the Territory and also, in the case of employees, where their former employers leave the Territory without meeting their obligations. I commend the bill to honourable members.

Debate adjourned.

SUSPENSION OF STANDING ORDERS

Mr EVERINGHAM: I move that so much of Standing Orders be suspended as would prevent two bills associated with soil conservation and land utilization, firstly, being presented and read a first time together and one motion being put in regard to respectively the second readings, the committee report stages and the third readings of the bills together and, secondly, the consideration of the bills separately in the committee of the whole.

Motion agreed to.

SOIL CONSERVATION AND LAND UTILIZATION BILL (Serial 157)

CONTROL OF WATERS BILL (Serial 156)

Bills presented and read a first time.

Mr EVERINGHAM (Chief Minister): I move that the bills be now read a second time.

I have moved for the consideration of these two bills together because they are both drafted for the same purpose. The purpose is to provide for the additional environmental controls necessary to ensure that the establish-

ment of uranium mining in the Northern Territory has no adverse effects on the Territory environment. These two bills have been introduced as a result of an agreement between the Commonwealth and the Northern Territory government relating to the oversight of operations at the Ranger project and eventually other uranium mining projects throughout the Territory.

I need not remind honourable members that the mining of uranium in the Northern Territory will be controlled principally by the Atomic Energy Act and, more particularly, by conditions laid down under a permit to mine given under section 41 of that act. However, decisions have been made, with the approval of both governments, that so far as possible the control of the incidence of mining and of matters associated with the mining of uranium will be governed by Northern Territory legislation and will be under the direction of Northern Territory officers. Upon this decision being made, it was of course necessary to examine the legislation for the Northern Territory to see whether the terms of that legislation were sufficient to permit effective control of all incidence of the mining of uranium. In the Control of Waters Ordinance and in the Soil Conservation Ordinance some shortcomings were found. The purpose of these two bills is principally to overcome those shortcomings although the opportunity has also been taken to update some of the provisions of the Control of Waters Ordinance. Major detailed controls of mining operations are also to be made by regulation under the Mines Regulation Ordinance. By recent amendment, extensive powers to make environmental regulations under that ordinance were included. A draft of those regulations is well advanced and will provide for the detailed conduct of the mining operation at Ranger to ensure the protection of the environment.

Turning first to the Soil Conservation and Land Utilization Bill, examination of the principal act showed that it was deficient in powers to effectively control land use in respect of major mining operations. Minor amendment only was necessary to provide for the additional powers. Section 14(1) of the principal act is amended to add to the matters that the commissioner shall take into consideration the disturbance of the land surface in an area. Subsection (4) of that section, now subsection (1)(a) in the bill, is enlarged by the addition of a further provision providing that a soil conservation order may prohibit the disturbance of the surface of the land.

The preamble to that subsection is expanded to provide the soil conservation order may prohibit absolutely or prohibit in accordance with the terms and conditions of a written authority from the commissioner. In other words, specific conditions may be designed for any area of land use and, except in compliance with those conditions, specified land use practices may be prohibited. One of the important conditions which may be associated with such an order is the construction of fencing to specified standards. This may be necessary to ensure that large stock cannot enter the area with the risk of damaging and destroying the banks of retention ponds, thus permitting the accidental escape of contaminated water, nor by grazing remove the ground cover creating an erosion risk with a similar potential for serious result.

Much more extensive amendment is necessary to the Control of Waters Act. The extensive administrative structure in that act provides for all authority to be vested in the minister and an action under the act would only be possible by the minister or someone authorised by him. This is cumbersome and unsuitable for day-to-day control, particularly in respect of the mining operation. The bill therefore creates an office of controller of water resources, the occupant of which will perform most of the administrative functions of the act and who will, subject to any direction of the minister, be responsible for the day-to-day operation of the act. Final responsibility will, of course, continue to reside in the minister.

Dealing first of all with a need for the supervision of mining operations in uranium project areas, the principal problem seen is the disposal of waters which have been contaminated by uranium or other heavy metals. If there were no control, these contaminated substances would be released into creeks and water courses with possibly serious consequences. In the mining of uranium at Rum Jungle in the late 1950s, the escape of copper in excessive concentration was responsible for very considerable and very long-lasting damage to the waters of the Finnis River. Indeed, although mining and operations for the recovery of uranium have ceased at Rum Jungle for many years, the Finnis River is still recovering from the effects of that pollution. In order to cover the situation in future operations, whether they be at Ranger or elsewhere, the bill proposes to permit the creation of drainage control areas. So far as uranium mining is concerned, these areas will be confined to the areas upon which mining operations are carried on.

The bill provides that the controller of water resources may in those areas limit the amount of a given substance which may be released into any stream during any period and may prohibit the release of particular substances into any stream at all. In addition to these powers, the controller may require monitoring to be carried out by any person who is releasing or proposes to release or discharge water from a drainage control area.

Honourable members will note that the penalty for failing to comply with the terms of the notice relating to a drainage control area is \$10,000. That is unusually high but the damage that may be done in an area as fragile as the subcoastal plain is incalculable. The real sanction is provided by the provision which makes an offender liable to pay for the whole cost of remedying the damage. That cost may, in serious cases, run into hundreds of thousands of dollars. Honourable members will notice that the operations of these provisions is not restricted to the Ranger project area. This course has been taken deliberately so that if any other proposal comes up - whether in the mining industry or any other industry - which may pose similar problems, the law will immediately be at hand to deal with the situation.

Honourable members will note in proposed new section 10A two new concepts - prescribed prohibited substances and prescribed restricted substances. Prescribed prohibited substances are substances that may not be discharged in any quantity into a water course. Prescribed restricted substances are substances that may only be released into water courses into prescribed concentrations. A further restriction is imposed by subsection (3) of that section which empowers the minister to declare areas to which that prescription applies. Further, within a drainage control area, the controller may impose specific restrictions under proposed section 16M. Those restrictions are designed to ensure that rates of discharge may be related to rates of water flow. An acceptable level of discharge when waters are high and fast may be quite unacceptable when waters are low and sluggish.

I commend the study of this bill to all honourable members. I am sure that they will agree that it is so designed that effective control over the release of contaminated waters from uranium mining operations is possible at all times and in all circumstances. Honourable members will also notice the amendment of the definition of "water course" to include estuary. It is clearly undesirable that the control of waters, at least from the aspect of pollution, should cease at some indefinite point upstream from the river mouth. Control of water where pollution has taken place or is likely to take place should extend right down into the estuary. In the case of the Ranger project, for instance, it is clear that the Magela Creek discharges into the East Alligator River at a point at which it could properly be said that the river had become an estuary. It would be absurd to have control cease at that point.

The provisions of the bills are in line with the Fox report which recommended that the control of all environmental side effects of uranium mining should be a matter for the government of the Northern Territory. All honourable members will be aware that uranium mining is now likely to proceed. I personally consider this to be exciting knowledge and look forward to the many advantages it offers to the Northern Territory. I am sure that members opposite will appreciate the effect such operations can have on employment in the Territory. All people concerned with job opportunity and economic development must welcome the news.

The bills I have introduced give the Territory government the means to regulate uranium mining activities to prevent environmental damage from such operations. It will be noted that in each act a statutory official will administer the act subject to the control and direction of the minister. This government considers this to be an area of such importance that, in most cases where ministerial decision is called for, the decision is likely to be one for the full Cabinet.

I commend the bills to all honourable members.

Debate adjourned.

ASSOCIATIONS INCORPORATION BILL (Serial 158)

Bill presented and read a first time.

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

This bill is an amendment to the Associations Incorporation Ordinance and its purpose is to allow Aboriginal and other ethnic associations to incorporate for commercial activities. It is part of this government's policy of allowing Aboriginals a greater role in running their own affairs and should be seen in conjunction with the proposals already announced to allow Aboriginal communities to form their own local councils. Like those proposals, this bill is designed to help people once they have made the decision to form an association. There is no coercion at all involved. This bill will allow Aboriginal and other ethnic groups to form commercial associations and to have these associations registered as incorporated bodies. By doing this, they can carry out trading activities and have most of the benefits of a company without having to comply with complex and unsuitable provisions. In the past, there have been some problems with associations wishing to incorporate under the present Associations Incorporation Ordinance. That ordinance does not allow trading associations to be incorporated. Many Aboriginal associations, formed principally for the benefit of their members, carry out trading activities incidental to their main functions. These will be able to incorporate under this act. Small commercial associations with all-Aboriginal members may also incorporate.

However, this bill is not designed to allow persons to avoid Companies Ordinance requirements. Under the bill, the minister shall have power to direct any incorporated association to incorporate as a company where he considers the association would be more appropriately incorporated under the Companies Ordinance. The Commonwealth has passed - but, so far as I am aware, has not yet brought into full operation - the Aboriginal Councils and Associations Act 1976. That act provides similar provisions for Aboriginal associations to incorporate. However, my government believes it can provide the same facilities to Aboriginal associations through amendment of present Territory ordinances.

At this stage, I would like to foreshadow some of the amendments in committee. These will be to update the penalties in the Associations Incorporation Ordinance. This bill should provide to Aboriginal associations an alternative means of business management which is simple and flexible yet affords the benefit and protection of corporate status. This should encourage the growth of Aboriginal enterprise on a level more easily operated by an Aboriginal group. I commend the bill to the House.

Debate adjourned.

POLICE ADMINISTRATION BILL (Serial 159)

Bill presented and read a first time.

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

This is a major item of legislation and I have great pleasure in introducing it into this Assembly. It contains comprehensive new provisions for controlling the police force of the Northern Territory. For all purposes other than residual matters, the force will be removed from the Public Service of the Northern Territory. In this regard, I refer members to the accompanying public service amendment bill which I will be introducing very shortly. The only provisions not carried forward from the old Police and Police Offences Ordinance are those dealing with petty offences. In this regard I refer honourable members to the Summary Offences Bill already introduced in this sittings.

The bill has been prepared over a fairly long period of time, although this has been broken by the pressures of work arising from self-government. The police force and also the police associations have been involved in its preparation. It contains many new provisions which are innovative. It is my intention to circulate the bill widely and seek constructive criticism. All reasonable requests for amendment will be considered. I ask all members to give the bill their consideration with this in mind. As members can obviously see, the bill is very large and some of its provisions very complex. I commend the draftsman for his work and I commend all others involved in its preparation.

I now turn to the various parts of the bill. I will attempt to outline the provisions of each part in broad terms. It is not possible in the space of this speech to deal with every clause but I remain willing to discuss any particular matter with any member should he wish to raise it. Part I of the bill contains savings provisions and definitions and does not require any detailed comment.

Part II establishes the police force of the Northern Territory. Amongst the new innovations in this part is the introduction of the new office of deputy commissioner. The Commissioner of Police is charged with the general control and management of the police force, subject only to written directions of the responsible minister. Other provisions that may be of interest to members are the preference for internal appointments contained in clause 17 and the introduction of a new class of police aides in clause 19. The latter provision is drawn from the Western Australian act and I understand it is working very successfully, particularly in the case of Aboriginal persons. In relation to clauses 23 and 24, I draw members' attention to the appeal provision in clause 43. The provisions as to special constables have been greatly simplified.

I turn now to part IIA of the bill. This part and the sections within the part have been given alphabetical numbering as I have under consideration proposals to establish a single arbitral tribunal under Territory law. There has not been time to formulate these proposals into legislative form for this sittings but it is hoped that at some future time this will be done. In that event it is proposed that part IIA would be deleted from this act. There are some changes of note from the current provisions applicable to the Police Arbitral Tribunal. Under this bill, the tribunal will have a general jurisdiction to determine terms and conditions of members. In addition, the tribunal will be constituted by a single member, preferably a member of the Australian Conciliation and Arbitration Commission. There are new provisions for consent agreements and several other minor changes.

I move now to part III. This part establishes a Police Promotions Board to hear and determine matters relating to promotion of personnel and administration. The equivalent provisions were previously contained in the Police Regulations. They are obviously of considerable importance and should be contained in the act. The chairman of the board will continue to be a stipendiary magistrate and the part contains a number of consequential matters of administration. I draw members' particular attention to clause 43 which sets out the jurisdiction of the board. Clauses 45, 46 and 47 are important from the point of view of the way the board shall conduct its proceedings and the protection to be given to members of the force.

I turn now to part IV which deals with the discipline of the members of the police force. This part is drawn partly from the ordinance and partly from the Police Regulations. The provisions are brought together in a much more coherent and simplified manner. The general duties of members are set out in clause 52 through to clause 61. Clause 62 sets out the categories of disciplinary offences. The part then goes on to provide the disciplinary powers of the commissioner and for punishments. At the hearing of the disciplinary offence a person may be represented. The commissioner has wide powers of punishment subject to a general right of appeal.

I turn now to part V which establishes the Police Appeal Board to hear and determine appeals from any determination under the preceding part as a result of disciplinary proceedings. This board is established in a similar manner to the Police Promotions Board and is chaired by a stipendiary magistrate. There are provisions included to protect members of the force and to ensure that they get a full hearing on appeal. Under clause 89 a member has a further right of appeal from the appeal board to the Supreme Court. I foreshadow an amendment to restrict this appeal to points of law only because, in my view, there is adequate protection given to members of the force under the preceding provisions.

Clauses 90 and 91 provide for a power to suspend a member in anticipation of disciplinary proceedings but with adequate safeguard provisions as to salary. There may be urgent cases where a suspension is necessary in advance of the hearing.

I turn now to part VI which deals with the powers of members of the police force and related matters. In attempting to explain this most complex part, I should offer some general words of explanation. Members may be aware that there have been several recent investigations into the matter of police powers in Australia. The Law Reform Commission introduced a comprehensive report some time ago which found its way into the federal Criminal Investigation Bill and which I understand is about to be introduced in the federal parliament.

In addition, there have been recent inquiries in Victoria and Queensland. Apart from this Senator Bonner introduced a bill into the federal parliament dealing with admission and confession by Aborigines. I should also mention that not so long ago the Northern Territory Supreme Court enunciated in a judgment a number of principles which the police are expected to observe in handling disadvantaged persons. This new part must be viewed against the background of these developments. Indeed a number of clauses of the bill reflect proposals made in these other places.

The existing law as to police powers is to be found in part IV of the Police and Police Offences Ordinance and in some other Commonwealth and Territory laws supplemented by the common law and judges' rules. The task of attempting a total restatement of police powers is monumental. It is proving to be an on-going project of considerable difficulty in the context of the Law Reform Commission's report. It was realised early in the piece that it was not possible to attempt such a task in the Territory if we are to have an early passage of new general laws applicable to the Northern Territory police. Accordingly, this part of the bill only seeks to deal with matters presently contained in the Police and Police Offences Ordinance, with some elaboration in specific areas. I do not rule out the possibility of further legislative change with respect to police powers that are not presently covered by the Police and Police Offences Ordinance but this must await a consideration of developments elsewhere. I think members will agree after a consideration of this part that, in so far as this bill goes, it is in many respects progressive. It includes provisions which give new guarantees of individual rights to the citizen. There are other provisions which seek to strike a fair balance between the rights of the individual and the need for adequate enforcement of the law and the protection of the public in the interests of the community generally. I now mention briefly the principal provisions in the part which members may wish to consider.

Clause 95 deals with the issue of search warrants in respect of both persons, and premises. Clause 96 enables application to be made for search warrants by telephone or similar means. It is drawn from similar provisions in the drugs legislation which in turn are drawn from recommendations of the Law Reform Commission. Clause 97 provides for searches in emergency and is likewise drawn from recommendations of the Law Reform Commission. Clauses 98 and 99 are a rewrite of provisions presently found in the Police and Police Offences Ordinance. Clause 100 deals with arrest warrants and clause 101 enables application to be made by telephone in a similar manner to the clause 96 previously mentioned.

Clause 102 gives a general power for members of the force to arrest persons without warrant except for specified offences. At the same time, it seeks to encourage use of a summons in lieu of arrest wherever possible. Clause 103 deals with arrest without warrant of a person as to whom it is believed a warrant has been issued. Clause 103 deals with arrest of persons for interstate offences and follows a similar provision in Victoria. Clause 105 deals with powers of entry onto private premises to effect an arrest. Clause 106 deals with the powers of a private citizen to detain others for serious offences and clause 107 is a specific provision of similar effect. Clause 108 is a protective provision. Clause 109 requires a member effecting an arrest to inform the person of the reason for the arrest except in certain circumstances.

Clauses 110 to 116 are a rewrite of section 330 of the Police and Police Offences Ordinance with some new protective provisions recommended by the Law Reform Commission to moderate some of the more undesirable features of the

present section. Clause 117 contains provision for demanding the name and address of a person and includes a new reciprocal right in the hands of the person to whom the demand is addressed.

Clauses 118 to 125 are important new provisions dealing with police arrest. They introduce radical changes to the law which would afford the arrested person far greater protection upon arrest than he presently has. I do not think it is necessary to go into detail at this time on these provisions but I do draw members' attention in particular to the right of appeal to a justice against a refusal of police bail.

Clause 127 provides for a search of arrested persons. Clause 128 deals with medical examination of arrested persons. Clause 129 deals with fingerprinting and other recording methods of arrested persons. Clause 130 is a similar provision in respect of persons not involved in custody but who are believed, on reasonable grounds, to be in a position to assist police investigations in connection with an offence. The protection to the citizen lies in the fact that a magistrate's order is required under this clause. Clause 131 provides for the destruction of fingerprints and other records after a certain time and I stress that these provisions do not provide for general compulsory fingerprinting or similar recording of information.

Clause 132 is a new provision designed to enable the Commissioner of Police to close public places in the case of violence. This will be particularly useful in the terrorism or the highjacking type of situation.

I move now to part VII of the bill which creates a number of offences relating specifically to members of the police force. I do not think it is necessary to detail these offences. However, I do draw attention to the substantial increases in penalties proposed. Clearly, the present penalties are inadequate having regard to the high standards that are expected of members of the police force.

Part VIII of the bill contains a number of miscellaneous provisions. Clause 145 is a protective provision. Clause 146 is a provision relating to time limits under the bill and is drawn from section 105 of the Police and Police Offences Ordinance. However, members will note that the requirement of a prior written notice has been abolished. Clause 147 introduces the new concept of the vicarious liability for the negligent conduct of members of the police force and follows a similar provision recommended by the Law Reform Commission and included in the Australia Police Bill. Part VIII includes a number of other miscellaneous provisions.

In a bill of this size, it is very difficult in a second-reading speech to cover all of the features of the bill. I again ask members to closely consider the bill and let me have their comments as soon as possible. I would ask that comments be available to me some time before the next sittings so that they can be given full consideration and, if necessary, adequate amendments drafted. I commend the bill to all honourable members.

Debate adjourned.

PUBLIC SERVICE BILL (Serial 171)

Bill presented and read a first time.

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

This bill is complementary to three bills introduced into the Assembly during this sittings. In relation to two of them, the Liquor Bill and the Lotteries and Gaming Bill, it provides that the Liquor Commission and the Racing and Gaming Commission to be created by those bills shall be prescribed authorities for the purposes of the Public Service Act. That will provide for the employment of staff for those commissions as public service employees and for the conditions of service of such employees. Provisions relating to those two commissions are to come into operation on the date of operation of the enabling legislation, removing the need for separate administrative action.

The bill also deals with the situation with the police once the Police Administration Act comes into operation. Firstly, by clause 4, it vests the Commissioner of Police with the powers of a departmental head in respect of public service employees working under his control. Secondly, it provides in clause 5 that, if a person ceases to be a member of the police force, he does not cease to be a public service employee. The Public Service Commissioner is then required to place him in a unit of administration and determine his designation but he shall not do that without first advising the relevant police association of his intention. This is, of course, designed to give some oversight to the police association of the placement of persons who have ceased to be police officers. I commend the bill.

Debate adjourned.

CRIMINAL LAW (OFFENCES AT SEA) BILL (Serial 161)

Bill presented and read a first time.

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

Members will be aware from various public statements made over recent times that there have been ongoing discussions between the Commonwealth and the states with a view to remedying some of the effects of the High Court decision in the seas and submerged lands case. The matter has been discussed at several Premier's Conferences, as well as at meetings of the Standing Committee of Attorneys-General which I have attended. The Prime Minister has described the exercise as a major exercise in cooperative federalism.

The matter is of considerable significance to a newly self-governing Northern Territory because there are considerable doubts as to the powers of this Assembly to legislate extra-territorially. The constant argument of my government in all of the discussions that have taken place to this day has been that the Northern Territory should be treated in so far as is constitutionally possible in the same manner as a state. This view was publicly accepted by the Commonwealth Attorney-General at the last meeting of the Standing Committee of the Attorneys-General in Darwin. One aspect of the exercise relates to the application of state criminal law to off-shore waters. A Commonwealth bill entitled the Crimes at Sea Bill was introduced by the Commonwealth Attorney-General into the Senate on 22 August. The bill contemplates complementary state and Northern Territory legislation.

The bill I am now introducing is the same as the bill drafted for introduction in the states except for necessary amendments arising out of our status as a Commonwealth territory. It would apply Territory criminal law to acts and omissions occurring in the coastal seas adjacent to the Northern Territory, to acts and omissions on Australian ships beyond the adjacent coastal

sea in the course of voyages between places in the Northern Territory and to acts and omissions of survivors of ships sinking in adjacent waters. The Commonwealth bill in turn would apply Territory criminal law to acts and omissions in specified waters connected to the Territory and would not come within the Territory bill.

Both the Commonwealth bill and this bill have been drafted after lengthy negotiations and discussions by Commonwealth and state attorneys and Commonwealth, state and Territory law officers. I welcome the approach of the Commonwealth to the Northern Territory in this exercise and look forward to its continuing cooperation in the various other aspects of the exercise. I anticipate in due course introducing further complementary bills into this Assembly in a parallel manner to the states.

Debate adjourned.

MINING BILL (Serial 176)

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

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

This is a very short bill but one of prime importance to the majority of people in the Northern Territory. It clarifies the relative responsibility of the Commonwealth and the Territory government in relation to the mining of prescribed substances in the Northern Territory. As honourable members will be aware, by virtue of the provisions of the Northern Territory (Self-Government) Act, the Northern Territory executive has been given executive responsibility for all matters relating to the mining of minerals in the Northern Territory excluding those associated with uranium and other prescribed substances under the Australian Atomic Energy Act. In respect of uranium and other prescribed substances, the Commonwealth has retained the executive responsibility in that area and is to have continued responsibility for matters associated with the issue of mining titles for those particular minerals.

Mr Speaker, the purpose of this bill is to amend the Mining Ordinance to fully recognise this situation and adequately provide for the Commonwealth's continued interest in respect of prescribed substances while at the same time ensuring that the development of uranium deposits ...

Mr ISAACS (Opposition Leader): A point of order, Mr Speaker!

Mr SPEAKER: What is the point of order?

Mr ISAACS: I am just wondering whether the minister is aware that yesterday he introduced Mining Bill No. 4, 1978. It is in identical terms; the only difference is that yesterday's bill was serial 175 and the one he is introducing today is serial 176. The text is slightly different. Is he aware that that is going on? Does he know what he is doing?

Mr SPEAKER: There is no point of order.

Mr TUXWORTH: I am sure, Mr Speaker, that if I can just get through this second-reading speech, I will be able to clarify the matter in the mind of the honourable Leader of the Opposition because he is quite correct in what he says.

This proposal will ensure the Commonwealth's continued interest in respect of prescribed substances in the Northern Territory and provide an appropriate platform of communication between the Commonwealth and Northern Territory government on matters affecting development of uranium in the Territory.

The only other amendment contained in the bill is to proposed section 147A(1B)(b) of the ordinance. This amendment is required to conform with the provisions of the Atomic Energy Act whereby ownership of uranium and other prescribed substances in the Northern Territory is vested in the Commonwealth. Under the existing provisions of this section, any uranium or ores thereof recovered in any unauthorised operation within a mining reserve remains the property of the Territory. The use of the term "Territory" in this section is inconsistent with the Atomic Energy Act and the amendment I have proposed will ensure that the Commonwealth's ownership of uranium and ores thereof is fully recognised. There is no urgency in this particular bill, Mr Speaker, and I commend it to honourable members.

Debate adjourned.

Mr TUXWORTH (Mines and Energy) (by leave): Mr Speaker, I seek leave to withdraw Mining Bill, serial 175, which I introduced yesterday afternoon. In explanation, through an error on my part, the incorrect bill was introduced and the correct bill is Mining Bill, serial 176, which I have just introduced into the House.

Leave granted.

APPROPRIATION BILL (Serial 150)

Continued from 19 September 1978

Ms D'ROZARIO (Sanderson): Mr Speaker, I would like to take up two points which are of particular interest to my electorate in this budget debate. I hope they will not be regarded as fetishes, and I would say that any prize that was due to the honourable member for Fannie Bay for having the best budget fetish yesterday must surely have been wrested from her by the discourse delivered by the honourable member for Tiwi.

The two matters I want to take up, briefly I hope, are housing and transport. I would like to make an observation on the housing allocation because I feel that perhaps with the new Housing Act the situation is a little blurred. As honourable members will recall in the last sittings before the prorogation of this Assembly, the Housing Ordinance, as it was then known, was amended quite substantially to provide for the so-called single housing authority. I wish to leave aside the question of the allocation for public service housing.

Honourable members might recall that in the last budget, the 1977-78 budget, the Northern Territory Housing Commission was allocated for its public works program a sum of \$21.2m. If we exclude the Northern Territory Public Service staff housing from the present allocation of \$37m, we have an increase in money terms of some \$2.6m and that is the additional sum which has been provided for public housing as opposed to public service housing. The increase we have in this allocation of \$2.6m comes out at approximately a 12% increase on last year's allocation to the Housing Commission for public and welfare housing but I would like to point out, Mr Speaker, that in real terms there has been no increase on last year's allocation and that is simply because the addition this year of \$2.6m is not sufficient to offset the increased costs

of construction that have been apparent since the last allocation and construction costs have risen by more than the allocation to public housing.

The increase in the rate of change of investment in dwellings throughout Australia has been in the order of 16% - it is actually 16.3% to be more precise - and honourable members will note that this increase is much higher than the increases that have been recorded for the same period in a number of other indicators, including the change in private consumption, the consumer price index and the index for business fixed investment. What I am saying, Mr Speaker, is that the costs of constructing new dwellings has increased more quickly than consumer prices or the prices for capital goods purchased by businesses and that is the reason why I say that, in fact, the rate of change in the cost of house construction is much higher. From this members can see that, in actual fact, we have suffered in real terms a net loss of 4% on the housing allocation for public and welfare housing function discharged by the Northern Territory Housing Commission.

Even if we had had an absolute increase this year of \$2.6m, I would like to indicate to the House that this sum in fact would not even cover the rate of change of demand for public housing. In 1977-78, the Northern Territory Housing Commission estimated the cost of constructing 20 new 3-bedroomed houses in the Darwin area at \$680,000. These houses were to be precast which honourable members will realise is a cheap and expedient method of construction. The average cost of these houses as estimated at that time by the Northern Territory Housing Commission would have worked out at \$34,000. On the figures given then by the Housing Commission and assuming that in fact we had had an increase in real terms of \$2.6m for welfare and public housing, the additional allocation of that sum would have provided approximately 75 new houses. Those 75 new houses would have had to have been distributed throughout the Northern Territory. I might also remind members here that this calculation is worked out using a cheap method of construction.

Taking into account the changes in the cost of housing which have been notified in a recent paper by an economist of the Reserve Bank, the price per unit of those houses which would have cost \$34,000 last budget is now \$39,440 or, say, \$39,000 to round it off. When we look to see how far our additional allocation would go, it works out that we would have only 65 new houses throughout the Northern Territory. I point out that the Housing Commission is doing more than just building single unit dwellings but I have used the calculation using single unit dwellings merely for the convenience of exposition. Those are using the best possible circumstances. What we find is that we can expect a net accretion to the housing stock this year of the equivalent of 65 new houses throughout the Territory centres. I think the honourable Minister for Lands and Housing would agree that more than 65 families are added to the housing list of the Northern Territory Housing Commission every year, and that excludes public service families. What I want to point out to him is that the increase in the allocation for public housing is not keeping up with the rate of change of demand for that housing.

I remind members that, when the 1977-78 budget was brought down last year, the sum of \$21.2m for the capital works program was exactly the same as the sum for the previous year. Not only was there no increase in real terms but there was no increase in money terms either. The point that I would like to make from that observation is simply that there has been a backlog and I would have liked to have seen some action to overtake that lag rather than allowing it to continue.

As the honourable Treasurer said in his speech on the budget, the construction and housing sector is a key one for the Northern Territory economy. Indeed, it is a key sector for the whole of Australia. The difference is that, whilst in other places in Australia the demand for public housing is decreasing, in the Northern Territory, owing to a number of factors including the backlog of the supply to which I have just referred and the nature of our population, the demand for public housing is increasing.

Just to give a small comparison of the rates of participation by the government in housing, this rate has decreased over the last three financial years. In 1975-76 which is the last year for which figures are available, it stood at 2.31% of all government outlay. That is to say that the government spends that percentage of money on housing out of its total outlay. On the other hand, we find that the private housing market in the rest of Australia has an increased rate of participation. I just say for the benefit of members that we do not have the same trend in housing as the rest of Australia has and we are still well behind in catching up with the demands for public and welfare housing.

I would like to take up the point of the allocation for housing loans that was provided in this budget. The relevance of the 6% concessional loan is decreasing because people are no longer eligible to apply for that and that loan scheme has been terminated. However, the loan scheme which is still current is the 9% Home Finance Trustee loan. A number of people are eligible for this and, in fact, nearly every first home buyer in the Northern Territory has recourse to the 9% Home Finance Trustee loan. In the present budget, we find that \$2.2m has been allocated for the 9% loan. When we consider that the maximum amount of the loan is \$20,000, this would benefit only 110 families on the allocation that has been given. I am aware that the Treasurer has notified in this Assembly that the Home Finance Trustee has obtained approval to raise a further \$4.4m through Loans Council approval but, even so, the funds available, to use the Treasurer's own words, "Will be maintained at least at the 1977-78 level". I suggest that that is not good enough because there is still potential for growth in the number of applications that will be handled by the Home Finance Trustee and, as I have mentioned, our demand for housing in the Northern Territory is still quite high compared to other places in Australia. I would have appreciated a recognition by the honourable Treasurer that the Home Finance Loan Scheme should be aiming at providing more than was provided last year. As far as the people in my electorate are concerned who are making a decision as to whether to buy their fine Darwin Reconstruction Commission houses, this assurance by the Treasurer that the housing loans have been maintained at last year's level does not appease them at all.

The second point that I would like to speak about concerns transport. I welcome the allocation of nearly \$5m to commence stage one of the land-backed wharf as indeed do all members of the opposition. I must say that I was extremely disappointed by remarks made yesterday by the Minister for Mines and Energy concerning the development of public transport in the Northern Territory. I might also note that I detected in his remarks a conflict with the statement made on the opening day of the session by His Honour the Administrator who, at that time, said that improvements in the public transport services were taking place and that the government recognised the place of public transport in urban communities. I did find that the remarks of the Minister for Mines and Energy were a bit disappointing in that he obviously does not subscribe to that view and is quite content to let the situation ride as it is. He used the phrase "barking at the moon". I suggest that it is not so much a question of "barking at the moon" but coming to grips with the reality of urban transport systems.

At the last Premiers' Conference urban public transport was one of those areas for which funds were slashed or completely abolished. I presume that the honourable Minister for Mines and Energy is simply giving his support to that particular action. I repeat again in this House that, with the situation of ever-increasing fuel prices and the higher insurance costs associated with running a private vehicle some concentrated attention must be given to public transport. Indeed, although we have no direct control over the price of liquid fuel for the running of private motor cars, I think that factor could well be harnessed to boost public transport and to promote it.

The other point that I wish to make on the same subject is that it is all very well for the honourable minister opposite to talk about how we would all drive anyway and that it is terribly difficult to change people's habits. This does not derogate from the fact that there are a number of carless families even in Territory urban centres and there are a number of carless families in my own electorate. These people have very little option in the way of transport because public transport in my electorate is virtually non-existent. There are also a number of families who have only one car although two people are working. If one worker is a shiftworker or happens to work in an area outside the central business district of Darwin, then these families are also disadvantaged by the lack of public transport. I am pleased to say that some of my electors have gone so far as to organise buses to take children and non-drivers to areas of recreation and I commend these efforts. However, I do believe there is a need and demand for public transport and the government ought to face up to it.

The honourable Minister for Mines and Energy said it was very difficult to modify people's habits. Well, I suggest to him that unless we start to persuade them to change their habits now, the situation will become intolerable. If he was saying by his remark that he intends to let the situation of lack of public transport continue until very few people can afford to run a car, when it comes to that point, of course, it will be too late. I suggest in all sincerity to his government that persuasion would be a rather better course than coercion. I must say, Mr Speaker, that I am most disappointed in the attitude of the Minister for Mines and Energy when he has no regard at all for fuel conservation. He should stand down from his portfolio.

There are a number of urban communities that have embarked on lengthy programs of persuasion of the public to alter their habits and their mode of transport.

Mr Dondas: Buy a pushbike.

Ms D'ROZARIO: The honourable member for Casuarina says, "buy a pushbike". I have done that; I do possess a pushbike and I do use it. I would say to the honourable member for Casuarina, since he has raised this point, that the government opposite ought also to be doing something for the cycling community in the Northern Territory.

Mr Speaker, before I was interrupted from the other side I was going to outline a program of persuasion which must be undertaken before we find that we cannot run cars at all. These widely travelled members opposite will surely have noticed the system which the government of Singapore has imposed on its residents. It is a very simple system and it is very persuasive. You simply cannot enter the central business district of Singapore in a private vehicle unless you are carrying at least four passengers. The incentive to either move to public transport or to start sharing cars is very strong indeed because

the daily fee to enter the central business district of Singapore is quite high indeed, although I do not remember offhand what it is. I must say, Mr Speaker, I am very disappointed that there is no program outlined for the development of public transport in Darwin or in any other centre and the \$809,000 that has been allocated to cover the operating loss of the public bus service in the Northern Territory is a very severe indictment on this government's attitude.

Mr Speaker, those are two matters which are of concern to my electorate and I am pleased to have been able to make some remarks about them in this House. I would just like to say before I sit down that the budget papers this year were extremely lengthy and complicated, as members will have noticed by the large pile of documents that were handed out here. Like many other members, I would have like to have circulated these to people in my electorate who have a special interest in some of these matters. However, since the debate was brought on, I have not been able to do this and the only course now open to me is to keep raising matters that the electorate brings to my attention in subsequent sittings.

Mr DONDAS (Casuarina): Mr Speaker, I rise in support of this bill and, in my opening comments, I would like to make the remark that all I think the opposition is doing at the moment is grasping at straws because they have made no positive contribution to the debate whatsoever.

This first full budget of this government has been framed realistically, taking into account the special needs and difficulties in the Northern Territory. In my opinion, the budget makes important innovations in making provisions with respect to functions from which this government is responsible.

To take up the point that the honourable member for Sanderson made in relation to the cost of housing, I was very interested to hear that her division of the \$680,000 by 20 units of housing came to a total of \$34,000. The thing that strikes me as being significant, Mr Speaker, is that one of the last Housing Commission contracts let, possibly about a month, brought the average house that was being built by the Housing Commission to about \$29,000. So much for the authoritative report of a house in Darwin costing \$39,440. In fact, if my memory serves me correctly, I think Orlits won two lots of contracts for 80 houses and the average price was between \$29,000 and \$30,000.

If I may take up a point which the Leader of the Opposition made yesterday in relation to my interjection, when I said yesterday that it might have been a misprint. I was quite wrong; it was not a misprint. However, if the Leader of the Opposition had looked at the particular item of health in the budget speech delivered by the honourable Treasurer, he would have noticed that the extra \$8.4m was being provided separately under a provision of the Health Act. That is why the figures do not total up. I added them up today to make sure that he was right. He was right; it does come to \$350m-odd but this \$8m is not included. It comes under a separate allocation.

The Leader of the Opposition also said there were no comparisons. I looked up some of the records; I do not know whether they are completely accurate but I think they are. In 1976-77, the total spending by the Department of the Northern Territory for the financial year was \$234.361m. In 1977-78 the total was \$191.554m, as a direct allocation, plus our one-line budget of \$52m which made the total spending by the Department of the Northern Territory and ourselves amount to \$234.361m.

Look at the budget papers that have been presented today. I see there is an amount of \$307.503m plus the Health Department's spending of \$43.100m which

gives a total of \$350.603m, plus the \$8.1m from the Health Department which gives a total spending in the Northern Territory from the previous year of \$115m more.

Mr Robertson: And that's without education.

Mr DONDAS: That is without education and that is without the other money that is going to be spent by the Health Department in the latter six months of the financial year.

If we can go back to the housing side, then the significant point that is made by the Treasurer is that we are now looking at a waiting time for people applying to receive accommodation from the Housing Commission of 9 months and they hope to reduce it to 6 months. I heard a press report a month or so ago that in Queensland it can take up to 4 or 5 years for a person to get a house from the Housing Commission and probably the same period in any other state. This government is definitely working towards those people on low incomes who are looking for accommodation by saying we hope to get the waiting time down to 6 months. Not one member of the opposition gave credit for the earnest of this government in trying to promote accommodation for those low-income earners.

I noticed in the budget speech that the honourable Treasurer did make mention that the number of uniformed police would be 53. However, the budget paper says it will be 43 and I hope he might be able to enlighten me as to what the final figure will be. It is nice to see that the police department, after all these years, will get a higher staff ceiling. In the last 12 to 18 months, one-man police stations have been operating in isolated areas and they will now become two-man police stations. It should be a definite policy of this government to promote the idea that these police staff who are working in isolated areas should have other support staff with them. It is very easy for a person to become sick or to go away on an investigation. There is no reason why our government should not budget in the future to expand finance for this area.

On the social welfare side, I would like to mention the Homemaker Service. In this year's budget, the government has allowed \$100,000 for Homemaker Service. This includes provision for the support of tenants of Housing Commission residences. When fully operative, it should effect savings in Housing Commission expenditure, maintenance and recovery of rents from delinquent tenants as distinct from emergency home help services. In other words, that is another step in the right direction. It is a new service.

The other new service that is being introduced for \$100,000 is the delivery of welfare service to remote localities. Another \$15,000 is being given for the International Year of the Child - another innovation. I think that the Treasurer should be applauded for taking such consideration.

In 1977, when we faced our electorates in the Assembly elections, all we heard from the opposition was "Double taxation; it is going to cost you more". They really confused the electorates to a point where people really did not know who was telling the truth. I would say that the budget that has been introduced by the Treasurer certainly puts our word on the line. I would like to see how the Leader of the Opposition and his party are going to get out of this budget.

The honourable member for Fannie Bay spoke about the arterial road. I had a note handed to me this morning from a friend of mine who lives out in the northern suburbs. It said: "This morning a minor accident caused serious

delays. It took me from 7.45 am to 8.30 am to get to work, a delay of thirty minutes in a very hot car. The conditions under which we drive are quite different from down south. Thirty minutes of creeping over 2½ miles is no joke. We need the Ludmilla-Fannie Bay Road. Pam O'Neil should ask her newly-arrived friends from Parramatta if they have experienced a delay such as we did this morning. If they have had that experience, do they now have the same attitude?"

I commend the Treasurer for our very first budget. The Leader of the Opposition also made reference yesterday to what the auditor had said. If I may reflect for one moment on the Auditor-General's report, I would like to make mention specifically of page 224 of that report. Paragraph 317.4, expenditure in excess of appropriation, says: "As a result of apparent inconsistency between the Northern Territory Allocation of Funds Appropriation Ordinance No. 3 of 1977-78 and the Appropriation Acts Nos. 1 and 3, the Department of the Northern Territory incurred over-expenditure of \$670,490 under division 457-1 of the Northern Territory Legislative Assembly. In response to an inquiry by the Department of Finance, concerning a breach of section 82 of the constitution and section 34(2)(b) of the Audit Act 1901, the department attributed the irregularity to ineffective coordination between offices of the Northern Territory Public Service, the Department of the Northern Territory and the Northern Territory Treasurer who were associated with the administration of divisions 457-1, 899-1 and 899-2. The department indicated that officers of the Northern Territory Public Service apparently considered the Allocation of Funds Appropriation Ordinance No. 3 1977-78 to be legal authority for their actions but this ignored the primacy of the limitation imposed by the Commonwealth Appropriations Act. Notwithstanding the existence of unusual circumstances" - and the unusual circumstances was that we still had the Department of the Northern Territory holding their hands very close to their chest and they weren't telling us very much - "the evidence available to this office suggested that the over-expenditure occurred as a direct consequence of failure by the responsible authorising officers to comply with the statutory requirements".

If I might just go over to section 4, the Northern Territory Legislative Assembly, on page 290. \$52m was what we were given. If you look at the division 457-1 on page 290, the appropriation was \$27,337,200 with an expenditure of \$28,007,690. The capital expenditure was \$25,200,000 with the expenditure of \$24,490,430. They broke about even. Where was the bad management that you talk about?

Mr Isaacs: Read page 295.

Mr DONDAS: I am not reading page 295. I am on page 291, Mr Speaker. This has been a very boring debate, Mr Speaker, and I am going to try to take my time and see if I can get what I want out of this debate.

The total allocation for 1977-78 was \$587,600; the expenditure for 1977-78 was only \$532,923. That is good management from my side of the board; we did not spend as much as we said we were going to spend.

Then we get to the Department of the Chief Secretary, division 12. The allocation was \$1,304,000 and the expenditure was \$1,331,062. We over-spent maybe \$27,000. When you take an organisation like the Chief Minister's Department into consideration, it is not difficult to spend \$25,000 more than you should have because there are expenses that you don't know are there until you copy the bill.

The police unit was allocated \$10,349,400 and all that was spent was \$10,325,000. That is good management for an organisation like that. I can't wear what the opposition is saying all the time - that our Treasurer is incompetent. He is not; he is on the ball so far as I am concerned.

We have the establishment grant for the Department of the Chief Secretary. \$12,053,400 was the allocation but all we spent was \$11,920,184. We are well and truly below the allocation and it is on page 292 if you are trying to follow the debate, Mr Speaker.

The Department of Community and Social Development was given an allocation of \$6,617,050 and they spent \$6,705,277. That is probably about \$80,000 more than they should have but look at the size of the department, look at the problems that we have with social welfare, look at the extra money that we had to pay out to pensioners that was not budgeted for.

The total allocated for Finance and Planning was \$1,074,150 and they spent \$1,046,836. The opposition still say it is bad management.

The Department of Resources and Health: \$3,041,500 was the allocation and they spent \$3,192,464. They probably spent \$80,000-odd more than they should have. I do not know why they have; I do not really think the Department of Health warrants spending that extra money and maybe the Treasurer should give them a rap over the knuckles for it.

The Department of Transport and Industry: the total allocation was \$3,847,000 and they only spent \$3,642,992. That is something like \$203,000 under the budget allocation and they still reckon we are bad managers.

The Department of Law: \$1,135,500 was the allocation and they spent \$1,246,563. The Chief Minister's Department overspent again. Maybe the Treasurer better pull that department into line as well - too many big electric typewriters or something.

The Department of the Chief Secretary - capital works and services and the police unit: \$162,200 was the allocation and they spent \$160,041. They were well below the allocation. Bad money managers, that is what we are.

The Department of Community and Social Development once again: \$1,043,600 was the allocation and all they spent was \$1,023,033. That is \$20,000 below allocation. Still bad managers?

Division 55, capital works and services - the Department of Finance and Planning were allocated \$21,200,000 and they spent \$21,200,000. The Department of Resources and Health capital works: \$90,000 was allocated and \$90,000 spent. The Department of Transport and Industry: \$2,085,200 allocated and they spent \$2,017,257. All I have heard for the last two days is how this particular government cannot manage its affairs.

As I said, the debate has been pretty boring because I thought that the opposition has been grasping at straws for the last couple of days. They have not been able to put any serious contribution into it; they have not been able to pay any reasonable compliment to the first budget of the Northern Territory, a one-line budget of over \$350m.

Mr PERKINS (MacDonnell): I would like to say at the outset that I fully endorse the remarks that have come from the Opposition Leader and other members of the opposition on the budget. I was amazed at the scintillating performance

of the honourable member for Casuarina when he was talking about the budget, particularly the figures he quoted in relation to the matter of over-spending and under-spending. I think that everyone here was treated to an entertainment of great proportions. I would suggest that the honourable member for Casuarina go back to the drawing board and do his homework and extract the proper figures if he is about to give us a serious debate on the Northern Territory budget.

Mr Dondas: Your Opposition Leader quoted from that book.

Mr PERKINS: In answer to the interjection of the honourable member for Casuarina, I would say that he has obviously misunderstood the Opposition Leader and he has misrepresented him because as a matter of fact the Opposition Leader was not quoting from the particular sections that he quoted in his address on the budget. As I understand it, the Opposition Leader was pulling out of the auditor's report, page 295, and he referred to the fact that in monetary terms these amounts are relatively insignificant but in principle they represent a serious breakdown in the overall control in relation to financial matters. I would again urge the honourable member for Casuarina to go back and do his homework more adequately next time.

However, I would like to make a few general comments about the Northern Territory budget. There are two general comments I would like to make before I get down to the specifics in the budget. I would regard these as matters of interest. In the first instance, I regarded the bringing down of the budget in this Assembly as almost a non-event. The budget which has been brought down by the Treasurer appears to be directionless. I did not note any particular kind of strategy to overcome the high unemployment rate in the Northern Territory. Where is the strategy, Mr Deputy Speaker? I would say without doubt that the high unemployment rate in the Northern Territory which is in excess of 9% is a matter of grave concern to everyone and I would have imagined that the Northern Territory government would have been interested to propose a strategy which would directly come to terms with the high unemployment rate in the Northern Territory.

Mr Steele: How about uranium mining?

Mr PERKINS: It is the highest rate in Australia. In fact, I think there are even higher rates of unemployment amongst Aboriginal communities in the Northern Territory. We are talking about 4,700 people who are out of work in the Northern Territory, not to mention the many people who are not registered but are also out of work and cannot find work. This is a serious problem and yet, if you look at the budget and if you look at the speech by the honourable Treasurer, there is no strategy on the part of the Northern Territory government to overcome this particular problem. Where are the proposals to solve the high unemployment rate? In reality, there are none in the budget.

In the second instance, I would like to comment in a general fashion on the capital works allocation in the budget. I note in the budget documents that more funds for capital works are again allocated in the Darwin region at the expense of the Alice Springs region.

Mr Vale: Work it out on a per capita basis.

Mr PERKINS: I would argue again that the Alice Springs area has been discriminated against in the allocation of priorities and funds in this Northern Territory budget. Unfortunately, this is the same practice which has been adopted by the Commonwealth government in years past. I would have thought that, with self-government in the Northern Territory, there would be a more

equitable distribution of funds and resources around the Northern Territory communities. You only have to look at the regional summary in the speech of the Treasurer and you will find that in excess of \$24m is allocated in the Darwin region and yet, in the Alice Springs region, there is a little over \$10m allocated in respect of capital works programs.

Although it might seem that the Northern Territory government has actually made an attempt to provide for an equitable distribution, I believe that on those figures there is still a long way to go before we reach the stage of a proper and a fair distribution of resources in the Northern Territory, especially to isolated communities. I would urge the Northern Territory government in future to make a fairer allocation of resources and funds in the Northern Territory in respect of capital works programs. I am sure there are many communities in isolated areas in the Northern Territory which have considerable needs for capital works programs. In this respect, I would urge the Northern Territory government to have a proper regard for their needs.

I would now like to turn to the specific matters in the budget which are of interest to me. In the first instance, I would like to refer to the essential services to Aboriginal communities which was raised in the speech of the Treasurer. I take note that over \$13m will be set aside in this budget for the provision of essential services to Aboriginal communities. I welcome this: I think this will bring the Northern Territory into line with other states in respect of being able to provide essential services in Aboriginal communities. This is quite rightly the responsibility of the Northern Territory government as it is the responsibility of other governments in the states in Australia.

I would hope that these funds will be distributed on a fair basis, in respect to Aboriginal communities in the Northern Territory. I would hope that Aboriginals themselves will be able to set their priorities for funding of these essential services and that they will be consulted on this particular matter. I would hope that the Northern Territory government will effectively take into account their views and their wishes when allocating these funds, as I believe it is important that the people themselves have a say directly in how the funds ought to be allocated and what the priorities are in their particular areas. Unfortunately, there is still some confusion amongst Aboriginal communities about the essential services proposal, and also perhaps the message of the Northern Territory government is not adequately getting through yet. I would like to ask the honourable Treasurer whether in fact there are any plans to train and to develop Aboriginal people to take over responsibility themselves in respect of their own essential services. I have not seen any evidence of this to date; certainly there is no proposal in that regard in the budget or in any other debates we have heard in the Assembly so far.

I believe that some communities are already capable of being able to run their own essential services and, indeed, there have been some who have expressed an interest in wishing to have responsibility in respect to their essential services, and also provide the necessary training of members of their own community to accept that responsibility. The Northern Territory government ought to proceed with caution on its essential services proposal because it is a new responsibility and there is confusion amongst Aboriginals. I believe the Northern Territory government ought to be looking at the creation of employment and training opportunities in respect of Aboriginal people being able to run their own services.

I would now like to turn to the matter of tourism. Of course this was covered in the speech by the honourable Treasurer. I would say at the outset that like the Northern Territory government the opposition appreciates the value of tourism in economic terms to the development of the Northern Territory. Indeed tourism is a major industry in the Northern Territory and, as indicated by the honourable Treasurer, it is estimated that it injects up to \$40m a year into the Northern Territory economy. Without doubt, I think the potential is there to increase this annual value of tourism but only on the basis that the Northern Territory government is able to continue the support of the positive initiatives of the tourist industry.

I welcome the allocation of over \$1m in the budget in respect of the tourist industry in the Northern Territory. This will be an incentive for the industry to further develop its potential. However, I am also concerned about the fact that no funds were allocated in the budget for the building of the Yulara tourist village at Ayers Rock. In recent times the tourist organisations of Alice Springs have expressed their concern about this. In fact, I think they described the village in public as a myth and I suppose they might be right in a sense.

Let us look at the facts of this matter. On 12 May in Alice Springs at a meeting of the representatives of the tourist industry, the honourable Minister for Mines and Energy indicated to the industry that there were funds actually available and that the work would commence on the village in this financial year. He also indicated to that meeting that there would be a new all-weather airstrip and it would be operational in the next year. In addition, he indicated that new beds would become available in the new village by 1983. After that meeting, there was a press release - I think it was printed in the *Central Australian Advocate* of 18 May - by the honourable Majority Leader as he then was. He did not actually refute the undertakings given by the honourable Minister for Mines and Energy although there were some conflicting remarks. In recent times, we have had an indication from the Treasurer of the Northern Territory that funds will come from the federal government to build the new village.

However, in a letter of 8 June of this year to the tourist association of Alice Springs, the federal Minister for Industry and Commerce indicated that, as from 1 July this year, the Northern Territory Legislative Assembly is the body which will actually become responsible for the new village. I would like members to take note that, on the one hand, the federal minister says that the village is a responsibility of the Northern Territory government and yet the Northern Territory Treasurer says they have to seek the funds from the federal government. This is precisely the conflict.

Mr Perron: The village is still our responsibility.

Mr PERKINS: Unfortunately, as a result of this conflict of statements which have been emanating out of the Northern Territory government and also the federal government, there is confusion in the tourist industry and amongst other people at Ayers Rock itself in respect of the plans to build a new village. We are at a loss to understand who is actually correct in this situation and also what the local tourist industry in Central Australia is to understand in view of this conflict of views.

In addition to this, the tourist association of Alice Springs is also concerned about a number of other issues regarding the new village. They are concerned about the building of the new village and when this might commence. I have already asked a question in this Assembly on that particular matter. They

are also concerned to know the expected date of completion and what action will be taken by the Northern Territory government to protect the current lessees and the local industry at Ayers Rock in the period between the procrastination over planning and the actual completion date. I believe these are important questions which require answers. I have asked a couple of questions in this House of the Treasurer and I am waiting to receive adequate answers to those questions, even though he did attempt to answer them to some degree. There are answers to be supplied on such matters as when will the construction commence and be completed. We have yet to hear from the honourable Treasurer as to what action will be taken by the Northern Territory government to protect the lessees and the industry.

This is an important matter and requires urgent action in the interests of the tourist industry of Central Australia. I do not think the Northern Territory government ought to fall into the trap of inertia on this matter as has been the case with the federal government for many years. I would urge them in strong terms that they ought to respond to the needs and the wishes of the tourist industry in Central Australia and be able to give them some definite answers on the construction of the village at Ayers Rock.

In the final analysis, I would like to refer to an attack made in this House yesterday by the honourable Chief Minister in a speech which he made about the budget. He attacked the Central Australian Aboriginal Congress and the Miscellaneous Workers Union in respect of a staff award which was being negotiated in the Conciliation and Arbitration Commission at present. I am amazed to note ...

Mr EVERINGHAM (Chief Minister): A point of order, Mr Deputy Speaker!

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: What is your point of order?

Mr EVERINGHAM: I am being misrepresented. I did not attack the Miscellaneous Workers Union.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: There is no point of order.

Mr PERKINS: Mr Deputy Speaker, that interruption is unfortunate. I think the honourable Chief Minister was being mischievous. Unfortunately, he bucketed the two proposals in the proposed award which is being negotiated on behalf of the Central Australian Aboriginal Congress by the Chamber of Industries in the Northern Territory and also the Miscellaneous Workers Union.

The honourable Chief Minister referred to clause 22 in the award which actually relates to public holidays and objected in particular to the inclusion of National Aborigines Day as a public holiday. In the second place, the Chief Minister also referred to clause 47 in that particular award which relates to special leave conditions. He objected to the proposal for special leave of up to one week on full pay and up to three weeks without pay for tribal Aboriginal people who want to attend their tribal ceremonies. He had the audacity to suggest that these provisions were designed to jeopardise employment opportunities for Aboriginal people in the Northern Territory if they were successful. He said that, if these proposals were introduced, it would be a backward step in the creation of employment for Aboriginal people. He also said that unemployment amongst Aboriginal people would not improve but would get worse.

I would like to hotly deny those allegations by the honourable Chief Minister. I believe they are absolute nonsense. They also show a serious ignorance of what the Central Australian Aboriginal Congress is endeavouring to do and a lack of understanding on the part of the Chief Minister of the traditions of Aboriginal people. I do not believe the CAAC proposals are designed at all to jeopardise Aboriginal employment opportunities or even to worsen employment opportunities for Aboriginals. On the contrary, the Central Australian Aboriginal Congress is aiming to have these important documents recognised in the Northern Territory by the Northern Territory government and other employers.

The first option, of course, is the one which relates to the provision that Aboriginal people and particularly staff employed in Aboriginal organisations ought to have a public holiday on National Aborigines Day in view of the significance...

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! I would draw the honourable member's attention to standing order 58 - digression from subject. I find this is irrelevant to the budget speech.

Mr ISAACS (Opposition Leader): Mr Deputy Speaker, the deputy leader is responding to remarks made by the Chief Minister in precisely this same debate. The Chief Minister was allowed the latitude of speaking on the matter and my recollection is that he spoke at length. It is perfectly proper in my view, therefore, that the deputy leader of the opposition should respond to those remarks in the same debate.

Mr EVERINGHAM (Chief Minister): In answer to the Leader of the Opposition, Mr Deputy Speaker, I did not speak at length on this particular subject. I made some passing remarks which might be lucky to have comprised two paragraphs of Hansard.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Would the honourable member confine his remarks to the budget speech or to parts thereof.

Mr PERKINS: Mr Deputy Speaker, that is what I have been trying to do in answering the claims made yesterday by the honourable Chief Minister.

As I was saying, what the Aboriginal congress is trying to do is to have the whole significance of National Aborigines Day recognised in respect of staff employed in Aboriginal organisations and other Aboriginals in the Northern Territory in view of the significance that those people place on the idea of National Aborigines Day. In this respect, I think the Northern Territory government ought to take up this initiative of Aboriginal people and to legislate to recognise National Aborigines Day as a public holiday for all Territorians. I believe the Northern Territory government ought to be more positive and should respond to this kind of proposal from strong and influential organisations such as the Aboriginal congress.

On the second point which was disputed by the honourable Chief Minister yesterday, I would like to say that it was the Aboriginal staff themselves employed in the Aboriginal congress who actually want this recognition of special leave, particularly in respect of tribal Aboriginals to attend their ceremonies. They were the people who made this special request. I suppose this might be a new doctrine in relation to employees awards in the Northern Territory but I do not think it is new to those of our tribal people who have wanted to attend their important ceremonies to continue their culture. It is

a doctrine that the Northern Territory government and employers ought to recognise now if they have any respect for Aboriginal wishes and Aboriginal traditions. I would like to state - and again this is in reply to the claims by the honourable Chief Minister yesterday - that the clause I have referred to in the CAAC award is only a discretionary one which may be - and I emphasise the words "may be" - adopted. In his attack on the Central Australian Aboriginal Congress and the Miscellaneous Workers Union, the honourable Chief Minister amazes me with his hollow criticism. I believe it shows an ignorance of the real intentions of the CAAC awards which is being discussed in the arbitration commission and a lack of respect for Aboriginal traditions.

In closing, Mr Deputy Speaker, I would hope the Northern Territory government is interested to take up the ideas which have been suggested in the speech I have just made on the budget and be serious about these ideas in relation to the creation of employment opportunities for people in the Northern Territory. That is an important matter for concern. It is unfortunate that to date and in this budget they have not been able to adopt a strategy in the Northern Territory which will be able to bring down the high unemployment rate.

Mr OLIVER (Alice Springs): Mr Deputy Speaker, I preface my remarks with the observation that Alice Springs is the hub of Central Australia. It is the administrative centre; it is the commercial centre; anything that happens in the adjoining electorates has a profound effect on the electorate of Alice Springs itself.

I have been listening to the debate on the budget and there have not been very many strong points emanating from the opposition. Actually, there is very little that could be picked up. However, I do pick up the points made by the honourable member for MacDonnell when he said that Alice Springs is being discriminated against. It was discriminated against in the 1977-78 budget, according to the honourable member for MacDonnell and it is again being discriminated against. Mr Deputy Speaker, I think we could have a rational look at this discrimination to see what we end up with.

In Alice Springs, we are well provided with schools, both primary and secondary. The Sadadene High School is almost completed and that, together with the existing high school, should serve Alice Springs well into the 1980s if not right up to the 1990s. We would probably have the most up-to-date primary schools in Australia and, with the Commonwealth government's commitment to Ross Park school, this too will be completely modernised. I see no reason for complaint in that area.

Alice Springs can boast a magnificent hospital that is well in excess of current needs and will be for some time to come. A new court house is under construction. That will add a bit of beauty and dignity to the town itself and replace the old court house now in use. The municipal council has been presented with a fund to erect a civic centre. We do surely need a venue for performing arts. However, this is in the pipeline. We cannot accomplish all that we desire in the one year; if we attempted that, all the opposition would scream blue murder at the heavy impositions that would have to be put on the taxpayers to accomplish that. Mr Speaker: softly, softly catchee monkey. We are a newly pledged self-governing entity. Mr Deputy Speaker, let us sort out our priorities and I earnestly believe that this budget has done just that.

The honourable member for MacDonnell said something about going a bit easy on Aboriginal essential services. I thought this has had a very high priority. To point out briefly just what we do have going in Aboriginal essential services: works in progress, we have at Areyonga electrical reticul-

ation and water supply - \$58,100; at Docker River, we have a powerhouse and the water supply - \$50,800; at Santa Theresa, we have water supply and powerhouse - \$209,900; and at Yuendumu, we have sewerage reticulation, water reticulation and supply - \$384,300. The proposed new works in relation to Aboriginal essential services, and I only quote the major items, are: at Amooinguna, we have a sewerage scheme - \$296,000; at Areyonga the electricity supply will cost \$92,500; at Hermannsburg the water supply will cost \$64,700; at Papunya the water supply will cost \$78,600; at Santa Theresa, with the public toilets that were brought to the fore yesterday, there is the sum of \$50,000; and at Yuendumu the electricity supply will cost \$74,000 and to upgrade the airstrip will cost \$180,400. I think the Aborigines are being very well served in relation to these essential services and I do not think it could be said that this government has neglected them.

Another vital concern in the Alice Springs area is the roads. We have works in progress. I bring these works in progress into the debate because it indicates the activity that is going on. We have the Stuart Highway from Smith Street to Mount Nancy being done up at a cost of \$125,700. The Head Street subdivision is costing \$759,600. I will not go further with the finer details, but works in progress in Central Australia total almost \$1.6m and that does not include the \$2.637m for the Stuart Highway through the hills north of Alice Springs.

Turning to the new road works, two major works are the sealing of the road from Jay Creek to Gler Helen at a cost of \$2.5m and the stage 1 of the sealing of the Tanami Highway at a cost of almost \$2.5m. The road to Ayers Rock will be sealed from Eridunda to Angus Downs turnoff, roughly about 105 kilometres, at a cost of just over \$3m. Not included in these amounts is the sum of \$474,500 for minor road works. What an uplift to our roads and what benefits will accrue to my electorate anyway with improved road communications!

Finally, I want to look at the proposed new works for water and sewerage. In Alice Springs, we find the equipping of bore number P7 at a cost of \$192,000, the upgrading of Templebar pumping station for \$441,000, extensions to the water mains to Blatherskite Park \$76,000 and the construction of an effluent disposal scheme for \$652,700. The foregoing does not include the sum of \$1,094,000 for the repair and maintenance of water and sewerage installation in Alice Springs.

To say that Alice Springs has been discriminated against is rather strange when you see the activity that is going on around the town. The budget is a healthy budget. It will stimulate activity throughout the Territory and create jobs that will ease unemployment. It is a hopeful, encouraging budget which sets a pattern for many a good budget yet to come under self-government. I congratulate the Treasurer for his efforts and I wholeheartedly support the bill.

Mr DOOLAN (Victoria River): Mr Deputy Speaker, at the risk of being accused of nitpicking, I would like to point out what seems to me to be a couple of minor errors in this capital works program booklet. On page 9, there is an item for upgrading water supply under the heading Croker Island and, on page 12, there are two items for construction of stormwater drainage, construction of new barge landing and bulk fuel facilities under the heading "Crocker Island". On page 10: "Erection of powerhouse and provision of bulk fuel facilities, Minjilang". I have no doubt the spelling "Crocker" is a typographical error and will be picked up but I hope that it is realised that these four allocations under three different names all apply to the same community.

On page 20, I am extremely happy to see for the Victoria Highway the construction of King River Bridge at \$1,509,400. This will certainly make many people in my electorate very happy and it will help them a great deal. It is a relatively small river which floods at a high level and either locks you in or out of the country. I know that is a most necessary and overdue effort. At Wave Hill, the upgrading of the access road to Hooker Creek at a cost of \$259,000 is much needed. It is quite a reasonable road except for a black soil plain; a little drop of water on that and it puts the road out. On page 19, I must say that it is extremely pleasing to see that the Daly River Road will be sealed from Survey Creek to the police station at a cost of \$994,000.

It has been said by several members of the government party that there are no deficiencies in this budget. Personally, I can demonstrate that there is a very serious deficiency. I can find no allocation for the road from Daly River to Port Keats. I find this almost unbelievable. I have spoken at length in a few debates and told this House that there is almost a desperate need for a road for the 126 miles from Daly River to Port Keats. This has apparently been to no avail because I can see no reference to it anywhere.

A few months ago, I drove from Hooker Creek down the middle of the Tanami Desert down to the bore on a road that really serves very little purpose whatsoever except for grog runners running from Lajamanu to Rabbit Flat. There is no real purpose for it to be there and that is an upgraded highway compared to the Daly River to Port Keats thing. To disregard the 300-odd residents of the Daly River Reserve who are in four separate communities - Peppimenarti, Nardirdi, Palumpa and Port Keats - is nothing short of criminal.

On page 13, there is an allocation or an estimated cost for the construction of an airstrip at Peppimenarti of \$120,200. This is very good but how about the vehicle transport? I can give you a fairly graphic description of what that road was like. I bought a Toyota 4 months ago and it is the only new vehicle I have ever had in my life and it is not in real good nick at the moment. I have travelled all over the electorate and never done it any harm. It looked like it had come out of a showroom until I did one trip to Port Keats. In that one trip on that road, I staked a brand new tyre and tube so there was \$103 down the drain. If you look at her now, she has a distinct list to port because the springs have lost all their tension. That was the result of one trip to Keats and back; I will have to fork out \$200 plus to get that rectified and put it on an even keel.

That is my trouble, but the troubles of the people down there are very desperate and it seems that no notice has been taken of them at all. This road is impassable to any vehicle other than a truck or a 4-wheel-drive vehicle. I am speaking about the dry season; no one worries about it in the wet because it is completely out. It is almost impossible to do that trip even once without breaking something on a 4-wheel-drive vehicle or a truck. It is totally unreasonable that people have to put up with conditions like this.

The cost of transporting foodstuffs and materials to Port Keats overland is vastly cheaper than by barge. Because of the lack of road transport, the barge operators are holding the people to ransom. As a matter of fact, at one stage, a person who works on the barge told me I had better stop talking about upgrading the roads down there because they might lose the business. They have no competition; they charge what they like and they get away with it. It is quite unfair. I would ask the Treasurer - I am sure that he has a cunning buck or two stuck away in the reserve somewhere - that he take a serious look

at the need for an upgraded road down there. It is a hopeless place in the wet; nobody wants the road in the wet, Peppimenarti are trying to get cattle out - they have now run a road down to the beach on Hyland Bay at the barge landing. That is also out in the wet; it is only a dirt road which they have built themselves with a dozer. I would ask the Treasurer to take a serious look at finding some finance somewhere to do something about the road.

The only other comment I would have on the budget is that, in the explanations of Appropriation Bill No. 1, under rural adjustment scheme, it says: "The rural adjustment scheme commenced on 1.1.77 to provide assistance to rural industries. The scheme replaced previous federal schemes which provided assistance to rural industries. Assistance in 1977-78 was provided in the following forms: carry-on finance-commitment \$482,623, expenditure \$335,153, revote \$146,470; debt reconstruction - commitment \$1,063,000, expenditure \$465,000, revote, \$598,000; farm improvement - commitment \$359,000, expenditure \$223,750, revote \$135,250; farm buildup, household support and rehabilitation - commitment, \$13,000, expenditure \$2,500, revote \$10,500".

Mr Deputy Speaker, if we could just look at this one item headed "reconstruction", the commitment is \$1.663m, expenditure \$465,000, revote \$598,000. We see that over 50% of the commitment, a sum of nearly \$600,000, has been revoted. It would seem to me that an extremely hard line must have been taken by whoever was responsible for the expenditure of the committed sums in view of the fact that pastoralists have been so desperately seeking finance during the 1977-78 period. I am at a loss to understand how a total of almost \$900,000 could have been revoted.

Mr MacFARLANE (Elsey): Mr Deputy Speaker, talk about the revote brings to mind the loss on the Darwin bus run. I understand that is \$800,000 and the revote was \$900,000, so somewhere along the line there seems to be a lot of money floating around for public convenience.

The first obligation of this Northern Territory government is to solve the employment problem. This can only be done by promoting our primary industries. It would seem to me that mining, pastoral, fishing and agriculture must be made viable. It would seem that a radical new approach must be taken towards these industries. Unless we do make them viable, we are going to see the present dependence on the public sector and there is no reason at all for this. Food is in short supply throughout this Southeast Asian region and it is up to this government to exploit the markets that the trade delegation found earlier this year. I think it is reprehensible - to use a good Labor word - that this government has not done that.

Mr Everingham: Intolerable.

Mr MacFARLANE: Yes, intolerable - and also unfortunate for the industries concerned.

I think the pastoral industry employed 2,000 people, black and white, in 1973. Naturally, since then they have gone down and in 1974, although the crisis was on the cattle industry, the Miscellaneous Workers Union applied for further increases of \$15 per week in the pastoral award. You can see, when you are down, in some cases you get kicked as well.

In 1974, we saw the Labor government abolish tax incentive for development, abolish outback concessions for mail services, revalue the Australian dollar and abolish foreign investment. We saw the Woodward Aboriginal Land Rights

Commission. We saw the abolition of superphosphate subsidy and bounty, the abolition of freight incentive for fuel in outback areas, the abolition of beef payroll incentive, worth about \$1.50 per 100 pounds, the introduction of the export beef levy collected by the government, worth about \$1.6 per 100, and the trouble with transport and communications and the increased interest rates.

A lot of these things have not been replaced by either that government or this one. I talk now of this federal government. You can see the lot of the cattleman is not a happy one. This government has not gone far enough. Cattlemen will not be able to do what they should be doing, all the things a cattleman has to do - improve his turnover etc - until he gets a fair price, and a fair price is approximately twice what he is getting now or something like the 1973 figure. 1973 was the year before the bust.

One of the things, of course, which is stifling development and really making cattlemen squirm is the interest which has accumulated on their original debts over the past 4½ years. Most of these debts have been at commercial rates and this is what cattlemen just cannot pay. This year the average price for cattle was about \$75. This includes stores, live exports and meatworks - I am talking about the Top End. This is about half the price of production. I would suggest the first thing that this government should do is to restructure the loans and somehow remove this tax, this interest accumulation which is going to strangle cattlemen.

There are lots of schemes which could make the cattle industry viable. One of them is a government killing facility somewhere near Elliott. This is going to cost the taxpayer, some people say, because all government-owned meatworks throughout Australia are a burden on the taxpayer. Well, so is the Darwin bus run. It is a convenience for some, not for most. Anytime I see the bus around here, it is empty. Of course, people might get off half way; it might be packed the other end. Anytime I have seen the bus, it has been empty and it cost the best part of \$800,000 in the last financial year.

A government killing facility near Elliott or somewhere in the Top End could cater for the Barkly Tablelands, for the Victoria River area, for the gulf area and be an alternative market for the Alice Springs area and the Katherine area. Right at the present time, there are some Israelies in the Northern Territory who are reputedly looking for 1,000 tonnes of forequarter beef but there is nowhere to kill it. There is no service meatworks in the Northern Territory and this I feel is a requirement. From the tablelands every year we see 100,000 head of cattle going into Queensland for fattening or for slaughter. In fact, the manager of Eva Downs, that is out from Elliott, finds his cattle weigh and yield better in Bowen after a 1,000 mile trip than they do at Katherine which is just up the road from him. They must have something in that peanut state. Those cattle could be killed, or some of them, provided the meatworks is economic in this Northern Territory. That is what would happen in South Australia. They do not welcome the cattle down there; they levy them - 1% on Northern Territory cattle going into South Australia. We possibly could reverse that and levy these cattle for going out, provided we had somewhere to kill them. but we have not.

If we are going to develop the Northern Territory in agriculture and in cattle and beef, we will have to have some firm undertaking with the gentlemen who run the wharf. It is no good putting \$5m into a land-backed wharf unless there is some firm agreement worked out with the gentlemen who run it. I bring to the attention of the Assembly the fact that only last week the wharf

labourers loaded cattle for Malaysia during a national waterfront strike and I commend them for their action. It does seem that they are open to negotiation. They can be reasonable. The future of the export industry from the Northern Territory depends either on the Darwin waterfront or the deep sea port to be built in the years to come out from Borroloola.

There are schemes available to this government. I do not know if they know about them. The first one is the federal scheme: the export incentive scheme and the export development plan. For all I know, they may be quite expert in these schemes. Seemingly the federal government does appreciate the need to export, but in this budget I cannot find any reference to delegations going overseas, to hard-headed businessmen going overseas to tie up these markets that the babes in the wood found. I think it should come. I think we should regard ourselves as desperate for markets and we should be doing everything we possibly can to find them and to tie them up and to supply them. We seem content to sit back and waste another year. We should become self-sufficient in beef, cement, milk, salt and fertilizer.

It is interesting to note that a lot of our beef, particularly the beef that supplies Vesteys shops or William Angliss shops, comes from Queensland. Prime beef is going begging at Alice Springs. I think that Vesteys who own huge stations and run vast herds would be well advised to think of supporting the Territory which allows them to do that. We should endeavour to become self-sufficient in beef; that should be mandatory.

We import all our cement and yet we have huge limestone deposits around Katherine. We bring milk 2,500 miles. With this scheme that the honourable Minister for Transport and Works brought in the other day, with 10% differential for local contracts, something like that could help, so that the higher prices up here compared with the higher prices of say Malanda could, with the 10% differential, equate with the price of Malanda milk plus the transport. It cannot be cheap to bring milk 2,500 miles. As a matter of budgetary consideration, we should do all these things here. All the salt I have seen lately comes from Rockhampton. There are miles of salt lands close to Darwin. We used to get all our salt from Darwin. It was not the best salt but it was good stock salt and I think cattlemen would be able to afford that. Fertilizer is another area the government seems to have neglected, if you read the budget. There are other areas too. One of the reasons why Willeroo was developed was to supply some of the ingredients for stock feed, poultry feed, fowl feed. Other ingredients, of course, are meatmeal.

It would appear that the government has not done anything about practical education. Yet they see the results of neglecting practical education in the delinquency which is so worrying people in this Assembly. Hardly a session goes past but you hear about the troubles confronting unemployed people. All these things put together could provide education for a lot of people who want to work but practical education is a particular need. The honourable member for Victoria River has just spoken about the road between Port Keats and Daly River. With a second-hand grader which is fairly cheap these days and with youths trained as grader operators at a rural college or a school of practical education, at least two kids from Port Keats or Daly River would have employment grading that road and it would save the honourable member staking his tyre and busting his springs. I don't know how he would get on bull-catching because he would find things a bit rougher out there. That is just one facet of what practical education means and could do.

It was interesting to note the comment from the member for Casuarina, the \$15,000 for the Year of the Child - and I do not blame him. I hope it is a girl.

It was interesting to hear the need for barges to Port Keats. I seem to remember some years ago the Department of Aboriginal Affairs buying a controlling interest in V.B. Perkins. It makes me wonder why V.B. Perkins and Aboriginal Affairs are not doing something to supply the needs of the Aboriginal communities on the seaboard.

There seems to be a need for this government to put some money away for public relations. The people in Katherine were very upset to find that \$300,000 or \$400,000 have been bunged into fluoridation of their water supply without any consultation. Whether fluoridation is necessary, whether it is compulsory, is one thing. I think a public relations exercise could have taken a lot of pressure away from this government - which does not need any more publicity at the present time of the kind it is getting down there - because these people find there is self-government in one place and compulsory government in another.

The road from the Stuart Highway to Maranboy on the Mainoru road has been a bottleneck for a long time. I have spoken often in this place about it. There is only about 14 miles of ti-tree country and you cannot get around it although the road has been realigned. This road has been on the estimates for about ten years and it has never made it on the program. Apart from the thousand people at Bamyili and the couple of hundred at Beswick, you have settlements at Bulman - I am talking about Aboriginal communities - then you have the cattle stations of Mainoru, Bulman, Mountain Valley, Goondaloo, Beswick and Eva Valley, all served by that road and all cut off every year at this one area. I have made representations to ministers Bryant, Cavenagh, Johnson and Viner. I think communications in some cases are more important to Aborigines than land rights and I would bring this to the attention of the government again. The honourable Minister for Transport and Works has noted my complaint. Money is available this year for gravelling but this is not solving the problem. These people deserve all-weather access and they must have it.

Roper settlement - there is a half a million dollars in the budget for water reticulation, for electrical reticulation and upgrading and for the provision of a better road. Under Canberra control, the road to Roper stopped at the edge of Arnhem Land. I am pleased to see that this government has bridged this gap.

The bridge over the King River on the Victoria Highway and the bridge over the Warlock Ponds on the Stuart Highway have both been needed but I do not think there is any roadworks in the Northern Territory required more than the bridge over the King River. It has been long overdue and we have had fatalities when it has been flooded. I think it is a disgrace that it has taken so long. I commend this government for earmarking the money even before the budget was brought out. Sections of Roper Road were washed out in the big floods 5 or 6 years ago and they have never been replaced. That road requires attention. There are many things missing in the budget; there always will be. One thing about this budget we can be proud of is that it is our own.

Mr ROBERTSON (Community Development): Mr Speaker, I see that the only member of the opposition who has not spoken has absented himself on other business for quite some time during this budget session and does not want to speak. I did wish to extend him that courtesy if he wished to.

In reference to the honourable Minister for Mines and Energy, the honourable member for Sanderson used the most significant words that have been used throughout this debate on the attitude of the opposition in this debate and that was "barking at the moon". I do not think that I have ever come across any better description. It was in reference to the honourable minister.

Ms D'Rozario: I was quoting him.

Mr ROBERTSON: Let me quote from someone else who is probably the most important person among those thousands of important people in the Northern Territory and that is the elector - the person out there who puts that little white paper in the electoral office box. Let me quote from a letter to the editor of the NT News of 24 August 1978. This summarises precisely the attitudes of the Leader of the Opposition and that of the opposition generally. The article was entitled "Bark that has no bite" and I will read it to honourable members:

Sir, your paper gives too much notice to 2 of Darwin's annoying and noisy problems - dogs and Jon Isaacs. They are similar because both bark at the moon and at all times they bite at everything that moves. Did you notice that in his budget comments (Labour Puts View NT News 17 August) Mr Isaacs referred to Grant Tambling eight times by name and used about half of his statement to "take the mickey" out of Mr Tambling and Mr Marshall Perron. The rest of that short article was meaningless, particularly coming from an economics graduate. By comparison, in the previous day's article by Mr Grant Tambling, we were treated to a lengthy, good and practical analysis which had some depth and did outline most of the budget for the NT and only once, incidentally, managed to mention Mr Isaacs. As a regular reader of the NT News, I would be very happy if you would choose to give less space to dogs and knocker Isaacs.

I think that typifies and describes better than any painting I have ever seen anywhere in the Northern Territory the attitude and the nonsense we have heard. Let us look at what really has been suggested by the honourable Leader of the Opposition. I suppose the most significant thing he sought to explain was the reduction, as he saw it, in capital works. Let us assume that the \$27m had to be added to the Northern Territory budget having regard to the generous, realistic amount allocated by the Commonwealth to the Northern Territory government for the fiscal year 1978-79. We have a suggestion that we are going to solve unemployment and the economic problems of the Northern Territory by providing an incentive for apprenticeships. Not only are we going to create - and incidentally we do not really have the power to do this unless it is within the Department of Industrial Development - an apprenticeship scheme, we are going to offer a payroll tax incentive for people to employ apprentices. Not only is this an expensive program having regard to the present employment patterns of the Northern Territory, it is also an impossible one. After all, the role of an apprentice is that of trade. A tradesman's normal role is for repair and indeed there would be some role for the repair side. The most common usage of apprentices throughout this country is for production. Unless you can create an economic base with which people purchase the goods and require the services of apprentices, you have no point in employing them. It is an absurdity to suggest that you will solve any problems by subsidising employers to employ employees unless you can come up with something that actually gives them a productivity base, that gives them a reason for being in the market place.

If we balance up what the Leader of the Opposition has said, we are certainly not going to achieve that. He talks about economic mismanagement in the Northern Territory. That reminds me of a very interesting incident we saw this morning. Of course, Mr Deputy Speaker, you were perhaps intent upon the preparation of that magnificent dissertation which tore my department apart. We saw a very interesting thing. The Leader of the Opposition, apart from his nonsensical discussions which he tried to impress upon the electors of the

Northern Territory, concentrated 90% of his speech on economic mismanagement. So concerned was he to achieve this end that what he did was pass around this volume in front of me - the report of the Auditor-General for the year ended 30 June 1978 - firstly to the member for Victoria River.

Where did he have it open? On this infamous page which he has quoted many times - page 295. The member for Victoria River looked at it and looked back at the Leader of the Opposition and said, "Good grief, I do not understand what you are talking about". Immediately, the Leader of the Opposition snatched it back off his table and tried it on the member for MacDonnell. He could not understand it either because what the Leader of the Opposition was trying to get at was not the area that he had already spoken about - which was the last paragraph outlining this incredibly criminal negligence on behalf of the Northern Territory government and its Treasurer of \$351.05 - what the Leader of the Opposition was trying to do was hope that they could remember what they did about 35 years ago or 45 years ago and that is learn how to read and pick up some of other points from it. The member for Victoria River really could not manage that. Having snatched the document back off the member for Victoria River, he then shoved it in the hands of the member for MacDonnell. What happened then? Dear me, another absolute disaster. He could not read it either. The Leader of the Opposition grabbed it back off the member for MacDonnell and shoved it back on the desk of the member for Victoria River.

Mr Isaacs: Haven't you got anything better to do?

Mr ROBERTSON: Incredibly enough, he could not read it either because he never even mentioned the document. Let us look at the document.

Ms D'Rozario: This is worse than the adjournment debate.

Mr ROBERTSON: Oh my God, we are not talking about flowers and driveways and pretty rivers, we are talking about the merits of debate, about the nonsense that has gone on in this House. Let us demonstrate the nonsense.

The Auditor-General's report runs to about 600 pages in the first bracket and another series of 200-odd pages. In 180 pages of criticism of expenditure in areas for which the Commonwealth is responsible, in that broad area called "comments", the Northern Territory's sins are exposed in 3 sentences involving \$351. I do not really think that is a bad performance, having regard to the fact that there was no Treasurer when we took over that \$52m or \$50m as it originally was. There was no structure; there was only my colleague, the honourable Treasurer at the moment and a few people on secondment. It was not a bad performance at all, hardly something of substance for an entire attack from the opposition because there was nothing else in their debate. It was hardly something that would turn the Territory voter off this government.

Quite frankly, looking back through what has transpired over the last 2 days and particularly today, I find it rather difficult to come up with anything that the people could really pay any credence to. The member for MacDonnell made great play of his so-called 9% unemployment in the Northern Territory. I have pointed out in this place before that a high percentage of that figure, particularly for central Australia, comes from Don Dunstan's ALP government in South Australia and the northwest Aboriginal area all inclusive. While I have said that Aboriginal people, all people, have an entitlement to work and self-satisfaction, the employer in this country is entitled to employ only those people that he believes are capable of working within his industrial

system. Unless that can be achieved, those people are not only unemployable but unreferable - to use the jargon of the Department of Labor and Industrial Relations. If you did an analysis of what percentage of people are really employable, much less referable, in the Northern Territory, I think you would find the real figure is far less than the 9% suggested. Of course, we do know of active campaigns to register people who have never been employed in their life and who are incapable of being employed. I believe that we ought to be looking towards methods of employing them. Indeed, this government will be seeking methods of employing people who are otherwise displaced. It is very sad that this has occurred but it is also very unrealistic to use them in the statistical analysis of those who are unemployed.

I must take issue with the honourable member for Elsey on his reference that he was disappointed that there were no adult educational training schemes within the Northern Territory budget. I would draw to the honourable member's attention that it is illegal for the Northern Territory government to expend any funds at all unless those funds are approved by appropriation and those appropriations are approved by a schedule under the Northern Territory (Self-Government) Act. It is therefore quite impossible for us to go into the field of education. Otherwise all we are going to do is provide little snippets for the Leader of the Opposition to nitpick at when he comes to review the next budget.

The member for Elsey referred to the trade delegations. The Leader of the Opposition would be well aware of the arrangement entered into between him and the Chief Minister in relation to having ministerial, backbench and government member delegations overseas accompanied by senior officers of the departments as a rolling program over the next 18 months or so. The honourable member for Elsey may be well assured that these undertakings overseas will be continued. It is also very essential that the public never gets the idea that these are junkets; they are extremely hard working programs. I am quite sure that, if the Leader of the Opposition ever thought that they were anything but hard working delegations on behalf of the Northern Territory people, he would not have agreed to them either.

Looking at the broader spectrum of the Northern Territory budget, we have outlined by my colleagues, and indeed admitted by the opposition, that the industrial side is being well catered for. I have even heard the honourable member for Victoria River, albeit reluctantly, give credit to some of the capital works side of the budget. I think the other side of it need never be forgotten by Territory people. There is the dual responsibility of government and one is to those people who require government stimulus to private enterprise. Business has an entitlement to look to government for support. I think this budget indicates that.

Additionally, this budget also looks at the welfare side. That goes through my ministry of 3 separate divisions: the community welfare division, the local government area and correctional service. If anything disturbs me about this budget - and I have said this publicly and to my cabinet colleagues - it is the tremendous cost we are looking at in correctional services. I think that everyone in this Chamber who has looked at the figures contained in this budget for correctional services would have to be disturbed about where our society is going. I will be quite frank: it disturbs me and worries me. It is for this reason we look to such programs as community service orders, reporting centres, weekend detentions and work release programs to try to reduce the tremendous burden on the public purse and the public conscience of criminal activity.

For the operation of the Darwin gaol, there is an increase of \$5,700. That is not much but it is quite gratifying. Gunn Point operational vote this year increases by \$25,700. I think it is interesting, and the honourable member for MacDonnell might be interested, that the estimates for this year and the expenditure in Alice Springs are some \$14,700 less than we would have expected in a previous year. If any program of community services orders is going to work, it is the very nature of the centre, the environment, the relationship that exists in that community, particularly with service clubs and so on, that will allow that reduction to occur. I can assure this House that I, my officers and the Correctional Services Division will be working towards that philosophy to reduce the burden on the community.

The maintenance of prisoners south is an area which has concerned me greatly. There is a recent pattern - I might say this with the greatest respect to the Supreme Court - of recommendation that people be ordered to serve their sentences south. I believe, as a matter of principle, that if a person wants to come to the Northern Territory to commit an offence, then it really is not up to the Northern Territory taxpayer to support him between \$19,000 and \$28,000 a year in a place away from here, because it happens to be convenient to him. In other words, if it is convenient to break our laws, I wonder if it is not convenient to spend the sentence here - if we are going to sentence people to gaol at all. Nevertheless, we believe there will be a reduction of about \$61,900 this year in our maintenance of southern prisoners. I will stick around to see whether that is the case, Mr Deputy Speaker, because I have grave reservations about it.

We heard yesterday the proposed budget being announced by the Darwin City Corporation, with an increase of 12%. The mayor commented that they were terribly pleased that they could keep it down to 12%. Let us look at why she was able to keep it down to 12%. Subsidies to local government authorities last year were \$1.3833m. This year they are \$2.820m - an increase of \$1.4367m. I will admit, Mr Deputy Speaker, that a substantial part of that is the picking up of the original 1967 road programs which Darwin has been requiring for some time and I think Darwin is entitled to. It is rather miserable that the first Northern Territory government has to pick up a Commonwealth commitment back to 1967. I do not think there would be any honourable member here who would disagree with that. That incidentally is a reality. We have had to pick up 1967 commitments out of our global figure.

Grants to community organisations this year have increased from \$153,500 to \$348,300, an increase of \$194,800. That is the commitment of the Northern Territory government to community organisations who wish to be self-helped and wish to work at their own programs on community problems. Again, family homes see an increase. Concessions to pensioners was mentioned by the Chief Minister; that increases by \$201,000. In fact, it was only a pilot study last year; this year it is a major program.

The other area in which my department is pursuing its activities is subsidies to social workers employed in community work. This, again, is a relatively new idea where we believe that, if you involve community organisation actively in the community, then they are entitled to government support provided they fit within a certain bracket, a certain frame of endeavour and it fits within government policy. Quite frankly, their endeavours are worthwhile. The increase in that area this year is almost \$60,000. Supporting benefits fund has a massive increase from \$291,800 - an increase of \$158,200. That is quite significant.

Mr Speaker, I have not gone right through the budget for obvious reasons. It would take all day to cover my department's allocations. The point I was trying to make is that, while this government recognises its responsibility to the fiscal development of the Northern Territory, under no circumstances will it abdicate its responsibility to those who normally require assistance from state and welfare services or to those who, despite their best efforts on their own behalf, are unable to manage their own affairs properly themselves. In other words, there is that balance between the development of economic growth and looking after those who really depend on the "welfare state" as the term is used in other countries.

Mr PERRON (Treasurer): Mr Speaker, after this budget was introduced into this House last week, I waited eagerly to see what sort of descriptions were hung on the budget and, sure enough, it only took a day to find them. The Leader of the Opposition - "lacking direction, no exciting government initiatives". Senator Robertson - "lack-lustre, unimaginative and disappointing". After that, I thought, "Let us wait until next week's sitting and we will hear what the alternative government is proposing for the Northern Territory". Let us hear how the opposition would split up the \$350m to make it an imaginative budget, to give it direction, to see those exciting government initiatives that the Labor Party would have introduced into this House had they been on this side.

Firstly, running through the list given to us by the spokesman on financial affairs for the opposition, the Leader of the Opposition, they would have increased the Home Finance Trustee loan to \$30,000. At first glance, it seems a commendable suggestion but on a closer look we find it has its price and its drawbacks. The additional cost in government loan funds or in government direct funds would be in the order of \$2.4m - that is, if we were budgeting for the same level of loans that we are budgeting for at present and just increasing them by \$10,000 per loan. For what result? If we are looking to home loans as a source of stimulating the building industry, one would get better value from increasing the amount which can be borrowed to those who propose to build rather than to those who will buy a house. The total of many loans in the Northern Territory goes straight out of the Territory as people sell their houses and move away. If the opposition's aim in increasing the home loan is to stimulate the NT economy by this extra \$2.4m, they should have chosen a measure that was guaranteed to work.

On the other hand, if the intention was primarily aimed at assisting young families and others on relatively low incomes to own their own home, as distinct from a direct stimulus to the economy, the Home Finance Trustee loan is probably not the right vehicle to use at all. Many people, particularly those on low incomes and young families, will never be able to raise the deposit or meet the repayments on the conventional loan of \$30,000 plus. The answer to that problem, is the deferred interest loans such as proposed under the new Commonwealth-State Housing Agreement. That system, which the Northern Territory unfortunately is unable to participate in at this moment, will allow people on less than \$150 per week to purchase homes costing up to \$45,000 on \$500 deposit. That is the type of solution the opposition should be promoting - something that works. This government is continuing in talks with the federal government to enable the Northern Territory to participate in this deferred interest scheme and we will continue to press on with this matter until we have achieved our goals.

So much for the first big suggestion, Mr Speaker, to revitalise the budget and jazz up the Territory's economy. Let us look at the next one. The Leader

of the Opposition claimed that our efforts to assist pensioners will achieve nothing. I doubt that those pensioners who are going to receive portions of the \$208,000 that has been allocated will agree with him that our efforts are going to mean nothing. What did he propose as an alternative? He said we should have allocated more money to assist pensioners in a real way - no details, no proposals or suggestions, just a fairly meaningless ramble without any forethought at all.

Next, the opposition would have set up - again to jazz up, vitalise and make exciting the Northern Territory's economy - a Territory government insurance office. It has to be one of the exciting new initiatives that the Leader of the Opposition is obviously so fond of; we keep having it bashed around our ears from time to time. The opposition proposed no moves to ensure that such a move as a Territory government insurance office would reduce insurance premiums for Territorians. They do claim the profits from workers' compensation and other forms of insurance would be used to avoid increases in third party premiums but that is only half the problem. How about proposals to reduce premiums? How about proposals to assist Territory businesses by offering high risk insurance that they currently find difficult or impossible to get at all? How about offering no-fault third party insurance? Mr Speaker, again the opposition goes off half-cocked about these great schemes of theirs. They have done it before, many times. If the Northern Territory government ever moves to open a government insurance office, it will be after proper study and report, not straight after the first idea flashed across somebody's mind.

The next point that was raised was that we should be encouraging employers to take on more apprentices. The Leader of the Opposition said we missed this point completely but that the ALP would move into it by way of payroll tax concessions. I do not know if the Leader of the Opposition is aware or not but there are a number of existing innovative schemes offered by the federal government through its agencies to encourage employers to take on more apprentices. They do exist anyway, whether he knows it or not, and rather than offer payroll tax concessions in the hope more people will be employed, he should aim his objectives at the crux of the problem as to why they are not employed now. If you want employers to put on more workers, including apprentices, then get them more business. To stimulate the building industry would perhaps be a good idea - stimulate tourism, stimulate fishing, stimulate the mining industry, particularly uranium. That is what a government has to do to get more people and apprentices employed. The Leader of the Opposition's proposals are so far off the mark he does not seem to realise that hundreds of small employers do not even pay payroll tax. They are below the threshold level. It is not much point hoping that payroll tax concessions will encourage them to employ more apprentices. So much for that great scheme.

Finally, in that list of the Leader of the Opposition, the last great exciting initiative we have offered to us is solar research. Notwithstanding the fact that technologically advanced nations in this world are spending something in the vicinity of \$600m a year on solar research, the opposition believes we should either cut existing spending or increase Territory taxes to the tune of hundreds of thousands of dollars, perhaps millions, to get into the race. Information that was supplied to me from the Energy Policy Division of the federal Department of National Development in Canberra indicates that to their knowledge the US government is spending \$120m on solar research in 1977-78; private industry in the United States is spending \$130m; government and private European, Japanese and Middle East interests are spending an estimated \$350m. That is a total of \$600m world-wide in 1977-78.

The Leader of the Opposition mentioned no figure at all when he proposed that, as another exciting initiative, the Northern Territory government should have moved into the area of solar research. Even if we think of a very small project, say a dozen people, we would still be looking at a fairly hefty sum to set up our own research institution or experiment. Research scientists themselves do not come cheaply. We would have to provide houses for them, as we do for other public servants in the Territory. They do not come cheaply either. We would have to provide cars, laboratory equipment, materials for research and studies, airfares, reference books and presumably overseas study trips. We could not expect people to start off without any background at all; we would have to give them the opportunity to catch up on what is happening elsewhere. The opposition proposes that we move into all this in the hope that one day we in the Northern Territory might achieve a breakthrough that will revolutionise solar energy collection before the rest of the world does. Someone once mentioned - and I think all honourable members in the House will recall this saying - first things first. Before we attempt to lead the world in technological, scientific research, we should first ensure that people can enjoy the smaller luxuries of life, like bus shelters for example.

There we have the alternative government's budget. It is really basically the same as the budget that I presented to this House, plus a misconceived home loans stimulus costing Territory taxpayers an additional \$2.4m, plus unspecified pensioner handouts at unspecified costs, plus the Territory government insurance office which will not do anything but maintain existing premiums, again at unspecified costs this financial year, plus a payroll tax concession plan to produce more apprentices even though many employers do not even pay payroll tax, plus our own solar energy research unit, again at unspecified costs. Add to this package that we have been offered by the alternative government, the thumbs down on uranium mining and we have the bright, imaginative budget with firm direction, full of exciting government initiative. Tremendous!

As the opposition did not propose cuts in any of the areas of spending that we have proposed in the budget that I have introduced into this House, one must assume that the additional cost of the schemes would have come from additional Territory taxes. These could range anywhere from \$2m upwards on a conservative estimate of what the exercises they propose would cost - just depending on how grandiose their unspecified schemes really are. I am amazed! We have a suggestion of over \$2m in additional taxes from a party which bleats continuously about the cost of self-government. Mr Speaker, an example of the financial management expertise that is amongst their ranks can be found in the Northern Territory News report of Senator Robertson's remarks of 13 September:

"Mr Perron is certainly counting his chickens before they are hatched," Senator Robertson said. Mr Fraser has learned the hard way that the Aborigines cannot be pushed around and Mr Perron should have taken note. It is rather premature to allow for receipts of \$2.5m from royalties when the agreements have not been ratified yet.

Mr Speaker, as most honourable members in this House know, the \$2.5m in revenue income to the Territory government included in this budget is not, as Senator Robertson would have everyone believe, from uranium mining. It is from the mining operations which currently exist on Aboriginal land, namely those at Gove and Groote Eylandt. That is how close to the mark he was.

Having analysed the proposal put forward as a package alternative budget I turn to some specific criticisms that have been made of the budget that I introduced. The Leader of the Opposition claimed that there was a discrepancy of \$10m in the health figures between the budget speech and the Appropriation Bill before the House. He obviously has not read the speech very closely or perhaps I should have an abridged version printed in French as he is obviously very good at that or very good at telling us about it. I will read the relevant section on page 10: "\$34.7m has been provided to the Northern Territory government as part of the \$280m general purpose grant. \$8.4m will be provided separately under the provisions of the Health Insurance Act. The estimated combined outlays on health during the last six months of the financial year will therefore be \$33.1m". Obviously, the Leader of the Opposition did not read it but he was very quick to attack that. The \$34.7m in the Appropriation Bill added to that \$8.4m which we will receive outside the \$280m appropriation by federal government adds up to \$43.1m which is the amount which will be spent on health services in the last six months of this financial year. That is a very good example of the level of expertise of the opposition spokesman on financial affairs.

The amount of executive members' orders which vary expenditure last year brought a lot of criticism from the Leader of the Opposition. He said that, if we act like that again, the budget lacks any meaning at all. That is a fairly shallow statement from a fairly shallow thinker, Mr Speaker. This exercise of varying expenditure to obtain the best use of funds is standard procedure in all Australian state governments. The federal government gets around the procedure largely by using an enormous Treasurer's advance to meet unforeseen and emergent circumstances. The federal Treasurer has \$120m at his disposal this year and even that will probably be topped up during the year with any uncalculated income that the government may receive. To state that the practice makes the budget meaningless is simply nonsense. We would be rightly criticised if we refused to vary expenditure to meet changing needs. Would the Leader of the Opposition have preferred procedures which existed within some federal government departments in the NT prior to 1 July where you could not even buy a biro if the particular vote had been expended even if there was \$10,000 in the travel vote alongside it and it was a week before the end of the financial year? That is the sort of insanity that inflexible budgeting brings and that is the sort of inflexibility that we are getting away from.

Despite explanations previously given during the budget speech, lack of comparative figures was again attacked. The Leader of the Opposition snidely inferred that if the Attorney-General had detailed figures on last year, why could we not provide detailed figures on last year. He missed the point, Mr Speaker. I suspect he deliberately missed the point because he cannot be that thick. Of course we had last year's figures and this budget gives this year's figures. I repeat that they cannot be compared across the board as they do not relate to the same functional groupings. It must be remembered that, prior to July 1, we had the Department of Northern Territory with 12 or so divisions, the Department of Administrative Services, the Department of Construction within which was the electricity supply division and an element of transferred functions to this executive. These were all running functions which today are transferred to this Assembly. They are now administered by 10 government departments and a number of statutory authorities. It was not just a case of shuffling whole cells of people from one area to the other. Some sections were broken up completely and dispersed throughout the NTPS. These are the reasons why comparative figures cannot be gleaned between last year's budget and this year's.

One example was the Management Services Division - the people who handled the Department of the Northern Territory salaries, personnel, promotions, ministerial assistance and office services. All of these were handled by Management Services within the Department of Northern Territory as a central unit. After transfer, these people went to the various Northern Territory government departments - Public Service Commission, Treasury, Chief Minister's and other departments - because our system provides for a less centralised system of control. It would tend to mislead this House to attempt an across the board comparison with last year's expenditure. Obviously, in future years such comparisons will be made as is standard practice but 1978-79 is not a standard year, not in the Northern Territory anyway.

Mr Speaker, the Leader of the Opposition obviously feels strongly against some senior public servants. To highlight that fact, I quote from Hansard. When speaking about the increases proposed in the Northern Territory Public Service, the Leader of the Opposition said: "It seems to us, on the basis of an analysis of who we are going to employ within the public service, that the bulk of the increase is going to be in the upper echelon area ... stacking its own public service with senior people, senior public servants who are not producing any more of a service". Coming from a man with a background in the trade union area like the Leader of the Opposition, that is a very surprising statement.

He has overlooked two straight facts. The first is that a government does not decide to put on extra staff and then go around creating special positions for them. The need has to exist for the people and those needs exist at certain levels within the public service. Suitably qualified candidates have to be recruited to fill those positions. The second point is that the people the Northern Territory government is most short of in the public service are those people at senior levels because we have now taken over the functions which were formerly performed in head offices of the Department of Northern Territory, the Department of Administrative Services, the Department of Construction in Canberra and Melbourne. Using the logic that the Leader of the Opposition expressed here, one would put on five more typists instead of a level 1 because it seems to make better sense to him.

Another area where the Leader of the Opposition muddled his figures was over the provision allowed for salary increases, an area in which he should certainly be expert. Based on an expectation of a 2% national wage increase at quarterly intervals over the current financial year, the increase in total salaries will be 3.4%, the principle being one of an accumulative effect not a fixed full year percentage. Our figures are based on a cumulative national wage increase of 8%, even more than the federal government has predicted in its budget. The Leader of the Opposition will simply have to learn to do his sums better in the future.

The subject of capital funding seemed to cause some confusion in the mind of the Leader of the Opposition. He certainly succeeded in causing some confusion in the minds of myself and my officers who tried to work out what he was saying. I have been unable to identify the figures used by the Leader of the Opposition in his reference to the civil works program. I can find no trace of new projects totalling \$105m for 1977-78 nor \$73m for new projects in 1978-79. The Leader of the Opposition may have arrived at the latter figure by adding \$59m for new works to the public service housing cash outlay of \$13.3m. If so, his figure is certainly incorrectly based. In 1977-78 the Darwin Reconstruction Commission programmed \$56m for new works, but this was not a cash provision and included all departments, some of which have not and will not be transferred to this government.

For the benefit of the Opposition Leader, I will restate the provisions for the capital works program for 1978-79 as it appears in this budget. The government has provided for an expenditure of \$53,051,000 on building, water and sewerage, road works, health and essential services to Aborigines. To this must be added a cash allocation of \$13.3m for public service housing now included in the estimates of the Housing Commission and \$12.746m for reconstruction works on electricity resulting in a total cash outlay of \$78,787,000 for 1978-79. In addition the Electricity Commission has an approved semi-government borrowing program of \$8.123m.

I would like now to briefly touch on some of the other comments raised by other honourable members in this House. The honourable member for Sanderson waffled on about housing costs and the length of waiting lists. To allay her fears, the best one could do would be to provide her with some information. One is that the cost of building houses by the Housing Commission is coming down as contracts are being let. This is down from the very high levels of the immediate post-cyclone years. Her assumption that the average house cost must now be \$39,000 because an Australia-wide report reported such a move is obviously nonsense. To demonstrate the falsity of her claim that the rate of new houses was obviously behind the rate of the increase in demand, why are waiting times generally shorter now than they have been before?

The member for Sanderson was also worried about the level of funds we have put aside for the Home Finance Trustee loans. If insufficient funds are found to be put aside for the Home Finance Trustee loans, we will endeavour to get some more. It is part of flexible budgeting. We may have to introduce some executive members' orders in this House to shuffle some money but I am sure not too many members will worry about that other than the Leader of the Opposition.

In another interesting side reflection, the member for Sanderson, when asking why the government did not help public transport by forcing people not to use their cars, suggested that we should look towards Singapore for the answer to many of our problems but I do not think very many would appeal to her. They charge something like \$6 a day, which is a lot of money in Singapore, if you want to drive your car into the central business district. This encourages people to go on public transport. Singapore has over 2 million people and its problems cannot be compared to those of Darwin. I do not think local people in Darwin would take kindly to being asked to pay some exorbitant sum or leave their cars at home.

The honourable member for MacDonnell seemed to see a disparity between the capital works levels of funding on a regional basis. He seems to assume that the Northern Territory budget was the only money being spent in the Northern Territory and has obviously overlooked the fact that there are functions yet to be transferred and there are some functions which will not be transferred to the Northern Territory government. There is something like another \$150m other than in this budget going to be spent by various government agencies in the Northern Territory.

The honourable member for MacDonnell, like the Leader of the Opposition, made great play about the unemployment situation and said we should have got off our backsides and allocated some money towards getting the problem solved. They did not say what sort of solutions they saw to the problem. One presumed that, with typical Labor mentality, they would be looking at the hand-out type solution. Suppose the 4,000 unemployed we have in the Territory were informed that we would pay them a \$150 a week on a scheme where they could break rocks or something to keep them employed at a cost of \$600,000 a week.

I do not think that is very appealing, certainly not to me; it may be to members of the opposition. Some form of jump-through-loops scheme to keep people employed - anything, just as long as it sounds appealing to the electorate.

The honourable member for Victoria River is so concerned about the Northern Territory economy that he finds that the major serious deficiency in this budget is that there is no provision for the sealing of a road in his electorate. This is particularly important, Mr Speaker, because he staked a tyre. Because the particular road the honourable member for Victoria River mentioned is not in the capital works program does not mean that the road will not have money spent on it this year and it does not mean that it won't be maintained or graded. The roads program generally refers to roads which are being sealed. He is off on the wrong track there which is not really surprising.

To just touch on the comments by the member for Elsey, there is in this budget some follow-up to the overseas trade delegation. There were many problems raised by the honourable member for Elsey and the best way to cover them would be to say this: we have had the reins of this government for two and a half months. There are many tasks to be undertaken. There is an enormous amount of work to be done and all I can really say is, "Give us a go".

The opposition are not really an alternative government; they are really an alternative opposition because the honourable member for Nightcliff would have done a far better job of trying to find holes in this budget than they have done collectively. "An alternative opposition" - I think that should stick. Public comment has been very favourable throughout the Territory. Even on the talkback radio program that I went on, questioners had no criticisms of the budget; they simply sought more detail on various appropriations. The Allocation of Funds Bill before the House does provide a sound basis for self-government. Our measures to stimulate development on all fronts will instil confidence in the Territory and promote private sector development. The opposition is very much alone in their criticism of this budget and I believe they will stay alone.

MR SPEAKER: Honourable members, standing order 152 indicates that the question cannot be put that the bill be now read a second time. As the bill is not an urgent one nor does it involve unnecessary hardship, there will be no suspension of the standing orders and the bill will be stood over until the next sittings of the Assembly.

Bill stood over until next sittings.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY (REMUNERATION, ALLOWANCES
AND ENTITLEMENTS) BILL
(Serial 166)

Continued from 14 September 1978

MR ISAACS (Opposition Leader): The Opposition supports this piece of legislation as being necessary to ensure that we are paid legally and secondly, to provide a proper framework in which the members of the Legislative Assembly can be paid in future. I see that it takes in the definition of "services" in clause 3 - the same wording which is used in the Remuneration Tribunal Act. In clause 4, the legislature is somewhat restricted by the wording of the Northern Territory (Self-Government) Act - section 54 I think it is - where it talks about the Assembly having power to pass laws in relation to remuneration for

members of the Assembly, members of the Executive Council and ministers of the Territory. I have been convinced by the draftsman that office bearers of the Assembly, that is whips of both sides and the Leader of the Opposition, are covered by the definition of "services" and I think perhaps, at some stage, we should give consideration also to including as office holder the position of deputy leader of the opposition as well.

One thing does concern me in relation to the operation of the Legislative Assembly (Remuneration, Allowances and Entitlements) Bill: as I read it and as I listen to the Chief Minister's second-reading speech - and there can be no doubt that it is an urgent bill in the sense that members of the Assembly won't be paid for another two months unless we do pass it at this sitting - upon its passage, the Administrator acting on the advice on his Executive Council will make a ruling that the decision of the Remuneration Tribunal, as it is purported to apply to the Legislative Assembly in its 1978 review, will be brought into force as from 1 July this year. Therefore, we can be paid according to that determination. I would hope that the government would look very carefully at the decision of the Remuneration Tribunal, especially in its preliminary discussion - and I refer specifically to paragraph 57 which appears on page 30 of the 1978 review of the Remuneration Tribunal. I quote from that paragraph:

It has been submitted that the tribunal should have regard in this review to the executive powers which are to be transferred on 1 July 1978 and the further transfers which are scheduled to occur by 1 July 1979. The tribunal has concluded that it would be preferable if the range of matters raised, and especially those pertaining to allowances and entitlements, was considered further in a separate review in the latter half of this year when it would be possible to look in detail at the implications of the transfer of additional powers.

I would hope that the Chief Minister would attend to that and make a request of the Remuneration Tribunal to look at the question, not so much of salaries which I personally believe are quite perfectly adequate, but in relation to entitlements that members have. In particular, I would like to mention the matter of electoral assistants. The federal parliament has just agreed to give each member two electoral assistants and I believe that, in the states, there are provisions for electoral assistants per member. We in the Territory ought also to have full-time electoral assistants. It is not requesting full-time electoral assistants plus a stenographer or plus a telephonist or a receptionist. It is just seeking one full-time electoral assistant per member. I am quite sure that members on both sides would willingly forgo some salary increases if we were to have that sort of assistance given to us.

I know the work that goes through my office and I do know the workload of other members of the opposition. I am sure it applies similarly to members opposite. Our job requires us not only to be in the office but out in the electorate as well, at the same time almost. When you are outside your office, you must have somebody there to take queries, to try to assist the people of your electorate. I refer the Chief Minister to paragraph 57 of the Remuneration Tribunal review. I would hope the tribunal will consider the matter towards the end of the year, especially in the matter of entitlements, so that all members will receive the proper assistance in their electoral offices.

The opposition does support the bill and its urgency. If an urgency certificate is not granted - I do not know whether it has or has not been; I have been informed that it has been - we certainly would cooperate with the suspension of Standing Orders. If it has been granted, that will not be required.

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

Mr EVERINGHAM (Chief Minister): Mr Speaker, I have no quarrel at all with the remarks of the honourable Leader of the Opposition. The position as outlined by him, namely that the Administrator will make an interim determination based on the recommendations of the tribunal to come into effect on 1 July is correct. As I outlined in my second-reading speech, it will be the intention of the government to take up the suggestion of the tribunal that a further review should take place during the remainder of this year. I agree entirely with the proposition that each member should have a full-time electoral assistant and I understand that my party made this submission to the tribunal on the last occasion. I do not know that circumstances will have altered that much in relation to that particular situation so as to make the tribunal change its mind. I certainly hope that it can be persuaded to do so. We will again make such a submission. I would hope that, perhaps now that the Northern Territory is self-governing, the tribunal will take the activities of this Assembly rather more seriously than I feel they may have done in the past.

Motion agreed to; bill read a second time.

In committee:

Clause 1 agreed to.

Clause 2:

Mr EVERINGHAM: Mr Chairman, I move amendment 2.1.

This amendment deletes the word "is" and substitutes the words "and the Legislative Assembly (Remuneration of Members) Act (No. 2) 1978 are". You will remember that there were two bills passed previously by this Assembly and this is to ensure that both previous pieces of legislation are repealed.

Amendment agreed to.

Clause 2, as amended, agreed to.

Remainder of the bill agreed to.

Bill passed the remaining stage without debate.

STAMP DUTY BILL (Serial 174)

Continued from 19 September 1978

Mr ISAACS (Opposition Leader): I shall be mercifully brief, Mr Speaker. The bill introduced by the Treasurer and the reasons given for it in relation to the renewals of insurance policies and the matters he referred to in relation to the large sums of money and the very insignificant effect that the excess of \$100 has on those large sums of money bring no opposition from this side of the Assembly and we support the passage of this particular bill.

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

Motion agreed to; bill read a second time.

Bill passed the remaining stages without debate.

SUSPENSION OF STANDING ORDERS

Mr ROBERTSON (Manager of Government Business): Mr Speaker, I move that so much of Standing Orders be suspended as would prevent the passage through all stages at this sittings of the following bills: Aboriginal Sacred Sites Bill (No. 2) 1978 (Serial 172), Registration of Births, Deaths and Marriages Bill 1978 (Serial 146) and Lands Acquisition Bill 1978 (Serial 145).

By way of explanation, Mr Speaker, these are bills which do have to pass through all stages of the Assembly at this time but would not otherwise gain your certificate of urgency.

Mr ISAACS (Opposition Leader): Mr Speaker, there is some debate on this. So far as the Aboriginal Sacred Sites Bill and the Registration of Births, Deaths and Marriages Bill are concerned, if the Minister for Community Development had sought our support for the suspension of Standing Orders, it would have been given gladly because we do see a real need for the passage of those two bills at these sittings. The same does not apply to the Lands Acquisition Bill. We have seen this piece of legislation before, slightly different from its current form. It is true there has been some argument about it but there are significant amendments in this Lands Acquisition Bill compared to the one which came through this Assembly in May and June. I do not believe there is any great urgency to pass this piece of legislation. I cannot imagine that there is any acquisition program which the government has up its sleeve which requires the passage of this bill before November. I do believe that because of the importance of the legislation, there should be sufficient time for the community to discuss the various amendments which the Minister has introduced.

So far as the Aboriginal Sacred Sites Bill and the Registration of Births, Deaths and Marriages Bill are concerned, the opposition gladly and wholeheartedly supports the suspension of Standing Orders to ensure that those bills pass through all stages at these sittings. That does not apply to the Lands Acquisition Bill. That is the reason we will not support the overall motion moved by the minister.

Mrs O'NEIL (Fannie Bay): Mr Speaker, I would also like to speak in opposition to the suspension of Standing Orders in relation to the Lands Acquisition Bill only. Firstly, I would like to say that I have been requested by the honourable member for Nightcliff, who has leave of absence at this time, to say that she opposes the passage of this piece of legislation at this sittings. She has not had the opportunity to circulate the amended bill to electors and other interested persons and she is distinctly opposed to what is happening.

On my own behalf, I would like to remind honourable members of something which the honourable Minister for Mines and Energy said this morning in relation to the Liquor Bill. It is brief and I will quote it:

I indicated to honourable members at the previous sittings that I would be seeking to have the bill passed through all stages during these current sittings. Because of the importance of the bill and the fact that a number of amendments have now been made to the original proposals, it is not the government's intention to follow that course.

I would argue that the Lands Acquisition Bill is similarly and equally important as a Liquor Bill. It is a major piece of legislation. There have been significant changes to the original proposals and that argument of the honourable minister in relation to the Liquor Bill applies equally to the Lands Acquisition Bill. Mr Speaker, I oppose the suspension of Standing Orders in relation to the Lands Acquisition Bill.

Mr PERRON (Treasurer): Mr Speaker, honourable members were informed earlier this year that there was a great necessity for the Northern Territory government to have a lands acquisition facility. At the present time, I am advised by my department that there are a number of proposals that are awaiting acquisition and there are a number of minor acquisitions, such as easements and the like, which are liable to cause some difficulty.

The consolidated bill was circulated to members just prior to this sitting. It was unfortunate that it was as late as it was but it was circulated as soon as it was available. The consolidated bill is really the bill that was introduced into this House in July and not proceeded with in August. The amendments circulated at that time have been incorporated and there have been a couple of other minor changes. Substantially, the bill really is the same. It has been drafted by a different draftsman and probably results in some of the different readings that people gather from it when they pick the bill up and compare it to the last one.

In speaking to the motion to suspend Standing Orders, I reiterate the point that there are acquisitions which are necessary for the proceeding of government works. One of those in particular is the widening of Berrimah Road where work is currently under way and I believe that matter would cause a great deal of difficulty if this bill was left over until the November sittings. The bill itself does institute procedures which could be somewhat time consuming in the interests of the community. We could find ourselves with a number of proposed works programs being seriously affected if we do not proceed at this stage.

Ms D'ROZARIO (Sanderson): Mr Speaker, I oppose the suspension of Standing Orders for the Lands Acquisition Bill. The honourable minister has said in his second-reading speech and again this afternoon that the bill is much the same as that which he introduced earlier. It is fair to say that in relation to the procedures that are outlined in the present bill, serial 145, that is certainly not the case when we look at some of the principles which have been incorporated in the new bill. It is on these points of principle that we believe that members of the community ought to be informed.

I am sure the honourable minister and some of his other colleagues on the other side would realise the question of land acquisition does excite a great deal of interest in the community and indeed in some regions one only has to mention the word "acquisition" to cause quite a stir in the population. I accept that the bill has retained a number of provisions which are similar or analagous to the ones that appeared in the previous bill but those are largely related to procedure. There are significant matters of principle upon which I think the community ought to be consulted.

As to the programs that the honourable minister has mentioned, some of those programs were instituted before 1 July and I would not have imagined that the necessity for a Northern Territory acquisition bill rested on those. The main point about this - and I do not think it is just a question of a different draftsman - is that, either intentionally or inadvertently, some principles have been altered and they are the principles that were recommended by the Law Reform Commission.

Mr EVERINGHAM (Chief Minister): Mr Speaker, I can only enter this debate to say that I certainly challenge the honourable members opposite to indicate where the principles of this legislation have been changed from that legislation which was first introduced into this House in May of this year and could well have been passed at the sittings in July had my colleague, the Minister for Lands and Housing, not determined to defer the passage so that the large slab of amendments could be amalgamated with the substantive bill. I believe that the community has had more than adequate time to consider the principles that were previously enunciated. I do not believe that any substantial difference exists between those principles and the principles that we are proposing to legislate on at the moment.

The Assembly divided:

Ayes 12

Mr Ballantyne
Mr Dondas
Mr Everingham
Mr Harris
Mr MacFarlane
Mr Oliver
Mrs Padgham-Purich
Mr Perron
Mr Robertson
Mr Steele
Mr Tuxworth
Mr Vale

Noes 6

Mr Collins
Mr Doolan
Ms D'Rozario
Mr Isaacs
Mrs O'Neil
Mr Perkins

ABORIGINAL SACRED SITES BILL (Serial 172)

Continued from 19 September 1978

Mr PERKINS (MacDonnell): I would like to indicate that the opposition will support the bill. We agree that the bill is necessary to bring it into line with the provisions of the federal Aboriginal Land Rights Act. I wonder whether the Chief Minister would be agreeable to the suggestion that he ought to approach the Minister for Aboriginal Affairs to see whether any change could be made to the federal act in order to provide for the situation whereby, if we have to determine the wishes of Aboriginal people on the extent to which sacred sites ought to be protected, then we ought to be going to the custodians of the Aboriginal sacred sites. I propose that suggestion to the Chief Minister because it is important that the custodians themselves and other people directly related to the preservation of sacred sites ought to be the people directly consulted. There would be a problem if the matter were left wide open and it was possible that Aboriginal people in Australia at large had to be consulted on their wishes in relation to the extent to which the sacred sites ought to be protected. The opposition will support the bill. We realise its urgency.

Motion agreed to; bill read a second time.

Bill passed remaining stages without debate.

REGISTRATION OF BIRTHS, DEATHS AND MARRIAGES BILL (Serial 146)

Continued from 14 September 1978

Mr DOOLAN (Victoria River): Mr Speaker, the opposition supports this bill. I will not comment at length on it. The option given for the naming of the child after the father or mother is a good thing. Over the years, Europeans have decided what names Aboriginal children will bear and that the wife should bear the husband's name. I do recall a Mr Nandjiwara Amagula at Groote Eylandt. At one time, someone decided that his wife should be Mrs Nandjiwara and the people were appalled because, if this had been the fact, Mr and Mrs Amagula would have been committing incest. Nothing but good can come out of a thing like this where there is a choice on how the child will be named.

Mr ISAACS (Leader of the Opposition): I too want to express my support for the bill and commend the government for the legislation that they have introduced. I think that it is an imaginative piece of legislation. I am not quite sure whether the Chief Minister himself referred to it as a revolutionary piece of legislation, but he made some similar comment and I wholeheartedly support it. It is an excellent and flexible piece of legislation. You would be aware of my interest in the matter. Indeed, the Chief Minister himself referred to it. There are a number of people in the Spanish speaking community in the Northern Territory who are waiting for this piece of legislation. It certainly will accommodate them and I feel that it is flexible enough to accommodate most of the requirements of the various diverse communities which we have in the Northern Territory. I would like to again express my support and commendation of the government for this piece of legislation.

Motion agreed to; bill read a second time.

Bill passed the remaining stages without debate.

LANDS ACQUISITION BILL (Serial 145)

Continued from 14 September 1978

Ms D'ROZARIO (Sanderson): I do not want to take up a great deal of time in going over arguments or the points of debate that were raised in relation to the earlier bill that was presented in this House which I shall refer to as serial 93. The points that I do want to speak about at length concern those points where I believe a departure of principles has occurred from the earlier bill.

One of the outstanding omissions from this bill is the lack of any reference that this act will apply only to the acquisition of land for public purposes. I have raised this point with people who are extremely competent and have worked in this field for a number of years. They too have signified their surprise that there is no indication anywhere at all in this bill that the act will apply only to the acquisition of land for a public purpose.

The first indication of this departure is to be found in the title of the bill. For the information of members, I do point out that the earlier bill con-

tained the title that it was a bill for an ordinance relating to the acquisition of land for public purposes. The present bill contains the title that it is a bill for an act relating to the acquisition of land on behalf of the Territory. I do not know whether there is a great deal of significance in this omission and, if there is not, I would like to be reassured by the minister in his reply because already there is some consternation about this point.

I might point out also clause 3 of the earlier bill, serial 93, contains a definition of "public purpose" whereas no such definition occurs in clause 4 of the present bill, serial 145. I am a little bit apprehensive about this omission. One of the reasons is that the commissioner who undertook the major investigation into this reference made quite a deal of play upon the validity of acquisitions for public purposes.

I might just refer to the report of the commissioner, Mr Murray Wilcox QC, on this particular point. The discussion is to be found in working paper number 8 which is a larger and much more detailed version of discussion paper number 5 which was circulated to members of this House and to the public by the honourable sponsor of the bill. The commissioner has stated quite correctly that the Commonwealth act and all state acts contain a specific reference that the acquisition is to be for public purposes. The relevant section, section 10(2), in the Commonwealth act states that the Governor-General may authorise the acquisition of land by compulsory process for a public purpose approved by the Governor-General.

The commissioner in charge of the reference has said that nomination of the public purpose is important since it ensures compliance with the limitation inherent in section 51 placitum 31 of the Constitution. He has also gone on further to say: "The constitutional limitation could not be enforced if the particular public purpose was left unspecified". The commissioner has also outlined one or two cases which were taken up in the High Court where the acquiring authority had neglected to specify the public purpose for which the acquisition was to take place.

My concern is that, not only is there no provision to specify a public purpose for which the acquisition will take place but also there is no express provision that acquisition can only take place for public purposes. In other words, it is quite within the provisions of this bill that an acquisition can take place by the minister responsible at the time for a private purpose. That is to say, the Crown could be placed in a position of becoming a real estate agent where what it does is acquire land, sometimes compulsorily, and then simply divert it to another private owner for a private use.

The honourable minister, in his second-reading speech, made reference to section 50 of the Northern Territory (Self-Government) Act. He said that, in his view, the present bill serial 145 reflects the principal outlined in section 50 of the Northern Territory (Self-Government) Act. What he neglected to tell the House was what section 50 was about. I shall come to that in a minute. It is quite true that, in the letter which the commissioner wrote to staff of the minister's office on the first bill, he said that, whilst it was not necessary, it was useful to have the limitation in our own bill that any acquisition that took place would take place on just terms. Mr Speaker, that is the limitation of the Australian Constitution.

If I can relate that back to the reason for specifying public purposes in the present bill, let me just outline to members who may not be so familiar with the Northern Territory (Self-Government) Act what section 50 of that act says. Section 50 reads:

- (1) The power of the Legislative Assembly conferred by section 6 in relation to the making of laws does not extend to the making of laws with respect to the acquisition of property otherwise than on just terms.
- (2) Subject to subsection 70, the acquisition of any property in the Territory which, if the property were in a state would be an acquisition to which paragraph 51 placitum 31 of the Constitution would apply, shall not be made otherwise than on just terms.

My interpretation of that section and also the minister's reference to it in the second-reading speech is that in fact we are bound by section 51 of placitum 31 of the Constitution. Again I refer to the remarks that have been made by the commissioner in charge of this reference. He has already stated, and I have read the necessary passages, that the constitutional limitations could not be enforced if the particular purpose was left unspecified.

The term "public purpose" is defined in the federal Lands Acquisition Act which we are hoping to replace by this particular bill. My fear is simply that when actions have been taken to contest the validity of an acquisition merely by reason of the specific public purpose not being specified, then I believe - if my interpretation is correct - that the lack of any reference to this bill applying only to the acquisition for public purposes - that is to say, the Crown cannot acquire land and divert it to private use later on - must be explained. I call on the minister to explain why this has occurred. It could, as he says, reflect a different style of drafting but I believe this question has been given so much attention in higher courts that it behoves us to resolve it.

I might also point out that in clause 14 of the earlier bill, serial 93, specific words were contained which again reinforce the idea that an acquisition could only take place for public purposes. The words are: "Subject to this ordinance, where it is proposed to acquire land for a public purpose the minister shall ..." The analagous section in this bill, which I believe to be clause 32, does not cope with this question at all. It merely says that the minister shall not acquire land unless he does certain things but it contains nothing at all which says that the minister may only acquire land to implement a public purpose.

When I first noticed there were no references at all to acquisitions for public purposes in the present bill and that there were some 9 or 10 references in the earlier bill, I did not worry too much about it until a specific instance was brought to my attention. I discussed it with people who have worked in this area for quite a long time and who are quite familiar not only with the laws of acquisition pertaining to state jurisdictions within Australia but also those pertaining to the Canadian provinces. They thought this omission was very strange indeed. However, quite recently, I had a person come to me and say that, in relation to a proposed casino development for which there are already preliminary plans, a block of land owned by this person was included in the proposed development. This person then contacted those who had prepared the plan and said, "Look, that land is owned by me and I have had no approach whatever for the sale of it and no negotiations for the sale of it have taken place." To this, the person who had prepared the casino development plan said, "You could be acquired". This person rang me up after learning that a lands acquisition bill had been presented to the Assembly. I must confess that I had not had any specific examples placed before me but when this particular person rang up and asked if this could be done, I said to her, "As a matter of fact, I have looked at this bill quite closely and there is no specific provision for public purposes only". If this is not a correct inter-

pretation and if it is only a style of drafting, I would be most appreciative to hear the honourable minister's explanation.

I did mention there were specific points of departure in principle from the bill that was presented to us earlier. The matter which I would like to take up now is the question of the pre-acquisition hearing. This particular provision was hailed as being very revolutionary in the manner in which it appeared in serial 93. I must say that I agree with that assessment of the provision. It was very largely in line with the recommendations of the Law Reform Commission and, in fact, every point that had been raised in both the working paper and the discussion paper had been incorporated in that bill. However, I now find that the pre-acquisition hearing provisions which are provided in clause 40 of the current bill, serial 145, do not compare very well with the provisions as outlined in clause 16 of serial 93. In my assessment, these provisions and the whole principle of the pre-acquisition hearing has been significantly watered down.

Under the earlier bill, it was open to a person to approach a pre-acquisition hearing and to appear before the Lands Acquisition Tribunal and to raise a number of questions. These questions are listed in clause 16 of serial 93. The questions are: whether the acquisition is necessary; whether an alternative course of action not involving the acquisition of that land is available and should reasonably be taken; whether the public purpose - note that phrase again - could be achieved by the use of other land or part of the land proposed to be acquired; or whether the use of the land would have a deleterious effect on the environment in which the land to be acquired is situated.

In a later section, there are also outlined a number of environmental issues and these have been reproduced in the present bill in clause 40(3). However, the matters which related specifically to the pre-acquisition hearing have not reappeared in the current bill. It now just simply says that the tribunal shall consider, having regard to the evidence placed before it, whether the proposal should be implemented by the acquisition of (a) the land, (b) part only of the land, or (c) other land, the subject of the proposal.

I am sure that honourable members realise the earlier proposal has indeed been watered down. Under earlier proposals, a person was permitted to enter into a discussion of whether the acquisition was necessary and, indeed, whether even the public purpose was necessary. In the present proposal, the acquisition of his land or somebody else's land is inevitable. He has only the three options - acquisitions of his land, acquisition of part only of his land or acquisition of somebody else's land. This significantly removes the idea that a person appearing before the tribunal could say to the tribunal and present evidence to this effect that either the public purpose is not necessary and could be achieved in some other way or that the acquisition is not necessary. The current proposal, I must stress, makes acquisition absolutely inevitable. You cannot argue that the acquisition is not necessary.

I consider this a significant departure in principle from the earlier provisions which were presented to us in serial 93 and from the recommendations of the Australian Law Reform Commission. I say this because the Australian Law Reform Commission set out not only to make the question of compensation as a result of acquisition more equitable but also to remove the inequities that arose from people having their land acquired perhaps on some ill-conceived scheme of the government - they could then prove that it was not necessary to acquire their land - or for some other reason. I consider this to be a significant departure which I would have liked to have taken up with other people as well.

The other point that I want to discuss at some length is the question of the disclosure of interest. The question of disclosure of interest in a matter such as land acquisition is very vital indeed. The provisions which were earlier presented to us in an amendment by the honourable sponsor of the bill were very good indeed. In a proposed clause 47A, the honourable minister proposed that there should be a quite stringent provision relating to the disclosure of interest and that provision read as follows:

- (1) A member who has a direct or indirect interest in the question or matter referred to the tribunal under this ordinance shall, as soon as possible after he knows that he has the interest and that the tribunal is hearing the question or matter, disclose his interest to the tribunal by way of declaration which shall be lodged at the office of the registrar.
- (2) Where a member of the tribunal makes a declaration in accordance with subsection (1), that member shall not serve as a member for the hearing of the question or matter to which the declaration relates.

I thought that was a very good provision indeed and I quite looked forward to supporting that amendment. However, the present analogous provision is very weak. It is to be found in clause 12 of the present bill, serial 145, and this simply says that "a person who has a direct or indirect interest in land, the subject of any proceedings before the tribunal, shall not be selected as a member of the tribunal in relation to those proceedings under section 19(1)".

I suppose that could be considered sufficient but I do not think so. For one thing, the responsibility of knowing who has an interest rests with the selector, who is the chairman or the deputy chairman and, for another, there is no provision for a member to notify that he has an interest or to have it registered, as we had in the earlier bill. Further, Mr Speaker, subclause (2) of clause 12 is to be utterly condemned as far as the principle of the disclosure of interest being vital to matters such as land acquisition is concerned. This subclause reads that "a determination of the tribunal is not vitiated by reason only that a person acts as a member in contravention of this section". In other words, a person can sit on a tribunal in which he has a direct interest and the decision to which the tribunal arrives is considered to be valid. In fact, there is no real reason at all why the disclosure of interest clause should be in there if, in fact, subclause (2) is to stand. I must say that I heartily condemn this because I think that the matter of land acquisition is already one which causes a great deal of public anxiety, excites a great deal of interest and the dealings of the tribunal should be absolutely above reproach. I call on the honourable minister to reinsert the amendment he proposed to bill serial 93 and to delete clause 12 of the present bill.

Another small matter which has been brought to my attention by people who are again concerned that perhaps this bill could apply to the acquisition of land for other than public purposes relates to the clause for the disposition of acquired land. Under the earlier bill, serial 93, proposed section 57 stated that "where land acquired by the Territory is no longer required for the public purpose for which it was acquired, the Minister may publish a notice in the Gazette declaring that the land is no longer required for that purpose and, upon such publication, the land shall become capable of being dealt with as unalienated Crown land under a law in force in the Territory".

The provision in the present bill might be considered to be not very much different but, in view of the fears that have already been expressed to me in the short time that this bill has been introduced in the House, I think it is worth taking up. The analagous provision is now to be found in clause 48 of the present bill, serial 145, and that reads:

Land acquired under this act may, if the Minister so directs, be dealt with as though it were unalienated Crown land.

As those people who know something about the manner of dealings in crown land - and the honourable member for Alice Springs has already given a very good discourse on the subject - would realise, the current provision is very much different from the earlier provision. The earlier one required a statement from the minister that the public purpose was no longer to be undertaken and it required gazettal that the land was now available. The present one merely says that, once it is acquired at any time - the minister need tell nobody about it - he may direct that it be dealt with as unalienated crown land which means that it could be given by way of lease or licence or even as an estate in fee simple to anybody else. The question does arise as to whether land could be acquired from private landholders in the Northern Territory and simply diverted, by the action of the minister, to other private persons. As I say, this puts the Crown in the position of a real estate agent and not having to account to anybody for the implementation of public construction programs in the Northern Territory.

A matter that was also mentioned by the honourable sponsor of the bill was that of injurious affection and in his second-reading speech he said that the question of compensation for injurious affection has not been dealt with in this bill and that this was in accordance with the recommendations of the chairman of the commission. I am a little bit disappointed that the question of injurious affection has not yet been taken out of the too-hard basket. I cannot really reconcile the statement of the minister with the reports of the Law Reform Commission. Perhaps he has some private correspondence in which the chairman has advised him against this course and, if he has, I would ask him to inform me of it.

On the question of injurious affection, I would point out that Commissioner Wilcox made several recommendations and they are listed as recommendations Nos. 39 to 43 and they are to be found in working paper No. 8. I regret that I cannot give the page number for that because these particular pages are not numbered. However, there is also a lengthy chapter in this report, chapter 7, which examines the law relating to injurious affections in all jurisdictions in Australia and also in other places where reform of land acquisition law has taken place and that includes some provinces of Canada and Britain. Although the commissioner has said that these are tentative conclusions - indeed all the conclusions that have been notified in these reports are still tentative; the commissioner has not yet brought down a final report - I am extremely disappointed that the minister has not yet come to grips with the question of injurious affection.

If I might just mention some instances in which it should be necessary to afford compensation to people whose land is not necessarily acquired but those who suffer injurious affection as a result of an acquisition undertaken by the government, I would like to do so now. I do think that not having dealt with this question must be considered as a failure on at least two grounds. One of those is that it simply perpetuates the inequity of the present land acquisition law and the other is that it prevents the development

of provisions for off-setting the amount of compensation by the enhancement that might be enjoyed by a person whose land is not necessarily acquired but who does gain some benefit.

Quite briefly, the Law Reform Commission has suggested that physical factors ought to be compensated and it is physical factors which result in injurious affection. It has mentioned these in two categories; namely, the construction factors - and listed here are the denial of access of frontage lots to public road, the loss of air, the loss of sunlight and so on and so forth - and nuisance factors, such as noise, vibration, smell, fumes, smoke, artificial light, emission of noxious discharges and so on. The commission has suggested, and I believe this particular provision has been taken up in the British act of 1973, that in fact you can compensate people for injurious affection by looking at the situation 12 months after the completion of the public work for which the land was acquired. 12 months is considered to be an adequate time span whereby the market can be gauged and the physical effects of the land can also be judged. I find the statements that this absence is on the recommendation of the chairman of the commission a little hard to understand.

Mr Speaker, there is also another question relating to injurious affection which is the converse of it and that is enhancement. By this, I mean the occasions where people benefit from the public work that has been undertaken by the government. We have had instances of this in the Northern Territory. If I might quote one which would be of interest to the honourable member for Tiwi and the honourable member for Victoria River, that is the Darwin River Road. The acquisition of land for this road and the construction of it was of immense benefit to people who held land in the area and, certainly in the last few years since the completion of the construction of the road, sales of land in that area have increased as a result of access having been opened up. It is only fair that, in these cases, the amount of compensation which would have been due to people as a result of the acquisition of their land should be offset by the enhancement that they enjoy. This has happened time and again in the rural areas near Darwin. Another instance is, of course, the acquisition of land for and the construction of the Arnhem Highway.

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

Mrs O'NEIL (Fannie Bay): I move an extension of time for the honourable member for Sanderson.

Motion negatived.

Mr EVERINGHAM (Chief Minister): Mr Speaker, I move that the debate on this bill be adjourned.

The reason for moving the adjournment of the debate, despite the suspension of Standing Orders to enable the passage of the legislation through at this sittings, is that this is the sort of legislation that I want introduced with the fullest public confidence.

I have listened to the honourable member for Sanderson this afternoon and she has raised a number of matters. I believe most, if not all, of them can be answered. For instance, she raised at the outset the matter of public purpose being used in the legislation and the definition of the term "public purpose" I would say simply, by definition the purposes of the Territory are a public purpose. Rather than put this legislation through, even though it has been canvassed in this House more than sufficiently, I am prepared to

move the adjournment of the debate at this stage. We will stand the legislation over until the next sittings so that it can be once again canvassed and so that there can be no complaint that the legislation was pushed through.

Debate adjourned.

ADJOURNMENT

Mr TUXWORTH (Mines and Energy): Mr Speaker, I move that the Assembly do now adjourn.

In speaking to the adjournment this afternoon, I would just like to take up some few remarks that I started yesterday and that I was not able to finish because my time expired. However, I believe they are of such import that I would like to place on record my feelings on the matter.

In the budget handed down by the honourable Treasurer, there were several allocations made for the encouragement of sport and recreation in the Northern Territory and I believe that, while a start has been made in this particular direction, there is much to be done. I am a very firm believer in the fact that team and competitive sport does much to build the character and fibre of young people and that we have a vested interest as legislators and a government to try and provide for the youth of the Northern Territory every opportunity to develop their characters and their bodies and their minds in the best way possible. I believe that sport plays a very important role in this development of people.

Admittedly, not all individuals are interested in sport or partake in it, particularly competitive sport, but there are many thousands who do. I made the point yesterday that I believe the youth of the Territory are our greatest resource. I believe it is in our interests to try to retain them in the Territory and it is in our interests to see that they develop to their greatest potential. The honourable the Treasurer outlined several schemes which will become available for young people. I would like to touch on a couple of them that we may have started and some that I believe we should continue with.

There is a very great need in all walks of life and in all facets of our recreation for Northern Territory people to have available to them the equality in training and competition that exists for people living in the other states. I believe the proposals by the Minister for Community Development to encourage coaching programs to be brought to the Northern Territory by national bodies and national sporting organisations is commendable. It is one that has already been started by several sports and I believe the Territory has benefited greatly from it. I believe the young people get a great deal of benefit from it in the sense that it equips them to go away and play in Australian championships on a much better footing than they otherwise would.

I believe there is room for us in the Northern Territory to ease the financial burden that is placed on people competing in national championships under the Northern Territory flag by the Northern Territory government contributing to the cost of fares. We would like to see the situation in the Northern Territory where Territorians generally have the same opportunities as people in other states. People living in South Australia, Victoria, New South Wales and Queensland, for a very small fare of some \$40 to \$50, can all compete against each other in national championships every year without the onerous financial burden being thrust upon them that Territorians have to bear. I believe, as a government, we should start to concentrate our efforts on young people competing in national championships of any sport. Provided people

play under the Northern Territory flag, there is more than enough reason for us to support them.

Another aspect we should enter into is the provision of floodlight facilities for sport in all major centres in the Northern Territory. It costs about \$100,000 to provide lights for any oval or facility in the Northern Territory for people to play competitive games of any sort. It seems obvious that it will cost us as much as \$150,000 to \$200,000 to provide additional playing facilities, with all the infrastructure that goes with them such as toilets and roads, to accommodate the people that want to play sport. We would be doing ourselves a very good turn if we doubled the utilisation of existing playing facilities by putting in lights. If we could use them both at night and during the day for respective sports, the whole community of the Northern Territory would benefit from it.

Mr Ballantyne: Paying the bills is the worst thing.

Mr TUXWORTH: The honourable member for Nhulunbuy has just made a comment about paying the bills for the lights. I accept that this could become onerous in some circumstances but I also accept that, in other circumstances where the lights were available, the patronage in the respective communities would be sufficient to be able to afford the use of the lights on certain occasions. It is not the sort of thing you would use for training but you would most certainly use it for strong competition.

There is one other aspect in which I believe sport is important to the Northern Territory young people and that is in relation to employment. When I came out of school any young person who aspired to play sport for money was regarded as the lowest form of animal life and in the true spirit of amateurism, no man would accept money for playing sport. I think the pendulum has swung the full gamut. I believe that it is not only reasonable that people be paid for playing sport; it has become socially acceptable and in some cases very rewarding for the people who do it well. We all like to watch a good game of sport, whether it is cricket or tennis or soccer or whatever and the only way that any country has ever raised its standard of sport up to a satisfactory level where it can compete favourably on the international scene is to move into the arena of professionalism, and professionalism simply means that you are being paid to do what you like doing.

I have been heavily involved in coaching young people in sport since about 1964. I have never ceased to be amazed at the amount of talent we have in the Northern Territory for our small population. One of the most extraordinary things is the potential we have amongst the Aboriginal community for people to play sport for a living and do it well. I do not see any stigma on a young man entering into the sports world to play sport for money, particularly if he is good at it and particularly if he enjoys it. There are many Aborigines that I could name and I am sure honourable members on both sides of the House could think of dozens themselves who, given the right opportunity, could compete in any national competition in Australia in all sorts of sports and maintain for themselves a position of respect and dignity and get good employment from it. I do not say that the employment which would flow to people in this particular arena would be great but it is certainly one that is significant and rewarding. Anything that we can do as a government to encourage it, we should do.

Mr BALLANTYNE (Nhulunbuy): Mr Deputy Speaker, I know it is getting late and I do not want to take up too much time but there is one little problem in my electorate I would like to discuss. There was a recent announcement that,

by the end of September, a decision will be taken whether Dhupuma College will continue or be closed down. It did cause quite a few problems. Going back over the last five years to see how that college has operated, first of all we must remember that, when it was first introduced at the old ALDO tracking station, the buildings were not in a good condition. It was never built as a school and it was only there as an interim measure following the lines of Kormilda College and Yirrara. It has operated in a temporary way and it has served its purpose.

A great deal of money would have to be spent on the upgrading of the building. They have problems with the sewerage system. One of the bigger problems is that they have spent money there unwisely. Probably one of the greatest shames is that they built a swimming pool in the last couple of years which cost a lot of money. They have bought in caravans for the staff and they have also spent quite a bit of money on the demountable units. Aside from the education part of it, one of the biggest things is that it is like a little village. You have to apply for accommodation. They have accommodation for all the staff - teaching, industrial and ancilliary people. It is a costly function.

It has served a great purpose for the people in the northeast arm of Arnhem land. We have had some very good students come out of there and make their way in life in the various fields. Some have become nurses aides and one apprentice started this year. Others have taken on office jobs and are acquitting themselves quite well. One of my biggest worries is that, if it is phased out, there are quite a few people who will be without a job, particularly the Aboriginal women in the kitchen and in the laundry. I have stressed my concern to the federal Minister for Education and to the minister here and I hope that we can help those people if it does wind down.

The teachers and staff just about outnumber the students. If you took a rough estimate, it would cost about \$13,000 per head to keep the students there. They do have problems sometimes with students leaving and then they have to follow this up. I do not think you can really get down to accounting for every cent but it is costing a lot of money. I am sorry to see it go but I think everybody understands that there are problems in other community colleges. I think that Kormilda College could quite capably cater for all the students in our area. Many of those young people will have to move away. Some of them are already moving away now so it will only be a few extra hundred kilometres further than they are now.

I believe that the college could take about 100 students. I don't know whether that is a viable operation. I know that a report which came out last year showed that they were operating quite successfully. However, upgrading the building or perhaps even building a new one is probably out of the question because, in recent years, we have had an extension to our pre-school, we are finishing a school at Yirrkala and we are going to build a new high school over on Elcho Island. They are just finishing off Sheparton College which provides a wonderful area for Aboriginal children to be educated in crafts. The classrooms are modern; they have carpet on the floor and everything you could possibly want. That in itself would stop many of those children from going to these live-in colleges.

The philosophy behind it in the first place - and I think that Mr Jim Gallagher was one of the original instigators - had a lot of merit but I think it may have been a little ahead of its time. I would just like to express my appreciation to the people who have built up that college. They have

done a tremendous amount of hard work in trying to get adult Aborigines into education programs but it has not quite come to that. We will know by the end of this month whether it will be wound up by the end of the year.

Mrs PADGHAM-PURICH (Tiwi): Mr Deputy Speaker, this afternoon I want to speak briefly on two things. The first one is on the subject of white safety lines down the Stuart Highway. I accepted the answer given to me by the Minister for Industrial Development. I can see the good reasons why the lines were not painted on the highway at the time it was repaired. I do hope that the lines are painted on the highway before the heavy rains of the wet start to fall. In the wet, these white lines assume an even greater importance in safety for drivers using the highway. I would say that all of us have driven on bitumen roads in the wet. We have all driven when the rain has been pelting and sheeting down and any windscreen wiper is useless. The guide posts down the highway may be of marginal use but it is that white line down the middle of the road that can be a lifesaver in any storm conditions. They can prevent accidents from a car perhaps straying over the wrong side of the road, perhaps round a bend with visibility negligible, and the accident happens when it is too late to take avertive action. These white lines down the middle of the highway can prevent a car from going over onto the soft shoulders on the left because the white lines are useful to help the car driver judge the distance between the centre and the edge. Many times I have crawled along in my car in a storm, only able to see the white line down the centre of the road.

The next subject on which I would like to speak is again something about which people do not usually talk, like the toilets I spoke about yesterday. I would like to say a few words about rubbish dumps. Dumps are places where people dump unwanted stuff. They are not places in which we live and they are not parks, but still they are important places because without them we would be in a fix. Some time ago - it was many months but I remember it from the particular time - a lady wrote to the newspaper giving her views on rubbish dump management. Her idea showed imagination and was in line with practical conservation, about which a few more people should interest themselves instead of the nebulous conservation which is usually only hot air and talk but which seems to get the headlines. This lady recommended that the rubbish dump be divided into three sections: the first section would be for wet, undesirable, sloppy sort of rubbish like bad food; the second part would be for large rubbish like car bodies, and the third and largest section would be for household rubbish, builders' rubbish, paper and garden cuttings. This last section is where people could go to dump their discards which could be of use to the next dump visitor. It is a case of one man's garbage being another man's gold. In the days of the dump at Gilruth Neck many years ago, if one visited the dump with a load of garden rubbish or anything else, it was the usual thing to check the situation over to see what one could find of use. Arc mesh was as scarce as hen's teeth and any piece found was grabbed immediately. One day I found a nice silver teapot on the dump - the sort that sits on a little stand over a spirit lamp - but try as I might, I could not find the stand. This view of exchanging discards at the dump is exactly the same principle as the white elephant stall and we all know about jumble sales and opportunity shops.

To conclude, I would like to say that I have something with me today which came from the dump. I do not know which dump it was. A friend gave me a red jumper after a visit to one of these dumps. I unpicked it and knitted it up into this stole I have on the chair. In conclusion, I would like consideration being given to the dump management proposals I have outlined.

Mr PERRON (Stuart Park): Mr Speaker, I use this opportunity in the adjournment firstly to answer a question asked of me during the sittings and I would like to get it on the record and off my desk. The honourable member for Sanderson asked when the next industrial land auction would take place in Darwin. I am advised that the last land auction of industrial land in Darwin was the Pruett Road subdivision in August 1977. At that time, 25 lots were offered for sale and only 10 lots were sold. As is the practice, the balance of unsold lots was made available for purchase over the counter from the Lands Branch. At today's date, 11 lots in this subdivision are still available for purchase. The last lot which was sold was on 16 December 1977.

Inquiries from real estate agents reveal that there are currently about 20 industrial lots available in the Pinelands industrial estate and about 3 in the Berrimah area. Associated with these vacant lots, there is an oversupply of vacant warehouses available for lease in the Winnellie area and the space and layout of these cater for a wide range of potential use. In view of the large quantity of both vacant land and empty warehouses, it would be uneconomic to make available additional land for this purpose at this time. To answer the honourable member's question, no industrial land auction is proposed in the near future in Darwin.

I presented a petition this morning from residents of rural Darwin pertaining to a cement batching plant which is proposed to be erected in an area near Humpty Doo and I would just like to put on record that it is of concern to me and the Department of Lands and Housing that there has been no plan put over rural Darwin earlier than this. Most honourable members will realise the Darwin Reconstruction Commission attempted once or twice to produce plans for the area and have them accepted but there was a great deal of hostility from people towards town plans in that area and, for one reason and another, they were never implemented.

The only practical way to stop undesirable and obnoxious uses being erected or installed in the vicinity of residential dwellings is by way of a town plan. The area is freehold land. There are no lease covenants and people can do absolutely what they like on the land, providing they comply with the building manual. This position will prevail, unfortunately, until such time as a plan is put over the area and, whilst I am taking steps now to try to have the proposed concrete batching plant moved to another site more acceptable to everybody, it is by negotiation alone and I have had to make it quite clear that there is no legislation whatsoever that the government can call upon to compel a person not to place an obnoxious or a noxious industry in the vicinity of residential dwellings. I just hope that our endeavours to discuss a rural plan over the area with all the rural associations in the area prove successful. To date, the cooperation has been very good. The executives of these associations appreciate the reasons for a plan to protect their own interests as well as to guide the government in its own development program and I just hope this level of cooperation extends throughout the community out there because, if a great deal of hostility is raised against plans, the situation can only be made worse in the future as more and more people seek to take up industrial uses in the area, and that will be to everyone's detriment.

Motion agreed to; the Assembly adjourned.

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