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NORTHERN TERRITORY OF AUSTRALIA

**LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY**

Fourth Assembly  
First Session

**Parliamentary Record**

Tuesday 28 February 1984  
Wednesday 29 February 1984  
Thursday 1 March 1984  
Tuesday 6 March 1984  
Wednesday 7 March 1984

Part I—Debates  
Part II—Questions  
Part III—Minutes



## **NORTHERN TERRITORY LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY**

### **Fourth Assembly First Session**

Speaker	Roger Michael Steele
Chief Minister and Minister for Industrial Development and Tourism	Paul Anthony Edward Everingham
Opposition Leader	Bob Collins
Deputy Chief Minister and Minister for Health, Youth, Sport, Recreation and Ethnic Affairs	Nicholas Manuel Dondas
Treasurer and Minister for Lands	Marshall Bruce Perron
Minister for Mines and Energy and Minister for Primary Production	Ian Lindsay Tuxworth
Attorney-General and Minister for Transport and Works	James Murray Robertson
Minister for Education	Tom Harris
Minister for Housing and Conservation	Cecilia Noel Padgham-Purich
Minister for Community Development	Daryl William Manzie

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## **Members of the Legislative Assembly**

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



Chairman of Committees —Mr Vale  
Deputy Chairman of Committees —

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

**House Committee**

Mr Speaker  
Mr Bell  
Mr Coulter  
Mr Hanrahan  
Mr Lanhupuy

**Standing Orders Committee**

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

**Publications Committee**

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

**Privileges Committee**

Mr B. Collins  
Mr Firmin  
Mr Hatton  
Mr Leo  
Mr Manzie

**Subordinate Legislation and Tabled Papers Committee**

Mr B. Collins  
Mr Coulter  
Mr Finch  
Mr Hatton  
Mr Smith

**Sessional Committee — Environment**

Mr D. W. Collins  
Mr Coulter  
Mr Dale  
Mr Ede  
Mr Lanhupuy

**Sessional Committee — New Parliament House**

Mr Speaker  
Mr Finch  
Mr Leo  
Mr Perron  
Mr Smith

PART 1

DEBATES

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## DEBATES

Tuesday 28 February 1984

### ASSEMBLY CONVENED

The Fourth Assembly convened at 10 am on Tuesday 28 February 1984 pursuant to notice by His Honour the Administrator.

The Clerk read the notice summoning the Legislative Assembly into session.

### COMMISSION TO ADMINISTER OATHS

The Serjeant-at-Arms conducted the Deputy of the Administrator of the Northern Territory, the Honourable Sir William Forster, and his Associate into the Chamber.

The DEPUTY: Members of the Legislative Assembly, His Honour the Administrator, not thinking fit to be present in person at this time, has been pleased to appoint me his deputy to do in his name all that is necessary to be performed in declaring this Assembly open.

The Clerk read the Deputy's Commission.

The DEPUTY: His Honour the Administrator desires me to inform you that, after all members present shall have been sworn, the causes of His Honour calling this Assembly together will be declared by him in person at this place; and it being necessary that a Speaker of the Legislative Assembly shall be first chosen, you, members of the Legislative Assembly, will proceed to choose some proper person to be your Speaker; and later this day the person whom you shall so choose will present himself to His Honour at such time and place as His Honour shall appoint.

Honourable members, my Authorisation to administer to members the oaths or affirmations of allegiance and of office as required by law will now be read by the Clerk.

The Clerk read the Authorisation.

### RETURNS TO WRITS

The Clerk laid on the Table the returns to the writs for the election of members of the Legislative Assembly held on 3 December 1983.

The following members named in the returns made and subscribed the oaths or affirmations required by law:

Electorate	Name
Arafura	Bob Collins
Araluen	James Murray Robertson
Arnhem	Wesley Wagner Lanhupuy
Barkly	Ian Lindsay Tuxworth
Berrimah	Barry Francis Coulter
Braitling	Roger William Stanley Vale
Casuarina	Nicholas Manuel Dondas
Elsey	Roger Michael Steele
Fannie Bay	Marshall Bruce Perron

Electorate	Name
Flynn	Raymond Allan Hanrahan
Jingili	Paul Anthony Edward Everingham
Koolpinyah	Cecilia Noel Padgham-Purich
Leanyer	Michael James Palmer
Ludmilla	Colin Charles Firmin
MacDonnell	Neil Randal Bell
Millner	Terence Edward Smith
Nhulunbuy	Daniel Murray Leo
Nightcliff	Stephen Paul Hatton
Port Darwin	Tom Harris
Sadadeen	Denis Wilfred Collins
Sanderson	Daryl William Manzie
Stuart	Brian Richard Ede
Victoria River	Terence Robert McCarthy
Wagaman	Frederick Arthur Finch
Wanguri	Donald Francis Dale

### ELECTION OF SPEAKER

Mr EVERINGHAM (Chief Minister): Mr Clerk, I remind the Assembly that the time has come when it is necessary for the Assembly to choose one of its members to be Speaker.

I propose to the Assembly for its Speaker the honourable member for Elsey, Mr Steele, and move that the honourable member for Elsey do take the Chair as Speaker.

Mr DONDAS (Health): I second the motion.

Mr STEELE (Elsey): I accept nomination.

The CLERK: Is there any further proposal?

Mr B. COLLINS (Opposition Leader): Mr Clerk, I propose to the Assembly for its Speaker the honourable member for MacDonnell, Mr Bell, and move that the honourable member for MacDonnell do take the Chair as Speaker.

Mr SMITH (Millner): I second the motion.

Mr BELL (MacDonnell): I accept nomination.

The CLERK: Is there any further proposal? There being no further proposal, the time for proposals has expired. Does any honourable member wish to speak to the motions?

Ballot taken.

The CLERK: Honourable members, the result of the ballot is Mr Steele, member for Elsey, 19 votes, Mr Bell, member for MacDonnell, 6 votes. I declare the honourable member for Elsey elected as Speaker of the Assembly in accordance with Standing Orders.

Mr SPEAKER: Honourable members, I wish to express my sincere thanks and appreciation for the high honour you have conferred upon me.

Mr EVERINGHAM (Chief Minister): Mr Speaker, I would like to offer you, on behalf of the parliamentary CLP, our congratulations. I am sure that you will discharge with integrity the high office which you now hold.

Mr B. COLLINS (Opposition Leader): Mr Speaker, I wish to extend to you on behalf of the opposition, rather than the parliamentary Labor Party, the congratulations of the opposition on your election.

Mr Speaker, Erskine May says in respect of the office of Speaker, apart from noting that it is indeed one of the most durable traditions of the parliamentary system: 'Confidence in the impartiality of the Speaker is an indispensable condition of the successful working of the parliament'.

Having gone on to explain the minor departures from this practice in Australia, Pettifer goes on to say: 'Notwithstanding the foregoing, and the fact that the Speakership has long been regarded as a political appointment, Australian Speakers have striven to discharge their duties with impartiality. The degree of impartiality achieved depends on the occupant. But, as a rule, Speakers have been sufficiently detached from government activity to ensure what can be justly claimed to be a high degree of impartiality in the Chair'.

Mr Speaker, indeed the practice of Speakers in Australian parliaments in years past has been largely free of controversy, although not entirely free of controversy; and indeed in the Northern Territory not entirely free of controversy. As I have said in this Assembly before, the role of the Speaker is more than simply to administer the procedures of the parliament. Indeed, the job extends beyond the parliament because the Speaker is the public personification of the parliament. In this case it is the parliament of the Northern Territory. Therefore, your responsibility in that respect is equally onerous.

Mr Speaker, I must say that, in discharging your responsibilities in maintaining both the dignity and authority of this parliament, it is a matter of extreme regret to me that your job has been made doubly difficult by the quite extraordinary statements in the national press by the honourable Chief Minister who relegated this parliament to the status of a kindergarten. Mr Speaker, I would of course have to defer to the honourable Chief Minister in his knowledge of the capacity of his colleagues. But, Mr Speaker, I do feel strongly on this point, and I have mentioned it during previous sessions of the Assembly. The job really is for 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

Mr Speaker, I would like to conclude by offering you the positive support of this opposition and congratulate you in achieving this high office.

Mr BELL (MacDonnell): Mr Speaker, lest I be accused of a curmudgeonly lack of grace, let me, as the unsuccessful candidate, also rise to offer you my congratulations and to place on record my appreciation of your capacities as a fine parliamentarian. You have distinguished yourself in debate, in question time and in every aspect of the workings of the Assembly. I am aware of the keen understanding that you have of the privileges and rights that adhere in this Assembly. I am quite sure that you will savour the distillation of the hundreds of years of parliamentary practice as the essential spirit of this Assembly. I extend to you, Sir, my heartiest congratulations.

Mr TUXWORTH (Primary Production): Mr Speaker, on behalf of the many rural people of the Northern Territory that you and I have represented over the years, I would like to extend to you, Sir, their very good wishes. They will receive the news of your appointment and election today with great pleasure and I am sure, Mr Speaker, that there is no doubt in the minds of any of those people

that you will carry out the duties of your office with impartiality and that you will bring to this Assembly the dignity and respect that your predecessors have seen fit to bestow in here by their actions.

Mr SPEAKER: Honourable members, I thank you very much for your remarks about the election, a rather landslide election, as the honourable Leader of the Opposition indicated. I do take the office very seriously. I want you to know that. I will be impartial. I will have the interests of all members forever to the fore in my deliberations as your Speaker. This Assembly already has a high reputation in Australia for orderly conduct. I would like to see the members maintaining that high reputation.

#### PRESENTATION OF SPEAKER TO ADMINISTRATOR

Mr SPEAKER: Honourable members, I am informed that it is the intention of His Honour the Administrator to attend in the lounge of the Assembly and I propose to present myself to him there as the choice of the Assembly as Speaker. I invite honourable members to accompany me to present myself to His Honour the Administrator. The sitting of the Assembly is suspended until the ringing of the bells.

Mr Speaker Steele resumed the Chair.

#### AUTHORITY TO ADMINISTER OATHS

Mr SPEAKER: Honourable members, I have to report that, accompanied by honourable members, I presented myself to His Honour the Administrator as the choice of the Assembly for its Speaker and His Honour was pleased to congratulate me. I inform honourable members that I have received from His Honour the Administrator an authorisation to administer to honourable members the oaths or affirmations of allegiance and of office. I table the Authorisation.

The Clerk read the Authorisation.

#### ATTENDANCE OF ADMINISTRATOR

Mr SPEAKER: Honourable members, I am pleased to inform the Assembly that His Honour the Administrator intends to attend the Assembly immediately to declare the causes of his calling the Assembly together.

Serjeant-at-Arms, please inform His Honour that the Assembly is ready to receive him.

His Honour the Administrator took the Chair.

His Honour the ADMINISTRATOR: Mr Speaker, honourable members, I have called you together at this time for the dispatch of business and to outline my government's legislative program for the ensuing period. Since the achievement of self-government, the Northern Territory has demonstrated its ability for real growth under the management of a regionally-elected government. It is my government's renewed intention to continue that progress by enabling people to capitalise on the opportunities that the Northern Territory offers.

Despite the achievements to date, my government believes that there are many opportunities yet to be taken up, which have so far remained dormant because of our lack of population, capital and essential facilities. It is my government's first priority to overcome these barriers to progress by attracting the people, the investment and, where necessary, the attention of the federal government, to overcome disadvantages which reduce our ability to prosper and grow into a full

member of the Australian Commonwealth. In this regard, my government remains committed to establishing the strongest possible working relationship with the federal government, ensuring that the interests of the Territory's people are a constant consideration in national policy making. That is my government's first responsibility to the electorate.

In this Assembly in March last, I was pleased to welcome the announcement that the new federal government would build the railway from Alice Springs to Darwin. It is a matter of great disappointment to my government that this commitment and other undertakings given have been set aside. My government will endeavour to persuade the federal government to renew and honour those commitments. My government will look for a relationship with the federal government under which decisions which affect the Territory are enacted after consultation, and in agreement, with the Territory electorate. The construction of the north-south railway, the establishment of a Territory university, the removal of restrictions that prevent Territory uranium mining ventures from proceeding, the maintenance of coastal shipping services and the settlement of outstanding Aboriginal land claims stand among the most important issues which must be resolved in the interests of the Territory and all Australia. My government will work wholeheartedly with the federal government in bringing these and other Territory issues to a successful outcome. The Territory has much more to contribute to national prosperity and progress if it is given both the means and the freedom to make that contribution.

One of the most serious questions facing Australia today is the provision of employment, particularly for young people. My government will continue to promote the growth of our tourist industry and the manufacturing sector in order both to diversify the Territory's economic base and provide new job opportunities. With the Yulara Tourist Village near completion, with consideration of tourist facilities in the Kakadu National Park under way, with new international standard hotels built or under way in the major centres, the Territory is rapidly improving its tourist facilities and opportunities.

Plans for the relocation and construction of a civil airport terminal in Darwin are welcomed, and my government will use its voice to promote a rapid start to that project.

Tourism is one of the major growth industries in the world today, estimated to be increasing in importance at a rate of about 15% per annum across the world. It is a labour-intensive industry with many hidden benefits for the community - commercial and cultural. My government's commitment to the creation of real, long-term jobs in the private sector can be fulfilled in part by the growth of Territory tourism. The apparent reluctance of the Commonwealth government to come to grips with planning for tourism in Kakadu National Park is a matter of very serious concern to my government.

While the manufacturing sector is undergoing a traumatic period of readjustment nationally, the Territory is in a position to reap the one benefit of our past lack of an established industrial base. The Territory does not face industrial upheaval in order to readjust for the manufacturing needs of the 1980s and beyond. New Territory enterprises can and will be encouraged to adopt the latest technological advances.

My government will also seek to attract manufacturers of new-technology products to the Territory. Our aim is to secure for Territorians the best long-term employment advantages for the future.

A fair measure of the Territory's success in the future will be the degree to which we are able to cement a growing link of trade and mutual interest with

the countries of our region. My government believes that this is, firstly, a responsibility of national government, but that the Territory is uniquely positioned to assist in that effort. Accordingly, we will promote the concept of a Territory university, able to offer studies to north Australian, South-east Asian and west Pacific region students.

North Australia is the only major area of the world with a tropical climate within what is known as the 'developed' world. North Australia can provide a senior educational institution within an environment similar to many regions of the world where over-population, under-employment and food production yields are some of the most pressing problems. Australia has the resources to provide and maintain such an institution and its presence in the Territory would provide a major intellectual and economic stimulus to local progress. There is scope too in the Territory for private educationalists to take advantage of the undoubted demand in the South-east Asian region for Australian secondary education.

I have spoken of the broad, long-term aims of my government. There are many matters of more particular concern which will occupy my government during its term of office.

Taking into account the undoubted high costs of both living and investing in the Territory, my government remains committed to minimising the taxes imposed on people and business activity. Wherever possible, Territory taxes will be held down, offsetting some of the cost disadvantages borne by the community, and helping to attract new investment and individuals. My government takes note of the recent encouragement by the federal Treasurer to the states to hold down taxes. At the same time, there is an increasing need to ensure a fair spread of financial responsibilities across the community. My government believes that a fair contribution is a necessary part of the growing-up process that the Territory and its communities are presently undergoing.

In the long term, my government will move towards full commercial operation of public transport and water and sewerage services and will continue to examine the problems associated with Aboriginal communities, particularly those situated on Aboriginal land, contributing to the cost of water, sewerage and electricity charges.

On receipt of the report from the greater Darwin Rural Advisory Council, my government will consider the progressive introduction of a form of local representation with a concurrent local contribution towards the provision of services in this and other similar areas.

My government will continue to work closely with the business community in all matters related to training, investment opportunity and regulatory legislation. The Territory Development Corporation Act will be amended to include a representative of the small business community on the board, and small business services are being expanded to include a shopfront advisory centre. The Territory Development Corporation will continue its important work of identifying business opportunity and of encouraging local entrepreneurs or interstate and overseas investors to take up those opportunities.

My government will pursue prospects for the commercial development of large gas reserves in central Australia and the further exploration of the Territory's mineral-rich areas.

After nearly 6 years of self-government, it is time to review the Public Service Act and ensure that it is tailored to meet the emerging needs of a modern Territory service. In particular, it is appropriate to look at those areas concerned with conflict of interest, equal employment opportunity, discipline



and Aboriginal development. The Public Service Commissioner's office will be responsible for drawing up a public service code of ethics which will be complementary to the act. Equal employment opportunity, although specifically addressed in the present act, is a concern of my government. The encouragement of applications by suitably-qualified women for senior positions within the public service, and the appointment of women to boards, councils, tribunals and trusts within government and semi-government authorities, will receive particular attention.

A study of the present and future impact of technology on the service and the related issue of information dissemination in view of the ever-growing volume of records compiled by such technology is clearly necessary.

Other matters under consideration include the formation of a senior executive service and the revision of conditions applying to new recruits. Wherever possible, the emphasis will be on local recruitment to the service, and my government will be looking for ways both to reduce the hidden costs of interstate recruitment and to ensure a longer-term commitment from those brought to the Territory from other parts of Australia.

Permanent part-time employment will now be introduced to the Northern Territory Public Service. It is the intention of my government in all matters concerning the public service to promote a true Territory-based service providing excellent career opportunities and the highest level of effectiveness.

In education, a number of new initiatives will increase the need for cooperation and joint planning between authorities in the vocational training and post-school areas. My government will meet its commitment to expand post secondary education with particular emphasis on vocational preparation of youth, better school staffing levels and the provision for post-graduate scholarships. My government will strive to achieve its objective for self-sufficiency in teacher education through the Darwin Community College and Batchelor College.

Proposals for improvements in secondary correspondence education available via satellite technology, TAFE centres in smaller towns, cooperation with Primary Production on short training programs in rural skills, and teacher and student exchanges with our Asian neighbours will be followed through. Alternative schooling for disinterested or behaviourally-disturbed students and secondary student accommodation in Darwin are other matters under consideration.

To meet the demands and aspirations of communities for more skilled and qualified local members of their community, a range of strategies for improving the academic and secondary education will be introduced. Liaison with the Commonwealth on the question of provision of permanent and transportable out-station schools will be necessary because the Commonwealth funds such schools. In anticipation of the establishment of the Tindal air force base, my government will enter into negotiations with the Commonwealth on the development and funding of new primary and high schools at Katherine.

A Northern Territory board of studies is being established to accredit senior secondary school courses and issue certificates for both junior and secondary school courses. The new board will closely monitor changes taking place in the South Australian system to which the Northern Territory is currently linked.

In health, my government is proceeding with plans for a children's hospital at Casuarina, a sports medicine institute, retirement villages in Darwin and Alice Springs, a new hospital wing at Katherine and, provided federal government support is forthcoming, a nursing home in the same town.

The Territory's future can be assured only with the full commitment of its people, and my government will act to encourage home ownership in the community. We will maintain current levels of assistance to people wishing to buy their own homes. The home loans assistance available to date has helped increase Territory home ownership by some 30% since self-government. This year, the present public service waiting list will be exhausted, allowing my government to introduce a single set of policies over housing matters. To prepare for this, a major review of housing policies will be carried out. The Planning Act will be streamlined to make it easier for applications to be processed speedily and efficiently. My government is also reviewing covenant requirements over all leases and is preparing to act against those who have failed to comply with their undertakings.

It is my government's intention to provide a recreation lake for the people of Alice Springs.

Among legislative initiatives to be brought before this Assembly for consideration will be those resulting from the current review of the Evidence Act and the inquiry into workers' compensation. The results of the Territory freight costs inquiry will be put before this Assembly for consideration, and my government will act upon the conclusions in the Territory's best interests. A submission to the federal government on the desirability of a free trade zone for Australia's most northerly port is under final preparation and should be ready by mid-year.

My government will use its term of office to advance the Territory economically, socially and constitutionally, using all opportunities to encourage new population and new investment, maintaining the view that real and sustainable growth and thus greater opportunity is created only through the growth of the private sector.

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

His Honour the Administrator was led from the Chamber by the Sergeant-at-Arms.

#### ADMINISTRATIVE ARRANGEMENTS

Mr EVERINGHAM (Chief Minister)(by leave): Mr Speaker, I wish to make a statement relating to the ministry office holders and the administrative arrangements of government.

On 13 December 1983, His Honour the Administrator made the following appointments of ministers of the Territory: Nicholas Manuel Dondas, Minister for Health, Youth, Sport, Recreation and Ethnic Affairs; Marshall Bruce Perron, Treasurer and Minister for Lands; Ian Lindsay Tuxworth, Minister for Mines and Energy and Minister for Primary Production; James Murray Robertson, Attorney-General and Minister for Transport and Works; Tom Harris, Minister for Education; Cecilia Noel Padgham-Purich, Minister for Housing and Conservation; Daryl William Manzie, Minister for Community Development; and Paul Anthony Edward Everingham, Chief Minister and Minister for Industrial Development and Tourism. On the same day, His Honour made an administrative arrangements order allotting to those ministers the administration of departments and the provisions of acts and the responsibility for areas of government specified in that order.

The honourable member for Araluen has been appointed Leader of the House and the honourable member for Sadadeen is government whip.

### OPPOSITION OFFICE HOLDERS

Mr B. COLLINS (Opposition Leader)(by leave): Mr Speaker, the following members of the opposition hold offices as follows: Bob Collins, Leader of the Opposition, responsible for education and electoral matters, primary industry and the public service; Terence Edward Smith, Deputy Leader of the Opposition, responsible for treasury, industry and commerce, employment, industrial relations, youth, sport and recreation, and housing; Daniel Murray Leo, opposition whip, responsible for mines and energy, lotteries and gaming, public works and utilities, police and fire services, and prison officers; Neil Randal Bell, responsible for women's affairs, transport and works, lands, consumer affairs, functions of Attorney-General and special responsibility for central Australia; Brian Richard Ede, responsible for health, community development and local government; and Wesley Wagner Lanhupuy, responsible for Aboriginal affairs, tourism, conservation and the environment.

### ADOPTION OF CHILDREN AMENDMENT BILL (Serial 12)

Bill presented by leave and read a first time.

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

Motion agreed to.

### ADDRESS IN REPLY

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

Mr EVERINGHAM (Chief Minister): Mr Speaker, I move that the following Address in Reply be agreed to: To His Honour the Administrator of the Northern Territory, may it please Your Honour, we, the Legislative Assembly of the Northern Territory, 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.

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

Leave granted.

Mr B. COLLINS (Opposition Leader): Mr Speaker, I second the motion and seek leave to continue my remarks at a later hour.

Leave granted.

Mr ROBERTSON (Attorney-General): Mr Speaker, I move that the resumption of the debate be made an order of the day for a later hour.

Motion agreed to.

### ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN OF COMMITTEES

Mr SPEAKER: Honourable members, it is now necessary for the Assembly to appoint a member to be its Chairman of Committees.

Mr EVERINGHAM (Chief Minister): Mr Speaker, I propose to the Assembly for

its Chairman of Committees the honourable member for Braitling, Mr Vale, and move that the honourable member for Braitling be appointed Chairman of Committees in this Assembly.

Mr DONDAS (Health): Mr Speaker, I second the motion.

Mr SPEAKER: Is there any further motion?

Mr B. COLLINS (Opposition Leader): Mr Speaker, I propose to the Assembly for its Chairman of Committees the member for Nhulunbuy, Mr Leo, and move that the honourable member for Nhulunbuy be appointed Chairman of Committees in this Assembly.

Mr SMITH (Millner): Mr Speaker, I second the motion.

Mr SPEAKER: Is there any further motion? There being no further motion, the time for motions has expired.

Does any honourable member wish to speak to the motions?

Ballot taken.

Mr SPEAKER: Honourable members, the result of the ballot is Mr Vale, member for Braitling, 19 votes, Mr Leo, member for Nhulunbuy, 6 votes. I declare the honourable member for Braitling, Mr Vale, appointed as Chairman of Committees in accordance with Standing Orders and offer him my congratulations.

Mr VALE (Braitling): Honourable members, I wish to express my sincere thanks and appreciation for the high honour you have conferred upon me.

Mr DONDAS (Health): Mr Speaker, I would like to congratulate the honourable member for Braitling on his election as Chairman of Committees. I once held the position myself and I certainly know that it is not an easy task. In fact, honourable members would remember one occasion when, as Chairman of Committees early in the piece, I became muddled up in the Chair and one of the attendants of the Assembly, Mr Lew Fatt, walked by and said: 'Can we help you?'

Mr Speaker, the Chairman of Committees is a very difficult position to hold within this Assembly. It was once referred to by the honourable Attorney-General as akin to walking through a minefield. I would like to advise the honourable member for Braitling that we will provide to him whatever assistance we can in his new position of Chairman of Committees.

Mr LEO (Nhulunbuy): Mr Speaker, I would like to offer my congratulations to the honourable member for Braitling for achieving the position of Chairman of Committees. The honourable Deputy Chief Minister of the Northern Territory has fairly accurately described the task of Chairman of Committees as a very difficult one. However, in the past, when acting in that role in the absence of the then Chairman, the honourable member did a fine job in the Chair. He would certainly have my support and whatever assistance that I can provide to him.

Mr VALE (Braitling): Mr Speaker, I thank honourable members for their kind words and I will do all within my power to discharge my duties properly.

#### MOTION OF CONDOLENCE

Death of Former Member - E.J. Connellan AO, CBE

Mr EVERINGHAM (Chief Minister): Mr Speaker, I refer to the death on 26 December 1983 of Edward John Connellan AO, CBE and move that this Assembly

express its regret at the death on 26 December 1983 of Edward John Connellan, a nominated non-official member of the Legislative Council for the Northern Territory between 3 December 1965 and 23 November 1967, place on record its appreciation of his meritorious service to the Assembly and the people of the Northern Territory, and tender its profound sympathy to his widow and family.

E.J. Connellan died, after a long illness, at his property, Narwietooma, on 26 December 1983 and was accorded a state funeral. The eulogy was read by the Hon Doug Anthony who was a personal friend for many years. 'EJ' was born on 24 June 1912 at Donald, Victoria, the son of T.P. Connellan, grazier of Narwie Station near Balranald, NSW. He was educated at Xavier College, Melbourne and Melbourne University. He spent some time jackarooing on his parents' property and then 3 years teaching mathematics and science at Swan Hill High School.

He early developed a passion for flying and a deep interest in the Northern Territory which was kindled by J.V. Fairbairn who later became Australia's first Minister for Air in the federal parliament. 'EJ' purchased his first aeroplane, a Spartan, in 1936 when he was 24. In 1938, he undertook his own, privately-financed, 3-month aerial survey of the Territory's stock and aviation potential. From Essendon to Essendon, he covered 40 000 miles in an open plane without adequate landing strips and with no engineering back-up. It was during this trip that he first met John McEwen, then Minister for the Interior, who was to become a life-long friend and mentor. McEwen suggested that he run an airmail service to a group of Territory stations.

Connellan Airways commenced operations on 10 July 1939 when Connellan himself piloted a single-engine Percival Gull monoplane on an inaugural run to Wyndham and back. The 'fleet' comprised 2 Percival Gulls and the initial service was from Alice Springs, Mount Doreen, the Granites, Tanami, Inverway, VRD, Wyndham and return, on a fortnightly basis. The service attracted a subsidy of £1500 per annum plus £1000 per annum from the flying doctor service for a 3-year period. Few of his ports of call had airstrips and 'EJ' made most of them himself with a now-famous 1920 Silver Ghost Rolls Royce. The first ground staff at Alice Springs included Sam Calder and, in December 1939, Damian Miller joined the company.

Eddie Connellan married Evelyn Mary Bell in Alice Springs on 29 August 1940 and Mrs Connellan then spent her honeymoon running the Alice Springs end of the operation while her new husband flew all over northern Australia.

After the war, with George Taylor as chief pilot, the airline expanded rapidly with the introduction of Dragonflys and Rapides. Later, Connair, as the airline had by then become, began to service main towns and large Aboriginal settlements in the Territory, Western Australia and Queensland as more economical aircraft such as Herons and the immortal DC3s were added to the fleet.

'EJ' was dedicated to the safe operation of his airline and his record is admirable: only 2 crashes of which one, near Cairns, was due to pilot error.

Eddie Connellan's battle with the bureaucracy are legend. The 1950s and 1960s saw him constantly travelling to Canberra to lobby heads of government and public servants for a continuation of the large subsidies which were vital to support an airline which served such a small population over a vast area. Although he never developed any sort of rapport with bureaucrats, he was invariably on most friendly terms with the leaders of government with the exception of Prime Minister Whitlam. He was a close friend of Robert Menzies. He also had friends in the mainstream of commercial aviation. He had been at

Xavier College with John Ryland, for many years General Manager of TAA, and had known Reg Ansett since childhood.

For services to aviation, Edward John Connellan was awarded the Coronation Medal in 1953, the OBE in 1958, the Oswald Watt Memorial Medal for Aviation in 1964, the CBE in 1976 and the Order of Australia in 1981.

He was a nominated member of the Legislative Council from 1965 to 1968 and founder of the Northern Territory Development League in 1947. In March 1983, he launched the Connellan Airways Trust to subsidise air services to fill the gap left by the closing of airline operations to the remote areas of the Territory and the Kimberleys.

He was an intensely private person, much respected and admired, who provided a service to Territorians that has never been matched, despite the advances in modern technology. He was a true Territory pioneer not only in aviation but also in the pastoral industry. It is said that profits from Narwietooma on many occasions sustained the airline. A towering figure, if not in stature certainly in strength of personality and vision, his death is a sad loss to the people of the Northern Territory.

Eddie Connellan had 3 children. His daughter, Cynthia, died as an infant and his elder son, Roger, was tragically killed on 5 January 1977 when a deranged pilot flew into the Connair hangar at Alice Springs Airport. His younger son, Christopher, now manages the family property, Narwietooma, 160 miles from Alice Springs.

To his widow, son and other members of the Connellan family, this Assembly extends its deepest sympathy.

Mr B. COLLINS (Opposition Leader): Mr Speaker, the opposition wishes to join the government this afternoon in offering its condolences to the family of the late, and indeed great, Territory aviation pioneer, Eddie Connellan. As all Territorians would know, Eddie Connellan was responsible for pioneering a bush airline to service vast areas of the Northern Territory, Queensland, Western Australia and South Australia so that the few thousand people who lived in those areas would have access to medical, educational and ordinary facilities which would have been denied them otherwise.

Mr Speaker, I mentioned at the time that, perhaps more than any member of at least the former Assembly, I appreciated the significance of the contribution which Connair made to the Territory. At the time, I was the only member of the Assembly who was a regular passenger on Connair aircraft. In fact, I flew on Connair aircraft for something like 13 years. It was pretty hard for me to think about the Northern Territory without thinking about Connair because it became synonymous with the Northern Territory. In all that time, I do not think that Territorians have been serviced by a more personalised and obliging airline. Certainly, it had a tremendous reputation among bush people in the Northern Territory, largely because of the efforts of its founder and manager, Eddie Connellan.

Mr Speaker, the Chief Minister has gone over historical ground as far as Eddie Connellan is concerned, and there is no need for me to repeat that. I want to say that, in establishing and developing Connair, Eddie Connellan made a major contribution to helping alleviate the tyranny of distance from which many people in isolated areas of the Northern Territory suffer. It is fitting that Mr Connellan's significant contribution to the development of the Territory has now been recognised in several ways, in particular by the naming of an airstrip at the Yulara Tourist Village in central Australia.

Mr Speaker, the opposition joins the government in offering condolences to the family of Eddie Connellan and in paying tribute to the very great pioneering work he carried out for the benefit of all Territorians.

Mr VALE (Braitling): Mr Speaker, I wish to speak to the condolence motion moved by the Chief Minister. E.J. Connellan, known to many people as 'EJ' and to his close friends as Eddie, was born in Donald, Victoria on 24 June 1912 and died at his property, Narwietooma, in central Australia on 26 December 1983. In a farewell speech to his staff in Alice Springs on 21 January 1980, after Connair had been sold to East West, Mr Connellan said in part: 'In 1945, we made the discovery that subsidy is the worst form of cancer'. It is somewhat ironical that cancer killed this tough pioneer pastoralist and aviator who was feared by some, not liked by others but respected by all who knew him. E.J. Connellan, who became a legend in his own lifetime and did so much as an aviator to bridge the tyranny of distance in northern Australia, did so not by design but by accident. He originally arrived in the Northern Territory in 1938 to seek out pastoral land in central Australia, not for cattle as commonly believed but, according to Mr Connellan himself in a 1939 edition of Walkabout, for sheep.

As well as securing land for himself during this 40 000 mile survey trip in 1938, Connellan was to report back to the then Minister for the Interior, John McEwen, and others on the Territory's potential for pastoral development. It was during this survey trip that 'EJ' met up with McEwen who was visiting the Territory. The minister asked Connellan to start an aerial mail run in the Territory. 'EJ' agreed on the condition that the run be taken out of his hands after 3 years so that he could concentrate on his first love, raising cattle. Connellan borrowed money and purchased 2 Percival Gull aircraft. In July 1939, when Edward John Connellan piloted one of these planes out of Alice Springs on a 2000-mile run to Wyndham and back, he unofficially launched the Territory's first and only airline, Connellan Airways.

Connellan was a man of vision. He saw a developing Northern Territory, indeed northern Australia, peopled by men and women who would not and should not have been unduly penalised by isolation in the vast distances of the outback. Educated at Xavier College and later at Melbourne University, he then worked on his father's property in NSW before becoming a teacher of mathematics at Swan Hill School. In his spare time, he studied aviation and radio communications and dreamed of the distant Northern Territory and its untapped potential.

Mr Speaker, history records that the first official Connellan Airways flight was on 8 August 1939 and that, by the end of that month, Connellan had flown 3 mail runs to Wyndham and 3 medical missions. The biggest little airline in the world was off and running. Within 2 months, war was declared and his flight crew, comprising his brother Vin, Ted and Jeff O'Keefe, who were killed in the war, John Kellow, Damien Miller and Sam Calder were called up for service. Connellan was ordered to keep the mail and medical services operating. By this time, he had a ground crew building, hangars and accommodation at the town site aerodrome in Alice Springs and the famed Silver Ghost Rolls was ranging north and west to the Western Australian border, levelling out landing and emergency strips.

In August 1940, 'EJ' married Evelyn Bell who spent her honeymoon running the Alice end of the airline whilst 'EJ' flew hundreds of thousands of miles over northern Australia.

During the war, Eddie Connellan supplied army observer units around the north-west coast, surveyed aerodrome sites for the RAAF and developed an aerial photographic technique which the army adopted and planned to use in the mapping

of the north-west if the Japanese invaded. With the return of the survivors of his crew from the war years, 'EJ' was able to expand his fleet by another 2 aircraft, a Dragon and a Dragonfly.

Eddie Connellan's main aim in coming to the Territory was to choose a pastoral property for himself and, as a result of the pastoral survey he made in 1938, he chose 1000 square miles of good grazing land 100 miles west of the Alice and christened it Narwietooma. Narwietooma was successful and it is alleged that 'EJ' subsidised the airline from time to time out of profits from the property.

His main problem area was to find a plane to meet the requirements of a long distance mail run, with above century heat, coping with the rough bush strips and the long distances between airstrips. Because of this, he drew up specifications for the ideal aircraft for his mail run. He called it the 'Brolga' after the Connellan Airways code name used by the military during the war. He had plans published in the magazine 'Aircraft' in April 1946. This design was recommended to the aeronautics division of CSIRO and 'EJ' tried to interest manufacturers in it. The Brolga was never built. However, the winner of an England to Australia air race, the Britten Norman Islander, closely resembled his specifications. Next he began convincing DCA officials to remodel certain regulations to suit the conditions and the job he was doing, and he rebuilt the undercarriage of the Gull so it could carry heavier loads and handle the rough bush strips. He then demonstrated to DCA that the heavier payloads could be carried in the remodelled Gull whilst still maintaining the safety margin.

However, being an expert pilot and an aviation engineer were not enough for the Territory's pioneer mailman. He had to dabble in public relations to convince isolated and independent-minded Territorians that they needed an air service.

Eddie Connellan and his wife, Evelyn, had 3 children: a daughter, Cynthia, who died as an infant, Roger, who was killed, and Christopher Connellan, who now runs the property, Narwietooma. He was awarded the Coronation Medal in 1953 for his services to aviation, the OBE in 1956, then the Oswald Watt Memorial Medal for Aviation in 1964 and the CBE in 1976. He was a member of the Northern Territory Legislative Council from 1965 to 1967, the founder and President of the Northern Territory Development League in 1947 and President of the Centralian Pastoralists Association from 1950 to 1952. He has also written and had published a number of papers on drought management and pastoral protection in central Australia, for which he experimented on his station, Narwietooma.

Mr Speaker, the airline and its founder have gone but the mark that Edward John Connellan has left on the Northern Territory will remain forever.

Mr BELL (MacDonnell): Mr Speaker, I rise to endorse the motion of condolence moved by the Chief Minister. I do so because Narwietooma is within my electorate and Edward John Connellan was a constituent of mine. It would be quite a surprise if 'EJ' had in fact voted for the sitting member in either of the last 2 elections and I trust neither he nor his family will take it as ill that I take this opportunity to accord my respect to the man and to his achievements. In the course of my duties as member for MacDonnell, I received representations from Mr Connellan on behalf of the large number of Aboriginal people who live in the area.

The matter of excisions for Aboriginal people living on pastoral leases, at times, has been one of hot debate within this Assembly. It has also been of some concern to and, dare I say, bloodymindedness on the part of, some lessees.



However, I think it is to his eternal credit and an indication of his attitude that E.J. Connellan was one of the first pastoral lessees to negotiate such an excision. A large number of people now live at the community at Mbungara which is an excision from the Narwietooma head lease.

Another surprising connection that E.J. Connellan had with the Northern Territory was pointed out to me when another person of national stature who has left his mark on northern Australia visited the Centre. I refer to the writer Xavier Herbert. Mr Speaker, Xavier Herbert is a pathfinding author in Australia. He is a pathfinder in terms of describing human relations in northern Australia and in describing the history of social, economic and, dare I say, human development in northern Australia. It therefore came as a matter of some interest and surprise to me to find that the paths of these 2 great Australians, Xavier Herbert and Edward John Connellan, had crossed in the twenties and thirties in the Territory. I would look forward very much to seeing more written of the views and the work of both these men and the relationship between them.

I had the good fortune to hear E.J. Connellan speak publicly on a number of occasions and I think it is worth putting on record that he was a consummate public speaker. I heard him speak when he launched the Connellan Airways Trust to meet the educational needs of isolated children. At that time, he could not have been a well man, nor could he have been a well man when I heard him speak at a speech night at a local high school several months before. However, on both those occasions, he spoke brilliantly and entertainingly, and was a joy to listen to. I think that is worth recording, Mr Speaker.

Mention has been made of the fact that E.J. Connellan was a schoolteacher. I read a paper that he had prepared for an isolated children's parents' association meeting some 2 years ago. In that, he described some of his own experiences as a teacher. I heard him speak publicly about them at the speech night to which I referred. On the basis of those comments, and the manner of the man himself, it was clear to me that the children whom he taught must have had a very good teacher indeed.

Mr Speaker, I mentioned before that E.J. Connellan negotiated the excision of Mbungara for Aboriginal people who had traditional connections in the area of the Narwietooma lease. I think that I would be doing less than justice to Edward John Connellan if I did not mention in this Assembly the respect in which he is held generally and by the Aboriginal people as well. Mr Speaker, those are the terms in which I wish to endorse this motion of condolence before the Chair.

MR SPEAKER: I ask honourable members to signify their assent to the motion by standing in silence.

Members stood in silence.

### SESSIONAL ORDERS

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

Motion agreed to.

MR ROBERTSON (Attorney-General)(by leave): Mr Speaker, I move that this Assembly, for the purposes of section 24 of the Legislative Assembly Powers and Privileges Act, authorise the broadcasting of proceedings during the present

session of the Assembly on such occasions and under such conditions as Mr Speaker may determine.

Motion agreed to.

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

Motion agreed to.

#### APPOINTMENTS TO STANDING COMMITTEES

Mr ROBERTSON (Attorney-General)(by leave): Mr Speaker, I move that, pursuant to Standing Order 15, Mr Speaker, Mr McCarthy, Mr Robertson, Mr B. Collins and Mr Ede be appointed as the Standing Orders Committee.

Motion agreed to.

Mr ROBERTSON (Attorney-General)(by leave): Mr Speaker, I move that, pursuant to Standing Order 16, Mr Firmin, Mr Hatton, Mr Manzie, Mr B. Collins and Mr Leo be appointed as the Committee of Privileges and that the committee have power to send for persons, papers and records, to sit during any adjournment of the Assembly, and to adjourn from place to place.

Motion agreed to.

Mr ROBERTSON (Attorney-General)(by leave): Mr Speaker, I move that, pursuant to Standing Order 17, Mr Speaker, Mr Coulter, Mr Hanrahan, Mr Bell and Mr Lanhupuy be appointed as the House Committee.

Motion agreed to.

Mr ROBERTSON (Attorney-General)(by leave): Mr Speaker, I move that, pursuant to Standing Order 18, Mr D.W. Collins, Mr Dale, Mr Palmer, Mr Bell, and Mr Lanhupuy be appointed as the Publications Committee, the committee have power to sit during any adjournment of the Assembly, the committee have power to move from place to place and the committee be empowered to publish from day to day such papers and evidence as may be ordered by it, and a daily Hansard be published of such proceedings of the committee as take place in public.

Motion agreed to.

Mr ROBERTSON (Attorney-General)(by leave): Mr Speaker, I move that, pursuant to Standing Order 19, Mr Coulter, Mr Finch, Mr Hatton, Mr B. Collins and Mr Smith be appointed as a Standing Committee on Subordinate Legislation and Tabled Papers, and that the committee be empowered to publish from day to day such papers and evidence as may be ordered by it and a daily Hansard be published of such proceedings of the committee as take place in public.

Motion agreed to.

#### APPOINTMENT OF SESSIONAL COMMITTEES

Mr ROBERTSON (Attorney-General)(by leave): Mr Speaker, I move a motion for the appointment of a Sessional Committee on the Environment. I move that: 1. during the present session of the Assembly a committee to be known as the

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

Motion agreed to.

Mr ROBERTSON (Attorney-General)(by leave): Mr Speaker, I move a further motion in relation to a sessional committee. I move that: 1. during the present session of the Assembly, a committee to be known as the New Parliament House Committee, comprising Mr Speaker, Mr Perron, Mr Finch, Mr Leo and Mr Smith be appointed; 2. the committee be directed to prepare a brief upon which architectural drawings can be prepared for a new parliament house on the present site of the Legislative Assembly and adjacent roads and Crown land; 3. the committee arrange for the conducting of a competition to attract architectural proposals for a new parliament house and publicly exhibit entries received; 4. the committee report and make recommendations to the Assembly on these matters from time to time; 5. the committee have power to call for persons, papers and records, to sit in public or in private sessions notwithstanding any adjournment of the Assembly, to adjourn from place to place and to have leave to report from time to time its proceedings and the evidence taken and such interim recommendations as it may deem fit; 6. the committee be empowered to publish from day to day such papers and evidence as may be ordered by it and a daily Hansard be published of such proceedings as take place in public; 7. in considering the matters referred to it, the committee have power to consider the minutes of evidence and records of similar committees established in previous sessions of the Assembly; and 8. the foregoing provisions of this resolution, in so far as they are inconsistent with Standing Orders, have effect notwithstanding anything contained in Standing Orders.

Motion agreed to.

#### ADDRESS IN REPLY

Continued from page 9.

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, 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 this Assembly.

At the commencement of this Fourth Assembly, it is appropriate to review one of the most important aspects of government. Federal-Territory relations could only be described as poor to bad, despite a proclaimed desire for

consensus by the federal government. Regrettably, consensus seems to consist of agreement with federal view or else, despite a record of total lack of consultation with the Northern Territory government unless forced. Despite this, I must congratulate the federal government on moves to deregulate the financial system, restructure and restrain Australia's ailing manufacturing industry and to consider reductions in protectionism - gradually, but a timetable needs to be established.

However, the federal government has failed to deliver on many of its promises. For instance, with petrol, it has increased rather than lowered the price. In the case of the Territory, even more than Queensland, it seems determined to frustrate the efforts of Territorians to evolve a viable, local socio-economic unit.

The worst of its designs appears to be a move through the state-Territory relativities study to cut into the Territory's funding arrangements under the Memorandum of Understanding. We would not argue that the memorandum is immutable but it does specifically provide that any change must be by agreement - not unilaterally. Of course, in its decision to proceed with the review of a 6-state and Territory basis, the federal government overruled not only the Territory but all the states. So much for consensus.

There is a lesson in all this for the ACT, which is currently considering self-government, and that lesson is to go one step further than the Territory. We thought we were safe with a solemnly-concluded written agreement, signed by the Prime Minister of the day, but it appears all this counts for little when the chips are down. My advice then to the ACT Legislative Assembly is not to settle for anything less than legislation to cover its financial arrangements with the Commonwealth. Even then it will not be 100% safe.

The pity of it all is that, regrettably, this federal government has little appreciation of the potential that stands to be realised by the expenditure of reasonable funds on infrastructure in the Northern Territory. Everywhere else the infrastructure that we lack is taken for granted. If Territory funding is cut back before our economic and social development gathers reasonable impetus, then once again we stand the chance of drifting along at the mercy of the current as we did for so many years of direct Commonwealth administration.

Whilst our financial arrangements are modelled on those of the states, there are important differences. We are, after all, a territory, not a state, and as such a special responsibility of the Commonwealth which has many years of doing nothing to catch up on. As our economic and social base grows, our political evolution towards statehood must follow. But until the Territory is allowed the full prerequisites of statehood, it should not be lumped in with them. It is, and remains, a special case to be developed towards statehood.

For much the same reasons, the insensitive decisions to allow uranium mining at Roxby Downs, while forbidding new mines in the Territory, and the dishonouring of the railway promise have aroused the ire of Territorians who see our prospects of viability threatened. It is interesting that further evidence is mounting of the special consideration that the Territory should be afforded as a result of the operation here of the Aboriginal Land Rights Act. While the act has much to recommend it in terms of economic potential for the Aboriginal community, there is no doubt that it inhibits the economic development of the community at large.

The ability to veto development of any sort on Aboriginal land, and what the Aboriginal Land Inquiry Commissioner, Paul Seaman, of Western Australia describes as 'double dipping' in terms of royalties, merits special consideration

for the Territory. The commissioner is quoted as stating: 'My present impression is that, if legislation here follows the Northern Territory model, there would be an inhibition of exploration activity and possibly some adverse effect upon the Western Australian economy'. Developments in WA are interesting and will be followed with keen interest here. Obviously, the government of Western Australia, so heavily dependent on revenues from mining to maintain state services, will have a different perspective of federal government which can look to the whole Australian tax base for its revenue.

I will only stray outside my portfolios in one area: education. Let us face it, though, education is a major industry and so I do have some responsibility, however indirectly. We must use our geographical position to enhance educational opportunities for Territorians. I am hopeful that we are now in a positive track with the Tertiary Education Commission towards the establishment of a university facility in the Territory. Even so, it is probably still some years off. I am sure the minister will report as the situation develops in the months immediately ahead of us.

However, whatever form it takes, it will grow faster and offer a better and wider range of courses to Territorians if its enrolments can be augmented by streams of other qualified Australians and South-east Asians who cannot be found places in existing universities. The social and economic benefits to the Territory of a more diverse university facility are obvious. Indeed, in the field of secondary education, benefits can possibly be gained without detriment to present requirements and with no call on our resources. Many Asians are looking unsuccessfully to Australia at the moment for an education for their children. I think it may be possible to get overseas funding for the provision of private secondary boarding school facilities in the Territory when a favourable decision on the university becomes known. Obviously, a more than fair share of places in any such school would have to be available for young Territorians. This only makes sense because otherwise the overseas students would not be getting a real Australian education.

These thoughts are not an expression of government policy but at this stage simply indicate a readiness to think flexibly in developing our economic base. Education is an area of considerable potential for economic growth in this country and I do not see why we should not aspire to getting a share which will enhance the opportunities available for our own kids.

I will say a few words on the subject of training as it relates to the tourist industry. I will be talking about the tourist industry shortly and it obviously holds out the greatest hope for the Territory and, for that matter, Australia, for speedy job creation. It is a labour-intensive industry and for that reason I have always been anxious to promote it.

The ambitious plans that the Territory has for tourism will necessitate considerable training of the workforce, especially as in the tourist industry, perhaps more than any other and in the Territory more than anywhere else - perhaps more than north Queensland and Western Australia - the workforce is very mobile. I am concerned that, although many people and groups are not seeking to stick their fingers into the tourism pie from any and every angle, the matter of training which, a couple of years ago, I thought the Northern Territory was approaching in a reasonably coherent way as regards the tourist industry, now seems to be a matter of pushing and pulling between various seemingly rival groups which should be working closely in harmony. I have asked the Minister for Education to resolve the matter within the next few months and I hope that bureaucracy, academia and the industry can come to terms because, if they cannot, I consider the matter sufficiently important to simply make the decisions for them.

Turning my attention now to an entirely domestic matter, the government sees it as being timely to review the operations of the Public Service Act. The act has stood substantially unaltered since its passage before self-government. One of the major concerns with the act is that everything seems to take so long - rather like the Planning Act. Appeals against appointments and such like need to be expedited. There is too much humbug still talked of in regard to the Public Service. It is no longer, as it was in the 19th century, a small coterie drawn in from the ranks of the establishment and living by certain traditions. In Australia, it is very largely a pacesetter employer whose employees are responsible for the efficient expenditure of billions of dollars of taxpayers' money. At a time when the world is marching into the era of 'hi-tech', we must bend and blend to adapt to this.

The federal government obviously sees a requirement for a more flexible service and has introduced extensive changes recognising the need for greater freedom to hire and fire at the senior executive level. A thorough-going review of the act is proceeding in the Public Service Commissioner's Office and is yet to come to government for consideration but I do not see any threat to existing fundamental conditions. The review, I should make it clear, is not even considering subjects such as leave entitlements or air fares. It is concerned only with streamlining the act itself.

To give some idea of my thinking, though, I should say that, whilst I do think permanency inhibits the efficiency of the public service, it is there, and below the level of, say, E4, I do not see much point in changing it. A solidly permanent senior executive division, however, may well be sufficiently less effective and warrant consideration of more attractive incentives than permanency. The federal government obviously thinks so and seems to be of the view that senior executives should relate much more directly to the government of the day. All in all, the federal government moves could see much greater mobility amongst upper echelons in the public service and could lead indirectly to greater movement of executives between public service and private enterprise with corresponding advantages. The proposed changes will be discussed with staff representatives when they have been sufficiently developed.

We are, I think, close to consummation of special superannuation arrangements for police and NTEC employees and I hope they can be in operation by 1 July 1984. The government has no intention now of proceeding with a Territory public service superannuation scheme. It is unfortunate in some ways, especially as I think the unions knocked back a very good deal for their members. But rather than haggle any more, we will continue with the Commonwealth scheme and await with interest any moves towards a national superannuation scheme. I might say that, in my appreciation of the future of superannuation, the proposed NT scheme may well rank as the high-water mark in terms of benefits for contributors.

Police and emergency services continue to carry out their tasks effectively. In the Fire Service, agreement has been reached with the Victorian government for the secondment of a senior fire officer to act as Chief Fire Officer here for 2 years. I would like to express my appreciation to the Victorian government.

In the field of women's affairs, the Women's Advisory Council is up and running and the Women's Affairs Unit is beginning to function. The position of Assistant Commissioner for Equal Employment Opportunities in the Public Service Commissioner's office is proving difficult to fill.

Turning to industrial development and tourism, let me say that, except for maximising local growth and participation through and in new mining ventures, I see the role of the Department of Mines and Energy as exclusive in promoting

more mining and exploration activity in the Territory.

In the field of tourist promotion in Australia and overseas, the role of the Tourist Commission is paramount. In the area of tourism development, the Tourist Commission has a policy and executive role which, to some extent, it must share with the Territory Development Corporation which is engaged in assisting the rapid expansion of tourism infrastructure - and it needs to be rapid. In Alice Springs alone, after the completion of the new Sheraton, we will still be 1000 rooms short of the targeted projection in the 1969 Harris Kerr Forster Report. That is not to say that the intervening years have proven the HKF report to be all that it was cracked up to be in 1969. But, of course, tourism promotion effectively languished on a pitiful budget until 1978, so we have that catching up to do as well.

Good and all as tourism promotion efforts have been since then, we have no cause for complacency. In 1978, the Territory took the rest of this country by storm tourism-wise, with massive and professional promotions. And we have continued to do so, but the other states now have their acts together and are fighting back - especially our main domestic competitor, Queensland. Greater effort will be needed, not only by government but also by the industry, not only to maintain but to increase our share of the market. Especially in the Top End, operators must become more reliable, more attuned to the market and more aggressive in doing something themselves to market their product.

Reliability is a key factor. Last minute cancellation of tours, especially in the Wet, because only a few seats have been sold, cannot be tolerated. This gives the whole industry a bad name. Alternative tours when certain creek crossings are flooded must be laid on rather than a total cancellation. It is time for a much more professional approach to be adopted in some sectors of the industry if we are to succeed in making tourism the Territory's major industry.

Hampered as we are by federal control of our 2 major national parks and a complete absence of any substantial infrastructure in Kakadu even after all these years of talk about its scenic wonders by successive governments, the task of attracting the masses of overseas visitors we would like will not be an easy one if operators do not gain a high reputation for their product and their dependability. Industry consultants point out that the market orientation of many operators, not just here but elsewhere in Australia, is all wrong. They are offering the visitor what the operator thinks the visitor wants, not in fact what the visitor wants. There are examples here in the Territory of operators failing for precisely that reason - failing to adapt to a developing market - and I encourage all operators to survey their clients regularly with a view to improving and enhancing their businesses.

We have Yulara, now virtually an accomplished fact; the Alice Springs Golf Course development, including the new Sheraton with all the potential to make Alice a retirement centre like Palm Springs in the USA; and the Esplanade complex in Darwin well down the track, with a Sheraton hotel planned and hopefully to start this year. All this will take quite some marketing, but it is virtually impossible to sell the Territory in a big way overseas until the infrastructure is in place. The overseas airlines are difficult to interest but I am sure the very name 'Sheraton' appearing in Yulara, Alice Springs and Darwin has created enormous interest in the trade and is causing the Territory to be taken much more seriously.

Whilst on the subject of overseas airlines, and with great respect to Qantas and indeed acknowledging its generous support in promotional activities - I should not mention names but Ian Auchinachie, the Qantas Inbound Sales Manager, has been a tower of strength to us - I must say nevertheless that, in tourism

terms, our national carrier seems better at taking Australians out of their country than bringing overseas visitors in. Some questioning of the age-old wisdom that it is necessary to have a national flag carrier is long overdue. I think a study would establish that a national overseas airline could prove a drain rather than the reverse.

But accepting that my views are too extreme to be adopted and would be very difficult to implement, let me argue for a rationalisation of aviation in Australia in line with reality and practice overseas. Instead of looking at the USA, let us look at Canada - some would say a fairer comparison. Canada has 2 major airlines - Air Canada, the government airline, and CP Air, a private operator. Both airlines operate overseas and domestically within Canada. Some routes are shared and competitive, others are exclusive. Outside the country, both must compete in the market. CP Air comes to Australia; Air Canada does not. Both operate into the USA and, since deregulation, they seem to have built up something of a USA domestic network, competing in that hurly-burly environment.

The significant thing is that, if you want to fly to somewhere in Canada from overseas, and if your airport is serviced by one of these 2 airlines, you will be able to buy a throughfare to Regina, Saskatchewan, or Edmonton, Alberta, not one fare from Sydney to Vancouver and then another from Vancouver to Edmonton. Also, and perhaps more significantly, the same airlines can offer discount travel packages within Canada. Members are probably asking why we cannot do this in Australia. We cannot do it because our domestic and international civil aviation policies have been tailored to the situation and not to the real national requirements.

All members know what has happened in our skies since World War 2. TAA was established as a domestic operator in 1945. Qantas was taken over from private ownership by government in 1947. Ansett Airlines has evolved as the second major domestic airline from antecedents such as Guinea Airways and ANA. Our international CAP (ICAP) has developed as a struggle to maintain Qantas route entitlements and fare structures in the international marketplace. Our domestic CAP (DCAP) has evolved as a coercive exercise directed at the travelling public and potential competitors of TAA and Ansett and has become known as the 2-airline policy.

I even acknowledge that, at some stage in the 1950s or 1960s, it could even be seen as attractive but its rationale is the maintenance of a level of services to the whole of Australia. Even if the equipment the 2 domestics now operate did not militate against that desirable end, their own policies have discredited the 2-airline policy. They are pulling out of the feeder routes and turning them over to third level operators and attempting to hog the main trunk routes. They no longer maintain the pretence of serving remote areas. Check the list of ports serviced by their DC3s and Fokker Friendships in the 1950s and 1960s and you will see what I mean.

Here in the NT, we have the situation where the Ansett subsidiary, ANA, is required to operate profitably. And a very desirable end it is too but Ansett gets all the on-traffic income.

But I divert - we have what we have because of history. With the federal government owning TAA and Qantas, the situation can be changed to try to meet our real needs. The 2 government airlines should be amalgamated and Ansett offered an opportunity to operate overseas directly or in partnership with another airline. This would, I believe, lead to a better penetration of the overseas market through more competitive air fares which can be achieved by more rational use of expensive equipment. We would be able to wipe the ridiculous proviso that compartmentalises overseas and domestic operations at the moment.



We would be offering the traveller greater convenience in that there would be less need to change planes. I will be seeking to interest the federal government in seriously studying this proposal. Australia's future and thousands of jobs hang on the future of our tourism industry. At present with our airlines, we are just digging ourselves deeper in.

Our marketing strategy for the next few years is in the process of formulation by the commission and will be considered during budget discussions. While Queensland is a competitor in the domestic market, the Territory and Queensland are complementary overseas, and hopefully our natural rivalry can be overcome and more active joint promotions overseas will soon be a reality.

Katherine will continue to develop as a destination and expansion will continue there as the attractions of the region become more widely known and appreciated. The completion of the Stuart Highway in South Australia and the construction of the Jabiru-Pine Creek Road by 1986 will enhance the position of Katherine and also Tennant Creek. Tennant Creek is more of a worry to me. Katherine is very enthusiastic for tourism and the jobs it creates; Tennant Creek much less so. A real effort is necessary on the part of operators in Tennant Creek to improve the attractions of the region and their own standards. The energy and time spent bemoaning their plight should be applied more constructively. For one thing, the town's service clubs should be enlisted by the council in a coherent effort to get tourism off the ground in the district. Improving the airport will be pointless if there is nothing to attract the visitor. The planes will continue to fly over the top. It is important that the council put its weight and credibility behind the industry. The council must set the lead. Coercive ideas regarding visitors should be abandoned in favour of attracting them.

In Australia at the moment, if people think of a place to retire to, they think of Queensland. It is a habit that has developed for lack of any alternative. It is no good pretending either that it is a bad habit that is going to be easy to change or easy for the Territory to break in on. But, in a country and a western world with an ageing population, it is a market that must be considered. With, of course, a much larger population, the USA has many retirement centres in its more arid areas where the climate has some attractions. Palm Springs in California and Phoenix, Arizona, are only 2 such centres. Golf and other recreational activities such as bowls are what retired people are looking for. Pure fresh air, unpolluted by city smog, enhances their health.

I believe Alice Springs has the potential perhaps more than the Top End to attract the person considering a suitable place to retire to. The Alice now has good hospital and medical facilities. In the next few years, we will have to bend our efforts towards attracting older people to the Alice to settle. Careful planning will be necessary. Attitudes that have been conditioned for generations will have to be changed. It will not be easy but it can be done and will be done.

Still on Alice Springs, a week or 2 ago, I could not hire a rent-a-car. In the month of February, this is almost incredible. Storekeepers and business people assure me they have had busy months in January and February - not all the motels are full but the level of activity is building solidly into a year-round thing. My motel had many German and Japanese visitors. They liked our warm weather, contrasting it with the bitter cold of their home countries at this time of the year.

In the Top End, our green, or wet season, needs to be more fully exploited with flood-plains tours in airboats or hovercraft. Nothing could be more

exciting and attractive to the overseas visitor. But the big hole still exists in Kakadu - a serious lack of infrastructure. To give you an idea of how it would go with the right level of facilities, the South Alligator Motor Inn keeps expanding to meet increasing demand without active promotion in the south. The new Cooida Motel apparently is booked out for the season and even next year even though it has only just opened.

It was interesting that, in early December, Minister Cohen gave me a copy of the federal Cabinet decision on infrastructure for Kakadu, which our proposed seminar at South Alligator was convened to discuss and provide feedback from all interested parties. When I discussed the seminar and its timing with Mr Cohen at that time, he gave it his full blessing. I extended an invitation for him to be present.

Strangely, his colleague, Mr Holding, said at Cooida only a couple of weeks ago that the nature of the infrastructure in Kakadu would not be decided in backrooms in Canberra or Darwin, yet he was instrumental in torpedoing what was to have been a major effort at on-the-ground consultation with all the parties and actively supported by NLC and ANPSW. It is vital for the future of tourism in the Top End that this World-Heritage-listed park be catered for in a rational fashion without further unnecessary delay. It is the key to many, many jobs, not just in the region but also in Darwin where the viability of new hotels and our international airport are all at stake. We have lost hundreds of jobs in new uranium mines and we were promised they would be made up in tourism. When, I ask, is anything going to happen?

Behind major tourist developments there will be plenty of scope for coach operators, for air tours, for trail rides, for tennis and squash courts, for restaurants, laundries, fishermen, market gardeners and all the host of supportive industries. And the majority of visitors will not want, or be able, to afford to stay with the likes of Sheraton, so lower-budget motels and camping grounds will spring up to supply that sector of the market.

We must make a success of tourism because, frankly, there is no immediate alternative. Uranium is in limbo, and oil and gas will be good but are some years away from having a major impact. The railway hovers like a mirage and a free port is several years off at the least. Agriculture is fraught with difficulty. Horticulture holds much promise but will not be easy. Even the old reliable pastoral industry is under the BTEC cloud. So tourism it has to be, and Territorians must rally round. Friendly service must be the watch word.

The Territory Development Corporation will do all it can to promote other activities and endeavour to attract investment from outside the Territory. Our plans are ambitious but it is not a matter that can be open to question. We must succeed with these projects and give ourselves the successful track record that is so essential to ensuring future support of Territory growth by the domestic and international financial community.

Mr LANHUPUY (Arnhem): Mr Speaker, last December, the issue that impelled the Chief Minister to call an early election was the handing over of the title to Ayers Rock to its traditional Aboriginal owners. In the midst of this election fever and deliberately-fostered racial mistrust, the real issues were buried. A majority of voters in the Northern Territory were apparently taken in by the Chief Minister's energetic show of righteous indignation, and they subsequently gave him the majority he wanted. Voters in my electorate, however, were not fooled. They have consistently identified the Australian Labor Party as the political party which best represents their interests, and the results of last December's election confirm that this is still the case.

It seems to suit the CLP government and the media to propagate an image of Aborigines as blindly opposed to economic development, eager to appropriate the land belonging to honest, industrious white Territorians and, of course, politically ignorant and open to manipulation. The government has opposed every land rights claim, regardless of its legitimacy or merit.

Through its Department of Education, it has hampered the education of Aboriginal children - particularly those in bilingual schools - by a stubborn policy of non-replacement of Aboriginal assistant teachers who go to Batchelor for training. It closed down, on one day's notice in 1980, the only Aboriginal secondary education facility in Arnhem Land. It refused to assist the innovative Yipirinya School, which is probably the most energetic and ambitious self-help project ever undertaken by Aboriginal people in the Northern Territory.

As I have said, Mr Speaker, Aboriginal people are not fooled by the Chief Minister's anti-Canberra rhetoric. Despite their profound communications problems, their isolation and their generally low level of formal education, the people of my electorate are well aware of the Territory government's lack of regard for them. They attach great importance to the principles of self-determination and self-management, and they are far from blind to the need for economic development. Witness the recent opening of the Cooiinda tourist development by the Gagadju Association. Quite legitimately, of course, they wish to have a say in the nature of the pace of that development. They want to be consulted and they want to be represented.

In trying to provide that representation for the people of Arnhem, I will address myself to a number of issues which are of long-standing concern. These include: the poor state of public facilities in many communities; the staffing and funding problems of schools, health-centres and community councils; the abject failure of the legal system to accommodate itself to Aboriginal needs; the necessity for Aboriginal field officers and rangers to monitor and protect the environment; and the desperate need for meaningful employment opportunities in all communities.

Mr Speaker, I will not be ignoring the needs of my non-Aboriginal constituents. The many public servants, teachers, nurses, essential services personnel and others who work in the various communities - often under difficult conditions - rarely have the opportunity to have their voices heard on issues which are important to them. The residents of the mining town of Alyangula, on Groote Eylandt, live in what is probably the most remote town in Australia. I intend to make sure that their isolation does not prevent them from having their concerns expressed vigorously in this Assembly and elsewhere.

In conclusion, Mr Speaker, I should like to make it clear that I represent an electorate in which many people are dissatisfied with the service they have received from the Northern Territory government in recent years. They are treated to a constant flow of rhetoric about the wondrous development of the Northern Territory but, for the most part, they do not seem to share in the benefits.

It is worth noting, Mr Speaker, that the majority of my constituents were born in the Northern Territory and will live all their lives here, as will their children and grandchildren. They are not here to make a quick dollar and then head south again. Their interest in the Territory's development is not temporary or cursory but permanent and vital. When they receive money from any source, it is spent on goods and services here in the Territory, not salted away down south or overseas.

It is my firm intention to help them to articulate their dissatisfaction, and to demand a say and a share in the development of the Northern Territory.

Mr DONDAS (Health): Mr Speaker, I have much pleasure in rising today to support the motion by the Chief Minister. His Honour's address outlined the government's proposals for the life of this Assembly. I would like to touch on some of the government's plans in the fields of health, youth, sport, recreation and ethnic affairs.

Mr Speaker, in 1979 when the Northern Territory government assumed responsibility for the delivery of health services to Territorians, the annual budget of the Department of Health was \$55.3m. Five years later in 1983-84, it has almost doubled to \$102.6m. This figure includes \$7.58m of funding to a wide range of community-based organisations providing health-care services. During this period, the Department of Health has undergone extensive review. The result is a streamlined and rationalised health service, providing modern and efficient health care right across the Northern Territory.

During the life of this Assembly, Mr Speaker, the government is committed to a wide range of initiatives that will ensure the continuation of current programs and improvements in all facets of health-care delivery. As outlined by His Honour in his address, the government has approved the construction of a new 32-bed wing at Katherine Hospital, incorporating paediatric facilities, at a cost of \$3m in 1984-85. Planning is under way for a \$6.5m 70-bed children's hospital in Darwin. Construction will begin in 1985-86. New health centres will be opened at Berrimah, Palmerston and Ramingining, and proposals for a nursing home at Katherine are under consideration by the Commonwealth.

A 24-hour general practitioner service has been established at Royal Darwin Hospital. Standards of hospital care are constantly evaluated by the government, the hospital management boards, professional peer review groups and the Royal Darwin Hospital patient care committee. As honourable members may know, the 2 specialist hospitals in the Territory are nationally accredited, each for a second period of 3 years. They are also recognised as special teaching hospitals of the University of Sydney.

In the area of community health care, the government is constantly reviewing its services and facilities to ensure that community needs are met. The opening of the northern suburbs health centre and dental clinic at Casuarina Plaza last year was a significant step in rationalising health services in the northern suburbs of Darwin.

Mr Speaker, all pre-school and primary school pupils in the Northern Territory receive free dental screening and treatment. Honourable members will be aware of the introduction in 1984 of free treatment, in addition to present dental screening, for Northern Territory secondary school students. This is a first for Australia.

In the area of services for the aged, the government is committed to various initiatives, including further development of nursing home facilities in Darwin and Katherine, the establishment of senior citizens' centres in rural Darwin, Katherine and the northern suburbs of Darwin and the establishment of a home support group, providing a coordinating mechanism for existing services. From 1 March 1984, a subsidised taxi service will operate in Darwin for the benefit of handicapped people.

In the area of youth, sport, recreation and ethnic affairs, there have been significant advances and government programs that have benefited all Territorians. Territorians are renowned for their keen interest in a wide range of sporting activities.

During the life of this Assembly, we are committed to the establishment of an institute of sports medicine. The institute will be staffed by a range of professional officers including a general practitioner and a physiotherapist and will have access to other specialist resources. It will include a clinic for the treatment of sports injuries and will be housed on the ground floor of Sports House in Waratah Crescent, Fannie Bay. We are also committed to a \$1-for-\$1 subsidy for Territory directors of coaching. This subsidy will be provided up to the level of \$12 500 per year and is designed to enable Northern Territory sporting associations to have full-time directors of coaching.

There will also be a \$1-for-\$1 subsidy for administrative officers of Northern Territory sporting associations. This subsidy is designed to improve the capability of Northern Territory sporting associations to cope with the ever-increasing load of administration.

A policy on sport and recreation for the disabled has been developed to ensure that this special group is not overlooked in the development of general community sport and recreation facilities. The basis of the policy is that integration in the mainstream of sport and recreation is desirable whenever possible.

We are also committed to the completion of stage 3 of the Marrara complex, including parking areas, by July and the development of the Australian Football and Cricket Association facilities at Marrara sporting complex. This latter development includes 3 ovals, 2 of which will be used as homes of football clubs and the NT Football League headquarters. The third oval will be the headquarters of the Northern Territory Cricket Association. It will have a first-class turf wicket. This development will be a long-term project and will be undertaken in stages. The end result will be that the headquarters of the Northern Territory Football League will be housed in a modern facility eventually capable of holding up to 25 000 spectators. Detailed costing has not been completed but it is expected to be in the order of \$8.5m.

In Alice Springs, we are committed to the development of a new cycling velodrome at a cost of \$284 000 this financial year to be completed about July. There is also the proposal to build a stadium in Alice Springs. \$500 000 is allocated for this financial year as a tied grant-in-aid to the council and a 4:1 subsidy for the Alice Springs YMCA complex.

Further, there is the Northern Territory youth policy and the Northern Territory Advisory Committee on Youth Affairs. The youth policy has been developed following the adoption of the interim youth policy by Cabinet early last year and full consultation with the community over recent months. The policy is designed to focus attention on youth needs while, at the same time, retaining the flexibility to respond to changing needs.

A youth leisure centre will be established in the northern suburbs. It is expected that this centre will be privately managed and will offer a range of activities, including some electronic games, table tennis, eight-ball and quiet areas for reading, chess etc. The government is negotiating with various community groups which may be interested in the project.

The Northern Territory Advisory Committee on Youth Affairs will be established to facilitate consultation and cooperation between the government and those groups in the private sector which are involved with youth. One of its first tasks will be the organisation of programs leading up to International Youth Year. It has been a Territory government initiative to establish an IYY unit within the Youth, Sport and Recreation Division. The role of this unit will be to stimulate, coordinate and evaluate activities leading up to and

incorporating the themes of IYY. The Northern Territory Youth Advisory Council will also be concentrating during the course of this year on planning for IYY which is 1985.

The government established an Office of Ethnic Affairs. With the advice of this body, it actively promotes appreciation of the cultural diversity of Territorians, encourages cultural activities and provides special services, such as interpreter services, to meet the needs of ethnic groups.

In the area of drug and alcohol services, the Territory spends far more per capita than any other government in Australia. Currently, policies are being developed on tobacco products. Further broad policies on alcohol use are being developed, including policies on the appropriate balance of services between prevention, intervention and rehabilitation. An increasing proportion of drug and alcohol funds will be expended in preventative programs, rather than on treatment or rehabilitation. Alcohol education and other community-based activities will be emphasised.

The levels of skill of people working in this field will be upgraded through consultation and training programs. An Aboriginal alcohol worker training program will be instituted. Regional drug and alcohol groups will be strengthened and will play an increasingly important role in the delivery of community-based service, funded through grants-in-aid. Research and program evaluation will continue to receive high priority. Policy-oriented research will be emphasised as an essential component of policy development. The current imbalance in the distribution of drug and alcohol services - if they are concentrated in Darwin - will be progressively reduced. Preventative programs, treatment facilities, sobering-up shelters etc will be developed in response to regional needs. This is in addition to the significant achievements already made by the government in the drug and alcohol area.

In the area of Aboriginal health, there has been obvious improvement. Over the last few years, Aboriginal infant mortality rates have dropped and the incidence of new cases of leprosy has declined. Much of the credit for this success should be given to Aboriginal health workers. Mr Speaker, you would be aware of the highly successful Aboriginal health worker training program operated by the Department of Health. Thanks to this program, there are now about 300 Aboriginal health workers in the Territory. They operate from an extensive network of government and independent community health centres, with professional support from rural nursing sisters and district medical officers. In addition, the government provides an effective aerial medical service to isolated communities.

As an example of the contribution made by Aboriginal health workers, I would like to mention the Department of Health's trachoma control program. This program, which is coordinated by the Northern Territory Trachoma Control and Eye Health Committee, uses the skill and training of Aboriginal health workers in the diagnosis and treatment of trachoma sufferers. Two Territory Aborigines have also produced a booklet on the subject which is being used as a health guide throughout Australia and even overseas. Legislation to provide for the registration of allied health professionals, including Aboriginal health workers, is being prepared.

Other projects in the Department of Health's legislative program for this Assembly include amendment of the Poisons and Dangerous Drugs Act to effect minor changes. A total review of the following professional registration acts will be conducted to achieve uniformity of registration board procedures: Pharmacy Act, Optometrists Act, Medical Practitioners Registration Act and the Radiographers Act. A complete review and updating of the Radiation Safety

Control Act will be carried out. Environmental aspects of noise legislation are to be reviewed in conjunction with the Office of the Co-ordinator General. New legislation relating to non-coronial post-mortems and to the disposal of bodies will be considered. Consideration is being given to the making of regulations relating to tattooists.

Mr Speaker, the whole process of providing health services in the Territory must be subject to a continuous program of review and evaluation. It is vital that the services we provide are appropriate, cost-effective, responsive to community needs and of a high standard. Territorians have experienced many new federal health schemes over the past few years. The newest scheme, Medicare, came into operation on 1 February 1984 and Territorians may be assured of access to any of the benefits it offers and that the best possible deal was negotiated when the Territory signed the Commonwealth Medicare Agreement on 31 January.

I have pleasure, Mr Speaker, in expressing my gratitude to the Administrator for his attendance within this Chamber and his address to honourable members. I support the motion.

Mr EDE (Stuart): Mr Speaker, I have the honour to represent the seat of Stuart. Stuart nowadays lies north of Alice Springs, south and west of Tennant Creek and stretches from the Western Australian to the Queensland border. It comprises an area of approximately one-third of the Northern Territory. It is 1000 km from Alice Springs to one corner of the electorate, 1400 km across to another corner and a further 800 km back to Alice Springs. In the north, you are almost in the Top End; in the south, you are very much in the heart of the Centre. The main impression that anybody would get travelling around my electorate is that it is big.

Approximately three-quarters of my constituents are Aboriginal. Most of the rest are of European stock. They are scattered between some 120 communities, outstations, cattle stations and mining camps.

To say that it is a difficult electorate to service would not be an exaggeration. It will be necessary to spend days and weeks behind the wheel of a vehicle just to provide the most basic contact with the people. There are no television stations servicing Stuart. Radio reception is extremely patchy and no newspapers circulate freely through the area. Given all this, I am constantly amazed at just how well-informed my constituents are on the various issues that affect them and the rest of Australia. They are in fact so starved for information that they purchase news cassettes from their local store just so they can keep abreast of what has been going on in the rest of the country.

As other members who have represented rural areas will know, a large part of a rural member's time is spent acting as a go-between between the people and various government departments. The difficulty in doing this for Stuart is compounded by the fact that various parts of the area are serviced by departments based in different areas. For example, some departments service parts of the area from Tennant Creek, others service the same area from Alice Springs and yet others will service parts of the area from Katherine. When I have completed the bureaucratic shuffle between those 3 centres, I will no doubt be taking cases to the departments' headquarters in Darwin or Canberra. Still, if it is difficult for me, how much more difficult has it been for my constituents?

Mr Speaker, I believe my electorate, without fear of contradiction, could be described as the most poverty stricken in Australia. A recent international survey came up with the conclusion that Australia was the third most desirable country in the world in which to live. This was compiled on the basis of various

social statistics. My constituents would, along with the rest of us, rank Australia far higher than third. However, this country's statistics are significant compared with what actually exists in the electorate of Stuart. Australia, I am told, averages 489 telephones per 1000 people. This should give Stuart some 2400 phones. In the whole of Stuart we have in fact only 10 automatic telephones. According to statistics, we should have numerous doctors dentists, social workers etc. We have one doctor, a valiant worker, living in the area, no dentists and the large majority of our other services are provided, where they are provided, by people who live in centres such as Alice Springs, Tennant Creek and Katherine.

In saying this, I must pay tribute to those people who are delivering services from within the area: the schoolteachers, community advisers, police, health workers etc who, in the main, are striving to do the best job they know how in an area where cross-cultural relationships are very important. Many of them were sent out to these areas young and inexperienced, without having had the opportunity of study in the type of problems they would experience. They have had to try and work out for themselves a method of operating which works for them. I find it very difficult to blame those who fail. I find it very easy to blame the system which would throw people into the deep end in this manner.

In spite of their valiant efforts, we must look at the facts as they exist in Stuart today. The people in the area suffer one of the highest morbidity rates in the country. The death and accident rates on our roads are amongst the very highest. Large numbers do not even have a safe water supply. Most do not have adequate housing. In fact, many do not even have security of tenure to the place where they lay their head. They can at any time have their homes destroyed and be moved around the country like a mob of cattle. These people are not even able to apply for water, shelter etc.

Our unemployment statistics go as high as 100% in some communities and would average around 60% to 70%. The pastoral industry employs as many as it can; the rest are in service industries. The majority of skilled workers are, however, still brought in by contractors from outside areas. To an extent, this is because of our low skills level but, in the main, it is because the contract system is such that contractors are unwilling to take the risk of relying on local labour and find that there is more certainty in bringing in the labour from Alice Springs, Tennant Creek or wherever.

There are large gaps in the coverage by primary schools. Communities of up to 200 people are left entirely without education. There are no high schools in the area and children have to be moved away from their parents to schools in town, Yirara or the like. Unfortunately, while the parents are happy for their children to receive a degree of formal education, they become very worried when their children come back unable to observe the basics of tribal ritual and good manners.

We have no hospitals which means that, with some 85% of births now occurring in hospitals, large numbers of mothers are repatriated from their own areas to Alice Springs, Tennant Creek or Katherine, there to give birth to their children. While this may have brought down the infant mortality rate somewhat, it creates enormous problems within the family as to who looks after the elder children and it prevents bonding ceremonies so the babies' future land ownership rights are often clouded.

To sum up the bad points, we have completely inadequate environmental health, our service delivery, in many areas, is grossly lacking and the control by the community over delivery of those services is in many cases non-existent.



What then is the good news? The good news for the people is that more than half now have land rights or are in the process of gaining control over some of their ancestral lands. This has given the people in those areas a new sense of purpose and a degree of self-assurance which is often sadly lacking amongst those people who are simply squatters in their own country.

We have many good leaders who are working to try and overcome problems and to explain to the government and anyone else who will listen the nature of the problems and how we can all work together to overcome them. We have community councils which strive mightily under the dead bureaucratic weight of departmental instructions to attempt to provide to their communities services in the manner that these people desire. I have mentioned those services personnel who have come to Stuart from another place to attempt to provide services in that area. I also pay tribute to those people who were born in the area and who are now undergoing training to take up positions such as health workers, police aides, teachers etc. In them lies the great hope for our future.

Mr Speaker, there are areas in my electorate where you would be forgiven for believing that the people are preoccupied with the problems of race relations to the exclusion of all else. While we do have our racists, our paternalists and rebels, we also have a large majority of people who acknowledge the fact that we are 2 groups with vastly different sets of values, who must somehow find a way to live together. This is an area which has seen some of the most horrendous racial clashes that Australia has experienced in the last 60 years. I have found, however, that the vast majority of people still acknowledge that their future is inextricably bound together and that solutions have to be found to the problems of different racial and socio-economic groups living together if a harmonious future relationship is to be established.

I believe that most people in Stuart acknowledge the historical fact that nowhere in the world have 2 vastly disparate socio-economic groups been able to coexist over a long period without friction and without a tendency for increasing force to be applied by the haves against the have-nots. You have only to look around the world today to see that, where you have a small group of haves and a large group of have-nots, there are basically only 2 alternatives. The haves can use increasing force to hold on to what they have or they can work together with the have-nots to lift their economic status to a degree where they no longer perceive a major economic difference between themselves and the rest of the community.

While there will always remain individual differences, differences of a social nature and a difference in aspirations between various cultural groups, this in itself need not give rise to racial tension. It has been my experience that racial tension exists primarily where there is also an economic gap and is built upon an atmosphere of fear, compounded by ignorance. If the economic gap can be lessened and ignorance removed, there is nothing then for one group to fear from the other and the 2 can coexist in harmony.

In some parts of my electorate, people are approaching a crossroad where they will need to decide the type of relationship and the type of future they wish for their children. The imbalance between the 2 groups is, of course, far too great to be addressed by the people of Stuart alone. It is not simply a matter of those who have handing over all they have to the have-nots and saying: 'Now we are equal, everything will be okay'. Those people which I have named as haves are haves only in comparison to those who have not. They themselves are battlers who are struggling to make a living, often achieving a standard which in itself is below that of the general Australian norm. In any other area, many of them would themselves be classified as have-nots and the government would be implementing social programs to assist them. '

It will therefore be necessary, for some considerable time to come, for other parts of the Territory, and indeed other parts of Australia, to assist the people of Stuart to lift themselves up to a standard of living which more closely matches the Australian norm. There will no doubt be those who cry shock and horror at this statement. They will say: 'Why should we be subsidising the people of Stuart?' It would, of course, be the height of hypocrisy for any person in the Territory to say this about those less fortunate than himself. It is a simple matter of mathematical calculation to work out that the average person in the Territory is subsidised to the tune of about \$6000 to \$7000 per annum by the federal government. I am not decrying this - it is essential if we are to build up within the Territory a new state which can take its place with pride alongside the others throughout our nation. What I am saying is that those arguments which, when applied to the Territory as a whole, make it necessary and indeed just that we receive substantial subsidies, apply equally, if not more so, to the people of Stuart.

I am not even saying that gross per capita expenditure will in each year necessarily be equal between the urban and rural areas. There are highly expensive items to be constructed in the cities to provide facilities and infrastructure to rural areas forming a base from which further development can take place. I am, however, extremely impatient with those who have decided that the current level is a just one. There would be very few people living in the towns who would be prepared to exist with the low level of services provided on outstations and camps around Stuart. And yet many people decry the expenditure of funds providing services to small population groups in rural areas. These same people would probably be the first to scream bloody murder if those same people were to leave their home areas and camp around the major centres of population on anything like a long-term basis.

Mr Speaker, the members of the government opposite are constantly reminding us that the justification for increased funding in the Memorandum of Understanding is the principle that people in the Northern Territory should enjoy services of the same standard as those enjoyed by people in other states. Mr Speaker, through you, I am inviting the members of the government to take into account the level of services provided in Stuart when next they make their submission. I am certain that Blind Freddy will agree that the quality of services available to the people of Stuart is grossly and criminally deficient when compared with anything that exists in Victoria or New South Wales.

I have described the electorate of Stuart, its people, its problems and its financial needs. Its needs, however, are more than financial. Also required are policies by the government which will allow the people of Stuart themselves to develop their area to an appropriate level. I often hear members of the government saying that they believe in self-management and they support Aboriginal culture. Mr Speaker, I am afraid that, in the past, these have been empty words. They should visit communities and talk to the members of the councils and hear the high level of frustration which exists amongst those people who are trying their damndest to develop their own area. I sometimes feel extremely discouraged.

It would appear that we are building up large bureaucracies whose sole aim is to govern rural areas by remote control. They continuously tell the people: 'It is your own decision. You have to make it and you have to wear it'. However, whenever the decision that the people make does not fit in with some particular policy guideline, the people are criticised and threatened with the possibility of reduced funding or even legal action.

In some communities, we are losing some of our best leaders. They have not been able to live with the frustration of trying on the one hand to develop

services with the priorities and methods that their own people request of them, while at the same time attempting to comply with ridiculous guidelines imposed by this government. How can the government say that it recognises Aboriginal culture and supports self-management when it does not allow councils to provide services in a culturally relevant manner or to manage their own affairs within anything more than the most straitjacketed guidelines?

In the bush, we are constantly hearing words like 'development' and people are being told that they will be consulted about this development. I ask the question: who owns this development? If the people own it, then they must have control of it; they must be the ones to allocate the priorities, decide on the speed at which it will take place and the means of achieving it. If the government owns this development, it would be better off if it comes out and says so and tells the people: 'This is our development. We want to do this particular project for our own ends and you can either take it or leave it'. Let us cut out this hypocrisy whereby we continually tell people that their wishes are being taken into account when the decision has already been made at a far higher level. Stop the hypocrisy. The people of Stuart are not fools. They want genuine consultation and involvement in those areas of development which the government maintains are theirs and for them. Through the process of consultation and control of the type and nature of development in their area, they can express their cultural specifications for service delivery. If people identify with a particular service that they have decided upon and fought for, they will ensure its success. If something is foisted upon them by a distant government for its own ends, they will feel no identification with it and will simply vote with their feet when it comes up against a problem. The people of Stuart have a rather ironic chuckle whenever they hear the Chief Minister blame Canberra for lack of consultation.

Mr Speaker, I turn now to the law and order situation in Stuart. No one is satisfied with the present overall situation. To say that there are problems is to put it mildly. My people face some of the highest imprisonment rates in the world. To what end, and at what cost, I sometimes ask myself. The financial cost is simple. It costs more for a prisoner to be looked after in the Alice Springs jail than at one of the better class motels in the town. The social cost is, however, far, far higher. Families are left to their own devices, often triggering further problems which will lead to the imprisonment of the same person, or others, later on.

I am a very strong believer in law and order. I believe that the weak must be protected and that good laws, administered in a culturally relevant way through the police and the courts, are as essential in this day and age as in any other. I believe, however, that prison as a deterrent is only effective when it is used to punish deviant behaviour. If the behaviour becomes so widespread that it becomes the norm, if prison becomes the norm, it no longer is a satisfactory deterrent. It must be the social stigma that attaches to jail which makes it a deterrent.

How then do we both enforce the law and ensure that the imprisonment rate remains acceptably low? In this, I applaud the efforts being made in some communities along the lines of watchmen, police aides and police who cooperate with these 2 levels and with the council to ensure that the community works out within itself as many of the minor problems that arise as is possible. I believe that this movement needs to be fostered and extended much further throughout the Northern Territory. I also look forward to the day when it will be possible for us to establish a system of community courts which will be able to give community work orders to members of their own community for a wide range of offences.

Mr Speaker, this speech would be incomplete if I did not address myself to

some of the practicalities of the economic situation in Stuart. We have a pastoral industry which, while currently still suffering the effects of the brucellosis and TB eradication program, is probably the best managed in the Northern Territory. It has, however, roughly reached its limits as an employment provider. We have the possibility of mining development but this by its very nature is uncertain. There may in the future be further development in the tourist industry but, for the time being, much of this will concentrate on people moving through the area fairly rapidly.

The major industry in the area is the delivery of services. It is this industry which also offers the greatest scope for further expansion. For many reasons, of which economics is only one, it is necessary that the delivery of services be concentrated more within the community and within the area rather than being provided on a remote control basis from Alice Springs, Tennant Creek etc. These industries have the capacity to generate employment and to increase the people's skills level to the extent where more people can earn themselves a satisfactory income. At the moment the major centres like Alice Springs and Tennant Creek act as a vortex in which all the income of the people of Stuart very quickly finds itself. It is essential for the development of Stuart that this money is turned over many more times within the area before it finds its way back to these centres.

In conclusion, Mr Speaker, let me say that I am hopeful that I can work with the members of the current government, particularly those ministers who are very closely associated with the provision of services in my electorate. I hope that political considerations will not rule out a cooperative approach to finding and solving the problems in my electorate.

Mr MANZIE (Community Development): Mr Deputy Speaker, in speaking to the Address in Reply, I would like to take the opportunity to outline some of the general directions proposed in the immediate future in the area of community development and to explain to honourable members some of my own opinions in this regard. But, firstly, I should place on record my grateful thanks for the chance to be able to do this. The electorate of Sanderson has placed its trust in me, both to represent its residents and to play an effective role in an effective Territory government. I intend to work hard so that this trust will not prove to be misplaced.

The opportunity presented to me is not unique but it is rare indeed that a member of any parliament finds himself in the position of making his maiden speech as a minister of government. Research has not been exhaustive, but 2 previous examples have been uncovered. One was Australia's first Prime Minister, Edmund Barton. Another was the illustrious R.G. Menzies, who made his maiden speech in the federal parliament as Attorney-General. With all humility, I have to say that I shrink from such comparisons. They are mighty footsteps to follow.

Mr Deputy Speaker, I am grateful indeed to be associated with the portfolio of community development. Much of my previous working experience has been in this area, and I hope I am able to bring to my new job many ideas and opinions formed as a result of that experience. The Chief Minister has said previously that community development would receive fresh impetus from this government. Accordingly, it has been allocated as a single portfolio to one minister.

I have taken the chair as the responsible minister with the Chief Minister's message very much in mind and I hope I am able to provide that impetus. In general terms, it is obvious that the Department of Community Development must be somewhat dynamic. Policies need to be changed constantly to meet the needs of the community and, in many cases, to anticipate those needs. This department

is all about people - all the people of the Northern Territory, whether in urban or remote areas.

In the area of community government, the Territory government is keen to push ahead with a number of initiatives and programs designed to give people a greater involvement in their own affairs. As some honourable members would know, 3 Aboriginal communities have opted for conversion from incorporated council status to community government - Lajamanu in 1980, Angurugu in 1982 and Milikapiti last year. We see considerable advantages for Aboriginal communities taking this course, as councils can expand their functions into typical local government areas and become part of the Australian local government system. Reconstitution into the Local Government Act can increase the opportunities for genuine self-management by remote Aboriginal communities.

At least 3 more communities are presently hoping to have community government established for their areas in the near future, but the government's policy is to ensure full consultation and explanation before that can happen. It must be absolutely clear that the new councils are in complete accord with the wishes of the people.

It is important that members and staff of community councils be capable of sound administration of responsibilities and, to this end, the government has initiated a training program to improve the knowledge, skills and managerial capacity of Aboriginal people to enable them to play an increasing role in the management of their own affairs. The Department of Education is responsible for the main implementation of this training program and it is due to go into operation under the advisory umbrella of the Department of Community Development about now.

As well, 2 finance officers have been touring Aboriginal communities to assist with accounting and financial problems. Support for Aboriginal communities is also being provided through the town management and public utilities program which provides funds to Aboriginal councils to allow them to operate their essential services and municipal functions. Funds totalling \$20.7m have been provided for this in the current financial year, and this has been topped up by an additional \$2.7m for recently-identified targets which will allow acceleration of the provision of essential services.

Mr Deputy Speaker, I have touched only on some of the policies, programs and initiatives concerning assistance to Aboriginal communities. There is a continuing story which demonstrates this government's attitude in this matter, and it is a story that is largely not told in the general community. Great strides have been made in the provision of services and assistance to Aboriginal communities in recent years and in the establishment of genuine self-management. It is the firm policy of this government to continue that drive so that Aboriginal people can increasingly manage their own affairs, and manage them well.

As an outside observer of parliamentary affairs until recently, I have to say that the Territory government does not seem to get the credit it deserves in its genuine desire for these objectives and that the Commonwealth appears sometimes to be over-credited for the role that it plays. In this and other areas, the Territory is in fact leading the way while the rest of Australia follows. Such is the case in community welfare, particularly in relation to juveniles.

The new Community Welfare and Juvenile Justice Acts passed all stages of debate in this place in October last year. This was the culmination of a

comprehensive review of Northern Territory welfare legislation, and the new acts reflect an innovative approach to legislation in this area.

I remind honourable members that the predominant feature is the total separation in law of those provisions designed to protect the welfare of children from those relating to the treatment of juveniles charged with offences against the law. The acts replace the outdated Social Welfare and Child Welfare Acts and, in many respects, the Territory is leading the world in this complex area. Such innovation brings inevitable criticism and possible teething problems, but I am confident the Territory will emerge with legislation which provides for humane treatment of difficult problems with real sensitivity.

In local government, this year emphasis will be placed on a more structured approach to communities through consultation and introduction of ways to manage their own affairs. The Rural Advisory Council was set up last year to investigate the feasibility of various options for local government in the outer Darwin area. The committee will make its final report on the subject shortly.

In the area of correctional services, the government is placing great emphasis on the need to expand sentencing options to take the strain off our institutions. In general, the ratio of offenders under the supervision of probation or parole authorities over prisoners being held in institutions is about 2 to 1. We would hope we can improve that ratio.

In arts and cultural affairs, the major interest this year will be the opening of the Araluen Cultural Complex in Alice Springs. This magnificent complex will bring to central Australia the very best in facilities for the arts, and it will play a key role in the government's tourism ambitions for the region.

The State Reference Library is undergoing considerable expansion as it moves towards amalgamation with the university library and its eventual establishment at Palmerston. A permanent archives building will also be located at Palmerston, and negotiations for this are at an advanced stage. A principal archivist started work in the Territory this month, and the consolidation of important archives will ensure vital records are preserved for posterity.

Mr Deputy Speaker, on this occasion I have attempted only to brush across some of the areas in which development is occurring at a rapid rate and which may be of interest to honourable members. It is my intention to keep the Assembly and public fully informed of events and happenings in the community development portfolio and, in this regard, I will welcome inquiries from all honourable members. I regard the challenge before me as exciting and stimulating. In a rapidly growing and developing area such as the Northern Territory, there is always a danger that social development may be left behind. I will make it my role to ensure that this does not happen and I will be devoting my time and energies towards this end.

Mr VALE (Braitling): Mr Speaker, I also wish to speak to the Address in Reply this afternoon. Before I raise a number of issues pertaining to central Australia, I offer the honourable member for Stuart the advice that, if he wishes to get cash flowing into the economy of that electorate, he use his good offices and any pressure possible to get his constituents to let projects such as the Granites goldfields and others go ahead. If projects such as that were not delayed for many years, it would result both in employment and cash flows into those communities ...

Mr Bell: What about a few other examples?

Mr VALE: In the honourable member for MacDonnell's electorate, Palm Valley and Mereenie ...

Mr Bell: They are happening, aren't they?

Mr VALE: ... have been dragging on for years.

Mr Speaker, in speaking to the Address in Reply, I wish to raise a number of issues which are, I believe, important to the many residents of central Australia. The first issue is that of roads. While central Australia has in recent years experienced a massive road building program, both in Alice Springs and in the bush area, much work is still to be done. In the bush area, I am hopeful that funds will continue to be made available for sealing work on both the Plenty and Tanami Highways. Work must also continue on construction of the Bunday Highway east of Mud Tank on the Plenty Highway.

Mr Speaker, I have previously spoken in this Assembly of the need to develop a ring road system from Ayers Rock across Lake Amadeus through Kings Canyon on to Kings Creek, then to the meteorite craters and into Alice Springs via the Stuart Highway. I believe that the salt Lake Amadeus will in itself become a major tourist attraction and provide another tourist spot in the Ayers Rock region. Mr Speaker, I am pleased to note that, acting on your advice, departmental officers from Transport and Works have now done some survey work on a possible road between Ayers Rock and Kings Canyon via Lake Amadeus. Without wishing to pre-empt any naming of such a road, I am hopeful that the name of Giles will be considered carefully in that context.

In respect to the roads within the town area of Alice Springs, one area of concern to the residents is the bitumen bleeding which occurs during the hotter days in the summer months. Damage to vehicle duco is at least one of the reasons for concern. I believe steps should be taken to determine the reason for the bleeding and what action, if any, can be taken to overcome it.

The largest single road construction contract ever undertaken in Alice Springs is presently under way with the reconstruction and realignment of the Stuart Highway from north of Smith Street through to Telegraph Terrace near the jail. The completion of this road work will see Alice Springs' first traffic lights and hopefully will result in a much smoother flow of traffic through the town area.

I must congratulate officers of the Department of Transport and Works and others who participated in the recent demonstration at Blatherskite Park. This demonstration showed how road trains would be able to turn and manoeuvre once this section of the Stuart Highway is reconstructed. One area that will require attention is where interstate haulers continue to park alongside this road edge creating, in some cases, severe traffic hazards.

Mr Speaker, the recently-completed east side connector road will also be of great benefit to motorists in Alice Springs but I believe that the Stott Terrace and Todd Street intersection will be the next place requiring traffic lights in Alice Springs. As a result of the connector road construction, the volume of traffic crossing this road will increase dramatically.

I believe the most important road for Territorians, particularly in central Australia, is the South Australian section of the Stuart Highway. By May of this year, another 200 km of this will be sealed and opened to traffic. By the end of next year, only 214 km of this highway will then remain unsealed between Darwin and Adelaide, and this work will be completed by December 1986.

Mr Bell: By a Labor government.

Mr VALE: But started by the Tonkin Liberal government.

Mr Speaker, Territorians will be delighted when this last national highway, funded under the bicentennial program and linking 2 states, is completed. The importance of this road, particularly to the tourist industry, cannot be over-estimated. Its completion will provide a tremendous boost to tourism. As well, many residents of the Northern Territory will finally be able to motor out of the Territory on holidays without the possibility of wrecking their cars in the process.

Mr Speaker, climatically, Alice Springs is the sporting headquarters of the Territory, if not Australia. The vast amount of money spent in central Australia in recent years on the upgrading of sporting facilities means that Alice Springs can now organise and host many national competitions for various sporting events from baseball, swimming, soccer, Australian Rules football, to car and motorcycle racing, gliding and, with the completion later this year of a \$280 000 velodrome in Alice Springs, cycling. Despite the amount of money that the government funds into these facilities, the weather and the enthusiasm of the sportsmen and women, it is the dedication of those many organisers with the various clubs and associations who devote so much time and effort day by day and week by week in organising and supervising the many sporting events in Alice Springs that is of paramount importance. It is these men and women who are responsible for the extremely high level of sporting achievements in central Australia.

Despite the fact that the government spends a lion's share of its annual budget on housing, both through direct building and through funding Australia's most attractive home loans scheme, housing is still creating some problems in Alice Springs, particularly in the rental area. I believe that we should look at some scheme or method of advising interstate people who are searching for work that they should first locate accommodation before coming to the Territory. That point aside, the Territory still has the shortest waiting time in Australia for housing accommodation and also the highest home ownership rate.

Mr Speaker, another area of concern for Alice Springs people is the lack of a resident eye specialist at the hospital. The need to locate, hire and hold such a specialist, I believe, should be a top priority of the Department of Health. In addition, the present eye clinic in Alice Springs will require some extensive upgrading.

The Alice Springs airport, one of the federal government's many false election promises, continues to have major problems with overcrowding. Interstate and international visitors really must wonder what they have let themselves in for when they arrive in central Australia. The upgrading of this facility is clearly a national responsibility and every possible pressure must be maintained on the federal government to honour its previous undertakings.

The Conservation Commission in Alice Springs only recently finished planting 1000 trees along the rail lines through the township of Alice Springs. Together with 600 trees planted around the government and commission flats and the nursing accommodation in Bloomfield Street, these trees are part of the Railtown Beautification Program. The commission is being assisted by Australian National Railways and various government departments. Whilst this railway beautification and tree planting scheme has been under way in Alice Springs for at least 12 months, I now note that tree planting, like just about everything else, has undergone a name change and is called 'Greening Australia'.



Nonetheless, this tree planting and other beautification work, particularly in the Gap area, will dramatically enhance the entrance to Alice Springs when these trees have gained a little height.

Mr Speaker, there is some worry in certain areas of Alice Springs concerning the Todd River flooding. Several years ago I suggested to the Chief Minister that consideration should be given to allowing gravel companies to remove several feet of sand from the bed of the Todd River under Conservation Commission supervision. The commission opposed the proposal. However, I believe that that idea and others should be examined pending a final decision on the proposed Todd River dam.

During the last Address in Reply speech I made in this Assembly in August 1980, I said that I hoped that, by the next election, both Palm Valley natural gas and Mereenie crude oil would be on stream. Whilst the Palm Valley gas is on stream, Mereenie crude oil is not. But I am ever the optimist: this valuable oil field should also be pumping within a few months and earning additional revenue for the Northern Territory government.

In recent weeks, residents of Alice Springs, Tennant Creek and Katherine were able to view 2 of the 3 one-day Benson and Hedges cricket series finals. Whilst the battle with the ABC was long and drawn out and commenced last September or October, I would like to take this opportunity to thank the ABC for televising this cricket. I also thank Mr Lynton Taylor, Channel 9 and PBL Marketing for making this series available to the ABC at no charge for televising into areas not serviced by commercial TV. I might say that this is not the first time that Mr Taylor and his organisation have gone out of their way to provide, at no charge, television coverage of national sporting events. This generosity is really appreciated by residents in outback Australia.

Whilst on the subject of flooding, there was some concern in central Australia several weeks ago when what was proudly regarded as our 'all weather' rail line was washed out near Marla Bore in South Australia. Given the volume and the velocity of the flood in the Marla Bore area, the question should be asked: just what is 'all weather'? I would like to pay tribute to those many rail workers and others who worked around the clock to repair the flood damage. I have been advised that the railways are now investigating the possibility of constructing more drainage in this area to prevent a recurrence of this problem.

Mr Speaker, my final point is that I believe a prison farm is still needed in Alice Springs. In fact, for want of a better name, I believe a 'junior prison farm' is also needed for young offenders so that they can be bushed, exercised and educated well out of the town area. The adult farm is, I believe, a necessary extension of other action taken in relation to the 2 km law.

Mr Speaker, I support the Address in Reply to His Honour's speech.

Mrs PADGHAM-PURICH (Housing): Mr Speaker, in rising to speak in this debate this afternoon, I see many new faces around me representing many new electorates. I see some older faces from previous electorates, whose boundaries have been changed to new electorates. The number of government members in the Assembly today compared with the number of members representing the opposition shows how this government's policies and initiatives fit in with what about 65% of the Northern Territory population really wants.

I would like to thank all the people in the Koolpinyah electorate who showed support for me in the recent election, and also support for my party.

It is with some regret, but not total regret, that I see that I am the only

woman in the Legislative Assembly today. I do not consider being a woman in politics important or unimportant. I consider being a woman in politics just a personal characteristic. I would like to think that I was elected because I was considered by about 64% of the electorate to be the most fitting person to represent them and not because I am a woman. My electorate is comprised of about 50% men and 50% women. I would like to think that I am considered as just a person.

Mr Speaker, in considering the state of policies and objectives read by His Honour the Administrator in his address to the Assembly this morning, I would like to say at the outset that most but not all of these proposed initiatives bring to the fore the importance of the Housing Commission and the Conservation Commission. Both of these commissions are viable, energetic, innovative, hard working and responsive to their charters in relation to Territorians and the Northern Territory.

Before I go on, I would like to take issue with what one honourable member said and with what one honourable member interjected in relation to the housing policy in the Northern Territory. The honourable member for Braitling commented adversely that it was necessary to wait for accommodation provided by the Housing Commission in the Northern Territory. I would like to say now that the average waiting time for accommodation in the Northern Territory is from 12 to 18 months. Nowhere else in Australia can this be bettered. In many cases, the waiting time for accommodation is a lot less than this. The waiting time in Alice Springs for accommodation is comparable with the waiting time in Darwin.

The honourable member for Stuart, in commenting on the long waiting time for accommodation in the Northern Territory, said that he would like to see the waiting time shortened. We would all like to see it shortened, Mr Speaker. With the continuing efforts of the Housing Commission, I expect that the waiting time for accommodation throughout the Territory will be reduced in the near future. One of the reasons for the current waiting time for accommodation in the Territory is that it takes so long to obtain accommodation in the states. People get tired of waiting for accommodation in the states and come to the Territory because they know they will get a pretty good deal here.

The honourable member for Stuart said that the Northern Territory government's policies are not responsive to the needs of Territorians. I would like to take issue with him on one point. He said that mining, by its very nature, is uncertain. It is uncertain while we have a federal Labor government in power.

Before I continue my remarks, I would like to declare an interest. My husband works for Pancontinental Mining Company in the Northern Territory. Pancontinental Mining Company, by its nature, was not an uncertain operation. Pancontinental Mining Company spent something like \$50m in development of a known ore body in the Northern Territory. That ore body contains something like 5000 million tonnes of uranium ore and about 116 000 t of gold ore. It came within weeks of starting its project. Tenders had been called to build a bridge over Magela Creek. The federal Labor Party gained government last March and that was the end of the project. Instead of Pancontinental and Koongarra being allowed to mine uranium, a mine in South Australia, Roxby Downs, was given the go ahead. I do not know why uranium mining is okay in South Australia and, for some reason, the uranium that comes out of the ground in the Northern Territory cannot be considered. Roxby Downs will take about 10 years to prove up and to bring into operation. Mining by its very nature is only uncertain when there is a federal Labor government.

In relation to my portfolios, I am very proud to be representing the Conservation Commission and the Housing Commission. I know many officers in these commissions from my years in the Northern Territory and I have come to know of the work they do, how they do it and how it is received by Territorians. Both commissions have an innovative, energetic and hard-working approach to what they are doing for the development of the Northern Territory.

The Housing Commission in particular is responding to the rapid Territory population growth by providing a level of housing which is far and away above any level of housing provided in any state in the Commonwealth. It supplies home loans to home purchasers in the Northern Territory which encourages people on low incomes particularly to take out loans at favourable rates of interest and to put their roots down in the Territory and live here.

In the 1983-84 budget, the housing commitment was about \$153m which is an increase on last year. Again, nowhere else in Australia has there been such an increase in the Housing Commission commitment to build houses for people. The Housing Commission has about 40% of the building commencements in the Territory. This is in the private housing field. In the states, only about 6% to 12% of private housing commencements belong to the equivalent bodies of our Housing Commission. This points to the favourable way our Housing Commission operates in the Northern Territory.

In the 1983-84 financial year, \$9.6m was spent on Aboriginal housing. Of this, \$5.3m was spent on Aboriginal communities. I think the honourable member for Stuart said there was a lack of consultation. I would like to direct his attention to the places where this \$5.3m has been spent in Aboriginal communities to provide the type of housing that the Aboriginal people in those communities want. I can speak mainly from my experience with the Tiwi people on Bathurst and Melville Islands. There was consultation with those people on the sort of housing they wanted. The houses were built by their housing associations and they were built by the people who live on the islands and who would occupy those houses. If that is not consultation, I do not know what is.

The Northern Territory Home Loans Scheme is second to none. The Northern Territory Home Loans Scheme, administered by the Housing Commission, contributes 70% of home finance. Compare that with the 5% average that the state Housing Commissions contribute to home loans schemes. We are 65% ahead of the rest of Australia in providing finance for people to buy a home, to put down roots and have some security of tenure in the Northern Territory.

Since October 1979, 3500 home loans have been approved and the popularity of this government's approach to encouraging people to live in the Northern Territory is shown by the fact that the Housing Commission is now expecting something like 1000 approvals per year for home loans. During the course of the successful election on 3 December, this government promised to extend the qualification for home ownership in the Northern Territory. From 1 January the residential qualification to encourage home ownership and acceptance of a loan was reduced from 12 to 6 months. Loan ceilings have been increased and another new initiative, loans for first and second mortgages, has been introduced at the same rate.

Another initiative of the Housing Commission is the portability of loans over 3 years old which means that, if a person is living in a Housing Commission house, and after 3 years wishes to move to another house because of an increase in the family or for any other reason, that loan can be carried over to a new house after the relevant formalities have been completed with the Housing Commission. Nowhere else in Australia can a person do this. Another initiative of the Housing Commission is the Home Maintenance Rebate Scheme offering a

maximum amount of \$1500 over a maximum period of 3 years. If, within a 3-year period, a person specifies that he or she is considering the purchase of the house, an agreement is entered into with the Housing Commission regarding maintenance of the house to be undertaken by the person living in it. The \$1500 is taken off either the deposit for the house and subsequent purchase or deducted from loan repayments.

The Housing Commission is second to none in encouraging private sector building and in the variety and innovative approach to the design of houses. It is second to none in providing encouragement to small builders through the 'safety net' scheme. In cases where small builders and small building companies build houses, an agreement is made with the Housing Commission. If the houses have not been sold to private owners after 90 days, the Housing Commission will buy them from these private builders at a price agreed earlier.

Another innovation is the purchase of house-land packages. A further innovation is expressed by the Housing Commission through design-and-construct contracts which are let to builders in all centres in the Territory. The Housing Commission has as its main object not only the housing of people in the Territory, which encourages them to live here, put their roots down and raise their children in the Territory, but it also seeks to encourage the building industry. Also it is actively seeking to encourage private bank financing of home loans and other enterprises. In view of the operation of our Northern Territory Housing Commission, the work it has done and the options and encouragement it has offered to people in the Northern Territory compared to other housing authorities in the rest of Australia, I think our Housing Commission deserves a very firm pat on the back.

With regard to the operation of the Conservation Commission, I would like to say that, by and large, the tourist industry would not operate as successfully as it does if the people in the Conservation Commission did not have the interests of the Tourist Commission and the interests of the Territory at heart. I am not speaking only of the people at the top but for the rangers at the bottom of the scale. Without these people manning and administering our nature parks, reserves and sanctuaries throughout the Territory, the tourists would not be made as welcome as they are, they would not see as much as they do and they would not come back as often as they do. It is due in large part to the way the Conservation Commission officers do their job for the people of the Northern Territory with the interests of the Territory at heart.

Since taking up the portfolio of housing and conservation, I have travelled a little bit, Mr Speaker. I have seen work that has been done by the Conservation Commission, especially in Alice Springs. I was most impressed by the dust control project near the airport at Alice Springs. It was started a couple of years ago by the Conservation Commission. It has been very successful and really something to show off. Some members will have noticed the whirly design which was used for the cover of the telephone directory a couple of years ago because of this unusual approach to conservation. I can arrange for members to visit this project at Alice Springs. Probably the honourable members who come from that area have already visited it. The dust control project was initiated to do several things. One was to bring back ground cover to the area after the disastrous droughts of the previous years and to reduce the dust over the township of Alice Springs which was very bad from the point of view of primary industry, health and general economic conditions. It was intended to provide feed for stock grazing on these projects and to take advantage of the minimal rainfall in Alice Springs. All of these things were considered in this dust control project and, I must say, with great success.

I have also seen the soil erosion control measures adopted by the Conservation Commission, in the Alice Springs area particularly, which are directed mainly at pastoral properties. These initiatives are instituted sometimes by the Conservation Commission officers themselves and sometimes by the pastoral lessees. It shows the desire that Conservation Commission officers have to restore the country to the pretty good state it was in before the disastrous droughts of some years ago. They are receiving the encouragement of the pastoralists in doing this.

Several applications have been made to convert some pastoral leases to perpetual leases. A close examination is made of properties not only to assess what flora and fauna may be on the property but also to assess public recreation areas. This ties in quite happily with the BTB eradication campaign in that the pastoralists are seeking to bring their herds under closer control. They aim to put the herds on the most productive ground. This means that they have no further use for some of their non-productive ground. Often, these non-productive areas are hills, ravines and gorges which are the very things that the public and the tourists want to see. The Conservation Commission is working in very close harmony with the tourist industry in looking at all these areas and bringing them to the notice of the tourist industry.

In the states, the area of land covered by national parks or state parks ranges from 4% to as high as 40%. In the Territory, the proportion of national parks land is about 0.9% of its total area. This indicates a gross deficiency on our part which the Conservation Commission is working hard to overcome. The Conservation Commission officers are continually assessing areas to be included in our park estates. They are looking at areas in all parts of the Territory. When these projects come to fruition, they will be presented to this Assembly for its consideration.

The Conservation Commission is working with the Department of Primary Production in introducing and continuing quarantine measures, especially park quarantine measures. The first one that comes to mind is the dieback outbreak at Gove, the causative agent being *phytophthora cinnamoni*. This was discovered relatively recently. The Conservation Commission has received great help from the governments of Queensland and Western Australia. They sent forestry officers to attempt to contain the infestation and to consider methods of hygiene and the whole situation generally for the betterment not only of the citizens of Nhulunbuy but the whole Territory. The prospect of quarantine will be a major consideration in the years ahead because no more can we consider ourselves as isolated up here.

I do not think I will have time to say much more. I will just mention briefly that the Conservation Commission is very active in a crocodile protection policy and is actively encouraging 3 crocodile farms in the Top End. I think there may be one other crocodile farm in Australia. I stand to be corrected on that. Again, the Northern Territory is way ahead of the states with its crocodile protection policy and its general consideration of crocodiles in the wild and how they can be harvested. This is to the betterment of the people engaged in farming ventures. It also considers the safety of Northern Territorians and tourists who visit areas where crocodiles are prevalent.

In conclusion, I would like to stress that, in any development policies that the Territory government puts forward, the Housing Commission and the Conservation Commission will continue to make their valuable input with the interests of all Territorians at heart.

## ADJOURNMENT

Mr TUXWORTH (Primary Production): Mr Speaker, I move that the Assembly do now adjourn.

Mr VALE (Braitling): Mr Speaker, many years ago in Alice Springs, I lived next door to a very distinguished citizen who was known by all and sundry, from Alice Springs to Darwin, simply as Judge Nichols. He was not a true judge but a Justice of the Peace. He held many offices and from time to time he received letters from people interstate addressed just to 'Mr Everything - Alice Springs'. He ran the post office on the east side of Alice Springs, which the honourable Chief Minister would recall because, in those days, everyone on the east side received their mail addressed simply PO Box 38, east side. The old house is still there but the post office has been shut down. Two of the offices that Judge Nichols held in those days were as secretary of both the Alice Springs Football League and the Darwin Football League.

Last night I had the pleasure of attending the Nichols Medal Count in Darwin and meeting the late Judge Nichols' son. I would like to take this opportunity tonight to congratulate last night's Nichols Medal winner, Ninny Briston from Buffaloes. He won with 18 votes defeating his fellow team-mate John Patterson. Both players are brilliant. They have had good grounding playing for the Pioneer Football Club in central Australia. Other Buffalo players have had a similar background.

As well as congratulating Ninny Briston, I would just briefly like to pay tribute to the runner-up. In a few years time, his name will not be recorded as runner-up. The record will simply be: 'Ninny Briston - 18 votes'. Johnny Patterson took an early lead but sat on 17 votes. Ninny Briston came from behind in the last few counts and won the medal. I would pay tribute to John Patterson for his sportsmanlike approach in immediately getting out of his seat and going across and congratulating the winner. Johnny Patterson, as I said, played in Alice Springs for a couple of seasons for the Pioneer Football Club and he was known down there as the demon of the league but up here as the gentle giant.

If I could offer any tip for the premiership flag up here, I would suggest the Buffaloes. Last year in Alice Springs, a Pioneer footballer won the medal and the runner-up was also a Pioneer player. We went on to win the premiership. If omens follow suit in this part of the world, then Buffaloes must be odds-on for the premiership.

I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate the Northern Territory Football League and all the competitors for organising the medal count. I would also like to wish all competitors in the grand final series up here all the best.

Mr D.W. COLLINS (Sadadeen): Mr Speaker, when I was at school, one of the favourite pieces of poetry which we had was called 'The Priest and the Mulberry Tree'. It ends up with this particular comment: 'All that well may be thought cannot wisely be said'. Often, the real thoughts of people are made known by their inadvertent comments. I would remind you, Sir, and those members who were in the last Assembly of one particular occasion when I asked a question of the honourable Minister for Education concerning a 100% rejection of teacher strike action which was being urged upon them by certain unions. The inadvertent comment of a member of the opposition, which was no doubt later regretted, was that they were scabs. Today, the honourable member for Koolpinyah happened to mention that 65% of Territorians voted for the government and considered it a good thing to do so. The inadvertent comment from the opposition was: 'only the

racist ones'. I deplore such comments. They add nothing to the dignity of this Assembly.

Motion agreed to; the Assembly adjourned.

Mr Speaker Steele took the Chair at 10 am.

PETITION  
Electricity Tariffs at Nhulunbuy

Mr LEO (Nhulunbuy): Mr Speaker, I present a petition from 331 residents of Nhulunbuy and citizens of the Northern Territory, relating to electricity tariffs. The petition bears the Clerk's certificate that it conforms with the requirements of Standing Orders. Mr Speaker, I move that the petition be received and read.

Motion agreed to; petition received and read:

*To the honourable the Speaker and members of the Legislative Assembly of the Northern Territory, the humble petition of the undersigned people of Nhulunbuy and citizens of the Northern Territory respectfully sheweth that we are outraged by Nabalco's intention to increase the cost of electricity tariffs by 10% when NTEC's increase will be only 6.2% to other NT consumers, and that Nabalco's increase will commence 3 months earlier than the rest of the Territory. We also respectfully ask the minister concerned to assure us that residents of Nhulunbuy will receive part of the \$64m subsidy allocated by the federal government to the Northern Territory government to subsidise all electricity consumers in the Northern Territory, recognising that Nhulunbuy is a part of the Northern Territory. Finally, we query why, if there is an NTEC subsidy already available to Nhulunbuy consumers, the supplier sees fit to increase charges rather than apply for the subsidy they are entitled to. Your petitioners therefore humbly pray that the Legislative Assembly, through the executive member responsible for Mines and Energy, will thoroughly investigate and take action against this increase, and your petitioners, as in duty bound, will ever pray.*

NOTICE OF MOTION  
Censure of Chief Minister

Mr B. COLLINS (Opposition Leader): Mr Speaker, I give notice that, on the next general business day, I will move that this Assembly censure the Chief Minister of the Northern Territory for: (1) misleading this Assembly in a statement he made on 4 October 1983 in respect of his future tenure as Chief Minister of the Northern Territory; (2) bringing this Assembly and its members into public contempt by a statement he made in the national media on 6 February 1984; (3) completely compromising his position as head of the Northern Territory's government by his announcement of his intended candidacy on behalf of the Country Liberal Party for the federal seat of the Northern Territory. And this Assembly calls on the Chief Minister to resign as Chief Minister of the Northern Territory immediately.

Mr ROBERTSON (Leader of the House): Mr Speaker, I move that so much of Standing Orders be suspended as would otherwise prevent this motion being brought on forthwith.

Motion agreed to.



MOTION  
Censure of Chief Minister

Mr B. COLLINS (Opposition Leader): Mr Speaker, I move that this Assembly censure the Chief Minister of the Northern Territory for: (1) misleading this Assembly in a statement he made on 4 October 1983 in respect of his future tenure as Chief Minister of the Northern Territory; (2) bringing this Assembly and its members into public contempt by a statement he made in the national media on 6 February 1984; (3) completely compromising his position as head of the Northern Territory's government by his announcement of his intended candidacy on behalf of the Country Liberal Party for the federal seat of the Northern Territory. And this Assembly calls on the Chief Minister to resign as Chief Minister of the Northern Territory immediately.

Mr Speaker, I have received advice from the Leader of the House this morning that indicates that events later on today may in fact overshadow this debate. Perhaps my timing was not exactly appropriate. I hope that that does not happen and this debate in fact is given the attention it deserves.

Mr ROBERTSON (Leader of the House): A point of order, Mr Speaker! We have previously authorised the broadcasting of question time but not debate. I would indicate to the Assembly that question time will not be taken this morning so that the will of the Assembly in respect to broadcasting can be followed.

Mr B. COLLINS (Opposition Leader): I am very sorry, Mr Speaker, that that procedural matter has cut some time out of my debate this morning. Good work.

Mr Speaker, it is an absolute truism to say that politics and politicians generally, and undeservedly, have a bad name in this country. Because we live in a healthy, democratic society, that kind of debate is encouraged and occurs daily. One thing is true about politics and I can say it with total honesty: although politicians are not the dishonest, lazy rogues that people often say they are, politics is an extremely cynical business to be in. There have been politicians in Australia who have demonstrated just how totally cynical they are prepared to be. But I must say that, in the political cynicism stakes, it would be very difficult to take first prize from the Chief Minister of the Northern Territory.

Mr Speaker, because of his efforts over the last 5 years, the Chief Minister of the Northern Territory enjoys a deservedly high approval rating in the Territory. The Labor Party's poll results, which I am sure are totally consistent with CLP polls, indicates that his approval rating is extremely high. That makes what the Chief Minister is doing doubly contemptible because he is quite callously trading on that approval rating.

Mr Speaker, I will address the first part of the motion. If any member, and indeed any Territorian, seriously believed the Chief Minister's statement earlier this year that his course of action was not premeditated, that same person would believe very definitely in fairies at the bottom of the garden. Indeed, it was the subject of considerable debate in this Legislative Assembly at its last session. As honourable members would recall, a profile on the Chief Minister was published in a national magazine, *Woman's Day*. Anyone who reads the article, which is an extremely sympathetic and laudatory profile of the Chief Minister, would detect some rather ironical twists. The article was written by a professional journalist, Julie McGlone. She was not a stringer. She was employed by the magazine. The headline reads: 'Paul

Everingham, the Northern Territory's leading man on the move'. Mr Speaker, he is a man on the move but not one of us thought he would move quite as rapidly as he did.

I will quote from the article and it is ironical to read this now. It was published only late last year: 'Partly because of his deep family bond, Paul sees his political career coming to an end in the near future'. Again, as a result of the Chief Minister's own assurances, none of us thought it would be quite as near in the future. The Chief Minister went on to say: 'If I am re-elected next year, I will not be serving out my full term of office as some time during that period I will have been Chief Minister for 10 years. That is long enough'. Not surprisingly, in an election climate, that attracted a great deal of interest from the media and was raised quite properly in this Assembly during the last session. The Chief Minister could hardly have been more categorical in the way he treated this particular article. Indeed, it must have given some pause to the journalist concerned. I am sure she has changed her views on the Chief Minister. As she said in the article, she found him a refreshing change from most politicians because he was so honest and one could believe what he said. As a result of the events since the publication of this article, I would say with absolute certainty that, if every voter in the Northern Territory had the same opportunity for contact with the Chief Minister as she had, the Chief Minister would be getting less support than he is receiving now.

Mr Speaker, on 12 October last I quoted from this article in this Assembly, and the Chief Minister responded as follows:

*I have made it quite clear that I will be standing for re-election to this Assembly in 1984. I have made it quite clear to the Northern Territory electorate, as I have all along, that if I am re-elected to this Assembly in 1984 and I am subsequently re-elected by my party to the position of leader of the parliamentary CLP and if that party has a majority in this Assembly, as I confidently expect, then I will be serving out the full term as Chief Minister of the Northern Territory.*

He went on to say:

*I make the categorical statement that, in my view, the reporter from the Woman's Day was somewhat confused. I think I have made the situation particularly clear: if re-elected to this Assembly next term and if re-elected as leader of the parliamentary CLP, I will be serving out my full term.*

I am not quite sure how much more categorical a statement needs to be than that. To indicate the extent to which the Country Liberal Party traded on this - and let there be no doubt about it - the Northern Territory electorate was sold a pup. There is no question of that. It was not a vote for the CLP; it was a vote for Paul Everingham. All honourable members saw the full page advertisements that were published all over the Northern Territory. They were not only displayed in the Chief Minister's own electorate, but were published Territory-wide. There was a profile of Ayers Rock and across Ayers Rock, not 'Vote for the Country Liberal Party' but 'Vote 1 Everingham'. Obviously, the strategists of the CLP - with good sense, judging by the poll results - saw that the Chief Minister was the best thing they had going for them and they used him quite mercilessly in the campaign.

Mr Speaker, I know, and the Chief Minister knows, that prior to the

election last year, he intended to get out of the Northern Territory Legislative Assembly. He knew that when he made that categorical statement. Of course, he knew what political dynamite it would be if that was not refuted. He had no hesitation about standing up here and refuting it, knowing full well that he had no intention of serving out his full term and he knew perfectly well that he was misleading this Assembly and the Territory electorate quite deliberately by doing so. I will cover this in a minute and the member for Millner will do that further. One only has to look at the dramatic events that have occurred since the Northern Territory election when he went to the people on that platform and obtained the very considerable mandate that he sought. What has happened since then to change that categorical assurance? I suggest that I can demonstrate that nothing whatever has occurred except the Chief Minister's own completely self-serving, political opportunism which is of the worst kind.

Last November, election speculation began because of federal government decisions that were pending on uranium and a number of other matters. In the course of all this, the Chief Minister was questioned about an early election and about his plans, as disclosed in Woman's Day, for abandoning the Northern Territory after the election. The Chief Minister's response to that was as follows. On 10 October 1983, he said in an interview on the ABC: 'I certainly have no plans for retirement from the Assembly during the term leading up to 1988'. He claimed that the reporter interviewing him had taken no notes during the interview and obviously had misunderstood him. As we all know, not only did the magazine journalist concerned take notes, she also tape-recorded the interview. We had then the quite interesting experience of the Editor of Woman's Day going on ABC radio and not only getting stuck into the Chief Minister but saying that he had a tape-recording of the interview and that he stood by the accuracy of his journalist. Subsequently, I invited the Chief Minister to contact Woman's Day and allow the magazine to make that interview public. He did not take up my suggestion.

Mr Everingham: I did.

Mr B. COLLINS: In response to that interjection, let me tell you, Mr Speaker, that is not what the Chief Minister said in the Legislative Assembly. His response is in the Hansard record. That is very interesting. If the Chief Minister did that, obviously he did it in a very confidential way. But I have been working with the Chief Minister here for 6 years and I know that he has a tendency to deliver that kind of 'from the heart comment' every now and again. Indeed, he did it again quite recently - and very illuminating little asides they were.

Mr Speaker, I turn back to the first couple of weeks in November and all that election speculation. There were persistent rumours around the Northern Territory that the Chief Minister was looking for an issue for an early election, and it was natural that, when the uranium issue was raised, the media asked the Chief Minister what he would do in respect of it. On 8 November, a front page article in the Northern Territory News stated: 'Mr Everingham is known to hold the view that an election cannot simply be called because the Territory suffers setbacks at the hands of Canberra'. On the following day, on 9 November, the ABC program, After Eight, had an interview with the Chief Minister and asked him again whether or not he intended to carry out his full term in the Legislative Assembly. He said: 'We believe the Territory needs stability and, whilst this is certainly a time of crisis for the Territory's economy, we believe we have got to show people in the Northern Territory the directions the Territory can move in and we think that, in all

the circumstances, the government should run its full term'. Less than a week later, Mr Speaker, the Chief Minister had gone to the Administrator and writs were issued for an early election.

He said also, and this is an important point, when he announced the election: 'I believe getting a fresh mandate from the people of the Northern Territory will clear the air. The federal government will know it has to deal with us for another 4 years' - that is cute - 'and persuade them to cease their contemptible under-the-table dealings with the Leader of the Opposition. What is really at stake is self-government. If a federal government is to make arbitrary decisions and trample all over the Territory, we have to give them the message that Territory people want them to take self-government seriously. They have treated the Territory with contempt and the time has come to take a stand. I am asking Territory people to give me and my government an overwhelming mandate to represent their interests so we can get on with the job. We have got to let the federal government know that they have got a Territory government to deal with which has a mandate from the people to negotiate with them'. Fine words, Mr Speaker. I will say again, and I will demonstrate it in a minute, that not a single politician in this country has made a more profound attack on the dignity and the authority of this Assembly, and indeed self-government in the Northern Territory, than the honourable Chief Minister himself.

We had a Chief Minister who began and ended an emotive election campaign with those kinds of untruths but he did it convincingly as the results show. Time and time again, he reminded people in the Northern Territory that, by voting for him - and remember that it was 'Vote Everingham', not 'Vote for the CLP' - they were voting for self-government. They were voting for Paul Everingham and his government to get on with the job of establishing good relations with the federal government. There can be no mistake at all that people were being urged to vote for an Everingham government because that government would get a mandate and govern the Territory for 4 years.

Mr Speaker, it is interesting to note that the night of 3 December showed that Paul Everingham had won not only an election but had received the overwhelming mandate that he wanted from the people to govern the Territory for another 4 years. The Northern Territory News of 5 December had this to say: 'Mr Everingham now has a duty to the Territory to use his bloated majority wisely over the next 4 years and not be tempted, as he sometimes is, to be autocratic. This newspaper will watch the actions of the government with a great deal of care'. The Chief Minister got what he wanted; he received a mandate to fight for what he regarded as a threat to self-government. His first action as Chief Minister was immediately to misrepresent completely a meeting he was alleged to have had with the Prime Minister, Bob Hawke, and ministers of the federal government.

I have correspondence that took place between the Chief Minister and the Prime Minister on that matter, and copies of the press statements that the Chief Minister made. Let us have a quick look at them. I will give honourable members copies of this telex rather than quote it at length. The telex from the Prime Minister said quite clearly that there would be no meeting because he would be going on holidays. Apparently he is not allowed to do that; the Chief Minister is the only one who can do that. According to the Northern Territory News, I am not allowed to do it. He said he was taking a break; was not able to meet with the Chief Minister but telexed him to say that he would meet him within a month.

In response to that telex, the Chief Minister of the Northern Territory - and not surprisingly the Prime Minister was incensed about it - sent the following to the press: 'I am going down to Canberra and I want to see Mr Hawke this time. If I do not see him and he reneges on his appointment, then I will persist and I will see him after he comes back from leave in the new year'. Despite the fact that it was clearly stated in the telex that there would be no meeting but one would be arranged within a month, the Chief Minister was quite happy to tell the press that an appointment had been cancelled and that the Prime Minister was going to renege on it. That is how the Chief Minister was going to cement these new relations with the federal government. It is extraordinary, Mr Speaker.

In fact, as the Prime Minister has said quite accurately on several occasions, the access of the Chief Minister and his ministers to the Prime Minister and ministers of his government has been greater than that offered and given to some state premiers. That is probably because of the peculiar relationship which exists between ourselves and the federal government.

It was not long after this that the Chief Minister himself went on holidays. We all know he goes away for 4 weeks in January every year. Why shouldn't he? Therefore, he was away on leave, straight after the elections, for the whole of the month of January. The Prime Minister was away on leave for most of that period. Of course, as we all know, almost immediately after getting back from his ministerial leave, the Prime Minister represented this country on an extremely important overseas mission - a highly successful one, as it turned out. As we all know, the slowest period of the year politically is the last 2 weeks of December and all of January. What dramatic event happened during that period while the Chief Minister was on the beach in Queensland and the Prime Minister was on holidays to make the Chief Minister make his extraordinary decision? He told us that relationships between the federal government and the Northern Territory had deteriorated to such an extent between the Northern Territory election and February - a period of 8 weeks and before this new Assembly had even had its first sitting - that he had no choice other than to announce that he was getting out and would run for a federal seat in an election which almost certainly would be held this year.

Mr Speaker, the people of the Northern Territory gave a 70% mandate to the Chief Minister of the Northern Territory for a 4-year term in government. The electorate has a right to demand that this non-stop electioneering finish. People are sick and tired of it. We have an election in the Northern Territory every day. The campaigning never stops. As the Minister for Housing and Conservation said yesterday, 65% of the people got behind the Chief Minister and gave him that mandate. They have a right to expect that, as the whole campaign was based on him personally, once he got that support, he would respect it and get on with the job of governing the Territory for 4 years instead of using most of this year, if not all of it, to run his federal campaign. What a complete abrogation of his responsibilities as Chief Minister of the Northern Territory that is!

The Chief Minister went away on holidays and, as always happens when the Chief Minister goes away, everything fell apart. We had the Darwin Primary School issue, the scandal over the Marrakai Apartments and the government was in all kinds of trouble. The Chief Minister then came back and had to restore order. What other major events happened during that time? The government dropped David Combe as its lobbyist, Mr Sinclair was elected to the National Party leadership and, on 25 January, a \$70m loan was granted to Yulara - that was terrible - so he came back from his holiday. I heard on Col Krohn's

talkback show that the Chief Minister was back from holiday and, because of the speculation that was around, although he did not announce it, he refused to rule out the possibility that he was going to run for a federal election. That was immediately after he returned from holiday and after winning this massive majority in the Legislative Assembly. In making that suggestion, the Chief Minister said on talkback radio: 'Mr Hawke won't even talk to me'. I might add that, while he was saying that, the Prime Minister was overseas, representing Australia. But, of course, that is of no importance to the Chief Minister.

On 6 February, less than 8 weeks after the Territory election and before this Assembly had its first sittings, the Chief Minister went on Territory Extra and said: 'Over the Christmas holidays, I had 4 weeks to think about things and it is becoming pretty plain to me that, unfortunately, the federal government seems to have the NT in its sights, presumably to cut our funding in order to give what it can pick up here to Sydney and Melbourne' - something like that. It seems that, if the Prime Minister will not talk to him in his office as Chief Minister, he will bail out of the Assembly. The Prime Minister will not talk to him and he says: 'I am going to have to take the Northern Territory's case to Canberra on the floor of the House' - with the other 145 of them - 'and put it across to him down there'. Of course, the Chief Minister has vaunting ambitions to move immediately to the frontbench.

Mr Speaker, has anybody heard of the frontbench of the federal opposition lately? Can anybody name any of the shadow ministers in the federal parliament from the conservative parties? Have they been in the news lately? Have members heard about anyone, except Peacock on occasions? Do they remember John Howard? However, the Chief Minister, the wizz kid from the north, is going to go down and everyone will stand aside and say: 'Paul is here. What job would you like?' What nonsense! Apart from actually moving immediately to the position of leader of the federal coalition, the prominence he will receive on the Territory's behalf - and quite rightly - will be a great deal less than he currently receives as leader of its own government. The Chief Minister is trading quite unmercifully for pure personal ambition, not for altruistic reasons. He has said that publicly on a number of occasions. He intends to trade on the approval rating that the people of the Northern Territory have given to him.

Mr Speaker, in the interview on 6 February, he said: 'Of course, I suppose I could stay around in the Northern Territory as king of the kids if I wanted to for a bit longer'. In May 1978, I attended an extremely disorderly meeting to form a committee to watchdog events in Kakadu National Park. It occurred during a sittings of the Assembly. While I was trying to speak at that meeting, there was a great deal of heckling. To lighten the atmosphere a bit, and because 5 other members of the Legislative Assembly were present at the meeting, I said: 'Boy, this is worse than the Legislative Assembly'. I know the honourable Leader of the House will remember that. Mr Speaker, the following morning in question time - and quite out of order, I might add - in response to a question from the member for Nhulunbuy, an attempt was made to drag me before the Privileges Committee of this Assembly for bringing the Assembly into contempt by saying that. In fact, Mr Speaker, I was carpeted by your predecessor, Mr Speaker MacFarlane, as a result of action taken by the Leader of the House. Having been carpeted by the Speaker in his office and covering myself in sackcloth and ashes and saying, 'Oh sorry, dreadful, dreadful', I had to stand up in here and give an apology for that absolutely dreadful thing that I said about the Legislative Assembly which was said to have brought it into contempt. As a result, the Leader of the House, in his charity, withdrew his motion to take me before the Privileges Committee.

Mr Speaker, I feel strongly about this. As a federal politician of some experience said: 'There has not been a head of government in Australia of any political persuasion that has ever made such an extraordinary statement about, in fact, the entire political spectrum of his own state or territory'. 'King of the kids'. I would like to know how many of the Chief Minister's colleagues had the intestinal fortitude to say to him after that particular event: 'We don't think that was a very smart thing to say. We don't particularly like your arrogance carrying you away to that extent. We don't particularly like that public statement from the current leader of the government'. If he is fortunate enough to go to Canberra, Mr Speaker, the present Chief Minister will have that statement pushed down his throat every time he gets up to speak on behalf of the Northern Territory: the champion of self-government, the 'king of the kids'. It is a political fact known to everyone who has been around for any length of time that, if a person is silly enough to make an outrageous statement like that, it will continue to come back and haunt him for the rest of his parliamentary career. We all know that.

Mr Speaker, I have been told by a number of very experienced ministers in the federal government that, if the people of the Northern Territory are silly enough to vote for Paul Everingham to go to Canberra, they will really enjoy 'having him for breakfast'. Mr Speaker, I have seen how accomplished some of those people are at cutting members of the opposition into tiny pieces as a result of silly statements they have made. How ridiculous has the Chief Minister made this Assembly and the very process of self-government in the Northern Territory through that statement? I find it quite incongruous and bizarre that, in the first sittings of the Legislative Assembly, at the beginning of this 4-year term, I am addressing the head of this government as the CLP candidate for the next federal election. It is absolutely bizarre.

Mr Speaker, if the Chief Minister wants to do it, let him, but he should let us get on with governing the Northern Territory for the next 4 years instead of conducting a non-stop campaign. We have just finished one and now we are into another. If the Chief Minister goes to Canberra and has the hide to say, 'the federal government is not listening to the people of the Northern Territory and not respecting self-government', the response he is likely to get is: 'Well, Paul, going on your authority, that is dead right; let us know when the kids up there grow up and we might pay some attention to them'. Mr Speaker, I would be surprised if the Leader of the House would disagree. I was almost hauled before the Privileges Committee of this Assembly for making a statement that did not come within cooe of that extraordinary statement by the Chief Minister. I was a member of the opposition, not the head of the Northern Territory government. If a complete nonentity like the honourable member for Alice Springs had said that, no one would pay much attention, but it was said by the leader of the government of the Northern Territory.

Mr Speaker, the Chief Minister has compromised himself as leader of this government. He has completely compromised this Assembly and made it a national laughing stock. This was done on national media, Macquarie news and AM. He has brought this Assembly into complete contempt. He has given a display of arrogance that would put the Prime Minister in the shade. Through the contempt that he has shown for his own colleagues and for this Assembly, he has made a total mockery of the so-called battle he has been leading for self-government in the Northern Territory. He has relegated us to where he really thinks we belong. That phrase, and the statement the Chief Minister made, will return to haunt not only him, but all of us.

The facts are that the Chief Minister planned this move early and he planned it well - it was not dreamt up on the beach over Christmas. As I have demonstrated, Mr Speaker, considering that, for 90% of the time between the election and his announcement, both he and the Prime Minister were on holidays or out of the country, it was a premeditated move. But he has compounded it. He has also stated publicly - and I find this extraordinary - that, if his parliamentary colleagues agree, he has every intention of continuing as Chief Minister until he has to stop in order actually to contest the election. That will render this Assembly completely impotent. The federal government will not deal with the Chief Minister. I have been just as quick as the Chief Minister to condemn the federal government for that. In this case, it will be totally justified because the Chief Minister is no longer the head of the Northern Territory government but a candidate for a federal seat at the next election. You can hardly imagine that the normal protocol that exists in confidential meetings - and there have been a number between the head of this government and the head of the federal government - will be continued when you know the man sitting opposite you will be running against your government in the next election. It is just absolutely ludicrous.

Mr Speaker, I have a document here. It is not a bombshell or anything dreadful but it is proof positive - not that it will surprise anybody - that the Chief Minister is already using his position and already using his staff. I would ask the Leader of the House to do me the courtesy of extending me a short extension of time because it is important that this be read into Hansard. This document demonstrates quite clearly that the Chief Minister is already using his position as Chief Minister, and the staff provided for him by the Northern Territory taxpayers, not to govern the Northern Territory on the mandate that he has just been given, but to campaign for the federal election. I will read this out. The reason that I need an extension of time is because I do not want to be accused of taking anything out of context. I want to read it all into Hansard. It is a memo from the Chief Minister's Press Secretary to the Chief Minister himself. It is from Moustachio Pete, the enforcer, to the Godfather, at least a temporary Godfather. It is very illuminating stuff.

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

Mr LEO (Nhulunbuy): Mr Speaker, I move that an extension of time be granted to the honourable Leader of the Opposition so that he may complete his speech.

Leave granted.

Mr B. COLLINS (Opposition Leader): Mr Speaker, the trouble about the cynicism that I talked about is that the electorate becomes cynical too. It is unfortunate and it is reciprocated. When people get on to something like this, they say: 'Oh well, they all do it. Anyone would do it. So what?' That is a shame because any reasonable person, even the most ardent CLP supporter, would have to ask whether it is really fair that, having given Paul Everingham, personally, the level of support that he has been given, he has now chosen to desert them. I might add that his present position is far more powerful politically than being a backbencher in opposition. I would like to see anyone on the frontbench of this government stand up here and say, as a defender of self-government, that the head of the Northern Territory government is not in a stronger position than an opposition backbencher in the federal parliament.

This is the memo to the Chief Minister from his Press Secretary:



*Yulara Hotel Opening:*

1. Ian MacIntosh advises, following a briefing by Graham Ride last night, that there are problem areas with the Yulara development. Several activists have joined the Pitjantjatjara lawyers and advisers in recent months and there is a strong rumour that the Pitjantjatjara will claim the existing motels and operate them in competition with the Yulara resort.

Peter Murphy is not just a pretty face.

The rehabilitation of the old camping ground was stopped at the request of the Aborigines who are now using part of it as a camp ground. Letters have been received from land council lawyers throwing up irritating problems about the survey of the road to the Olgas. In general, there is a campaign of hindering the Northern Territory government's development of Yulara and restoring Ayers Rock to its natural state as per plan.

2. About a dozen journalists and 4 TV crews will be at Yulara for the opening. MacIntosh points out that, if any of them go after the story of your justification of an early election because of the proposed give away of Ayers Rock and subsequent problems with Yulara resort funding, they could get the wrong slant on the Yulara development by activists who might be behind this campaign. I have taken the liberty of booking Rob Gill down to Ayers Rock to leave MacIntosh free to handle the journalists after purely tourist stories by riding herd on the press with more general ideas and aiding Conservation Minister Padgham-Purich and Marshall Perron. If he wants speeches handed around, TV interviews set up etc, Gill can return to Alice Springs with Jim Robertson and do the press secretary's job for Friday's Cabinet meeting, including any publicity needed for the Sheraton signing, before returning to Darwin.

3. Michael Venus of the Melbourne Herald is covering the Yulara opening and has requested an interview with you after your arrival in Alice Springs at 4.25 pm Wednesday. You have nothing booked officially after your arrival and, since this interview will be on your proposed switch from Assembly to federal politics, and since you are familiar with the South-east Asian region vis a vis Australian discoveries which Bob Hawke, Bill Hayden etc are only just making, a Melbourne Herald feature will not hurt your national profile. If you give me a time and place, I will advise Michael Venus accordingly.

Mr Speaker, as I said, I do not suggest for a minute that that is a bombshell, a major scandalous disclosure or anything of the sort. It is simply clear evidence of what we all know: between now and the federal election, the Chief Minister will use his own position as Chief Minister and he will use the staff that is made available to him by the Northern Territory taxpayer to campaign as a Country Liberal Party candidate for the federal seat. Frankly, that is simply not a situation that should be tolerated by the honourable Chief Minister's own colleagues. Some of those people sitting on the frontbench will be voting on this motion shortly. Some of them should have the intestinal fortitude to say to the honourable Chief Minister: 'Look, we have no hassle with your wanting to go to Canberra. We have no hassle with your shifting from the frontbench to the backbench. After all, you have done

it before with a great deal of alacrity and it is a move that you are used to. We do not mind your staying in here as the member for Jingili until the election, but you cannot possibly continue to represent the Northern Territory and this government in its relationships with mainly Labor state governments and indeed with the federal government. You cannot continue to run your campaign from your office over in the Chan Building, and at the Northern Territory taxpayers' expense, between now and the federal election'. It is reasonable for his ministerial colleagues to say to him: 'Look, no hassles about your running for this seat. You go off and be the federal candidate for the election and let someone else carry the mandate that has been given to us for the next 4 years'. Mr Speaker, that is not an unreasonable demand.

I am not suggesting that the Chief Minister should resign from the Assembly. Clearly, he misled the Assembly last year and he can argue with that. He certainly cannot argue with the fact that, by his 'king of the kids' statement to the national press, he certainly succeeded in totally destroying the status and authority of this Assembly and indeed the whole process of self-government in the Northern Territory. He certainly cannot argue with the available proof that the honourable Chief Minister intends quite happily to use his position as head of government and his staff to be a CLP campaign candidate between now and the next federal election. I would suggest that, if there is any integrity left on the other side of the Assembly, the Chief Minister's own colleagues should be saying to him: 'We would like you to resign. We would like the whole question, which is now in limbo again, of who is to be the Chief Minister of the Northern Territory settled so that we can get down to business with a leader for the next 4 years'.

Of course, that is the other big problem that this has created, and it is entirely the responsibility of the Chief Minister: after an election with this kind of mandate, we are still campaigning. No one in the Northern Territory knows who the next leader of the Northern Territory's government will be. That is an intolerable situation to be placed in straight after an election. It has not been caused by suspicion or palace coups. It is the result of extremely public statements from the Chief Minister himself.

Mr Speaker, I think the Chief Minister owes it to the Northern Territory and to the people who support him strongly to be a little honest about it, and stand down from the position of Chief Minister. He can remain in the Assembly if that is his desire. However, at the earliest possible opportunity, the government should advise the people of the Northern Territory who will be the next Chief Minister of the Northern Territory.

Mr EVERINGHAM (Chief Minister): Mr Speaker, I had thought that the Leader of the Opposition would have saved his censure motion until such time as I was the endorsed candidate for some political party for a federal seat of some description. Be that as it may, it is obvious that, in his desperate frame of mind, with it reliably reported that his own colleagues are looking at replace him, any move at this stage is a good one. Of course, we know that he would have the clamour of the current federal member in that man's desperation to cling to office as nothing more than a placement. That man has no regard for the interests of the Northern Territory. He simply wants to be a member of a particular parliamentary party.

Mr Speaker, it was very illuminating that the Leader of the Opposition read out that memorandum from the person on whom he continually heaps vituperation and who has no prospect of responding at all to his repeated, petty and small-minded attacks. I refer to Peter Murphy who happens to work

for me. Mr Speaker, I would not so degrade myself as to start attacking the staff of the opposition. That was a very illuminating memo because nowhere - and the Opposition Leader never claimed that there was - until the last paragraph of the memo was there any indication that my interests in securing election to the Northern Territory federal seat could perhaps conflict with my interests as Chief Minister of the Northern Territory. Frankly, Mr Speaker, I have yet to see how there can be any such conflict of interest. We are told that the last paragraph said: 'You should see this chap' - whom I did not see - 'because it cannot do any harm to your national profile'. Who wants a national profile when he is simply relying on the Northern Territory electorate to elect him. Certainly not a candidate for the Northern Territory seat in the House of Representatives.

More likely, the Chief Minister of the Northern Territory would try to build up and attach as much national weight and importance as he possibly can to that office. I have directed my efforts continually through the 5 or more years that I have been Chief Minister for this Territory and before that when I was Majority Leader to build up and give credibility to the office of minister in the Northern Territory and to the affairs of the Northern Territory generally. As far as I am concerned, if the Opposition Leader can read anything other than that into that memo, I cannot see how he can say, in some strange way, that he is rewriting history. That memo is a clear indication that my efforts are constantly directed to building up a profile for the Northern Territory nationally because that is what we need.

Mr Speaker, I would like to set history straight again because, unfortunately, the Opposition Leader keeps coming back to matters of which he has no direct knowledge such as the matter of seeking an appointment with the Prime Minister immediately after the last election - which I did. I would remind all honourable members of the moderate terms that I adopted when I was interviewed by the TV and the press immediately after our overwhelming election victory which sent the Opposition Leader into a tailspin from which he has not yet recovered. This morning, we heard the mouthings of a desperate and bitter man. Transcripts are available of everything I said that night on radio and TV. In every interview I emphasised that it was not a victory for the CLP but a victory for the wishes of the people of the Northern Territory and that we wanted to work with the federal government. I did not attack Mr Hawke at any stage. I did not attack the federal government; I said we wanted to work with them. Consequently, as soon as I could the following week, I personally rang the Prime Minister. That was on the Tuesday night after the election. I spoke to Mr Hawke himself. He said in response to my request: 'Yes, I will give you an appointment next week. Can you get someone on your staff to contact Graham Evans on my staff. I had my staff - indeed not just my staff in the end, but senior public service officials - attempting to contact this gentleman on Mr Hawke's staff. That person did not return any phone calls and continued to remain unavailable until after I had travelled to Canberra. However, we did manage to contact a stenographer and that person was apparently detailed to indicate that the Prime Minister would not be available.

I have here the telexes that passed between myself and the Prime Minister. The first telex from me to him is as follows: 'You will remember that, early last week, I telephoned you requesting an appointment to discuss various matters affecting relations between our respective governments. You indicated you would be prepared to give me an appointment to see you during the course of this week. You nominated Graham Evans as the person with whom my staff should liaise to arrange the appointment...'. There is the telex, Mr Speaker. I am quite happy to table it.

The response from the Prime Minister does not even refer to our telephone conversation and nowhere in subsequent telexes is there any attempt by the Prime Minister to deny the fact that he voluntarily gave me an appointment which he then used his staff to put off. I went to Canberra because I had arranged appointments with Mr Cohen and other ministers including, from memory, Mr Beasley, the Minister for Aviation, about Alice Springs Airport and other matters. When I was in Canberra, I was told by members of the National Press Gallery that the Prime Minister, although he said he was unable to spare the time to see me, had said: 'My program for the next few weeks precludes an early meeting with you unless you have some matters of particular priority of which, at this stage, I am unaware'. What hypocrisy that is after the election and considering the fact that the Prime Minister came here twice during that election to campaign against me. Someone from the National Press Gallery counted the number of times that he called me a liar. Apparently, in the course of his visits to the Northern Territory, the Prime Minister managed to call me a liar 82 times.

Nonetheless, despite his program for the next few weeks precluding an early meeting with me, the Prime Minister spent the afternoon of the day in which I was in Canberra sitting down over drinks, talking with journalists at the National Press Club. The Prime Minister considered that he could not spare half an hour for the Chief Minister of the Northern Territory despite what he said at the National Economic Summit Conference. The summit was just another example of how hard we tried to work with this government. We came back and sold the communique to the Northern Territory and have constantly and loyally supported the conclusions of that communique. If the Prime Minister cannot spare a half hour away from having drinks with the journalists at the National Press Club to talk to the Chief Minister of the Northern Territory, it certainly has to set people like the Chief Minister of the Northern Territory wondering whether it is possible to build up communications with someone who spends his time calling all his political opponents liars. Mr Gray and Mr Bjelke-Petersen also suffer from this. We are all liars. We had the example of Tasmania only the other day where there is a deliberate campaign of vilification by the Prime Minister against his political opponents.

Mr Speaker, I wonder what sort of relations one can achieve. I am continually trying to see the Prime Minister and I agree as far as possible with everything the Prime Minister requires of me. I continue to seek an appointment with the Prime Minister. As of this date, his appointments secretary will not return calls placed by my appointments secretary. It is a funny thing that all other ministers in the federal government, including the Treasurer, Mr Keating, will see me. I saw Mr Keating for half an hour last week and our relationship on a personal level could be described as 'cordial'. It is remarkable that the only member of this government who continues to close his door against me and the one who is on public record in the National Economic Summit Conference as keeping the door open to all Australians, particularly ministers of governments, is the Prime Minister.

Let us deal with the matter that the Leader of the Opposition is particularly upset about - and I apologise, Mr Speaker, humbly and contritely to the Opposition Leader if he considers that he is a kid. Could I read the actual context of that interview which in fact was on ABC Territory radio, not the Macquarie Broadcasting Network.

Mr B. Collins: It was on AM. I heard it.

Mr EVERINGHAM: I had better read the question first: 'Well, I was going to say you denied it categorically then. But, later, talking with some

of us in the Press Club after the Press Club luncheon, you even went so far as to suggest that I must have rocks in my head to think you would want to go and work in Canberra, I answered:

*Well, that's pretty true. It is not something I want to do frankly but it is no good sitting up here as king of the kids on top of the sandcastle while the Feds turn the fire hose on underneath and wash it all out from under you. We are being white-anted in Canberra and I have come to the conclusion that remaining here as Chief Minister in the Northern Territory and not going down there to fight for the Territory would really be an illusory victory. It is not something that there is a great deal of joy out of. Let's face it, my salary will get cut in half straight away. No more white cars to drive around in - just a miserable existence as a backbencher in Canberra, in a crummy little room about the size of a telephone booth. It seems to me that, you know, that everything that we have done here in the Territory for the last 6 or 7 years is going to be swept away unless someone goes down there and turns the spotlight of publicity onto what the Feds are doing to us.*

I think that rather places it in a better context. The Leader of the Opposition continually uses other people's words - and his own for that matter when it suits him - out of context. When one reads the whole passage, one sees any motivation that I may have arrived at.

When I spoke to the journalist from the Woman's Day in October of last year, we were in a completely different situation. When I responded to the questions in the Assembly following the appearance of that article where I undertook plainly - and I acknowledge it - to continue in the service of this Assembly until at least the expiry of this term, who foresaw at that stage the decision of the federal government to permit uranium mining at Roxby Downs but not in the Northern Territory? It is not even as straightforward as no uranium mining. You can have uranium mining in a Labor state but you cannot have it in the Northern Territory which happens not to be a Labor state. A week after that shattering decision, who foresaw Ayers Rock being handed over without a word of consultation?

The Leader of the Opposition cheerfully chooses to ignore all these situations. He chooses to ignore that there was an election with an overwhelming victory as a consequence of which the Prime Minister, apparently in a fit of pique, refuses to see me. The Leader of the Opposition criticises me for mulling over the implications of the Prime Minister's actions whilst I am on holidays.

Certainly, I have not misled Territorians at any time. It has been my continuing objective to do the very best I can in the interests of Territorians. If the Leader of the Opposition believes that seeking endorsement for another place is a choice that my family or myself particularly relish, then he had better think again. I believe that, in our current situation, where the Northern Territory has one single, solitary voice in the House of Representatives and where that voice is never raised to support the Northern Territory and indeed is raised constantly to damn the Northern Territory - 'overfunded' is how our current member of the federal parliamentary ALP has described the

Northern Territory - then perhaps the Leader of the Opposition has some appreciation why it causes me such great concern that I would surrender an office that I prize in order to try to save what chestnuts I can before they are completely destroyed by this irresponsible person who presently represents us in the federal parliament.

As for abandoning the Northern Territory, I just do not know how that could be said because I am abandoning my personal interests in the interests of the Northern Territory. The Leader of the Opposition has had the grace to acknowledge in this Assembly before that, if I followed my own personal interests to the full, I would not be in this Assembly and I would not be in politics. I am certainly not furthering any personal interest by going to Canberra. If indeed I do receive endorsement from the party of which I am a member, then I will be prepared to joust and debate on this subject with the opposition. It is because the opposition knows what my answer will be that it is so desperate. It is so desperate that it is considering moves to try to incorporate Christmas Island and Cocos Island into the Northern Territory electorate to try to rig the Northern Territory electorate to keep its numbers in the federal parliament. That is all it is to these people: numbers in the federal parliament. But I say, Mr Speaker, whatever may transpire, let the people of the Northern Territory judge because I have confidence in their judgment.

Mr SMITH (Millner): Mr Speaker, the Chief Minister has again put his foot in it in his concluding comments by casting aspersions on the independent electoral commission that operates in the federal arena and he should be condemned for it.

Mr Everingham: You are wrong. It has to be by statute.

Mr SMITH: It is an appalling state of affairs to cast such aspersions on the deliberations that are currently taking place at the federal level on what boundaries there should be to encompass the 24 or 26 additional seats that there will be after the next election.

Mr Speaker, I had not heard the full context of the Chief Minister's remarks before, but it is worse, not better: 'The king of the kids on top of the sandcastle'. There is no way out of that. It is a direct denigration of this Assembly and of the people of the Northern Territory. The honourable Chief Minister should be ashamed of it and should be censured for it by this Assembly.

Mr Speaker, I do not want to spend any more of my time deliberating on the comments of the Chief Minister. In this case, we are in the fortunate position of the Leader of the Opposition being able to reply. I wanted to concentrate on one thing that I thought was seminal to the Chief Minister's decision to go to Canberra, but which he did not mention in his own speech: the relativities review that is taking place in regard to Commonwealth, state and Territory financial relationships and where the Territory fits into that. There has been a lot of hysterical talk in the Northern Territory coming from the government about that review and about the impact it may have on Territory finances. It was one of the publicly-stated reasons that the honourable Chief Minister gave in trying to justify his decision to attempt to go to Canberra but he did not mention it just now.

I think we need to start by examining the Memorandum of Understanding and what both the CLP and Labor governments have done with it since 1978. It is clear to this date that the Memorandum of Understanding has been adhered to by both the federal CLP government and the federal Labor government. Indeed, in perhaps the most significant variation from the original Memorandum of Understanding, this Territory government agreed that the health grants issue should be incorporated into a relativities review. I think that was in 1981. As I understand it, the Territory government has been reasonably happy with what came out of that relativities review, accepted the findings of the relativities review and, in doing so, agreed to a significant variation in the original Memorandum of Understanding.

It is also very interesting to note that, on 28 November last year, at the height of the hysteria of the last Territory election, the Treasurer finally admitted that in fact the federal Hawke government had very much honoured its commitment to the Memorandum of Understanding. I will quote from the very day of the election when Mr Perron was speaking on the radio about the federal government. He said: 'It has, by and large, certainly adhered to the formulas in the Memorandum of Understanding as far as the automatic funds which flow to us in the Territory. As far as the memorandum is concerned, we are pleased to acknowledge that they have adhered to it and, as well, to the electricity agreement which is the other major financial document impinging on the Territory's financial position'. Then, on the actual day of the campaign, we had a front page article in the Northern Territory News entitled: 'Funds boost for the Northern Territory'. That time it was the Chief Minister who was quoted: '"The Northern Territory will receive an increase of \$88m in federal funding", the Chief Minister, Mr Paul Everingham, said today. He said that funding would go up to \$847m this year and \$935m next year. Mr Everingham said that the extra funding will come under the commitment for funding in the Memorandum of Understanding worked out at the time of self-government. He said that, no matter which party would be returned to power in the election tomorrow, the federal government was obligated to the same amount of money'.

We had a situation where, in the context of the election campaign, both the Treasurer and Chief Minister acknowledged that the Hawke track record in relation to financial agreements and the Memorandum of Understanding is in fact impeccable. There is one thing which is now clear about the Memorandum of Understanding. Clearly, in a couple of significant aspects, the first 6 years of self-government were seen as a transitionary period. This is expressed particularly in the provision under the memorandum that, in the first 6 years, there would be special purposes grants available to the Northern Territory starting off at \$20m per annum for the first 3 years and reducing to \$5m in the last financial year 1984-85. As well as that, the Territory has had the opportunity of going to the Grants Commission and arguing for special assistance on the cost of the provision of services and for the difficulty it has in raising revenue for those services. Of course, as we all know, the Territory government, on at least one occasion, has been to the Grants Commission - it has just been again. On the occasion it did go to the Grants Commission, it gained an additional \$16.9m which was a recognition by the Grants Commission that it had been underfunded.

That agreement, as the honourable Chief Minister stated in June 1978, runs out at the end of 6 years. He said in this Assembly on 13 June 1978: 'A review of our base funding will then be conducted to allow for the incorporation of all or part of this special grant into the base general

purpose revenue grant for automatic escalation in accordance with the state tax reimbursement formula'.

Mr Speaker, it is clear that a significant aspect of the Memorandum of Understanding is up for review. This of course coincides with what is happening in terms of Commonwealth-state relationships. The present Commonwealth-state tax sharing arrangement ends at the end of the next financial year. It has always been the arrangement that there would be a review conducted by the Grants Commission. Of course, this review is taking place at the moment. The machinery has been set in motion by the federal Treasurer. It was set in motion in fact at the Premiers' Conference held on 30 and 31 July 1983 at which the Chief Minister and, I assume, the Treasurer were present. At that stage, it was agreed that a working group of Commonwealth, state and Territory officers would advise at the end of October 1983 on terms of reference for a review by February 1985 of the distribution of the tax-sharing and identified health grants to apply in the 1985-86 financial year.

Mr Speaker, I would have thought that, if the Northern Territory government had concerns about the Northern Territory being part of that process, in terms of tax-sharing grants, they would have been expressed in that eyeball-to-eyeball situation that the honourable Chief Minister so loves. But, if they were expressed, the government was very quiet about them because we, in the Northern Territory, were not aware of any misgivings that the government had about the prospect of the Northern Territory being involved in this relativities review until at least a month or 6 weeks later when the Treasurer wrote to the federal Treasurer stating that the Northern Territory government did not want to be part of it. At the time, when the opportunity was there in that eyeball-to-eyeball situation, nothing happened.

In terms of the review that will take place, again I believe a misleading impression has been given to the public of the Northern Territory as to what the nature of the review will be. I have a document headed: 'Terms of Reference for Review of Tax-sharing Relativities and Identified Health Grants'. I do not intend to read it all. I hope that I do not read it selectively. I just want to pick out points that I think are relevant in this exercise.

First of all, it basically says that, in fact, there will be 2 reviews. The first review is a distribution of tax-sharing grants among the states only. A second review will be a distribution of tax-sharing grants among the states and the Northern Territory with the Northern Territory being treated on the same basis as the states. We certainly do not have a federal government commitment that the Territory will be forced into this situation. The federal government quite clearly is interested in seeing what the results are, and frankly, so am I.

The terms of reference that will be used by the Grants Commission, without reading them out, are basically the same as the terms of reference that the Grants Commission used in assessing additional Territory needs in the last 2 or 3 years. It is under those terms of reference that the Territory has gained an additional \$16.9m. I want to quote from this a particular reference to the Northern Territory in the terms of reference:

*As regards the Northern Territory, the government would expect the commission to report on arguments put to it that needs exist in the Territory which are not apparent in the states, or which differ from those of the states, and to report, if any such needs exist, on whether they would be best addressed in the context of the tax-sharing arrangements or separately from those arrangements.*



Mr Speaker, that appears to be a fairly open-ended commitment from the federal government to this independent body, the Grants Commission, to assess independently the needs of the Northern Territory and whether they can be met within the terms of the relativities review or whether they are better met with the continuation of the existing arrangements. The point is that it is very clearly a responsibility of the Northern Territory government at this stage to put a strong and well-established case to the Grants Commission as to its funding areas. As we have been told, the Chief Minister himself acknowledged in 1978 that it was up to the Territory to get its act together, as it were, and spend the first 6 years of self-government preparing a major submission on funding. Of course, that has been done on 3 occasions in terms of presenting information to the Grants Commission. The information is there. If the exercises so far have been successful, there is little reason to doubt the exercise in this case would also be successful. One could reasonably conclude that, if the Territory government has done its job, and I believe it has, we should not have much concern about this relativities review that is about to occur.

I want now to get back to the basic point in this address: the Territory's responsibility to ensure that the Memorandum of Understanding and the principles therein are continued to be adhered to by whatever federal government is in power. In that regard, let us look at what the Chief Minister has done to the people of the Northern Territory in the last few months. The Leader of the Opposition has outlined to some extent the misconceptions, misrepresentations and deceptions on which the Chief Minister based his election campaign. He took the people of the Northern Territory to a snap, emotive election on the grounds that he was to have a mandate to save self-government. That was on 3 December. A couple of weeks later, he took his 4-week holiday. When he returned from his holidays, Mr Hawke was still overseas. The Chief Minister announced that the mandate he had from the Northern Territory people was not big enough and that relations had deteriorated to such an extent while both he and Mr Hawke were away from their offices that there was nothing left for him to do but to bail out from his responsibilities as Chief Minister of the Northern Territory and pursue an eyeball-to-eyeball contact in the federal parliament with Mr Hawke.

If he has had problems getting an interview or a meeting with Mr Hawke, those problems are small compared with the problems that an opposition backbencher or an opposition frontbencher will have obtaining an interview with Mr Hawke. I was told yesterday of a very interesting situation where a close personal friend of Mr Hawke and minister in the Hawke government practically had to throw himself under the wheels of the Prime Minister's car to get himself an interview. He did not finally throw himself under the wheels of the car but got in the back seat and went with him to the airport. He had 10 minutes with him. I think it is often forgotten that the Prime Minister has an extremely heavy workload. Persistence might get you somewhere but sounding off in the press will not impress anybody, particularly not a busy person.

The Chief Minister claimed he was making the decision to go to Canberra for the good of the Territory and that he was 'taking the Territory's case for better representation to Canberra'. At first, the rhetoric sounds good but one can quite easily see through it. The fact of the matter is that the Chief Minister announced before the Assembly even sat in the Northern Territory that he was prepared to give up his position as Chief Minister, as head of a state-type government with all the negotiating advantages that

that position gives him, to become a backbencher in opposition in the federal parliament. No one here has suggested that the Hawke government with its current popularity rating of 57% and the Prime Minister's personal popularity rating of 73% will not be returned at the next election. Probably it will be returned with an even bigger majority than it has at present.

Instead of leading the people as head of their government - and that is basically what the people voted for - the Chief Minister is now telling the people of the Northern Territory that he thinks he could achieve more for them as a backbencher in the federal parliament. With all due respect to the political acumen of the Chief Minister, I think that he is kidding himself. The cold, hard realities are that, should he manage to be elected to the federal opposition, he will be subject to all the rules of the federal parliamentary procedures. In the next House of Representatives, there will be 149 members instead of the present 124. Each evening, they have half-an-hour devoted to adjournment speeches. There will be at least 120 people competing in question time. Apart from the occasional question, the only opportunity on which the Chief Minister would have a chance to speak in the eyeball-to-eyeball situation would be on bills. His remarks would have to be related to the topic of the bills.

It is clear that there are other reasons for the Chief Minister's decision than the betterment of the Northern Territory. He would be giving up his most powerful position as a negotiator with the federal government to become a non-entity in federal parliament. In fact, I think he has probably become sick and tired of pulling his colleagues out of the mud. It is clear that the Chief Minister has compromised his government's position at a most critical period, and we do not deny that. We agree that there are important issues facing the Northern Territory at this particular time and not the least of them is the issue of continued funding.

What we are saying is that he has compromised his government's position at this most critical period. He is prepared to leave the government in the hands of a group of ministers, some of whom have not yet done much to prove themselves and others of whom have a proven track record of absolute disaster. In doing so, the Chief Minister has put the Northern Territory in a most unfortunate and contemptible position. He wants to bail out from the responsibility he very clearly had to lead negotiations with the federal government on federal funding, on the Memorandum of Understanding and on major developments in the Northern Territory. He has taken himself out of a position of strength and is prepared to put himself in a weak and ineffective position because it suits him and no one else.

It is imperative that we have a Territory government that is governing the Territory. If the Chief Minister is serious about wanting the Territory to be in a strong negotiating position with the federal government, then at this time, after making his intentions clear, he should resign his position as Chief Minister at once and allow the rest of the ministers to get on with the job they were elected to do.

As the Leader of the Opposition has clearly pointed out, any federal government would have to keep the Chief Minister, who announced his intention to contest the Territory seat in the next federal election, very much at arm's length. That is very much the nub of this. We have a Chief Minister who will be very much a lame duck in the next 12 months in the

political situation in Australia. The federal government obviously will not be able to trust him. That is perhaps a personal disaster for him and perhaps a disaster for the CLP government. Unfortunately, it is also a disaster for the people of the Northern Territory. The only way that the prestige of this Assembly and the prestige of the position of the Chief Minister can be restored is by the Chief Minister resigning and by the CLP majority party in this Assembly electing his successor to get on with the job that it was given the mandate to do on 3 December.

Mr ROBERTSON (Attorney-General): Mr Speaker, I think I will deal firstly and very briefly with the speech made by the honourable member for Millner. It is very easy to make a reply to that. He started off by referring to some aspersion that the Chief Minister cast upon the Commonwealth Electoral Redistribution Committee in relation to the Cocos, Keeling and Christmas Islands joining the Northern Territory electorate. If he had only done some homework before he had opened his mouth, he would have realised that the only way that can be done is by statute, not by the commission. It is a political decision, not one for the commission. The honourable member destroyed his credibility before he even addressed the subject before us. I submit that the rest of his speech was designed for no other purpose than to talk the Chief Minister out of the very thing that the opposition fears most: a strong candidate to represent the Northern Territory's interests.

Mr B. Collins: Oh, it is campaign time again.

Mr Bell: Back on the hustings.

Mr ROBERTSON: Mr Speaker, during the speeches by both the members of the opposition, I never uttered a word. I would ask for the same courtesy. There was little substance in anything that the honourable member for Millner said which is deserving of reply.

Mr Speaker, what I will address myself to is the terms of the actual motion. It is in 3 parts. The first relates to misleading the Assembly as a result of a statement on 12 October 1983. The second relates to bringing the Assembly and its members into public contempt by statements made in the national media on 6 February 1984. Thirdly, there is the proposal put to us that these actions compromise the Assembly and the government.

I will deal with the last first because I think it the easiest to deal with. Of course, it is well known that, in the majority of cases where heads of government give an indication of their intention to retire or move elsewhere, but in particular to retire, they resign from the position as head of government. Of course, the sole reason that is done has nothing to do with the present set of circumstances but is based purely upon internal political expediency in that it is necessary to have a new man in place before the next election. That relates to state elections. This is not about a state election. The circumstances are entirely different. The reasoning which governs that kind of factor is entirely irrelevant to the present set of circumstances. If one talks about people stepping down where conflicts of interest are believed to occur, whereas in fact they do not, one might recall the position of Mr Hawke when he was the President of the Australian Council of Trade Unions. He made clear his intention to move from that theatre, where he was expected to represent the interests of union members and to be able to approach a then CLP government in negotiations in respect of matters of

interest to the membership of the ACTU. He did not resign.

Mr Smith: He did.

Mr ROBERTSON: He did not step down immediately. The speculation went on for months. It was only when he actually became a candidate that he stood down. The Chief Minister is not a candidate. His position differs in no way from that of Mr Hawke at that time when he continued as President of the ACTU.

Mr B. Collins: He resigned almost immediately afterwards.

Mr Smith: It is not a legislative body.

Mr ROBERTSON: If you shut up, I will deal with the point made by the Leader of the Opposition.

Mr Speaker, the point made by the Leader of the Opposition was that the ability of the Chief Minister to negotiate with a Labor government would be decreased as a result of a stated intention perhaps to seek preselection. That is exactly what Mr Hawke did at the time. It did not seem to affect his effectiveness and I admit that he was a very effective President of the ACTU when dealing with the CLP government. I would not have thought that the Hawke government was of such a petty nature as to have regard to what a person such as a Chief Minister may or may not do. Remember that there is a preselection process and this is a may-or-may-not situation.

Mr Speaker, let us get to the substance of the rest of this motion. The part relating to the misleading of the Assembly falls flat in the face of the evidence which we have before us. As members will well know, the rule of truth is a very plain one. What one is bound by is that the person making a statement believed in the truth of that statement at the time of its making and that the statement was true at the time. Some people also add that it was 'to the best of their knowledge'. However, I believe that those words are strictly superfluous because, obviously, it has to be 'to the best of their knowledge'.

What was the position on 12 October 1983 when the Chief Minister made his statement that he would continue for the full term of this Assembly if various factors came to pass? The position then was that we were negotiating with the Commonwealth over a wide range of issues. He had every intention of continuing at that time for the full term as Chief Minister, if elected to that position, because he believed 2 things. One was that, when the election came, we on this side of the Assembly would be very successful in being returned to government and that a number of those issues which were federal-Territory related would be the very issues upon which this government would be returned successfully.

We sought a mandate on the things which we believed were important to Territorians such as the issue over Ayers Rock, uranium mining, the rail project, the termination of state grants for our roads and matters relating to the Criminal Code where conventions are torn up and thrown out the window. Last night, the federal Attorney-General said in the Senate that he had sent a letter to the Chief Minister or to myself - I forget which - saying that unless we buckled under the will of the Holy City in Canberra,

certain constitutional or legal sanctions would be taken against us. Mr Speaker, this is the sort of hypocrisy we have become used to. On the one hand, every Remembrance Day, when people ought to be remembering fallen soldiers from the First World War, this nonsense is dragged out time after time, year after year, about what a horrible chap Sir John Kerr was because he breached a convention.

It seems to me to be quite in order for the Commonwealth to do precisely the same thing. It is exactly like the logic which argues that uranium mining in a Labor state is good because the uranium must be different from that mined in a non-Labor Territory. It is because of those sorts of things that we believed, when we were returned with a mandate, that the Commonwealth would realise the error of its ways. It was in that context that the Chief Minister reasonably believed that, when this government was returned on those very issues, the Commonwealth would behave reasonably towards us. What was the truth after the landslide of 3 December? We all know the truth, Mr Speaker. There has been no change in attitude on Ayers Rock, on the uranium mining industry and our needs in the Territory, on the rail project nor on the state grants bicentennial programs which are being held by Mr Morris at this moment out of sheer and utter spite and based upon the Hill Inquiry on a railway line which had absolutely nothing to do with an agreement between ourselves and the Commonwealth for a 2c levy. Incidentally, that levy is collected on an indexed basis and sent to us on a pure 2c basis. Also, there has been no change on that other issue which we were very concerned about in the Territory and which we put to Territorians: the impost of levies on crude fuel and on fuel products, which is indexed.

All of these things were issues in the election. We were elected on those issues and the Commonwealth took absolutely no notice of the result of that election. That is why the Chief Minister has reached the stage of utter frustration where he says to himself: 'I went to the people with these things. I won an election through the team and nothing good has come out of it. Not a solitary benefit has come out of all of that'. What is the Chief Minister to do? Is he to say that he is not interested in the Territory any more and bury his head in the sand, like the Leader of the Opposition damn well did by his resignation from the executive of the Australian Labor Party? So much for the Leader of the Opposition's interest in pushing for the Territory. He walked away from the one forum where he could do most for the Territory. He turned his back on it in a fit of pique and bitterness. Let us not have this pious stuff we had this morning from the Leader of the Opposition that the Chief Minister has weakened his position in terms of the Territory government negotiating with the federal government when the Leader of the Opposition himself turned turkey and ran away from his responsibilities.

Mr Speaker, there is no substance to this motion whatsoever. As for the stupidity of the point relating to bringing this Assembly and its members into public contempt by a statement in the national media, anyone including the opposition would know what that meant. It did not mean that the Chief Minister was saying that this is a place for kids. It did not mean that he was saying the government was comprised of kids or that the Territory was comprised of kids. He was saying the Commonwealth government was treating us like kids. The distinction is very clear. Mr Speaker, there is no substance in this ridiculous censure motion and I think that has been demonstrated by the Chief Minister in his address and by myself. I reject it outright.

Mr DONDAS (Health): Mr Speaker, I move that the question be now put.

Motion agreed to.

Mr B. COLLINS (Opposition Leader): Mr Speaker, I have the right of reply to this motion and I demand to get it. I move that so much of Standing Orders be suspended as would prevent me from replying, as is my right, to the motion that I moved this morning. I ask for a suspension of Standing Orders. I did not think you would do that, Jim. It is a first time.

Mr SPEAKER: Honourable Leader of the Opposition, there is no question to be brought before the Chair for a suspension of Standing Orders while a question that the question be put has been agreed to. The question is that the motion moved by the Leader of the Opposition be agreed to.

Motion negatived.

#### TABLED PAPERS

Mr MANZIE (Community Development): Mr Speaker, I table the 4th and 5th reports of the Commissioner of Consumer Affairs and the 3rd report of the Commissioner of Motor Vehicle Dealers.

#### DEPUTY CHAIRMEN OF COMMITTEES

Mr SPEAKER: Honourable members, I lay on the table my warrant nominating Mr D.W. Collins, Mr McCarthy, Mr Palmer, Mr Hanrahan, Mr Finch and Mr Leo to act as Deputy Chairmen of Committees when requested to do so by the Chairman of Committees.

#### MINISTERIAL STATEMENT Allegations of Messrs Ward and McNicol on the Chamberlain Trial

Mr ROBERTSON (Attorney-General): Mr Speaker, I seek leave to make a statement to the Legislative Assembly on the allegations of Messrs Ward and McNicol on the Chamberlain trial.

Mr SPEAKER: Is leave granted?

Leave denied.

#### SUSPENSION OF STANDING ORDERS

Mr ROBERTSON: Mr Speaker, I move that so much of Standing Orders be suspended as would prevent me from making a statement to the Legislative Assembly on this matter.

In so doing, I advise the Leader of the Opposition that I will give some consideration to asking you, Sir, to convene an early meeting of the Standing Orders Committee. It is the first time that this has happened in this Assembly.

Mr B. COLLINS (Opposition Leader): Mr Speaker, I wish to speak to this motion.

Mr ROBERTSON (Attorney-General): Mr Speaker, I move that the question be put.

Mr SPEAKER: The question is that the motion be...

Mr B. Collins: This is a most contemptible display of the use of 19 members in this Assembly to ensure that this Assembly remains a CLP club instead of a house of democratic debate that I have seen in 6 years.

Mr SPEAKER: Honourable members will resume their seats.

Mr B. Collins: Contemptible!

Mr SPEAKER: The question is that the question be now put.

Motion agreed to.

Mr ROBERTSON (Attorney-General): Mr Speaker, I...

Mr B. Collins: Are you going to change the Standing Orders now?

Mr ROBERTSON: We are meeting on that question. I am not going to change the Standing Orders.

Mr B. Collins: This is going to be a happy 4 years.

Mr ROBERTSON: If you start that way, it is going to be.

Mr B. Collins: A Country Liberal Party clubhouse.

Mr SPEAKER: The question is that the motion to suspend Standing Orders be agreed to.

Motion agreed to.

Mr ROBERTSON (Attorney-General): Mr Speaker, after that little bit of petty bloody-mindedness...

Mr B. Collins: You have to be joking. Six years of cooperation thrown out the window on the first morning. Great stuff. CLP clubhouse.

Mr Everingham: When have you cooperated?

Mr ROBERTSON: Mr Speaker, I would not normally bring matters of this nature into the Assembly but, in doing so, I refer to nearly 9 months of incredible and scurrilous allegations against this government and the Territory system of justice by 2 men purporting to act in the better interests of the Chamberlain family. I see no other way to lay it to rest than to have recorded in Hansard the allegations made by Messrs Phil Ward and Don McNicol. They would have a considerable cross-section of the Northern Territory involved in one of the most almighty conspiracies covering up the inquiry into the disappearance of Azaria Chamberlain in August 1980.

I will outline these allegations which are based, at best, on dubious reasoning and, at worst, on fabrication, and which have attempted to make a mockery of the justice system, to bring police and the Territory law into disrepute and to ferment alarm within the community at large. A prime example of the manoeuvring and double-dealing we have come to expect from this brace of concerned citizens is contained in this telex sent to me late yesterday, but not before media representatives around this town were on the phone asking about it:

*Thank you for your advice that the police investigation has proved fruitless. Unfortunately, our continuing investigations have not been fruitless. We have gathered considerably more information. We now have a case we can prove beyond all reasonable doubt. Legal advice is that I will be in a position to lay charges in this matter within the next few days. Therefore, I request you delay announcing the lack of success of your police inquiries so that any announcement does not prejudice my case.*

Mr Speaker, the fact of the matter is that there was no such communication whatsoever between myself and either Ward or McNicol. It is a total fabrication for the purpose best known to themselves. I say that, if Ward and McNicol's investigations have presented them with a case sufficient for them to warrant prosecutions, let them do it. After all, that is what they have been saying they can do for months. That telex is typical of the war that Ward and McNicol have waged on the police and the government through the media. They have paid scant attention to the fact that much of their campaign was fought while the High Court considered the Chamberlains' application for an appeal against the decision of the Federal Court. All this is from men who would have the country believe they were on the side of the Chamberlains who, incidentally, have made it known to the government that they dissociated themselves entirely from the actions of Ward and McNicol.

I would also take this opportunity to go into the details as regards my own dealings and those of the Solicitor-General with these men. I propose later to read the Solicitor-General's opinion which goes at length into the allegations and, I must say, repudiates them beyond doubt. By the way, that is my opinion of course and not what the courts may or may not believe.

The following is a short history. On 3 May 1983, I received copies of several documents, some in the form of sworn affidavits which had apparently been prepared by Messrs Ward and McNicol. It was subsequently arranged that Messrs Ward and McNicol be interviewed by the Solicitor-General in relation to the material and other allegations. A meeting took place in Darwin on 6 June 1983, at which Chief Superintendent of Police, Neil Plumb, was also present. At that meeting, Ward and McNicol produced further written material, together with copies of tape-recordings of interviews which had been conducted by them with various people. Some of these recordings were made without the knowledge of the person being interviewed. Amongst the material made available were what are purported to be transcripts of tape-recordings between a Mr Alan Hawken and an Aboriginal at Ayers Rock. Although they undertook to try to obtain further such tapes from Mr Hawken, Messrs Ward and McNicol have not produced them. The tapes provided by Ward and McNicol were transcribed and copies of the transcripts were sent to Mr McNicol on 5 August 1983 for his comments as to the accuracy of the transcripts. No response has been received to that invitation.



Allow me now to outline the allegations of conspiracy. It is alleged that, on the night of 17 August 1980, a child was placed in the family tent at Ayers Rock by her mother shortly before 8 pm. Shortly thereafter, the mother left the tent with her eldest son to return to the barbeque area. Whilst there, a dingo, which was subsequently identified as 'Ding' - and remember these are allegations, not facts - came to the tent, entered it, removed the sleeping child from its bassinet, left the tent carrying the child and fled up the sandhill east of the camping ground where the tent was located. From there, it is alleged, it travelled along the top of the sandhill and then went in a westerly direction, eventually coming into the vicinity of a house occupied by a person employed in the area, his wife and family. It is further alleged that, at the time of the dingo's arrival at that house, certain persons were present. The child, which was then dead, was either taken from the dingo or left there by the dingo. The child was then buried by those present. At some later stage, it is alleged, the child was dug up, the clothing removed and the body disposed of elsewhere. The clothing was then put where eventually it was found a week later.

The claim is that the motive for this behaviour was the realisation that the dingo responsible, 'Ding', should already have been destroyed following an attack upon another child some weeks earlier. It is alleged that the dingo was not destroyed because it was a family pet. Rather, it was removed from an area west of the Olgas from whence it was returned. The allegation is that the employee feared that he would lose his job if it was known that the dingo had not been destroyed after the first attack on a child in June.

It is further alleged that others were involved in these actions and that they then became involved by assisting a cover up or failing to disclose evidence which might lead to the discovery of the so-called 'truth'. As all the supportive material of these allegations was passed to the Northern Territory police, who undertook a detailed and thorough investigation into the matters raised and into the material said to support the conspiracy theory, the police interviewed 3 persons previously interviewed by Ward and McNicol and those upon whose information they claimed to rely for their theory. These conversations were recorded with the consent of the interviewees. Where Aboriginals who may have difficulty with the English language were involved, an interpreter was used. These tape-recordings have been transcribed. Some of the police carrying out this investigation were also involved in the substantive investigations concerning the death of Azaria Chamberlain. They had an intimate knowledge of all of the details of the prior investigation, the original statement supplied by various witnesses soon after the event of 17 August 1980 and the transcripts of all sworn evidence subsequently given during the course of proceedings.

Any suggestion that the police investigation of the Ward and McNicol allegations was biased or was not conducted in a thorough manner is rejected. The earliest material upon which Ward and McNicol rely apparently was obtained by Mr Hawken on 15 January 1982, about 17 months after the event, and the last about 12 months after that. The police provided the Solicitor-General with a full set of the material originally supplied by Ward and McNicol and the transcripts of the taped interviews conducted by the police on 3 October 1983. The Solicitor-General has reviewed everything available and given his opinion.

Mr Speaker, I wish to mention the activities of Mr Ward and Mr McNicol. Notwithstanding the cooperation extended to Ward and McNicol by the Northern Territory government, Mr Ward, in particular, has conducted a media campaign over the last few months involving press, radio and television, particularly outside the Territory. In this campaign, he continued to make allegations of conspiracy and attempted to vilify the government, counsel for the Crown involved in the prosecution, the Solicitor-General, the police, the Ombudsman, rangers within the employ of the Conservation Commission and myself. As far as I am aware, Mr McNicol has not dissociated himself publicly from Mr Ward's activities. Mr Ward has gone so far as to suggest that there is a monumental cover-up by all those concerned and has asked why I should not be charged as an accessory after the fact to the alleged conspiracy. May he go his hardest. He predicts that the disclosure of what he perceives to be the truth will bring down this government. He has said constantly that, if the Crown does not prosecute those alleged to be involved, he will. That is his right and I say: may he go his hardest.

The Chamberlain attitude to the alleged facts and much of the material upon which the conspiracy theory is based was made available to the legal advisers of Mr and Mrs Chamberlain after the conviction in the Supreme Court but at a time when they could seek to present fresh evidence to the Federal Court if instructed to do so. They did not. The same applies to the High Court which could have heard fresh evidence. Again counsel did not use anything of the Ward-McNicol allegations. Legal advisers of the Chamberlains have informed the Solicitor-General that Ward and McNicol are not acting in any way on behalf of their clients. Mrs Chamberlain wrote to the Chief Minister on 16 October 1983 and I quote from Mrs Chamberlain's letter:

*Dear Mr Everingham,*

*Numerous recent mail has made me distressed to realise that people think I condone and am, indeed, involved in the private actions of Mr Phil Ward and Mr Don McNicol. Although I know both of the gentlemen to some extent, I do not support their actions in any way whatsoever. Indeed, I have asked both gentlemen, in separate instances, to desist from their activities and also contacted their lawyer for the same reason. I wish you and your government to know that I will have no part of their actions and that they are not supported by myself, husband or family. I have seen enough first hand of what malicious gossip and fabricated hypothesis has done to me and do not wish to see another similar situation which I fear may be the case.*

That is the case from their activities.

Mr Speaker, I apologise to you and members about the quality of the photocopy but I have read from a typed version of this. There are copies for everyone. I would like to table a copy and circulate copies of Mrs Chamberlain's letter.

Mr Speaker, I will now turn to the opinion on this matter of the Solicitor-General of the Northern Territory, Mr Brian Martin QC:

Opinion: Ward-McNicol

1. You have asked my opinion concerning the allegations made by the abovenamed regarding a conspiracy to pervert the course of justice in relation to the trial of Mr and Mrs Chamberlain on charges relating to the disappearance of their daughter Azaria at Ayers Rock on 17 August 1980.

2. As I understand it, the allegations are that, on the night of 17 August 1980, a child was placed in the family tent at Ayers Rock by her mother shortly before 8 pm. Shortly thereafter the mother left the tent with her eldest son to return to the barbeque area nearby.

Remember, Mr Speaker, these are allegations, not facts.

Whilst there a dingo, which was subsequently identified as 'Ding', came to the tent, entered it, removed the sleeping child from the bassinet, left the tent carrying the child and fled up the sandhill east of the camping area where the tent was located. From there, it travelled along the top of the sandhill and then went in a westerly direction, eventually coming to the vicinity of a house occupied by an employee of the area, his wife and family. At the time of the dingo's arrival at that house, certain persons were present and the child, which was then dead, was either taken from or left there by the dingo. The child was then buried by the persons who were present and, at some later stage, dug up, the clothing removed from the body and disposed of elsewhere. The clothing was then put where it was eventually found a week later.

The motive for this behaviour was the realisation that the dingo responsible, 'Ding', should have been destroyed following an attack upon a child some weeks earlier. It is alleged that the dingo was not destroyed, being a family pet, but was removed to an area west of the Olgas from whence it returned. The fact that the dingo had not been destroyed after attacking the child in June and was then found to have killed Azaria would have led to the employee losing his job if the truth were known. Others were informed of the actions taken and they had then become involved in a covering-up or failing to disclose evidence which might have demonstrated the truth.

Words very similar to those I used earlier, Mr Speaker.

3. I was firstly provided with a number of documents made available by Messrs Ward and McNicol. I later obtained certain tape-recordings of conversations between them and a number of other persons and I had these recordings transcribed. Messrs Ward and McNicol took the opportunity to discuss the matter with Chief Superintendent Plumb and me.

4. During that discussion, they indicated that there was other evidence in support of their allegations which they would obtain and make available, but none has been received.

5. All the material held by me was delivered to the police for investigation. I subsequently received transcripts of tape-recorded interviews conducted by the police with a number of persons, including those from whom Messrs Ward and McNicol and Mr Hawken apparently obtained their information as supplied to me. When dealing with Aborigines, the investigating police used an interpreter. I have also been supplied with copies of original statements made by those concerned shortly after the events of 17 August 1980 and of transcripts of their own sworn evidence and other material.

6. I have considered all the material now available to me which is retained in my possession.

7. The material provided by Messrs Ward and McNicol was confusing and unclear. Much of it was equivocal. Although corroboration may not be necessary as a matter of law, it is helpful in determining the credence to be given to important facts alleged, particularly in criminal matters. Little or no corroborative evidence was provided by them.

8. On the other hand there is, in my opinion, credible evidence that (a) the dingo known to a number of people as 'Ding' who it appears attacked a child at Ayers Rock in June 1980 was destroyed on the same day. There is direct evidence of the destruction of the dingo by shooting by the person who did it. There are contemporaneous notes and memoranda prepared by him at the time, in the normal course of his duties, and others who have identified that particular dingo did not see it thereafter. (b) There was another dingo called 'Ding' by others, who was alive at the time of the disappearance of the child. (c) Erroneous assumptions were made by these people that the latter dingo I refer to was the former. They have acknowledged that they did not ever have the real 'Ding' identified to them and that they did not know - as opposed to assuming - that the dingo they called 'Ding' was the real 'Ding'. (d) The person who says that, on 17 August 1980, he tracked a dingo which, it is said, may have been carrying a child from the vicinity of the tent to the vicinity of the house, was not engaged in the search that night at all. His original statement to the police, his sworn evidence and the observations of others who knew him, who were searching on that night, confirm that he was not there. (e) That person's assertion, that he followed dingo tracks from the vicinity of the tent to the vicinity of the house in company with others is also mistaken. Those other persons named by him as accompanying him, when he says he did the tracking, did not confirm his story. He was engaged in tracking on

*the morning of 18 August 1980, but did not track a dingo from the vicinity of the tent to the vicinity of the house. (f) Other matters put forward as being connected with or in support of the conspiracy allegations are either unsubstantiated or have innocent explanations.*

9. Accordingly, I am of the opinion that there is no substance in the allegations and it follows that the person alleged to have been involved in a conspiracy to prevent the course of justice ought not to be charged.

Mr Speaker, with your leave, I table, a copy of that opinion. There is a copy for every member.

#### MOTION

Third Report of the Commissioner  
of Motor Vehicle Dealers

Mr MANZIE (Community Development): Mr Speaker, I move that (1) this Assembly, in accordance with the provisions of the Legislative Assembly (Powers and Privileges) Act 1977, authorise the publication of the Third Report of the Commissioner of Motor Vehicle Dealers; and that (2) the report be printed.

Motion agreed to.

#### MOTION

Fourth and Fifth Reports of the  
Commissioner of Consumer Affairs

Mr MANZIE (Community Development): I move that (1) this Assembly, in accordance with the provisions of the Legislative Assembly (Powers and Privileges) Act 1977, authorise the publication of the Fourth and Fifth Reports of the Commissioner of Consumer Affairs; and that (2) the reports be printed.

Motion agreed to.

#### TABLED PAPER

Annual Report of the Territory Insurance Office 1982-83

Mr PERRON (Treasurer): Mr Speaker, in accordance with section 33 of the Territory Insurance Office Act, I table the Annual Report for the TIO for the financial year ended 30 June 1983.

Honourable members will be aware that the TIO was established in 1979 and, amongst other functions, was charged with the responsibility for administering the Motor Accidents Compensation Scheme. Third-party insurance, with its rapidly escalating premiums, was scrapped in favour of a more equitable no-fault scheme. This innovation resulted in immediate reductions in premiums paid by motorists and provided the basis for streamlining the administration of claims against scheduled benefits.

The 1982-83 annual report indicates that, for the fourth year of operation of the no-fault scheme, there was a loss of \$3m due to the necessity to make some large provisions for possible common law awards for pain and suffering under section 5 of the Motor Accidents (Compensation) Act

and for payments for loss due to incapacity under section 13. Included under common law awards are those involving non-residents where a claim for damages is successfully brought against the Territory resident. The Motor Accidents Compensation Scheme is exposed to such claims where Territory residents cause injuries to non-residents through motor vehicle accidents interstate. Although the numbers of such claims are very small, the amounts involved when they do occur can be considerable. One such case now on the books of the office may result in a payout of \$1m. There are a number of others with possible payouts in the range of \$600 000 to \$800 000.

Because of the Territory population's relative youthfulness and their interstate family connections, the average Territory resident probably crosses state boundaries more frequently than his southern counterpart. Unfortunately, this means that his exposure to accidents is correspondingly higher, and that translates eventually into more frequent claims on the scheme by non-residents. When the scheme was introduced in 1979, it was expected that the section 5 provision would be used only in exceptional cases and that claimants would prefer a quick settlement through taking advantage of the schedule benefits for loss of bodily functions. Experience shows that claims under this section are more frequent than was originally envisaged. The implications of these trends are being closely studied and it is likely that action will be necessary to modify their effects on the scheme.

With regard to the Territory Insurance Office's general insurance loss of \$2m, the results for the 1982-83 year were adversely affected by unfavourable claims experienced on its inwards reinsurance. Under this type of business, the TIO accepted a portion of risks ceded to it by other insurers. The loss experienced on this business resulted principally from 3 large claims that were received in connection with such business. The problem was compounded by the fact that, in laying off the office's inwards reinsurance risks to other reinsurers, some former staff members of the office had incorrectly ceded some portions of those risks to treaties from which they should have been excluded. Consequently, the office was not covered for those risks. The 3 large claims that were received were in this category and were therefore to the TIO's net account; that is, there were no reinsurance recoveries received. To make matters worse, there was some attempt by former senior staff members concerned to conceal the extent of the losses from the TIO board and the reinsurers.

The board ordered a full investigation of these matters by expert insurance auditors and took immediate action to cancel or curtail the unprofitable lines of inwards reinsurance business. Relevant reinsurance policies have been cancelled where possible and notice of cancellation given in other cases. Reinsurers were advised of the discrepancies in the information provided to them and the report setting out the necessary amendments that will need to be made has been provided.

Mr Speaker, I am satisfied that the board of the TIO has taken all reasonable action to identify the inaccurate transactions and to correct them as well as establishing improved control and reporting procedures to ensure that there is no recurrence of these events. The board has acted also to reduce the office's involvement in inwards reinsurance business. While the losses that have been incurred as a result of these developments have been quite large, the position of policy holders is not affected and remains secure.

Over the last few months, the board and the new senior management of the TIO have set in train a number of changes in organisational structure and administrative procedures in the office. I am confident that these will begin to show their effects in coming months and over the longer term will return the office to profitability.

I should mention that 1982-83 appears to have been a bad year for government insurance business in the states. The State Government Insurance Corporation of South Australia declared an underwriting loss of \$63m and a net operating loss for the year of \$16m. While earning a net surplus overall of \$2m, the State Government Insurance Office of Queensland made a loss of nearly \$9m on its compulsory third-party business. The New South Wales Government Insurance Office shows in its 1982-83 annual report what appears to be a profit of \$128m on its third-party insurance business. However, this has resulted from changes in the accounting methods adopted. Essentially, the scheme in that state is now operated on a pay-as-you-go cash basis rather than the accrual accounting basis adopted by the insurance industry generally. If the Territory Insurance Office used the accounting methods used by the Government Insurance Office in New South Wales, it would have shown a profit of nearly \$7m. The Tasmanian Motor Accidents Insurance Board made a loss, before allowing for investment income, of \$8m in 1982-83 and a net loss of nearly \$900 000. In Western Australia, the Motor Vehicle Insurance Trust incurred an operating loss in its third-party scheme of \$33.6m in 1982-83. After allowing for investment income, the deficit was \$2.6m. Honourable members can see what I mean when I say 1982-83 was a bad year.

Mr Speaker, in a more positive vein, it is pleasing to see that, during the year, the TIO completed and moved into its head office building which won the Tracy Award for outstanding design in the Territory and a special commendation in the 1983 Sir Zelman Cowan National Award presented by the Royal Australian Institute of Architects. The office has strongly supported the Northern Territory government's loan program and continues its involvement in the Yulara Tourist Village project. In supporting private sector projects, the office will continue to ensure that the thrust of its investment policies is towards Territory growth and increased employment opportunities.

Mr Speaker, despite the losses referred to, it is expected that the office will overcome its present difficulties and proceed to build on its basically strong position in the Northern Territory. I move that the Assembly take note of the paper.

Motion agreed to.

#### REQUESTS FOR URGENCY

Mr SPEAKER: Honourable members, I have received 3 requests for urgency from the Chief Minister relating to the Education Amendment Bill, the Motor Accidents (Compensation) Amendment Bill and the Yulara Tourist Village Management Bill requesting me to declare the bills urgent pursuant to Standing Order 153.

I will read the letters. The first one concerns the Education Amendment Bill:

Pursuant to Standing Order 153, I request that you declare the above bill to be an urgent bill. The bill establishes a board of studies to accredit courses of study for students in Years 10, 11 and 12. The courses of over 2200 students will be affected if the board of studies is not in place by 30 March 1984. It would cause hardship to these students if they were to undertake courses of study which subsequently could not be accredited.

Yours sincerely,

Paul Everingham.

The second letter deals with the Motor Accidents (Compensation) Bill:

Pursuant to Standing Order 153, I request that you declare the above bill to be an urgent bill. The bill amends the act to simplify the calculation of death benefits, formalise the appeals process and limit the discretion of the Board of the Territory Insurance Office. The bill will speed up the process and limit the discretion of the Board of the Territory Insurance Office. The bill will speed up the process of hearing appeals and ensure that the decisions are consistent. The procedures to be adopted are designed to enhance the process of law and the existence of firm guidelines, which guidelines will also clarify the matter for the lay person. There are a number of appeals pending these amendments as rules governing the hearings of such appeals cannot be determined until the amendments are passed. Urgent passage of the bill is required to avoid hardship to these appellants.

Yours sincerely,

Paul Everingham.

The third and last letter deals with the Yulara Tourist Village Management Bill 1984:

Pursuant to Standing Order 153, I request that you declare the above bill to be an urgent bill. The bill provides a framework within which municipal affairs will be managed in the integrated resort town of Yulara. The bill is essentially the same as the bill introduced into the Assembly in 1983, which lapsed on prorogation. In the intervening months, construction has proceeded apace. Many of the resort's employed residents have now arrived. Suitable legislation to allow for municipal government of the resort has become very urgent. It is equally urgent for the bill to be passed promptly in order to effectively utilise taxation benefits available in the project, thereby reducing development costs and enabling competitive prices. For these reasons, any delay in passage of the bill would cause hardship to the residents and the developers of the resort.

Yours sincerely,

Paul Everingham.



Honourable members, in accordance with Standing Order 153, I declare the bills to be urgent bills.

LONG SERVICE LEAVE AMENDMENT BILL  
(Serial 14)

Bill presented and read a first time.

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

Honourable members will recall the Inquiry into Leave of Absence for Employees in the Northern Territory conducted by Hon James Edward Taylor CBE back in 1980. His report tabled in June of that year resulted in the government's adoption of all his recommendations in the area of long service leave. This bill seeks in general terms to strengthen the provisions of the current act, particularly in the area of preservation of rights. The bill further draws upon administrative experiences since enactment of that act in 1981.

The amendment proposed for section 6 of the act is clear-cut and prohibits credit for long service leave more than once in respect of the same period of qualifying service. Largely a procedural matter, the amendment will prevent any rather obscure arguments that some sections of the act could be interpreted as giving some people a double bite of the cake.

The amendments to section 8 of the act derive from requests to me to exempt employers and employees from the operation of the act where agreements are entered into for different entitlements, including agreements to defer the taking of long service leave. The fundamental concept of the act is not only to give long service leave after 10 years of continuous service but also to place emphasis on the need to take that leave as soon as possible after the right to the leave has accrued.

I have received requests to approve agreements between employers and employees to defer the taking of that leave. While there is perhaps nothing wrong with that per se, some agreements envisage the deferral for many years. Also, by reference to section 11(2) of the act, those agreements may specify that, when an employee finally takes his leave, he would be paid the rate of pay which applies at the date the agreement was made. In other words, today's rate of pay may apply for leave taken several years in the future, whereas the act currently contains a basic provision that, when you take your leave, you get paid your current rate of pay.

Mr Speaker, I caution honourable members about reading anything sinister into what I have just said. The facts are that the act currently allows agreements to be made to defer leave and that those agreements may - not shall - contain provision to pay for future leave at today's rate of pay. I have no real problems with those provisions as they stand provided that the parties to those agreements know and understand what it is that they are getting themselves into. This of course applies particularly to employees. Consequently, the proposed amendments to section 8 give the minister a continuing watchdog role over such agreements together with the ability to approve, vary or revoke on such conditions as he thinks fit. Honourable members should note the distinction between approving agreements to defer leave under section 8 and the minister's ability to exempt employers under section 13 to have a scheme of long service leave not less favourable than that provided by the act.

The further amendment proposed to section 8 is a consequential one arising from the amendments proposed to section 10. Originally section 10(1) was to provide for the payment of approved long service leave to employees who ceased their employment except for reason of death or serious misconduct. For employees who are unfortunate enough to die on the job, provision for payment to the estate is made under section 10(3) to which I will refer later. Examination for serious misconduct was omitted from section 10(1) when the current act was passed by this Assembly in 1981. Not only should such a provision be inserted but it is also accepted practice around Australia that it is only pro rata payments which are affected when serious misconduct is involved. In other words, if an employee is terminated for any reason and that employee has his or her basic 10 years' qualifying service in credit, he or she is paid for that credit. It is only when employees have, say, 11-19 years service in credit that pro rata payment for the 11th to 19th years may be forgone because of serious misconduct. The basic 10 years payment is protected. The insertion of the new subsection 1A in section 10 plus the deletion of this phrase in section 8(1) seeks to put this practice into effect.

The deletion of the present section 10(3) and the insertion of a new subsection (3) is designed to correct a fault caused by the existence in subsections (1) and (2) of the word 'otherwise'. The new subsection corrects this problem and ensures payment of full entitlements to a deceased's estate in the event that an employee dies in harness so to speak.

The amendment to section 11(2) corrects a drafting error which has recently come to light in the remaining amendments to section 14(2)(a) and section 18 adopts the 3-year limitation on prosecutions as provided under the Limitations Act. These amendments will allow the Long Service Leave Act to stand on its own in this regard and will improve the present time limitations for prosecutions of 6 months under the Justices Act. A similar amendment was passed by this Assembly in relation to the Annual Leave Act in 1982. I commend the bill to honourable members.

Debate adjourned.

#### JABIRU TOWN DEVELOPMENT AMENDMENT BILL (Serial 23)

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 Jabiru Town Development Authority was constituted under the provisions of the Jabiru Town Development Act at the beginning of 1979 to construct and manage the town of Jabiru. The town was to accommodate the work forces required to operate the 3 mines in the Alligator Rivers region. The town was developed to a stage in 1982 when it accommodated some 1200 permanent residents made up of the employees of Ranger Uranium Mines, the government and the private sector and their families. Early in 1982, the residents of Jabiru made very strong representations to have a say in how the town was to be operated. They made it quite clear that they were not satisfied to live in a town without a voice in how it was run.

The government took note of the concern of the townspeople and, in May 1982, by an amendment to the Jabiru Town Development Act, established the Town Advisory Council whose function it was to advise the authority on

municipal matters related to the town. The policies of the Commonwealth government have stopped all further development of the town. The Jabiru Town Development Authority, because there will no longer be a conflict between its construction activities and its role as manager of the town, after consultation with the Town Advisory Council, has put forward a proposal that its local government role in the town could well be taken over by the representatives of the town and they have proposed therefore that a council, not an advisory council, be established to perform the municipal functions required in the town.

In August last year, I outlined to this Assembly the government's proposals for devolving responsibility for local government functions on a town council. I pointed out at that time that there were certain difficulties mainly related to the tenure of the land in the town being held by the authority on lease from the Director of the Australian National Parks and Wildlife Service, in addition to some commercial matters between the authority and the mining companies which made it impractical for local government to be devolved on Jabiru under the Local Government Act.

The legislation set out in this bill will give to the Jabiru Town Council all the local government powers that the authority has under the act except the power to declare the rate and set the establishment of terms and conditions of council staff. The town council will perform those functions as a delegate of the authority. The provisions in this amending bill in relation to local government lean heavily on the contents of the Local Government Act reduced to meet the Jabiru situation.

This legislation has been developed following very close consultation with the Jabiru Town Advisory Council and it has its support. The power to declare the municipal general rate will not be delegated to the council until the mining companies who have participated in the construction of the town have agreed. This is because the greater part of the funds required to build the town came from ERA which is now also by far the greatest contributor to the rates required to run the town. The government's policy has always been to grant local government to the people of Jabiru as soon as they demonstrate they want it. At the same time, it is important that we protect ERA's interests. Hence the proposal to withhold from the council for the time being the power to set the level of rates which will determine the council's annual expenditure.

Mr Speaker, this is a most important and unique piece of legislation which I believe responds to the need for the residents of the town to have some self-determination in the same manner as enjoyed by other communities in the Territory. I commend the bill to honourable members.

Debate adjourned.

#### FINANCIAL ADMINISTRATION AND AUDIT AMENDMENT BILL (Serial 8)

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 bill will amend certain parts of the Financial Administration and Audit Act relating to the duties of the Auditor-General. The Auditor-General is presently required by the act to audit public and other accounts of

of departments and authorities and to report thereon. These provisions are broadly drawn so as to afford the Auditor-General the widest possible discretion and degree of independence as to his responsibilities. The timing, scope and methodology of the audits is a matter for the Auditor-General entirely. However, in the final analysis, the government of the day, and its ministers in particular, are answerable to this Assembly for everything done or failed to be done by any arm of its administration. Thus, the government must be able to respond promptly and effectively to any information or complaint which is brought to notice, either publicly or privately, concerning the financial administration of the government.

For these reasons, the amendment proposes to empower the minister to direct the Auditor-General to conduct a special investigation into specific aspects of the financial affairs of a department or authority as a matter of priority where the minister considers such action to be warranted. The Auditor-General is then required to report back to the minister within a specified time or within such time as is reasonably required to finish the investigation. After receipt of the Auditor-General's report, the minister is required to table it in the Legislative Assembly within 6 sitting days. It should be noted that the powers of the Auditor-General will not be increased in any way by the amendment. Mr Speaker, I commend the bill to honourable members.

Debate adjourned.

#### MOTOR VEHICLES AMENDMENT BILL (Serial 20)

Bill presented and read a first time.

Mr ROBERTSON (Transport and Works): Mr Speaker, I move that the bill be now read a second time.

Mr Speaker, this bill seeks a simple amendment to the Motor Vehicles Act which will correct what otherwise could result in hazardous and very expensive situations. As it stands, the Motor Vehicles Act allows only those vehicles with rubber tyres or pneumatic tyres to travel along Northern Territory roads. The present definition in the act of 'pneumatic tyres' requires that they be filled with air. Following a recent court case, where the Crown failed to prove whether the tyres of the vehicle combination were pneumatic or not, an examination of the act indicated that it is unlikely that the proof could be produced in any similar case. It is noteworthy that the definition of 'pneumatic tyre' and the section creating an offence of overloading vehicles with pneumatic tyres are essentially copies of similar entries in the Control of Roads Act. The fault in the law has been long-standing and discovered only because the point was challenged.

Mr Speaker, a number of possible alternatives to amending the act were explored. None were discovered that would suggest any easy way out of proving the tyres were pneumatic short of dismantling them all. Since enforcement relies on the capacity to prosecute offenders, there is a real danger of the road network being damaged if the minority of transport operators who persistently overload are not held in check with the threat of prosecution. This could also create increased hazards on our roads. For obvious reasons, the situation has not been canvassed with the industry but strong support is anticipated from legitimate operators.

Mr Speaker, there is also some confusion caused by the current definition of 'non-conforming vehicles'. These are those vehicles previously registered in the Territory for which old dimensions and load limits were to continue to apply for a phase-out period. To remove the possibility of dispute, the Parliamentary Counsel has suggested deleting the words 'which complied with' and inserting 'which is subject to compliance with' in their place. An averment is now to be included that, in the absence of proof to the contrary, a tyre shall be taken to be a pneumatic tyre. While I am not all that keen on the idea of evidence by averment, I think the necessity for it here is completely obvious. It is just a matter of simple common sense. There would seem to be no point in tying up the time of the courts to prove the obvious. I commend the bill to honourable members.

Debate adjourned.

TRAFFIC AMENDMENT BILL  
(Serial 19)

Bill presented and read a first time.

Mr ROBERTSON (Transport and Works): Mr Speaker, I move that the bill be now read a second time.

At the August 1983 sittings of the previous Assembly, the member for Millner introduced a bill to allow young people to be carried in sidecars without protective helmets. Mr Speaker, that bill has lapsed, but anyway it was deficient. It included a blanket provision that children under 8 years of age need not wear a helmet if they were securely fastened in a sidecar by seatbelts or other approved restraints. The bill was unlikely to achieve what it set out to do, mainly because it required suitable restraints in place of helmets. At this stage, the structural design of most sidecars does not permit effective anchorage of restraints. The government did not oppose the objective of that bill and so its own bill has now been introduced.

The bill recognises that not wearing helmets means a lowering of safety standards. It tries to balance higher risk with the convenience and needs of some people. The bill provides that an exemption must be obtained from the Registrar of Motor Vehicles if a young person is to be carried without a protective helmet. A system of exemptions capable of being upgraded over time as better products become available should encourage manufacturers to improve their standards. The Territory seems to have a marginal effect on national manufacturers.

Mr Speaker, there is no doubt that motorcycle outfit owners have problems when they want to carry young children. The present law is very restrictive. To relax it too far is to put those young children at an unnecessary risk and they need all the protection that is available and reasonable. In presenting this bill, I would like to emphasise an aspect of the ratio of motorcycle accidents to car accidents. The small number of motorcycle outfits tends to limit the amount of meaningful data available. However, what is available suggests that motorcycle outfits are involved in accidents at about the same rate as motor cars. In raw terms, they are some 6 to 8 times less likely to be involved in an accident than are solo motorcycles. However, the death and serious injury rate per accident is akin to that of a solo motorcyclist. Put another way, motorcycle outfits are involved in fewer accidents than are motorcycles but, when accidents do happen, they tend to be just as serious.

Motorcyclists are heavily subsidised by other road users against the risk they face. Helmets are a major factor in holding down motorcycle insurance costs. This bill seeks to overcome the problem of carrying young children in sidecars in the safest way possible. As a secondary matter, the bill also allows for the registrar to exempt motorcyclists participating in a procession, parade or funeral cortege from wearing helmets as the speed travelled at is quite slow and helmets are uncomfortably hot and of little benefit in safety terms. Further, in situations such as the funeral cortege, tradition may require a person to remove his hat or helmet. Mr Speaker, for such things as the Alice Springs motorcycle club's annual Christmas presentation to underprivileged children in Alice Springs where there is a parade, it would look rather ridiculous for Father Christmas on a motor bike to be wearing a helmet on top of his red hat. There are circumstances where danger is at a minimum and where these relaxations can be made at the discretion of the registrar. I commend the bill to honourable members.

Debate adjourned.

### SUSPENSION OF STANDING ORDERS

Mr ROBERTSON (Attorney-General): Mr Speaker, I move that so much of Standing Orders be suspended as would prevent the passage of the Justices Amendment Bill (Serial 18) through all stages during the present sittings.

Mr Speaker, by way of explanation, as you would have been aware when you were a minister, Sir, what we used to do in this Chamber was to present the second-reading motion of the bill and proceed through the debate on the bill. We would then move the suspension of Standing Orders when it was necessary. It has been pointed out by the Clerk and, with respect, quite correctly in my view, that that puts 2 motions before you at one time. Clearly, it is now necessary to suspend Standing Orders prior to the second-reading motion being taken. Of course, honourable members would be entitled to some explanation as to why Standing Orders ought to be suspended for the purpose of the passage of the bill.

Mr Speaker, the bill will relate to certain difficulties which have been discovered in the way in which persons who are purported to have been appointed as Justices of the Peace have in fact been sworn in. I would point out to honourable members that, in doing this, we are not asking for the passage of the bill but merely for the Suspension of Standing Orders which would otherwise prevent it from going through all stages at this sitting. The Assembly is at perfect liberty to vote against it in the second reading.

Motion agreed to.

### JUSTICES AMENDMENT BILL (Serial 18)

Bill presented and read a first time.

Mr ROBERTSON (Attorney-General): Mr Speaker, I move that the bill be now read a second time.

Mr Speaker, this is a short but important bill. It seeks to correct certain anomalies that have arisen in the appointment of some Justices of the Peace and the subsequent conduct of their duties. One of the problems is that certain persons have reportedly acted as Justices of the Peace where there has not been strict compliance with the requirements for their appointments. For example, all Justices of the Peace are required to swear an oath or make an affirmation, witnessed by a judge or a Commissioner for

Affidavits. In one case, the person appointed as a justice signed his oath before a policeman. In another case, it was made before a Commissioner for Oaths. In fact, it is arguable that they have been acting as justices without the legal authority to do so. One has been acting as a justice without even being so appointed.

The Justices of the Peace hold what is, in effect, a semi-judicial appointment. Justices can, in appropriate cases, issue warrants which lead to the imprisonment of persons. They have the power to sit on the bench, though that rarely happens nowadays with the extension of the magisterial system and better communications. It is an historic and important office and one which is of great value to the Territory community.

The Department of Law has been conducting a thorough review of the Justices of the Peace system - at my instructions, I might add, Mr Speaker. I anticipate that there will be further amendments introduced in the Assembly in the future to the Justices Act which will clarify some ambiguities and improve the system of appointment and termination.

These amendments seek to clarify some immediate and potentially serious problems. Some justices have signed numerous documents, particularly as witnesses without legal authority to do so. The status of such signatures is in doubt.

Mr Speaker, clause 2(1) clarifies that the purported action of the justices acting in good faith before the commencement of this bill are protected. The Criminal Code states that such actions after the act's commencement, that is from 1 January 1984, are protected. There is just that bit of doubt about actions before that time. Clause 2(2) provides that any action, liability or obligation in good faith undertaken as a result of the action of a person purporting to be a justice but who did not hold the appointment shall be deemed to be effective. Subclause (3) provides that, where a person lodges a document with the registrar or otherwise under an act and subsequently discovers that the witnessing party he thought was a Justice of the Peace was in fact not so appointed, then he is deemed to be acting in good faith for the purposes of subclause (2) and his actions in lodging the document can still be valid. In many cases, the person could not have the document correctly witnessed and relodged without being out of time and incurring penalty or having his document rejected because of this. This subclause endeavours to correct this situation. I commend the bill to honourable members.

Debate adjourned.

#### SUPREME COURT AMENDMENT BILL (Serial 7)

Bill presented and read a first time.

Mr ROBERTSON (Attorney-General): Mr Speaker, I move that the bill be now read a second time.

This bill seeks merely to amend section 87 of the Supreme Court Act to allow the Administrator to make regulations setting a fee that the Master may charge for taxing a bill of costs. The Master taxes a bill of costs by reviewing the bill presented, particularly checking the value of each item and whether it is reasonable in the light of the fee scales. It can be a

time-consuming task. It is, in fact, one that involves quite a lot of time being spent.

The amendment will enable, at an appropriate time in the future, a fee to be imposed which will bring the Territory into line with other jurisdictions which impose a fee and enable the Territory to be compensated for the valuable time spent by the Master or Deputy Master in performing this service.

Mr Speaker, I might also point out that, in such cases, the losing party in the litigation must pick up the fee imposed. I commend the bill to members.

Debate adjourned.

#### MOTOR VEHICLES AMENDMENT BILL (Serial 6)

Bill presented and read a first time.

Mr ROBERTSON (Transport and Works): Mr Speaker, I move that the bill be now read a second time.

The purpose of this bill is to correct a small but important omission in the Motor Vehicles Act. Whilst it is illegal to use a vehicle which is unregistered and uninsured, there is a loophole which has allowed a few operators in the car rental business to pay the compensation contribution applicable to a normal business vehicle, currently \$151, and then allow the vehicle to be used for hire. By doing this, they have avoided the higher rate applicable to hire and drive vehicles, currently \$424. Thus, they escape a bill of \$273. This has quite rightly caused concern to hire-car operators who meet the spirit of the legislation.

The proposed change will strengthen action that now can be taken against persons using private vehicles for hire and reward. I might add, Mr Speaker, that this anomaly was drawn to the government's attention by one of the car rental firms. The amendment will make it an offence for the owner of a vehicle to use or allow it to be used for a purpose different from that for which it was registered if a higher category of accident compensation contribution should apply. I commend the bill to honourable members.

Debate adjourned.

#### COMPANIES (TRUSTEES AND PERSONAL REPRESENTATIVES) AMENDMENT BILL (Serial 5)

Bill presented and read a first time.

Mr ROBERTSON (Attorney-General): Mr Speaker, I move that the bill be now read a second time.

Mr Speaker, the Trustee Executor and Agency Company Limited is a company incorporated in Victoria and registered as a foreign company in the Northern Territory. Since 1981, it has carried out business as an authorised trustee company under the Companies (Trustees and Personal Representatives) Act. As an authorised trustee company, the company has become the nominal executor and trustee in 161 wills in the Northern Territory. It also acts as agent and holds powers-of-attorney for various companies and individuals.



On 13 May 1983, receivers were appointed to the company in Victoria as a result of perceived liquidity problems in the company. On the company's own application, provisional liquidators and, finally, liquidators have been appointed to wind up the affairs of the company. In an attempt to preserve the value of the trustee operations of the company for the benefit of unsecured creditors, the trustee side of the company has been sold to the ANZ Banking Group throughout Australia.

The purpose of the Companies (Trustees and Personal Representatives) Amendment Bill is to provide for smooth transfer of the legal obligations of the old trustee company, the Trustee Executor and Agency Company Limited, to the new trustee company, ANZ Executors and Trustee Company. The bill also amends section 13 of the act by requiring that prescribed financial information is to be lodged with the Registrar of Companies rather than with the Master of the Supreme Court.

Mr Speaker, I now turn to the bill itself. Clause 4 amends section 13(1) (a) of the act by providing the prescribed financial information under the act will now be lodged with the Registrar of Companies rather than with the Master of the Supreme Court. This proposed amendment will lead to a more efficient administration of the act because the Registrar of Companies has staff with sufficient financial expertise to analyse the accounts.

Clause 5 inserts a new part in the act which provides a new section 39B which transfers the trust business of the old trustee to the new trustee and automatically appoints the new trustee in the place of the old trustee. The section further provides that the production of this part of the act shall be conclusive evidence in courts and proceedings concerning these transfers and the appointment of a new trustee in the place of the old trustee. Clause 5 also inserts a new section 39C which provides that, where an application is made by the new trustee and is accompanied by a certificate to vest property in the new trustee, the Registrar-General will invest the property in the new trustee.

Mr Speaker, this bill was originally to be considered at the November 1983 sittings. The Assembly was prorogued prior to those sittings. In December, I considered the application made by ANZ Executor and Trustee Company Ltd for company trustee status under this act. After considering all factors, I have approved this application. This bill provides for a smooth transfer of TEA's trustee business to the ANZ Executor and Trustee Company.

Mr Speaker, I advise you that the Chief Minister will be writing to you with a request for urgency. If that is not granted, then the Clerk and I will have to work out some method of getting this bill through at this sittings. It is essential to protect the interests of innocent parties and shareholders that this matter be processed through all stages at this sittings. I commend the bill to all honourable members.

Debate adjourned.

REAL PROPERTY AMENDMENT BILL  
(Serial 4)

Bill presented and read a first time.

Mr ROBERTSON (Attorney-General): Mr Speaker, I move that the bill be now read a second time.

The Territory's provision for registration of land titles under the Real Property Act is in common with other Australian jurisdictions known as the Torrens system. A principal feature of the system is that titles registered under the Real Property Act are said to be indefeasible. There has been much judicial, legal and academic debate as to the precise limits of indefeasibility. The concept can be summarised shortly by 2 words: 'Territory guarantee'. In short, if the Territory by registering an estate or interest in land deprives any person of an estate or interest in the relevant land, the person so deprived will be entitled to compensation from the Territory. Mr Speaker, the extent of this government guarantee includes both the tenure and boundaries of registered land.

The act does include provisions to deal with situations where boundaries are misdescribed in a certificate of title. However, this intrusion into indefeasibility is severely limited by the fact that errors and misdescriptions cannot be corrected if they are not discovered before a subsequent sale of the land title to a purchaser who acts in good faith. The Territory must bear the cost of compensation in such cases under its guarantee of title. As a consequence, the Registrar-General, before issuing a certificate of title under the act, is required to satisfy himself that the boundaries of the particular land to be dealt with are described with absolute precision. The lack of precise descriptions of boundaries can lead to refusal to register land titles under the Real Property Act. Often there will be substantial delay before a proper survey of boundaries can be undertaken.

Mr Speaker, the purpose of the present bill is to permit the Registrar-General to issue a qualified certificate of title in circumstances where he is not satisfied that the description of the land is sufficiently accurate for the purposes of the act. The concept of qualified certificate of title exists in Tasmania, New South Wales and New Zealand for various similar purposes. While the nature of qualification may vary, in all cases the purpose is to provide secure title to property until such time as it is possible to remove the qualifications - in the present case, for example, by the completion of a proper survey of boundaries.

The present bill will assist in the early issue of titles in a number of important areas. A further important application is the conversion of pastoral leases to perpetual leases. The precision required in describing boundaries for freehold land or perpetual lease is necessarily greater than that acceptable for leases of fixed duration. In the absence of the current bill, there would be substantial delays in the grant of perpetual leases until surveys could be completed. I commend the bill to honourable members.

Debate adjourned.

LAW REFORM (MISCELLANEOUS PROVISIONS)  
AMENDMENT BILL  
(Serial 3)

Bill presented and read a first time.

Mr ROBERTSON (Attorney-General): Mr Speaker, I move that the bill be now read a second time.

This bill seeks to amend the Law Reform (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act. This act incorporates sundry amendments to the law of torts. The need for this present amendment arises because there are some doubts about an employee's position when he commits a wrongful act. The common law seems to provide that, if the employer required it, the employee would have to reimburse him - or, more likely, the employer's insurer - for any damages paid to the victim. This is clearly an inequitable situation and has been criticised by judges and other legal authorities. Very few employees could afford to pay back large damages sums and, in fact, most employers would have taken out insurance in the reasonable belief that it would cover their employees' tortious acts. South Australia and New South Wales have already introduced legislation to correct the situation. I think the Territory should follow suit although I believe that insurance companies have not made a practice of requiring tortious workers to indemnify them. As the law stands, they could however do so at any time. This legislation will forestall this by stating that, in such a situation, the employee would not have to reimburse his employer.

Clause 2 establishes the general principle previously outlined and seeks to ensure that you do not get a situation where 2 insurance companies would get into an argument over who was to pay the victim by providing that, if an employee is otherwise indemnified, the bill does not apply. If the employee's insurance happens to cover it, the employer's insurance will not have to do so. Clause 2 also provides for an exemption to this rule where the employee committed an act of serious and wilful or gross misconduct. Therefore, the employee who commits such a serious act is not protected and, I submit, does not deserve protection.

Clause 3 provides that this bill certainly relates to all costs whether committed before or after the act commences but, if an employee had previously indemnified the employer, he would not be entitled to be paid back. Such a matter would be administratively impractical and it would be almost impossible to enforce. I commend the bill to honourable members.

Debate adjourned.

#### EVIDENCE AMENDMENT BILL (Serial 2)

Bill presented and read a first time.

Mr ROBERTSON (Attorney-General): Mr Speaker, I move that the bill be now read a second time.

Mr Speaker, many people who have served on juries in criminal trials will have experienced the frustration of being sworn in as jurors only to be told by the trial judge that a matter of law or a question of whether certain evidence is admissible must be decided in the jury's absence. This procedure, known as *voire dire*, may require that the jury is only away from the action for an hour or two but, in many cases, the jurors have to sit around twiddling their thumbs for days while counsels argue questions of law. Witnesses are also inconvenienced. They are told to be in court for the commencement of the trial and they too must sit around waiting for matters of legal argument to be determined. As well as individual considerations, the government and the taxpayers of this Territory are disadvantaged. Once the jury has been empanelled, the jurors are paid on a daily basis. If a *voire dire* lasts for a day or two then, in effect, the taxpayers' money has been wasted and the public purse is depleted because jurors have not been engaged in listening to the evidence produced at the trial.

Accordingly, the present bill to amend the Evidence Act is introduced to try to alleviate inconvenience to jurors and witnesses and to allow for smoother running of the courts. The amendment seeks to allow a court, where it is dealing with a matter on indictment and where it thinks appropriate, a discretion to hear and determine before the jury is empanelled questions of admissibility of certain evidence or of law affecting the conduct of the trial. It must be pointed out that the decision to hear and determine such questions should lie with the court. It may be in some instances that the court's discretion is exercised in favour of empanelling a jury first. However, as I have indicated, where discretion is exercised in favour of determination of matters of law prior to a jury being empanelled, inconvenience to jurors and witnesses and the cost to the taxpayers should be reduced. I cannot see how that would prevent inconvenience to witnesses, but I would seek further advice on that.

Finally, Mr Speaker, may I mention that a similar provision has operated successfully in South Australia since 1981. The South Australian experience indicates that, where discretion is exercised in favour of hearing and determining questions of admissibility of evidence prior to the empanelling of the jury and where evidence is subsequently ruled admissible, the accused often changes his plea from 'not guilty' to 'guilty'. This change of pleas means that there is no necessity for a trial and considerable savings are made both in money and in court time. I commend this bill to honourable members.

Debate adjourned.

#### SHERIFF AMENDMENT BILL (Serial 21)

Bill presented and read a first time.

Mr ROBERTSON (Attorney-General): Mr Speaker, I move that the bill be now read a second time.

This bill seeks to clarify some probable anomalies in the Sheriff Act. Sheriffs of the Supreme Court, being both important and useful officers of the court, have in the past carried out a wide range of duties. One of these is that they execute warrants of commitment following the imposition of a sentence of imprisonment by the court.

In the past, these officers have at times actually prepared and signed the warrant document which commits the prisoner from the hands of the court to the jailer after the judge has imposed a prison sentence on the defendant. Some doubts have been cast on this practice by certain of the judges. On the other hand, some authorities argue that the sheriff, through the existing act and inherent powers, is entitled to do this. This bill intends to clear up any doubts about the validity of previous actions taken by the sheriff when he prepared, signed and executed warrants of commitment.

Clause 3 provides that, from the commencement of the act, the sheriff may perform, apart from his other powers such as to serve documents, other duties as authorised under this or other acts or the rules of court or under the direction of a judge of the court. While I use the words 'under the direction of a judge of the court', the difference between this and the one in relation to the Justices Act is that each of these actions taken by sheriffs have been pursuant to a court order. Thus, there is no sense of urgency about it. It is not as serious a matter as the previous bill.

Presumably the court could order, if it so felt, a sheriff to carry out the task of preparing and signing a warrant of commitment, the document necessary to carry out the sentence of imprisonment of the defendant, or any other relevant legitimate duty required. This clause also clarifies that the sheriff can carry out any duty imposed on him by any relevant legislation.

Clause 4 provides for the retrospective validation of any preparation and signature of warrant of commitment by a sheriff and enables such warrants to be effective. It also provides that, where a sentence had been pronounced before the commencement of this act, and the warrant prepared after, the sheriff may still prepare, sign and execute the warrant of commitment.

Mr Speaker, as I have said in this Assembly on a number of occasions, I do not like retrospective legislation, but I feel that clause 4 is necessary to remove any doubts about certain previous actions of the sheriff or his duty taken in good faith. I commend the bill to honourable members.

Debate adjourned.

MEDICAL PRACTITIONERS REGISTRATION  
AMENDMENT BILL  
(Serial 1)

Bill presented and read a first time.

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

The Medical Practitioners Registration Act provides for the establishment of a medical board, the registration of medical practitioners and the conduct of medical practices. The amendments deal with 2 issues: the incorporation of medical practices and the hearing by the Medical Board of complaints which may have been made against a registered medical practitioner.

Mr Speaker, the proposed amendments have been recommended by the Medical Board of the Northern Territory. The amendment dealing with the incorporation of medical practices is, in essence, a facilitative one. If 2 or more medical practitioners wish to form a company by incorporation of their practices, they have to apply to do so under the Companies Act, and their activities generally will be subject to that act. In so far as professional conduct and medical ethics are concerned, however, the amendments which are now proposed to the Medical Practitioners Registration Act will enable the Medical Board to exert the same controls over an incorporated medical company as it currently does over individual registered medical practitioners. In this context, unprofessional conduct specifically includes the practice of advertising or canvassing for the purpose of procuring patients, and conduct not in accordance with the standards of good medical practice.

The amendment bill provides that only registered medical practitioners may form a medical company. This provision ensures that medical practice companies are kept very much under the control of medical practitioners. The only exception to this will be the case of the solo practitioner who may, with one other person, form a medical company by incorporation under the

Companies Act. This provision would enable, for example, a registered medical practitioner to form a medical company with his wife as the other shareholder.

One further provision which has been included in this bill, and is in my view an extremely important one, is that which makes the shareholders of a medical company who are registered medical practitioners jointly and severally responsible for the liabilities of the company. The practical effect of this provision is that, in the event of a medical negligence claim, all directors of a medical company would be personally liable, and not simply the practitioner primarily negligent. This will ensure that the victim of professional negligence is not the losing party.

Mr Speaker, honourable members may be aware that, over the last 3 years, there have been moves towards acceptance of incorporation of medical practices in most Australian states. The New South Wales Branch of the Australian Medical Association has been a leader in this move, and its success can be gauged by the fact that incorporation is now possible in New South Wales, Victoria, Queensland and the ACT, and both South Australia and Western Australia are moving in a similar direction. This amendment bill will bring Territory legislation into line with these states in the matter of incorporation of medical practices.

The other issue which is addressed in this amendment bill is in regard to the hearing of complaints by the Medical Board. Section 31B(3) of the Medical Practitioners Registration Act currently allows the Medical Board one month from the receipt of a complaint against a registered medical practitioner to consider it and determine whether it should be investigated by the Medical Practitioners' Disciplinary Tribunal.

Regular meetings of the Medical Board are normally held at intervals of 6 weeks so that, should a complaint be received shortly after a meeting, the permissible period of one month lapses before the next scheduled meeting. The majority of complaints which are received by the board are of a minor nature or related to matters of professional etiquette. It would be inappropriate to call a special meeting of the board to deal with such matters, particularly as one board member travels from Alice Springs to Darwin each time the board meets. It is also often difficult for board members, most of whom are practising private medical practitioners, to be available to attend meetings at short notice, as their appointments are usually made well in advance. This amendment, therefore, changes the period allowable for a determination to be made in respect of a complaint from 1 month to 3 months. If a complaint was lodged which the chairman felt was of a serious nature, it would still be within his power to convene a special meeting at the earliest possible time, and this, of course, would be done. I commend the bill to honourable members.

Debate adjourned.

#### EDUCATION AMENDMENT BILL (Serial 11)

Bill presented and read a first time.

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

Mr Speaker, a similar bill was previously introduced into the Legislative Assembly last October. The amendments contained in the bill are concerned with 3 separate matters. They allow for the establishment of the Northern Territory Board of Studies, the appointment of the Chairman of the Council of the Darwin Community College by His Honour the Administrator and an increase in the maximum amount currently able to be awarded by contract by the Darwin Community College.

During the first sittings of the Assembly last year, my predecessor foreshadowed the establishment of a board of studies when the government education policy document, Directions for the Eighties, was tabled. The board will accredit senior secondary school courses and issue certificates for both junior and senior secondary courses. It will also be responsible for advising the Secretary of the Department of Education on curriculum policy in Territory schools from pre-school to Year 12. This board will carry a great responsibility for the quality of education offered in our schools and will therefore be required to be representative of a wide cross-section of the population of the Northern Territory.

Membership of the board, which will be under the chairmanship of the Secretary of the Department of Education or his nominee, will include representatives of schools, tertiary institutions, parent organisations, employer and trade unions, the Northern Territory Teachers' Federation, TAFE and the Vocational Training Commission.

An independent board will strengthen public confidence in the standard of secondary courses and the certificates awarded. It will also bring the Territory into line with other Australian states. At the senior level, Years 11 and 12, the board will develop policies and guidelines for academic courses and also for general vocational courses. This should enable schools to offer programs appropriate to local needs and allow students to be able to select courses in terms of their individual developing needs and interests. The board will be required to ensure that its courses are not merely educationally sound but socially, culturally and economically relevant. It will develop procedures which will enable it to examine the relevance of proposed courses and certificates to life after school.

The board will be concerned with all secondary certificate courses, except those offered by the Senior Secondary Assessment Board of South Australia - that is, matriculation courses and the senior secondary certificate courses. It is expected that the NT board will enter into close liaison with the Senior Secondary Assessment Board of South Australia to ensure that, where relevant, Northern Territory needs are taken into account. The board will also provide for a general education from pre-school to Year 10, catering for students with a wide range of needs, interests and aspirations.

The board will oversight assessment procedures in the issue of the Northern Territory Senior Secondary Studies Certificate to students leaving school at the end of 1984. This certificate will include the results gained by students who have studied South Australian matriculation and SSC courses as well as the results gained in Northern Territory courses at Years 11 and 12 levels.

The board will also issue the Northern Territory Junior Secondary Studies Certificate for junior secondary students completing their compulsory education program at the end of Year 10. The certificate will be issued for the first time in 1984 to students who began their secondary studies in 1982.

This board, which will come into effect as soon as this legislation is passed, will be made up of members whose initial appointment will be for a period of 3 years, thus enabling continuity of service and input to the development of education in the Northern Territory. Matters such as the appointment of the chairman, deputy chairman and the appointment and resignation of members are specified in this bill. Frequency of meetings, functions, powers and requirements of the board are specified. The confidentiality required of members is necessary to protect the privacy of students and to ensure that all students have equal opportunities. The board will also be required, as is the case in other statutory and advisory boards, to furnish an annual report outlining its activities during the year ended 31 December. The establishment of this board will help achieve many of the aims of government in primary and secondary education. I commend it to members.

Mr Speaker, the second amendment is designed to allow the Darwin Community College to extend its contractual powers from \$100 000 to amounts up to \$150 000. In view of cost increases since 1979, this adjustment is essential for efficient operation of the college.

The third amendment repeals the current section 50 of the Education Act and requires His Honour the Administrator to appoint a chairman from among the members of the council. A deputy chairman shall be appointed by the members of the council. The current chairman and deputy chairman shall, under the terms of the bill, retain those positions until the expiration of the terms of appointment at which stage they will be eligible for reappointment. This amendment allows the Darwin Community College Council to assume the same status and role as other similar statutory authorities both in the Northern Territory and elsewhere in Australia. I commend the bill to honourable members.

Debate adjourned.

### CROWN LANDS AMENDMENT BILL (Serial 15)

Bill presented and read a first time.

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

This bill is substantially the same bill, formerly identified as serial 357, which was introduced in the Assembly on 18 October 1983. It has been amended only to include additional clauses 17 (new section 110A), 18, 19 and additions to clause 20. The object of the bill is to correct a number of irregularities and errors in the Crown Lands Act which have been detected since the act was amended substantially by the freeholding bill early in 1981.

Other amendments have also been introduced to improve the interpretation and administration of provisions of the act. An example of this is the amendment proposed in clause 4 of the bill. As the law stands, the minister is, by section 7 of the act, charged with the general administration of Crown lands in the Northern Territory. By section 12A, the minister has the power to delegate all or any of his powers or functions under the act. There is some doubt, however, that this power enables delegation of the functions given in section 7 and it would be simpler if there were a specific provision stating that Crown land may be managed, regulated or controlled in such a manner and by such persons as the minister directs. The amendment achieves this.



Clause 5 proposes the repeal of section 13 of the principal act. This section specifies, for the purpose of the act, 4 districts: Darwin and Gulf, Victoria River, Barkly and Alice Springs. They were introduced in the early 1930s for the purpose of regulating minimum numbers of cattle to be run on pastoral leases in each district. The retention of these districts can no longer be justified because they cause unnecessary confusion with the 5 administrative regions and various subregions adopted by the Northern Territory in 1979 and shown in the Territory pastoral map.

The amendment contained in clause 6 has been proposed to facilitate the granting of leases of land, including buildings over which the Territory holds a fee simple title. In such cases, the formal processes of section 15 of the Crown Lands Act will not be necessary and only the requirements of registration under the Real Property Act will have to be met.

Clause 7 expands the provisions for the sale of Crown leases by tender so that the minister may extend the time by which tenders may be received and for the minister to negotiate with tenderers as to the contents of their tenders.

The provisions governing easements and easements in gross have been amended to place beyond doubt the minister's powers in respect to the granting of these rights over Crown land and their reservation at the time of granting of fee simple title. The purposes for which service easements may be utilised are specifically described by schedule and a new concept, namely a general service easement, which allows for multi-purpose uses, has been introduced. The complete description of each type of easement will provide the Registrar-General with a reliable legislative reference when identifying easements on titles, particularly those arising from subdivision.

It is also proposed to provide for the issue of licences to appropriate authorities over unalienated Crown land for the purpose of supplying services. These issues are contained in clauses 11, 12, 13 and 17 of the bill. Clauses 8, 9, 10, 14, 15 and 20B are self-explanatory.

Clause 16 repeals section 58 of the principal act. This section is redundant as section 25D contains more appropriate provisions for the consolidation of all leases, including pastoral leases under the Crown Lands Act. New section 110A and clause 17 and part (a) of clause 20 deal with matters detected by the Parliamentary Counsel. As the principal act stands, some matters dealing with licences are held to be invalid and the amendments seek to correct this situation. I commend the bill to honourable members.

Debate adjourned.

#### MOTOR ACCIDENTS (COMPENSATION) AMENDMENT BILL (Serial 22)

Bill presented and read a first time.

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

There are 3 objectives of this bill aimed primarily at improving the administration of the no-fault motor accidents compensation scheme and reinforcing the original intention of the act. Section 22 of the current act provides a formula for the calculation of death benefits. The original intent of the scheme was that, upon the death of the head of a household, the benefit paid to the spouse would be a proportion of \$45 000 based on the

degree of dependence. Thus, if the income lost to the family as a result of the death was equal to the total family income in the preceding 12 months, then the full amount would be payable. On the other hand, if the lost income was equal to only 50% of the total, then only 50% of \$45 000 or \$22 500 would be paid.

Whilst this concept is believed to provide fair treatment, it has proved almost impossible to draft legislation to adequately explain the concept. The existing wording was introduced by way of amendments in 1981 but is still being the subject of criticism by the legal fraternity and the Appeals Tribunal. The proposed amendments, whilst not strictly along the lines of the original intention of the act, provide the same level of or greater benefits and is more explicit in its expression. It is now proposed that the existing formula for calculating death benefits be repealed and the benefits be calculated at 3 times the deceased's income with a maximum of \$45 000 and a minimum of \$6 000 where the deceased is a head of household or a dependent husband or wife earning more than 25% of the spouse's income. Where the deceased is the dependent husband or wife earning less than 25% of the spouse's income, the benefit will be \$6 000 as under the current act. This provision will be very much simpler to calculate than the existing formula and should resolve many of the conflicts of the past. The proposed formula is a little more generous than the existing formula and no one will be disadvantaged by this change. The effect on the overall cost of the scheme should not be significant.

Secondly, this bill revises and formalises procedures to be adopted by the General Manager and the board of the TIO in making determinations of motor accident victims' rights and benefits. The bill formalises the method of appointing a judge to the Motor Accidents Compensation Appeals Tribunal by the Chief Justice and the method to be adopted in referring the matter. Put simply, if a matter is referred to the General Manager, he will now be required to make a determination within 30 business days. If the affected person wishes to appeal against that determination, he has 28 days in which to refer the matter to the board which, in turn, must make a determination within 60 days. If still aggrieved, there is then a further 28 days in which the matter may be referred to the tribunal. The time limits imposed by these amendments are considered to give all parties adequate time to make a decision. The board has 60 days as it is only required to meet once every 2 months. However, in practice, it usually meets monthly and the full 60 days should not be required. 28 days or 4 weeks is considered sufficient time for a claimant to decide whether or not to appeal. Both the board and the general manager will be required to give their determinations in writing.

This bill introduces a new section 29A which enables judges appointed under the terms of the Supreme Court Act to make rules pertaining to the following matters: the practice and procedures of the Motor Accident Compensation Appeals Tribunal, regulating the referral of matters to the tribunal and conferring on the tribunal the necessary powers to carry out its functions. This amendment does no more than formalise the existing arrangements. However, it should ensure that all materials are dealt with expeditiously and clearly. The introduction of procedural rules was contemplated in the original act. However, legal advice available to Treasury and the TIO indicated that, to ensure the effectiveness of the rules, these amendments to the act were necessary.

The final amendment concerns the discretion of the board. Under the terms of section 33 of the act, the board of the TIO has certain discretionary powers to exceed benefits in the act. Section 29(3) of the act enables the Appeals Tribunal to make any decision that the board could have made, and that includes exceeding the limits. The TIO's legal advisers felt that the combination of sections 29 and 33 could lead to a situation whereby the tribunal could make awards well in excess of the limits under the act and make payments not intended to be covered. It was never intended that these sections would provide an avenue for granting awards well in excess of the limits in the act. The discretion allowed the board was introduced to assist persons suffering particular and unusual hardship. The requirement is still considered to be valid. The act is thus amended by limiting the board's discretion to twice the monetary limits in the act. No such restriction is to be applied to the time limits. As those limits have been exceeded very rarely and never by double the original limit, this move will not cause any undue hardship.

The lack of tribunal rules has been criticised recently by judges here in motor accident compensation appeals. As there are a number of cases due to be heard in the near future, the government has been advised that, in order to expedite the hearings, this bill should be introduced and passed in the course of these sittings if possible. The amendments to the death benefits provisions also should be introduced as quickly as possible to clarify an area that is giving rise to confusion in interpretation of the act.

Mr Speaker, I note with some satisfaction your ruling on this bill as a matter of urgency to avoid hardship and commend the bill to honourable members.

Debate adjourned.

#### YULARA TOURIST VILLAGE MANAGEMENT BILL (Serial 16)

Bill presented and read a first time.

Mrs PADGHAM-PURICH (Conservation): Mr Speaker, I move that the bill be now read a second time.

Mr Speaker, the Yulara Tourist Village Management Bill provides a framework within which municipal affairs will be managed in the Territory's newest town, Yulara. Yulara is unique in the Territory in that it is an integrated resort town. Facilities within the town are owned by the Yulara Development Company. Their purpose is to serve tourists and to serve them well. The development agreement for Yulara, which was tabled in this Assembly on 26 May 1982, required the Yulara Development Company to arrange for the formation of a resort management company as a wholly-owned subsidiary to carry out functions in relation to managing the resort. The management company was incorporated under the Companies Act on 18 May 1983 as the Yulara Corporation Pty Ltd. The memorandum and articles of association of the company require it to operate on a no-cost no-profit basis and to carry out functions including the operation of water and sewerage systems, garbage collection and disposal, administration of commercial agreements on behalf of the development company and maintenance of public areas.

Alternatives to this approach, including the creation of a council under the Local Government Act or a statutory body by new legislation, were assessed and found to be unsuitable for a combination of reasons. The very small permanent population, the nature of the development as a resort rather than a regional township and the requirement to integrate service provisions and necessary controls with the overall management of the major revenue-earning facilities were major considerations. It should be noted, however, that an advisory board for the corporation will be established before completion of construction to represent community interests.

In many respects, the operation at Yulara by a company mirrors the management in Nhulunbuy. However, in the case of Yulara, the availability of separate titles to facilitate the eventual sale of resort components gives rise to the need for the supporting legislation. This bill, recognising the special situation of Yulara, provides a basis within which municipal functions of the resort will be carried out. The bill also provides for easements for vital common services be constructed within the complex. It contains powers to make regulations to control the further development of Yulara.

Further, to assist in the financing and profitable operation of the tourist resort facilities, the bill contains special partnership arrangements under which further partners can join the partnership formed by the Yulara Development Company in January. This expanded partnership will finalise construction and provide for operation of the commercial tourist facilities at the resort. In general, the powers and functions of the new corporation are similar to those extended to local councils, the Nhulunbuy Corporation, the Jabiru Town Development Authority and the Palmerston Development Authority.

Turning now to the provisions of the bill, clauses 1 to 3 are formal, covering the title, commencement and definition sections. Clause 4 places control over the powers of the management company - that is, the Yulara Corporation Pty Ltd - in the hands of the responsible minister. Under the current administrative arrangements order, the minister is the Minister for Housing and Conservation. Clause 5 provides that the directors of the management company must declare their interests and excuse themselves from involvements wherever conflicts of interest arise. This is necessary in view of the structure of the company.

Clause 6 provides that a director or employee is not personally liable to legal action for anything he or the company has done in good faith. This protection is similar to that given to the Jabiru authority directors.

Clause 7 enables the minister, by notice in the Gazette, to declare that the relevant parts of other acts can apply at Yulara. This means the company will be able to carry out necessary local government functions and exercise selected powers in other acts; for example, in relation to water supply.

Clause 8 permits the company to levy rates and charges similar to a municipal council. Such rates or charges can be levied in advance in certain circumstances. Clause 9 provides that rates and charges are due within 28 days. Clause 10 prohibits other persons from providing services in competition with the company unless the company agrees. This is necessary to ensure that service provision does not become fragmented; for example, in relation to garbage services where, if charges are to be fair, the costs need to be spread over all users.

Clause 11 gives the minister the power to declare public places for the purposes of Territory laws - for example, the Police and Police Offences Act. Clause 12 provides for the management company to make bylaws for good management of the town areas in much the same way as a municipal council. Clauses 13 and 14 permit the company to take proceedings for the recovery of unpaid fees and charges or in relation to an offence against Yulara bylaws and, where a fine is imposed by a court, that the money is to be paid to the company as a municipal authority.

Clause 15 provides that the moneys of the company be used to meet its obligations and only for such other purposes as the minister approves. Clause 16 enables a subdivision to be approved under the Planning Act to define the area for the purposes of clause 17 of this bill.

Clauses 17 and 18 provide for easements to be granted at Yulara for common services to multiple users. The provision relating to easements and other controls over lands in the township amplify existing provisions of the law relating to planning to recognise the particular circumstances at Yulara.

Clause 19 enables new partners to join the existing partnership set up to establish, develop or manage Yulara without involving the formal dissolution of the existing partnership. This is a key to compliance with taxation rulings. Clause 20 gives the Administrator power to make regulations. The Yulara corporation will be required to meet the costs associated with the operation of the resort, and there are no direct financial costs to the Northern Territory arising from this legislation.

Most of the provisions in the bill are the same as those in the bill introduced into this Assembly last year which lapsed subsequently. In the intervening months, Yulara's construction has proceeded apace. Two of the major tourist facilities are now in full operation - that is, the campgrounds and the Four Seasons Hotel - with the holiday cabins being due for completion before the next Assembly sittings. Many of the town's employee residents have now arrived. This means that suitable legislation to allow for municipal government of the resort has become very urgent. An equally pressing reason for the urgent passage of this legislation arises from the financing arrangements for Yulara. The partnership referred to in this bill must be expanded to include new investors by 16 April 1984 if the taxation benefits available in the project are to be utilised effectively. This will reduce the cost of the development and enable tourists to be catered for at reasonable and competitive charges. Clause 19 varies, in this single circumstance, the general Territory law governing partnerships. Under the Partnership Act, the introduction of new partners automatically dissolves the partnership and creates a new one. In the case of Yulara, this would have meant that substantial tax benefits, prior to that step, would not be available to the partners. I commend the bill to honourable members.

Debate adjourned.

#### BUSHFIRES AMENDMENT BILL (Serial 13)

Bill presented and read a first time.

Mrs PADGHAM-PURICH (Conservation): Mr Speaker, I move that the bill be now read a second time.

This bill deals with the composition of the membership of the Bushfires Council. Current membership of the council, excluding the chairman, who should not be required to represent any sectional or regional interest, includes representatives from each of the 6 fire control regions, namely Alice Springs East, Alice Springs West, Elliott-Wauchope, which is the Tennant Creek district, Barkly Tablelands, Victoria River and the Gulf fire control regions. The deliberations of the council are strengthened by high-level advice from senior officers from the Department of Lands, Department of Primary Production, Bureau of Meteorology, Northern Territory Fire Service and the Conservation Commission which is also represented on the council. As far as possible, each region is represented by the chairman of the regional committee, who has the opportunity to present the fire control problems for that region. These problems can vary quite significantly from region to region and, consequently, the ability of each region to be represented on the Bushfires Council enables the latter to develop an overall perspective of the Territory fire control situation and to make balanced judgments which affect the Territory as a whole.

Since the level of council membership was first established, there have been changes in the distribution of the various regions. The northern region was originally established by the old Bushfires Control Ordinance. However, it has been varied from time to time with the excision from it of a few regions such as the Gulf, Victoria River and now the Vernon region, with the result that the northern region is now unrepresented. These regions have been established to clarify the different fire control situations in the various areas resulting primarily from the different landholding situations. The Gulf and Victoria River regions include different types of pastoral land whilst the northern region now includes large tracts of Aboriginal land.

The Vernon region was established recently in recognition of the unique fire control problems presented by the growth of the Darwin rural area. Being a new region, it is unrepresented on the council. I believe that both of the unrepresented fire control regions should be represented on the Bushfires Council. The bill before the Assembly reflects this in that it increases council membership from 12 to 14.

The government further believes that, although there are apparently 4 members on the council who are employees within the meaning of the Public Service Act, the provisions of section 8 would appear to be an unnecessary constraint on the government's ability to appoint members as it sees fit and in response to the fire control needs of the Territory. As the majority of the representatives of the fire control regions on the council are pastoralists, the council currently operates effectively with a good balance of representatives from the pastoral industry and relevant areas of government. In this regard, the bill seeks to remove the requirement for 4 members of the council to be Northern Territory public servants leaving the way clear for more flexibility of appointment. I commend the bill to honourable members.

Debate adjourned.

#### MEAT INDUSTRY BILL (Serial 9)

Bill presented and read a first time.

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

Mr Speaker, since March 1983, negotiations have been continuing at officer level between the relevant Commonwealth and Northern Territory departments. Those discussions have focused on developing options for integrating Northern Territory meat inspection services into the proposed national inspection service. The need to develop complementary legislation has also been recognised. However, the decisions of the New South Wales and Victorian governments to hand over their meat inspection services to the Commonwealth in toto has placed considerable strain on the resources of the Commonwealth Department of Primary Industry at senior officer level. As a result, negotiations relating to the Northern Territory have been deferred to a later date.

In the meantime, however, and bearing in mind the recommendations of the royal commission into the meat industry, we consider that there should be no further delay in updating and upgrading our legislation relating to the Northern Territory meat industry. The current Abattoirs and Slaughtering Act came into effect in 1955. Continuing changes in the industry and, more recently, the findings of the royal commission into the meat industry have resulted in the need to amend this legislation to an extent where it is now more practical to replace the act than to seek an extensive number of amendments. Hence the bill now before the Assembly.

You will appreciate, Mr Speaker, that the change in name from the Abattoirs and Slaughtering Act to the proposed title of Meat Industry Act implies this bill is concerned not only with abattoirs and the slaughtering of animals for meat production but also with the licensing and control of processing places, including independent boning rooms, cold stores and the control of meat imported from the states. In addition, emphasis has been placed on the need for licensees to accept their share of responsibility for the disease-free status, quality and integrity of their product. Provision is also made for documentation for all commercial traffic in meat whether within, into or out of the Territory. This will prevent the repetition of past malpractices and also provide useful statistical data relating to the industry.

A significant change in this bill is the inclusion of a power to determine the maximum number of licences of a specified type which may be issued in relation to a particular area or the whole of the Territory. We have seen too many abattoirs in South Australia go to the wall with consequent serious local and regional socio-economic problems. We want to avoid that occurrence in the Territory and clause 5 is aimed at preventing the creation of hardship within the industry, particularly by eliminating the threat to the livelihood of people who rely on our meatworks, a threat which is inherent in the closure of any establishment. As long as the proposal for a new works will not result in the maximum number of works determined being exceeded, the application will be subject to a series of stages before a licence to operate is actually issued. The first stage involves approval of a location for a licensed meat establishment. This means the applicant will not incur unnecessary expense before approval in principle to proceed is given. Then follows the second stage of the licence application when plans and specifications must be submitted. Approval of the plans will allow the project to enter the construction phase which, if carried out in conformity with the application, will enable an operational licence to be granted.

Mr Speaker, the bill also provides for penalties similar to those in acts in the states for false descriptions of meat products with respect to both species and quality. In addition, an ultimate provision is

included in clause 30 where, if the holder of a licence has been convicted of an offence under the act or the regulations, automatically the licence will not be renewed. Abattoir operators will therefore need to be very careful that they comply in every way with this legislation.

The general provisions of the bill are aimed at preventing specific malpractices uncovered by the Woodward Royal Commission. It also provides for the better operation of abattoirs, processing plants and coldstores as well as the hygienic transportation of meat. These provisions cover the meat chain from the farm gate to the retail outlets. In so far as the latter is concerned, I should point out that the supervision of butchers' shops is a matter for the Department of Health, working in close consultation with my department.

Mr Speaker, in closing, I refer you to a quotation from the Woodward Report which says: 'The small meat inspection service in the Northern Territory, controlled by the Department of Primary Production, has performed reasonably well in spite of a most inadequate legislative base'. Therefore, Mr Speaker, I am confident that the enactment of this legislation will repair this deficiency and I commend the bill to honourable members.

Debate adjourned.

#### FISH AND FISHERIES AMENDMENT BILL (Serial 10)

Bill presented and read a first time.

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

Currently, the Fish and Fisheries Act makes no provision for the declaration of restrictions on the type or amount of gear which may be used for the taking of fish. This bill will provide legislation for the Northern Territory which complements the Commonwealth Fisheries Act.

In light of the heavy exploitation of some of the Northern Territory's fish resources, it is necessary to be able to restrict the effort in the fishery in line with the current management plans in place in both Northern Territory and Commonwealth waters adjacent to our shores. The amendments to the Fish and Fisheries Act will enable the Fisheries Division of the Department of Primary Production to manage the fish resources more effectively. At present, under the Fish and Fisheries Act, no provision exists requiring the Director of Fisheries to maintain a register of licences and fishing vessel registrations. Clause 4 makes provision for such a register to be maintained and for judicial notice to be taken of the register by any court. Similarly, legislation applies in the Motor Vehicle Act relating to drivers' licences and vehicle registrations. I commend the bill to honourable members.

Debate adjourned.

#### MOTION Australasian Study of Parliament Group

Mr ROBERTSON (Attorney General): Mr Speaker, I move that during the full term of this Assembly, the Legislative Assembly of the Northern Territory be represented at meetings of the Australasian Study of



Parliament Group, not conflicting with sittings of the Assembly, by 2 members, 1 nominated by the Chief Minister and 1 nominated by the Leader of the Opposition.

Mr Speaker, as you would be well aware, this group was established to create a forum where people interested in the workings of parliaments in Australia could discuss parliamentary matters of common interest. The group consists of parliamentarians, parliamentary officers and academics drawn from all over Australia. The group normally has 2 major meetings a year, a workshop and a seminar in which such matters as fixed-term parliaments - that is a joke at the moment - come under close scrutiny. The Legislative Assembly has been represented at a number of these meetings in the past.

Mr D.W. COLLINS (Sadadeen): Mr Speaker, I would strongly support this move. I have been to 2 of these conferences in the last session of the Assembly and I found them very worth while. The first one was in Alice Springs in 1980 or early 1981. The second one was in Melbourne in March 1982. The Leader of the Opposition and I went down to that. I found it very very helpful indeed.

Mr B. Collins: Not me!

Mr D.W. COLLINS: He went but did not attend.

Mr B. Collins: What are you on about? You are talking about someone else.

Mr D.W. COLLINS: This Australasian Study of Parliament Group.

Mr B. Collins: I've never been to one in my life.

Mr D.W. COLLINS: I commend that this practice be continued.

Members from both sides of the Assembly should attend. It is a very worthwhile exercise in gaining experience in parliamentary practice.

Motion agreed to.

#### MOTION

Delegates to the Australian Constitutional Convention

Mr ROBERTSON (Attorney-General): Mr Speaker, I move that the delegates of this Assembly to the Australian Constitutional Convention be the Chief Minister and the Leader of the Opposition or their respective nominees.

I do not really know what I can say about this motion which would be really supportive of it. Both the Leader of the Opposition and the Chief Minister went to the last Constitutional Convention in Adelaide. I do not think it would be saying the wrong thing on behalf of either of those members to say that it was not exactly the greatest use of their time. Nonetheless, matters which may come before the Constitutional Convention from time to time can be of vital interest to the Northern Territory. It is essential that, when important matters do crop up - hopefully, next time it will be more constructive than the last - both sides of this Chamber be represented at that convention. I commend the motion to honourable members.

Motion agreed to.

ADOPTION OF CHILDREN AMENDMENT BILL  
(Serial 12)

Continued from 28 February 1984.

Mr MANZIE (Community Development): Mr Speaker, I seek leave to take responsibility for the conduct of this bill. It comes within the Community Development portfolio.

Leave granted.

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

This bill amends the Adoption of Children Act to give recognition to Aboriginal tribal marriages for adoption purposes. It has been the practice in the Northern Territory to place Aboriginal children with Aboriginal adoptive parents. This practice has been carried out within the framework of the Aboriginal kinship system. The amendment will provide the proper legal framework for this practice and allow several adoption orders which have been pending for some time to be finalised.

Under the amended legislation, an Aboriginal couple, whose relationship is recognised as a traditional marriage by the community or group to which either Aboriginal belongs, will be entitled to the same adoption rights as a man and woman whose marriage has been celebrated within the civil legislation.

Mr Speaker, it is worth noting that the Northern Territory already leads the rest of Australia in recognition of Aboriginal tribal marriages for the purpose of Territory law, and this will be another important advancement in this direction. I commend the bill to honourable members.

Debate adjourned.

ADDRESS IN REPLY

Continued from Tuesday 28 February 1984.

Mr MCCARTHY (Victoria River): Mr Speaker, I would like to acknowledge the people of the Victoria River electorate who, despite the fact that many of them did not know me a few short weeks before the election, have done me the very great honour of voting me into this Assembly as part of the CLP team. An extensive whistlestop tour by air - railways are scarce - took me to most corners of this vast and beautiful electorate and I was able to meet many of the people who make this part of the Territory unique.

Victoria River is certainly not short on potential. The electorate ranges from the seaside dwellers on the western shores of Darwin Harbour through the sprawling rural and farming areas, Adelaide River, Batchelor, the Douglas and Daly Rivers, vast cattle stations, Aboriginal communities, the highway towns of Elliott, Larrimah and Pine Creek, mining, current and potential, and beautiful Territory parks of the future. We have some of the best rivers in the Territory, a valuable resource belonging to all Territorians and all Australians. Best of all, Victoria River is an electorate where the true pioneering Territory spirit is very much alive.

Right now the electorate is very wet. We cannot boast of 7 seas but we do take issue with 5. They are not necessarily in order of importance: communities and towns, communications, culverts and roads, cattle, crops and agriculture. There are 13 communities and towns within the Victoria River boundaries. Many of these communities are poorly serviced. Housing, water, electricity and roads are often below normally-accepted standards. Youth facilities are an issue currently in many of the Aboriginal communities. Many young people suffer from boredom brought about often by improved education and no work. Few Aboriginal communities can adequately employ their people and even fewer have any worthwhile youth activities or facilities.

I take issue with some of the statements made by the honourable member for Arnhem in this Assembly yesterday. There can be no doubt that this government supports self-determination and self-management in Aboriginal communities.

Mr B. Collins: Rubbish!

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order!

Mr MCCARTHY: As one who has worked closely...

Mr B. COLLINS: Mr Deputy Speaker, I point out to the honourable member that the convention quite clearly states that due courtesy will be given to maiden speeches provided those speeches are not provocative.

Mr ROBERTSON: A point of order, Mr Deputy Speaker! What on earth is the honourable member on his feet for? He never took a point of order. He does not have the right to make a personal explanation. I would ask him to at least honour Standing Orders. If he cannot honour the rules governing someone who is making his maiden speech...

Mr B. Collins: The Speaker keeps order in this Assembly, not you.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! The honourable member for Victoria River is making his maiden speech and I would ask members to observe the normal courtesies.

Mr MCCARTHY: As one who has worked closely with Aboriginal people for many years, both within the community and as manager of an organisation which fought strongly for better services for Aboriginal people, I can say with conviction that this government has done more in a few short years to develop local initiatives and to ensure that Aboriginal people speak on their own behalf than has ever been the case under rule from Canberra.

The Northern Territory took over a hotch-potch of underdeveloped communities from the Commonwealth on self-government. Since this government took over responsibility for services in Aboriginal communities, the improvements made to water and sewerage, power and roads in those communities has been outstanding. I suggest that the honourable member cast his mind back just 5 years and remember how things really were in those days.

With regard to this government's efforts in improving education and health facilities for Aboriginal people, I suggest that the honourable member take the time to visit Batchelor College and the Katherine Institute.

If these 2 institutions do not provide convincing proof, let him look at the improvements to school facilities and curricula that have taken place in Aboriginal communities during the last 5 years.

With reference to the honourable member's comments that his constituents were not hoodwinked by the Chief Minister's stated policy, I can say, of course they were not. Neither were the people of Port Keats or Daly River or Wave Hill for that matter. They saw fit to put me into this Assembly because they know that the Chief Minister has their future and the future of all Territorians at heart and they have been poorly served by the opposition. The honourable member assumes that the Aboriginal people of Victoria River were hoodwinked. I have a lot more faith in the independence of thought of Aboriginal people, it seems, than does the honourable member for Arnhem. While this government has done much in improving community facilities and services since self-government, there is a long way to go and we must not rest until all Territorians share in the development and services that are available in the larger towns.

In this year, communications within the major part of the electorate are little better than archaic. Radio communications can be summed up for many by one station manager's description: 'If I take the radio up to that ridge there, about 5 km away, at about 2 am, I can pick up Indonesia'. Even in underdeveloped countries, radio is considered a basic right. While travelling during the campaign, I was asked, 'What election?' Two weeks after the announcement, the news had not filtered into the farflung reaches of Victoria River. Can Aussat really overcome the lack of television communication in remote areas of the Territory? Even if Aussat gets into the right orbit, I am told that it will provide only interstate programs. Victoria River is part of the Northern Territory and proud to be so but Sydney or Brisbane will take the place of Darwin in program content.

While normal telephone communications are available to towns along the Stuart Highway, the majority of people in this electorate must rely on the radio telephone or VJY. The staff of both services are particularly helpful under very difficult circumstances. But, the problems associated with radio communication renders the service unreliable and time-consuming for its users. It is my belief that the present level of communication facilities available to the people of outback Northern Territory are totally unacceptable, and I intend to remind this Assembly and the institutions responsible for communications of that fact on a very regular basis.

On the subject of culverts and roads, the comment, 'See you after the Wet', unfortunately still applies. While major highways are usually passable, many of the access roads totalling many thousands of kilometres are impassable right throughout the wet season and even well into the Dry. This is a major problem for the movement of cattle and supplies. In the case of cattle movement, the season is short enough, but often it is not possible to take heavy trucks over access roads until weeks or even months after the muster commences.

Public access roads through cattle properties provide a further headache for the BTB eradication program. Grids are expensive and gates can and often are left open by careless people. This of course makes control of cattle very difficult. Some assistance from the government in the provision of grids on access roads is worth considering. Cattle were once the Territory's major industry. Times have changed. Mining and

tourism are frontrunners. But the Territory owes much to its cattlemen. They have fought wet and dry, flood and drought, disease and vermin, and have survived. While cattle roamed free and fencing was minimal and labour cheap, the cattlemen flourished. Those times are over and they will not come back but there is still a future for cattle and buffalo in the Territory. The BTB eradication program has placed a heavy burden on cattlemen and this government but I am firmly of the belief that the cost will bring dividends. Cattlemen must accept new ways and the government must provide support to ensure that the cattle industry prospers and continues to provide the Territory with a diversity of industry that is required for overall and continued prosperity for all Territorians.

The Northern Territory government has provided agricultural development in the Territory with renewed vigour through its initiatives in the creation of ADMA and the Douglas-Daly project farms. Over the years, many agricultural projects have failed. Those that have survived have experienced great difficulty in their efforts to stay afloat due to unsure markets, poor knowledge of tropical agriculture and the high cost of freight. With the establishment of ADMA, expert advice and marketing know-how have become available to project and private farmers alike. The creation of grain storage depots at the Douglas-Daly and Katherine have added impetus to the development of agriculture and has given farmers the courage to improve their crops and their output. The belief in the future of agriculture for the Territory, that this government has shown, cannot be allowed to falter. The infrastructure is now in place, the expertise is available and hiccoughs will occur but, with perseverance, another valuable industry will become part of the Territory way of life.

There are other issues relative to the Victoria River electorate. There will be other times to air them. I intend to bring issues to the Assembly and I intend to give the people of Victoria River a strong voice in this forum. Mr Speaker, I was pleased to hear the proposals that have been put forward by His Honour the Administrator in his address to this Assembly. They are proposals that will bring benefit to all who share this Territory and they represent a balanced development plan for the next 4 years. I am particularly pleased to hear that there will be no halt to improvements in education and health facilities and that employment opportunities will accrue from increased tourism, mining and, hopefully, a free trade zone. I trust that every effort will be made to ensure that persons living in remote communities will benefit from these initiatives along with all Territorians.

Mr B. COLLINS (Opposition Leader): Mr Deputy Speaker, I well remember my maiden speech in this Assembly, as I am sure the Leader of the House does. My maiden speech was interrupted after 60 seconds by the Leader of the House on a point of order which resulted in an adjournment of the Assembly for 5 minutes and, upon reconvening the Assembly, there was found to be no point of order. This was after a reference to the Hansard record. The honourable minister, who was taking such exception a few moments ago, certainly got my maiden speech off to a flying start.

Mr Deputy Speaker, I was interested in the remarks of the honourable member for Victoria River who obviously has taken that new electorate under his pastoral care. The thing that interested me most about those comments was that, for someone who has been connected as he has with Catholic missions for such a long time, I am amazed that the honourable

member is either totally ignorant of or not prepared to acknowledge where 100% of the money came from for all of those welcomed improvements in the last 5 years in basic environmental health in Aboriginal communities, particularly in sewerage and water reticulation. The honourable member knows that 100% of the money which is disbursed by the Northern Territory government for all of those services comes straight from the federal government. I can see the honourable Treasurer shaking his head. I would like to see him present the evidence that that is not so.

I was also interested to hear the honourable member refer to the marvellous work that his government has done in relation to agricultural development in his electorate. His government, and particularly the minister who is in charge of that particular portfolio, was almost single-handedly responsible for dismantling the ADMA scheme on the Douglas-Daly, a scheme that I have been supporting fairly enthusiastically and, I might say, with a fair degree more competence than the minister has over the years. Of the 6 farmers, 4 were kicked out at 24 hours notice because they were not prepared to sign redrawn contracts. That is not something to be proud of. A 5-year agreement was entered into between his government and the farmers. Two years later the government wanted to tear up its side of the contract and provide the farmers with contracts for which they could not obtain finance. Because they refused to kick out the front gate, they were ridiculed on television by the Chief Minister who said in that extraordinary interview that perhaps they were ploughing the taxpayers instead of the land. There were 2 years of backbreaking effort down there to start virgin farms. I know personally how much effort was required to get those farms into the condition that they are in. That is a proud record for his government and his electorate of Victoria River.

Mr Deputy Speaker, the one thing I do want to nail in the Address in Reply debate is what brought us all together - the last election and the reasons for it. Perhaps that is also of some interest to the honourable member for Victoria River. The honourable member for Victoria River - and maybe I will have to revise this - is a person who has formerly had some degree of honesty and integrity in the area of Aboriginal affairs. He now represents a government which possesses neither.

This election was called on that very emotive trigger of Ayers Rock being given away by the federal government. Of course, the CLP, particularly the Chief Minister, played fast and loose with the truth through that particular exercise. Nothing of the sort happened. The Chief Minister took some exception in this Assembly to the word 'liar' being applied to him. The electorate always has a short memory. But, how can any of us who are closely connected with the business of politics forget the telex that launched it? It was a concocted telex, full of the worst kind of political dirty tricks. It was hatched across the road in the Chan Building, put together at Citibank and waved around at the press conference announcing the election. There were all these furies. There was to be no finance for Yulara. It would be closed down. The loan would not go through. Then we had that great conclusion of the telex from Citibank: 'I trust this helps you in your discussions this morning. Whilst we are both optimists and believe common sense will prevail, I think we may have a long wait on our hands. These comments are dictated in a hurry and I hope they are acceptable'. They were acceptable to the Chief Minister's purpose of calling an early election. I might add that later they were refuted soundly by the head of the very corporation that this telex was reported to have come from.

Then the Chief Minister launched the election by quite deliberately turning - and the honourable member for Victoria River might like to open his eyes to this - white Territorians against black Territorians in the Northern Territory. He did it very successfully, as is always the case. The CLP was in central Australia telling white Territorians that black Territorians would keep everybody locked out of Ayers Rock and out of Yulara. We all know all the fears that were raised in that telex, in particular that the loan would not come through. It was actually signed during the election campaign. The opening of Four Seasons could have gone ahead as planned. It was suspended artificially by the Chief Minister himself. Subsequently, it was opened by the Treasurer immediately after the election. None of it happened, of course. Nobody has been disadvantaged. No one has been hurt. But that is what the election was run on: a big photograph of Ayers Rock with 'Vote Everingham' across it. Short radio commercials were run in Alice Springs by the Chief Minister: 'I do not have to tell you what giving away Ayers Rock means down here'. That was nice stuff.

In my electorate, the federal government was proposing to spend \$70m of public money in a project which not only I supported but formally had no hesitation in saying, with some degree of pride, that I had a great deal to do with bringing it together. A total of \$70m was proposed for tourist upgrading in Kakadu National Park. I arrived in Oenpelli 48 hours before the poll. I was attacked immediately by my constituents. The Chief Minister certainly did a successful job on them. There is no statesman in him; he is 100% politician.

Mr Deputy Speaker, I could not believe what my constituents told me. They said that the Chief Minister was out there the day before. They said: 'He told us that he will help us stop the tourist development in Kakadu National Park because it is too terrible. It will destroy land rights. The Chief Minister will get right behind us and stop it'. There were at least 100 witnesses to this particular event. With some degree of surprise, I thought that that was a bit rich. It does not sound like the Chief Minister whom I know and love. They then produced a pamphlet: a Country Liberal Party photograph with the smiling Chief Minister at the front with the CLP candidate. He told them that the Labor Party was planning to put large numbers of tourists into big hotels in the park under Balanda control, destroy Aboriginal determination, take away their control of the land and place restrictions on Aboriginal hunting. They were told that the Labor Party had walked all over Aboriginal people. That is extraordinary stuff.

While the Chief Minister was trumpeting to the rest of the Territory, he was capitalising, for the information of the honourable member for Victoria River, on the very poor communications that exist in isolated communities in the Northern Territory by distributing this pamphlet 48 hours before the poll out there. Remember that the mobile polling booths went early. They did not have a 3-week campaign. It was 4 days in some Aboriginal communities. No wonder they did not know there was an election on with people arriving to take their votes 4 days after the whole thing started. They were being told by the Chief Minister that he would stop those naughty white men putting tourists into their national parks and he would stop the federal government, because it happened to be Labor, spending \$80m of taxpayers' money in putting tourist facilities out there. The Chief Minister has the hide to scream his head

off because 2 federal government ministers who had to attend a Cabinet meeting in Hobart wanted to postpone a seminar on tourism at the South Alligator River Motor Inn until June this year.

I was looking forward to attending the seminar, Mr Deputy Speaker. Park residents - Aboriginal people who actually reside in the park - had a meeting a week or so before and intended to go to the seminar to ask the Chief Minister how fair dinkum he was - because he distributed these pamphlets all over the Kakadu National Park - about stopping the federal government from developing Kakadu as a tourist resort. As someone who made quite a number of trips to Canberra, spent hours and hours with Mr Cohen's staff and staff of the ANPWS putting the proposal together and finally obtaining Cabinet approval for it, I have no hesitation in saying that I was bitterly angry with the Chief Minister for doing that. It is still there; it has not gone away. It will be produced. I ask the honourable member for Victoria River, and I am quite serious about this, if he takes any joy at all in representing a political party which was telling one thing to white Territorians and deliberately exploiting their fears - and legitimate fears, I might add - about land rights and everything else and telling them it was terrible that the blacks were trying to keep the whites out of the park and, at the same time, he was giving written promises to the blacks out in Kakadu that he would keep the whites out of their park because the proposal for the tourist development happened to be a federal Labor party initiative. That is the same honourable Chief Minister who becomes upset because people say he ran this election on a lie. He did that from start to finish.

Mr Deputy Speaker, I witnessed a fairly interesting performance in this Legislative Assembly yesterday. Perhaps the honourable member for Victoria River may understand when I tell him why I am a little sensitive about maiden speeches and the courtesies shown to members as they deserve to be shown. I intended to speak about this in the adjournment but I will do it now. Yesterday in this Assembly, the honourable member for Arnhem delivered his maiden speech. The honourable member for Sadadeen either did not know or did not care that, in fact, there were a considerable number of people in the public gallery. Obviously, he did not know or did not care. I am happy to tell you that at least 12 to 18 of them were friends and former colleagues of the honourable member for Arnhem who had come here to listen to him. The honourable member for Sadadeen has a smirk all over his face already. Obviously, he knows to what I am referring. These people witnessed an extraordinary performance in mime from the honourable member, as I did, all through the speech of the honourable member for Arnhem. Of course, he was preoccupied. It can be a fairly terrifying experience for all of us to deliver that first speech and he did not see it. The people in the public gallery and at least 2 journalists did. By sign language, the member for Sadadeen was indicating to members around him how funny it was that this new member was delivering a prepared speech, with the obvious implications that only the member for Sadadeen could draw.

Mr Speaker, after the speech was concluded, I spoke to those people outside the Assembly. Two of them said to me: 'Who's that bloke?' I told them. One of them said: 'After watching that performance, I can understand why the Chief Minister talks about wanting to get out of the Legislative Assembly and stop being king of the kids'. Another one said to me: 'Is there something wrong with that bloke?' Mr Deputy Speaker, of course, I told the person who asked me that, indeed, there was something very profoundly wrong with 'that bloke'.



Mr Deputy Speaker, during the adjournment yesterday afternoon, the honourable member took some exception to an interjection from the honourable member for Stuart. Mr Deputy Speaker, I agreed with him. I do not agree with the honourable member for Stuart and we agreed to disagree on this particular point. There is nothing particularly momentous about that. I do not believe that a blanket statement saying that all the people who voted for the CLP are racists is correct at all although some, of course, certainly are. But, Mr Deputy Speaker, I know from very close personal contact with the honourable member for Sadadeen, in the time that he has been in the Legislative Assembly, that he is a pure and unadulterated example of that particular species of humanity.

Mr Deputy Speaker, I do not owe the CLP very many favours but one favour I do owe it and the electors of Sadadeen is that they voted for the honourable member for Sadadeen, formerly the member for Alice Springs. Because of my close interest and involvement in the education services of the Northern Territory, I am very grateful that the electors transferred the honourable member for Sadadeen out of the education services of the Northern Territory and put him in the Legislative Assembly where, comparatively speaking, he is probably doing much less harm. I have enjoyed the conversations of the honourable member for Sadadeen on a number of occasions. I remember one occasion where he told a number of members of the Assembly of his view on the role of women in politics for example. That was a fairly interesting conversation.

Mr Deputy Speaker, I was disgusted with the performance from the honourable member during that maiden speech yesterday, as were a number of the friends and colleagues of the honourable member for Arnhem who witnessed it. It was a puerile and childish performance and it was not an edifying spectacle. I have been in here 6 years but I have to confess - and I am a member of the opposition, not the government - that even after 6 years I still feel a sense of embarrassment about even being a member of the Legislative Assembly when people carry on like that in full view of the public gallery. It was a ridiculous performance.

Mr Deputy Speaker, the Northern Territory Country Liberal Party ran this election on a lie from start to finish. The lie in fact did not even stand up for very long. As our political consultants told us - and they were very experienced, judging by the polls and the opinions expressed by the voters - the kind of issue that the CLP ran on needed a short campaign to be successful. If it had gone for a week or 2 weeks longer, people would have started seriously to question it. They had to be bulldozed into the polls, and bulldozed they were.

I want to go back to a point I made earlier. It was a snap poll and, for people in the bush, it was a very snap poll indeed. We introduced into the Northern Territory a system of mobile polling booths. That was supported totally by the opposition at the time and still is supported. But, we had no forewarning that it was ever intended that those mobile polling booths would be used in the fashion they were. They were designed for small, isolated bush communities. The honourable member for Stuart can correct me if I am wrong but, from memory, I do not think there was a single static booth at all in his electorate or in the electorate of MacDonnell. However, I found it astounding that, in an electorate such as Arnhem, large urban communities such as Galiwinku with 1500 people,

the largest Aboriginal community in the Northern Territory, had mobile polling booths. Total confusion reigned in my electorate, not through any ignorance of the constituents but through poor communications and because polling teams arrived to take votes 4 days after the process started. The mobile polling started a week ahead, on the Monday before everyone else went to the polls, and total confusion reigned.

Whilst I was campaigning, and I know other honourable members had the same experience, people had to be advised individually that the polling would not be on Saturday as almost all of them thought it would be. Places like Maningrida, Croker Island and Oenpelli had always had static booths and indeed could still have had them because the community resources were there to do it. They found that they were voting on Wednesday, Tuesday or whatever. Some places voted between 9 and 11 o'clock in the morning and other places between 2 and 3 in the afternoon. Indeed, total confusion reigned.

Strenuous efforts were made by many people in the communities to tell people about the election in the short time that was allowed to isolated voters to consider the issues. The way in which the mobile polls were implemented, they barely knew where and when they could vote. Indeed, I know 1 constituent, a non-Aboriginal constituent, a person who took his vote seriously - and I do not know whether he voted Labor or CLP - who, because of his job, had to travel between 2 communities. He was in the position, not knowing that this would happen, of being in one community in the morning while the mobile booth was at another and then, because of his employment, literally passing the polling team in mid-air as it flew past him as he was on his way to the other community. He missed out completely. That sort of thing happened on a number of occasions.

There was also the situation where people who wanted to exercise the right that is normally available to them of assisting the candidate of their choice were not able to do so. I arrived in a particular community and I had not thought about it. I told this group of surprised people that they would be voting on Wednesday morning or whatever it was. They happened to be school teachers. They said: 'We will not be able to. What are we going to do - abandon the classes and stand in line?' In places like Elcho Island, for example, which had a mobile polling booth, people sometimes wait 4 and 5 hours to vote because of the number of assisted votes going through the booth. These Northern Territory public servants asked me what they would do. I rang the Director of Education and he told me, quite accurately, that he had no power to give them time off. Subsequently, we discovered that there is a clause in the Electoral Act that allows people 2 hours if they are public servants but that was good luck more than good management.

Mr Deputy Speaker, what I want to say in conclusion is that the opposition supports the concept of mobile polling booths if the system is correctly applied. The great problems associated with what I believe to be its misuse during the election campaign were exacerbated by the short campaign. I am prepared to accept that perhaps the government, as I did, foresaw that there would be those difficulties. I know that a number of academics have already written reports on the problems that were caused by this particular practice. I hope that, by the next election, some changes will be made either to the legislation or to the regulations so that people, through no fault of their own, are not deprived of the right to vote.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: I remind honourable members that courtesy dictates that maiden speeches be heard in silence. By the same token, maiden speeches should be non-contentious.

Mr HATTON (Nightcliff): Mr Deputy Speaker, I have the honour to represent the electorate of Nightcliff in this Assembly. At the outset, I must say that this honour has been given to me as a result of the outstanding efforts of the Country Liberal Party and a marvellous team of workers on my electorate campaign committee who performed wonders during the exceptionally short campaign. Here and now, I put on record my heart-felt appreciation for their efforts and their act of faith. I further put on record my awareness that not only have I been given this honour, but that I have been given a responsibility to justify the faith in me shown by the people of Nightcliff. During the election campaign, I committed myself to ensure that the interests of Nightcliff are fully and effectively represented in this Assembly. I now reaffirm that commitment.

Nightcliff has a proud and rich history which, in many ways, reflects the history of Darwin. The origin of the name 'Nightcliff' itself is surrounded by controversy and folklore. Many people believe incorrectly that the name derived from the misspelling of the name of a Mr J.G. Knight who was a government official, including Government Resident, for nearly 2 decades until his death in 1892. Mr Knight was one of our most popular Government Residents. He was physician to sick settlers, a friend who won the respect and admiration of miners and the architect of many of our older buildings, including the extensions to Government House which gave it its title of the 'House of 7 Gables'. Mr Knight was apparently also somewhat of an eccentric who, amongst other things, would spend hours sitting on a cliff top at Nightcliff contemplating his navel, to use a colloquialism. Thus, in the early years after his death, people remembered him and assumed that this was how the location gained its name.

Unfortunately for the romantics amongst us, Mr Knight did not arrive until 1873 and the name 'Nightcliff' appeared in Goyder's map of 1869. Perhaps the romantics can gain some solace from the more likely origins of the name. I am advised that, either in Stokes' diary maintained during his examination of the harbour of 1839 or in the diary of the Beagle, a passage is written that, one evening, some sailors from the vessel scaled a cliff and it was thus named the Night Cliff. So much for originality. In any event, the official name of the town was established on 26 October 1948 when the Nomenclature Committee adopted the conjoint name of Nightcliff.

The first known settlement occurred in the area in 1882 when Father Anthony H. Strehle established St Joseph's Freshwater Rapid Creek Jesuit Mission on a grant of 640 acres between what is now Ryland Road and McMillans Road. That mission eventually closed around 1899, but there is evidence of other isolated settlers in the area during and after that period. For example, the mission vessel Evangel was wrecked off Nightcliff in 1901 whilst landing furniture for an early resident, a Mrs Dolan. Nonetheless, Nightcliff, with its beautiful blacksoil rainforest on the westernside, remained a peaceful retreat outside Darwin frequented by picnickers at the headland, the mouth of Rapid Creek and at Coconut Grove - that is, until the Second World War caught up with it.

During the war, a naval base and observation area was established on the headland and defence facilities constructed bringing with them military personnel and facilities. Those facilities were maintained after the war with the conversion of a building to create the famous Seabreeze Hotel which was one of the most popular nightspots in the city until it met a wild lady called Tracy. The famous Sydney Williams huts that had been left behind were used to provide accommodation for returning civilians after the war. The honourable Treasurer's wife was one who spent part of her childhood there. I do not propose to ask the honourable member whether he took advantage of the parking opportunities which Nightcliff provided and which were popular amongst courting teenagers of his day.

The first official subdivision of Nightcliff occurred in 1948. As well as the house block subdivisions along the waterfront, the rainforest area was also subdivided into agricultural leases. Unfortunately, this led to the destruction of the rainforest with only a couple of the magnificent banyan trees remaining today to remind us of its past. As the suburb continued to gain popularity, further subdivision occurred through the 1950s and delightful, floral street names were adopted on the recommendation of the Nightcliff Progress Association which existed throughout the 1950s. The progress association was our first step towards local government in the area. Unfortunately, it ceased to function after the creation of the Darwin city council which incorporated the town of Nightcliff as well.

Whereas other members boast or bewail the geographic size of their electorates, Nightcliff represents the converse. My electorate now comprises 903 residential lots and 35 business lots. Approximately one-third of the residential lots are zoned R2 or R3. To the casual observer, it appears developed and settled. However, many of the R2 and R3 lots still contain single detached dwellings. Flat, townhouse and home unit development is proceeding at a prodigious rate and, with it, a growing and concentrating population. It comprises a large section of residents who have lived in their homes in the area for 10, 20, 30 or even more years. In addition, with development, we now have a growing group of people in rented accommodation and an emerging group of people living in their own strata title units or townhouses. Apart from the mix of old and new residents, a significant proportion of our residents come from other than Anglo-Saxon ethnic backgrounds.

The demography of Nightcliff, like that of the Territory itself, is dynamic not static. This brings with it new challenges to ensure that we plan properly for the change and growth so that such changes are for the better not the worse. It is too easy, with the pressures and needs of new suburbs and new towns in a rapidly expanding community, to assume that the older suburbs, such as Nightcliff, are already well served. This attitude of mind has led less perspicacious governments to neglect the needs of older, inner suburbs in cities with the consequence that those areas degenerate into substandard and even slum suburbs until, eventually, public pressure forces them to be reclaimed or redeveloped. We have the opportunity to learn from the mistakes of others and thereby avoid them. By planning and forethought, we can ensure that suburbs such as Nightcliff are maintained and upgraded along with the rest of the city so that they remain pleasant, attractive places to live.

Whilst it is the role of every member of this Assembly to promote the interests of his or her electorate, the Assembly has a more important and solemn duty. We sit in this place to consider the needs of all Territorians, to debate legislation for all Territorians and to represent the interests of all Territorians. The election of 3 December 1983 was fought on one, clear issue and the electorate - the people - spoke with crystalline clarity. They said that the behaviour of the Australian government in running roughshod over this Assembly, this government and the people of the Territory is unacceptable. They have said that they have the right to expect, and do expect, the national government to consult meaningfully with the elected government of the Northern Territory on matters which directly affect this government and the people of the Territory. The electorate has enjoined us, as members of the Assembly, to take this message to the national government, and through whatever means we have at our disposal, to bring it to a realisation of the justice of this claim, and to a genuine recognition that the Territory is no longer an experimental playground for federal social legislation.

If any one of us fails to fulfil these instructions of the electorate, we will stand damned by the people we claim to represent. We will bring shame on the proud tradition of this Assembly and its predecessor, the Legislative Council. It was the foresight and courage of our predecessors who stood up for the rights of the Territory that brought us this far in our progress towards eventually taking our place as full and equal partners in the federation of states that comprise Australia. Members are reminded of the courage and dedication of the elected councillors when, on 17 April 1958, they resigned en masse, in the face of a federal government which ignored their proposals for constitutional reform, mild as those claims were. All of them were rewarded by being re-elected by the Territory people because then, as now, to quote my immediate predecessor in her maiden speech in 1971: 'Territory people are alive to the political necessity and are eagerly awaiting change'.

We have just undergone a similar election and each of us, on whichever side of the Assembly we sit, has an obligation to use whatever claimed influence we have with the federal government to take the Territory's case to Canberra. The Australian government must understand that we cannot contemplate being dragged back into what was described as the hollow, sham-democratic government that existed prior to 1 July 1978. It has already been demonstrated that the development of responsible self-government has and will lead to the Territory gaining its economic feet and becoming less of a burden on the taxpayers of Australia.

Here is the nub, the essence of our case: if the federal government is concerned that the Australian taxpayers are incurring an undue burden in the Territory, it must recognise that the only hope of overcoming that is to stimulate our economic development and diversification. We, as with the federal government, do not enjoy the snide remarks about our financial dependency and we have striven with all our will to work towards becoming a contributor rather than a dependant to justify the faith of the previous Australian government for outstanding achievements in our economic development. In 5 short years we have moved to a position where we contribute 12% of the cost of governing the Territory in 1982-83 compared to 5% immediately prior to self-government. These figures, I should say, exclude recovery of debt charges. Despite this, obviously we have a very long way to go.

The programs outlined by His Honour the Administrator yesterday and the Address in Reply speech by the Chief Minister set out a comprehensive and constructive plan to continue the economic and social development of the Territory. I lend my full support to the motion proposed by the Chief Minister.

I have spent the last decade as a representative of private industry. I have also worked to assist the unemployed and our young people seeking to make that most difficult transition from school to work, and joined with them in their sporting and recreational pursuits. I have seen the emergence of our industries at close hand and like to believe that I have contributed to that emergence. I have had the glow of satisfaction in seeing new businesses start, struggle and eventually prosper. I have seen young people achieving their ambitions. However, I have also seen the tragedy of the young unemployed, with disillusion in their eyes and desolation in their hearts. I have felt the anger and frustration of seeing our resources not developed through political bickering and bureaucratic interference or indifference. There is no doubt in my mind that we can achieve much more.

We have only begun to develop our tourist industry potential and we must maintain our courage and commitment to this task. We must find answers to the ludicrous double talk that allows uranium to be developed in South Australia and not the Northern Territory. We must solve the problem of turning local inventions into local manufactured products. Through this, we may be able to take the disillusion out of the eyes of our unemployed and put hope back into their hearts. Through this, we can develop the tax base that will enable us to better attack the real problems of our outback communities and meet the aspirations of our urban communities. We must be mindful always that the only generator of national wealth is private industry, through the goods and services produced and the jobs created by private industry. The government programs are aimed at promoting private industry development whilst meeting as far as possible the needs and aspirations of our citizens. Through partnership and a shared vision between the Territory and the national government, we can achieve the mutual objective of the Territory being a national contributor rather than a dependant.

Attacking essential infrastructure development, alienating vast tracts of Territory land, perpetuating the myth that we are overfunded in the light of our existing economic circumstances or failing to consult the properly-elected government of the Northern Territory on matters directly affecting the Northern Territory are destructive to the welfare of the Territory and to Australia because they undermine confidence and our progress toward self-sufficiency. Pouring millions of dollars into propping up inefficient industries at the expense of the north may gain a few votes in the short term but is contrary to the interests of Australia as a whole. A national government, to be true to its name, should adopt a truly national perspective and work towards a vision of Australia's future. That future is in our resource rich north. There is an inextricable demographic shift occurring in the Australian population distribution towards the north and west and out of the overcrowded, polluted cities of the south-east - a movement towards Australia's future. King Canute could not hold back the tide and the federal government cannot hold back this population drift. Short-term, politically-expedient policies will not stop this drift. What it will do is make our 20th century pioneers suffer undue difficulties and could slow down Australia's progress towards what eventually will be a richer society both economically and sociologically.

In pressing for the needs of the Northern Territory, we can bring this vision to the national government. In this, we will serve not only the needs of our community but that of Australia as a whole. We can proceed towards eventually alleviating the Australian taxpayers of their unwanted burden of financial support. We can proceed towards becoming a contributor to the national wealth and, through economic development and diversification, we can provide jobs, homes and a fulfilling lifestyle to our residents. Were it not for the development in the 1960s and 1970s of Western Australia's iron ore, Queensland's coal and our uranium, such as it is developed, Australia would today be a bankrupt nation. How much more could be achieved for the nation if we could rekindle that vision, that will, in the Australian government and if we could convince it of the simple logic of accepting our political existence and working in partnership with us. Unfortunately, the current climate of acrimony seems to make this task almost impossible.

After the March 1983 federal election, we proffered the olive branch only to have it dashed across our face. We then stood up and gained the mandate of the people. We must once again proffer the olive branch. But if it is again dashed across our face, our obligation is clear. We must stand up for the Territory because, in doing so, we are standing up for the fundamental principles of democracy, for Australia's future and the Territory's future. We must each of us, on whichever side of the Assembly we sit, stand up or be damned.

Mr FINCH (Wagaman): Mr Deputy Speaker, I am also pleased to speak in support of the Address in Reply to His Honour the Administrator's speech in the Assembly yesterday. Firstly, could I say that I am honoured to have been elected as the member for the new electorate of Wagaman. I would like also to thank those many friends, new and old, who have seen fit to endorse me as their representative in this newly-extended Legislative Assembly. To this end, I must also acknowledge the loyal support of my family and those helpers who worked tirelessly throughout what was a fair but vigorous campaign. In accepting office and the responsibilities involved, I am conscious that I will need at times to call upon those experiences gained through involvement in community service and throughout my 22 years in the civil engineering profession.

This new electorate has been formed by the redistribution of the boundaries of the previous electorates of Jingili and Sanderson and is located in the more substantially-developed areas of the northern suburbs of Darwin. In contrast to the sparsity of the honourable member for Stuart's electorate, Wagaman is one of the smallest of the Territory's electorates. To my knowledge, there are only one or 2 vacant residential allotments which have still to be developed.

Mr Deputy Speaker, the electorate is comprised of the suburbs of Wagaman, parts of Wulagi and parts of Anula and is distributed approximately equally on both sides of Lee Point Road. The western half of the electorate consists primarily of pre-Cyclone Tracy houses, many of which substantially survived the cyclone and have been repaired and upgraded since. In general, those which have been upgraded have been developed to a more modern and more strengthened fashion, creating both a pleasant and better living environment. The balance of the electorate, east of Lee Point Road, consists almost totally of residences which were constructed by the Darwin Reconstruction Commission after 1975. Although some houses had been constructed in this area prior to the cyclone, they were all totally eliminated in December 1974.

The majority of people in the area have young families and, further to the comment by the honourable Minister for Youth Sport and Recreation, I support the need to provide further youth facilities and recreational activities for people in this area. Our youth policy focuses attention on these needs and is to be commended by all. On completion of facilities such as the magnificent Marrara sporting complex and the extensions which are currently under construction at Casuarina High School, it can be seen that we are well on the way to satisfactorily providing suitable venues for youth activities. These activities will provide not only for young peoples' needs, but will cater also for the public at large. They will become a tremendous asset to the northern suburbs.

However, work will still be needed to ensure that our future generations are given the best opportunities for full and productive development. From previous experience with school groups, swimming clubs and various other sporting bodies, girl guides and other youth groups, I am also concerned that we should be attempting to encourage greater family involvement, particularly in the development of those vital areas of education: social attitude, self-discipline and development of character. Whilst governments and educators can and do play a significant role through the provision of supportive services and facilities, there is no substitute for caring, parental involvement. How we tackle this problem, however, I am not certain, but it is certain that we must try.

Whilst our future lies with today's youth, I was pleased to hear the Administrator refer to accommodation for the aged population of the Territory and for proposals currently being considered. Through involvement with Tracy Lodge Hostel for the frail and the aged and the NT Council on Ageing, I am aware of the work already done by the NT government, private organisations and the Department of Social Security in this area. Additional facilities are still required to meet the needs of our ageing population. Whilst our retired Territorians receive better treatment than their counterparts anywhere else in Australia, they are an integral part of the community who deserve all of the federal and Territory governments' support that they can get. Ill-conceived schemes such as the recently-abandoned income assets proposals by the federal government should be left in the can.

While I see my primary responsibility being to look after the needs of the electorate, I recognise also that we have an obligation to serve the interests of the Northern Territory and Australia as a whole to the limit of our individual and collective abilities. In this regard, I have a genuine desire to see the existing potential resources of the Northern Territory utilised to their optimum. In considering the continuing development of the Northern Territory, one can only be impressed at the distance we have covered since self-government in 1978. As mentioned by His Honour the Administrator, there are still undoubtedly many opportunities left for us to participate in. No doubt, though, we will be judged as much by the efficiency of our handling of those tasks as by their extent. It is hoped that the increase in the size of this Assembly will help to share the load on a broader basis and increase our capacity accordingly.

These are still exciting times and there is much to be done to secure the long-term stability and prosperity of the Territory. In this regard, careful detailed planning is essential. Experience has shown that the ultimate economic success of any project depends almost directly on the



degree of preliminary and thorough investigation and planning. From broad experience as a civil engineer on projects ranging from roadworks, water and sewerage schemes and building works, including various components of investigation, design, construction and operation, I am well aware that often the least component in job costing is the initial cost of construction. We do need to take account of long-term operating and maintenance costs, the impact on the environment and other secondary factors. In determining the long-term viability of any project, it is necessary to take into account local knowledge and local experience and to utilise the latest technology, including construction techniques, equipment and materials. In this age of rapidly changing technology, it is recognised that it is difficult to keep up with this change.

However, it is of paramount importance not only to keep up with the change but also to recognise that we have a responsibility to provide a positive contribution to investigation, research and scientific developments generally. Aside from the obvious utilisation of our natural resources through mining, primary production and tourism, there is seen to be a potential and innovative participation in the South-east Asian manufacturing marketplace. In particular, it is not unreasonable for us to consider increased development of some forms of high technology industry. For example, our own climatic and geographical environment lends itself towards innovation in building sciences. The remoteness of some of our communities should encourage the development of low-cost operations and maintenance-free equipment.

It might be of some interest to honourable members to know that the Northern Territory engineering and architectural fraternities have developed both national and, in some cases, international reputations in areas such as economic road construction, particularly in remote desert regions, identification and utilisation of valuable ground-water supplies and, particularly in the Top End, in the areas of domestic building to withstand cyclonic windloads. I guess our architects have developed also skills in the design of buildings to suit our harsh, tropical and, in the centre, arid zone climates. Alternative power-generation is another obvious area for development and we have already seen some limited work in solar and wind systems. Mr Speaker, all of these systems would be exportable interstate and overseas. However, before we can develop a skills-based industry successfully, governments at all levels need to join with private enterprise to establish a suitable environment. As laid down in the report completed recently on developing high technology for enterprise in Australia, which has been strongly supported by the current federal Minister for Science and Technology, consideration of taxation incentives, contract government research, venture capital facilities and market research assistance are only some of the catalytic encouragements which the federal government might consider.

In his speech His Honour the Administrator referred to the need for a Northern Territory university. It has been suggested that the establishment of a university could provide a base for technological research which could support the development and eventual export of a local high-technology industry. Whether we are considering high-technology industry or development of natural resources, I believe that our future success depends heavily on our early preparation. The more important infrastructure services on which development will rely are transport, water and power supplies and communication.

Much has been said recently about transport and communications. His Honour the Administrator referred yesterday to the cancellation of the railway - or should we say 'postponement', for sooner or later the current or future federal government will see past the end of its nose, and proceed with this very vital project. Accordingly, we might consider urging the federal government at least to proceed with the survey, design and documentation of a railway on the basis that the relatively small cost involved today would capitalise on what otherwise would be potentially lost leadtime.

I believe that I would be negligent if I did not express my concern in regard to the sorry state of the current water resources field in Australia. In the federal government's recently released report 'Water 2000' considerable emphasis is placed on the need to alleviate Australia's greatest limitation to development, namely, the management and development of our limited water resources. Whether we are talking of agriculture, horticulture, mining or residential communities, the one commodity which is a fundamental prerequisite is an adequate water supply system. I share the honourable member for Stuart's concern regarding the further development of our remote areas; that is, further to the significant provision of basic services which have been provided already to isolated communities under difficult and extremely expensive conditions. However, I am sure that the honourable member can see - and I guess even Blind Freddy could see - that prior to developing sound economic and, therefore, long-term and meaningful projects in these remote areas, we need to do some substantial homework on the overall servicing infrastructure required.

When we consider the water situation in north Australia relative to the remainder of the continent, it can be seen that we have by far the greatest untapped potential in water resources. It is estimated in the report 'Water 2000' that almost half of Australia's surface waters discharge into our oceans. But, we use less than 1% of the possible, exploitable yield. Compare that to 16% for the balance of Australia and we have some perspective. However, for much of the Territory, ground water is of greater importance. Whilst the capacity of the more central Northern Territory basins are limited, the report suggests that adequate potential exists to support considerable development throughout the Territory. Despite this, the federal government's report identifies a reduction of 50% in water resource expenditure over the last 15 years. In addition, the current federal government saw fit recently to cancel a 5-year \$350m program which could have involved over 20 major water projects. My apologies - I should have said 'postponed' rather than 'cancelled' because, sooner or later, these projects will have to proceed or Australia's growth will be stunted. These major projects are seen to provide realistic avenues for the direction of employment funds as opposed to some of the more half-baked, weed-pulling programs currently under consideration. When we consider that development of any significant water program requires a leadtime of 10 or 20 years, it can be seen that our future development could be seriously curtailed. In all areas, investigation, research and development of new and existing technology is not something that we can shelve until tomorrow.

Mr Speaker, as a new member in this Assembly, it may be difficult to see what realistic impact my small voice will have in influencing the federal government in its policies but I know that I share an obligation to assist this government in its on-going development program to the limit of my capacity for the betterment of all Territorians.

Mr FIRMAN (Ludmilla): Mr Deputy Speaker, in speaking in support of the motion for the Address in Reply to His Honour the Administrator, I would like to comment on areas of interest to me, some of which may be of particular interest to the people of Ludmilla who saw fit to elect me. The electorate of Ludmilla has always been a disjointed one without a major focal point. Since the redistribution of electoral boundaries in 1983, it has become even more so. The area is bounded by major arterial roads with triple, double and dual carriageways. It covers an area of diverse housing, ranging from high-rise Housing Commission flats at one end to multi-storey Housing Commission flats at the other, a small industrial area and an unusually high proportion of multi-storey rented accommodation scattered throughout the remainder of what is basically a residential area. Also within its boundaries lie 2 Aboriginal residential areas covering a vast land area in comparison with the electorate's total size. There is also the 2½-mile Works Depot, a creek and foreshore completely covered by mangroves, a sewage treatment plant at one end and a pumping station at the other. There is a primary school, a pre-school, a special school, a football oval and a racecourse with its associated stables. Added to this diversity is the fact that a major part of the electorate straddles the airport flight path and falls within the NEF 20 zone. The whole electorate has only 2 small corner shops and one take-away food outlet.

All this produces an electorate under pressures of noise, disruption, disturbance, smell, mosquito problems, traffic and pedestrian problems. You might well ask why people wish to live there! Mr Deputy Speaker, surprisingly enough, not only do most of them enjoy it, they take quite a pride in their area, and rightly are very vocal about the needs of their community. Over the years since self-government, the previous member for Ludmilla, now Speaker of the Assembly, Mr Steele, worked very hard and quite successfully on behalf of his electorate. Many changes were instituted in the area to the benefit of residents and, in the case of the overpass, to the rest of Darwin as well. I am happy to say that I intend to work as hard as my predecessor did towards the betterment of the quality of lifestyle for the residents of my area.

Some of the changes occurring now, such as the staged closure and removal of the 2½-mile depot and associated workshops to allow for residential development, will continue. A development application, incorporating a large tree-filled buffer zone on the Stuart Highway frontage, is currently before the Northern Territory Planning Authority for the north eastern one-third of the 2½-mile area. A second stage of subdivision of another large parcel of land in the centre of the area is more than likely to proceed later this year. I am hopeful the total area to be turned off for residential use will be completed in 2 years.

I am pleased to announce, to my constituents particularly, that I have been informed that, within the next 12 weeks, a combined cycle path and footpath will be completed along the western side of Bagot Road, from McMillans Road to the Stuart Highway. This will have a great effect on reducing the traffic hazards caused by cyclists using the slow traffic lane in peak hours and also provide safety and comfort for parents and children when they are travelling to and from the Ludmilla Primary and Pre-schools.

There are problems of noise, flies and smells from the Darwin Turf Club. This large area of land in a prime residential part of the city has always affected and will continue to affect my electorate. Whilst it remains a considerable thorn in the side of many residents, I note that discussions between the club and developers have commenced. Unfortunately, they did not include the government initially and some misunderstanding as to what were each party's objectives and expectations have occurred. That is not to say that all parties should not return to the conference table with a clear mind and attempt to come to a satisfactory solution to enable this prime site within the residential area to be utilised other than for a racecourse. During my first term in the Assembly, I intend to work with all the parties concerned to attempt to resolve this issue.

In his Address in Reply to the Assembly in 1980, the then member for Ludmilla mentioned the difficulties in access and egress that the residents and commercial operators in the Nation Crescent and Totem Road area were experiencing. Whilst some relief has occurred with the extension of Nation Crescent through to Dick Ward Drive, and the setting aside of land to provide a slip road to the commercial users abutting Bagot Road, further planning decisions must be made to address this problem, which should have the additional benefit of encouraging commercial infill development in the currently vacant land between Bagot Road and Dick Ward Drive.

Whilst on the subject of the Coconut Grove area, I have been advised that, at the completion of the new drive-in theatre on Thorak Road opposite the 10-mile abattoir, it is highly likely that the owners of the existing drive-in site on Dick Ward Drive will be seeking approval to develop townhouses there. This development, together with the current developments partially completed or planned on lots 4533, 4539, 4540 and 4541, have the potential of producing a residential unit increase in the area of somewhere between 200 and 300 units, depending on the scale of development. Using the planning ratio of 1.5 vehicles per dwelling unit on the one hand and probably the more realistic scale of 2 vehicles per unit on the other, we will be facing an additional vehicle usage in this area of between 400 and 600 cars morning and evening, entering and leaving Dick Ward Drive by entry points within 300 m of each other. Traffic planning studies will have to be undertaken, not only to head off any difficulties that may arise locally but to determine the effect on through traffic and the compounding peak hour effects on the Ross Smith Avenue end of Dick Ward Drive. I intend to work with the honourable Minister for Transport and Works on this matter.

This increase in dwellings, both partially completed or planned, will also have a marked effect on the ability of existing schools to cope with the increase in the number of students who are likely to take up residence with their families in these new areas. While this is not a matter of immediate concern, it is a possible trend that will have to be closely monitored.

Mr Deputy Speaker, moving away from matters which more clearly relate to the electorate, some aspects of the Territory, and in several cases the Territory's relationship with the rest of Australia, and in particular the federal government, also deserve comment. Most people in the rest of Australia know about our major topographical and geographical features,

particularly Ayers Rock, Kakadu National Park and Katherine Gorge. Most Australians are aware that we have a large Aboriginal population and that the top end of the Territory has a Wet and a Dry and the Centre a 4-season climate.

What most Australians do not realise is the interrelationship of these to each other and to some of our major industries. Mining, fishing and tourism are some of the Territory's major industries and each one of these industries suffers in some way from the factors mentioned earlier: too much wet or too much dry; the tyranny of distance from markets usually reached over a network of roads which are external to the Northern Territory and do not perform an all-weather function; and intervention on behalf of Aboriginals by well-meaning people or by a federal government appearing to have little consideration for the wishes or aspirations of the residents of one-sixth of the Australian continent. Our mining industry suffered a major blow with the federal government's refusal to allow Northern Territory mines to proceed, preferring instead Roxby Downs in South Australia.

The continuing saga of 100 years of attempts by Territorians to have a rail link from north to south into the national rail system, and thus opening up the Territory, is one which we will debate for some time to come. Hopefully, it will not be for 100 more years. I believe that, whether it can be proved to be viable at today's cost or not, it should be an expression of faith by the federal government to complete this long-awaited project and get on with the job. Where would we be today if a Hill Report were produced to justify an Australian national railway anywhere else in Australia? I doubt that it would stand up to scrutiny. It totally discounts the manufacturing, residential and commercial developments which followed in the footsteps of other national lines. The Sydney Harbour Bridge, I suspect, would also have been given the axe using similar criteria. The Sydney Opera House would have suffered the same fate and possibly the Snowy River scheme and many others as well.

Our prawning industry over the years has worked hard to prove viable areas in the Joseph Bonaparte Gulf, along the Northern Territory coastline and into the Van Dieman Gulf area. Certainly, I acknowledge that, in some cases, it was with the help of overseas and interstate interests, but as soon as the areas were known to be a possible commercial bonanza, we were pack-raped by the states. Once again, we are fighting for survival and receiving little or no help from the federal government to become masters of our own destiny.

Tourism, our number one money earner and job placer in the Northern Territory, also suffers from intervention such as the recently-announced specially-reduced air fares for international tourists. In one fell swoop, this successfully did exactly the opposite to the Northern Territory's Japanese market.

The state of the roads south from the Northern Territory border to Adelaide was the source of pleasure, I am sure, to those hardened, off-road specialists who rough it for pleasure. It continues to be off-putting for the average Australian family wishing to see the wonders of the Northern Territory on a limited but still, to us, very welcome budget.

Any international visitor entering Australia's gateway in the north has to be a very patient, intrepid and kindly person, and possibly even masochistic to twice suffer the facilities of the Darwin International Airport. I am ever hopeful, but not altogether convinced, having lived in the Northern Territory for 18 years and watched the fluctuations in the political moods of successive federal governments, that the rebuilding and relocation of this facility will ever occur. In the light of recent statements on this subject from the federal government, perhaps I should express my faith in the possibility of a return to better relations between our 2 governments in matters concerning the Territory.

Debate adjourned.

#### ADJOURNMENT

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

Mr BELL (MacDonnell): Mr Deputy Speaker, I would like to make a few comments about the progress of the deliberations of the Assembly generally. There have been a number of comments that I have heard in various quarters that have caused considerable concern to me. I regard it as a shame that the Chief Minister is not in the Assembly to hear them today because it is a very strong feeling I have, which I am sure I share with a large number of people in the Territory community, that the Chief Minister's candidature, whether it be as a National Party of Australia candidate or whether it be as a Liberal Party of Australia candidate, for a seat in the House of Representatives has quite thrown under a cloud all the deliberations of this Assembly. I suggest to you, Mr Deputy Speaker, that it is a matter of considerable concern to all of us that, from now until the time that that candidature is resolved, the deliberations of this Assembly will be under a cloud. The people of the Northern Territory cannot now consider to be legislated for nor administered in a way in which they can have confidence.

I feel that the Chief Minister is rather in the position of the frog in the de la Fontaine fable about a frog which wanted to swell himself up and up until he was as big as a cow - 'la grenouille qui se veut faire aussi grosse que la boeuf'. I appreciate that the animals do not quite fit but I do not think the imagery will be lost either on the Chief Minister or on other honourable members. This particular frog went through all sorts of contortions and all sorts of gestures in a desperate attempt to become as big as the cow.

Mr Perron: Did he stab himself?

Mr BELL: Well, that is the point I am coming to. Mr Deputy Speaker, you will be interested in this because I believe that the fate of this particular frog will be instructive not only to the Chief Minister, but also to his current parliamentary colleagues. The net result of the contortions and the gestures that the frog carried out was that he burst. Of course, it goes on to draw the parallel about the human characters who perform in exactly that way. I believe that I would not be doing him justice if I did not at least forewarn the Chief Minister in this regard and certainly the colleagues who are at his back. Perhaps I should forewarn the Chief Minister of the colleagues at his side.

There have been a couple of references which I find quizzical. I am sure that my colleagues on this side find it quite amazing that the Chief Minister, at least - it may only be the Chief Minister - has chosen to reflect on the Leader of the Opposition. He has made a quite bizarre suggestion that the Leader of the Opposition would not be leader in 12 months. Mr Deputy Speaker, allow me to say to you and to the horde over the other side - let me put them on notice, particularly a few of the people on the backbench - that I hope they enjoy the next 4 years because there are a few of them who will not be here in 4 years' time. Let me make another statement, Mr Deputy Speaker. The next elected Chief Minister of the Northern Territory will be the member for Arafura. I hope honourable members appreciate exactly what I am saying. When the candidature of the Chief Minister is resolved, as resolved it will be, who will take over from him? Will it be the Leader of the House? Perhaps it will be the Leader of the House, particularly after his performance this morning which was short on reason and long on polemics. He is perhaps putting in a bid to be campaign manager and slotting from campaign manager to being Chief Minister. Or is it to be the honourable Treasurer who has decided to step down from the deputy leadership? Is it the honourable member for Fannie Bay who will be in the front running or, perhaps, the honourable member for Barkly? Or, dare I say, somebody from the backbench? Perhaps it will be a field day for those denizens of the press, watching us from above now, when we will be able to enjoy a night of the long knives as the government frontbench destroys itself. But, whatever the results of that process are and whoever becomes Chief Minister, should the current honourable member for Jingili be successful, let me say that whoever becomes the incumbent under those circumstances will have no mandate to legislate for the Northern Territory, to administer the government departments of the Northern Territory or to give leadership in the Northern Territory. I say it again to you. The next elected Chief Minister for the Northern Territory will be the honourable member for Arafura.

Mr SMITH (Millner): Mr Speaker, I was tempted to take the opportunity to talk about some electorate matters after the excellent guided tours of the respective electorates that I have heard today. I do not intend to enlighten people with a guided tour of Millner at this stage, but I want to talk about a particular project that was previously within the Millner electorate but has now been taken over by the member for Jingili under the redistribution, and that is the Rapid Creek Water Gardens. Members who were in the last Assembly will recall that I mentioned the Rapid Creek Water Gardens on a number of occasions.

My interest this time has been prompted basically by some recent comments on talk-back radio concerning the condition of the water gardens. In a nutshell, those comments indicated that the barbeques did not work, the fountains did not work, the lawns had not been mowed and the toilets were shut. I am pleased to say that, after a personal inspection on Saturday, the lawns had been mowed, the fountains were working quite nicely and the toilets were open. I must say that I am very pleased that toilets have been placed in the water gardens after my representations last year and I would like to assure the honourable member for Jingili who, at the time, predicted an uprising from residents in the nearby area, that there have not been any complaints from residents about the toilets and they have gone a long way to improving the facility and making it a more attractive area for people to use.

I would like to say to the existing Minister for Transport and Works that a playground is still needed there. As I have pointed out on a number of occasions, there is very little to do there, particularly for kids. They can ride their bikes around for a while. They can ignore the signs and swim in the wading pools. But that is about it. On the original plan in the Dwyer Report, quite a comprehensive playground was planned but unfortunately that has been omitted.

I want to refer to the Dwyer Report of 1979 because it was a comprehensive report into the development of the whole Rapid Creek area, from the mouth of the creek right through to the Marrara Swamp behind the existing airport. In my view, it is unfortunate that, probably because of cost considerations, the government has not proceeded with the full development of the project and instead has concentrated solely on what is, in fact, the middle section and the water gardens development. For those people who have not read the Dwyer Report, I will briefly summarise the 3 main sections.

First, there was the section north of Trower Road, between Trower Road and the sea. The Dwyer Report recommended that it be established as a mangrove botanical gardens. If established, that would be a world first. Nowhere in the world are there mangrove botanical gardens. It is ideally situated for such a thing because it is very close to the community college and it would provide an important teaching and resource facility for the community college. Unfortunately, as I have said, that proposal has not been followed up. In conjunction with the mangrove botanical gardens, it would have been possible to create a boating, fishing and swimming area there.

The second area, which has gone ahead I am pleased to say, is the tropical water gardens. Again, unfortunately, the original design has not been followed through fully. There is no adventure playground, as I have mentioned previously, and another important part of the design was to be a Chinese garden and a tropical fruit orchard. Unfortunately, neither of those has been proceeded with.

The third area was south of McMillans Road, behind the airport and in front of the Marrara Sports Stadium. That was designed for more passive recreation use, with picnicking, informal sports, swimming and cycling. To an extent, that has been done. Grass has been kept cut. Some defined carparks have been put in and it has become a reasonably pleasant recreational area.

However, the main thing that is lacking at present, which was an important element of the Dwyer proposal, was the construction of a comprehensive bicycle track and bridge network to link the 3 areas. In fact, 4 pedestrian-cum-bicycle bridges were proposed across the creek, 2 north of Trower Road and 1 near the mouth of the creek and designed to provide a direct link to the community college. It was designed to be built in conjunction with the mangrove herbarium. It is obvious that, although it was designed only as a pedestrian and bicycle link, it would have had a very favourable effect on traffic flow and the opening up of the Casuarina beach area to the residents of Nightcliff and Rapid Creek and would have provided easy access to community facilities like Lims Hotel for the people on the other side of the creek.



I believe that that has been costed and it would be a fairly expensive exercise. There was a proposal in the Dwyer Report to upgrade an existing sewer groyne, which was further along the creek towards Trower Road. Basically, that was to provide bicycle access across the creek. It would also act as a weir and enable the launching of boats downstream from the upgraded sewer groyne and, again, provide access to Darwin Community College and the beach. I am not sure if that has been costed but I think the honourable member for Wagaman probably would be able to assure us that that would be a much less expensive exercise than a bridge across the mouth of the creek.

Between Trower Road and McMillans Roads, it was proposed that a bridge be built linking the water gardens and the Millner area. Again, it was to be a pedestrian-cum-bicycle bridge. Unfortunately, that has not been built and I am not sure if it has been costed. To the south of McMillans Road, there was a plan for the provision of another weir to provide a formal swimming hole in that area. I think most Darwin members would be aware that there is an informal swimming hole there which is used by a number of kids. It would also provide bike access across the creek to the Marrara sports complex. I know we are all gratified that the Marrara sports complex has taken off. It is a very important facility and will become extensively used and it would have been good to have that bike access there.

Mr Speaker, it appears to me that, with the expenditure of a relatively small sum of money, it would be possible at least to put in 1 bridge north of Trower Road and between Trower Road and McMillans Road to provide access both ways to people living in those areas. I think that, until that is done, the full benefit of the Rapid Creek facility, in particular the water gardens, will not be realised. With the expenditure of a little more money and a bit more imagination from the government, more and more people will be able to make use of the facility.

There is one associated issue. Behind the Darwin Community College, there is what the horse people insist is a bridle path. I had a look at that on the weekend as well. Certainly, there is a path there. It does not go very far. There is a bridge across a large stormwater drain from the college going to the creek as well. I believe it does have the potential to be a formal bridle path, and a cycle path too, but again I would urge the government to consider that area in its plans over the coming months.

Mr VALE (Braitling): Mr Speaker, in tonight's adjournment debate, I wish to discuss an editorial which appeared in the NT News of 4 January this year concerning the fuel supply in Darwin and allegations that the Northern Territory government had failed to act in 'an emergency' given that Darwin had 8 days' supply in storage depots around the town during the cyclone season. The editorial accused the government, the Director of Emergency Services, the Fuel Emergency Service Controller, the National Disaster Organisation and the fuel companies of failing to accept responsibility or to act in an emergency. The editorial, while whipping up hysteria with ill-informed or inaccurate comments, failed to explain to the readers just what was the emergency or potential disaster. An industrial dispute in the Darwin port, while causing major inconvenience to some, could hardly be labelled as a disaster. Petrol rationing was introduced to avoid an extreme emergency in case of prolonged or further industrial action.

I may not be an expert on industrial disputes or cyclones but, in 1972, I carried out an extensive and detailed survey across the whole of the Northern Territory into fuel consumption and depot storage facilities. The Darwin fuel storage facilities were either on a par with or better than other capital cities. Since 1972, storage facilities in Darwin have been upgraded considerably. The editorial went on to say that, if 10 000 people had wanted to leave Darwin by road after a cyclone, they would not have been able to have done so. That is not so. Had a cyclone occurred, and if this number of people had wanted to leave town, they could have, and at best consumed between 1.5 to 2 days' supply of fuel, still leaving adequate supply in storage.

If a cyclone hits Darwin, and God forbid that it does, considerably less fuel than normal would be consumed for the first few days after the cyclone. In fact, this was the experience with Cyclone Tracy. Some types of fuel held in storage for extended periods will chemically age or go stale. Whilst the editorial mentioned 8 days' supply of fuel, I am advised that at least 10 days' supply of motor spirit was held in Darwin and a further 20 days' supply in a fuel tanker in the harbour. The Stokes Hill Power-station had in storage, and access to, at least 40 days' supply of fuel and oil for its generators.

These figures would indicate that Darwin was a far cry from the emergency referred to in the NT News' most inaccurate editorial of 4 January. I would have thought a responsible paper such as the NT News could have researched figures before printing such an inaccurate editorial.

Mr B. COLLINS (Opposition Leader): Mr Speaker, I will be brief. Talking about editorials, the one that interests me, not so much for its content but for what it talks about, is today's. I have expressed in the Assembly on previous occasions my attitude towards the relationship between ministers of the government and the public service. I have never been a believer in the system that operates in the United Kingdom, for example, where permanent heads in fact are permanent heads and it is quite a considerable job to shift them.

I was interested to note the federal government's task force recommendations for changes to be made in the Australian Public Service. Its conclusions were not surprising. They are fairly attractive. They brought down conclusions that the public service should be reorganised very largely along the lines in which it is done in the Northern Territory. Indeed, I find it quite sensible to contract senior people to come to the Territory to head up departments because it gets the best talent that is available. Sometimes it is necessary to negotiate with the individuals concerned to get the best people for the job. Of course, the federal government is still hampered very much by the carryover of the old English traditions, which are still practised in Great Britain, of having hidebound restrictions applying to the relationship between the public service and the ministers.

I have always been of the view that the proper relationship that should be struck is quite simple: the relevant minister should indeed have the right to be involved in the engagement of his departmental heads. In logic and reason, it is ridiculous to suggest anything else. But that is as far as it should go. Indeed, it makes sense because, if indeed the minister concerned does have that role and responsibility and subsequently the department comes adrift, it is very much the responsibility of the minister

for his poor choice in the first place. It is inappropriate for ministers to go past the heads of their departments. Indeed, if the minister has made a wise choice, there is absolutely no need to go past his departmental head because a good relationship would exist between them.

The reason why I raise this in the adjournment this afternoon is because the so-called resignation of the Secretary of the Department of Primary Production raises serious questions. The reason it does so is that the gentleman concerned was the recipient of a quite unique accolade from the head of the Northern Territory government in the Legislative Assembly. That is the reason that I remember it. I have never heard it applied to any other Northern Territory public servant. The Chief Minister said on one occasion in this Assembly in respect of the former Secretary of Primary Production that he was 'the best acquisition that the Northern Territory Public Service had ever had'.

I find it deeply disturbing. I freely admit that I am sure that he would not have seen eye to eye with me, and not because of politics. I imagine that his politics are conservative because he was a departmental head appointed by a conservative government. You do need people you can trust and whose basic philosophy is in accord with your own. I see nothing wrong with that. Although I may have had disagreements with him in the past, it has always been my understanding, having looked very carefully at his background, that he indeed had a fairly impressive work record behind him with his former employers. Indeed many cattlemen whom I have spoken to expressed their great regard and respect for his ability. We then had the Northern Territory's own Chief Minister describing him as the best the Territory had ever employed.

I find it extremely disturbing that this particular senior public servant has once again fallen foul of a government minister who seems, for some reason or other, to have provoked a whole string of these kinds of problem. Of course, all members of the Legislative Assembly who have been here for some time will remember the events surrounding appointments to the Mines Division and so on.

I do not wish to demand specific reasons as to why it happened because I think that would be inappropriate. I wish simply to say that I find it puzzling and disturbing that a public servant, who seems to have been so highly regarded for his ability by everyone I have spoken to, and who received a pat on the back from the Chief Minister, is now departing the Northern Territory. In a practical sense, as the person responsible for the portfolio of primary production on this side of the Assembly, I will be extremely interested to find out who his successor will be.

Mr Speaker, I would also like to say that at least one mystery has been solved today. I have sat through sittings after sittings of this Legislative Assembly at which the former honourable member for Stuart, now the honourable member for Braitling, had gone from one end of the sittings to the other without saying anything, apart from the occasional 'Hear, hear'. On this side of the Assembly, we are all quite astounded this afternoon to have heard the fourth speech the honourable member has made in 2 days. I can only say that it is fairly obvious from that remarkable performance - in fact, the best performance I have seen from the honourable member in the 6 years that I have been here - that he is indeed making a bid for the vacancy of the position of Chief Minister of the Northern Territory.

Mr DONDAS (Youth, Sport, Recreation and Ethnic Affairs): Mr Speaker, there are several points that I would like to make. They are related mainly to the Marrara International Indoor Sports Complex. As most members would be aware, it was officially opened by the Chief Minister last Saturday. Several hundred people were there to witness what I believe was an excellent display by Darwin youth of indoor sports. Before continuing my remarks on the official opening, I would like to say something about the Australia Day Council's exercise at the Marrara stadium when the doors were opened for the very first time to the general public. Some 6000 to 8000 people went through the doors of that complex on Australia Day. Of course, we were then fortunate enough to have Australia's victorious Davis Cup team come to Darwin and play a round-robin tournament in the facility. Over 3 nights, they provided some outstanding tennis entertainment for Darwinites. Last Friday evening, the Channel 8 Charity Appeal held a concert there and some 1500 people attended. I believe that they raised about \$10 000 towards the charity appeal.

All this signifies that finally we have a facility that caters for many different needs within the community. Of course, once the performing arts centre opens in Mitchell Street, there will be another facility which will cater for the arts and pop concerts. In the meantime, while it is under construction, I am quite sure that the Marrara indoor sports stadium will certainly prove its worth. What was evident the other night was the number of children involved in the opening - in gymnastics, marching, judo etc. If anybody says to me again that there is nothing for the youth of Darwin to do, I will become quite angry. I would probably want to point my finger up that person's nose. It has often been said that there is nothing for the children to do out in the suburbs. Last Saturday night, there must have been more than 250 children involved in purely indoor activities. I believe that the important thing is that it really opened the eyes of many people in Darwin that such diverse activities are available to our younger people in the northern suburbs.

One thing that was very noticeable was the capability and expertise of our younger groups when one considers that callisthenics was only a very minor recreational pursuit 3 or 4 years ago, as was gymnastics. Of course, judo has always been an important form of recreation in the Top End. In fact, it has been going for some 20 or so years. However, the important thing is that the financial support the Northern Territory government has given to sporting and community organisations has certainly given them much encouragement to improve. Last year, up until October 1983, some 54 teams represented the Northern Territory in national championships. I hope that that level of support will continue and encourage more of the associations to go to national championships to better their expertise. Not only that, when they go south and learn something new, they are able to educate the other members of their organisations who were not fortunate enough to go.

Another event over the weekend, Mr Speaker, was the Channel 8 Charity Appeal during which a sum of \$200 000 was pledged by the citizens of Darwin to the Spastics Centre, the Spastics Association and the Northern Territory Handicapped Persons Association. I would like to place on record my thanks to Channel 8, to its board and to all the other people who were involved in making that Telethon the success that it was. Of course, I would thank the artists who came from other parts of Australia to be part of the Telethon. Members should be reminded that these artists came to the Territory for this Charity Appeal Telethon and they did not charge for their services.

They must be thanked for that. Media members who were involved in the promotion of the Telethon should also be thanked and also the many hundreds of people who were involved behind the scenes. The Telethon was carried out with military precision. They kept it going for 24 hours and many identities of Darwin - including the member for Millner, the Chief Minister and His Honour the Administrator - gave their valuable time to ensure that the Channel 8 Telethon Appeal was a success. It was and, as I said, I would like to place on record my best wishes and most sincere thanks to everyone involved.

I am not going to pick up any points raised by members. Unfortunately, the honourable member for MacDonnell has departed from the Assembly. I shall not pick up any of his adjournment diatribe or French fables; I do not think they are worthy of comment. However, there is one particular point that I would like to make, Mr Speaker. The honourable member for MacDonnell said that the next elected Chief Minister in this Assembly would be the member for Arafura. My comment is, Mr Speaker, that the member for Arafura has more chance of being struck by lightning.

Motion agreed to; the Assembly adjourned.

Mr Speaker Steele took the Chair at 10 am.

DISTINGUISHED VISITOR  
South African Ambassador

Mr SPEAKER: I draw the attention of honourable members to the presence in the gallery of the South African Ambassador, His Excellency Dr Denis Worrall, who is accompanied by Dr Anita Worrall. On behalf of honourable members, I extend a warm welcome to our distinguished visitors and hope their stay in Darwin and the Northern Territory will be a pleasant one.

Members: Hear, hear!

STATEMENT BY SPEAKER  
Dispatch Boxes

Mr SPEAKER: Honourable members will notice that 2 chairs have been placed at the table alongside the dispatch boxes and that microphones have been provided at the dispatch boxes. This has been done so that if ministers and the Leader of the Opposition wish to speak from the dispatch boxes, they may do so.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT  
Government Restrictions which Hamper Job Creation

Mr EVERINGHAM (Chief Minister) (by leave): Mr Speaker, I table a paper regarding government restrictions and policies which hamper job creation.

My government is committed to pursuing policies and programs which will maximise job creation in the Northern Territory. It has always been committed to that aim and has taken a series of initiatives to stimulate the private sector and to encourage the establishment of viable industries which will create long-term jobs. The deferred payment scheme, for example, and our efforts to attract investment both from within Australia and from overseas are 2 instances of government initiatives which will stimulate employment.

We have been fairly successful in this aim. Between August 1978 and August 1983, the Territory's labour force increased at an average annual rate of 6.1% compared with an overall Australian rate of 1.7%. The government is working on further development projects which, I believe, will continue this trend but, within the broad spectrum of activities, the full potential for job creation cannot be achieved without the help and cooperation of the Commonwealth government.

Unemployment in the Territory is seasonal in some respects but it is still too high and a major cause of concern. However well-intentioned some of the Commonwealth initiatives may be, they still seem to be mainly short-term palliatives rather than long-term solutions. In general, they appear to be policies aimed at the mass electorates of the south rather than at particular regions. Our efforts to draw our problems to the attention of the Commonwealth are not new. Last June, my colleague, the Minister for Mines and Energy, represented me and the Northern Territory at the Commonwealth and state industry ministers' meeting in Perth and moved a motion which received the support of all participants and is as relevant today as it was then. The motion was:

*That ministers believing that the current employment level of 10.3% is a deplorable waste of the human and natural resources of Australia, reconvene before the end of 1983 to consider ways and means of creating full-time productive jobs and, specifically, to identify,*

*firstly, what policy changes and initiatives are required by federal and state governments to enable industry to create employment; secondly, those industries in which job creation is practical; and, thirdly, in which states, territories and regions such job creation should occur.*

Although the Northern Territory has continued to press for a meeting, this important discussion has never taken place.

I have asked that a submission be prepared which will examine those government policies which hamper job creation and identify specific industries in which jobs can be created. The paper will be forwarded shortly to the Commonwealth government for consideration as the matter of job creation will be considered again at the next Industry Ministers' Conference to be held in Hobart in June. Members will be well aware of my long-standing criticisms of certain Commonwealth government policies which are depriving the Territory and the nation of badly-needed job opportunities. There are jobs going begging right now that could be created, in the short term, virtually by a stroke of the pen. Willingness to grasp opportunities and abandon outdated policies is essential if the task is to be tackled seriously.

The submission identifies federal government policies which severely curtail job creation in the Territory. Briefly summarised, these include: the failure to build the Alice Springs to Darwin rail link; government indecision on the uranium industry; various policies which run counter to the Commonwealth's stated intention to promote tourism, especially in relation to the deregulation of the airline industry; costly fuel policies which act as disincentives to industry; foreign investment restrictions; industry protection; and ever-increasing Commonwealth government regulations which are strangling free enterprise. The submission also comments on the limitations of the response of the Commonwealth government to the problems of unemployment to date which have emphasised employment-generation programs, policies for reducing the labour supply and for job sharing. Whilst reducing unemployment statistics, these schemes have doubtful effects on creating lasting jobs. Finally, the Northern Territory government paper will identify a number of ways in which job opportunities have been, and can be, promoted directly and indirectly in the Territory.

I intend to hold ministers to the commitment they gave last June to consider these restrictions to job creation and undertake changes to government policies which will encourage industry and thus promote job opportunities. I have tabled this paper to give all honourable members the opportunity to contribute to its final formulation. At this stage, it is a draft and has yet to go to Cabinet. I would ask for any comments on it within the next 14 days.

I move that the statement be noted.

Mr B. COLLINS (Opposition Leader): Mr Speaker, I wish to make some preliminary remarks on this paper which I read with some interest last night. The paper is headed: 'Government Restrictions/Policies which Hamper Job Creation'. It refers specifically to the federal government. I have not had time to make a detailed examination of this statement but I will do so in the next week or so. Much of it is supportable. The comments, for example, on the uranium industry in the Northern Territory are totally supportable. I could not have been much more public on how I feel about problems with the policy. Indeed, it has caused me a fair bit of strife in one way or another. I have no particular argument with that.

There are some curious aspects to this paper; for example, the section

headed 'Foreign Investment Policies'. I draw honourable members' attention to this and I support the Chief Minister's remark that people should examine the document carefully. The chapter is headed 'Foreign Investment Policies'; that is, foreign investment policies of the federal government which are hampering job creation. The opening paragraph says: 'The Territory government is concerned about a possible tightening up of policy on foreign investment'. I point out to honourable members that that is as close as this entire section comes to establishing that the federal government has any policy whatever, in respect of foreign investment, which hinders job creation. It says: 'The significance of foreign capital is underscored by the oil discovery in the Jabiru oilfields'. That is fine. It carries on in that vein to the end of the section. It spends 3 pages talking about the importance of foreign investment to the Northern Territory and one could not argue with any of it.

Mr Speaker, with the greatest respect to the Chief Minister, if it is intended that this be forwarded to the federal government as a persuasive argument by the Northern Territory, it will have to be tightened up and made much more specific. The only statement in the entire section that even comes close to talking about government policy is concerned with a possible tightening up in relation to foreign investment.

I would have to say that, judging by the 11 short months that the current federal government has been in office and statements that have been made by relevant trade ministers, the Deputy Prime Minister and the Treasurer, this particular federal government is likely to have a more enlightened and progressive attitude towards foreign investment than any previous federal government. The move that was made by this government in floating the Australian dollar, rather than restricting it, has already been lauded. It is also obvious that it will be this government that introduces foreign investment into the banking system of Australia - a progressive move that should have been made 30 years ago. It seems to me rather extraordinary that the Territory government makes a statement that there might be a few rumours that the federal government might do something about foreign investment and put that in a paper about federal government policies that hinder job creation. It weakens the argument considerably. The Territory government will have to do a lot better than that.

I make the same criticism about the section entitled 'Industry Protection'. There is nothing in the section with which I disagree. In fact, the information on federal government policies and attitudes which are to the detriment of the Territory is sound and accurate. However, it really is ridiculous to talk about industry protection in a direct attack on the federal government, which is what this paper represents. If this is not simply another plank in the Chief Minister's platform for the next federal election...

Mr Robertson: Come off it.

Mr B. COLLINS: In response to that interjection, Mr Speaker, I was not prepared to treat it as such because I was looking for some substance in this paper. I would suggest to the minister who interjected, who I am sure has not read this paper, that if he likes to read it, he will discover that my complaints and criticisms are justified.

On industry protection, it says: 'While generally advocating a more open and freely competitive international trading system, Australia has in fact continued to embrace high levels of protection for Australian industries ...'. That is absolutely true, and has been the case with all federal governments of whatever political persuasion. Maybe there is no substance in it but, going on the reported statements of federal politicians, in the 11 short months that this



government has been in office federally - and I have to keep reminding myself that it has only been in office for a year - its ministers have made more encouraging and positive statements in respect of doing something about reducing the level of protection than any other ministers of any former federal government.

If the Chief Minister wants people to examine this over the next 2 weeks, I would suggest that they turn back to the section on the railway. As all honourable members know, the federal government has brought in a report as a result of the inquiry conducted by Mr Hill. Honourable members would be aware that there are serious discrepancies in the conclusions that are drawn and, in particular, the economic statistics used, between that inquiry and the original report that was brought down by the Northern Territory government. The report tables, in a fairly concise form at table 14.1, some of the major discrepancies between the conclusions drawn by those 2 reports. My office is examining that very closely at the moment.

I must say that there were 2 aspects of the submissions made to the Hill Inquiry which I found interesting and which gave me cause for thought. Both were submissions that I did not expect. One of them was a submission from the Australian tourist industry - as an industry group - which opposed the railway. Mr Speaker, certainly that gave me cause for thought. I intend now to read that submission in full. One point it makes is that tourists prefer to take advantage of the comfort of modern, air-conditioned coaches because of the additional flexibility coaches give to tourists. The coaches enable them to see more of the points of interest in any community. Of course, a railway only stops at railway stations.

However, the submission which really interested me was that of the Queensland government. It is a doozy! Before the Queensland election, we heard of the great Mt Isa to Darwin rail link and the support we would receive, according to the honourable Chief Minister and the Premier of Queensland, from the Queensland government in our efforts to get a railway. I thought to myself at the time: 'Boy, that will be a turn-up for the books because Queensland is fairly famous for supporting no one except itself. This will be a first'. I would commend to all honourable members of this Assembly that they read in full the submission from the Queensland government to the Hill Inquiry. When it came down to actual brass tacks, instead of campaigning prior to an election, the Queensland government opposed the construction of the rail link. Not only did it oppose it, it was vitriolic to the point where it threatened to belt the federal government over the head with the Constitution if it dared to allocate a single dollar to the Northern Territory. So much for the 'hands across the border' with our conservative colleagues in Queensland.

I will quote from the relevant sections and members must take me at my word that I am not taking these paragraphs out of context:

*7.1 If the development of this rail link is to proceed, Queensland will be severely disadvantaged. Development of this railway should be concurrent with the eastern railway. Queensland will argue for some form of compensation for the loss of trade through Queensland and the lack of social and economic equality to the people of north Queensland brought about by Commonwealth assistance to the development of the Northern Territory.*

That is great support. Paragraph 7.2 reads:

*Section 99 of the Australian Constitution specifically states: 'The*

*Commonwealth shall not give preference to one state over another. Similarly, fiscal equalisation is really another principle long enshrined in Commonwealth-state relations...'*

The conclusion is:

*Development of the railway will severely disadvantage Queensland unless development of the Mount Isa railway is undertaken at the same time. Without this concurrent development of the eastern corridor, Queensland will seek compensation for loss of trade and for social and economic equality generated by the preferential treatment given to the Northern Territory by the Commonwealth government.*

I might add that that is the final paragraph in the Queensland government's submission. You just cannot believe politicians at election time - any of them!

Mr EVERINGHAM (Chief Minister): Mr Speaker, I have been very anxious to bring copies of the Hill Report before this Assembly so that it could be debated. Insufficient copies of it were available the week before last. Only yesterday was I able to procure in Canberra 40 copies of the Hill Report from the Australian Government Publishing Service, at some cost, of course, to the Northern Territory exchequer. They are being air freighted to the Northern Territory. I hope that a debate on the Hill Report will be possible in this Assembly next week.

The only copy made available to the Northern Territory has been reproduced, all 300 pages of it, on one occasion on a photocopier so that the report could be thoroughly analysed by the appropriate people. It is not terribly apparent on the face of the report what methodology has been used by the Hill committee.

I turn to the submissions that the honourable Leader of the Opposition referred to. Firstly, he mentioned the one from the Australian tourist group. Obviously, that is the coach operators making their submission. That has been quite plain for years. In fact, several years ago, the coach operators spoke very trenchantly against the concept of an Alice Springs to Darwin rail link. One would be surprised if they had supported it because they do not want any opposition to the fairly cosy arrangement that they have currently, both in regular scheduled services up and down the Stuart Highway and the additional hold it gives them on the tourist market between Alice Springs and Darwin. In the Northern Territory, coach operators are seeing some of the greatest expansion in the history of their business. Large numbers of new coaches are being purchased by some of the leading operators. Mr Speaker, you would know as well as I do, concerned as you are with the interests of the tourist industry, that the increasing availability of new coaches and off-road vehicles to carry large numbers of tourists can only back up the contention that the railway would be of great benefit to passenger traffic.

Turning to the Queensland submission, I ask you, Mr Speaker, what does the honourable Leader of the Opposition expect? Would he expect us in the Northern Territory to lightly stand aside if Queensland was being given some benefit that we wanted. The Queensland government certainly indicated that it wanted to enter into a feasibility study on the concept of a Mount Isa, Darwin or Tennant Creek rail link. I made it plain at the time that the only reason a Territory government had to deal with a state government in that way was because of the plight that the federal government had put us into. Needs must when the devil drives. Of course, the devil was Mr Hawke. Straight away, upon his election - and that is the rub, Mr Speaker - Mr Hawke dishonoured his electoral commitment

to build the railway. That was not seen as a sin but the Queensland Premier wanting to undertake a feasibility study into the railway between Mount Isa and Tennant Creek or Darwin is a grievous crime and an offence. Queensland tried to get its oar into the proceedings of the Hill Inquiry. The terms of reference of the Hill Inquiry rendered the Queensland submission quite irrelevant. I do not really know why it was even considered by the inquiry. Its terms of reference were to analyse, in effect, the financial viability and social desirability of a rail or road link between Darwin, Alice Springs and Adelaide. The Queensland submission was irrelevant. It talked about section 99 and preference and equality between the states. Of course, the Northern Territory is not even a state so that too, whilst totally irrelevant, was constitutionally nonsensical. Regarding the Queensland submission, if we are to be drawn down that sort of track, I think we ought at least to examine the situation that the Northern Territory government is in. We had to talk to anyone who would talk to us.

Mr Speaker, I hope to give this Assembly the opportunity to debate the Hill Report fully next week. I hope that the copies will reach Darwin today or tomorrow and we will table them on Tuesday and made a statement. I hope that all honourable members will have the chance to make their contribution before the sittings is out, unless the time of the Assembly is taken up with other matters that preclude our getting to some of the rather more important business of the day.

#### TABLED PAPER 'Seven Years On'

Mr EVERINGHAM (Chief Minister)(by leave): Mr Speaker, I table a paper entitled 'Seven Years On' which is a report by Mr Justice Toohey to the Minister for Aboriginal Affairs on the Aboriginal Land Rights (Northern Territory) Act 1976.

For some years now, the Territory government has been trying to persuade the Commonwealth government to make a number of essential amendments to the Land Rights Act which experience since 1976, when it was passed, has shown to be necessary. The extreme sensitivity of the Commonwealth government on this issue has made it reluctant to change the act even in the most obvious ways.

The Territory government presented a lengthy submission to Mr Justice Toohey in the course of his review of the Land Rights Act. I am pleased to note that a number of our recommendations have attracted his support, even despite the constraints of the terms of reference with which the Minister for Aboriginal Affairs saddled him. For example, he agrees that any law to provide for excisions from pastoral properties should be Territory legislation and agrees generally that the bill introduced by the government late last year is suitable. He agrees that the Aboriginal Land Commissioner should be able to recommend conditional grants of land and that the Territory government should have some power to acquire easements or other interests on Aboriginal land for public purposes. At the moment, we have no such power. The judge agrees that compensation should be payable to holders of grazing licences when the land has been successfully claimed and that it should be made clear that the Control of Waters Act applies to Aboriginal land. Honourable members will note other positive recommendations when they read the report for themselves.

On the negative side, the judge sees no reason why there should not be repeat claims. A number of his recommendations affecting the mining industry not only reinforce Aboriginal control over mineral exploration and mining on their land but fail to resolve some of the basic problems pointed out by the

Territory government and the Australian Mining Industry Council in their submissions. The mining companies will still be very seriously inhibited in their attempts to explore for minerals on Aboriginal land.

Perhaps most damaging of all is the extraordinary series of recommendations which could lead to an almost permanent locking up of a large area of Territory land at the whim of land councils. As I said, the judge recommends that there should be no barrier to repeat claims and no cut-off date for land claims overall. Furthermore, he recommends that the Land Rights Act be amended so as to prevent expressly the Territory government from alienating land or in any way dealing with it once it has been claimed. Taken together, these recommendations mean that a land council, having failed for some reason in a claim to land, could, at the moment of decision, immediately lodge a fresh claim to that land and, apparently, could continue to do so ad infinitum without the Territory government being able to do anything about it.

In short, although there is much in Mr Justice Toohey's report which would make the act easier for all Territorians to live with, there is still much to be concerned about. We must bear in mind also that the judge had to work within the straitjacket terms of reference imposed by the minister, without any consultation on the formulation of those terms of reference with the Northern Territory government which, of course, is the government most affected by the operations of the act. The terms of reference are at page 1 and make interesting reading. Already, at least in part, they have been implicitly criticised by the working paper produced by Mr Justice Seaman in Western Australia.

The Minister for Aboriginal Affairs has assured me that no final decisions will be taken on the judge's report until all interested parties have been consulted. To this end, a joint Commonwealth-Northern Territory working party of senior officials has been established to examine the report in detail. The first meeting of this working party will be held during March.

I move that the statement be noted.

Debate ajourned.

#### DISCUSSION OF MATTER OF PUBLIC IMPORTANCE

Failure of Government to Consult with the Community.

Mr SPEAKER: Honourable members, I have received the following letter from the Leader of the Opposition dated 1 March 1984:

*Dear Mr Speaker, I wish to propose under Standing Order 81 that the Assembly discuss this morning, as a definite matter of public importance, the following: the failure of the Northern Territory government to honour its commitment to consult with the community, and in particular parents, in its education decision-making as demonstrated by the closure now of 2 major Northern Territory schools without consultation.*

*Yours sincerely,*

*Bob Collins - Leader of the Opposition.*

Is the proposed discussion supported? The proposal is supported.

Mr B. COLLINS (Opposition Leader): Mr Speaker, in debate once again this morning, the Chief Minister complained bitterly about lack of consultation. It

is a consistent theme with the Northern Territory government, and one with which I agree, that it is a dreadful thing if necessary consultations do not take place when they should. Clearly, the Northern Territory government sets one standard for every other government and another for itself. Obviously, it considers that consultations between the federal government and itself are far more important to it than consultations between itself and the Territory electorate and, indeed, the people who support it. Mr Speaker, I do not hold that view.

Mr Speaker, it will become clear from my comments that my objections in this matter are very much political objections and not educational ones. This has been a contemptible and sorry affair, and a fairly disgraceful start to the career of the Northern Territory's new Minister for Education both in his capacity as Minister for Education and as the member for Port Darwin. In a democratic society, people must be guided by the promises and assurances they get from politicians and, not surprisingly, at election time it is common - and indeed proper - for all politicians to receive approaches from constituents so that they can decide on the particular issues that interest them and then cast their vote one way or the other. The correspondence that flowed between the current Minister for Education and the former Minister for Education and the parents connected with Darwin Primary School, in the campaign leading up to the last election, has given those people the most legitimate of complaints against the government for its indefensible actions in respect of closing that school. The course of events was not at all admirable.

When he was asked why he did not consult with parents or, indeed, the school council, during an interview with the ABC, the Chief Minister said: 'Well, you cannot inform councils until you have made the decision'. That is an interesting point of view from the Chief Minister who wants to be consulted before anyone else makes decisions. Clearly, he thinks his own government is beyond and above that. He makes the decisions, then he tells people afterwards. Mr Speaker, I stress that this was in direct response to a question about why he had not consulted with the parents prior to the decision being made. 'You do not do that', said the Chief Minister. 'You make the decision first and you tell them afterwards'.

Mr Speaker, in this Assembly, we all know and the former Minister for Education knows - and I am addressing myself specifically in the terms of the matter of public importance now - that a general commitment was given by the government at the time the Education Act was introduced. Many fine sentiments were expressed that parents of the Northern Territory would be consulted on matters involving education and there would be a general effort on the part of the government to involve parents more and more. However, a specific commitment was given by the then minister during the election campaign to do so in respect of the Darwin Primary School and the government totally failed to honour that commitment. I will read the letter in which that commitment is contained. It is dated 28 November 1983, only a few days before polling day. Of course, questions about the Darwin Primary School have been raised in the Assembly before because there have always been concerns about its viability and whether it should continue. The parents on the school council of the Darwin Primary School wrote to both the minister and their local member during the campaign and asked for their attitudes on the future needs, redevelopment and upgrading of the school. They received this response from the minister. I will not have time to quote the whole letter. It is addressed to A.B. Millner, Chairman of the Darwin Primary School. I will table it for anybody who...

Mr Everingham: Read it out like you did yesterday. Read it all.

Mr B. COLLINS: Are you prepared to grant me an extension of time?

Mr Everingham: I can't in these debates. Read it out.

Mr B. COLLINS: Exactly, Mr Speaker, the following is the relevant section of the letter:

*As the population ages in an inner city area, the number of primary school children decreases. Nationally, this trend will continue for the next decade and it would appear that Darwin is no exception to this prediction. You are probably aware that the enrolments in Darwin Primary School, Larrakeyah Primary School and Stuart Park Primary School, in particular, have been declining for some time with respect to enrolments from the actual feeder areas. I will be asking the department to carry out a feasibility study, specifically to examine the nature of the population and what school facilities will be required and, when information comes to hand, I will be pleased to meet with your council to discuss the results.*

In response to a letter asking what was to happen to their school, the Minister for Education - during the campaign - promised the parents of Darwin Primary School that he would consult with them and failed dramatically to do so. But, of course, they also wrote to their local member. His reply is interesting. He wrote on 29 November: 'Thank you for your letter. As you and members of your school council will be aware, I have always supported the need for primary schools in the city area to cater for the children of families... I can assure you that I will continue to support the upgrading of school facilities in the electorate of Port Darwin...'. The interesting thing about that letter is that it is a good lawyer's letter. In fact, it could have been written by the Chief Minister. Mr Speaker, the letter, which was in direct response to an inquiry about the future of the school, talks about support for Darwin schools, inner-city schools, and all the rest of it. Nowhere does it say specifically that their local member was going to maintain their school. But that is the inference that was intended to be drawn from it. Quite rightly, as any reading of the letter will indicate, that is the inference that the council did draw from it during the election campaign - that the honourable member for Port Darwin, their elected member, was going to support them and oppose that school being closed down. But, of course, he was careful to say: 'Darwin schools', 'Darwin city schools', 'school facilities in the electorate of Port Darwin'. Nowhere is there a specific commitment. That letter does not do the honourable member for Port Darwin, in his capacity as the local member, any credit at all. Of course, the school was closed down.

It is with a certain sense of déjà vu that I talk about Darwin Primary School because precisely the same kind of affair took place with the closure of Dhupuma College. We had the then Minister for Education making a ministerial statement in this Assembly outlining plans for a major upgrading of Dhupuma and an expenditure of \$3.5m. I remember that he even quoted the figure. Only a short time later, he implemented that promise by closing the college down at 24 hours notice to staff, students and everyone else. It was done without any warning whatsoever. Of course, the buildings have been bulldozed into the ground and there is just a bare spot there now.

This is the sorry record that this government has in respect of this important matter. Shortly, the honourable member for Millner will detail some positive moves the government might like to make to ensure that this sort of thing does not occur again.

The whole affair of Darwin Primary School is interesting because the school had been singled out for another kind of attention only 6 months before.

During the celebrations of 5 years of self-government in the Northern Territory, the government produced a great series of full-page advertisements extolling the virtues of the government and the wonderful contributions it had made to this, that and the other. A full-page advertisement was put out on education. I remember it well. Featured in that advertisement was the smiling face of the Chief Minister and underneath him the smiling faces of a 1983 class from the Darwin Primary School. Underneath the photos were these very ironical words: 'Territorians are being taught a real lesson'. Well, that is certainly true. That will stand for some considerable time to haunt the honourable Minister for Education. They were taught a lesson all right. I wonder where those kids and their teacher are now.

Mr Speaker, let us have a look at the chronological events surrounding what happened. In 1980, the government withdrew funding for the Darwin Primary School's after-school activities, saying that they were not profitable. The parent body then continued that program. It administered it itself, funded it and made it profitable. So there is a clear example of the deep involvement of parents at the school. In the same year, the Minister for Education said that no closure of the school would occur in the foreseeable future. The parents continued to be involved for the next several years and raised money to make improvements to the school.

In June 1983, departmental upgrading of the school was undertaken and it was painted inside and outside. In June 1983, 6 months before it was closed, \$140 000 of taxpayers' money was spent to paint the Darwin Primary School. Between the years 1980 and 1983 - and perhaps I could be corrected on the exact figure - it is my understanding that the parent group at the school raised in one year \$43 000. In a subsequent year, \$31 000 was raised. In fact, close to \$100 000 was raised by the parents of the school between 1980 and 1983, and then the department spent \$140 000 to paint it 6 months before it closed it down.

Mr Speaker, in late 1983 the department approved and drew cheques on a \$1-for-\$1 funding basis for the school. On 28 November 1983 - and this is ironical indeed - a Gazette notice was given for the Darwin Primary School Council. The interim school council received a letter from the then Minister for Education, Marshall Perron, regarding development and upgrading of the Darwin Primary School. I have quoted from that letter. And late last year, the government formally incorporated the Darwin Primary School Council.

Mr Speaker, what I am saying is not based on amorphous statements or rumours but on direct approaches made to both the relevant minister and the local member. From the actions of the government in spending considerable money in upgrading the school that year and from the actions of the government in incorporating the school council, the parents had every reason to believe that that school was going to be viable for at least another 12 months. They were sadly mistaken.

On 19 December, a senior departmental officer told a Darwin Primary School Council member that there was no closure proposal going to Cabinet, only a proposal to continue upgrading the Darwin Primary School and for the probable relocation of the pre-school on to the Darwin Primary School grounds. We are getting close to D-day now. On 22 December, the Chief Minister, who was then the acting Minister for Education, announced that a submission on the future of the Darwin Primary School had gone to Cabinet that week and a decision had been made to close the school.

A letter was received from the local member during the campaign for the last election saying: 'No worries boys, I'm right behind you'. They received a

letter from the minister promising them that he would consult with them, which he totally failed to do. I dare say that a significant number of the parents went off to the polls and voted for the CLP and their local member as a result. I certainly know that some of them are regretting it deeply now. They have good reason. It is not simply because the school has been closed down but because they were led right up the garden path by election promises that were not kept.

In a talk-back program with Col Krohn, the Chief Minister said: 'What was this nonsense about consulting with school councils. You can't talk to them until you have made the decision'. Certainly, there is one set of standards for the Chief Minister's consultations and quite another when the Chief Minister is talking about other governments.

As I have said, it is a fairly disgraceful start to the career of the new minister. His first act was to close down a school in his own electorate - Darwin's oldest primary school. That was his first mark on the board as Minister for Education - and after telling his constituents that that would not happen.

Mr Speaker, I remember raising this question after the government revealed it was prepared to spend \$2.4m on 16 luxury apartments for senior public servants in the inner-city area. Of course, that has been changed now and those apartments have been put on the ordinary roster. I dare say 16 people are now living in luxury Marrakai apartments as a result. I questioned those priorities then. On 19 January, past students of the Darwin Primary School met and said there was at least the need for some debate and consultation about inner-city planning. The Save Our School Committee tried again and again to see the minister, their local member, to discuss the issue. He consistently refused to meet with them. Indeed, in the latter part of January, I remember hearing on Channel 8 news - and I was disgusted because I thought he would do a better job - the Minister for Education threaten the parents who refused to obey the government directive about the school closure with action under the Education Act. That was a great performance.

On 25 January, the people demonstrated their anger in a very positive way when they marched on the minister's office to present him with a petition signed by over 2000 people urging the government to keep the school open. It is interesting to note the verbal exchanges that took place at that particular time with the Minister for Education. They once again illustrate the underlying contempt that this government has for the people it serves and, indeed, the people who support it. The students, parents, supporters and members of some of Darwin's oldest families marched on the minister's office. They were met first by the Chief Minister and the former Minister for Education, Mr Perron, who were off down the street for lunch. The Chief Minister - and I can just hear him saying it - turned to the group and said in his inimitable style: 'Why aren't all you people in school?' He then kept walking down the street. Of course, the majority of that group consisted of members of some of the oldest Northern Territory families. The Chief Minister is flushed with the mandate he got from the election. He showed his amazing arrogance yesterday.

Mr Everingham: It consisted of all the professional demonstrators you could muster. Labor voters.

Mr B. COLLINS: Mr Speaker, if the Chief Minister has any doubt about this, I spoke to a person who would have to be one of the most conservative voters you would ever meet in your life. He is a member of the Darwin Chinese community. He told me, and I believe him, that not only he but 80% of the Chinese community had been voting consistently for the CLP since they had had the vote. That person told me quite adamantly that he would never vote for the CLP



again in his life, not necessarily because of the closure of the school, but as a result of the total contempt with which he and friends of his were treated by both the Chief Minister and the Minister for Education. We are used to that in here, Mr Speaker.

It was the attitude of the new Minister for Education that I found particularly disturbing. Not only did he renege on his promise to support the school but he went away while the school was being closed down. I am looking forward to hearing his explanation. He reneged on his promise to support the school in his own electorate. Not only did he go away while it was closed down, not only did he refuse to meet parents of students when he returned - and I understand he is still refusing to meet them - but when he finally appeared for a few moments to accept the petition, he did so without any comment whatever and refused even to speak to the group. He took the petition, turned around and walked back into his office. He made no statement at all to the group of people who had gone there to see him. He called a press conference at 3 pm and referred to the fact that it had to be taken into account that 'professional agitators were behind the protest'. With that remark about the people he was elected to represent - indeed, the majority of the people who went to his office were his own constituents, almost all of whom were long-term Darwin residents - he put himself in the same category as the Chief Minister by insulting the very people who put him where he is.

In its own defence, the government put out its usual reasons for the closure. I do not doubt that some of them will stand up to scrutiny but that is not what I am talking about. The fact is that it ignored the people concerned and treated them with the total contempt for which the Chief Minister is becoming more and more famous, particularly through the off-the-cuff remarks he delights in making.

The ultimate contempt was that, after dispersing the 150 students to other schools, the government then announced it would be using the premises for the 7 people who make up the University Planning Authority. I think - and I will take this up in another debate - it is about time people of the Northern Territory started to ask what sort of return the Territory has received so far for the over \$2m that has been consumed by that particular organisation.

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

Mr HARRIS (Education): Mr Speaker, I would like to say that governments are concerned, and naturally they have to be concerned, about school closures. As the minister, I am extremely concerned about the closure of schools. I have asked the Education Advisory Council to look into this particular matter. The government has to make decisions relating to taxpayers' money and often one has to make decisions that one does not like. Some of the initiatives of this government have given the people of the Northern Territory many benefits in relation to education. We have the best staff and resources in both primary and secondary schools. There is a freedom of choice as to where parents can send their children so that the children's education is not upset. We also have a free bus system provided to those who live outside 1.6 km of their feeder school. All of these government initiatives have community support; they are good initiatives. If we are to keep those initiatives going, it is occasionally necessary for the government to make very tough decisions. In the case of the Darwin Primary School, I can assure the Leader of the Opposition that I am more attached to that school than he or anyone else and the decision that was made upset me. My mother went to Darwin Primary School, my sisters went to the Darwin Primary School, my son went to the Darwin Primary School and, if it had not been for the war years and its closure, I would have gone there as well. I went to St Mary's Primary School. Do not let anyone say that I do not have as

much feeling for that school as other people in the community. The decision to close the Darwin Primary School is one that I regretted personally.

I want to make one thing clear. I was well aware, as were members of the school council and other people connected with Darwin Primary School, that, unless enrolment numbers picked up for that school, the school was at risk. They knew that. It is not a matter of having it written down. The Darwin Primary School Parents and Friends Association was well aware that the Darwin Primary School was at risk unless it picked up on enrolment numbers. It has acknowledged that. It has been some 9 years since closure of Darwin Primary School was first considered. Throughout that period, the parents and friends of that school knew that, unless the enrolments increased, the school would close. The council tried extremely hard to increase the enrolment figures. It introduced after-school activities in order to encourage people to send their children to the Darwin Primary School. It tried to increase enrolment figures but that did not occur. Enrolments decreased steadily. It knew all the time that the Darwin Primary School was at risk unless the number increased. Mr Speaker, what really hurt me is that many of these people came back and said that there had been no consultation.

Mr B. Collins: None.

Mr HARRIS: I refute that openly. I have done it publicly before because, as the member for Port Darwin, I am well aware of what took place with the Darwin Primary School issue. Not one of those people denied that he knew that the Darwin Primary School was at risk.

Mr Speaker, I wrote to the Darwin Primary School in response to a letter received during the election campaign and I would like to clarify something because, this morning, I answered a question from the Leader of the Opposition about the timing of the closure of that school. I presumed that the Leader of the Opposition had information which I had. I am sorry for having presumed that. In November of last year, the principal of the school asked for projected enrolment figures for 1984. Those figures were received at the time when the election was called. I then received - as did the then honourable Minister for Education - a letter from the Darwin Primary School Council. That letter made it quite clear that the council wanted certain things done to the school - very basic things - to upgrade it. The Treasurer then sought to have those matters costed. They related to essential aspects of the school. When the results of that costing were available, they went to the Chief Minister, who was the acting Minister for Education at that time. The Chief Minister called for a Cabinet submission which was forthcoming and a Cabinet decision was made.

Mr B. Collins: Did he consult you?

MR HARRIS: I was aware of the decision.

Mr B. Collins: Did he consult you?

Mr HARRIS: Mr Speaker, the Cabinet decision was made and the closing...

Mr B. Collins: He did not consult you. Terrific! He is great at consulting.

Mr HARRIS: Mr Speaker, as far as consultation is concerned, I can assure the honourable Leader of the Opposition that, throughout this whole exercise, which goes back a number of years since I have been the member for Port Darwin, I have raised the issue of the Darwin Primary School with the honourable Chief

Minister. I had to raise it because it was one of my major concerns and I knew - as well as the council members of that school knew - of the inevitable fate of that school if certain things did not happen. There has been consultation all along.

Mr Speaker, we heard today about the demonstration across the road and the fact that I did not accede to requests to meet with members of the community. I can assure you that, as far as I am concerned, consultation is one of the things that I am very keen to see improve between members of this Assembly and members of the community. I can assure you that I have already started moves to have my wishes carried out in this regard.

I had spoken at length to one of the members - and I will not mention names - of the SOS Committee about this very issue, and the reasons given as to why the Darwin Primary School should remain open were basically 3. One was the historic aspect, and that is the only concern that I have. The trouble with that is that the school, as it is sited at present, is not on the block occupied originally by the Darwin Primary School. I have said publicly that the government acknowledges the Darwin Primary School's involvement with education overall and I will be aiming at having something erected in recognition of the part that the school has played in the education system in the Northern Territory. I will be calling on members of the public at some stage for comment on that.

Mr Speaker, the second reason was in relation to what the land would be used for. I am not going to get into that debate at all. I am interested in the education of our children, and that is the issue under discussion here. The third issue that was raised was in relation to after-school activities and the need for a school to be in the inner-city area so that parents who lived outside but worked in the city area could have somewhere to send their children. I accept that, and I acknowledged in that letter that I would always support schools being placed in inner-city areas. I have mentioned this to the Chief Minister and on occasions have had words with him because he happened not to agree with me. I still recognise the need to have schools in the inner-city area to cater for parents of children who live outside that area and work in the city. I have always supported that and I will continue to support it. Incidentally, it is interesting to note that some of the people who were adamant that this was the reason why the school should remain open enrolled in other schools where there were no after-school activities. Basically, they were the 3 reasons that the committee gave for keeping the Darwin Primary School open.

Mr Speaker, I spoke at length with one of them on this issue. It was obvious immediately that we did not agree. I discussed all the issues openly with that person.

Regarding the march to the Chan Building, I would correct the honourable Leader of the Opposition who said that the participants were mainly old Darwin families. There were representatives of about 4 or 5 old Darwin families there. I would be happy to speak with them individually. I have no problem with that. I went out and met that particular rally. The Chief Minister had asked me that day if I wanted him to come down with me. I said: 'No, I am Minister for Education and I can front up to them. It is my responsibility'. The Chief Minister did not come because I had asked him not to come. When I went out to receive the petition from the crowd, I made the comment that this government respects the right of anyone to protest. We respect the right of anyone to make a point. I made that comment. I said: 'I accept your protest, I accept your point and I will receive the petition'. I spoke with those people and it is incorrect for the Leader of the Opposition to say that I did not say anything at that particular time. I made that comment publicly in front of TV cameras.

Mr Speaker, let us look again at the issue of consultation, in particular in relation to Dhupuma College. Residential colleges are very serious worry to governments. It does not matter which government we are talking about. Governments are always extremely concerned about the cost of maintaining such colleges. I have a letter here written in 1980 by the then Minister for Education, Jim Robertson, in relation to that. It was addressed to the Chairman of the National Aboriginal Education Committee. I will just quote one paragraph: 'The role of residential colleges in the Northern Territory has been under consideration and review for some considerable time. Senior Aboriginal educators were involved in both the reviews and the canvassing of Aboriginal options, which appeared divided and confused in most communities'.

When we talk about consultation, I believe that in both these cases there has been adequate consultation. The Parents and Friends Association of the Darwin Primary School knew about the situation. Perhaps the association is at fault for not conveying to the parents of those children that it knew that, unless enrolment numbers picked up, the school would be closed down. It was the same with Dhupuma College. The cost of education generally is of concern to everyone. In the Aboriginal communities - and I will touch on this later in another debate - we spend some \$32m in upgrading facilities and providing Aboriginal education in the Northern Territory...

Mr B. Collins: The federal government provides the \$32m.

Mr HARRIS: We receive that money the same as the states receive their money. The states are funded by the federal government as well, Mr Speaker. We support 2 colleges. At Kormilda College, the actual cost per student per year in 1983 was \$13 500. At Yirara College, the cost in 1983 was \$10 500. At the best private school in Australia, it is only about \$8000 per head.

Mr Speaker, we have acted responsibly in the decisions that have been made. I acknowledge the need for consultation. The honourable member for Arnhem wrote to me recently about concerns in his electorate. I would say to the honourable member for Arnhem that we have already instigated many programs for upgrading schools in his electorate. Progress has been made in expanding the programs in many Aboriginal communities. I believe we have the best Aboriginal education policies in Australia.

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

Mr SMITH (Millner): Mr Speaker, the Minister for Education stated that it had been well known for some time amongst people involved with Darwin Primary School that, if the numbers were reduced, there was a possibility that the school would be closed. I do not disagree with that. During my days in the Northern Territory Teachers Federation, the long-term prospects for Darwin Primary School were the subject of some discussion from time to time. That, of course, is the very reason why the Parents and Friends Association of the school wrote at election time to the honourable Minister for Education and the member for Port Darwin. It was concerned about the future of the school and it wanted assurances from both those honourable members about the sort of future it would have. As the Leader of the Opposition pointed out, those assurances were given. It was assured by the then Minister for Education that there would be consultations on the future of the school and that no grave decisions about its future would be made until after those consultations had taken place. The Leader of the Opposition has already read out the letter that the member for Port Darwin sent back to the school council and it is quite clear that any normal school association would have read into that a guarantee from its local member that its particular interest in its school was being looked after and that school would continue for at least the next 12 months or so.

Once the election campaign was neatly and tidily out of the road, this government broke an election promise to the people who had been involved with that school over a long period. That is a fact that it cannot get away from and that is one reason why people have been so upset. There was a commitment to consultation and discussion and that was thrown out the window 2 or 3 weeks after an election campaign.

I accept that the government is charged with responsibility for making sure the taxpayers' money is spent effectively. I do not deny that at all but that is not the question. We are not denying that Darwin Primary School is perhaps superfluous to the needs of the education system. What we are saying is that the way that decision was implemented is a disgrace, particularly when one considers the noises that this government makes from time to time about a lack of consultation from the federal government in Canberra.

In this case the Territory government did not have the common courtesy to talk to its constituents about something that was very dear and near to them. Unfortunately, it is the Minister for Education who is the big loser in all of this. He is a loser because it is his local electorate and because, in his role as the local member, he gave assurances to his constituents before the election. He is the loser because he has been revealed by his fellow Cabinet members to be a lame-duck minister - he was not even there when the decision was made. Despite the fact that he is the Minister for Education and the local member - 2 pretty good reasons for him to be involved - they went ahead blithely and did not even bother to invite him to the meeting. In his own words, he was made aware of the decision elsewhere. Well, if that is not the first sign of a lame-duck minister, I do not know what is. I just hope that, for the sake of the minister and for the sake of people involved with education in the Northern Territory, things get better for him and that his colleagues show him a bit more respect in future.

I have to say that there were high hopes held for the new Minister for Education, particularly after the arrogant and dismal performance of the previous incumbent. There were extremely high hopes that, at last, we might have a minister who is prepared to listen, who is prepared to talk to the people in the Northern Territory before making decisions. They were very high hopes indeed. But unfortunately, within the first 3 or 4 weeks of his taking up that portfolio, he was torpedoed by Cabinet. I am afraid it is going to take him a long time to crawl out of the hole that his fellow Cabinet members have dug for him.

Mr Speaker, one of the reasons why people were so upset is that Darwin Primary School had a unique and important role to play in the cultural and educational development of this city. The honourable Minister for Education knows as well as anyone here how much parent and community involvement has taken place in that school and how genuine the concern was over the complete lack of consultation on the closure of the school.

The sad thing about this whole affair is that several alternatives could have been considered, at least to determine an interim measure, which would have created less distress and given people time to prepare a rational plan for inner-city schooling. I state again that we believe that there is a need for a rational plan for inner-city schooling but a rational plan can be developed only by talking to everybody who is involved. You do not make rational plans on education by direction from the top. It is one of those areas where there are so many different groups involved that you must have discussions. If you have those discussions and if you follow them through faithfully enough, you arrive at a rational plan.

One of the things that I have been informed of is that there was a proposal last year that the Larrakeyah students should be accommodated in the old hospital buildings whilst the Larrakeyah School underwent major renovations. We have it on good authority that that proposal was mooted. It would have made a lot of sense, if that proposal was a real one, to transfer the students from Larrakeyah to Darwin Primary this year and then return the students to Larrakeyah at the end of the year. In other words, that year's grace could have been used to allow ongoing discussions to take place on the future of Darwin Primary School. At the very least, if the government was determined to close the school, why did it not announce it during the last school year so that students and parents did not have to return from holidays and deal with a complete surprise? I can tell you why: the government does not have the guts to face the people for whom it is ultimately responsible on these decisions. It chickened out over Dhupuma. It chickened out on this one as well.

The only saving grace about this affair compared to that of Dhupuma is that at least this situation did not result in people having to remove themselves physically from their previous location over a period of 10 days - which was the September school vacation in the Dhupuma case - and relocate themselves somewhere else. At least, this time, we did not have families uprooted. We had students uprooted in terms of which school they would go to. I guess one could say that that is a bit better than the Dhupuma approach.

What is revealed in both these situations is that, although the reasons for the decisions may have been good, the process by which they were put into action was appalling. The fact that there is no procedure laid down which enables the government and the school communities to make rational decisions on whether schools should be closed is deplorable. I am glad that it has been called for now. Why it was not done before, I will never know. It is another classic case of acting after the horse has bolted. I would like to suggest, now that the honourable minister has taken the belated action of calling for a program that schools at risk can follow, that very close attention be paid to the Teachers Federation proposal. The Teachers Federation proposal, in essence, is that the Department of Education should identify minimum numbers for particular schools, or groups of schools, at which they are viable and, when it appears that those minimum numbers are very close to being achieved in those particular schools, that the department set up discussions between departmental officers, community representatives, teacher representatives and, in secondary school cases, I guess with student representatives, so that the whole issue can be thrashed out.

It is done elsewhere in Australia, Mr Speaker. It works successfully there. I guess it is a sign of our growing up in Darwin that this problem is just reaching us - the inner-city population is growing up. Certainly, it has been a problem in the major Australian states. I know Canberra, in particular, has faced it. We ought to be big enough to be able to learn from the procedures that have been adopted in those states to ensure that things work out properly to the maximum satisfaction of the government, which obviously has the taxpayers' concerns at heart, and to the school community which obviously feels the concerns of parents, teachers and students in those communities.

Mr Speaker, these suggestions are sensible and constructive and are in line with what the former Minister for Education, now the member for Fannie Bay, told the interim Darwin Primary School Council he wanted to do in order to rationalise school planning. Of course, there was a big difference between wanting to do it and actually doing it.

I urge the new minister to see the error of his ways in this disastrous start to his portfolio and to take immediate action to rectify this situation.

I urge him to demonstrate that he is prepared to learn from this disaster and to adopt a more constructive approach in future. I urge the minister to develop and implement proposals - he said he would do so. I urge him to proceed with those as expeditiously as possible and to open them up for public comment so that we get to a position where everybody knows what procedures will be followed when a situation like this occurs again.

Mr PERRON (Treasurer): Mr Speaker, I do not think that I will be speaking very long in this debate. There does not appear to be a great deal of substance to it. The honourable member for Millner said that he felt that the new Minister for Education had been torpedoed by Cabinet. It is clear that the honourable member for Millner has had no experience in the Cabinet system and I guess he is unlikely ever to obtain any. Indeed, Mr Speaker, primarily it is Cabinet which makes the decisions which ministers follow rather than vice versa. I think it is amusing to hear the view that a minister was torpedoed by Cabinet when, in fact, the minister, as a member of Cabinet, follows directives, as all must in order for the system to work.

The honourable member went on to say that, particularly on issues such as this, if rational discussions are held between all concerned, a good plan will result. Perhaps the honourable Leader of the Opposition should give some of that advice to his party colleagues and they might be able to get a good plan to try to reverse the numbers in the Assembly here because they have not been very successful at it in the past.

Mr Speaker, the situation on Darwin Primary School, as I see it, was that most people who took the time to look at the question knew some time before the actual closure of the school that the writing was on the wall. That statement would certainly apply to the school council concerned because in its own letter it conceded that the school was under a cloud, had been for some time and that there were many indications that the school was unlikely to proceed, in the long term, as a school in inner Darwin. As a result of the steadily declining enrolment numbers, it was aware of the difficulties and of the decisions which were likely to be made. My letter written as minister at that time to the school council indicated, rightly at that time, that I proposed that there would be a review of the situation. Obviously, at that stage no figures were available to the Department of Education on enrolments for the 1984 year. I proposed that consideration be given to the question of the future of schools in the inner Darwin area. My letter created no illusions about the cloud that Darwin Primary School was under. The honourable minister's letter, written by him as member for Port Darwin, confirmed this. It did not give the school the assurance that it was seeking that the school was no longer under a cloud.

The facts are that Cabinet had information placed before it only in mid-December about the 1984 enrolments for Darwin Primary School and for other schools. As I understand it, Cabinet made a decision at that time. I was not present, Mr Speaker, having...

Mr B. Collins: Did Paul do it on his own?

Mr PERRON: ... been on leave. Some of us are allowed a little leave. The Leader of the Opposition likes to take a bit of a spell now and then.

Cabinet had information presented to it in mid-December and it was the first time that Cabinet had such information on the enrolment projections for 1984. It faced a situation where, in the total area of Darwin - I think including part of the rural area - of some 24 primary schools, there were approximately 3000 vacant positions. That is the wider scene. In the immediate

Darwin area, of the 3 schools in question - Darwin Primary, Larrakeyah Primary and Stuart Park Primary - there were substantial vacancies as well. Darwin Primary School was in the worst position, particularly when one considered how few of the students going to that particular school were from its immediate feeder area. Cabinet took a decision in mid-December that the school should be closed and the potential students should be enrolled in other schools.

The opposition is suggesting that, in the middle of December, we should have written a letter or contacted those parents who could be found at the time - having regard to its being Christmas - and started a debate on the matter with the school council and the parents. What Cabinet decided to do was to make a statement that the decision was non-negotiable so that people clearly knew that, rather than debate the issue, they should make alternative arrangements as quickly as possible. They had several weeks to do so.

The opposition suggested that we should have debated the question. I can assure you, Mr Speaker, that it would be very unlikely that agreement would have been reached with those persons who could have been contacted in time for the school to close for 1984. We would have had a series of exchanges between the various parties and confusion through that holiday period leading up to the opening of school, and parents would have been in the position of not quite knowing whether their children would go to Darwin Primary or not. Because of the way it was handled, the parents had a clear indication from day one. The decision was non-negotiable, they had to make alternative arrangements and they had several weeks to do that. Surely that decisive course was the most sensible one for the government to take.

Mr Speaker, the other question concerned the lack of consultation concerning Dhupuma. The decision relating to the closure of Dhupuma was made on a number of grounds but economics played a big part. The decision was taken fairly quickly in order that alternative arrangements could be made. Do the honourable members opposite really see the situation being completely resolved if the government had gone to the people out there and said: 'Dhupuma has to close for these reasons. Let's talk about alternatives'. It would have resulted in a protracted argument and fight to try to stop the decision being implemented. You can be absolutely sure of it. Once some decisions are made, the government must be firm so that people get the message and make alternative arrangements as soon as possible.

In the case of Dhupuma College, the inference was that there were not any satisfactory secondary education facilities in Arnhem Land. It would appear to me from the list of organisations and schools which are available for people in the Arnhem Land region that they not only have a good standard of facilities to choose from but a range of them as well. As honourable members are probably aware, quite a number of the students at Kormilda College are from the Arnhem Land area. I understand that the honourable member for Arnhem attended there himself.

I am advised that Kormilda College is a unique institution in Australia. I am told that nowhere else will you find a facility specifically to accommodate Aboriginal students with the same quality of staff and facilities. The same applies to Yirara College in Alice Springs. In addition to that, of course, Shepherdson College on Elcho Island runs some secondary courses. There are secondary courses run at Yirrkala and, of course, there is Nhulunbuy High School which has an excellent range of facilities. Some expansion has been announced for that particular school. I am advised that Milingimbi has courses for secondary students. Of course, Katherine High School, on the edge of the Arnhem Land region, also has a complete range of secondary facilities. Therefore, I do



not think that the honourable member's view that there are not sufficient facilities in these areas for Aboriginal students is really valid.

The colleges that I mentioned may not be located quite as conveniently as Dhupuma was but the figures which were announced at the time by the then Minister for Education were that Dhupuma College was costing in recurrent expenditure some \$10 800 per student per year. At the time, other secondary schools in the Northern Territory were operating at approximately \$2000 per student per year. Kormilda College is certainly an alternative for students from Arnhem Land. At that time, in 1980, it was operating for \$3500 less per student than Dhupuma. Quite clearly, the government made a rational economic decision. Clearly, it could afford a level of transportation funds in its education vote to bring people to Kormilda and still have the project completed at less cost overall.

I appreciate that education is not an area of government activity for which all the decisions can be made simply on the criterion of finance. But any government that cares to throw the book out of the window on rational expenditure of money in the education portfolio is going to find itself in big trouble very quickly.

I do not think that this matter of public importance brought on by the opposition is any different to most of the others we have debated in the Assembly. It is purely an exercise in wasting members' time.

COMPANIES (TRUSTEES AND PERSONAL REPRESENTATIVES)  
AMENDMENT BILL  
(Serial 5)

Continued from 29 February 1984.

Mr SPEAKER: Honourable members, I have received the following letter from the Chief Minister relating to the Companies (Trustees and Personal Representatives) Amendment Bill 1984:

*Companies (Trustees and Personal Representatives) Amendment Bill 1984.*

*Pursuant to Standing Order 153, I request that you declare the above bill to be an urgent bill.*

*The bill expedites the transfer of company business from the failed TEA to ANZ Executors and Trustees Company Limited.*

*If the transfer of the trustee company business from TEA is not completed expeditiously, the interests of Northern Territory investors in the company could be jeopardised as there is a coordinated Australia-wide move to transfer all of the trustee business of the failed company during March 1984. Hardship could therefore be caused to those investors.*

*Yours sincerely,  
Paul Everingham.*

In accordance with Standing Order 153, I declare the bill to be urgent.

MOTION

Select Committee on Communications Technology

Mr EVERINGHAM (Chief Minister): Mr Speaker, I move that a select

committee to be known as the Select Committee on Communications Technology be appointed to inquire into and report upon new developments in communications technology and the appropriateness of their utilisation in the Northern Territory; that the committee consist of 5 members, namely, Mr Firmin, Mr Hanrahan, Mr Hatton, Mr Lanhupuy and Mr Ede; that the committee have power to call for persons, papers and records, to sit in public or in private session notwithstanding any adjournment of the Assembly, to adjourn from place to place, and to have leave to report from time to time its proceedings and the evidence taken and such interim recommendations as it may deem fit; that the committee report to the Assembly at the latest by the first sitting day in 1985; that the committee be empowered to publish from day to day such papers and evidence as may be ordered by it, and a daily Hansard be published of such proceedings as take place in public; and that the foregoing provisions of this resolution, so far as they are inconsistent with Standing Orders, have effect notwithstanding anything contained in Standing Orders.

In support of my motion, I would say that, in October last year, the General Manager of Aussat Pty Ltd announced that a contract had been awarded for the construction of a major city earth station at Palmerston for the Australian Domestic Communications Satellite System. The station is scheduled to be ready to operate in the second half of 1985 when the first domestic satellite is due to be launched.

Some areas of the Territory already receive television signals via the international satellite Intelsat 4. A significant network has been developed in the Territory with the encouragement of the Territory government for non-commercial, public interest, 2-way voice communication using the ATS-1 satellite within the Peacesat program. The development of local industry to support and manufacture small earth station facilities has commenced with an expectation of expansion to service the adjacent markets in South-east Asia.

Satellites as vehicles for television and radio have been with us for some time, but these are only a part of the rapidly changing scene in communications. Sophisticated telecommunication systems using a variety of terrestrial links are now available. National and international computer networks have become an integral part of industry and commerce, and electronic mail and data services are no longer just on the drawing board but are operational systems. There is no doubt that the era of high technology development in communications has arrived and we can expect that the rate of development will accelerate in the near future.

Mr Speaker, the needs of the Northern Territory with regard to communications are unique in Australia. Its population is thinly scattered over a wide and rugged area. Communications systems fill a very important social need by providing a means to bring isolated individuals and groups into the main stream of Territory and national life. This can extend to health, education and other services, entertainment and contact in emergency situations. The Territory's high potential for economic, industrial and social growth can only be realised if the necessary communications facilities are available. These must extend not only to the remainder of Australia but also to South-east Asia and the Pacific region.

The urgency of the Territory's needs must also be recognised. There is no justification in this day and age for standards of communications in the Territory which are below those enjoyed by other Australians. The catch-up is long overdue and we must go on to build systems which, in all respects, will support our aspirations. My government has grasped every opportunity offered by the several relevant Commonwealth inquiries in the years since self-government to put a strong case for our particular requirements.

Mr Speaker, against this background, it is essential that the Northern Territory keep pace with the technology of communications and where it may lead. We need to be aware of new developments and those which are expected to emerge. A perspective needs to be established on the strengths and weaknesses of the technology available and the implications of its application with respect to the Territory community and its economy. Many of the emerging systems are attractive but all options should be thoroughly assessed and the most important question is whether they are appropriate to our requirements. The goal is to ensure that a comprehensive and integrated system of communications, utilising the most appropriate and advanced technology, is established to serve the Territory and its aspirations as soon as practicable. I believe that a select committee with the tasks that I have outlined will make a major contribution to this goal.

Mr Speaker, I commend the motion.

Mr B. COLLINS (Opposition Leader): Mr Speaker, my remarks will be brief. Of course, the opposition supports the establishment of this committee. As anyone who visits my office can easily see, I have followed all of the developments that have occurred, particularly over the last 3 or 4 years, in communications technology. I would not like to see this committee unnecessarily cover the same ground as has been gone over in an extremely effective way by other organisations.

We all know that, now that we have a larger number of government backbenchers with small electorates, it is necessary to occupy the time of those members. However, there is a great body of very contemporary information that has been collected already. Of course, honourable members would be aware that a similar committee exists in the federal parliament and that that parliament also has at its fingertips one of the best research organisations available in this country: the Commonwealth Parliamentary Library. Members who have seen reports, statements and research projects that have been commissioned by members over the years by that organisation will realise just how good it is. One of the most concise, accurate and informative statements on the whole area of satellite communication technology - and I would commend its reading to all honourable members - is a report that has been prepared by the Commonwealth Parliamentary Library as a result of the work that has been done by the Commonwealth committee. It may be that there exists some specialist application for this technology unique to the Territory. Off the top of my head, I cannot imagine what that would be because the kind of technology that is used now, particularly satellite technology, is applicable on a nationwide basis. I find it very difficult to understand that there could be peculiar circumstances in the Territory that would be dissimilar from, for example, the northern regions of South Australia, most of Western Australia north of Perth, Queensland and various other isolated areas.

One of the very early jobs of this committee would be simply to establish exactly what material is already available. I can assure the honourable members of this Assembly that there is a considerable amount of it. It is not dated at all. This happens to be one of the areas of advancement in science and technology that is being written up and published continually. What I am saying is that I would not like to see this become a 'make-work' committee. I would be surprised, from my reading of the report I have just referred to, which is the most concise collection of up-to-date information on satellite technology and its application to Australia as a whole that I have seen, that anything that is in that report would be directly applicable to the Northern Territory. The question of a satellite, for example, which is the most topical improvement likely to be achieved in the Northern Territory, relies on whether they can actually manage to get the satellite into the right spot when they heave it out

of the bay of the spaceship. From memory, Australia is fourteenth on the list for satellites that are to be launched. Hopefully they will have solved their teething problems with numbers 1 to 13 by the time we get there.

In conclusion, I would ask: what is new about what is needed in the Northern Territory so far as the political aspects of the committee's work are concerned? As I have said in this Assembly before, people in isolated areas in the Northern Territory will tell you - as they did nationwide when Telecom conducted its survey - that basically the 3 priorities are: telephones, telephones that work and telephones that work all the time. From my experience of isolated electorates, telephonic communication is still the major priority by a long way. It comes before television and radio. Of course, hopefully what will happen in 1985, if everything goes as planned and nothing goes wrong with the satellite launch, will be a very rapid change in many places from virtually nothing to suddenly a very great deal. As far as Aussat is concerned, at present it is likely to be able to offer - as the result of a ground station - 3 national television networks. It seems to be clear that 3 of the transponders will be owned by 3 of the major national networks. A fourth transponder will be operated by a subscription television service, a prospect which I find very attractive. A decoder will sit on top of the television set to decode the signal at a hire cost of about \$1 a day and will give 45 hours of top quality commercial television-type programming without the commercials. On top of those 4 national television channels, the ABC channel will be available as well as 6 national radio networks. As a result of rapidly improving technology, the price is coming down every 24 hours. We already have a situation where the dishes that are required for receiving the signal are down by about \$1000. I saw a report the other day that, once it really takes off, they will bring the cost of those things down to around \$500.

So far as communities are concerned, it is my advice that a ground station, which will cost in the vicinity of \$100 000, which is dirt cheap, will be capable of distributing all of the signals I have just talked about - 4 television channels, 6 radio stations - and, as well as that, provide an STD and ISD automatic dial telephone service. This is all likely to occur in 1985. I wish the committee well in its work and look forward to making a submission to it.

We support the committee, Mr Speaker.

Mr HATTON (Nightcliff): Mr Speaker, I rise to support the motion. The honourable Leader of the Opposition has referred to the communications satellite and some of its scope and potential. I want to expand a little on that, following on from the statement made by the honourable Chief Minister.

The Northern Territory has a disparate and scattered population with small regional centres of concentrated populations and widely separated smaller communities throughout the wide expanses of the Northern Territory. Already this week, we have heard many people refer to isolation and tyranny of distance. New technology in the communications field provides us with a potential vehicle to overcome that tyranny and bring to people in the remote corners of our Territory many of the facilities that exist for people in the major parts of Australia. As the Leader of the Opposition has said, much of this information is collated already and no person involved on this committee would want to try to reinvent the wheel. What is important, though, is to analyse this information and look at its implications for the Territory. Yesterday, the honourable member for Victoria River referred to concern about the possibility of not being able to receive Northern Territory ABC radio. That, for example, is an implication of the new technology. Is it possible that people throughout

the Northern Territory will be able to receive Northern Territory-oriented television and radio communications?

Its implications in the mineral industry also require consideration. The potential of the technology that is already in existence with the launching of Aussat to expedite and dramatically reduce the costs of mineral exploration are quite extensive. The capacity actually to feed geological data into head office main frame computers on a daily basis can save geologists and explorers from going up many a dry gully in their explorations and can dramatically increase the speed of exploration on mineral leases.

The potential is there for bringing our pastoral industries into some form of participation through the computerised selling of their beasts rather than taking pot luck in taking animals to market. A process which is being undertaken in other parts of Australia now may be a possibility and it is an issue that should be examined and investigated by the committee.

The potential for cost reduction and alleviation of many of the industrial relations problems on major construction projects should not be ignored either. I am sure the member for Nhulunbuy is quite conscious of the problems that can arise on construction projects with rudimentary or non-existent communication facilities and the problems that that can create for employees working on those projects. Typically, they are separated from their families and friends and therefore are often under considerable pressure in their personal lives. I believe that contributes significantly to many of the alcohol and industrial relations problems that exist on such projects. The introduction of computers could immediately bring to construction projects and survey and exploration sites the facilities of television, radio and, most importantly, telephone communication. It could significantly ease the sense of isolation and separateness that exists on many of those work sites. It may have a potential economic advantage in that, with the removal to some extent of the sense of separateness, there may be less argument for some of the extremely high payments by way of special site loadings that exist on many of these projects. I have already referred to savings in terms of industrial disputation.

Mr Speaker, the most important thing that arises from technology is the facility that it can provide to fixed communities - Aboriginal communities and pastoral properties. I refer briefly to a statement made by Mr Harold White, who has many letters after his name, who was the chairman of a Commonwealth government task force to inquire into all aspects of the possible introduction of the national communication satellite system in Australia. That was presented to the Northern Australia Development Seminar held in Broome in November 1979. Quite obviously, that was long before the decision was taken actually to enter into the satellite communications field. He said:

*Special services to meet special needs could be readily transmitted and received: programs for our Aboriginal people, in their languages and designed for their cultures; educational programs for schools and individual children in the more remote parts of the country; programs for the health services and for medical training and support; special communication services for aviation, for meteorology, for mineral exploration and mining or drilling data transfer; and for defence strategic and tactical purposes are all easily achievable.*

That is only with our current technology and, to use a cliché, we are in the process of a technological revolution at the moment. New technological advances will continuously come forward which will have potential application to and benefit for the people of the Northern Territory. This select committee

should be in a position to examine those and be able to readily advise this Assembly of what advantage may be taken of new technology - not just today's current, existing technology, and not just Aussat, but all technology.

Mr BELL (MacDonnell): Mr Speaker, I rise to make a few comments in support of this motion. I am quite sure that, in a Legislative Assembly such as ours, it would be ironic if there was any particularly strong dissent on a motion of this sort. I dare say that serving an electorate as extensive as mine, it would be strange indeed if I were not to endorse it, and I rise to do so.

I have taken some considerable interest in the debate and deliberations about the setting up and use of the domestic satellite. As the honourable member for Barkly will be aware, I participated in a conference he convened in Alice Springs. In addition to that, I was present at last year's Isolated Children's Parents Association annual general meeting when consideration of the capacities and the use of the satellite was a key issue. Indeed, our member in the House of Representatives for the Northern Territory, Mr John Reeves, performed an excellent service for that conference, as the people in attendance mentioned to me. He was able to attend and, being so intimately involved in the Commonwealth's deliberations on these matters, was able to provide a great deal of information for the benefit of the people who attended the ICPA meeting.

In passing, it is worth mentioning that, in response to that, the honourable member for Barkly was somewhat less than charitable. He had not actually been at the conference when Mr Reeves was making his valuable comments. But the honourable member still chose to occupy a bit of paper space and a bit of air space by deriding a contribution that he did not even hear. The minister suggested when this Assembly was being opened on Tuesday that it was only himself and yourself, Mr Speaker, who represented rural Territorians. I am sure you will agree, Sir, that there are a number of people on this side of the Assembly who represent rural Territorians. That is one of the chief reasons why I rise to speak in this debate today. I trust the honourable member will take that to heart and remember that there are not only 2 people who represent rural interests in this Assembly.

Mr Speaker, as I say, I commend the establishment of this committee and would suggest to the committee that it has a role to play. I am sure that there are a number of honourable members who are aware of the misinformation that has been spread abroad about the domestic satellite and its capabilities. I suggest that the chief reason for that is that a great deal of public money will be expended. A great deal of public money has already been spent and is being spent in assessing what the domestic satellite will be able to do and what services are economically viable.

Since I mentioned the term 'economic viability', and since it is usually conservative politicians who regard themselves as the most hard-nosed in this area, let me make the point which came to my attention from the conference organised by the then Minister for Community Development in Alice Springs. That point was that it is not clear how the satellite would pay for itself. Is it to be paid for entirely by the Australian taxpayer or not? There was a great deal of enthusiasm. The honourable member will recall this, I am sure. There was a great deal of enthusiasm for the possibility that the satellite would be controlled by Aussat Pty Ltd because this was believed to be private enterprise, and ipso facto good. On the other hand, it was expressed that the satellite should not be controlled by Telecom because this was public enterprise, and ipso facto bad.

I suggest that the committee take into consideration the fact that there are 3 areas that are currently referred to about the satellite's capabilities.

It is vitally important to people in the Territory. It is vitally important to people in my electorate in the provision of radio, television and telephones. What is not discussed, certainly in terms of profitability - and I have no information about that in case honourable members expect it - is the information exchange facility that I understand will be possible through the domestic satellite. If the satellite is to pay for itself to any degree, it is presumably through that facility. I do not think that the honourable member for Nightcliff made reference to the data exchange services available. I may not have caught that part of his speech. But it is certainly the profitability of that area that is likely to pay for services. In relation to remote, non-profitable areas like the vast reaches of the Northern Territory, that is something that I commend to the committee for its consideration.

The Chief Minister referred to the Northern Territory's needs being unique in Australia. I accept that the needs of northern Australia are great. But, as the honourable Leader of the Opposition pointed out, the Northern Territory's needs are not unique at all. There are vast reaches of South Australia, Western Australia, New South Wales and Queensland where exactly the same parameters apply in terms of decisions about communications facilities.

I trust that the committee's deliberations will be fruitful. A tribunal is inquiring into satellite program services. I am sure that the committee will take the tribunal's deliberations into consideration. Again, the big bad Commonwealth is conducting a ministerial inquiry into radiated subscription TV which glories in the acronym RSTV. The honourable Leader of the Opposition referred to that before. Quite clearly, the situation is in a state of flux and the deliberations of those bodies will affect the services that will be available in the Territory and in northern Australia.

There is also the very interesting possibility that the satellite may make possible - and this is important in the Territory because of our small isolated communities - low-power stations which would allow for some sort of local service. I think all honourable members would agree that our regional radio and television services are of great value in tying us together as a community and tying together the places that we live in. Regional commercial television in Darwin fits in that context. You have seen, Mr Speaker, an advertisement in the Financial Review calling for potential advertisers on regional commercial television. The advertisement stated that as many people are served by regional commercial television as there are viewers in Sydney and Brisbane put together. I noticed on the map that our own Channel 8 in Darwin came into those calculations. It would be a shame if those important regional services were threatened by the extensive capacities of the domestic satellite. I have given some thought to our current regional radio services through the ABC and the commercial radio stations in Darwin and Alice Springs. Of course, they will not be affected by the domestic satellite. I think also of the burgeoning Aboriginal broadcasting services in central Australia. We have the Central Australian Aboriginal Media Association which also glories under the somewhat peaceful acronym of CAAMA. It is currently providing an audio and video cassette service to Aboriginal communities. That is very much appreciated by communities in my electorate. I trust that those services either will make use of the satellite or, at the very least, not be threatened by the launching of the domestic satellite.

Mr Speaker, I would like to reinforce the point that there is a danger from misinformation. There is a gap between what is possible and what is affordable. I think that is worth the committee's consideration. For example, the Chief Minister referred to the facilities available currently through the present generation of Intelsat. It should be pointed out to honourable members

that the domestic satellite will do no more than what Intelsat will do at present. The difference is that the domestic satellite that is envisaged for Australia will have higher-powered transponders and, therefore, the technology that is necessary to provide that signal will be cheaper by \$1000 and possibly more. With those few thoughts, I commend the deliberations of the select committee. I wish it well in its deliberations. I hope that those deliberations are going to be of value to this Assembly and to the people of the Northern Territory.

Mr FIRMIN (Ludmilla): Mr Speaker, I am pleased that the member for MacDonnell raised some of the technological advances which will need to be looked at by the committee. I also support the motion for the formation of this committee.

A lot of us consider communication as mainly the communication of information in an aural, oral or visual sense, which is what has mainly been spoken about here today, particularly in relation to the Aussat satellite. The electronic transmission of data from machine to machine is another function which is very important. Many changes are taking place in technology today, which I believe the Northern Territory may enjoy considerable spin-offs from in the future.

The head of one of the Japanese organisations which is leading the field in the electronic technological advancement has said that, in several years time, most of these 2 communication forms will come together. He calls it convergence of technology. At the end of this decade, he believes that communications in the aural, oral and visual sense, and the computer sense will almost be one and the same. He believes that this will take place over a period of 15 to 20 years.

Some of the changes that may be affecting our lifestyles in those next 15 to 20 years could be placed into 3 categories: business, public and private or home sector. Some of the things in the home can be related to the Aussat satellite-type technology. If we relate back to where we stand in the 1980s, most people will understand communications technology as being telephones, television and possibly a home computer.

Moving towards the latter part of the 1980s, the home will probably see the introduction of a banking information system, an FAX, video and a telex terminal, an advanced computing system terminal, a home utility control system, home terminals and a high resolution television set. Moving through the 1990s and into the year 2000, there will be technological advances in voice input and output terminals, viewer-participation 2-way television, electronic newspaper distribution systems and possibly automatic interpreting systems as well. These should become available in homes through some of these new technological systems over the years.

In 1980-84 in the business sector, communication forms were things like the PBX system and office computers which, of course, were usually linked into a word-processor of some sort. Moving through the 1980s, the evolution of office automation will take place. We are seeing it today. The office will use multi-media terminals. We are just starting to use them in the Northern Territory. We are working up a program in some of the commercial operations in the Territory using the Northern Territory Public Service's computer, the IBM 3081.

Factory automation embraces computer-assisted design and VLSI automatic design systems. Moving through the 1990s, we should be looking for stock



investment planning systems into businesses, the International Exchange Control System and probably a programmable robot. Into the 2000s, there should be high-intelligence robots and artificial-intelligence application systems with a human-orientated terminal.

In the public sector, we are seeing some spin-offs already. Further advancement will be made into the maritime information satellite systems, air traffic control systems, motor vehicle telephones, local area health information systems, cable TV, computerised library systems and computer-aided instruction systems. Looking into the 1990s, we should see international trade information systems, government information systems and direct broadcast satellite systems. Through into the 2000s, we should see space resource development systems and automatic interpretation-aided communication systems.

It is all very heady stuff. How does it affect the Northern Territory? In the Northern Territory at the moment, the IBM 3081 computer we are using is part of this advanced new technology. At the moment, it is used by the Department of Lands, the Motor Vehicle Registry, the law courts, the Northern Territory Police Force and Treasury. Strangely, some of our systems lead Australia in technology. Currently, we are being canvassed by several states and even overseas interests, particularly in the South-east Asian region, which are interested in purchasing some of our systems. I see it as part of the function of the technological committee not only to take in information to determine what sort of new technology should be used in the Northern Territory but also to sell and send out information to other areas.

Aussat has been referred to today. There is another system called the Austpac system which will be hooked into the Aussat system in the not-too-distant future. The Austpac system is called the electronic pulsars transmission system which works on a digital package message transmitter. This particular system is built to international standard and has high-speed quality impulse with a failure rate of 1 in 6 million.

Mr Speaker, possibly members will not be able to understand what that means. I did not until I read about it and made some inquiries. Some years ago when I was in Europe, I was lucky enough to attend a computer lecture by a professor in the north of England called Dr Burke. Dr Burke showed a program on the then latest technology in computers. That was some 3 years ago. He showed us a small silicon chip - about 1-inch cubed. That silicon chip was based on a molecular structure of 10. As part of the demonstration, he put it into a latest state-of-the-art computer and pressed a button. There was a high-pitched electronic signal of some 6 seconds duration, and he said: 'I hope you understood all that'. Of course, we did not know what it was. What he did in that 6 seconds was to transmit the total information contained in the King James version of the Bible word for word. That particular piece of technological advancement in the shape of a silicon cube, he told us - and I had no reason to disbelieve him - was capable of storing every written work that exists in the world. That sort of system is quite unique and, to me as a layman, somewhat frightening because I do not really understand the potential that it has for us. I believe this committee's function is to find out if it can be used in the Northern Territory.

Going back to the Austpac system, as I understand it, it involves the delivery of a high-speed electronic message. This system has such high-speed quality impulses, and such a low failure rate, that it has the ability to deliver, at that high speed, any distance around the world to the media, a satellite or a ground station. The information is of a high quality and is capable of being transmitted at a later date into the technology that we

understand today, probably onto paper or into other forms of electronic transmission for processing to whatever form it needs to be processed.

Technology is moving forward very fast. Reference has been made to some of the satellites. I have just made reference to the satellites on parade around the earth. I am not going to go through the considerable list of those that may be of some interest to us. But there are several that are particularly important and it is possible that the Northern Territory could tap into them for economic gain. One of those could be the Landsat. Landsat 4 was launched in early 1982 and, with the launching last year of the TDRS satellite - the tracking and data relay system satellite - could have considerable spin-offs in the development of transport planning, the exploration in the oil and mineral fields and possibly even in urban and rural planning. The definition of the information delivered by this satellite at the moment is down to a 50 000 to 1 scale, and the definition photographs that I have seen produced by this machine are quite impressive. The other 2 satellites which I will refer to, one of which could be very important to us, are the Cospac and the Starsat satellites. Both of them are related to search and rescue functions. They are also part of the satellite parade that passes around the world picking up relayed distress signals for a search and rescue function.

The point that I picked up when reading some information on these last night at such short notice was that Brazil, which I had never thought of as a country that had made particularly large technological moves forward over the last years, strangely enough opened its Landsat centre in 1973 and now holds the second busiest Landsat station in the world. It is selling technology out of Brazil, receiving technology in, reforming and restructuring it, and selling it again. It also uses it for reformation of its own country in the areas of mineral and oil exploration, mapping, roads and city planning functions.

Going back to how this affects the Northern Territory, I suggested earlier that we had some systems that could be important to the Australian states and possibly overseas. One interesting area at the moment in that field is a trial program in place in a work station concept, which has access to the land information system. I understand that it is the most advanced land information system on computer in Australia today. This work station trial is taking place in a law firm today in Darwin and will continue to be monitored for some time. If successful, it could show the lead in Australia for the transmission of electronic data between business houses - not only law firms, of course, because it has an immediate spin-off into the architectural, engineering and, probably, into the local council areas as well. In the future, we should have instant access at the desk top level into the land information service system. The possibility of instantaneous conveyancing is quite an innovative move forward.

These spin-offs for commercial ventures lead me to another area. We have been asked by several companies from the south of Australia if they can set up a business in the Northern Territory to take advantage of some of these systems by setting up venture capital companies to become involved in the technological advances that are taking place already in the Northern Territory. I believe that the committee's function will be not only to evaluate the worth and economics of information that is available outside the Northern Territory but also the possible selling of information that we currently have available to return some profit to the Northern Territory. I commend the motion.

Mr LEO (Nhulunbuy): Mr Deputy Speaker, like the honourable member for Ludmilla, I find all this electronic wizardry quite terrifying. However, in his address to the Assembly, I think he might have been exaggerating his fears. If this committee can allay some of my fears and those of a number of people in the Territory, it will perform a worthwhile service.

This, of course, increases the number of committees that have been formed by the government. I applaud the setting up of this committee. Unfortunately, the Treasurer is not here but I would hope that, if any more committees are to be set up, the government will introduce a public accounts committee. That was one of the reasons we were given for increasing the backbench and absorbing 6 more members into this Assembly. Before the opposition is over-taxed and the backbenches over-extended on too many committees, I would like to see a public accounts committee introduced by the Chief Minister or the Treasurer.

Mr TUXWORTH (Primary Production): Mr Deputy Speaker, it had not been my intention to speak this afternoon but, as a result of comments by the member for MacDonnell, I feel I should reply to put the record straight. My interest and involvement in the technological revolution that is occurring around us was inspired originally by promises that I received from Telecom over many years not to worry about the telecommunications problem in the outback because 'when the satellite goes up, it will all be solved'.

About a year ago, the first cracks started to appear in the facade with the proposition put forward by the Minister for Communications, Mr Duffy, that Aussat was an expensive luxury that we could do without, that it would cost the taxpayer a lot of money and Telecom could do it anyway. I do not mind if Telecom can do it anyway as long as it gets done in my electorate. When I found out that the shafting of the Aussat project was really taking place as a part of a deal between the government and Telecom unions, I was a bit concerned for the aspirations of my constituents and, from that point on, I took a very keen interest in Aussat and what it was about to do for our country. The minister then moved to have Telecom control Aussat. We moved to the point where Telecom has a share and interest in Aussat and Aussat became an established fact which will enter the world of commercial and technological reality. I think that is great.

What is important is how we in the Northern Territory come to grips with the services that will be available to us. I think that needs special consideration by the Assembly. I accept the Leader of the Opposition's point that there are fantastic amounts of information available in all sorts of libraries but the people who compiled it did not compile it with a view to applying it to the Northern Territory. Certain questions arise. What services are available? Which ones are we going to use? How are we going to use them? When you talk to people involved with this technology, they tell us that Aussat can do anything. It really comes back to our deciding what it is that we want to do.

To be provocative for a moment, Aussat has so much potential that the School of the Air as we know it today may be obsolete in 2 years' time. There is the possibility for students to see their teacher on a television screen and communicate with the teacher in the same way that they do now by radio. Data transmission by the mineral industry and the oil exploration industry will revolutionise field activities and exploration activities and the administration of permits on lands involved. There is the transmission of educational programs for people in remote areas and people who want to do courses of higher learning. There is the prospect of our having a university of the air.

Services for radio, television, telex and data transmission are available to us. Because it is possible for the new Yulara development to hook into the satellite and have immediate booking contact with 4 or 5 of the largest computer booking facilities in the world, do we do it? Who will do it? What will it cost? What will it mean for us? These are the questions that our committee should address because the application of this technology is really important

for the Northern Territory. One honourable member put it into the context that our committee should consider what is possible, what is desirable, what is necessary and what can we afford. If our committee members can consider the technology available that might apply to the Northern Territory in the next 10 or 15 years with those questions in the back of their minds, we will get a lot out of what is available to us.

Motion agreed to.

#### MOTION

##### Extension of Term of Inquiry into Freight and Related Costs

Mr MANZIE (Community Development): Mr Deputy Speaker, I move that this Assembly resolve that the term of the Board of Inquiry into Freight and Related Costs, as approved by resolution of this Assembly on 2 June 1983, be extended to permit the completion of the particular aspect of the work of the inquiry dealing with barge operations out of Darwin to coastal and island communities in the Top End.

Mr Deputy Speaker, under the terms of reference for the Freight Inquiry as approved by this Assembly, the board was required to report on direct and indirect freight costs for all sections of the community. The Freight Inquiry has carried out that task in all but one respect - barge operations. This section of the report has been delayed due to difficulties encountered by the board in obtaining the requisite information. In this regard, legal action by the board is being contemplated in order to obtain the cooperation of the persons involved.

Rather than delay publication, the board, in the interests of producing its findings in a timely manner, has presented a report which covers other areas of the inquiry. A supplementary report will be produced as soon as the necessary information is obtained.

When this Assembly was debating the motion to institute the inquiry into freight and related costs, some concern was expressed by members on both sides of the Assembly as to whether the inquiry could be completed in the time allowed. During debate on Thursday 2 June 1983, the Parliamentary Record shows that the honourable member for Millner actually said: 'I too share the concern of the honourable minister that this will be a complex task. Perhaps 6 months may not be long enough to get to the bottom of it. I would indicate to the honourable minister that, if 6 months is not long enough, we would certainly support an extension if he wished to come back to the Assembly after receiving an interim report on the inquiry'.

The report was furnished on 21 February 1984 to His Honour the Administrator who in turn requested the Chief Minister to arrange for the report to be tabled through the appropriate minister.

Mr Speaker, I table the report and commend the motion to honourable members.

Mr SMITH (Millner): Mr Speaker, in the interests of consistency, I rise briefly to say that we do support the motion. I am pleased that the inquiry has basically completed its task. At one stage, I was somewhat critical of the way the inquiry was going about its task. I will look forward to reading its report with some interest.

I have one concern that I would like the honourable minister to respond to.

My understanding of the original timetable of the inquiry, as established by this Assembly, was that it should report within 6 months, which would have been at 1 December last year. I ask whether, in his opinion, the motion that we passed covers the operations of the inquiry between 1 December and this sitting day. I am not sure whether it does or not. I would not want there to be any doubt, when it comes to paying members of the inquiry, about whether they should be paid for the days between 1 December and this actual sitting day. I am not sure if he can answer that directly but I would like him to have a look at it and perhaps provide me with a response next week.

Mr LEO (Nhulunbuy): Mr Speaker, I am happy to go along with the request of the honourable minister regarding an inquiry into freight rates for barges between Darwin and various ports along the coast. Of course, the most significant port along the coast is in my electorate - Nhulunbuy. The community of Nhulunbuy is undergoing changes at the moment in terms of how its freight actually arrives there. I am sure the honourable Minister for Transport and Works is aware of those changes. I know that my constituents would like to be apprised of the outcome of any in-depth inquiry into freight and related costs in respect of the electorate of Nhulunbuy.

I would ask the Attorney-General, who is very knowledgeable in matters of propriety in the Assembly, about the constitutional requirements of this committee and the manner by which it has been able to operate over the last 3 months.

Motion agreed to.

#### TABLED PAPER

##### First Report of the Subordinate Legislation and Tabled Papers Committee

Mr HATTON (Nightcliff): Mr Speaker, I table the First Report of the Subordinate Legislation and Tabled Papers Committee.

#### ADDRESS IN REPLY

Continued from 29 February 1984.

Mr PALMER (Leanyer): Mr Speaker, firstly, I would like to place on the public record my appreciation for the great faith shown in me by the people of Leanyer and my thanks to those who worked so hard and tirelessly throughout my campaign.

Leanyer is the largest and most populous of the metropolitan electorates. At the time of the Territory elections, there were 3355 enrolled voters and that number has since grown to 3713. In keeping with the residual areas of Darwin, the population is a cosmopolitan one with all the major ethnic groups being strongly represented. The origins of the name 'Leanyer' have long since been lost in history. It appears first in the early surveyors' field books of 1869 and I am informed it is believed to be of Aboriginal origin. But that is probably just a good guess. The electorate takes in the suburbs of Karama and half of Malak. Karama is an alternative name for the Murinbata of the Wadeye or Port Keats area, and is believed to mean 'water folk', although some local historians believe it to be a corruption of the name 'Karawa' or 'Garawa', a tribe of the McArthur River, Boorooloola area. 'Malak' is a derivative of the word Mulukmuluk which, in itself, is an alternative name for the Ngolomwanga tribe of the Daly River.

Aside from the suburb names, the electorate contains some interesting

groupings of street names - VRD, Legune, Rosewood and Humbert, all properties of the Victoria River district, one of which I am sure Mr Speaker is very familiar with. Also, Dorriggo, Koojarra, Koolinda and Koolama are names of Western Australian Stateships, on the last of which I had the pleasure of taking passage.

Self-government, increasing demand and continued high inflation combined to put pressure on the Territory government to reduce or at least restrain the rate of increase in the price of residential land. Under Commonwealth control, there was no requirement for government agencies to realise production costs of residential land, nor was there a requirement to take cognisance of ongoing costs that certain types of developments incur. The government's answer to increasing costs and pressure to limit returns was an attempt to reduce costs by letting residential development out to private developers. The last 3 Darwin suburbs designed and funded by federal agencies were, to say the least, a town planning extravaganza. The backlash that gross misuse of public funds produced, combined with developers' understandable desires to maximise profits, returned the quality of some of the developments in my electorate to the Dark Ages. However, the government is to be commended for its recognition of the problems caused and thanked for its decision to fund the creation of 3 extra parks in Karama and Leanyer.

All is not yet rosy however. The electors of Leanyer face a problem which, over the last few years, governments at all levels have failed to come to grips with. Mr Justice Mitchell, Government Resident and Judge of the Northern Territory, in his address to the residents of Port Darwin on the occasion of the transfer of the Territory from South Australian to Commonwealth control on 2 January 1911, called upon his fellow citizens to think of the privations and endurance of the explorers, to recall the names of Grey, Eyre, Sturt, McKinlay, Kennedy, Gregory, Leichhardt, Forrest, Giles and, not least, Stuart and to find in their lives a splendid incentive to go forward.

Forward indeed we have gone. No longer is Darwin a squalid little outpost of the Commonwealth. No longer is Darwin the Siberian salt mine of the Canberra Politburo to which could be banished wayward public servants. Two cyclones, several dozen air raids and an equally catastrophic brewery fire later, Darwin is a proud, modern city, proud of its unique culture, its rare mix of Aboriginal, European, Malay, Kanaka and numerous others, proud of its gardens, its beaches, its warm friendly lifestyle and, dare I say, proud of at least some of its politicians.

Attendant to everyday life in parts of modern Darwin is the omnipresent reminder of days gone by, of the privations and sufferings of the explorers and early settlers, a painful reminder that man has not yet mastered this harsh tropical environment, a curse that makes man's existence a miserable one from the Arctic tundra to the shores of Beagle Gulf. I speak, of course, of our constant companion, the mosquito.

In the Darwin area alone, there are in excess of 70 individual species of mosquito, dominated by the Anopheles, Aedes and Culex varieties. But in keeping with the rich cultural heritage to which I referred previously, there is good representation of other types. These mosquitoes range from the brown house mosquito or, for the more learned amongst us, *Culex quinquefasciatus*, through *Anopheles farauti*, or Australian malaria mosquito which, as its name implies, has been responsible in Australia for the transmission of malaria, through to the particularly voracious and, at times, extremely numerous *Aedes vigilax* or salt marsh mosquito. *Aedes vigilax* is a small, dark, robust mosquito with a pointed abdomen. It commonly breeds in salt water swamps and temporary pools

that are filled after the highest tides of the month, those over 7 m, and after rain. The larvae will grow in a range of amounts of sea water and are found in fresh water when breeding grounds are flooded by rains. The period from egg to adult is usually 5 to 6 days, although eggs can survive periods of dryness until the next high tides. Mass migrations may take newly-emerged adults more than 40 km but, in times of strong prevailing winds, they have been found as far inland as Katherine. In Darwin, plagues of *Aedes vigilax* occur in the mid and late dry season due to simultaneous hatchings following the highest tides.

The Leanyer swamp contains no less than 7 distinct breeding areas, being stormwater drains, in an impounded area next to the sewage ponds, the dump, a fresh water swamp near the dump, brackish reed swamps, seasonally inundated plains and bomb craters in the former RAAF bombing range.

In recent years, the amount of water flowing into the Leanyer swamp areas has increased dramatically as a result of stormwater drainage being directed there from the Malak, Leanyer and Karama subdivisions. This increased flow of water has found its way to areas which previously were not subject to inundation and has greatly increased the mosquito breeding areas and thus the numbers of mosquitoes.

The Leanyer swamp is the principal mosquito breeding site near the residential areas of Darwin. The mosquito of most concern to the residents of Leanyer, aside from *Aedes vigilax*, is *Anopheles farauti*, the Australian malaria mosquito. Based on normal flight ranges of the *Anopheles* mosquito, a buffer zone of 1.6 km should have been established between the breeding grounds in residential areas.

A substantial area of Malak, parts of Karama and much of the suburb of Leanyer falls within what should have been a buffer. For whatever reasons, land developers, both public and private, saw fit to ignore the need for a buffer. As a result, many of the residents of my electorate, and I am sure the member for Arnhem will agree, are now enjoying some of the hardships referred to by Justice Mitchell and paying for the ignorance of others. While some, not too many kilometres removed from Leanyer swamps, are able to remain outdoors and enjoy our balmy tropical evenings, many of my constituents are driven into their shelters at the first hint of dusk.

The obvious long-term solution to the mosquito problem is to reduce or eliminate these breeding grounds. The elimination of breeding grounds must be tempered with regard to other life forms that also rely on the swamp and wetland areas for their existence. Therefore, the ongoing process of drainage of the Leanyer swamp, though hopefully leading to a marked reduction in mosquito numbers, should not be allowed to destroy completely the natural ecology of the swamp.

The elimination of the mosquito in the residential areas of Leanyer is a 3 part process - the continued draining of the swamp, the elimination of residential area breeding grounds, and ongoing ultra-low-volume aerosol control of adult mosquitoes in the buffer area at times of high pestilence. Ultra-low-volume aerosol control or fogging, over recent years, has been the subject of much emotive debate, largely centred on the properties of malathion.

Malathion is an organo-phosphorus compound which was introduced in 1950 as the first selectively-toxic organo-phosphorus insecticide. It is a safe, general-purpose insecticide which found wide acceptance as a replacement for organo-chlorine insecticides such as DDT. It would be foolish to suggest that malathion is a completely safe chemical. Taken in relatively large doses over

an extended length of time, malathion can cause a hazardous reduction in blood cholinesterase levels. Cholinesterase, an enzyme which acts as a catalyst in hydrolysis of acetylcholine to acetic acid and choline, prevents the accumulation of acetylcholine at nerve endings and thus plays an important part in the transmission of nervous impulses. However, it is worth noting that malathion has a similar acute toxicity for man and rats as aspirin.

Most cases of malathion poisoning have involved gross misuse, usually involving accidental or suicidal ingestion. In 1976, a large number of cases of intoxication with 5 deaths occurred in a group of spraymen and mixers involved in a World Health Organisation malaria control program. This was caused by the use of batches of malathion with a higher than usual toxicity due to the presence of contaminants and neglect of safety precautions.

Dr A.L. Black, Medical Services Adviser (Toxicology) of the Commonwealth Department of Health, in a paper of June 1981 entitled 'Comment on the safety for use of Malathion in Australian public health' said, in part:

*There is currently some confusion and concern about the mutagenic potential of malathion. In particular, there have been allegations that it may be associated with Downs Syndrome. Certainly, some toxic organo-phosphorus esters are highly reactive alkylating agents and are recognised mutagens. Malathion is neither. Despite many years of careful monitoring of Malathion used in its public health programs in many countries, the World Health Organisation has encountered no evidence whatsoever of human mutagenicity of malathion. There is nothing in the medical literature to suggest any association between malathion and Downs Syndrome.*

The World Health Organisation also found that although there are no reports of an experiment primarily concerned with carcinogenicity, no increased incidence of cancers has been reported in several long-term dietary studies in rats. The continued public health use of malathion can be justified by its proven efficiency and safety. The small risk of acute intoxication is less than for comparable organo-phosphorus compounds and can be minimised by proper application techniques and operator hygiene. There is no evidence of chronic ill-effects even amongst the most heavily exposed malathion applicators.

I urge the government to implement an effective mosquito control program immediately as part of the works associated with the drainage of Leanyer swamp, to construct tracks along the edges of the swamp and to provide funding for an ongoing program of ultra-low-volume aerosol control of adult mosquitoes within the buffer. The number of mosquitoes invading residential areas of my electorate, particularly in the eastern part of the suburb of Leanyer, impose a public health risk. Let us hope that it does not take a serious outbreak of dengue fever or malaria to spur the government into action. Not only is there a high risk of physical disease, mosquitoes present a serious imposition on the very quality of home life. One of the features of our tropical lifestyle is the use we can make of outdoor living. When that is denied to one section of the community, that section can justifiably consider itself hard done by.

Harking back to Mr Justice Mitchell, surely 73 years of privation and endurance is sufficient. Let us use the means at our disposal to rid ourselves of at least one of the major hardships to which our forebears were subjected.

In closing, much has been said about the rights and wrongs of man altering his environment by unnatural and or chemical methods. But I ask: can man be expected to be tolerant of his environment when that environment is not tolerant



of man? Finally, I support the initiatives outlined in His Honour's address and commend it to honourable members.

Mr BELL (MacDonnell): Mr Speaker, I rise to endorse the Address in Reply motion moved by the Chief Minister. In speaking to it, I would like to commence by referring to my own electorate. Unlike a number of honourable members opposite, I will not make copious reference to the etymology of the word 'MacDonnell'. I will be quite frank, Mr Speaker: I am not sure that I would be able to do so. Having listened to the speeches that have been given today, I will certainly keep it in the back of my mind to find out at some time.

To start with my own electorate, there are 2 points I would like to make, because my electorate contained in it the very cause for this election. For that reason, my election as an opposition member, in the face of the huge swing to the Country Liberal Party, is important. In a short campaign, the Chief Minister might have been able to pull the wool over a few people's eyes but he was not able to pull the wool over the eyes of the electors of MacDonnell.

Mr Everingham: We nearly did. Next time we will.

Mr BELL: You won't be here to do it will you? There continue to be areas of crying need and areas of grinding poverty in my electorate that cannot be ignored. I was surprised to hear such a rosy picture of Aboriginal communities described by the honourable member for Victoria River in his electorate. If they are as he says they are, and I do not claim to be familiar in any way with those places, those people are indeed fortunate. The communities in my electorate are not so fortunate by any means. In this context, there are 2 particular communities that I should refer to. I intend to take the matter of these 2 communities up with the Minister for Community Development. I refer particularly to the community of Imanpa, which is an excision from the head lease of Mt Ebenezer for a group of Pitjantjatjara and people who have been living in that area for generation upon generation and on whose backs in many cases the pastoral industry of that area, of which we are all so proud, has been built. The second community is Walunguru, more commonly known as Kintore because the community is in what is inscribed on whitefella maps as the Kintore Ranges.

Both those communities continue to suffer serious discrimination because of the continual bickering fostered for political motives by the Chief Minister. All is fair in love and war and politics and nobody minds the Chief Minister beating the federal government over the head for a few votes. If he can run a short campaign and spend thousands on newspapers, radio and TV to convince the electors of the Northern Territory, all well and good. But, particularly in those 2 communities, people should not suffer as a result. If any of the honourable members here present believe that I am in any sense exaggerating, let me offer to them an invitation to visit either of those places in my company.

Within my electorate there continue to be problems endemic to the race relations situation implicit in northern Australia to which this government and this Assembly all too frequently refuse to address themselves. The features of those communities are all known to members but it is worth describing it in a debate like this: record imprisonment rates, record infant and adult mortality rates, poor education facilities, poor housing - there have been no real solutions or, at best, inadequate solutions to the housing problems on those communities by this government - and very poor communication facilities. The government's statement of its intentions in the address given to us by the Administrator would give nobody any heart towards believing that this government has the will to address those problems. I am concerned that the government will

continue to refuse to attempt solutions to those problems; I am concerned that the government will continue to fail in that regard.

This leads me to the second point that I adumbrated in the introduction to my speech: the issue of Ayers Rock and Uluru - used miserably by the Chief Minister as a pretext for an election. It was a pretext that could never have had any justification. I will not dwell on it; the Leader of the Opposition demonstrated more than adequately the half-truths and the untruths that the Chief Minister chose to provide in regard to the likely impact on the tourist industry of granting title to those places to Aboriginal Territorians whom he chose to characterise as giving Ayers Rock away. Indeed, Mr Speaker, those people have lived there for generation upon generation. They were born there. They were brought up from the cradle to the grave with no books, no radio, no TV and no telephones. Their cultural stock was stories of various sorts, of varying degrees of importance, that tied that place into their very lives. The Chief Minister, who urges people to stand up for the Territory, has so little understanding of the importance of those places for the permanent Territorians that he chooses to deride that as 'giving the Territory away'. That is shameful. The sooner he gets out of this place, the better.

I turn now to the dubious little slogan that some advertising agency in Adelaide, Melbourne or Sydney dreamed up for this crowd who have money to burn when it comes to elections: 'Standing up for the Territory'. My word! The Chief Minister did a terrific job and he has certainly done well in following it up. As a friend of mine remarked: 'Standing up for the Territory is, at least in the Chief Minister's case and in the case of his minions who occupy the frontbench, a fairly important first step for taking a step back into the 19th century'.

Mr Speaker, I am no longer the opposition member responsible for tourism. However, I dare say that, having within my electorate one of the 2 chief tourist venues in Australia, it will not be regarded ill that I should make some comment. Of course, the tourist industry is vital to the Territory's future. Of course, the tourist industry can provide jobs for all Territorians and, in that context, many of the developments, including the Yulara Tourist Village, and proposed plans of management in the area of Ayers Rock and Mount Olga, are potentially of great value to the Territory.

It is a dreadful shame that the Chief Minister cannot learn to arrange those matters in a slightly more equitable fashion. It is a shame that the Chief Minister has to beat up those sort of issues into confrontations in order to press the little racist buttons that will trigger off a vote for the CLP amongst some Territorians - and I defy anybody on the opposite benches to deny that that is the case, to deny that that was a key element in the timing of this election. I am damned sure that not one of them will get up and deny it. It is a dreadful shame. I suspect that it has something to do with the relatively small number of people who live in the Northern Territory that the Chief Minister finds it necessary to create election issues in that way, because that is what he did.

As has already been said, the actual grounds for suggesting that there were any problems for development in the Territory as a result of title to Ayers Rock being granted to traditional Aboriginal owners was found to be nonsense within a day of the election being called. No less a person than the chairman of the bank providing the money for the development said: 'We are quite happy about that. No, traditional ownership at Ayers Rock, granting title to Aborigines, lease-back arrangement management by CCNT or whoever - we are not worried by that'. Goodness me, weren't we made to look foolish? If it had

been more than 2½ weeks, the government would not have looked so flash because that little untruth would have been unmasked well and truly.

Let me turn to the actual election, Mr Speaker, and the 2½ week time period is important in that regard because, within my electorate, polling started within 5 days of the close of nominations. That is to say it started within 5 days of finally knowing who was actually standing, and that was only a week after the declaration of the election. Now that is contrary to the spirit of the Electoral Act if not contrary to the letter of it. I give notice here and now, Mr Speaker, that the opposition will be moving to ensure that, in an area so vast and containing so many isolated communities, people in those communities will have a fair chance to consider the issues - that people who live as far apart as from Kintore Ranges to Lake Nash will have a fair chance. They do not have a daily newspaper as people in Darwin do. Mind you, I am not sure what sort of a service the daily newspaper in Darwin actually provides in illuminating anybody. Be that as it may, they do have a daily newspaper which is currently not available to people in the isolated electorates. I will finish this section of my speech by saying that the opposition will be moving to ensure that that sort of chicanery is not repeated.

Another aspect of the election that I wished to mention was the use of mobile polling booths. The use of mobile polling booths is of absolute importance in extensive rural electorates, as you yourself would appreciate, Mr Speaker. Where there are a small number of people who are able to cast their votes in half an hour, an hour or perhaps 2 hours, the mobile polling booth provides a service that is important to the expression of democracy in the Northern Territory. This election saw massive abuse of the system of mobile polling booths. People were confused. As the honourable Leader of the Opposition said, there were no mobile polling booths in my electorate and frequently people were disenfranchised because they moved between places and were unable to exercise their franchise. That applied particularly to Aboriginal people because, at the particular time when the election was called, there was a considerable amount of ritual activity involving a large number of communities that moved from community to community in my electorate and it was not easy for people to cast their votes, let alone actually find out what the issues of this instant election were about.

In the time that remains to me, Mr Speaker, I would like to pick up a few points that were made by other honourable members in their speeches to the Address in Reply motion. The honourable member for Victoria River surprised me by saying that, generally, facilities in Aboriginal communities in his electorate were good and that, in fact, the Northern Territory government had done a good job. I recall, Mr Speaker, that in fact - dare I mention it, lest the very pillars of this Assembly fall down - the Whitlam Labor government was responsible for a very significant upgrading of school facilities in those communities during and after the period of its office.

I think that, to say the very least, the honourable member somewhat exaggerated the actual results as opposed to the public relations for which this government has demonstrated a considerable flair. Perhaps, as a new member, he may have been somewhat bemused. He could certainly be excused, given the nature of the election campaign which has brought him to this Assembly, for being somewhat deluded by the capacity of the Northern Territory government to mistake public relations and advertising campaigns for actual achievements.

The honourable member for Braitling's Address in Reply speech was just delightful. Now that we have 4 of the lads representing the 20 000 who nestle in the MacDonnell Ranges, I wonder whether they have to hold a caucus amongst

the 4 of them to work out who is going to talk about what. Certainly, the honourable member for Braitling brought up an interesting issue concerning Alice Springs. He went on to refer to Alice Springs as the headquarters of Australia. Certainly, I admire his statesmanlike vision in coining such a phrase. Of course, there is a grain of truth there because Alice Springs is placed uniquely for the hosting of a large number of national conferences and things of that sort.

His comments, however, on the Alice Springs Airport found less accord with me. Everybody knows that the Alice Springs Airport is desperately in need of upgrading. I dare say everybody with the exception of the honourable member for Braitling also knows that we have been urging the Northern Territory government to participate in that regard in the airport local ownership plan. I am not sure that the honourable member for Braitling can actually work himself up into a state of high dudgeon. Certainly, the Chief Minister can. I recall a couple of occasions, both in this Assembly and elsewhere, when the honourable Chief Minister worked himself up into a state of high dudgeon and said that not a penny of Territory money would go into the Alice Springs Airport. That is all wonderful stuff. However, he will not say that not a penny of Territory money will go under that plan into any Territory airport. I will be very interested to find out what the honourable Chief Minister's answer to this is because my information is that the Connellan Airport, already referred to in these sittings, to service Ayers Rock and the Yulara Tourist Village, actually received ALOP funds on the application of this government. This government has therefore applied its own funds through the ALOP plan.

The question then is: why won't the government apply those funds to the Alice Springs Airport? I suggest that this is something that the member for Braitling can take on board before he next disturbs my Monday mornings by leaping up and down once more about the Alice Springs Airport. He should ask the Chief Minister how he has participated in that plan and why he will not do it in Alice Springs.

Mr Speaker, I have a number of points that, unfortunately, I will not be able to address this evening. I will take them up later. The final point I will address is that raised by the honourable Minister for Housing. I congratulate her for being the first woman minister in this Assembly. She certainly deserves congratulations on that account. However, she has a great deal of homework to do. I think that the comments she made in her Address in Reply speech gave nobody in central Australia anything to be thankful for. She suggested that it was something of which she could be proud and her government could be proud that they were reducing the waiting time for houses; that there would no longer be waiting time on houses through the Housing Commission.

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

Mr HANRAHAN (Flynn): Mr Speaker, I too am very pleased to stand before honourable members and speak to the Address in Reply as moved by the honourable Chief Minister in this Assembly last Tuesday. I take the opportunity, as every other honourable member has, to express my gratitude to the residents of the electorate of Flynn for placing their trust in me to represent their wishes and views during the life of this Assembly.

His Honour the Administrator addressed this Assembly on certain matters that are of particular interest to me. However, I think I would be very much remiss in not making particular mention of the great Australian whose name my electorate bears. I speak of none other than John Flynn, or Flynn of the Inland, as he has often been referred to.

Mr Speaker, John Flynn was an achiever and a communicator who faced many immense obstacles and tremendous difficulties of survival, as did many of our early explorers who brought civilisation to Australia's outback. As a man of the cloth, originally he set out to travel to places like Innamincka, Oodnadatta, Birdsville and, of course, Alice Springs to bring the word of God to those godforsaken people in the godforsaken outback who had no opportunities normally to hear the word of God.

During his constant and isolated travels, John Flynn developed a driving ambition to overcome the difficulties of outback communication and to instigate health facilities. To his eternal credit, he worked untiringly to achieve both. The legacy of John Flynn's success is recorded in our very history. The establishment of the Royal Flying Doctor Service, hospitals, homes for the elderly and communication systems all received some input from John Flynn. Mr Speaker, John Flynn was a man of vision.

I also venture the fact that the year 1984 sees the Northern Territory as a vibrant enterprise, building on earlier generations and their success, but still faced with mammoth tasks and difficulties. The tasks are still basically unchanged from the early days and, if anything, are more daunting. Think about it. What do we need today that we needed 70 years ago? Improved communications? What about health facilities, housing, education, roads, transport? What about improved race relations? Where are we going? What are we doing and what will be the result for future generations? Those are the questions I ask myself.

Mr Speaker, a great deal of rhetoric is often attached to most of the subjects I just mentioned. Needless to say, I intend to venture forth with a few comments and viewpoints of my own. I trust that my thoughts, my viewpoints, will contribute to a point of view not meant to change the world or bring the instant wrath of those who disagree, but simply to express the way I see it. Never before have I been so aware of the multitude of problems that occur in our expanding society: the needs of special-interest groups, the needs of the disabled, the needs of the disadvantaged, the requirements of youth, the need for expanding industry, the need for employment, the need for economic growth and social change. We certainly have a maturing society that constantly demands that government keep pace with, upgrade and improve the lifestyles of its constituents.

Mr Speaker, in comparison, I would venture to say that we have come a very long way since the days of John Flynn. As a territory, we are still faced with major difficulties of communication and isolation. Our major population centres, towns and cities, are certainly not denied the comforts that communities such as, say, Sydney enjoy. Rightly, it is our outlying areas and communities that will receive an improved living standard over the next few years.

The honourable member for Stuart's 10 telephones should increase dramatically with improved telecommunications, along with the other wonders of this electronic and computer age. If, as has been discussed at length in this very Assembly today, current plans for Australia's first domestic satellite come to pass, I am sure that many of the difficulties will be overcome in our outback communities through improved facilities and communication.

Mr Speaker, as a former outsider to this privileged group - an outsider looking in, so to speak - I formed the opinion that the last 5 years of government in the Northern Territory had been difficult. I attribute this difficulty, especially in recent times, to reliance upon federal governments. The Memorandum of Understanding, as we all know, has been discussed at length in this very Assembly. The point I would like to add and reinforce is that the

very principles of that Memorandum of Understanding will be the future base upon which this Territory builds. If anything, it should not be destroyed but upgraded and improved. The Northern Territory's input to land rights legislation, mining and national parks has often seen confrontation born simply from stifling frustration, as federal governments exhibit what I consider to be a heavy-handed attitude. The Northern Territory is unfortunately not a beneficiary of the consensus principle so eagerly promoted in the halls of Canberra at this very moment.

A point that I have noticed and witnessed talked about at length in this Assembly, especially during the Address in Reply debate, is one that I certainly do not treat lightly and on which I hope my views will receive the respect that I place upon them; that is, racial harmony. It is a sad fact of life that problems of immense complication exist and it would be naive to suggest that relations between black and white communities were at an all time high. A unanimous and uniform viewpoint does not seem possible. I dare to suggest that the very laws in existence today are largely to blame. Not many people in this day and age deny anybody his rights but I see land rights legislation, in many forms, to be very desirable and worth while. It allows various communities to achieve certain things but, unfortunately, in many instances, land rights legislation denies challenge. It denies negotiation. The fear that is expressed to me regularly in the community is that land rights legislation is one of the principal driving forces behind the establishment of 2 very separate sets of laws leading to 2 very separate societies. Conflicting views between black and white do create tensions. I do not think that is any secret. I suggest, for example, that, when drinking rights were granted to Aborigines, it was seen as a great step forward for equality of rights and social change. Now I believe it to be the root cause of many problems with shattering social consequences amongst many Aboriginal communities. The problem is being tackled head on by many Aboriginal communities, with the best of intentions, in an attempt to alleviate those problems. Yet, in many instances, it can also be said that the current changes, such as reduced hours of trading and the abolition of take-away licences, are an infringement of the rights of those individuals who do not have problems and who can cope with what most would call a modern society. The recent difficulties with the take-away licence at Ayers Rock can be cited as an example of such a decision. No matter which way it had gone, inevitably it would not have been suitable to one or other of the parties involved.

It was mentioned in this Assembly on Tuesday last, by the honourable member for Stuart, that promotion and consultation on a cross-cultural basis was the only direction for a successful future in this difficult situation. I agree wholeheartedly. Yet it is my opinion that, as long as only one point of view is the only acceptable point of view, and to suggest otherwise would be to be labelled a racist, we will forever be banging our heads against the wall. We must avoid travelling down the road to equality without mutual respect for all cultures at all levels. I suggest that negotiation on such a basis is the only way to prevent us all from living in a poorer society.

Mr Speaker, during His Honour's address I was pleased to hear of the major and expanding role that tourism will play in the Northern Territory. When a major growth industry such as uranium bites the dust because of federal government initiatives, and the beef industry struggles on without the promised upgrading of federal brucellosis eradication funding, we are left with tourism. The present Northern Territory government's initiatives in this area have been exceptional. Central Australia is presently reaping the benefits of the facilities at Yulara, with the opening of part of the complex operated by the Four Seasons group. The camping grounds are operational. The Sheraton Hotel

group has finalised agreement for the 5-star hotel at Yulara and an additional 200-room, major hotel in Alice Springs.

Accommodation availability has risen dramatically since the establishment of the Alice Springs Federal Hotels Casino and, behind the scenes, this has been due mainly to the enterprise and forward thinking of this Northern Territory government and the Northern Territory Development Corporation. The promotion of the Northern Territory, domestically and overseas, must increase to ensure the continued success of these and future projects. However, much more must be achieved.

The sealing of the Stuart Highway from Adelaide to Alice Springs will be a major event. It is scheduled for completion in 1986. It will see a major influx of road transport and caravan excursions to the Territory and with it will come an unprecedented growth in demand for accommodation in the centre. Such growth will benefit the whole spectrum of business enterprise in Alice Springs.

Mr Speaker, the electorate of Flynn combines the old and the new, rural and urban, plus a cross-section of all cultures whose lives will be affected directly and indirectly by tourism. There are plans for 2 new caravan parks. The Sheraton Hotel is under way. The 18-hole, world-standard Desert Springs Golf Course stage 1 is nearing completion and 2 new residential subdivisions will ensure a rapid growth of the electorate. It is my intention over the coming years to ensure that various initiatives take place that will enhance the growth of tourism. In some instances, such initiatives are necessary for normal living to proceed in special circumstances.

The completion of sealing of the Ross Highway to Ross River and the highway to Hermannsburg and Palm Valley will be necessary. An all-weather bridge across the Todd River at the Heavitree Gap causeway is essential, as is the upgrading of flood mitigation facilities throughout the town and Todd River areas.

I have concentrated my remarks on tourism in central Australia, but I realise its importance throughout the Northern Territory and its major centres. Many initiatives have benefited Tennant Creek and Katherine and I realise the importance of Kakadu and its planned development as an integral part of tourism's future in the Territory. Tourism must be encouraged and, if the Territory government's efforts continue in the same vein, its future is assured.

Mr Speaker, I mentioned briefly the importance of flood mitigation in Alice Springs and, with the changing weather patterns in central Australia over the last 9 years, it is now a matter of concern to many residents. That very concern was expressed to this Assembly last May in a petition bearing over 5000 signatures. Honourable members will remember the national publicity Alice Springs received in March 1983 prior to the Royal visit when extensive flooding occurred. I point out that, according to the experts, that particular flood was one-fifth the maximum flood that can occur. In the event of a maximum flood, an anticipated \$50m damage would occur in Alice Springs and many persons, of course, would be forced to take refuge on high ground.

There has been a desire to establish a recreation lake at Alice Springs, and the particular area that would best serve the purpose of recreation and flood mitigation would involve submerging an Aboriginal sacred site. I, for one, have been labelled racist for arguing the rights of one culture against another. The term 'non-negotiable' in reference to the sacred site is just one example of the lack of mutual respect between groups, especially when viewed in

the context of possible damage and loss of life. However, much debate has ensued and an inquiry is now in progress to consider all possible sites and alternatives. I implore of honourable members that, if the chosen site does not have a dual purpose of recreation and flood mitigation, they ensure that the federal government is made to honour its commitment to establish flood mitigation works in the Todd River as stated by the present federal Minister for Aboriginal Affairs. The people of Alice Springs anxiously await this future development and sincerely trust, Mr Speaker, any decision will favour their safety and future wellbeing.

I was pleased to note the reference in His Honour's address to the planned retirement village at Alice Springs. A possible project between the Housing Commission, the Alice Springs Town Council and others is envisaged. It could not be more timely. For many years, our youth and elderly residents have sought employment and retirement, respectively, away from the Northern Territory. If I may deal briefly with our youth, it is a fact that employment opportunities have improved dramatically. Expanding industry in all spheres means most now have every opportunity to secure their futures at home in the Northern Territory. However, it is an area in which this government will need to continue its efforts at the maximum level, and I stress my concern that not enough can be done in today's economic climate to protect the future of our youth. Reverting back to the retirement village, it is a much-needed facility in Alice Springs. It will promote family unity, provide employment, add to the overall stability of the town and give our elderly people additional facilities of comfort and the ability to remain active in our community for their lifetimes.

Mr Speaker, the elderly residents of Alice Springs, along with the general population, do not have a public bus service. Provision of a public bus service for Alice Springs is long overdue, regardless of the financial constraints. The first step, as I see it, is government funding through the Alice Springs Town Council for a consultancy report to establish the needs and requirements for implementation. Many will say that all the necessary research into the requirements has been done in the past. However, times have changed since the initial trials and I believe one of the major headaches of many tourists in Alice Springs is the lack of a public bus service resulting in limited mobility.

Mr Speaker, it seems that the growth of Alice Springs is assured. With the new subdivisions planned at Dixon Road and Mt John, the completion of Sadadeen stage 3 and the Desert Springs Estate, some 1500 allotments in all will be available over the next few years. Such development will involve massive expenditure by this government in the provision of headworks and planning. Confidence will need to be displayed by developers and future planning and expenditure will be required to provide community support facilities. Success will not be achieved without further government initiatives in the provision of housing. I believe the existing system of home loans, sponsored by this government, to be the very best in Australia. The Territory has set the pace for the rest of Australia to follow. It is about time it did.

I say without reservation that the commercial lending authorities, particularly the banking groups in the Northern Territory, must commence to accept a greater role and assume more responsibility in the area of home finance and return some of the benefits they so eagerly reap from the Territory. Unfortunately, this government is under constant threat of plunder by the existing federal government and, if any of those threats materialise, I am sure that somewhere along the line the Northern Territory's generosity will need to be curtailed somewhat to allow continued financial stability.

We heard mention in His Honour's address of the Alice Springs to Darwin



railway, now a much-joked-about facility. Joked about? Sure, when considered and viewed in context with the existing federal government hierarchy. All I can add is that if those responsible for the timely about-face and farcical inquiry and report had applied exactly the same logic and rationale to the Tarcoola to Alice Railway, it would not be in existence. The tremendous success of that enterprise stands alone as it has outlived its critics and proved to be a success beyond the wildest dreams of our most fervent optimists. There is no room for pessimists in the Territory's future.

In closing my remarks, I give notice to honourable members that the task of keeping the Territory moving forward will not be an easy one. In this day and age, the social and welfare dollar requirement continues to grow. Unemployment must be monitored constantly and the minority groups be given a fair and just hearing. Moral issues, those of racial harmony and the rights of all individuals, will command our respect and judgment. I intend, at all times, to achieve a balance that is just and beneficial to all, to represent the peoples of all races and cultures as equal citizens of Australia and to provide a lifestyle that makes us proud to live in the Northern Territory and Australia.

Mr DALE (Wanguri): Mr Speaker, it has been interesting to me to note the number of comments in the Address in Reply debate today that have mentioned the need for concern for youth in the Northern Territory, and that will be the main theme of my speech today. However, Mr Speaker, as this is the first occasion on which I have had the honour to address this Assembly, I believe I should give a brief profile of the new electorate of Wanguri, firstly, so that Hansard will record the details and, secondly, so that I might touch on some matters on which I will be expounding in the future.

During the recent redistribution of electorate boundaries, the suburb of Wanguri was taken from the previous electorate of Sanderson while Tiwi was shaved from Casuarina to create the electorate I now represent. It takes its name from a small tribal group of Aborigines who lived in north-east Arnhem Land. They now reside at Yirrkala Mission. Most streets in the Tiwi area are named after stations in the Territory; for example, Rocklands Drive is named after Rocklands Station which was established around 1868. It was one of the first pastoral properties in the Northern Territory. Veldt Court is named after a station near Mataranka which was first taken up by J.H. Gill in 1927 and in 1947 became part of Beswick and Mataranka Stations. Other streets in Wanguri were named after people who resided in Darwin from the 1920s to 1950s; for example, Gsell Street was named after Francis Xavier Gsell who set up a mission on Bathurst Island in 1911.

Towards the end of 1974, Wanguri was fully developed and Tiwi was about two-thirds established. The building of the Royal Darwin Hospital was well under way. The electorate was one of those worst hit by Cyclone Tracy, with at least 69% of houses destroyed. Only 5% of the population remained 2 weeks after Tracy. When the reconstruction of Darwin began, the main objective was to reunite families as quickly as possible. To facilitate this, the least damaged areas were repaired first. Consequently, the suburbs of Wanguri and Tiwi were the last cabs off the rank. Since then, growth has been rapid and it is estimated that some 6000 people now reside in the area with nearly 50% of that number being under the age of 19 years. There are approximately 1400 homes with a fairly even breakup of private and Housing Commission homes. In addition, there are 250 home units and a further 200 people are housed in quarters at the hospital.

Mr Speaker, the area is well serviced by the completed Royal Darwin Hospital, the Tiwi, Wanguri and Holy Spirit Primary Schools, each with a

pre-school annexe, and the Dripstone High School. Shopping centres are located in both Tiwi and Wanguri and residents are in close proximity to the Casuarina Plaza, the Casuarina Shopping Square and the Hibiscus Centre is just a few minutes away. The Tracy Village core unit, comprising a social club with an excellent bistro restaurant, shops, a hall used by various community groups and a family day child-minding centre, together with the Pandanus Holiday Centre, provides excellent facilities. However, all are located on Commonwealth Department of Defence land which has been subleased to the Darwin City Council. The effects of the precarious tenure of the lease and RAAF operations on adjacent land have been of concern to me during my 6 years as an alderman representing the area on the Darwin City Council. It is my intention to pursue the anomalies through the government and this forum.

Mr Speaker, Wanguri electorate is typical of urban electorates in the Northern Territory. I can cite and will be pursuing parochial issues such as rationalisation of facilities at camps for transients, negotiations with the Commonwealth Department of Defence regarding the tenure of prime land, the proper development of land and beachfront areas so there are no detrimental effects on the environment or the quality of life of residents, monitoring the effects on residents of increased use of the Royal Darwin Hospital and rationalising emergency access roads, maximising employment opportunities in existing and future retail and commercial outlets and many other matters.

Mr Speaker, my electorate is a classic example of a matter which must continue to exercise the collective mind of this Assembly: the concern for the needs of youth in the Northern Territory. It is clear, when demographic statistics for the Northern Territory are examined, that this must be a major area for action. At the present time, we have a higher proportion of adolescents in our population than any of the states has. I am advised, however, that this is a pale shadow of what is to come, particularly in Aboriginal communities and in newer areas such as Palmerston where young people will form a significant proportion of the population in a few years' time. The impact that this group is now having on the employment market and leisure and recreational facilities will be magnified.

I have no criticism of the government for its actions in the past. It has been active in the provision of services to youth in Northern Territory communities and I pay tribute to my colleague, the Minister for Youth, Sport and Recreation and Ethnic Affairs, for the tremendous work that he has done in establishing the necessary physical and social infrastructure for a wide range of community-based activities for youth.

I indicated during my last year with the Darwin City Council my interest in the urgent need to introduce a long-term corporate plan. I am just as firmly convinced that any good, social planning exercise must consult the people affected and ascertain their needs and expectations for the future. I have noted with interest the research along these lines that has already been conducted. In 1979 a comprehensive survey into youth needs was undertaken and this has been supplemented by smaller surveys such as that which was completed by my colleague, the Minister for Community Development, prior to his election to this Assembly. This information has been invaluable for planning purposes and resulted in the development of many new services. Government action since the Manzie Report has, for instance, seen money allocated to develop a community facility at Casuarina High School.

Non-government bodies must also be encouraged to continue this involvement as a vital part of present needs - for example, the operation of the Drop-in Centre at Malak, operated by the YMCA, and the commendable work being performed

by Somerville Youth and Community Services in Nightcliff. However, they must also be given the opportunity to be involved in long-term plans. Planning for the future is always fraught with difficulties. One major problem is that there is always a lean time when plans or concepts have to run the gauntlet of committees, recommendations, feasibility studies, budgeting and the like. In other words, there can be a time lag of many years between the recognition of a specific need in a community, the proposal and its fruition. This occurred with the development of the facilities at Casuarina High School. The need was first recognised in 1979 and internal school costing was done. In 1982, the Manzie Report recommended that the Casuarina High School proposal be implemented. Work commenced in 1984.

The Manzie Report listed a number of constraints under which it necessarily had to operate. I will quote one that I believe sums up my point:

*While organisations within the city could identify the needs to cater for the youth, they had difficulty in clearly delineating their future plans and goals in relation to these. Lack of certainty of operating funds appeared to be the main reason.*

Mr Speaker, a coordinated and comprehensive approach to long-term planning for youth would, in my view, consist of the development of a set of social indicators which would illustrate objectively the areas of highest need in the Territory. Such indicators would show at a glance those areas with a high youth population, those communities with a high rate of juvenile offences, those communities with a high rate of unemployed youth and the expenditure per capita on youth-related activity in each centre. It can only be through rational, planned intervention in areas of highest need that we can ensure maximum value for the dollars spent and efforts expended.

I note, Mr Speaker, that we will be participating in International Youth Year in 1985. I would like to suggest that, with the heightened awareness that such a year brings, we focus our attention on those communities facing most problems and youth and that we mount demonstration projects which will be alternatives to institutional care for juvenile offenders or children at risk. I further suggest that, during this year, we establish a 10-year plan for youth services in the Northern Territory which will address the needs of our youth in all areas seriously.

Competing demands on the public purse, heightened expectations of what government should do and the impact of new technology mean that this type of planning must take place if our resources are to be used wisely. Thus, the setting of long-term objectives, the analysis of future trends and the development of strategies to meet these objectives become crucial if we are to face the challenges of the 1980s realistically. Mr Speaker, to paraphrase the words of William Pitt: 'It is not a crime to be young. It is an experience we all go through'.

Mr Speaker, I thank honourable members for the courtesy they have extended to me today and look forward to the next 4 years working with the government in its role to achieve the best possible management of affairs for all the people of the Northern Territory. I support the motion.

Mr COULTER (Berrimah): Mr Speaker, like my colleagues before me, I would like to take this opportunity to speak in the Address in Reply debate on the electorate which I represent, the electorate of Berrimah. Mr Speaker, when you are at the bottom of a list of 11 in terms of presenting a maiden speech, it becomes difficult to maintain originality. However, whilst I am sure you will recognise the tune, I can assure you the words have changed.

Mr Speaker, the electorate was created as a result of the recent redistribution and is a composite of portions from 5 previous electorates: Stuart Park, Victoria River, Ludmilla, Sanderson and Tiwi. I see it as one of my first duties to promote the identity of the new electorate wherever possible. The technical description offered by the Redistribution Committee goes a long way towards providing all the necessary datum lines, intersection points and boundary lines. However, they are a mere mechanical formality and, no matter how exacting they may be, it is people who make up electorates, not lines. At the same time, no matter how broad-based one's description of an electorate is in terms of community interests, such as social, economic or regional factors, it is individuals who make up societies and governments should be ever wary to respect the rights of those individuals to be independent, resourceful and industrious, and not place them in neat boxes with interlocking arrows and dotted lines but, wherever possible, recognise the individuality and the benefit that this philosophy brings to all Territorians.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! There is too much audible conversation in the Chamber. The honourable member will be heard in silence.

Mr COULTER: The Northern Territory government is well aware of this. The results of the recent Territory election in my electorate brought home the fact that we are all Territorians and together we stand. We stand to ensure the success and momentum hard-gained through self-government, which will provide the continued opportunities and development that Territorians expect, regardless - no, in spite of - federal government intervention and the lack of consultation in our affairs. The boxes of 'continued Commonwealth government neglect' or 'too hard' will not be accepted by the people of the Northern Territory because, eventually, our isolation from the rest of Australia will work for us, not against us. Instead of being 'outback' in Australia, we will be out front through our unique geographical position in relation to our northern neighbours.

Ever mindful of this box syndrome, I have divided the electorate in terms of defence, industrial, urban and rural factors, along with sporting, social, employment and educational facilities. In these terms, Berrimah is one of the most, if not the most, complex and diversified electorates within the Northern Territory. The very size of Berrimah, as an urban electorate, plays a role in this complexity. Some idea of its size can be appreciated by the fact that the total 11 urban electorates of Darwin will fit into the electorate of Berrimah twice.

In terms of defence, both the Navy and the Royal Australian Air Force occupy large sections of the electorate and, at present, the personnel from both bases make up a substantial number of the constituents in the electorate. The very nature of their presence has certain intrinsic limitations which necessitates a highly cohesive and disciplined group because of the role they must play as front-line defence in northern Australia. However, Mr Speaker, they are keen to play an active role in community-based projects and proportionately are highly represented in service clubs, sporting organisations, charitable organisations and a host of other community bodies.

The industrial suburbs of Winnellie and Berrimah are the very hub of small business operations in the Northern Territory. Whilst they provide some residential areas, it is the warehouses, workshops, factories, aviation industry and office complexes which make up this vital component of the Northern Territory economy. Mr Speaker, in an attempt to help these people attain the recognition they deserve, I pledge myself to their representation, as it is organisations such as these which, throughout Australia, make up 98% of all enterprise, represent 55% of private sector profits and taxes, and provide 60% of private

sector jobs. Of all new jobs created, 90% can be attributed to the type of industries which are represented in these areas. With this in mind, for the continued development of the Northern Territory, I believe that government should recognise that people understand their own businesses and their own interests best, and care for them more than the government does or can be expected to do. We ought to condemn every kind of government intervention that conflicts with this.

The inferiority of government agency, for example, in any of the common operations of industry or commerce is proved by the fact that it is hardly ever able to maintain itself in equal competition with individual agencies where the individuals possess the prerequisite degree of industrial enterprise and can command the necessary assemblage of means. All the facilities which a government enjoys of access to information and all the means which it possesses of remunerating and, therefore, of commanding the best available talent in the market are not an equivalent for the one great disadvantage of an inferior interest in the end result.

While I recognise the need for government planning for specific purposes, it cannot be too clearly or too strongly affirmed that the lifeblood of production and development will still be the initiative, resourcefulness and courage of individuals and groups which ultimately will provide the answer to one of the most serious questions facing Australia today: the provision of employment, particularly for our young people. There is a need to continue to promote the growth of industry and the manufacturing sector in order both to diversify the Territory's economic base and to provide new job opportunities.

Plans for the relocation and construction of a civil airport terminal within my electorate are welcomed and I hope the federal government provides the long-promised finance to permit a rapid start to that project with all the benefits it will provide, not only in employment, but as the gateway to Australia that we can all be proud of in stark contrast to the broken hinges and loose pickets on the one to which we have become accustomed.

The urban areas within the electorate can be divided into 4 distinct districts. They are the Narrows, Northlakes and Palmerston along with the 8 caravan parks which are dispersed throughout the electorate. Within each of these residential areas, there are very clear social, economic and - would you believe - regional interests which include living standards, education, health and other such issues which embrace the quality of life. The Narrows is by far the most established in terms of a stable population which collectively identifies as a close-knit neighbourhood. Mr Speaker, you would be aware of that. It is interesting to note and indeed indicative of their identity that, of the 28 objections received by the Redistribution Committee throughout the Territory, 16 originated from within the Narrows area.

The Vocational Training Commission now has an annexe of the Northern Territory Training Centre within the Narrows situated at the old bus depot. Training is provided for mechanics and metal fabricator welders. This is in line with the government's commitment to expand on vocational preparation for youth. The area is also the most densely populated through the inclusion of Hudson Fysh and Fenton Flats.

The Northlakes area is a new concept in residential development in the Northern Territory. It is Darwin's first country club-style estate and provides an open space concept by incorporating a housing development around an 18-hole golf links. Whilst a percentage of the houses are occupied by RAAF personnel, in particular from 75 squadron, home buyers who live there have high ideals and

expectations to maintain a pleasant, open environment, with services providing a practical as well as aesthetic use. The concept itself will promote a strong identity for the people who choose to live there.

Within my electorate, the new town of Palmerston is emerging rapidly. The development of Palmerston offered the Northern Territory government an ideal opportunity to overhaul many of the land development processes, including financial budgetary control procedures. This resulted in cost savings and improved efficiency in the use of human and other resources. One of the secrets of the success of Palmerston's development is the partnership which has developed between government and private enterprise. This is to be commended and continued. Few people realise that, at present, there are more than 1300 people living within the first 2 suburbs of Driver and Gray. A third suburb, Moulden, is being developed currently and plans are under way for a fourth, Woodroffe.

The project began in 1980 with the objectives of introducing greater competition into the supply of land and housing and to make rental housing cheaper and more readily available in the greater Darwin area. The Northern Territory Housing Commission has housed 300 families in Palmerston so far and 39 private houses have been completed. The pressure on the highly populated residential areas of Darwin has been lifted and the objectives are being achieved. The people of Palmerston are enjoying a new and excitingly different lifestyle and services are being expanded continually. The community is actively taking part in planning for the type of local government it will want when the Palmerston Development Authority Act ends in June 1986. Ultimately, up to 50 000 people should be housed within the Palmerston area. The future of Palmerston is an exciting one and it is my belief that its future is assured despite the sceptics who knocked it at its inception as a 'white elephant'.

At the same time, people who have difficulty accepting the fact that a Northern Territory university will be developed and that a site has been set aside for that particular purpose within the Palmerston precinct do so through their own short-sightedness. Palmerston will provide the basic infrastructure for the establishment of such an institution which will be able to offer studies to north Australian, South-east Asian and west Pacific region students. Its presence in the Territory will provide a major intellectual as well as economic stimulus to local progress.

Mr Speaker, already the Landsat foundations have been poured at this site and construction is continuing. Talks on research and testing laboratories have come out of the realm of the 'fantasy factory' era and now look very much more like realities. The Northern Territory realises the benefits of not having a secondary industry geared to 1950s technology and therefore does not have to undergo a massive modernisation and turmoil of programs to meet the needs that high technology will be able to satisfy and society will demand for the 21st century.

What is required now is a pragmatic approach to a university that will fulfil our immediate needs as well as future demands for high technology by industry within the Northern Territory and I wonder not if but when a project of the magnitude that was the result of the Fairchild children from Fairchild University, who established Silicon Valley in California, that multi-billion dollar industry, will be repeated in an area that we now refer to as adjacent to Marlow's Lagoon. It is visionaries of this ilk, with the courage of their own convictions, who will ensure that the story of the Northern Territory will continue to be told.

Mr Speaker, as stated earlier, the electorate has some 8 caravan parks within its boundaries which cater to some extent for the population drift from southern states. They provide alternative housing arrangements for some 1000 people. Whilst many of them are tourists or transients, a high proportion are permanents who have taken the trouble to enrol within the electorate and are keen to play an active role to ensure the preservation of a lifestyle that they have become accustomed to expect within the Northern Territory. They do so with past experience, hard-gained somewhere else and, in many cases, consider themselves to be victims of an interstate society and political system which has let them down. In particular, they see such primary factors as continuity of schooling for their children, employment opportunities and permanent housing as major issues. The Northern Territory government's pledge to maintain current levels of assistance to people wishing to buy their own homes under the Home Loans Assistance Scheme, which to date has helped increase Territory home ownership by some 30% since self-government, goes a long way to assure these people of a permanent future within the Northern Territory.

Surrounding Ironstone and Knuckey's Lagoons is the rural area of the electorate. In the main, it consists of rural blocks ranging in size from 2 ha to 16 ha. Whilst some of the blocks are utilised as business concerns, many of them are occupied as part of an alternative lifestyle to the traditionally accepted mode of living within a residential area. The expectations for services are greater perhaps here than in any other rural sector within the greater Darwin area. In this area, the constituents pay rates and, as a result, they are concerned with roads, water and future development, particularly in terms of preserving the lifestyle and environment which suits their requirements and meets their expectations.

Berrimah has 2 designated areas set aside for Aboriginal housing. These areas are used for town camps when relatives come in from outstations and, whilst they have a small stable population throughout the year, the numbers increase considerably during the wet season and on other periodic occasions.

Some other aspects which need to be taken into account when considering the Berrimah electorate include the sporting complexes of Marrara and Hidden Valley along with the many rugby, rodeo and equestrian reserves, and BMX, rifle shooting and showgrounds which add to the significance Berrimah has in providing a venue for all these facilities. Special institutions and organisations such as Kormilda College, the Winnellie campus of the Darwin Community College, the Summer Institute of Linguistics, CSIRO and the North Australia Research Unit reside in Berrimah, along with the Marrara Christian School, the new police headquarters, Berrimah Prison, the SPCA, Berrimah Experimental Farm and Youth Hostels of Australia. Social organisations such as the Italian and German Clubs, the Kalyrnian Brotherhood, the Police Boys and Citizens Club are also represented in the electorate.

From these accumulative considerations of what constitutes the electorate of Berrimah, certain points are evident: the ideal form of government to satisfy fully all the needs of the electorate is one in which the whole range of people participate; any participation even in the smallest public function is useful; the participation should be as great as the general degree of improvement of the community would allow; and nothing less can be ultimately desirable than the admission of all to share in the continuous development of the electorate. Since all cannot participate personally within this Assembly, it follows that the ideal type of government must be representative.

Mr Speaker, I stand humbly before you as the elected representative of the people from the electorate of Berrimah and thank them for the great honour they have bestowed upon me.

Mr LEO (Nhulunbuy): Mr Speaker, I endorse the Chief Minister's motion for the Address in Reply. I will confine my remarks to my electorate as seems to be the custom today. A number of remarks have been made about the wonderful municipality of Darwin which now has so many able and capable representatives.

As the honourable member for Nightcliff would know, people look from Nhulunbuy to Darwin with some amazement. They really think it is wonderful over here. They think that this is really a remarkable community. They cannot see what actually happens here or what people actually do except that they seem to be producing a hell of a lot of public servants and even more politicians. With a single exception, they are not very good at producing those. However, Mr Speaker, my constituents look at this place with complete and utter wonder. They are in good old downtown Nhulunbuy and it is really a pleasant place. However, they cannot understand what keeps Darwin going or, indeed, the reason for its existence.

On the other hand, they live in a community which produces something for the Commonwealth of Australia, at least in terms of taxes. It does produce something; it does do something, for God's sake. It is not the complete liability which, at a cursory glance, Darwin would seem to be, on the entire population of Australia. They actually do something over there. They mine and produce alumina and they have absolutely no rights in their own community. As the honourable member for Nightcliff and anybody else who cared to examine the situation would know, the people in that community live on a lease which is not owned by the Northern Territory government but by a mining company.

I have raised this matter in this Assembly on a number of occasions. The simple fact that that lease is held not by the Northern Territory government but by a mining company means that the provisions of the Local Government Act cannot apply. My constituents live in a community which is represented by 4 members on a town board which is administered by a town administrator appointed by the mining company. He is an extremely nice gentleman but he still is in every sense an administrator.

Mr Speaker, I have taken this matter up in the Assembly before with a previous Minister for Community Development. Indeed, the honourable member for Araluen assured me in 1982 that 1983 would be the year when it would be a priority of the Department of Community Development to undertake an investigation and indeed to make recommendations to him on Nhulunbuy's complete inability to comply with the Local Government Act. I was assured that some legislative program would be entered into or some arrangement would be made through the lease so that those processes would take place. I have not seen any evidence of this to date. There has been a visit, a number of utterings and some verbalisation about it but, to date, I have not seen any great activity by the government. I hope that the new minister will be more than verbally enthusiastic about the plight of my constituents.

The other matter of course is that Nhulunbuy has not only a European population. I am fortunate enough to represent an electorate which has extremely diverse cultural groups. There is the reasonably affluent mining community, the majority of whom are of European descent. The other part of my electorate, a much smaller percentage - 15% to 20% - are Aboriginal people. They live within the electorate of Nhulunbuy. Of course, their social status is approximately equivalent. When financially able, they get around. The honourable member for Arnhem is a frequent visitor to my electorate. He is seen quite frequently. However, their economic status is somewhat reduced in comparison to what the mining community receives.



The honourable Minister for Education said this morning that the closure of Dhupuma College in no way disadvantaged people and that there were adequate facilities to cater for Aboriginal students within the Northern Territory. There may very well be but only if parents from outlying areas are willing to send their children to boarding colleges in Darwin. If he had any comprehension of Aboriginal society, he would understand that not many people are prepared to send young children, or indeed adolescents, so far away from their friends and family.

In my estimation, Dhupuma very adequately fulfilled its role in east Arnhem Land. Parents were willing to send their children there. This is 5 years down the track; 5 years of the you-beaut good old self-government. I think it must be seen as an indictment that there has not been one Aboriginal matriculant in the Northern Territory. I would ask the honourable minister if he could name just one and I would be pleased to repeat that to my constituents. I cannot think of one. It is an absolute indictment of this government and the process of self-government. I visit very remote parts of my electorate - Caledon Bay and Blue Mud Bay and up north around the various communities - and I see teacher aides who teach in schools, sometimes with 20 or fewer students and sometimes with a few more. They save all year for books, chalk and the necessities of a school, only to have the rain come through the holes in the roof and completely destroy it during the wet season. It is an extremely frustrating business teaching in these outstations. I do not know if the minister has ever been to one of these schools. If not, I would suggest that he visit one. It is an extremely frustrating business and is conducted under appalling circumstances. In no way, under those circumstances, can those children be expected to get what I would consider to be an adequate education. Maybe the minister would consider that their education is adequate but I feel that it is not.

Mr Speaker, those are some of the more pressing difficulties within my electorate. I will certainly bring to the honourable minister's attention any other matters as they come to my notice. We have a few more days of this sittings. I do not want to cram everything I have to say on Nhulunbuy into this one debate so I will wait till next week.

#### ADJOURNMENT

Mr TUXWORTH (Primary Production): Mr Speaker, I move that the Assembly do now adjourn.

Mr SMITH (Millner): Mr Speaker, I wish to take up a couple of matters resulting from a question without notice that I asked the Treasurer this morning. In his response to that question, he indicated that the government was considering several options to offset the \$3m loss by the TIO in the field of motor accident compensation. He then went on to say that one option being examined is an increase in premium rates which, for the average family car, would mean a rise from \$151 to about \$204. Mr Speaker, that is a rise of 35% and I must say that I am appalled that the government could consider such a major increase to that premium rate. I am sure the community would be appalled as well. It seems to me that this would just be another instance where Territorians would have to bear the direct cost of financial mismanagement by this government and its instrumentalities. Territorians deserve a fuller explanation of what miscalculations resulted in a \$3m loss. I think that the Treasurer owes this Assembly and, indeed, all Territorians an immediate explanation of what other options there are to cover the loss, how these have been examined and the basis on which those options have been formulated.

The statement he made yesterday when he tabled the 1982-83 annual report of TIO has provided material for speculation on what courses the government might be considering. Firstly, the Treasurer made reference to unexpected payouts under section 5 of the Motor Accidents (Compensation) Act which permits common law awards for pain and suffering. He claims that, when the legislation was introduced, it was thought that this provision would only be used in exceptional cases. Does this mean that there is a possibility that this limited common law right is to be reduced further or abolished?

The Treasurer attributed part of the \$3m loss to payments for lost earning capacity under section 13. This provision covers weekly payments to those injured in motor accidents to make up for their loss of earning capacity. Can we assume from the Treasurer's comments that weekly benefits may be further reduced? When referring to increases in both these areas, he said that the funds had been closely studied, and 'it is likely that action will be necessary to modify their effects on the scheme'. I call on the Treasurer to explain what he meant by that statement. I call on him to release publicly a detailed breakdown of the \$3m loss and to demonstrate clearly the make up of increased costs under the scheme.

The Treasurer has tried hard to soften the blow of the loss of over \$5m in total by saying that 1982-83 was a bad year for government insurance business in the Territory and the states. As Treasurer, he would know that this is not correct and that his statements are misleading. Not all government insurance offices have been performing badly. In fact, more than one has been praised in reputable business journals for progressive policies and good performance. I am yet to see our TIO cited in such a context and, with the release of the 1982-83 annual report, I do not expect it for a while.

Mr Speaker, there is little that can be said of the \$2.2m loss in the area of general insurance. The onus for this has been placed on the shoulders of former senior officers. Investigations are under way and it is to be hoped that the whole matter will be resolved speedily. However, I think the Treasurer should explain further how this loss came about. It is not good enough to blame former officers and, certainly, his explanation in the Assembly yesterday of the explanation the chairman gave in the annual report did not spell out in any detail at all how these losses occurred.

The Treasurer said that improved control and reporting procedures have been established to ensure that there is no recurrence of these events. Surely we are entitled to ask why these procedures were not already being used. It is not good enough to say that this has not happened before. It has caused a loss of \$2.2m which will be borne ultimately by the Territory taxpayers. This is no small loss and procedures should have been in place already to protect the TIO from what I shall call miscalculations. Further, the Treasurer's statement suggested the TIO was engaging in risky inwards reinsurance which, at the very least, is unwise as well as unnecessary for a government-backed insurance organisation. The TIO annual report and the comments of the Treasurer yesterday raise more questions than they answer and it is up to the Treasurer to resolve these issues as a matter of urgency.

Mr Speaker, I would like to address the question of the registration of domestic builders. Last year, as all honourable members will be aware, the Minister for Lands established a committee to look at problems in the housing industry. Through a press report, I understand that that committee has recommended the registration of domestic builders. I am a little concerned that the Administrator did not refer to the prospect of the registration of domestic builders in his address to the Assembly. I hope that the government intends to

take it up. I can assure you, Mr Speaker, that all reputable builders in the Northern Territory will welcome the introduction of registration legislation because it acts, as they are very well aware, as a protection for both them and the consumer. When the scheme is adopted, it is important that arrangements are better than those for the registration of plumbers and drainers. I would hope it is not the intention of the government, and certainly it is not our intention, that existing tradesmen, who have operated with skill over a number of years but who do not possess the formal qualifications necessary under any legislation that is introduced, should be prevented from continuing to operate. However, it is important that we have a scheme whereby we can get rid of the 'roughies' and the builders who, without regard for their clients, are intent on ripping them off.

I have mentioned previously a particular case that has come to my attention. I want to go over that case again and provide the Assembly with an update. A particular consumer entered into a contract with a building firm in Darwin to build a house in the Darwin rural area. When inspecting the house at the time that the builder had said it was suitable for occupation, he found the following faults: the roof leaked and water poured out of the power points; the septic tank lines were expected to flow uphill; plywood internal walls were warped because they were nailed at an 800-900 mm distance rather than the 500 mm distance called for in the plans; the spiral staircase, which was supposed to have had 30 to 40 screws in the handrail, had no screws at all; the minimum overlap on outside cladding had not been met and there were only 3 screws per sheet instead of 5. Approaches were made to the builder to correct the faults and he refused. At present, the only recourse that owner has is a legal recourse which is time consuming and expensive. He is taking that recourse because of the lack of any other option. He expects to get into the courts in October or November of this year - 2 wet seasons after the problems first occurred. Rather than see the inside of his house disintegrate rapidly under the force of those 2 wet seasons, he has been forced to take out another loan of \$16 000 to engage another builder to do the work badly done or not done at all by the first builder - \$16 000! That indicates quite clearly the extent of the neglect of the first builder.

The second builder, in overcoming the problems created by the first builder, has found a couple more. The sewerage pipeline from the sewerage tank out to where the sewage should dissipate into the ground was only lined for half the distance. The rest of the pipes that were supposed to be there were not there.

Mr Speaker, I raise this particular case again because it is the type of case that builders' registration will pick up. It will provide a consumer, who has been diddled by his building contractor, with quick and easy redress through a builders' licensing board. It will ensure that builders who are not performing adequately will not be able to practise in the Northern Territory.

One other thing is needed to protect the interests of consumers fully and that is an insurance scheme. Insurance schemes operate in New South Wales and 1 or 2 other states and they provide that the consumer, in a situation where a builder has gone bankrupt or is no longer practising in the industry or for other reasons assessed to be reasonable by the board, may apply to the insurance board and take out money to cover the cost of repairs and alterations resulting from the neglect of the builder. With those 2 measures - a builders' registration scheme and an insurance scheme - I believe consumers in the Northern Territory would be better protected. Those 2 ideas have the full support of reputable builders in the Northern Territory.

Mr VALE (Braitling): Mr Speaker, for the last 4 or 5 years, the Leader of the Opposition has constantly followed speeches that I have made in this Assembly with the sarcastic remark that it was the first time I had spoken. Those comments are so repetitious that he is becoming extremely boring.

Last night, he said that I might be a challenger for the position of Chief Minister. He, and other members of the Assembly, particularly on the opposition side, know full well that the first vacancy that will occur in this place is that of Leader of the Opposition. Mr Speaker, I wish someone would tell the honourable Leader of the Opposition that sarcasm is the wit of the ignorant.

Mr Speaker, tonight I would like to ask the Leader of the Opposition a couple of questions. I, and indeed many Territorians, will be very interested in his replies. Amongst the many wild promises that he made when he became Leader of the Opposition was one that he had a huge appetite for work and included in his new duties would be frequent visits to areas outside of Darwin, particularly to Alice Springs. While many of us are not unduly upset by the lack of visits by him to Alice Springs, we did wonder why he failed to visit the Territory's second largest town during the recent election campaign. Perhaps he was out shoring-up his crumbling - or should I say landsliding - electoral base with his first visit in 3 years to Oenpelli in his own electorate.

All Territorians would like to know where the Leader of the Opposition was on the evening of 3 December last year when, traditionally, party leaders either accept victory or concede defeat. There was neither sight nor sound of the Leader of the Opposition. Indeed, there has been a deafening silence from him since. Where was he? Was he sulking in the bush? Mrs O'Neil, the former member for Fannie Bay and the former Deputy Leader of the Opposition, was forced, in the absence of her leader, to go on television and radio to concede defeat while Landslide Bob sat out in the bush, stunned and trying to figure out why so many Territorians voted against him and his close personal friend, Bob Hawke, and why 26% of his electorate had changed their minds since 1980.

Mr Speaker, I would also like to take this opportunity to congratulate the Clerk and the staff on the excellent job they have done in refurbishing this Chamber since the last meeting in October. I would like to congratulate them particularly for the extremely efficient and large timing clocks on the walls on both sides of the Chamber. I hope for the sake of the honourable member for Wanguri that they are bolted properly to those walls!

Mr PALMER (Leanyer): Mr Speaker, I wish to speak on some aspects of the recent election which the opposition has seen fit to carry over into this Assembly. The Country Liberal Party based its election campaign around...

Mr Bell: Surprise, surprise!

Mr PALMER: The sparrow from the high perch!

The Country Liberal Party based its election campaign on issues of vital interest to Territorians: the giving away of Ayers Rock, uranium mining or lack of it and, in fact, the radical concept of self-government itself - issues which the electorate identified as the most pressing ones affecting the Territory and issues upon which electors of the Territory returned a Country Liberal Party government.

The opposition based its campaign on the perceived popularity of Hawke and a series of fallacious ad hominem attacks on the Chief Minister. The Leader of the Opposition quite rightly pointed out that the Chief Minister is one of the

main things that the Country Liberal Party has going for it. The honourable Leader of the Opposition forgot to mention 3 others who worked very hard for this government's re-election: himself, the Prime Minister and the Minister for Aboriginal Affairs. The Leader of the Opposition continually called into question the integrity of the Chief Minister. Who was he to call the integrity of anybody into question? The Chief Minister has steadfastly displayed his willingness to fight on in the face of adversity for what he sees to be the rights of Territorians. Mr Speaker, the ability to face adversity is one of the traits necessary in a leader and it is the quality of that ability that sets great leaders apart. I ask the members of the opposition to look at their leader and ask themselves: how does he face adversity? Well, I can tell them. The answer to that question can be found in the events of 3 December. In the face of the decimation of his party...

Mr Bell: Who wrote that speech?

Mr PALMER: The sparrow speaks again.

In the face of the decimation of his party, much of it by his own hand, where was the Leader of the Opposition? As is customary in this era of mobile television reporters, the respective combatants were expected to face the television cameras: the victor to claim his spoils, the loser to accept defeat graciously. But not the Leader of the Opposition. He chose to skulk away leaving the unenviable task of facing the cameras to his former deputy, a lady in the true sense, a lady witnessing the destruction of her party. She was a lady facing personal defeat yet she was thrust, by the lack of a leader, in front of the cameras. To her eternal credit, whilst visibly upset, she courageously faced the cameras and did the job of her leader.

Mr Speaker, the actions of the Leader of the Opposition on the night of 3 December were perhaps the most cowardly, scurrilous and dastardly of any political leader I have had the misfortune to witness. Yet, here we have that self-same Leader of the Opposition having the temerity to call the integrity of the Chief Minister into question. I ask honourable members of this Assembly to think about that.

Mr EDE (Stuart): I would like to take this opportunity to inform the Assembly about a few matters regarding the conduct of the recent elections in Stuart. I am using Stuart as an example, but I have heard that many of the points I shall raise have much wider and potentially dangerous implications.

Let me first of all compliment the electoral officials, brought in from interstate. Over the years, I have acted as returning officer, assistant returning officer, presiding officer and poll clerk, so you can imagine the effect of some of the horror stories one hears about bush elections in years past. It was an enormous relief in my first go as a candidate to see the professionalism with which those officers went about their duties. I am sure their reports will confirm substantially what I have to say here.

The use of interpreters was encouraging but it must be pointed out that using young Walpiri ladies to translate for old men of the Kaititja and Alyawarra is not just ineffectual; it is asking for trouble. It shows a complete lack of cultural awareness.

When I see the honourable member for Barkly's hair colour, I know that it is not due to the fact that he is haunted by the ghosts of departed departmental heads. Reading the rural electoral rolls would turn anybody's hair grey. Mr Deputy Speaker, you would know yourself that these rolls are hopeless. That has

been said before and yet they do not improve. I went to a particular cattle station in a community where there were lots of my old friends. We had been prospecting together and we had had a few beers together from time to time. I thought to myself, 'Here's 55 sure voters'. In fact, only 2 were on the roll.

This in itself is completely disturbing but even worse is the fact that a person would require about 5 years' training in the Bulletin's cryptic crosswords before he would be able to find anybody in the roll. It is even more frustrating when you are trying to get through an election and the times are all mucked up like they were for this one. The largest community that was polled went through with hardly a hitch. The reason was that one of the residents had prepared his own roll and correlated that with the official roll.

As I see it, for future elections, rural rolls should list people by location. Inside the polling booth, there should be a couple of large photographs of the candidates. There are many people with bad eyesight in the bush. A photograph less than life size is useless. Of course, it would be easier if we did not have to go through so much gobbledygook in the questions. I fail to see why the presiding officer cannot say to the voters: 'Do you want to vote for Bill Blake of the Country Liberal Party or do you want to vote for Billy Brown of the Labor Party'. I do not think that electors are as stupid as some people think. They may be blind, deaf or illiterate and need assistance, but they know who they want. Mr Deputy Speaker, those general things need fixing up for all elections.

However, there were a few dirty little twists in the last poll. I have supported mobile polling booths for many years. They are, however, an adjunct to fixed booths, not a replacement. They should be used to poll outlying communities with the booth coming back to large communities for a fixed booth on the actual polling day.

In my electorate, we had no fixed booths. They were all fully mobile. I was told the Chief Minister approved the times and locations. What did he come up with? One polling location had 6 adults, 2 of whom definitely were not on the roll. The next location had been deserted for years. The electoral officials swapped things around on the day in this area. I do not know where they went. It was either back to Alice Springs or maybe they disappeared in the mud. Outstations on the other side of my electorate, the area I had worked with for a good number of years, were completely ignored. One community of 280 people had no booth, fixed or mobile. The people loaded as many adults as they could into a truck and one other vehicle and battled their way for a day and a half to Yuendumu to try to vote.

Then there was the location of the booths at each place. I fail to see why the whole community has to traipse up to the homestead to vote. To me this really smacks of colonial attitudes. If it is too much for the grazier to go down to the camp and line up, I think some neutral ground like the clinic or the school could be utilised for elections in those areas. It was quite an education to sit out in the sun and dirt with the people at one station while the mob popped iced drinks whilst sitting in the shade of a nice big tree in the homestead grounds.

The amount of time allocated in some places was inadequate whilst in others it was far too generous. In one place, it was still going after 8 pm. The timing of polling was left up to the electoral officers. As you can guess, people in the bush cannot always get to a place at the appointed time. Punctures and breakdowns affect us all. Mr Deputy Speaker, what do you think of a schedule variation which pushed the polling team into a community a day early?

Of some 350 to 400 people in that area, only about 20 voted. It was like turning up for an ocean cruise to find out that the boat had left the day before.

The act has major problems. Careful reading of the act shows that electoral officials could have met together 10 miles south of Jervois an hour after the closing of nominations, opened the booth for an hour, taken one vote, closed up and then gone to Camooweal for the next 10 days and gone on the grog. They might have been in trouble with the Public Service Commissioner but nothing could have been done to them under the Electoral Act. The elections would have been a farce but they would have been legal.

Mr Deputy Speaker, I can see from the silly grin on the face of the honourable member for Sadadeen that I am giving him ideas. I think I will close there.

Mr HANRAHAN (Flynn): Mr Deputy Speaker, I rise to address honourable members on a very topical subject in the Northern Territory at the moment, and that is airports in Alice Springs and Darwin. I am particularly pleased to see the member for MacDonnell is in his seat after his rather outrageous accusations about the honourable Chief Minister this afternoon regarding responsibility for the Alice Springs Airport. I intend to enlighten him with a few very pertinent facts.

If you live in Darwin at the moment, you would be reasonably impressed with what is transpiring. An inquiry is in progress and the government is talking about spending something like \$84m within the next 4 years. I hope it comes to pass for the benefit of the community of Darwin. However, the same is not the case for the Alice Springs Airport. A major concern to all residents of the town is that much has been said, very little achieved and the status quo is likely to remain unchanged for quite some time.

Plans for the development and upgrading of the Alice Springs Airport commenced in earnest in 1981 when the federal government approached the Alice Springs Town Council to adopt the Airport Local Ownership Plan after repeated requests by the Alice Springs Town Council to have the facility upgraded. The council refused the plan then because of the airport's current inadequacies. However, over the next 2 years, it relented in response to federal pressure and agreed to a study to be conducted by consultants, funded by the federal government and based on detailed requirements as specified by the Alice Springs Town Council. It was from this point that the continuing Territory saga of broken federal government promises achieved new heights. A federal election occurred and with it came all sorts of promises of wand-waving miracles. The future, the candidates said, would see a new airport for Alice Springs. It was assured. But I will say more on the about-faces and broken promises shortly.

The Alice Springs Town Council, upon receipt of the study that it had commissioned, which was compiled by the successful tenderer, commenced a detailed analysis of the report and found many inadequacies, not to mention a blatant attempt by the federal Labor government to have the Alice Springs Town Council adopt the Airport Local Ownership Plan. The alternative, it was told, would be no upgrading at all.

Mr Deputy Speaker, the Mayor and aldermen of the Alice Springs Town Council made a unanimous decision not to proceed with the recommendations of the ALOP study. Their reasons for so doing were based on facts. Also, the report was, in many ways, not in accord with the Alice Springs Town Council's brief or intentions. For example - and listen to this - airport local ownership under

that fund and plan is limited within its own guidelines to 10 years' forward planning. But the Alice Springs Town Council requested, not unreasonably, forward planning up to and including the year 2000 in its brief. The proposed terminal, as outlined in the report to the Alice Springs Town Council, had a maximum efficiency life to 1992, and it was to cost some \$3.6m of which the Alice Springs Town Council was to fund half; that is, \$1.8m to be funded by the Alice Springs Town Council over a period of 15 years at 14.5%. That was the only way the ALOP could ever be financially viable if applied to the Alice Springs Airport. It made no mention of the fact that the Alice Springs Town Council would still be paying for an inadequate facility 10 years after it was completed.

The proposed terminal was not designed to cater for the increased growth expected: car parking was inadequate, staffing levels and plant and equipment proposals were obscure and inadequate, and consultation with local operators, requested in the Alice Springs Town Council brief, was almost non-existent. The runway design and subsequent maintenance obligations were felt to comply with federal government limitations, not future requirements. For example, the Alice Springs Town Council sought to have a parallel runway to the existing 12/30 strip, rather than just upgrading of the existing runway, for reasons of future use and safety. The point I am making is that the local ownership plan, as envisaged for the Alice Springs Airport, was confined by the study within a specified budget, and that budget was determined by the federal government. It does not matter which federal government it was: it was the way it was done.

Would you believe that the Department of Defence had no input to the report handed to the Alice Springs Town Council? Yet it is a major user of the existing facility and repeatedly refused requests from the compilers of the study to supply information. The Alice Springs Town Council was astounded, to say the least, with the federal Minister for Aviation's comments at the time. That department is a law unto itself. Nobody knows what it is up to. I doubt whether any development could be justified without significant input by the Department of Defence. In other words, it would be essential that it had input if any realistic and proper forward-planning were to eventuate.

Mr Deputy Speaker, honourable members should be made aware of some comparisons. In 1980, there were approximately 143 000 interstate movements at Alice Springs and, in Darwin, approximately 390 000. The traffic movement that transpires between Darwin and Alice Springs, and the very fact that we are tied to a national grid, would more than suggest to me, in my logic, that Darwin and Alice Springs can be treated pretty much on an equal basis. Why is it then that the Darwin terminal costs somewhere in excess of \$28m yet Alice Springs can have \$3.6m for its terminal under ALOP? Why is ALOP being shoved down the necks of the Alice Springs residents when facts prove it to be unrealistic? Why should Alice Springs accept ALOP? It only makes allowance for a 50-50 funding of ongoing and future development and maintenance costs.

The reality is that the Alice Springs Town Council could be faced with a further bill for future development in excess of \$10m as early as 1995 if current growth predictions are realised. Why should Alice Springs residents and visitors pay around \$3 per head as an arrival and departure tax? Why should general aviation pay increased landing charges? Why should airlines and users of the existing facility pay astronomical rent just to make ALOP a financially viable but outdated concept almost before the project would be completed? It was no surprise to me that, after lengthy and careful analysis with expert assistance, the Alice Springs Town Council decided not to proceed with the adoption of ALOP and sought the assistance of the Northern Territory government to take its unique case to Canberra.



Mr Deputy Speaker, one could be accused of being optimistic but the evidence made that attitude more than warranted. It was at this point that the attitude of the federal Labor government and the Territory's elected member in the House of Representatives, Mr John Reeves, became very hard to fathom. I sat with Mr Reeves on the Alice Springs Town Council and together we realised the total inadequacy of ALOP if applied to that town council. In fact, Mr Reeves was very intense in his opposition to ALOP but we did not count on political expediency. Many promises emanated from Canberra, none more positive than the assurances of Mr Reeves that the Alice Springs Airport would be upgraded. But, behold, he claimed that he was misrepresented and said he only promised to upgrade the terminal during his first term of office with the federal Labor government. I thought that was terrific. It was at least one promise that the terminal would be upgraded. But, somewhere along the line, Mr Reeves became a firm convert to ALOP and said that it was the Northern Territory government's responsibility to accept ALOP for Alice Springs.

I would like to ask honourable members to name one of the over 200 local ownership-operated airports around Australia that is operated by a state government. In fact, outside of local government, there is only one so operating and that is the proposed international airport at Cairns. It happens to be that way because it is the Port Authority which is managing it under the local ownership plan because the airport is required to be developed across its land. My one hope is that Mr Reeves will again about-face - we can but hope.

Mr Deputy Speaker, 2 further points are relevant to this issue. One is the absolute hypocrisy of the incumbent federal Minister for Aviation in stating that funds are available for the upgrading of the Alice Springs Airport but only if ALOP is adopted. That is to say, money exists under the ALOP budget but not under the civil works program. What a mind-boggling decision it must be to transfer funds from one account to another. It is an impossibility!

Mr Deputy Speaker, at present, Alice Springs is without doubt one of Australia's major tourist destinations with increased support facilities at Yulara, major hotel developments and improved accessibility to tourist destinations in the Alice Springs area. It is without question that tourist influx to Alice Springs will continue to increase and the Alice Springs Airport will continue to be a disgrace. Elections usually bring all sorts of broken promises for the Territory and I can only hope that the forthcoming federal election will bring new promises of substance.

While speaking on elections, let me tell you of the grab-the-\$9m-and-run affair. During the recent election campaign, the honourable members for MacDonnell and Stuart made it very clear that they, in government in the Northern Territory, would grab the \$9m on offer from their federal counterparts and proceed with ALOP. I would remind you that \$3.6m was allocated for the development of the terminal and slightly in excess of \$6m for the upgrading of the airport. In my mind, that was clear evidence of inability to assess the facts. It could have been at the expense of travellers to, and residents of, Alice Springs and I remind members of the \$3 per head minimum cost to travellers arriving and departing from Alice Springs. That was in total disregard of the elected members of the Alice Springs Town Council who, after all, are elected to represent the viewpoints of the people in Alice Springs. That would have been a financial disaster. It was political expediency.

Mr Deputy Speaker, it is my intention to ensure that the Northern Territory government continues to represent and respect the wishes of the residents of Alice Springs and that a scheme of operation and subsequent improvements be implemented by the federal government in accord with the unique

situation that exists in Alice Springs with regard to its airport. Currently, it is a disgrace and an example of poor management and planning, the responsibility for which rests squarely on the shoulders of the current federal government.

Mr B. COLLINS (Opposition Leader): Mr Deputy Speaker, I understand that, this afternoon during the adjournment debate, the honourable member for Braitling in this Assembly made attacks on me which I am sure you, Mr Deputy Speaker, would find as scurrilous and contemptible as I did. Mr Deputy Speaker, the member for Braitling made a number of remarks which need to be visited by me in order to set the record straight in the Assembly this afternoon. The honourable member criticised me for not visiting Alice Springs during the election campaign. I have a great love for Alice Springs and, indeed, I have said on many occasions that the climate alone of Alice Springs...

Mr Robertson: Well, familiarity does breed contempt, doesn't it?

Mr B. COLLINS: Indeed. The climate alone of Alice Springs, Mr Deputy Speaker, would leave that of Darwin for dead. There is no doubt at all that Alice Springs is an attractive part of the Northern Territory and of Australia. I have been down there very recently and in future I will ensure that I make a point of popping in at the electorate office of the honourable member for Braitling so that he will know when I visit Alice Springs.

It is perfectly true that I did not visit Alice Springs during the election campaign, to my great regret. The reason, of course, is worth talking about. I represent a very large electorate which has small, isolated communities. In fact, in this debate this afternoon, I shall reveal a few things about some of the discussions that have been held in the Northern Territory Labor Party in the past about this very problem. I do not believe that any member of this Assembly, in terms of his own political party, should be a second-class politician or a second-class citizen by virtue of the fact that he or she chooses, or the electorate chooses for him or her, to represent a rural electorate. Mr Deputy Speaker, I would be horrified if the honourable member for Braitling thought so either. The honourable member for Braitling was formerly the member for Stuart and represented that extremely large electorate. Let me tell you, Mr Deputy Speaker, that it has been a matter for debate in the Labor Party. People in the party have often said that I must switch seats if I want to remain as leader of the party. I have even been told that I must represent not just an urban seat but a Darwin seat. I do find that disagreeable. Indeed, I will put the first scar on this dispatch box.

Mr Deputy Speaker, I have always held a consistent line within Caucus and within the Labor Party that it would be a sad day for the Territory if our laws and electoral procedures did not recognise the very peculiar and special nature of the electorates of the Northern Territory. It would be totally wrong to suggest that, by virtue of the fact that anyone of us happens to represent a bush seat rather than a Darwin seat, we could not competently lead the government or the opposition, or even function as a minister. The honourable member for Barkly knows this full well. I am sure he would testify to the fact. In the past, there have been occasions when the opposition - not me personally but the opposition - has queried the cost of air travel for ministers. As the honourable member for Barkly knows, I have never been guilty of doing that personally. The honourable minister had one of the largest travel bills for charter travel. The reason for that is quite simple. As well as being an office holder of this Assembly - in fact, the only minister in this position - the minister represented a very large rural electorate. He maintained that electorate and his position as minister for some years through extensive charter

travel - and good luck to him. Of course, he is still the member for that electorate. I tell the honourable minister now, and the honourable member for Braitling in his absence, that I will not object to charter travel. I have not done so in the past and I shall not do so in the future. That is simply a recognition by myself, on behalf of the opposition and indeed this Assembly, that not a single member of this Assembly should be prejudiced or discriminated against because he happens to represent other than a Darwin electorate.

Mr Deputy Speaker, the reason why I did not visit Alice Springs during the election campaign was because of the brevity of the campaign. The person who was responsible for my not being able to visit Alice Springs was in fact the honourable Chief Minister who is the leader of the honourable member for Braitling's own party. The community of Maningrida is one of the larger communities in my electorate. I did not visit it at all during the election campaign. I managed to get in barely one visit to each of a number of communities in my electorate and at the same time fulfil my obligations as best I could as leader of the Labor Party in the Northern Territory. I am sorry, Mr Deputy Speaker, that I was not able to get to Alice Springs.

Mr Deputy Speaker, the honourable member for Braitling also made some scathing remarks about my skulking out in the boondocks somewhere on election night. Again, the reasons for that are the personal peculiarities that I have. I know I drive my own staff up the wall with this particular one but I happen to have an obsession with saving the taxpayers' dollar to a point. I would say that there is no member of this Legislative Assembly who is more scrupulous than I am in the spending of taxpayers' money on travel. I do not hesitate to hitch rides on charter flights with officers of government departments if I know that they are available. As you would know, Sir, the cost of charter flights is astronomical. To get a twin-engined aircraft these days to go to a place like Maningrida, which is only an hour's flight from Darwin, is \$700 for one trip. If I can possibly avoid that kind of expense, I will.

Mr Deputy Speaker, the reason that I was not in Darwin on election night is that I would have needed to charter a plane to get here. I did not consider it necessary as I had complete faith - and that faith was justified - in the ability of my deputy, the then member for Fannie Bay, to carry that particular burden. I do not hesitate to say that, as it turned out, it was a burden, though I did not know at the time that it would be. Perhaps I had a few suspicions. I had total confidence in the ability of that former member who made a very significant contribution to this Assembly while she was here. I am sorry she is not here now. That comment has nothing to do with party politics or the member who currently holds her seat.

Mr Deputy Speaker, I am sorry that the honourable member for Braitling disapproved. I did not think that spending \$250 or \$300 on a charter so late in the day was worth while for that particular purpose. I am very sorry, Mr Deputy Speaker, that the honourable member for Braitling disapproves of that consideration. I do not know how many members of the Legislative Assembly make a practice of travelling economy. Certainly, I do so regularly. I do not think that any member of the Legislative Assembly should travel economy, particularly ministers, when they are on an aircraft for 6 or 7 hours. However, for flights to Alice Springs, for example, which take only an hour or so, it is a quite wasteful and extravagant use of taxpayers' money to travel first-class. I might add that, for a politician of my ample proportions, I do not find it a difficulty. I remember the honourable Minister for Conservation giving the Assembly a very interesting rundown on the measurements of her waist, bust and hips. It can be a problem when there is not a lot of room on an aircraft. But I think that politicians and senior and other public servants must exercise a

reasonable degree of restraint and responsibility in the way in which they spend the taxpayers' dollar. If the honourable member for Braitling, Mr Deputy Speaker, finds that objectionable or something I should be condemned for, then indeed I stand guilty of it.

The honourable member then went on to make the most extraordinary statement of all. I do not know where he got it from. He said that I had not visited the community of Oenpelli in my electorate for 3 years prior to the election. Mr Deputy Speaker, I first went to Oenpelli as a meat inspector in the Gunbalanya meatworks buffalo abattoir 16 years ago. My association with Oenpelli extends from that time. Indeed, and I know honourable members of the Assembly will recall this, during the period when that community was involved in almost non-stop pressure during the Ranger and Nabarlek negotiations for something like 2 years, I practically lived at Oenpelli, as my wife can tell you, Mr Deputy Speaker. In fact, I made numerous visits to Oenpelli.

However, we then come back to the crux of the problem, and indeed it is a problem. My electorate, as was evidenced by the 80% level of support it gave me at the election before last, received a very high degree of service indeed. On one occasion I was at the township of Galiwinku when the Town Clerk told me that a public servant from Darwin had been in the community that day. He had seen me walking down the street and asked one of the Aboriginal people: 'Who is that over there? Is he a visitor?'. The person replied: 'No, that is Bob Collins. He is here all the time'. I remember that as one of the highest compliments I had been paid as a local member during the whole of that term.

Having had mediocrity thrust upon me, to quote the honourable Chief Minister in respect of his ascension to the leadership of the Northern Territory government, as Leader of the Opposition, I had to take on an increased workload. However, I also had a 16-year involvement with my electorate which I did not want to abandon because I valued that relationship highly, not just on a political level but on a personal level too. I was faced with enormous pressure from my own party to change electorates, to move somewhere else which would be more convenient or easier to handle. There is no question that it involved an increased workload for me. In fact, in the 2 years from becoming leader, up to the election day, I literally did not have a day off. I do not want any medals for that; I chose to do it.

However, I am glad the member for Braitling raised the particular problem that politicians in a tiny parliament in a huge area have in choosing to represent the people in the bush, not the people of Darwin. This applies also to people who might be unfortunate enough to come from Katherine, Alice Springs or Tennant Creek. Their work on behalf of the Territory should not be held back, nor should their ability to contribute within their own personal ability be impeded by the fact that they represent bush electorates.

I must say, Mr Deputy Speaker, that I had a bet of \$100 with the CLP candidate at the polling booth at Oenpelli on the day of the election that, despite the activities of the Chief Minister, I would win Oenpelli. I won Oenpelli and I am still waiting for my \$100. I must give Bob Woodward a ring one of these days and ask him when I am going to get it.

Mr Deputy Speaker, the honourable member for Braitling is a good grassroots politician and I would have thought that the honourable member would have appreciated those qualities in someone else. Indeed, Mr Deputy Speaker, it is a fact, and I know that you in the Chair would know, that there have been many occasions when the honourable member for Braitling has gone through an entire sittings of the Legislative Assembly without rising to his feet to give us the benefit of his sparkling wit.

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

Mr PERRON (Treasurer): Mr Deputy Speaker, I can see that short adjournment speeches are going to be a godsend in this place in future. Hopefully, mine will be short. I will offer a few words of enlightenment for the honourable member for Millner about insurance losses because, obviously, this will be the subject of some debate from time to time in the near future. I will try to get him on the rails early in the piece so that we do not have to waste a great deal of time in the future.

The honourable member sought an explanation of miscalculations which led to the \$3m loss to which I alluded in tabling the TIO annual report yesterday. The \$3m loss was really the same in nature as losses which were experienced by many other insurance companies around Australia, many of them government insurance offices, who were running motor accident compensation schemes, either third-party or a combination of third-party no-fault. It simply boils down to the fact that the payout on the claims that were received in a given year by those insurance companies was assessed at a greater figure than the premium income for that year. That is the miscalculation if a miscalculation is involved. The honourable member deduced rightly from the tabled report and the statement I made that the 2 biggest factors in claims under the Northern Territory scheme are the limited common law rights, which exist under our scheme at present, and the weekly benefits. That is certainly very true; the lion's share of all claims fall in those 2 categories. If one is looking at options to make up for losses and to put the scheme back on a break-even basis, one has either to look at increasing premiums or altering benefits. Obviously, one would have to look at those 2 particular benefits of the schemes - the weekly benefit and limited common law rights - if they comprise the greatest portion of all claims.

The honourable member is guilty, and I think the Leader of the Opposition was also guilty before the election, of making statements about the taxpayers' of the Northern Territory having to bear the burden of losses or other machinations within the TIO.

Mr B. Collins: It was not me.

Mr PERRON: What the member obviously cannot comprehend is that the TIO has never received any taxpayers' funds in its establishment right from day one and it is not anticipated that any taxpayers' funds from the Northern Territory will be directed towards the TIO to assist it with these losses or, hopefully, any losses in the future. Any backing by government of the TIO would be in the event of a major catastrophe that affected the TIO to the extent that it could not cope.

As honourable members are aware from the annual report, after 5 years the office has built up an assets list of some \$4m and, hopefully, that will increase from now on. I would like members to be mindful in making statements about the TIO or the motor accidents compensation scheme that taxpayers' funds have no role in the discussion unless, of course, someone is advocating a subsidised scheme, God forbid.

Mr Deputy Speaker, on this subject I would just like to make a few comments about an article in the Financial Review of 1 March which concerned the New South Wales third-party scheme. This is important because we will be debating the subject of motor accidents compensation in the future. As at 30 June last year, the Government Insurance Office in New South Wales had a shortfall of \$275m in its compulsory third-party fund. That company is suffering

the same experience as others are - an astronomical increase in the awards by courts to claimants for third-party insurance. Very recently, the office in New South Wales changed to a radical new approach which is causing concern in some circles inasmuch as it will now fund compulsory third-party insurance on a pay-as-you-go basis which means that premiums collected in one year are not calculated to take into account the need to cover payouts in later years for claims incurred in the original year. That is a very important, fundamental change to the concept of prudent insurance in Australia, and no doubt a big gamble.

The article further indicates that, had the government not announced the change in the funding method, it might have had to face compulsory third-party premium increases in the range of 30% in an election year - which no doubt had a big effect on it - due to the fact that the fully-funded scheme in operation had accumulated a large deficit because of past government controls on premium increases. That is always a problem for governments which set these particular rates. The New South Wales Treasurer, Mr Booth, said on Tuesday that the move from a fully-funded scheme to a pay-as-you-go scheme was to ensure that third-party accident insurance remained affordable for all New South Wales motorists. He did not explain, however, that future generations might find it quite unaffordable to pay for compulsory third-party insurance if the government is unsuccessful in reducing the rate of increase in the size of payouts for accidents which occur this year but are only paid out in future years.

The risk that the New South Wales government appears to be taking is that, in the first year of a pay-as-you-go scheme, it is going to be all premium income and no outlay. It will be enormous. Virtually, it will be all profit in year 1 because the accidents occurring in that year, by and large, will have no payouts for the second, third or fourth year down the track. Under a third-party scheme, of course, you have to prove negligence of another party prior even to making a claim against such a scheme. Firstly, you must wait for a period of time until your injuries have settled down. Then your lawyer takes the insurance company to court and proves the other party was negligent and you go for the biggest possible claim you can. By and large, the courts have been handing down very substantial amounts. What this pay-as-you-go scheme will do is fix premiums each year in line with payouts for that year. The New South Wales government had better hope that, in 10 years' time when it is facing the most astronomical bills from accidents in the preceding several years, it has enough motorists left in the state to be able to pay the bills.

The more prudent method adopted all over Australia until New South Wales made this change was that the total expected claims payout, even for 40 years hence, go against the current year's premiums. That is what the TIO has done and that is why the expected claims in the 1982-83 year exceeded the premium income by \$3m. That \$3m will have to be made up in future premiums, obviously, because the scheme must balance the books. But at least it is prudent insurance. It means that, if the TIO closed its doors tomorrow and other people took over running the insurance scheme, it would have sufficient funds to meet all its obligations for the next 40 years to persons who were injured up until the day it closed its doors. That is prudent insurance to me and I think honourable members should think about these things as we will no doubt be debating the subject further in the near future.

Mr McCARTHY (Victoria River): Mr Deputy Speaker, the honourable member for MacDonnell derives a great deal of fun from playing with words. It is pretty obvious to me that he does not take words very seriously. It is amazing to note that he can take what I have said, change all the words and then claim that he is quoting me. To put the honourable member straight, I quote what I

said in this Assembly in reference to communities. I said: 'There are 13 communities and towns within the Victoria River boundaries. Many of these communities are poorly serviced. Housing, water, electricity and roads are often below normally-accepted standards. Youth facilities are an issue currently in many of the Aboriginal communities. A lot of young people suffer from boredom, brought about often through improved education and no work, so Aboriginal communities can adequately employ their people and fewer have any worthwhile youth activities or facilities'. I ask you, Mr Deputy Speaker, is that a rosy picture?

Mr Bell: That is not part of your original speech.

Mr McCARTHY: That is part of my original speech. The honourable member harks back to the Whitlam days. I well remember the days of the Whitlam government. Fortunately, that was before self-government for the Northern Territory so this government and the people of the Northern Territory cannot be taken to task for the enthusiasm with which successive Ministers for Aboriginal Affairs made themselves look silly in the godfather-like way that they distributed presents, at great expense to the Australian people, on their marches through Aboriginal communities, never asking whether the presents were required or even wanted.

The honourable member for MacDonnell claims that, in his electorate, there are many Aboriginal communities that are in a pretty poor way, and I accept that. The same situation exists in Victoria River and I am sure in many other parts of the Northern Territory. I said yesterday that the Northern Territory government had gone a long way further than any federal government in bringing the standard of Aboriginal services and housing up to scratch. Currently, the Northern Territory government is responsible for Aboriginal communities, not outstations. I assume from the honourable member's remarks that many of the places that he refers to in his community are outstations, and they are still controlled by the federal government. Certainly, in the Victoria River electorate, they are the ones that are looked after poorly. Housing there is virtually non-existent or made up of bits of iron and bark.

Mr Ede: Water is all right?

Mr McCARTHY: Water occasionally, but in quite a few cases it is not. There is no funding yet for that particular area on outstations. It has only just come about. I refer to the outstations and pastoral groups. They continue to be disadvantaged by the Commonwealth because it has not yet transferred those funds. I do not really want to take that too much further.

Yesterday, I was accused by the honourable Leader of the Opposition of being provocative in my maiden speech and I want to refer to that briefly. If I was provocative in my maiden speech yesterday, it was in answer to provocative statements made by the member for Arnhem.

Mr B. Collins: Not against you personally.

Mr McCARTHY: They were not against me personally, but provocative statements were made and, certainly, I did not say anything that I considered to be terribly provocative against the honourable member for Arnhem. I know the honourable member for Arnhem, Mr Speaker. In some ways he worked in a similar position to my own in previous employment, almost like the opposition in fact, and I know that his thinking is really not so different from mine. In fact, I do not think he really believed the things that he said. I am certain that he had been asked to say a lot of those things. If I was provocative, I do not know in what way.

I do not really have a great deal more to add to that. I thought that I should answer it and I think that, if in fact conditions in the Aboriginal communities in the area of MacDonnell are not up to scratch, then the member for MacDonnell should do something about it.

Mr BELL (MacDonnell): Mr Deputy Speaker, before I get on with the substance of what I want to mention today, I must say that it is quite heartening actually to have somebody who represents Aboriginal communities in this Assembly take seriously the question of disadvantage. It is something that was seriously lacking in the previous Assembly.

I wanted to pick up 2 other points. If the honourable member for Flynn is 'hot throat' as we say in Pintjantjatjara, he might like to ask the Chief Minister how much money the government put into Connellan Airport. He did not mention Connellan Airport.

I would like the honourable member for Leanyer to explain what he means about an ad hominem argument. I am afraid it is lost on me. I look forward to an explanation at some stage.

Mr Palmer: One language that he doesn't know.

Mr BELL: I trust somebody will fill the honourable member in about interjecting from the gallery at some stage.

The subject I wanted to address in this evening's adjournment debate, Mr Deputy Speaker, is a serious one. It is regrettable that it appears that the Chamberlain case is about to become the subject of partisan debate in the Legislative Assembly. The reason for such debate is chiefly the honourable Attorney-General's extremely contemptuous and provocative answer to what I put to him this morning as a genuine question which clearly demanded a reasonable answer. I will repeat the question for the benefit of honourable members. I asked:

*Given the fact that some of the officers involved in the recently-completed inquiry into the Chamberlain case were involved in the initial inquiry, could the Attorney-General advise what steps have been taken to ensure that the findings are not influenced by conflicts of interest which must inevitably arise where these officers are investigating allegations which, at least in part, reflect on the reliability of the initial inquiry which was their own work?*

Clearly, the honourable Attorney-General will be aware that there has been correspondence between the honourable Leader of the Opposition in his position as shadow Attorney-General in the previous Assembly and himself on exactly this subject. Certainly, the Attorney-General could have done a great deal better than contemptuously referring me to the last 2 sentences of the Chief Minister's speech. The Chief Minister's answer to the previous question, to paraphrase it, was that the Northern Territory Police Force does an excellent job and they provide all the resources that are available. That was the sort of answer that the question did not merit.

Let me point out the problem which everybody around the world knows: there have been 2 inquests into the Chamberlain case. There was the inquest conducted by Magistrate Barritt and the inquest conducted by Chief Magistrate Galvin. Those inquests were preceded by inquiries carried out by the Northern Territory police. I hasten to add that I have no reason to suspect that there was any



problem with either of those inquiries. However, as the honourable Attorney-General mentioned in his statement to the Assembly yesterday, allegations were made by 2 gentlemen, Messrs Ward and McNicol, concerning the conduct of those inquiries. One problem that needs to be cleared up by the honourable Attorney-General, and I trust he can do it in a less contemptuous and less contemptible fashion than he demonstrated in question time this morning - requires him to explain why the officers involved in conducting the inquiry into the allegations made by Messrs Ward and McNicol were the same officers as those involved in previous inquiries. I would appreciate a clear statement from the Attorney-General about exactly who was involved, particularly in a directive capacity, in the inquiries concerned with the case.

I did not raise this subject in question time this morning without a great deal of consideration. I do not see any need for it to become the subject of partisan adversary debate. I trust the honourable Attorney-General will not rise to his feet and pour contempt on the comments that I have made. I trust we can get a clear answer to this question. It would be very bad for the institution of self-government in the Northern Territory if the inquiries and inquests into such a highly controversial case were to be put under a cloud in any way. At this stage, I see a few clouds gathering on the horizon. I sincerely hope and trust that the honourable Attorney-General can dispel those clouds forthwith.

Mr Deputy Speaker, there is one other matter that I want to raise in the adjournment debate this evening. It is a subject that I have raised before. It involves public comment by the honourable member for Braitling and administrative actions that he has initiated. I may not have time to complete this subject this evening but I will endeavour to do so.

Mr Deputy Speaker, allow me first to refer to the actions of a senior public servant. I have no intention of naming this senior public servant at this stage but I believe that, in the interests of the good government of the Northern Territory, this must be mentioned. Frequently, politicians are castigated for attacking public servants who, by the nature of their positions, must remain silent. It is rare indeed that a politician, by innuendo, is the subject of personal malignment. I refer to the fact that, as a citizen living in Alice Springs, I have been accused of applying political pressure to change positions within a school. I believe I owe honourable members an explanation of this. I made public references to the position of the principalship at Alice Springs High School and I intend to do so again because I believe it is only in this Assembly that I can get anything like some answers to them.

As the honourable member for Braitling has suggested, I had a son in attendance at Alice Springs High School last year. As the honourable member for Braitling has said, my wife was, in fact, chairman of the school council. That is the sort of activity that many responsible parents involve themselves in. We have had a considerable amount of debate about the active involvement of parents in the education of their children. Both my wife and I are no exception in this regard.

It may come as some surprise then to honourable members that my wife received a visit from the principal of the local high school who said that he had been transferred and cited as reasons, inter alia, 'political pressure' from myself. I was somewhat bemused by this. I do not feel that, as a parent of a child enrolled in a school in the Northern Territory and as a private citizen, I should have to put up with accusations like that. Therefore, I approached the principal and explained that no action on my part could have been deemed to have been political pressure. I have maintained a clear distinction between my role

as a politician and my responsibilities as a parent. I bitterly resent that sort of accusation. I was directed to the author of these accusations, a senior officer of the Department of Education, and I was told by him that he had not used the phrase 'political pressure' but that my name had come up in a conversation between himself and the principal during which he had said that the principal was to be transferred. I regard that as distinctly improper. I will mention names to the honourable minister for Education so that those conversations and that unjustified criticism can be followed up.

There is another episode, and I will continue this subject in tomorrow's adjournment debate.

Mr ROBERTSON (Attorney-General): Mr Deputy Speaker, it would seem that the honourable Leader of the Opposition of late never arrives in Alice Springs. He tells us he always arrives in Oenpelli. However, one thing he did do was to arrive at the dispatch boxes first. I am certain that it will be the only feat of one-upmanship he achieves over this side of the Assembly.

However, Mr Deputy Speaker, it is appropriate that on the first day on which chairs have been provided at the dispatch boxes that the Leader of the Opposition and I, as Leader of the House and in the absence of the Chief Minister, should use them. It is a tradition that has long been applied effectively in the House of Commons from whence all of our traditions come. It is a practice used in the House of Representatives. As you would know, Mr Deputy Speaker, in those places they do not have desks at the frontbench at all, and I suppose that is where the tradition came from. Certainly, it gives me pleasure to address the Assembly in the adjournment debate from these magnificent gifts. For the benefit of new members, if the briefing they received when they first came here did not indicate it to them, the dispatch boxes were gifts of the Commonwealth Parliament to the Legislative Assembly of the Northern Territory, as was the mace. Personally, I hope to see ministers and the Leader of the Opposition often use the position at the dispatch boxes, which have a tremendous tradition in the Westminster system of parliament, with dignity and with respect.

Mr Deputy Speaker, again I do not know what briefing was given to the new members of the Assembly. Through you, Mr Clerk, I imagine it would have been a very thorough one. I remind honourable members that the dispatch boxes were instruments whereby the Speaker took the messages and remonstrances of the parliament to the monarch. Of course, we saw Mr Speaker himself, Sir, for whom you are deputising, escorted by the elbow from his place in the Chamber to the Chair during the ceremonial opening. Quite often when these remonstrances were taken to the monarch, the boxes were returned to the parliament but the Speaker was not. It was for that reason that the traditional symbolic resistance of the Speaker to his escort was provided.

Mr Deputy Speaker, a reference was made yesterday morning in this Assembly. It was a fairly difficult morning. I think that can be said fairly from the point of view of the government side when first thing in the morning a motion of censure was put by the opposition. It is natural that that would pose a circumstance of some unexpected difficulty for the government. Of course, it was perfectly proper that the opposition put such a motion. What I want to talk about, Mr Deputy Speaker, is the reference by the Leader of the Opposition to my manoeuvres yesterday as turning this place into what he described as a 'CLP club'. It is a pity that the Leader of the Opposition is not here. He always points out that, if a member to whom he is addressing his comments is not present, he will continue for the purposes of the written Hansard. I repeat, it is a shame that the Leader of the Opposition has walked out of this place prior to its rising.

Mr Tuxworth: He has probably gone to the pictures.

Mr ROBERTSON: He may well have gone to the pictures, as the honourable member says. Nonetheless, let me assure honourable members...

Mr Bell: Fair go! You blokes don't always sit here.

Mr ROBERTSON: We do not leave the precincts though, other than on important business, and the Leader of the Opposition may well have that to attend to. I do not wish to get into that tonight.

Mr Deputy Speaker, I would like to assure all honourable members that, as Leader of the House, I propose to see that the proceedings of this Assembly, in so far as they are within my province, are carried out in the same manner as they have been before. We have a small Assembly. We have a large area to represent. We are here, by and large, to express the views that we believe our constituents and our respective parties - be they in government or opposition - wish to put forward to the Assembly. Nonetheless, there are times when, due to the exigencies of government business, or for other reasons, the normal courtesies which we hope to be able to extend to the other side of the Assembly have to be waived. Generally, I would believe that the public expects that members of this Assembly, within the rules that we agree to between ourselves, are able to have their say and not be cut off. I want it clearly known by all that that will be my policy.

Mr Deputy Speaker, the honourable member for MacDonnell stood up this afternoon - and this was after I spoke to him yesterday about making statements in relation to Messrs Ward and McNicol - and asked a question which, in normal circumstances and on the face of it, would not have incurred the ire that it did. Nonetheless, the question that preceded his question was clearly designed to cast aspersions on and create derision, lack of confidence in and a completely false tone and an atmosphere of intent on the part of the police force of the Northern Territory. There was no other way that question to the Chief Minister could have been construed. Immediately after that, the honourable member for MacDonnell asked a question of the Speaker which was totally out of place. It was not out of order but it was out of place. It was an insulting question. Following that insulting question, the same honourable member asked me a question which again followed the line of attack on the integrity, impartiality and professionalism of the Northern Territory Police Force...

Mr Bell: Oh, stuff...

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order!

Mr ROBERTSON: Mr Deputy Speaker, I would ask that the honourable member withdraw that remark.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! The honourable member will withdraw that remark!

Mr BELL: I did not make any remark, Mr Deputy Speaker.

Mr Tuxworth: Well, you are the only one who did not hear it. The rest of us did.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! The honourable member for MacDonnell will withdraw the remark that he made.

Mr BELL: Mr Deputy Speaker, I withdraw any remark that happened to have been heard by any honourable members of this Assembly. If the Attorney-General insists on piling calumny...

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! The honourable member for MacDonnell will withdraw the remark and resume his seat.

Mr BELL: It was a reasonable question, followed by a reasonable offering in the debate.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! The honourable member will resume his seat.

Mr ROBERTSON: Mr Deputy Speaker, I again ask that the honourable member withdraw unequivocally that insulting and unparliamentary language.

Mr BELL: I withdraw the remark. I thought I had given that impression to honourable members.

Mr ROBERTSON: Mr Deputy Speaker, thank you very much. If the honourable member wants to skulk out of the Chamber at this stage, he may well do so.

Mr Bell: I probably will unless you come up with something better than you have come up with so far.

Mr ROBERTSON: Mr Deputy Speaker, as I was saying, it was because of the nature of the questions asked, particularly by the honourable member, that I refused to answer the question. I believed that it could have been answered in no better way than by repeating the last 2 or 3 sentences of the previous answer by the Chief Minister to a question in relation to the police force. If the honourable member had taken the trouble of reading what I actually said in my statement, he would have been able to cross-reference that with the words of the Solicitor-General for the Northern Territory and would have had an answer to each of the questions he has raised in the adjournment debate tonight.

There can be only 2 alternatives. One is that the police officer who was substantially involved in this investigation was in league with the Solicitor-General himself or, alternatively, the honourable member's allegations are baseless. I indicated to this Assembly at the time that tape-recordings were taken of each person who originally gave evidence. That was done with their approval. Those tape-recordings were transcribed, and not by the police. I said in the Assembly that the Solicitor-General's opinion states: 'Transcripts which I hold in my possession'. So they were done by the Solicitor-General's staff. The Solicitor-General took all of those transcripts, all of the evidence which was available before him, including all the transcripts of depositions given at the inquests and the trial. He married them together and came to a legal conclusion. It was not a policeman's conclusion but the conclusion of the Solicitor-General of the Northern Territory that there was no basis on which a charge could be laid. I explained all of that yesterday.

Notwithstanding that, Mr Deputy Speaker, the honourable member stood up this morning and consciously, for some reason best known only to himself, set out to impugn the integrity - on evidence like that - of the Northern Territory Police Force. I believe that the honourable member ought to be damned well ashamed of himself.

Motion agreed to; the Assembly adjourned.

Mr Speaker Steele took the Chair at 10 am.

#### PETITION

##### Reserve in Dudley Street Nightcliff

Mr HATTON (Nightcliff): Mr Speaker, I present a petition on behalf of 50 people of Nightcliff relating to Dudley Street. It concerns an application filed by the Darwin City Council in late 1983 to seek the revocation of reserve No 1162 known as Dudley Park. The residents in this area have been particularly perturbed by this action and, following a public meeting on Friday last, they held discussions with aldermen and officers of the council, following which the council is reviewing its decision as to whether or not it will continue with the application. In the petition, they ask that the government not proceed with this revocation. I move that the petition be received and read.

Motion agreed to; petition received and read.

*To the honourable the Speaker and members of the Legislative Assembly of the Northern Territory, the humble petition of the undersigned people of Nightcliff respectfully petition your Assembly to take action to ensure that lot 626 Dudley Street, known as Dudley Park, be retained as a public park and that your Assembly refuse to revoke the reserve concerning that lot, and your petitioners, as in duty bound, will ever pray.*

#### COMMONWEALTH DAY MESSAGE

Mr SPEAKER: Honourable members, I lay on the table a copy of the Commonwealth Day message received from the honourable Gerald R. Ottenheimer, Chairman of the Executive Committee of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association. Copies have been distributed to all members. With the concurrence of honourable members, the message will be incorporated in Hansard:

*Since Commonwealth Day last year, I have been able to visit a representative number of CPA Branches: New Zealand, Papua New Guinea, Singapore, Alderney, Saint Lucia, Dominica, Montserrat, Kenya and, more recently, India. In New Delhi I attended meetings of the Working Party on the CPA and the Future, and some sessions of the Third Asian, South-east Asian and African Seminar on Parliamentary Practice and Procedure. I also visited state branches in Karnataka, Tamil Nadu, Rajasthan, Bihar, West Bengal and Maharashtra.*

*During all these visits, I was able to discuss CPA matters with a broad cross-section of the association's membership: presiding officers, heads of government, ministers, opposition leaders, backbenchers and branch secretaries. Consistently and unequivocally, loyalty to the Commonwealth as a unique, international family and commitment to parliamentary government as the preferred instrument for ordering man's political, social and economical relations, appear as the hallmark of our association. These values were given expression not only at the association's plenary conference in Nairobi but also at the regional (New Delhi, January 1984 and Saint Lucia, August 1983) level, as well as at meetings of individual branches; for example, in Dominica last August and in Bihar a few weeks ago.*

*The annual plenary conference is the single most important activity of the association. The various regional activities also rank high in order of importance. Yet we should never forget that it is the individual*

*branch which is the nucleus of the association. Each of the 109 branches, large and small, independent in its own right, but related to all other branches by its adherence to parliamentary democracy, forms an important link in the CPA chain. Let us each in our various branches scattered throughout the Commonwealth endeavour to strengthen our own branch in order to more fully realise the objectives of the association.*

*In closing, I extend congratulations to the St Christopher and Nevis Branch on that country's attainment of independence, and I express the hope that the branches in Nigeria, whose membership is now in abeyance, will soon be entitled to renew their membership with the restoration of parliamentary government.*

GERALD R. OTTENHEIMER

Chairman of the Executive Committee

## REPORT

### Independent Economic Inquiry into Transport Services to the NT

Mr EVERINGHAM (Chief Minister): Mr Speaker, I table a copy of the Report of the Independent Economic Inquiry into Transport Services to the Northern Territory. Mr Speaker, I seek leave to move a motion relating to the report.

Leave granted.

Mr EVERINGHAM: Mr Speaker, I move that this Assembly - 1. reject the findings of the Hill Report on Transport Services to the Northern Territory because of: (a) its serious methodological errors; (b) its conclusions based in part on projections which are totally without foundation and which fail to take account of the detailed calculations presented in the Northern Territory government submission; and (c) its failure to adopt a genuine social audit approach as required by the terms of reference; 2. endorse the South Australian and Northern Territory government submissions to the Hill Inquiry; and 3. call on the federal government to honour the Prime Minister's commitment to build the Alice Springs to Darwin rail link.

Mr Speaker, all honourable members will be aware by now that the so-called Independent Economic Inquiry into Transport Services to the Northern Territory has recommended firmly against building the Alice Springs to Darwin railway. Honourable members will not need a speech from me in this Assembly to appreciate how bitterly disappointed I am at this outcome. Territorians have been cheated, not just because the railway will not be built by 1988, although the loss of the benefits that the railway would bring cannot easily be accepted not just because they have been blatantly manipulated and lied to by the federal government, but also because they have been made victims of the charade acted out without regard to their aspirations and without regard to the real facts.

I categorically reject the findings of the Hill Report. The inquiry has done a massive disservice to Territorians and all Australians. It was not independent, it was not economic and it failed to address the requirements of transport services to the Territory as it was asked to do. This is not rhetoric or politicking, Mr Speaker. The issue is too important for that. I have provided, of course, an evaluation of the Hill Report for the information of honourable members as well. I do not need to point out that the inquiry was conducted by the chief executive of a state railway system that loses every year almost as much as he says the Alice Springs to Darwin link will cost between now and the next century. I do not need to point out that the allocation of

investment funds for the Alice Springs to Darwin railway may well be at some cost to his own railway system.

The federal Minister for Transport has said that the report is an excellent, exhaustive, comprehensive and analytical assessment. I put it a little differently. It is biased, shallow, inaccurate, methodologically deficient, highly subjective and totally unimaginative. The federal Minister for Transport has been quick to seize on the report and to announce that the railway will not proceed, so quick that he had done it even before I received a copy of the report and certainly before consideration of the defence implications, a very important aspect, had been undertaken. The Prime Minister had given me an undertaking that he would discuss the defence implications with Mr Bannon and myself.

It is too much to hope that the federal Minister for Transport would act sensibly but Territorians have a right to demand that he act responsibly. In embracing the report so quickly, so enthusiastically and so totally, he has been unacceptably irresponsible because the report simply does not do the job.

A major criticism of the report which should be made is of its methodological defects. As an exercise in the appraisal of the costs and benefits of the rail link, it fails to adopt universally-accepted procedures. As a result, its conclusions are wrong. The Alice to Darwin railway is not a freestanding proposal under which trains will simply run backwards and forwards between Alice Springs and Darwin, bringing benefit to no one other than those in that corridor. The line would be an integral part of the national rail system. Indeed, it is the major missing link in such a national system. It follows from this that the completion of the link would generate additional rail traffic on other sections of the national rail system outside of the Northern Territory. Indeed, the report acknowledges that rail has advantages in the area of long-haul transport. The cost benefits of this additional traffic throughout the national rail system must be attributed to the Alice Springs to Darwin railway for the simple reason that, without that rail link, they will not occur. That concept is quite fundamental in any project assessment of this type yet the inquiry chose to ignore it. More than that, it specifically rejected it.

This approach to cost-benefit analysis will come as a surprise to the Bureau of Transport Economics. The bureau published a report, just a few weeks ago, concluding that the standardisation of the railway gauge from South Dynon to the dock area of Melbourne is acceptable on economic grounds. To reach that conclusion, the BTE adopted the same methodological principle used by the Northern Territory, the same principle that the report by Hill alleges is incorrect. In Mr Hill's own backyard, he might look at an earlier BTE study on the Ulan-Gulgong-Maryvale line and note particularly the inclusion of very significant benefits for the New South Wales rail system outside of the particular section of line under consideration.

As a consequence of the approach it has taken, the inquiry is wrong and has introduced a strong bias against the railway in the resulting assessment. That is not the only error in methodology. The approach to the attribution of costs is wrong in such areas as railway rolling stock, capital costs and the allocation of overheads. The calculations have been based on financial costs, not resource costs as required on any proper reading of the terms of reference.

Mr Speaker, if the criticism of deficient methodology was the only criticism I had of the report, it would be clearly sufficient to sustain my rejection of it. But there is more. The inquiry has been totally cavalier in its approach to freight volumes. It has blithely rejected the freight forecasts provided by

the Northern Territory government in its major submission to the inquiry. It produced, instead, its own alternatives. Since a level of freight which is projected to flow along the line is clearly the most significant factor in assessing the value of the project, it is of fundamental importance that these freight forecasts be carefully produced. The figures produced by the Northern Territory government in its submission were comprehensive, very detailed and fully justified. For every item of freight, there was a detailed explanation as to how the figure was produced. While judgments will always need to be made about events 10 and 20 years into the future, the figures provided by the Territory made those judgments on the basis of full supporting evidence.

The inquiry has rejected a substantial part of the evidence presented by the Territory, without providing any justification for so doing. The report provides no working papers to show how the revised freight forecasts were derived. The inquiry has not developed its own independent projections of freight but has simply scaled down the Territory's figures in an arbitrary and unsubstantiated way. The result is what the inquiry terms 'illustrative projections of freight'. Mr Speaker, it is a measure of the failure of the inquiry to come to grips with the task that it was given, that it can do no better than call its freight forecasts 'illustrative projections'. This is in the face of detailed project by project forecasts, including probability assessments in many important areas, which were presented by the Northern Territory.

Put simply, the inquiry is saying that it has no idea what the freight level would be, but it does not wish to accept the carefully documented figures provided by the Northern Territory because these figures demonstrate the overwhelming viability of the railway. The inquiry's assumptions about population-dependent, non-bulk freight are simply wrong. The forecasts of mining industry freight are monstrosously underestimated as a result of errors, arbitrary exclusion of numerous projects and wild assumptions about inadequate mineral reserves in the Territory to sustain future freight flows.

Mr Speaker, the Territory government's submission not only detailed freight forecasts on a case-by-case basis, it also ascribed probability forecasts to the various tonnages based on the likelihood of future developments. As such, it was and remains the most valid and comprehensive assessment of future freight flows yet undertaken. The inquiry's use of this information is nothing short of pathetic. The inquiry concludes that, in about 10 years of operation, the railway would have an accumulated cash outflow of over \$1000m. That fact has been seized upon by the federal Minister for Transport. But there is another way to look at the figures. The inquiry's own calculations indicate that revenue from the railway would cover operating costs in its very first year of operation, and that conclusion can be drawn even allowing the substantial anti-railway bias in the basis of the calculations made by the inquiry. Even ignoring all the criticisms that I have made to date, it is very clear that the railway would be used and the inquiry admits that the railway would win the overwhelming proportion of freight from the road.

Honourable members should also note that the inquiry was asked specifically to take a social audit approach to the evaluation of the project. In short, this meant that, beyond the narrow financial implications, the inquiry was required to assess economic, environmental, social and resource allocation issues. The treatment of social audit in the report is a sham. This report will never become a textbook for social audit project appraisal. In fact, the report makes no attempt to undertake a genuine social audit. It presents a none-too-subtle, anti-railway bias in its assessment of individual benefits listed under this category. But beyond that, it fails completely to consider the cumulative



and total benefits which would result from the project.

The railway provides an unparalleled opportunity to achieve a wide range of benefits through one single project. This very important principle is totally ignored. Throughout the report, there are constant attempts to establish a veneer of economic respectability for the assessment made of the project. Comments are repeatedly made to the effect that proper project appraisal requires the setting aside of benefits which could be achieved by investing in alternative projects. There is a constant implication that all of the wider benefits which are identified in the railway project could in fact be achieved by other means. That argument only has force if these alternative projects, which would produce the wide range of benefits which the railway will produce, can, firstly, be identified and, secondly, demonstrated to be more cost effective. The report does neither of those things. It keeps talking about benefits obtainable through other projects but never once identifies what these projects might be, let alone provide any assessment of how much would need to be invested to secure the broad benefits the rail project would generate. That element of pervasive anti-railway bias in the report must be exposed and rejected.

Mr Speaker, a further point which must be mentioned is the total lack of imagination that the report displays. I was struck particularly by one of its principal findings which goes like this:

*A major factor that could alter this assessment of the railway in the future would be the emergence of significantly higher tonnages of bulk minerals than is currently evident. These mineral prospects would need to be definite before the economic assessments of the railway could be altered.*

The conclusion is drawn by the inquiry notwithstanding the detailed evidence presented by the Territory government in respect of mineral projects. This evidence emphasised the extent to which the railway itself would be the determining factor as to whether a number of projects proceed. In other words, the inquiry has set aside the view that the existence of the railway would itself generate freight. In so doing, it has totally rewritten the history of railways and the history of economic development in Australia.

In the same vein, the report dispatches a notion of a north-south landbridge as being virtually irrelevant to the assessment of the potential for the railway. That is certainly not the way that the South Australian government, Chamber of Commerce and Industry and the United Trades and Labour Council see the railway, nor is it consistent with the interest which is currently being generated in greater economic activity between Australia and South-east Asia. Such a totally unimaginative approach to the project simply brings discredit on the report.

Mr Speaker, as far as I am concerned, the case for the railway remains as strong as ever. Despite the words and the innuendo of the report, the facts remain. It is a project which is justified on economic grounds and imperative in terms of its wider social and community benefits. The fight will go on.

We will be providing the federal government with a detailed critique of the report which will expand on the deficiencies in it which I have highlighted in this statement. We will insist that the real facts be assessed when the report is being further considered, not the fabrications on which the so-called principal conclusions of the report were based. There remains the Prime Minister's personal commitment to me and to the South Australian Premier that he would discuss jointly with us the defence issues which were excluded from the inquiry's terms of reference.

I know that, in continuing the fight, the Territory government has the overwhelming support of the people of the Territory, but it seems that I have to make a special appeal to the Leader of the Opposition to support these further efforts to secure the railway. If he cannot do that, he might at least stop the process of undermining the aspirations of the Territory. Just a few days ago, the Leader of the Opposition said that the findings of the Hill Report confirm what most realistic people knew about the project, namely, that the railway could not be justified. He went on to say that the report was the first exhaustive independent economic inquiry into the project. It will be clear from what I said this morning that the Leader of the Opposition is wrong on both counts. I am appalled at his apparent ready acceptance of the report which clearly he has failed to understand and see through - a ready acceptance which presumably stems not from any real interest in the project or the Territory, but his desire to satisfy his political masters in Canberra.

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

Mr EVERINGHAM: Perhaps the honourable member for Millner, now the Deputy Leader of the Opposition, will explain to the honourable Leader of the Opposition that the Territory Labor Party is on public record as being committed to the railway, convinced that it is justified, and supportive of the Northern Territory government's submission. The honourable member for Millner said in evidence to the inquiry: 'The purpose of the Territory Labor Party submission is to reinforce the detailed information provided by the Northern Territory government. The future freight task required to justify a railway line is now not unrealistic and the construction of the railway is an important part of the future development of the region'.

I value the support of the Territory ALP on this vital issue. That support would be rather more effective, however, if the Leader of the Opposition knew what the party position was. So far as I am concerned and so far as this government is concerned, there is only one acceptable conclusion: the railway must be built. Territorians want it and the facts justify its construction. Mr Speaker, the Alice Springs to Darwin railway will be built and this government will not rest until it is.

Debate adjourned.

#### EDUCATION AMENDMENT BILL (Serial 11)

Continued from 29 February 1984.

Mr B. COLLINS (Opposition Leader): Mr Speaker, the opposition supports the establishment of a board of studies which is the principal matter under consideration in this bill. But we have a number of queries that perhaps the minister can satisfy in his response.

I am curious to know why the Council of the Katherine Rural College is included in the composition of the board. The Katherine Rural College is already represented on the Vocational Training Commission. To the best of my knowledge, none of the people employed at the Katherine Rural College are members of the Northern Territory Teaching Service. I wonder then if it is at least recognised by this government as a TAFE institution. I would suggest that, as a result of the situation at the Katherine Rural College, it would be difficult to establish the college in that light because of the particular way in which its courses are structured. I am curious to know why representatives from the Katherine Rural College would be included. As I say, they are already on the VTC.

Mr Speaker, I would like the minister to elaborate on the prescribed relevant organisations which he referred to in the bill. The organisations are not identified either by the bill itself or indeed anything said by the minister in his second-reading speech. I wonder if he could indicate just exactly which organisations they will be.

I would also assume that - and perhaps the minister can enlighten me - the union organisation would be the Trades and Labour Council which, of course, has the Teachers Federation as one of its affiliates. Perhaps the honourable minister could also give me some advice on that.

The other aspect of the honourable minister's second-reading speech that I am very curious about concerns the changes that have been made, in particular to do with the appointment of the Chairman of the Darwin Community College Council. Honourable members would be aware that the current legislation provides that, although the Administrator is responsible for the majority of the appointments to the DCC Council, the council itself has the right to appoint its own chairman. Indeed, the legislation goes further than that. It provides the council with the flexibility, which obviously was very deliberately written into the act, to appoint as chairman someone who is not a member of the council. The legislation simply goes on to prescribe that, where that happens, the council must stipulate in the terms of the appointment the length of office of that person up to a maximum period of 4 years. Indeed, it would seem to be very difficult to establish why - and I would like a precise explanation from the minister - the arrangement is unsatisfactory and why the government would seek to change it. Despite the fact that a substantial number of its members must be appointed by the Administrator, the ability of the council to appoint its own chairman is a facility which is enjoyed by most organisations that are involved in that area of education.

I want the honourable minister to explain to the Assembly what has happened in the operations of the Darwin Community College, particularly in respect of the person who has been Chairman of the Darwin Community College Council by the election of its own members for some years now, Mrs Nan Giese, which has caused the government to find unsatisfactory its ability to appoint its own chairman. What has the chairman of the council done that has upset the government to the point where it wants to move in and take that flexibility from the council? I would suggest: nothing. The reason I ask is that, in his second-reading speech, the honourable minister gave an explanation which is simply ludicrous. The minister said that the change is necessary in order for the institution to operate as effectively as other institutions throughout Australia. Of course, that is nonsense. I do not doubt that there are some CAEs which operate in a similar manner to the Darwin Community College. I would ask the minister what institutions in Australia which are comparable to the Darwin Community College have that particular provision. Each of the CAEs that I have contacted have a council which has the right to appoint its own chairman. Could the minister please justify the assertions that he himself made in his second-reading speech that the reason for this change is to improve the efficient operation of the college and put it on a par with other institutions elsewhere in the country? Unless he can justify it, the statement must stand alone as being nonsense.

I want 2 specific explanations. In my view, the facility of the college council to elect its own head is a useful and desirable power for the college to have. I want the minister to explain to me what aspects of the council's operation indicated to the government the necessity to change that perfectly satisfactory arrangement which has operated ever since the Education Act was passed by the Assembly and, indeed, for some period before that. What bodies similar to the Darwin Community College Council are there in this country

which do not have the flexibility of appointing their own head? He will need to demonstrate that in order to make any sense at all of the justification that he himself has provided in the second-reading speech to this bill.

Mr HATTON (Nightcliff): Mr Speaker, I support the legislation and the comments of the honourable minister. This legislation represents another essential link in the chain of development of education in the Territory as we move to improve its quality and relevance to the Northern Territory.

As the minister mentioned in his second-reading speech, the origins of the moves towards the establishment of a board of studies as provided for in this bill are found in the policy document for the Department of Education known as 'Directions for the Eighties'. That document was determined after extensive consultation with a wide cross-section of the community and provides specifically for a high degree of community involvement in the education process. In particular, it refers to the formation of a board of studies designed particularly to implement the improvements plan for course accreditation and assessment and certification at the junior and secondary level. It says in the document that the government intends 'to replace the Curriculum Advisory Committee with a board of studies which will have the power to issue certificates, accredit and externally moderate courses and conduct its final examination components of NT Year 12 courses'. This bill brings that into fruition and, to that extent, I commend it.

However, there are some questions of detail in the bill to which I would refer the minister. I ask him to give consideration to some amendments in the committee stage. Firstly, I direct him to issues associated with the definition of 'relevant organisation'. The Leader of the Opposition referred to this earlier. I would ask the minister to give consideration to having that examined to ensure that the establishment of the board does not allow what could be termed 'double dipping' by organisations which already have specific representation on the board of studies also finding themselves defined as 'relevant organisations'. I would recommend that the minister examine the possibility of amending that to provide that it should not include those which already have representation.

I refer also to the question of dismissal of members. As a matter of form and logic, it would be appropriate that there be a provision which ensures that, where a person no longer adequately represents an organisation on the board of studies, he should no longer be entitled to remain as a member of the board.

Further, the requirement of the board of studies to consult and cooperate with the Vocational Training Commission and other authorities or bodies engaged in education and related matters is very broad. I think it would be appropriate if the minister gave consideration to introducing a reference to prescribed organisations. Because of the plethora of organisations and bodies claiming to operate in that field, it would become an administrative nightmare because there is an obligation on the board to consult in those areas.

The next point I would like to raise is in respect to the secretarial control. The secretary directs the performance and the functions of the board of studies. Under proposed new section 10J(a), one of the functions of the board is that it consider and make recommendation to the secretary relating to a series of matters. Under proposed section 10N, it would be possible for the secretary in fact to instruct the board of studies on what recommendations it should make to him. I would suggest that that is certainly not the intention of that provision. I believe that there should be an exemption attached to 10J(a) along with (b) and (c) in respect to 10N.

Finally, on the question of confidentiality, it makes provision for non-disclosure, except in the course of a member's duties to the board. I would suggest that that be tightened further. The member should only be entitled to disclose such information as the board authorises to be disclosed, otherwise there is a potential for the provision to be circumvented.

With those points, which do not go to the philosophy or the principles of the bill but rather seek to improve the intent of the bill, I commend it.

Mr COULTER (Berrimah): Mr Speaker, I would like to speak to the bill. The honourable Leader of the Opposition said that the Katherine Rural Education College should not be represented on the board because it has a representative on the Vocational Training Commission. I believe that this bill was drafted to allow as wide a participation as possible. If you use that as an argument, then you could also say that the Darwin Community College has a representative on the VTC and should not be represented on the board and that, therefore, the VTC should be the only body that is on the board.

We should have as many facets of education as possible - in particular, those involved in the transition from secondary schools to the workforce - represented on this body. There has always been a problem of continuity in education. Students leave pre-school and there is a cut-off point when they enter primary school. There is another cut-off point when they go from primary school into a secondary school and then into the senior secondary level. There is a need to have some form of continuity right throughout the education system.

I believe that this bill will, in part, solve many of these problems by bringing together as many people as possible who are involved in post-secondary education. That way, everybody will know what the end goal is. The end goal, of course, is to achieve as much in the way of employment opportunities and outlining the educational requirements for those employment opportunities as is possible. I believe this bill in part sets out the format to achieve that, and I commend it.

Mr SMITH (Millner): Mr Speaker, I want to respond to the comments of the honourable member for Berrimah. As the honourable Leader of the Opposition has pointed out, Katherine Rural Education College will in fact be represented on the proposed body by the Vocational Training Commission. I point out to the honourable member that, as a result of a decision taken by the government last year not to employ members of the Northern Territory Teaching Service but to employ public servants - and there is a bit of background that I do not want to go into as to why that decision was taken - really there must be some doubt about the academic expertise being extended to students at the Katherine Rural Education College. Of course, that is not the real purpose of KREC. The purpose of KREC is to provide training in various farming operations to enable the students there to graduate and go into practical farming, hopefully within the Northern Territory.

That should be compared with the situation at Batchelor College. Batchelor College is not named as an institution to be represented on the board of studies. Batchelor College, quite clearly, is an academic institution. It has highly-trained and highly-qualified staff. It aims to send to Aboriginal schools Aboriginal teachers who are trained, qualified and able to replace white teachers. I would have thought it much more appropriate for Batchelor College to have direct representation on this board of studies than KREC.

A second concern that has been expressed to me - and again I would hope that the honourable minister is listening to this - is how proposed new section 10C(2)

would operate. It has been suggested to me that, out of the 5 nominations chosen by the Administrator, there could be a nomination from the Catholic Schools' Association, the Independent Schools' Association, the Catholic Teachers' Association and the Independent Teachers' Association. The concern is that that would give the independent school system 4 representatives against the government school system which would have only 2 representatives. I do not think anyone needs to be told that the government school system has a much greater number of students in it than the independent school system. We are not saying that the independent school system should not be represented on this board of studies. Obviously, it should be represented. But I would seek an assurance from the minister that it would be a basic one-to-one relationship between the independent school representation and the government school representation.

Mr PERRON (Lands): Mr Speaker, I wish to touch on one matter raised by the honourable Leader of the Opposition: the amendment to change the arrangement for the appointment of the Chairman of the Darwin Community College Council. This matter came to my attention during the latter part of last year in my then position as Minister for Education. It was pointed out to me that there was a section in the act which enabled the community college to appoint a chairman either from within its ranks or from without. This alarmed me somewhat because it did not seem that that was the government's original intention. At that time, I issued directions for papers to be prepared proposing a change back to the more normal style of this government wherein we play a much greater role in appointing people to boards and also retain the power to direct boards, which may not be common interstate.

It is my view that the government should be the body to appoint the chairman of a board in an important institution such as the Darwin Community College. Indeed, that holds true for most boards, statutory authorities and committees established by government. The government is charged with the end responsibility for the activities of those organisations and therefore it deserves a high level of control over them. I completely support what is proposed in this bill: that the government appoint the Chairman of the Darwin Community College from amongst those persons who are appointed under a particular section of the act.

Mr BELL (MacDonnell): Mr Speaker, I rise to make 2 brief but general points in relation to this bill. My first general point relates to the process of consultation and the establishment of councils generally. I have the feeling from the comments of the honourable member for Berrimah - it may be a regrettable implication and totally unintended - that there is a distinct problem in that we confuse consultation with the processes of education and training. It is possible to over-consult. It is possible to expend so much energy in administration, in organising councils and obtaining community opinion - which should be easy when there are so few of us in the Territory - that we do not have adequate assessment of the educative and training processes at primary, secondary or tertiary level.

The second general point that I want to make relates to my perception of a slight confusion in the offerings that have been made by some people in this debate. It is a distinction that is very important to bring to the attention of honourable members: the distinction between education and training. Very often in debates on this subject in this Assembly, I have heard people use those 2 words interchangeably as though they were synonyms. That, of course, is not the case.

The honourable member for Millner referred to the Katherine Rural Education Centre. I am not as familiar with the Katherine Rural Education Centre as you would be, Mr Speaker, but such a place would probably be so involved in the

acquisition of practical skills that it would be a training centre. I think it is an important distinction that training is essentially a process involved with the acquisition of practical skills. It may involve education, either consciously or unconsciously, but that education is a different process again. Education is a process of acquiring attitudes and understandings and an active interaction with the subject at hand. I would very much appreciate it if, in future debates on subjects of this kind, that distinction could be drawn.

In closing, I reiterate those 2 points. I am concerned that the process of establishing councils and the process of consultation may be blinding us to the appropriate assessment of the educational and training programs for which this Assembly, and the government of the Northern Territory, is responsible.

Debate adjourned.

### ADDRESS IN REPLY

Continued from 28 February 1984.

Mr TUXWORTH (Primary Production): Mr Speaker, in rising to participate in the Address in Reply, it is my intention to address some of the important things that I believe are confronting all the citizens of the Northern Territory and, in particular, the members of this Assembly. In my view, they are positive things that can go a long way towards improving the lifestyle of the people of the Territory and the development to which most of us aspire.

On the mining front, in the next 12 months we are going to see the development of 3 small gold mines at Tennant Creek: the Explorer 46 project in Tennant Creek, the Granites development outside of Yuendumu and a new mine at Pine Creek. Another mine came into production in Pine Creek during the last 12 months. The significance of these mines is very great because, while they are small in themselves, they will give an impetus to exploration which is really the basis for finding big projects.

It has been well established throughout the world that the greatest value to the community of mining comes through large, low-grade, long-term prospects because they run for 30 or 40 years. They are very long-term projects, like the Ranger project and Peko Mines in Tennant Creek, and they provide a very important part of the fabric of the community. The small, high-grade mines come and go. They do provide some benefits in the short term but, over long periods, they do not always contribute. While the mines I am speaking of at the moment are small, relatively high grade and will not have a long life, I believe they will give inspiration to the explorers to get out and find more.

I am always mindful of the role that the Peko mine played in the early 1950s when there were 4 gougers operating there, pottering away with native copper at the 300-foot level and trying to get a bit of gold. They convinced the Bureau of Mineral Resources that they needed a hole and the Bureau of Mineral Resources came to the party and put down one diamond drill hole that produced an ore body that, over the years, has provided 14 million tonnes of production, hundreds of jobs and millions of dollars in revenue and taxes. It has made a great contribution to the Territory and to Australia. I see these new mines leading to further exploration that will give us greater development on the mining front.

I would like to touch briefly on uranium for a moment. We have all spoken about it in the Assembly. I think we are all supportive of uranium mining even

though there is a uranium mine in Arnhem Land. When I say that, I accept that some people have a philosophical problem with it. But I believe that, later this year, the Labor Party will move to change its policy and I think that is not just good for the Territory but good for Australia. It really is a poor state of affairs when we have a national uranium policy that is inconsistent and makes the people who administer the country look like ghosts, and that is exactly the position we are in at the moment. If the Labor Party can make a change to its policy and uranium is developed in a normal and logical way, then that will be good for us and, I believe, for Australia.

Mr Speaker, in the area of oil exploration, there is activity in the Territory such as has never occurred before. This year we will see \$100m of expenditure on oil exploration. I think every member would accept that that is big expenditure in any language and it will contribute greatly to the future of the Territory. However, like all of these things, it is a case of nothing succeeds like success and we now have some successful exploration occurring in the oil and gas area of the Territory. I believe it will change our whole energy utilisation pattern in the years to come. We are reaching the stage when we can make deliberate decisions about the utilisation of energy that we could not have made 5 years ago because the information we have today just was not available then.

On a broader note, Mr Speaker, and one that I believe is just as important, there is the role of government in providing basic information to companies so that they can take conscious decisions about investing their exploration dollars. The days are gone when we can expect mining companies to do basic geological sampling and mapping and basic geophysical work in virgin country. If we expect to obtain investment dollars from the exploration industry, we must make a greater effort to provide basic data. Over the past 2 years the government has been moving in that direction. I hope we see greater impetus as the years go by.

In the primary production area, I believe there is opportunity, and we must take that opportunity where and when it arises. I see enormous changes ahead for primary production in a range of industries. I will just touch on them briefly.

In the cattle industry, I think the most important challenge for Territorians is to become involved in market development and the marketing of our product. We should work with organisations like the Australian Meat and Livestock Corporation or its successor because I believe that our situation is unique. Our product is not the sort of product that is normally promoted with vigour by federal marketing bodies. If we wish to protect ourselves and develop new markets, we must look to the north and find areas that we believe we can do business in. A small but important example is the success we have had with the development of butcher shops and the increase of beef consumption in Sarawak where Geoffrey Beere, one of our stock inspectors, has been stationed for 2 years in an attempt to introduce our concept of beef marketing, handling, processing and consumption. That must be the challenge for the Territory. To ride on the tail of the federal marketing people as we do at the moment will be to continue to have problems.

There are great technological developments ahead which we must address. In some cases, we may have to pioneer them. I was presented with one option the other night which I think is a good indication of some of the exciting things that are going to happen. One of the major pastoral houses in this country is already talking with Aussat about the concept of selling the herd from the farm via satellite, through buying rooms in the major capital cities. The product will then go from the farm to wherever it is that the buyer wants it to go. Data



on the herd will be processed through the data lines available on the satellite. In some cases, photographs will be taken from the back of a ute with a TV camera and relayed through a satellite to the buying rooms so that the buyers can see what they are buying. It is important that the Territory be very serious about this because it may mean that we will be seriously disadvantaged if we do not go with it. Alternatively, we might achieve an advantage over the states. That sort of technological development is coming very quickly to our industry and we need to be ready for it.

In the horticultural area, there is a great future for us. One of our challenges is to try and provide as much Northern Territory produce for Northern Territory consumption as we can. The other is to sell as much as we can to other parts of Australia and the world and make a dollar from it. The department sees itself as providing a service to the growers. In the years to come, we have to develop handling mechanisms and techniques for our products and marketing facilities for the growers to avoid the situation of a grower presenting himself at the farm gate with his product and finding that there is no way of disposing of it. In Queensland, an organisation known as COD was developed to help growers in the initial stages of their development. The COD operation as it exists in Queensland could well be applied to the role of handling products and marketing in the Northern Territory. That is something that we will have to come to grips with later this year.

The great advantage of our horticultural industry, one which we must not lose sight of, is that we will not be competing with the states in traditional market garden, primary produce or horticultural lines. We will be growing things here and selling them at times when other parts of Australia cannot grow them because of seasonal conditions. Mr Speaker, with that obvious advantage, we have a great future in front of us. I know members from central Australia are aware of the prospects for table grapes and carnations. People from Katherine are aware of the great prospects for mangoes and other products. The game is just beginning and there is a lot of opportunity for us.

I believe that the opening of the horse meat abattoir in Tennant Creek last Saturday is the first step in the Northern Territory becoming a viable and respectable horse meat-producing area of Australia. There is an enormous consumption of horse meat in Japan, Korea and the European Common Market countries. We do not have access to those markets. The people who developed the meatworks are trying now to encourage farmers to get into horse meat production in a sensible way, and are looking in the long term to selling to the European Common Market. If they are successful in that, I think it will be an excellent prospect for the Northern Territory because, as you would know, Mr Speaker, the control of horses has been a problem for a long time. In many cases, they become a definite environmental threat. Any way we have of disposing of the horses that are already a problem and introducing husbandry practices on others will be to our benefit.

I received a proposition last week from a man who is interested in becoming involved in rabbit meat production. He is looking to sell several thousand tonnes of rabbit meat a year. Another person is looking at goat meat production for sale in the countries to our north and to the Middle East. I think that is something we have to look at in conjunction with the industry. I do not see it as the government's role to become a farmer in that area but, if people are keen to try it, we should support them.

The buffalo industry is a matter of great concern to me. I have always advocated establishing a buffalo industry. There is no difficulty with that. The problem at the moment is that buffalo are not considered a prospective

industry on their own because people outside the Northern Territory are questioning whether it is possible to contain buffalo in given areas so that they do not spread disease. At this stage, after discussions I have had with the industry, I have not found a soul who is able to commit himself to the prospect of buffalo being held and controlled in a completely disease-free area. We will have to go through a difficult period for a year or 2 before we can come to grips with that. I would not like to underestimate the problem or play it down to honourable members.

Mr Speaker, in the development of our fisheries, I believe the Territory has a great opportunity before it. In this regard, the government has commissioned a report by a Mr Norgaard, a well-known and highly-regarded consultant. Mr Norgaard is attempting to identify our fisheries and how best to harvest them. It is fair to say that, in the past, we have looked at our port facilities, the boats and how far the fishery is from the nearest petrol tank and worked backwards on our development plans. Mr Norgaard's approach is to identify a fishery, build up the data we have on it, decide what we can take from it and then work back and decide what it is that we need in the Northern Territory to make the fishery a contributing part of our economy. It could be that we need a series of 4 or 5 small fishing ports, large cold storage, different types of boats and different types of fishermen. That is all part of the investigation.

Mr Speaker, on an electorate note, I would like to say that my electorate, like many of the electorates in the Territory represented by honourable members, must combat the tyranny of distance. I see it as one of the immediate challenges facing this Assembly in the years to come. The introduction of telecommunications right through the Northern Territory is of great importance, not just because people in the cities enjoy that facility but because there is a limit to how far we can develop and how fast we can grow while people cannot make basic communication. I have conducted a running battle with Telecom for 10 years now. I have a terrible feeling that it will continue for another 10 years because I believe it is not doing its part. However, new mediums of communication are becoming available to us, such as Aussat, and I am looking forward to the results of the committee which was set up the other day to see how we may apply that new technology to improving communications because it is integral to the things that we want to do.

Mr Speaker, another issue that I would like to raise on this occasion is one of great importance to the future of the Territory. It is the area of Aboriginal employment. I do not have all the answers and I am the first to admit that. This is a very complex problem. But I do worry about where we are going to be in the year 1990 or the year 2000 with the component of Aboriginal employment in our society. I think the problem is compounded by the fact that people have congregated in areas where there is just no prospect of employment, and to talk about the long-term prospects of providing hundreds of jobs in places like Docker River, Yuendumu, Warrabri and Hooker Creek is really fanciful. While I do not have the answers, I have the desire to come to grips with the problem. I believe that, if we can solve the problem of Aboriginal employment and participation in our society, we will go forward at a great rate of knots. While we have thousands of people in remote areas who do not have employment opportunities and do not know what is before them in the future, then we will continue to have some of the discontent that has been evident in recent years.

Mr Speaker, in closing, I would like to sit with any member of the Assembly, on any occasion, to try to work out a formula on how we should attack this problem. Quite often in the past, it has been dumped in the government's lap: the government ought to provide the jobs, the government ought to do this and

the government ought to do something else. I do not see the government solving the problem. It must be solved on a much wider front and it may involve cattle stations, mining companies, other employers and the education system, but certainly it will not be solved if we continue our present direction. I do not reflect on the efforts of federal government, our own government or the opposition. I see ourselves confronted with a very complex problem that we have to address in the days ahead.

Mr Speaker, I am pleased to have been able to contribute to the motion moved by the Chief Minister and I close my remarks on that note.

Mr HARRIS (Education): Mr Speaker, in speaking to the Address in Reply, I would first like to comment on some of the remarks that were made by the Leader of the Opposition and the member for Stuart that do not relate specifically to my portfolio of education. I will come to the education aspect shortly.

One of the things we must remember when we are talking about funding of the Territory is that everyone acknowledges that most of the funding comes from the federal government. There is no doubt about that. I was interested in the interjections of the Leader of the Opposition during the maiden speech of the member for Victoria River in relation to the funding from the Commonwealth. No one denies that most of the funding comes from the Commonwealth government. I would like to point out that most of the other states also rely very heavily on Commonwealth government funding. The thing to remember is that, whilst that is the case, it is the government of the state that decides how those funds are to be spent. This government is responsible for spending a great deal of that money.

Mr Speaker, the other comment that I would like to make is in relation to the remarks made by the member for Stuart about community councils. I agree with him that the bureaucracy can cause things to clam up a little. I would like to say to the honourable member that the Northern Territory Country Liberal Party government enabled those communities to have a say in what they were doing. Prior to amendments to the Local Government Act to enable community governments to be set up, those communities did not have a say in what they were doing. I accept the points the member made and, whilst I accept that the bureaucracy can clam things up, it is at least giving them a say in what they are doing. It is important to remember that. The other thing I would like to say in relation to that is that we should not try to move too fast because many councils are starting to query whether or not they want that particular function. They are starting to give consideration to handing back those hard-won powers.

His Honour the Administrator referred to a number of initiatives which will lead to further improvements in the area of education. The initiatives are in line with the government's objectives and priorities for education as set out in the education policy document, 'Directions for the Eighties', which was tabled in this Assembly last year. The initiatives which will be implemented during 1984 need to be seen against the background of all the cooperative development which has occurred since the Northern Territory government took over responsibility for education from the Commonwealth government some 4 years ago.

I would like to have recorded in Hansard my appreciation of the enormous amount of work that was put into the education sector by the previous Minister for Education. Indeed, there is increasing evidence of public confidence in the Northern Territory education system and there are signs that our system of education has at last come of age.

Mr Speaker, increasingly parents are placing their children in schools in the Northern Territory. A number of years ago, many parents would decide that it

would be best to send their children to schools elsewhere in Australia. From matriculation examination results in Northern Territory schools this year, they have done the right thing in deciding that the best place for their children to receive an education is in the Northern Territory itself.

I would like to say also that one of the most encouraging aspects of the matriculation examination results was that it was right across the board. The results achieved by the students at the Alice Springs High School, for example, were very similar to the results in other high schools throughout the Northern Territory. I believe it is important that we have improved our retention rate for senior secondary students and this now is in line with retention rates elsewhere in Australia. This year, we have a retention rate of some 25%. That has come about as a result of the commencement this year of the senior secondary certificate courses which will give students an opportunity to move into different fields apart from obtaining the required qualifications to enter university.

The 1983-84 budget set the stage for the government's latest staffing initiatives which will include an unprecedented increase in school and institutional staffing. By the end of this first semester, the Department of Education should have an additional 126 members and this is due mainly to the new staffing formulas, the 21:1 student-teacher ratio, the provision of nursing sisters for high schools, the additional speech therapists, the fact that now we have established computer centres in both Darwin and Alice Springs, and the establishment of new special education units. The net result of all this is that we now have the best staffed and resourced schools in Australia, not only in the secondary school area where we had them prior to this but also in the primary school area.

The Northern Territory government has extremely good policies in relation to many aspects of education. Parents are able to send their children to a school of their choice. If parents happen to move from one suburb to another, as is often the case in Darwin, the children can continue their education without disruption. It is probably the same in other areas of the Northern Territory. Therefore, they have a freedom of choice.

We also have free bus transport for students who live further than 1.6 km from their feeder school. This again is something that many of the states do not have. I would like to say here that, if we are to retain the very good policies of this government - the freedom of choice, the free bussing and the best staffed schools and best resources in Australia - then we must enforce those policies. This government has initiated moves to introduce bus passes by the beginning of the second semester. It is not a change to existing policy. All we are saying is that our policy is being enforced.

Mr Speaker, the introduction this year of the core curriculum at Year 10 level marks the culmination of 4 years of intense curriculum development activity. It means that all urban schools now follow a common core curriculum throughout the period of compulsory schooling; that is, from transition through to the end of Year 10. From now on, students completing Year 10 will receive the Junior Secondary Studies Certificate. During 1984, further important steps will be taken to ensure that high standards are achieved and maintained in primary schools. We will be implementing a program for screening early childhood students and assessing students in Years 5 and 7.

Public confidence in the Territory education system should be further strengthened by the establishment of an independent statutory board of studies, the bill for which we are debating at the present time. The major challenge to the entire school community during the coming year will be the operation of

schools under the government's new school councils legislation. At the present time, 22 school councils are constituted in the Northern Territory and many others are considering becoming constituted as school councils. This will mean that parents as well as teachers will have a say in decisions affecting their schools on a wide range of issues.

The government sees it as especially important that Aboriginal communities take full advantage of the school councils legislation and we will be encouraging greater involvement of Aboriginal communities in education at all levels. Again, I would emphasise here that it is hoped that councils and government are able to work together. Indeed, many issues have been raised with me about schools and problems at schools. There is now an ideal opportunity for those councils to work and to come forward with ways and means of solving particular problems that arise in their schools.

I would also like to touch on a comment made by the honourable member for Arnhem in relation to funding. He mentioned the lack of funding for teaching aides who come in from the outstations or the homeland centres to the Batchelor College. It is something that the government has addressed on a number of occasions.

Mr Speaker, I have been minister for approximately 7 weeks and I have had occasion to read correspondence from the previous Minister for Education to the federal Minister for Education, the honourable Senator Susan Ryan. The issue that the previous Minister for Education raised with the honourable minister was in relation to problems associated with funding the replacement of teachers in those Aboriginal communities. Senator Ryan was sympathetic to the cause of the Northern Territory. She said at that time that she would write to the Minister for Aboriginal Affairs, Clive Holding, asking that a special grant be provided to assist in this area. It was Mr Holding, the friend of the Aboriginal people, who wrote back to the federal Minister for Education to say that funds would not be forthcoming for this particular purpose.

I am very pleased to say that FEPPI, the Aboriginal education consultative group, is making a great contribution to Aboriginal education in the Northern Territory. Indeed, its role in the development of Aboriginal education will be discussed in a statement which I will be tabling tomorrow or the next day. A great deal of that work has been done in consultation with FEPPI. I hope that, because the Northern Territory does have experience in Aboriginal education, the Commonwealth government, which is at present introducing new initiatives in Aboriginal education, will consult with the Northern Territory government.

After listening to the comments made by the honourable members for Arnhem and Stuart in the debate the other day, I would forgive anyone for thinking that the Aboriginal communities themselves are poorly done by so far as education is concerned. The Northern Territory has been the leader in Australia in the field of Aboriginal education for a considerable time now. I would also say that the government has increased its commitment to Aboriginal education. Examples are numerous. Curriculum material, especially in relation to English as a second language, has been developed and tried in Aboriginal communities. Special efforts have been made to develop correspondence material to assist students at outstations. The program is known as 'School of the Bush'. I am sure that anyone who has seen that material would agree that it is well worth the effort and that it will play a very important part in Aboriginal education overall. The cost of printing such material is considerable. A 3-year diploma course in teaching at Aboriginal schools has been introduced at Batchelor College and a fourth year has also been introduced this year at the Darwin Community College which will enable Aboriginal teachers who receive the associate diploma to teach not only in Aboriginal schools but at primary schools anywhere in Australia.

Mr Speaker, the government has maintained its commitment to Aboriginal education through its staffing policies on both non-Aboriginal and Aboriginal staff. As a consequence, Northern Territory Aboriginal schools are by far the highest-staffed schools in Australia. I use as examples Shepherdson College on Elcho Island and the Alawa Primary School because their enrolments are very similar. The enrolments at Shepherdson College are 360 and the enrolments at Alawa Primary School are 375. The total number of teachers at the Shepherdson College is 19 and at the Alawa Primary School it is 17.5. In the ancillary staffing, and this is where the numbers differ considerably, Shepherdson College has 17 and Alawa Primary School 5. The total number of staff at Shepherdson College is 36 compared with 22.5 - a difference of some 13.5. Thus, our Aboriginal schools are extremely well staffed. As I have already mentioned, they are by far the highest-staffed schools anywhere in Australia.

Mr Speaker, in an effort to improve the quality of Aboriginal teachers and to improve the retention rate of these teachers, the government is committed to a great deal of expenditure on initiatives. Such initiatives include freight-free perishable allowances, air fares for teachers in Aboriginal communities to come in twice a year to major centres, allowances for teaching in Aboriginal schools and so on.

Residential colleges have continued to be supported by the government irrespective of the increasing cost per year to feed, clothe and transport the children. I am very pleased to note that both these colleges are nearly full. As I have already mentioned, during 1983 the cost of maintaining a student at Kormilda College was some \$13 500 and at Yirara College it was \$10 500.

Mr Speaker, the bilingual program has become an integral part of government policy for Aboriginal education and the result is an initial improvement in the literacy skills of the students. Despite the difficulties in building facilities in remote localities, the government is continuing to upgrade and maintain these facilities. An example is that, in this year's budget, the government is spending some \$1.2m to upgrade the Angurugu School. A number of other projects are programmed in the next budget. Government expenditure on maintenance in Aboriginal communities is a heavy burden. For example, this financial year, \$1.7m has been programmed for education facilities in Aboriginal communities.

Mr Speaker, we will have spent \$32.18m on Aboriginal education by the end of this financial year. Do not let anyone tell you that we do not spend a fair share of money on Aboriginal education. We have the best Aboriginal education anywhere in Australia.

During 1984, the government will begin introducing computer education as part of the core curriculum in both primary and secondary schools and will undertake the massive staff training program that it will entail. We shall also be looking closely at how to take advantage of the opportunities that the School of the Air, correspondence education and adult education will be afforded by the Australian domestic satellite system which is due to come into operation in 1985.

As mentioned in His Honour the Administrator's speech, the government is very concerned about behavioural problems at a number of schools. This occurs not only in Darwin but throughout the Northern Territory. One counter measure we will be taking will be to establish a special unit for disturbed children. This will be in addition to the excellent programs that are being run already in high schools for these children. Initially, a facility will be established in Darwin.

Greater efforts will be made towards achieving the ultimate goal of self-sufficiency in the training of teachers for our primary and secondary

schools, and technical and further education institutions. In this regard, it is disappointing that many of the scholarships available for teacher training offered by the government for tertiary study at the Darwin Community College this year have not been taken up. We increased the number of scholarships that were available from 40 to 80 this year and it was disappointing that 21 scholarships remained unallocated when the applications closed.

Mr Speaker, it is interesting to note that, this year, we have our first graduates from Batchelor College who will attend Darwin Community College with the aim of obtaining diplomas so that they are able to teach at any primary school. Again, that is a first for the Northern Territory. It is the aim of government to provide a comprehensive range of educational services from pre-school through to university. The Chief Minister has already touched on the university issue. I shall comment further on that in the not too distant future.

During 1984, substantial progress will be made at the post-school level as well as in primary and secondary education. Through the Vocational Training Commission, the government will continue to develop manpower and training strategies aimed at attaining and maintaining a skilled workforce appropriate to the Territory's present and future needs. Towards this end, the government, through the Vocational Training Commission, will continue to extend its liaison with industry over the identification of training needs. Particular emphasis will be placed on development of strategies through the vocational preparation of youth other than through the traditional apprenticeship system. In this regard, special attention will be paid to the training needs of early school leavers. Efforts will also be made to ensure that Aboriginal employment and training initiatives by Northern Territory and Commonwealth departments and agencies are coordinated with the way in which Aboriginal people wish to see their communities developed.

Late 1984 will mark the completion of 2 new buildings at Darwin Community College: the Learning Resources Centre and the School of General Studies. The latter will enable the reunification of the 2 main college campuses and the closing of the temporary accommodation at Winnellie. New initiatives in course development this year at the Darwin Community College include the introduction of 2 degree-level programs: Bachelor of Arts (Fine Arts) and Bachelor of Business (Economics and Finance). In addition, there is a new Diploma of Applied Science (Nursing Unit Management), Diploma of Teaching (TAFE) and Associate Diploma in Theatre Arts.

Mr Speaker, I indicated earlier that there was every indication that Territory education has now come of age. The initiatives which this government will be taking during 1984 will not only consolidate past achievements but will also pave the way for an even more encouraging future for our children in all avenues of educational training. I trust that all honourable members will support those aims. I would just like to say in closing that I have always supported the need for consultation. Next week I will be taking up the honourable member for MacDonnell's offer to visit Kintore. I also hope to be able to speak with the honourable member for Stuart about problems in his electorate and also the honourable member for Arnhem. I think that it is necessary for all of us to get together and talk about issues that are of concern in our particular areas. It has given me great pleasure to speak to the Address in Reply and I support the motion.

Mr PERRON (Treasurer): Mr Speaker, in speaking to this Address in Reply today, I would like to touch on a few matters that have been raised by honourable members during the course of debate. Last week, the member for Stuart made statements to the effect that self-management, as we know it and attempt to administer it today, is a nonsense and that controls are absurd and do not fit

Aboriginal ways and culture. I do not know a great deal about Aboriginal ways and culture but I would say that it is just as well that some of them do not fit at all.

The honourable member was very big on generalities but very short on specifics. He told us that virtually everything that we have ever done concerning Aboriginal communities, including the handing over of powers and funds to communities so that they can make decisions themselves, has been a massive failure. I hope that the honourable member enlightens the Assembly as time goes by. I am sure he will be giving us a few more specifics. I was trying to grasp at the sorts of things he was talking about but he was being very general.

I suppose that one of them is the requirement that those Aboriginal councils which have taken on a degree of responsibility account for taxpayers' funds in the same way as virtually any other organisation which receives funds from the government. I am sure it is exceptionally annoying to Aboriginal communities and town clerks in those communities to have to do all the paperwork and accountancy. I do not know how one gets around it. We could make it a much more simple operation by just writing out an enormous cheque for those people and telling them to do what they like with it and walk away. That is not the answer. Plainly, the Auditor-General and others will take a continuing interest in the financial controls of organisations to ensure that the funds are used for the purposes for which they were granted.

I hope that the honourable member for Stuart will give us some details about the types of things that government has required of Aboriginal communities which really frustrate them and make the system 'unworkable', as he would put it. Bold references about services, equipment and frustration, in themselves, do not mean a great deal unless they are spelt out further.

Mr Speaker, I was amused by the honourable Leader of the Opposition's references to the CLP printing an election brochure for the bush which he felt would be of great embarrassment if it ever appeared in towns. Perhaps I could remind him of the 1980 election when the ALP produced a poster for the bush which was headed 'Land rights now - not sweet talk'. It was to the eternal embarrassment of the ALP that a number of copies crept into the towns of the Northern Territory and caused some red faces. They related to a campaign the ALP was running in the bush, a campaign which it did not want anyone in the major settlements to see.

The member for Nhulunbuy made 2 comments which I think are worth touching on. Firstly, he challenged us to name even one Aboriginal matriculant in the last 5 years and, secondly, went on to say that Aboriginal parents do not like sending their children to Kormilda but want their children to be educated at the outstations. There is an interesting connection there. However, in response to his challenge to name an Aboriginal matriculant in the last 5 years - I guess to some degree it depends on the definition of 'Aboriginal'. These days, the term is used in the very widest context and I am advised that, in the widest context, certainly at least a couple of students of Aboriginal descent have matriculated within the last 5 years in the Northern Territory. However, if we are talking about full-blooded Aborigines, as I think most Territorians see Aborigines, it is true that there have been no known matriculants in the Northern Territory in the last 5 years. I do not agree that the way to judge whether the Territory's Aboriginal education programs are working is by the number of matriculants. I hope that not too many members of the Assembly judge the success of Aboriginal education in that way.

On his second point, I doubt that, even if educational programs could be mounted at the outstations - as was put to us by the honourable member for



Nhulunbuy - any students would pass at matriculation level because it is a high standard of education. Without any experience of what one might call the real world - that is, the world away from an outstation - I doubt that any student would ever matriculate. I regard attendance at institutions such as Kormilda to be an education in itself for Aboriginal students. Surely those students in remote communities who hope - and let us hope they hope - to obtain ever higher levels of education should have that education to a fair degree in concert with training to cope with living in an urban environment, at least from time to time.

The honourable member for Barkly made some important points about employment prospects for Aborigines, particularly on Aboriginal settlements. I agree with him wholeheartedly. Even if we had communities with several hundred Aborigines who were all matriculants, I do not see how that would change the employment prospects because those settlements are in areas where there simply are not any substantial employment opportunities. There may never be any substantial employment opportunities in many of the remoter areas of the Northern Territory. It is a sad fact that, if we expect to employ the great bulk of Aborigines, even in the next 50 years, a great many of them will have to move from where they are with all the ramifications that that brings to areas where there will be employment prospects.

The honourable member for Arnhem stated that the government has opposed every land claim. It was disappointing to hear that because I thought that the honourable member would have known better than to have made a statement like that, in view of the fact that he worked with the NLC over the past few years. Mr Speaker, the Northern Territory government has a responsibility to all Territorians to do what it can to ensure that the provisions of the Aboriginal Land Rights Act are adhered to. Indeed, the Northern Territory government has obligations under that act. Surely someone has to argue before the commissioner on subjects like detriment? Does the honourable member propose that such matters as community water supplies, roads, easements, public recreational needs etc be left to the land council lawyers to present to the Aboriginal Land Commissioner in each case? Does the honourable member suggest that legal argument should not be put to the commissioner that a land claim is over or contains alienated land not able to be claimed under the Land Rights Act? Does he suggest that the government should not be present at land claim hearings and test the strength of traditional attachment or the bona fides of names submitted as traditional owners? What a mockery the land claims process would be if the only people to attend a hearing were the commissioner and the land council representatives.

I think the honourable member confuses opposition to land rights claims with a desire for the various provisions of the Land Rights Act to be met. The commissioner is conducting an inquiry into those provisions of the act and how they pertain to a particular application. The honourable member is confusing the government's submissions on many of these issues with opposition.

This government stands by its firm belief that public purpose lands in the Northern Territory should be vested in right of the Crown for the wider community. Such land should not be claimable under the Land Rights Act. In fact, it seems from court rulings that much of that land is claimable under the Land Rights Act. I stand by my belief and the government's belief that it should not be claimable.

The honourable member was aggrieved that the government opposed Aboriginal initiatives on a number of fronts, such as the original application by Yipirinya for the registration of a private school in Alice Springs. What he failed to acknowledge in bringing to the Assembly's attention our failure to register on

the first application was that, following negotiations on the standard of education that the school would provide to its students, the school was, in fact, registered. This raises an interesting point but perhaps not an uncommon one in the Northern Territory. The government can decline to accept a proposal by a European person or organisation and that is okay. But if it is an Aboriginal organisation, that is an obstruction of Aboriginal advancement by the government - racist, as some would put it. A classic case is the rejection of applications to construct high-rise buildings in Alice Springs. A proposal by whites was rejected. That was too bad. When a recent application by an Aboriginal organisation was rejected, that was racist according to Mr Perkins. One can imagine the awful fuss that would have been made if the Darwin Primary School had been a black school. Goodness me, it would never stop.

Mr Speaker, the Northern Territory and its progress forward over the next few years and beyond raises the interesting situation of national parks. I could never really come to grips with the federal government's decision to withhold national parks from the Northern Territory government. One really wonders why we are trusted with a budget of something like \$1000m to dispense. We have legislative powers over police, the judiciary, welfare functions, housing, education and health. The Territory government can be trusted with all of those things but not national parks. It is just incredible. The power of the ANPWS, as a bureaucratic empire in Canberra, has been quite remarkable.

Mr Speaker, I move on to the subject of the memorandum. This is probably the most important aspect of all. As we are coming to expect in the Northern Territory, the Territory's member in the House of Representatives and members opposite are once again teaming up to apologise for federal government action which is eroding the Northern Territory government's position. Only the naive or the stupid would fail to see that dragging the Northern Territory into the relativities review can only disadvantage the Northern Territory. The proof, if anyone needs it, is demonstrated by every state in Australia joining with us in opposing our involvement.

Mr Smith: Tell us why?

Mr PERRON: I need hardly remind members opposite that two-thirds of those states are Labor states. The federal member got the story so wrong when he was trying to explain that there really was nothing to worry about. He even thinks that the Northern Territory's formula is based on personal income tax receipts. Of course, 2 years ago, that basis was changed to total tax. But the honourable member in the House of Representatives is a couple of years behind us.

The first we knew about the Northern Territory being included was from the last few words spoken at a Premiers' Conference which we attended. It would have been during the last 60 seconds. People were physically getting out of their chairs to move to the doors to catch planes in that God-forsaken place. The dying words of the Treasurer added the Northern Territory into a statement he was making about the Grants Commission.

We wrote immediately to the Treasurer and the Prime Minister saying that it was unfair that the Northern Territory should be included, that a mistake had been made and that we would like a discussion on it. There were 3 further communiques over the following 7 months, from the middle of last year, pointing out various facts to the federal government about the basis for self-government and the arrangements which were to stay in place until such time as the Territory's constitutional position changed. It was all to no avail. We received polite replies which dodged around the issue and then the bombshell came in a telex from the Deputy Prime Minister a few weeks ago saying that the

Grants Commission's terms of reference had been determined. The Commonwealth had ignored our pleas and the pleas of the states. It had ignored the recommendation of all the Under-Treasurers from the states of Australia who had met and made submissions to the Commonwealth. All had been set aside. The Commonwealth was proceeding on its original course which included the Northern Territory in the relativities review.

To make matters worse, the letter from the Deputy Prime Minister also said that, following the relativities review, the Commonwealth would make a decision on how the Northern Territory would be treated financially after negotiations with all the parties concerned. That completely sets aside that word 'agreement', repeated dozens of times through the Memorandum of Understanding, that this document can only change by agreement between the 2 governments. It has been made very clear to us that the Commonwealth will decide on the Territory's treatment following the relativities review. There is no suggestion that it will wait for agreement.

Mr Speaker, that sequence of events has a strong message. Despite any arguments or support that we have for our position, we have been dragged kicking and screaming into the relativities review. Why should we care? The Territory's federal member does not care and neither do honourable members opposite. They have all said that it is okay. They always thought we would be financed like a state anyway. So do we, Mr Speaker, but when we are a state, not before.

Are we expected to cast aside our claim for compensation for 70 years of Commonwealth neglect during which time the Northern Territory was left to rot? Are we satisfied with transport infrastructure and communications in the Northern Territory? Do our citizens enjoy the same level of services as those in the states? What state is denied 30% of its total area without compensation? What state is compelled to send its citizens interstate to attend a university or has national parks administered by the ANPWS in Canberra? We have no control over uranium or industrial relations. We are even denied local investment of superannuation contributions from our public servants. We are not a member of the Loans Council or a member of the Premiers' Conference and we have only observer status on a number of ministerial councils. But the crux is, of course, political representation. We have 1 MHR and 2 senators yet the federal government's intention is that the Territory be treated as a state.

Mr Speaker, I can see that some people in power in Canberra today, both politicians and officials, are ignorant of the facts leading up to and during self-government negotiations. They just do not understand what self-government is all about. They were not involved at the time. But to have Territory politicians mouthing support for the Commonwealth attack on these financial arrangements is incomprehensible. Such actions are traitorous to Territorians and they can only disadvantage us. I repeat that it is incomprehensible that any Territory politician could possibly agree to the Northern Territory being brought into a relativities review. Mr Speaker, I commend the motion.

Mr SMITH (Millner): Mr Speaker, I know there was some reason why I waited until this stage in the debate. I do not want to enter into debate with the Treasurer on the question of the Memorandum of Understanding because it is a detailed and important area and I certainly do not want to debate that matter off the top of my head. But I would ask the Treasurer to provide to this Assembly, or at least to the opposition in private if he so desires, a statement which quite clearly indicates the effects that the relativities review would have on the amount of money that we might receive. We have heard figures quoted by the government that we would lose up to \$30m. An NT News editorial said that we would lose up to \$26m. No evidence has been provided to this

side of the Assembly to justify that figure. All we have at this stage are assertions from the government that, if we go into the relativities review and the Commonwealth government forces us into a new financial arrangement, we will lose out. We are concerned by that matter as well. We do not want to see that situation arise. It would help us immensely on this side if we could be given some information that would help us to assess the situation for ourselves. Obviously, we do not have the resources or the background on the matter to be able to do it. I make a genuine approach to the Treasurer to provide that information to enable us to make a realistic assessment of what is going on and what the implications are of being forced into the relativities review.

Mr Speaker, I wanted to pick up 1 or 2 comments of the Minister for Education. I was intrigued to hear him claim credit on behalf of his enlightened government for providing to teachers in the Northern Territory in remote areas a freight-free perishables allowance and air fares into major centres twice a year. I can remember very clearly from my previous occupation that the Northern Territory Teachers Federation was forced to go to the Conciliation and Arbitration Commission to obtain an award to protect those conditions because the government of the day and the minister of the day were intent on taking them away.

Mr Robertson: That is not true. I supported it.

Mr SMITH: The honourable minister did not. He might have supported it in the end but the reason why the Teachers Federation took that to the Conciliation and Arbitration Commission was because of a definite departmental policy to phase it out. It is a bit cheeky after that for the Minister for Education to claim credit on behalf of his enlightened government.

Mr Speaker, in reference to the Administrator's speech to this Assembly, the thing that struck me is that it is quite clear that the speech was meant to soften up Territorians for significant increases in taxes and charges. We have already heard of one area where charges may be increased significantly and that is in the motor vehicle registration area. I look forward with some interest to the statement the Treasurer has promised to make during this sittings.

The Administrator also said that, in the long term, a full financial recovery is expected from the public transport area and the water and sewerage area. I point out first of all that there has been considerable confusion amongst the general public about what this means. I have had people contacting me and stating that they thought it meant that the government bus service would disband and its operations would be taken over by a private bus company, and that the government water and sewerage operation would disband and be taken over by a private organisation. I am assuming that that is not the case and that the government is looking at recovering more of its costs.

Obviously, the government has an interest in recovering more of those costs. But the ramifications for the average householder are quite enormous. We are not talking of a 35% increase, as in the case of third-party motor vehicle insurance. For water and sewerage, if we were to recover the full commercial cost, we would be looking at a 300% to 400% increase in current charges for water and sewerage. Now once that becomes commonly known, I would expect that you would see a minor revolution, particularly in the northern suburbs. The other area that I have mentioned is the bus area. Again, I am not quite sure what the recovery rate is for the bus service but I would be surprised if it is more than 20% to 25%. Again, we are looking at a dramatic increase from 30¢ per bus fare to well over a dollar. That has quite considerable implications for people living in Darwin because of its geographical layout. There are

considerable implications for the people living in Palmerston. I would hope that, when the government says that it is moving towards that in the long term, it is very long term indeed.

Mr Speaker, the other area that I was surprised that the honourable Minister for Housing did not comment on was the question of market rents for Housing Commission accommodation. We are all aware of the present government policy and the Commonwealth-States Housing Agreement that housing authorities should work towards a market rent for their tenants. I am also aware that there has not been an increase in housing rents in the last 18 months to 2 years. I would have thought that the honourable minister might have signalled the government's intention in that area or might at least have informed us of what I think are significant discussions at the national level - discussions revolving around moving away from the concept of market rents and moving more into the concept of what are called equity rents. The concept behind the equity rents proposal is to attempt to find a way for public housing tenants to incur similar costs to home owners. There is a lot of evidence around now that suggests that public housing tenants are incurring higher costs than home owners. I am not saying that that applies in the Northern Territory at this time because I think the costs situation is substantially different. But certainly, in the southern states, that is the conclusion that some researchers are coming to: that public housing tenants, the persons who are supposed to be disadvantaged and the persons we are supposed to be helping under the market rent concept, are in fact missing out. Their disadvantage is in relation to home owners.

I would have hoped that the honourable Minister for Housing would have addressed that question. I would certainly invite her to do so during the next sittings because I think it is an important and exciting area, and it certainly does have considerable implications for Housing Commission tenants in the Northern Territory, particularly when you consider that market rents are so high here compared with elsewhere.

I also listened with some interest to the honourable Minister for Housing's comments on the government's housing record. She should be justifiably proud of the government's housing record. It is a good housing record. It is not amazing that it is a good housing record because it is due to good socialist policies being pursued and I congratulate the government. Where else would you find the Housing Commission being responsible for 40% of the building commitments in the Northern Territory - a good socialist principle - compared to 6% to 12% in the states? Where else would you find, except with a good socialist government, a government home loans scheme contributing to 70% of total home finance - an excellent socialist principle? I congratulate the government.

Mr Speaker, I want to talk about the comments in the Administrator's speech on the possible future for the Greater Darwin Rural Advisory Council. I must admit I was somewhat amazed when the government seemed to pre-empt what might come out of the present inquiry into the question of local government in that area. The government seemed to be saying that there would be a form of local representation and, together with that, there would be some local contributions to the cost of providing local-government-type services. I have not been following all that closely what has been happening down there. Perhaps the honourable member for Berrimah could fill us in at a later date. I understand that there is quite a strong body of opinion that they do not want local government in any form whatsoever. I am not sure that they are going to be terribly happy that that option seems to have been taken away from the committee that is due to report to the Minister for Community Development some time this year.

I also take the opportunity of pointing out a concern I have had expressed to me about the way that committee has been going about seeking comments from residents of the area. I understand that it engaged a consulting firm at a cost of about \$1400 to survey the area. The consulting firm drew up a questionnaire which it circulated to as many residents as it could in November or December. A popular means of circulating the questionnaire was to put it on fence posts near the gates of residences. There was not all that much rain then but a number of them disappeared. Obviously, the wind was up and blew them all over the place. One person who complained to a committee member was told: 'Hell, if it is not on your fence post, it is probably in the long grass near your fence. Why don't you go and have a look?' That is not exactly the best means that I have heard of for gaining an accurate representation of what the people in the area want in terms of local government.

Mr Coulter: 36% replied which is very high for a questionnaire survey.

Mr SMITH: If you had taken a bit more care, it might have been over 50%.

Mr Coulter: 20% is the norm.

Mr SMITH: Mr Speaker, I would like to welcome the government's announcement in the small business area. My maiden speech was partly addressed to the need to take action in that area. Although I am not taking the credit, some of the suggestions that I made in my speech have been picked up and I welcome that. I think that there is a crisis among many small business men and women, particularly in Darwin. This is due partly to the oversupply of certain operations in town and partly to inadequate knowledge and inadequate finance when people go into a new business. I am pleased that the government will set up a shopfront advisory service. I am particularly pleased that the government will establish a seat on the Northern Territory Development Corporation for small business. I think those measures will go a long way towards making small businesses more effective in the Territory.

Mr Speaker, I want to spend a little time expressing my concern at the lack of detail that is provided to members of this Assembly and to the public of the Northern Territory in general in budget documents and statements of account. I know this has been raised before but, as you are probably aware, I have taken responsibility for this area and I have become concerned at the limited information that is made available to us.

At the Commonwealth and state level, governments have reached a situation where a large amount of information is provided as general background to the budget papers that are presented. I will give an example. This is the Commonwealth budget statement for 1983-84. It is Budget Paper No 1 and is one of 11 budget papers. It deals with the following: summary of 1983-84 budget; the budget and the economy; estimates of outlays 1983-84; estimates of receipts 1983-84; budget outcome 1982-83; and budget and other public sector transactions since 1973-74. We have a separate Budget Paper No 7 which deals with payments to or for the states, the Northern Territory and local government authorities. If anyone wants to become an expert on the Northern Territory's financial relationships, this is one of the budget papers that must be read. The point I am making is that, by reading these, a very good idea can be obtained of the overall context within which the Commonwealth budget is being set, the overall expectations of the Commonwealth in coming out with those budget figures and other related questions. Compare that to what happens in the Northern Territory. We get a very skimpy budget speech which goes for approximately one hour. As well, we get explanations to the Appropriation Bill which, basically, show various areas of departmental budgets divided into items, the previous year's

actual expenditure and the anticipated expenditure for the coming year. If there is a significant variation, a couple of sentences follow at the bottom to explain it. That is all we get.

The problem with that is that people who are trying to analyse the budget have no idea of the overall context within which the budget is set. They are given no information on whether budget targets have been set or if targets have been met in previous years. No analysis of the overall economy and the contribution that the government makes to the overall economy in the Northern Territory is provided. In all, I think it is fair to say that the government does not do anything to raise the level of economic literacy in the Territory. In fact, it could be said that it discourages economic literacy deliberately because less information is provided in the budget documents now than 5 or 6 years ago. As well, there are always changes in the headings of departmental estimates which make it very difficult to gain comparisons year by year.

The same thing happens with the quarterly and half-yearly accounts. I will give an example. The half-yearly accounts, I think, were published in a special Gazette in early February. There were quite large discrepancies between the estimated half-yearly expenditure and the actual half-yearly expenditure. I will give 2 examples. One related to the Housing Commission. Its anticipated budget for this year was \$90m; it had spent, in the first half-year, \$31m. Another is NTEC. Its anticipated annual budget was \$72m; it had spent only \$31m. I believe that there are good reasons for that. Even after my private inquiries, I am not sure if I know fully what those good reasons are. What I am saying is that the government ought to improve its procedures so that it provides explanations where there are significant variations in the half-yearly accounts so that everybody knows what is going on and the level of economic debate in this community can be raised.

The essential problem is that, in the Northern Territory, we appear to be using an old-fashioned budget concept - the general term for it is 'line budget'. It is a traditional budgeting method. It is used basically to determine an individual department's budget. It works off the previous year's budget as a base and then haggling takes place each year about how much extra money can be supplied. In many areas of the world and in other parts of Australia, a move has been made away from traditional line budgets and into new concepts which go under different names. In some places, it is called 'performance budgeting'; in others it is called 'planning programming budgeting' or 'zero base budgeting'. There are other names as well. But what they have in common is an emphasis which is placed on purposes, results, impacts and effects of government expenditure and an examination of the relationship between the money that goes in and the results that come out.

The main weakness of the line budget is that it is not really given a public examination. The concentration is always on how much money each department will get in any financial year. Very little concentration is placed on what the money is to be used for, why it is to be used for that purpose and what effect putting money to that use has had in the past. All those aspects are covered by the new concepts of budgeting that go under the various names that I have given.

Program performance budgeting is not new. It was first introduced in 1961 by the US Defence Department. It has been investigated by a number of inquiries throughout Australia since the mid-1970s. Examples were the review of NSW Government Administration Interim Report in 1977 and the Public Accounts Committee on Finance in Government Operations. All of the committees of inquiry in Australia have recommended shifts away from traditional line budgeting into something along the lines that I have suggested.

By going to a program budgeting approach, policy formulation and implementation areas will benefit as will program design, planning and administration, budgeting itself and accountability. Also, it enables the redirection of government effort or resources. It should assist the task of redirection of public sector resources in response to changing circumstances. It places an emphasis on planned achievement and results, and can facilitate identification of areas where change is required and where programs should be expanded, refined, scaled down and perhaps even abandoned.

The public would benefit because it would have a much clearer idea, if the government implements it fully, of what the government is about. It would have a clear summary explaining the purposes of government funding and providing some measure of the extent to which public moneys are achieving their stated purposes. The Assembly would have a much better understanding as a result of receiving more comprehensive and relevant information. The Cabinet would have a better idea because its members would be in a better position to set expenditure priorities and make resource allocation decisions as a result of receiving more specific information about the impact of various expenditure proposals on available resources. Ministers, as individuals, would also have a clearer understanding of how the money in their departments was allocated. The last group of people who would benefit from such an approach is senior management because they would be in a better position to explain their activities and their priorities to both ministers and Cabinet.

Mr Speaker, in conclusion, I have put forward this suggestion in a positive way. I am concerned at the lack of information available. I do not believe that it is helpful to the Territory, to this parliament, to my political party or to the government party and I would urge the government to give serious consideration to examining the existing system of budgeting and a system along the lines of the one that I proposed.

Mr D.W. COLLINS (Sadadeen): Mr Speaker, I would like to congratulate the new members of this Assembly on their maiden speeches. It is very clear from the depth of study that obviously went into those speeches that this Assembly will be well served by their efforts. I must give the Adam Smith award to the honourable member for Berrimah for his very timely reminder that the people who most want to see businesses succeed are businessmen. It was also a reminder that government departments should help and not hinder. I have one plea to the government: please do not drain Leanyer Swamp. The rumour is that there is a very ferocious bunyip out there. One thing I am sure of, whether this rumour is true or not, is that they certainly breed them tough out Leanyer way.

There are 2 conventions to be followed with maiden speeches: firstly, they will be heard in silence and, secondly, the member will not be provocative. We well remember the Leader of the Opposition calling a point of order on my friend, the honourable member for Victoria River, in his maiden speech, when he claimed that he was being provocative over a mild rebuke he gave to the honourable member for Arnhem. I personally found 3 points in particular in the speech of the honourable member for Arnhem which were provocative. These were picked up by the members of this Assembly. We heard the member out in silence, and thus kept our part of the bargain. I do recall holding my hands up in horror. Of course, the Leader of the Opposition put a ridiculous interpretation on it. He gave us one of his wonderfully embellished stories. He has a very fruitful and vivid imagination and goes to town in the silliest possible way.

The fact is that I found the honourable Leader of the Opposition's speech most curious. He defended the member for Arnhem with a real passion but he crucified the member for Stuart. You will recall, Sir, that a remark was made



here that 65% of people supported the CLP. Then there was an interjection: 'Only the racist ones'. I brought this matter up in the adjournment debate. But I was kind, Sir. I did not name the member. But what did his leader say the very next day: 'I had a conversation with the member for Stuart, and we agreed to disagree'. The leader then went on to say: 'I do not believe that 65% of the people who voted for the Country Liberal Party were all racists'. There is only one inference that you can draw from that, Mr Speaker: the Leader of the Opposition and the member for Stuart had a conversation and the member for Stuart defended his interjection in this Assembly. Now that should have been a private conversation. But in this Assembly, his leader named him and exposed this particular attitude which he was prepared to defend.

Well, I would suggest that that is terrible behaviour for a leader. It is very odd behaviour indeed. I would say to the honourable member for Arnhem: welcome to this Assembly. I have worked in the past for Aboriginal candidates, obviously for the Country Liberal Party. They were not successful and I found some disappointment in that because they would have made excellent representatives. They would have represented their electorates very well indeed, and they would have brought some insights into this Assembly which, I believe, we badly need.

I hope that the member for Arnhem will bring insights to the Assembly which the previous member for Arnhem was not able to bring. I would like to think that the member for Arnhem will expect to be treated in a colour-blind sense. If he raises a point, then that point will be debated by members. We will debate the points in question and not attack the person.

When I arrived back in Alice Springs last Friday, I was very pleased to see a copy of Aboriginal News which discussed the Aboriginal member to represent Arnhem. I concur wholeheartedly with the 3 points quoted there from him. He talks about his hopes for Aboriginal people making an economic contribution to the Territory. That is excellent. I do not believe that the dignity of any people can be enhanced until they stand on their own feet. It may interest the honourable member to know that on Monday morning I had an in-depth discussion with an Aboriginal person, a good friend of mine in Alice Springs, about such a proposal.

Mr B. Collins: Tell us that some of your best friends are Aborigines.

Mr D.W. COLLINS: Some are indeed, but the Leader of the Opposition cannot accept that particular point even though it does happen to be true.

The second point the member for Arnhem made in this article was his working for harmony between the races. I would say to him 'hear, hear' on that particular point but urge him to guard against those who try to make mischief and drive a wedge between Aboriginal and other people in the Territory. That should not be a barrier. Differences should be raised freely in this Assembly with the aim of resolving them and explaining feelings.

The third point was that he is prepared to treat all people the same regardless of race, creed and colour. That is certainly an excellent ideal for each one of us.

As I have mentioned before, the Leader of the Opposition is a story teller extraordinaire. He is adept at making something out of nothing. I remember a uranium story in this Assembly. He sat here one day and wove the most intriguing story about Ranger. He said that it might only be scuttle-butt but he had heard that there may have been a flow of radioactive material out of the

retention ponds at Ranger and into Magela Creek. It was very plausible and he asked for it to be investigated. Lo and behold, the very next day there was a statement over the radio to the effect that radioactive material had flowed down Magela Creek. People believed it. I have in my possession a paper from the Uniting Church stating that it should be getting out there and warning the Aboriginal people and moving them out.

Mr Speaker, the inquiry came up with the finding that it was rain water. No radioactive material whatsoever had flowed over the dam. All that had happened was that some rain water had flowed back into the works area. The story had been concocted by this person. It had absolutely no substance to it whatsoever. It was very intriguing.

Now, let me come to another one of his fascinating stories. You may remember, Sir, the 5 March election last year. Prior to that date, election pamphlets were circulated saying: 'Hawke Labor Government will ...'. They were circulated all over the place. Have a look at some of the promises. A Labor government would build the Alice to Darwin rail link with a 1988 target completion date, upgrade the Alice Springs air terminal, and introduce Medicare, a simple health scheme which would greatly reduce health costs for 95% of the people. Mr Speaker, you ask the people in the electorate whether they think it is simple and whether they think it has reduced costs greatly. I have not found too many who feel that way about it. The facts of the matter are that all those people who could not afford it before were cared for and all those people who could afford it and could make their choice now do not have a choice. They are told what they must do. That is typical socialist policy, of course.

Then we had the reduction of petrol prices by 3¢ a litre. Well, we know the truth about that. It is the other way round by a long shot. A Labor government promised to cut income tax and give \$19 more a week to Territory pensioners and unemployed. Of course, it did not mention the means test which it has decided to rethink. It woke up to the fact that it would hurt the lower socio-economic group.

Regarding this particular pamphlet, in the June session of this Assembly somebody was obviously having a bit of a dig at the Leader of the Opposition by continually putting this poster up on the wall in the Nelson Building. I noticed it there. It was continually up and then down again. On one particular day, I had the great misfortune to climb the stairs and come round the corner just as the Leader of the Opposition dashed out of his office and grabbed the pamphlet off the wall. He was in a fit of pique. There were drawing pins flying all over the place. I made the dastardly mistake of smiling. That of course did not encourage the Leader of the Opposition at all. He stood up in this Assembly that day in an adjournment debate and he made a great song and dance, an absolute song and dance. He said he was happy with the ALP's propaganda. He supported Mr Hawke on everything.

Mr B. Collins: That was 12 months ago.

Mr D.W. COLLINS: Learn to count. But his concern was that there were huge pinholes appearing in that wall. The walls were being ruined. Hundreds of dollars had been spent on painting the Nelson Building. He did not mind it going up, remember? He told the person to stick them up with sticky tape. What a lovely job that would do on the wall. Might I present the honourable member for giant pinholes.

The honourable member attacked me about women. He knows all about my attitude to women. Well, after much recall, there is only one occasion which I

remember when he might have told the Assembly anything about women at all. It was a deliberate attack by innuendo. There was no substance to it whatsoever. Let me recall that particular occasion. The Sessional Committee on the Environment was out at Jabiru. I was talking to a young lady who was actually in this Assembly this morning. She was driving us around. I made a remark which I claim to be totally reasonable: that some women will not vote for a woman candidate. In particular, I had in mind Aboriginal women living in tribal conditions who find it very difficult. The fact had emerged in an analysis of why one of our Aboriginal candidates missed out on being elected to this Assembly. However, I did not have the chance to explain. The then member for Nightcliff came out with a very stinging and embarrassing attack. Perhaps I should have restrained myself but, as I left the bus, I had a little defensive dig back at the honourable lady. What did I get in return? She flew completely off the handle and demonstrated a total loss of control. I have been a schoolteacher, Mr Speaker. Teachers should use every emotion. They should show anger on occasion but it is also good to be able, deep down, to have a little giggle to oneself about the whole matter. There is a great difference between controlled anger and total loss of control. Of course, the people who arrive in that position are beaten and they do not forgive very readily.

It is rather interesting, Mr Speaker, to find that those people who are excellent at giving out the medicine are very poor takers of the same.

Mr B. Collins: This is possibly the worst speech I have ever heard from you, by a mile.

Mr D.W. COLLINS: From the time when I started teaching, my policy was to treat everybody the same. That has gained for me a great deal of respect in the teaching field. I taught in Alice Springs for over 10 years and, if I had made as many enemies as the Leader of the Opposition has sought to suggest, there were enough former students and their parents, in the electorate, to have voted me out of the Assembly. The fact that 70.5% of the electors of Sadadeen were prepared to support me and the Country Liberal Party is something which I am very proud of and humbled by. Let me reply to the honourable Leader of the Opposition in modern parlance: 'Eat your heart out'. You can see, Mr Speaker, that obviously I was very upset by the Leader of the Opposition's attack on me last Wednesday. Tongue in cheek, I could not sleep very well. In fact, I turned to my Bible for comfort. Seriously, Mr Speaker, I appreciate the gift of this Bible. Perchance I turned to Proverbs and the very first verse I read was 18.2 of the King James version. Believe me, when I think of the Leader of the Opposition, I take a great deal of solace from reading that particular verse. I am not going to read it out; I hope merely to encourage some Bible study.

One member said that the reason for the election was simply because Ayers Rock had been given away. That is nonsense. That was simply the very final straw which made the election absolutely inevitable. We well know the deliberate lack of consultation from the federal government on that particular matter. No doubt, there is good will on the part of the Aboriginal people at Ayers Rock and tourism will go ahead in the short term. However, nobody can say what the future holds. One cannot commit a group of people in the future, as we well know. Indeed, it was the right of this government to be concerned about the conditions under which Ayers Rock would be given away and defend its future use for all Territorians, all Australians and all of our visitors.

Much was made about the election campaign being short. There were problems in the bush. The Country Liberal Party encountered them particularly when it came to mobile polling booths and schedule changes due to the weather. I would commend the Electoral Office on the good and professional work it has done.

Mr Bell: Hear, hear!

Mr D.W. COLLINS: The member for MacDonnell, who likes to make a noise over there, made much of the fact that Ayers Rock was the cause of the election. He should be glad he had a short election instead of complaining. I have it on very good information from scrutineers that, if the third candidate preferences had been distributed, he would have been no more than 100 votes in front of his opponent. If we had had one week more, he would have gone down the drain. Just 50 people needed to have changed their minds. Our candidate, when he was rid of his work commitments and got out on the job, had about 10 days at the most. He did not even get to places like Ayers Rock and Docker River. If he had done so, we would certainly have had a different member for MacDonnell. Next time, Mr Speaker.

It really gives me a great deal of heart that the Country Liberal Party received so much Aboriginal support all around the Territory. It puts a lie to the myth which the media encouraged that the Country Liberal Party could not win those bush seats. We won Victoria River and went darn close in Arnhem, Arafura and MacDonnell. We received great heart from that and we will be working very hard in the future to win those seats for the Country Liberal Party.

Another election issue was Mr Hawke's stop to uranium. Obviously, the Leader of the Opposition was in the know. He said so the other day. He knew that we would not be getting our 2 uranium mines. Of course, he was working quietly behind the scenes for a \$70m tourism donation for Kakadu. Well good on him on that particular matter. But are there strings attached? One could be forgiven for thinking that there would be an unwritten string attached: you get it if you put in an ALP government. If that is not true, I would suggest that the Leader of the Opposition - who bragged about this particular pull with the federal government - if he wants to demonstrate his real interest in the Territory, should work behind the scenes again to get that funding.

Another tactic in the federal election was to call the Territory a mendicant state. We were told we were getting 87% of our funding from the federal government. I disagree with my friend, the honourable Minister for Education. Federal government funding comes from Australian taxpayers and let us not forget it. According to figures that I have been given by the Treasury, we have increased from 1% of our own funding before self-government to 13%. In that short time, that is a very admirable effort. But we must keep down our charges. The way to increase our total revenue is by attracting people to the Territory. If we start bumping up our charges, we will certainly prevent that.

Let us get things in perspective. On average, 65% of state funding comes from the federal government, alias the taxpayer. The federal government is doing all it can to kill the Territory's opportunity to catch up with the states and fund ourselves to the same level. The federal government is pouring money into the populous areas of Australia: Sydney and Melbourne. The Prime Minister, Mr Hawke, is 100% politician and no statesman at all. The Territory does not matter as is obviously seen from the treatment it is given. I believe that this treatment will toughen and unite Territorians. We have a very keen sense of fair play as was demonstrated through the election by the number of people on this side of the Assembly. The actions of Mr Hawke are purely vindictive. It seems as though it works this way: 'If you vote Labor, you are all right but, if you vote against us, we will cut you down'. This is bully boy action at its worst and is certainly an assault upon democracy.

Mr Hawke would like to project an image of being a good sport but the revealing comments that he makes give the true picture which is that he is

really vindictive. Mr Speaker, do you remember Tasmania on the night of the federal election? Tasmania voted against the federal government. His revealing comment was: 'They won't get their dam'. What are the last couple of issues that have been hitting the Territory in relation to the federal government? Firstly, there is the Stuart Highway. There has been no further funding for the upgrading of the Stuart Highway for 5 months. We are \$0.8m down the drain and, if it continues, we will be \$3.55m down by June. I am not talking about the accelerated program to have the highway finished for the bicentennial celebrations in 1988. This is the ordinary program. Then, of course, there is the Criminal Code. A crowning bit of glory this one was. How were we informed of the fact that the federal government is not happy with it? The Chief Minister received it through a telex to the NT News. Hawke is really showing his true colours. Hawke is nothing but a wolf in sheep's clothing. 'Old Consensus', as he loves to be called, is really 'Old Vindictive'. I believe, Mr Speaker, that Mr Hawke will live to regret his actions against the Territory.

In his contribution to the Address in Reply, the member for Wagaman said he did not know how he could influence Canberra. I would suggest a method whereby he can influence it very well. He can play a big part in it, as can the rest of us, when we send the Chief Minister to Canberra with the blessing of the people of the Territory. People are coming to understand why the Chief Minister will make that move. He was the architect of self-government in so many ways and he is seeing it pulled down around his ears. We will send him to Canberra in good company with 2 Country Liberal Party senators.

At the moment, the 2 senators cancel one another out. We will send 2 senators from the Territory CLP. I believe, Mr Speaker, that that will go a long way towards gaining for the Territory the balance of power in the upper house and give Mr Hawke a kick where it will hurt most. I would suggest to the honourable member for Wagaman that he get out and sell that, as I will and as I know every member on this side of the Assembly will.

Mr Speaker, I am pleased to have been able to speak in this debate.

Mr EVERINGHAM (Chief Minister): Mr Speaker, I think there was some mention of price control on the radio this morning. Maybe we should introduce fair rentals in respect of the areas that we are allowed in this Assembly under the present seating arrangements.

There is very little that I feel that I can say, Mr Speaker, in reply to the almost innumerable comments and issues that have been raised in debate on the Address in Reply. One could spend hours attempting to deal with the whole gamut of issues raised. Many issues of considerable moment have been addressed by honourable members. In the relatively limited experience I have had in this Assembly, it would perhaps be the most diverse range of speeches that I have heard in the Address in Reply debate. Also, I think it is probably the first time that every honourable member has made a contribution to the debate. Certainly, I will not attempt to cover all the matters raised but I would like to enlarge on a couple which have been touched on.

Firstly, the honourable Leader of the Opposition raised the matter, which is pretty dear to his heart, of a visit of mine to Oenpelli during the last election campaign. He continues to persist in his assertion that I went to Oenpelli to discuss tourism. Of course, there is some correspondence from a Kunwinjku Trading Association Incorporated which was handed to me at the meeting that I attended at Oenpelli together with a copy of the response I made a day or so later. I would like to table those 2 letters. The letter from the Kunwinjku Trading Association Incorporated speaks only of uranium mining and housing. My

reply, I think, speaks for itself. The matter is not particularly important. I table this correspondence simply because, although I do not disavow at all the election brochure that the Leader of the Opposition keeps seeing in such an obsessive light, the fact is that tourism was never raised with me, and certainly was not raised by me, in the course of my visit to Oenpelli.

Mr Speaker, one matter of very considerable concern has been raised during the course of this Address in Reply debate and that is the Yulara Tourist Village development and the undertakings which were given to the Yulara Development Company as a result of the agreement by the federal government to hand over Uluru National Park to the Aboriginal people in November of last year. In order that the raising of foreign loans by the Yulara Development Company could go ahead in November, it was necessary for the Minister for Home Affairs and Environment to give certain undertakings to the Yulara Development Company. Of course, those undertakings were passed on to the various banks which I think contributed \$70m. At that stage, it was a \$70m loan raising. The second of the specific undertakings in this telex, dated 22 November 1983, received by the Yulara Development Company from the Minister for Home Affairs and Environment was: 'Existing motel accommodation and camping areas will be relocated to the Yulara Tourist Village by the end of next year'.

Recently, I had a meeting in Darwin with the Minister for Aboriginal Affairs, Mr Clyde Holding. Because unfortunate rumours had been circulating which had caused disquiet to the Yulara Development Company, to some of its lenders and indeed to the Northern Territory government in relation to the existing facilities around Ayers Rock, I sought of Mr Holding that, in discussions with Aboriginal people at Ayers Rock, he would reiterate the undertaking given by his colleague, the Minister for Home Affairs and Environment. Unfortunately, as newspaper reports indicated, not only did he not reiterate the undertaking but he gave at least some indication to the people at Ayers Rock that the existing facilities would be able to be used beyond the time indicated by the Minister for Home Affairs and Environment. That original time, of course, was the end of 1984. Upon my raising the matter with him in the course of correspondence, Mr Holding replied in the following terms: 'Nor is there any intention that existing buildings would be used to provide tourist facilities in competition with the development at Yulara Tourist Village'. There is more in relation to that. The question arose of using 2 of the motel buildings close to the Aboriginal community for the benefit of Aboriginals in the area, and for convening arts and crafts workshops to service tourists and so on.

Mr Speaker, all I want to do is place on record the undertaking of the Minister for Home Affairs and Environment and the correspondence of the Minister for Aboriginal Affairs. There is absolutely no reason why the needs of the Aboriginal people of the area cannot be catered for in the Yulara Tourist Village. I understand that an arts and crafts workshop is in fact to be built for the use of the Aboriginal people of the area and the Yulara Development Company stands ready to assist and cooperate with Mr Holding in any way in providing such facilities as he may consider necessary, as long as he is prepared to find the necessary funding.

I just want to place the concern of the Northern Territory government on the record of this parliament because a great deal of money has been borrowed on the basis of assurances from the Commonwealth government. The Northern Territory has pledged its credit to a vast extent with overseas banks. I say 'overseas banks' deliberately because every effort was made to raise the funds within Australia. Because Australian banks simply were not interested, the only alternative was to borrow the funds from overseas. I do not want this state of

concern, this hiatus, to continue. It seems to me that there is absolutely no reason why the Commonwealth government cannot be quite explicit and give a reassurance that Mr Cohen's undertaking of 22 November last year will be carried out. Mr Speaker, I call on it to do so because it is doing harm to the credit of the Northern Territory by allowing this doubt and concern to arise.

Motion agreed to.

MOTOR ACCIDENTS (COMPENSATION) AMENDMENT BILL  
(Serial 22)

Continued from 29 February 1984.

Mr SMITH (Millner): Mr Speaker, this bill contains a number of provisions, all of which we support. The first major thing that it does is to change the existing death benefits formula into one that is easily comprehensible. The previous formula had considerable problems which we raised in March last year following serious criticism of the formula by Mr Justice Nader. At that time, the Attorney-General said that 'it was illogical to tamper with it' as the provision had been examined by the court and further litigation was most unlikely. Mr Speaker, it has taken the government an additional 12 months to acknowledge what was obvious to everyone else - that is, the opposition, the legal profession and the courts - that some change had to be made to the death benefits formula. I am pleased that the government has finally caught up with the rest of the world and is going to change the death benefits formula. We support the change.

The second major change is in terms of the appeals procedure. The section now contains specific time limits for each stage of the appeals procedure. This also is long overdue because there have been some complaints in the past of long delays in undertaking the appeals procedure.

We still have a concern that, even under the new restrictions, there could still be some fairly lengthy delays. To go through the bill as proposed, the general manager can take up to 30 working days to make a decision on a claim. That is 6 weeks. Then there are 28 days to request a referral to the board. Then the general manager must refer as soon as possible. However, as proposed new section 27(1) probably applies, that can be up to 6 weeks. The board must consider this thing within 60 days and there are 28 days to appeal to the tribunal. On our calculations, the total time that may elapse if this whole process is followed is 5 months. That is a fairly lengthy period of time. However, as we have said, we are happy to accept the amendment on the basis that at least it does lay down specific time limits, which is a considerable improvement on the previous situation.

We are pleased to see that rules and procedures can now be made by the judges who sit as the tribunal. We hope that this will cover rules for the awarding of costs. I would like the honourable sponsor of the bill to answer that specific point in his reply. At present, there is a disgraceful situation where, if a person goes all the way through the tribunal and wins, he still has to pay his own costs. I do not think that that is very fair. It certainly does not apply in other courts and other court systems. It would be appropriate that judges, who sit as a tribunal, and who will now have the power to determine rules and procedures, should also have the power under certain conditions to award costs. The honourable Treasurer, I believe, has misled the Assembly in saying that this provision merely formalises existing arrangements. Previously the judges were not specifically empowered to make rules. Indeed, they have at times in their judgments commented on the lack of any rules or regulations. Yet

the act has been in effect for nearly 5 years. This was a serious oversight and has undoubtedly caused hardship.

Another major alteration is to section 33 which will serve to restrict the increase that a board may order to twice the maximum benefits that are specified. We have no objection to that but we do take exception to the sponsor of the bill suggesting that this was due basically to a concern that the tribunal and not the board would make awards well in excess of the maximum limits and make payments not intended to be covered. It is clear from his comments that he obviously has more faith in the board than in judges. One could say, however, that judges are probably better versed in this area of law than the board. There is an anomaly there. He would be taking the appropriate step if he changed the act to make sure that the anomaly is removed.

However, we are concerned that the amendments proposed to section 33 do not address the problems that were raised by Judge O'Leary in October 1982. In the case of Katsopoulos v The TIO, the judge drew a distinction between the amount of the benefit payable and a limit on the payment of the benefit. He pointed out that there was no discretion to vary the formula by which benefits are determined; that is, to vary the amounts payable in weekly benefits under sections 13 and 14. He also placed a restrictive interpretation on the provision in respect of the wording 'special hardship likely to be suffered'. According to practitioners, this interpretation makes it well nigh impossible to come within the terms of the section. The government has a responsibility to address the problems raised by Mr Justice O'Leary in this case and the opposition calls on the government to look more closely at the amendments needed to section 33.

With those comments, Mr Speaker, the opposition supports the bill.

Mr FIRMIN (Ludmilla): Mr Speaker, I would like to speak in support of the amendments. As has been pointed out, the main thrust of this legislation is a technical amendment to the existing act. Certainly, sections 22 and 23 of the principal act created some difficulties for its operation. The formula that was laid down in the scheme was complicated and, certainly, there have been difficulties in applying that formula.

This bill attempts to deal with that matter. The proposed formula calculation is much simpler and provides for the specific sum of \$45 000 or 3 times the average income, whichever is the lesser, though not less than \$6000, to be paid. That makes the formula clearer than does the current provision. Proposed new section 23 would also clarify the formula relevant to a dependent spouse, either a wife or husband, earning less than 25% of the deceased person's income. This is also a step forward.

The main thrust of the amendments to sections 28, 29 and 33 is to enable clear rules to be set up by the tribunal and by the judges through powers given under section 32(1) of the Supreme Court Act to make rules regulating the practices and procedures that can be followed by the tribunal, regulating and referring matters to the tribunal, conferring additional powers as may be necessary to carry out its functions and to enforce penalties. Amendments to sections 29 and 33 are clearly designed to speed up the process of handling disputes against the general manager or the board of the TIO, and also empower the tribunal to speed matters up.

The honourable member for Millner expressed some concern about the possibility of extended delays. His reading of the act seemed to indicate that it could take up to 5 months. I assure him that that will probably not happen.



I am not sure that he is aware that the board, in fact, sits twice monthly. I imagine the board will be hearing such matters expeditiously. The interjection about the existing provisions under the act is taken, but obviously this amendment is setting up a provision to clear the sort of backlogs that occurred before. Mr Speaker, I commend the bill.

Mr BELL (MacDonnell): Mr Speaker, I wish to make a brief comment about a particular clause in this bill. I refer to clause 4 which amends the principal act by omitting the words 'or culpable' and substituting a further phrase. It may be a drafting error because the words that have been omitted from the principal act are 'or culpable' and the phrase that is to be substituted is 'an offence against section 154 of the Criminal Code or'. I am not sure if there is a drafting error there or not because the 'or' is at the end of the second phrase whereas it is at the beginning of the first phrase.

That is not why I rose to speak in this debate. The reason is that I want to ask why Northern Territory legislation of this sort was not given due consideration when the Criminal Code was being enacted. There has already been comment in this regard from this side of the Assembly and I do not propose to rehash previous discussions on the subject. But, Mr Speaker, you would be well aware of the ink and the lung power that has been expended to no avail on this subject. I will say briefly that it is a matter of considerable concern to me that the Criminal Code was enacted so precipitously upon the tabling of the draft which was finally enacted. A mere 2 months was the period involved there. It would appear that due consideration was not given to this act. One is led to the inescapable conclusion that the Criminal Code was enacted hastily for whatever short-term political advantages the government, or more particularly the Attorney-General, saw at that time. I would very much like to hear, in the context of this second-reading debate, a reply from the government as to, firstly, why the amendments consequent on the enactment of the Criminal Code were not given thought at the time and, secondly, what further amendments of this sort are likely to occur.

Mr PERRON (Treasurer): Mr Speaker, I will touch on a couple of matters raised by an honourable member. The subject of the award of costs was raised. I raised that very question with my officers only a week or so ago. The matter was clarified to my satisfaction but I have forgotten the explanation. I would not want us to delay this particular legislation whilst I seek a further explanation for the honourable member. He mentioned the time involved. If one added together all the particular times that various parties have in which to make a decision, it would take about 5 months. I am sure that would be the case although I have not added them together. Hopefully, most problems will be resolved in less than that period. They are maximum times within which people have to operate. I think I mentioned in my second-reading speech that it is expected that the average claim will be processed in a very much shorter period than each of those sections would necessarily allow. Of course, if you are requiring by legislation that a person make a decision in a fixed time, one obviously has to give him reasonable opportunity to make the assessments necessary in order that he can make that decision. Decisions should not be made hastily.

I will have a further look at points raised by the honourable member for Millner about possible problems with section 33. Most government legislation is subject to re-examination from time to time. There is no reason why we should not look at further amendments as they are deemed necessary.

As far as the honourable member for MacDonnell's view that the Criminal Code was somehow hastily processed, I would have to say that, in my nearly 10

years here, no other piece of legislation has had the degree of consultation and revision that the Criminal Code has been subjected to. It has been tabled and has been debated and amended in the public forum. I could not conceive of any other government consulting with the people as much as we did on the Criminal Code. Indeed, I think the government would have risked being charged with gross procrastination had the subject continued any further and not been put into practice.

Mr Speaker, rather than move into the committee stage straight away, it would be useful for me to take a little time and look at some advice which has been handed to me. I have not had time to read it while standing on my feet. I would suggest that we take the second reading now and perhaps defer the committee stage to a later hour.

Motion agreed to; bill read a second time.

Committee stage to be taken later.

### YULARA TOURIST VILLAGE MANAGEMENT BILL (Serial 16)

Continued from 29 February 1984.

Mr LANHUPUY (Arnhem): Mr Speaker, the opposition does not oppose this bill. It provides for the Yulara Corporation to carry out council functions in respect of the Yulara Tourist Village resort. It will provide for water, sewerage services, garbage collection and the use of public areas. I note that the corporation will provide these services on a non-corporate basis.

In introducing this bill, the honourable minister has stated that an advisory board will be established to represent community interests. The bill makes no provision for this board and I will be interested to see just what powers the board will exercise, since it will no doubt be the voice of private interests within that area. Since freehold title will be available, private community interests should be assured of some effective voice on what is in fact their local council body. I trust that the government will ensure that this is the case.

However, there is one provision in this bill which raises some doubts as to the government's concern to protect the rights and interests of individuals. I refer to proposed clause 11 of the bill. This clause provides for the minister to declare what is a public place for the purpose of the laws of the Territory. Subclause (1) provides: 'The minister may declare a rural park or other area of land in Yulara, whether or not it is owned and occupied by a person, to be a public place'. In other words, any area, including a private house, can be declared a public place. After declaration, it then becomes subject to any rules which create offences in public places, which include activities which are perfectly legal in private.

Mr Speaker, consider the 2 km law under the Summary Offences Act or offences of immorality under the Criminal Code. Drinking in a home, within sight of licensed premises, is legal. So are certain acts carried out in private. But once someone's private property is declared a public place, this provision means that all rights of privacy can be abrogated, together with the legal protections that go with those rights. However, I suppose Territorians should not be surprised at such a provision. Recent legislation of the Everingham government has revealed a disturbing attitude on the basic rights of individuals. A trend to erode those basic rights has been reflected clearly in

the passage of certain provisions within the Criminal Code, and provisions of legislation such as the Lotteries and Gaming Act, the Racing and Betting Act, and the Grain Marketing Act which give inspectors the right to enter private residences without a warrant. The government has yet to explain why, under these acts, inspectors have greater powers than those possessed by the police. Clause 11 in this bill continues this trend and I call upon this Assembly to reject the inclusion of such a restrictive power. It is an erosion of individual rights and cannot be justified.

Further, Mr Speaker, I must express reservations of a similar nature in respect of clause 12(2)(f). This confers on the corporation an absolute right of entry and I would like to hear the honourable minister's views on why such an unlimited provision is necessary. I can see that there may be circumstances in which the corporation may need right of entry to effect repairs vital for the maintenance of services in such a community, but the power in this subclause is without qualification.

I would welcome the honourable minister's comments on this matter. As I indicated earlier, the opposition does not oppose this bill and its basic aims. However, I cannot but have the greatest concern for the unlimited powers conferred under proposed clause 11 and the implications this has for individual rights. I urge all Assembly members to consider seriously the amendment which I will propose in the committee stage.

Mr VALE (Braitling): Mr Speaker, I rise to speak in support of the Yulara Tourist Village Management Bill and to congratulate the minister on the introduction of her first piece of legislation. Tourism is now the major industry in central Australia and the only industry at Yulara. The construction of Yulara has been designed for one sole purpose: to properly provide for the management of the many thousands of tourists who will visit Ayers Rock each year.

Mr Speaker, during 1983, some 83 000 people visited Ayers Rock and this year it is estimated that the figure will reach 100 000. Quite apart from the need to provide and construct first-class visitor accommodation at Yulara, there is, of course, the need to manage the municipal affairs and services which will play a vital role in the Territory's newest and fastest growing town. The purpose of this legislation is to do just that.

The government considered the creation of a council under the Local Government Act but, because of the small base population as opposed to the many visitors to Yulara, opted in my opinion for the correct course of management, as detailed in this legislation. I am pleased to note the minister's assurance that an advisory board to the corporation will be set up to represent the interests of the permanent population and that this board will be set up prior to the completion of village construction.

Whilst the minister has indicated that the operation at Yulara is in some aspects similar to the management at Nhulunbuy, I am pleased to note - and I am sure the honourable member for Nhulunbuy will be pleased also - that provision will be made for separate titles to allow for any eventual sale of resort facilities. However, I would appreciate the minister's advice on whether housing will also be included for possible future sale. While this legislation generally gives powers to the corporation similar to the local councils, the Palmerston and Jabiru Development Authorities and the Nhulunbuy Corporation, it also makes provision for the possible future expansion of the Yulara Tourist Village and for this expansion to be covered by the administration of the corporation.

The minister has indicated that the Yulara Corporation will be required to meet the costs associated with the service it provides and in the operation of the resort and that no direct cost will be borne by the Northern Territory government. Whilst no mention has been made concerning the provision of electricity, I assume that this is to be excluded from services to be provided by the corporation and managed by NTEC. However, I would appreciate the minister's comment on this point. Mr Speaker, I support the legislation.

Mr EDE (Stuart): Mr Speaker, I support this bill generally, mainly because Yulara is so important and tourism is one of our great hopes for the future. I do not really see what choice we have considering that the bill before us has been granted urgency.

However, I am very disturbed at the continued setting up of ad hoc arrangements for local government in the Territory. We have one at Nhulunbuy, another at Jabiru and now one at Yulara. I hope that the Local Government Act will soon be amended so that it can handle local government functions without the necessity for setting up proprietary limited companies. I noticed under clause 7 that sections of other acts can be applied to it. I would like to see whether elections can be applied to this particular body. I do not accept the argument of the member for Braintree that, because there will be only a couple of hundred adults there, they have any less right than anyone else to a form of local government to decide their own affairs. The community government provisions of the Local Government Act were set up specifically to allow local bodies to exercise local government powers.

There are a couple of other things that I want to mention. I am rather worried about clause 8(2)(d) which allows rates or charges levied by this body to apply in respect of a period that commenced before the date on which the rate or charge is levied. I know that people have talked in various legislatures about retrospective legislation but here we have retrospective taxation. I think that would be a bit rough.

Clause 10 gives a monopoly to the Yulara Corporation. However, it provides no limits to the power that the corporation will have over the type or the nature of the service it will provide. As it stands, if a person takes a load of his own rubbish out to the rubbish dump, this could be used against him.

As the member for Arnhem stated, clause 11 needs amending. People in the Territory are fairly disturbed at the way we continually slip new sections into acts. The honourable minister said simply that clause 11 gives the minister the power to declare public places for the purposes of Territory law; for example, the Police Offences Act. A public place can be a public place as defined under a different act. The minister does not necessarily have to declare it to be such, as he has the right to do here. That right is not limited in any way by the fact that a person happens to own the place and live there. One could make some fairly outlandish statements about what could happen in one's own home if one wanted to take a shower without wearing a set of bathers.

I am worried that this company, which has the authority to make bylaws, can do so apparently without having them tabled in this Assembly whereby they may be disallowed. I presume that the minister has a residual right under clause 4 to give instructions as to the type of bylaws to be made and presumably could give an instruction for the company to revoke a bylaw if he did not agree with it. However, I think that things of that nature, which amount to subordinate legislation, should be put before the Assembly.

In conclusion, I am rather mystified about part V. There is mention that

it will help people obtain some tax benefits. When I hear about these substantial tax benefits that various people are going to get, and we are actually legislating to allow people to get them, I think that they could be explained a bit more clearly.

As I said, Mr Speaker, we support the bill in general terms. The honourable member for Arnhem will be proposing an amendment which I hope the honourable minister and members of the government will examine very carefully and agree to so that we can have a reasonable act for the people of Yulara.

As it stands at the moment, I think people might be fairly wary about living there.

Mr PERRON (Treasurer): Mr Speaker, I would like to say a few words, particularly in relation to part V of the bill. Part V refers specifically to aspects relating to partnerships which is of concern to my own portfolio.

The Yulara Development Company Limited, as owner of the resort, is accumulating within its accounts certain interest and depreciation expenses and investment allowances which are available as offsets against taxation liability. It has been concerned to use the tax benefits available to tourist operations to ensure that the resort can be built and operated at reasonable cost. Such action would place the company in the same situation in tax terms as resort developers and operators in other parts of Australia. The utilisation of such normal tax benefits is a prerequisite to establishing a cost structure which would enable attractive and fair tariffs to be charged to tourists visiting Yulara.

Mr Speaker, according to a ruling of the Taxation Commissioner issued in January of this year, the taxation benefits of the resorts are only fully effective if equity investors can be drawn into the project financing as partners by 16 April 1984. The return to those partners flows from their take up of those tax benefits. It will be seen that the company faces a very tight timetable if the proper tax position is to be achieved.

Pursuant to this, and consistent with the tax ruling, the company has entered into an interim partnership which can be expanded with speed and convenience as the investors are identified. As the honourable Minister for Conservation has already advised this Assembly, this partnership must persist notwithstanding the expanded partnership, if available deductions are to be used in the normal way. Without this amendment, the partnership would end each time the membership changed. The government, considering its interest in seeing Yulara operate in a sound and competitive commercial manner, is therefore moving to remove the technical difficulties which would exist without that particular amendment.

Mr Speaker, that is a little confusing for lay people to follow, including myself, but primarily means that it is very important that the legal tax positions within the Australian system be taken advantage of in the whole Yulara financing arrangements so as to make the operation that much more viable.

Some honourable members see possible unreasonable restrictions and unreasonable powers being given to the company by this bill in respect to certain local government functions. I would like to point out to members that Yulara is no normal town. Nor is it likely to ever be a normal town where people can breeze in from wherever and say: 'This looks like a pretty cosy little part of Australia. I think I will settle here, find myself a quarter acre of freehold and settle down'. I do not think it is ever going to be that sort of town.

Yulara is a self-contained, very carefully environmentally-planned village. It is probably the most planned village ever constructed in Australia. It has been in the planning stages for 10 years. It is going to be a very attractive model for tourist villages everywhere. A number of people will settle there. No doubt some of them will become quite permanent residents. However, the majority of employees at Yulara and their families will, I guess without doubt, turn over fairly rapidly. I think most people expect that. I think that most people feel that the employees of a place like Yulara will have to be replaced regularly.

Exception was taken to clause 11(1) and I understand the honourable sponsor of the bill may propose a change in that area. However, I do not see why the company would ever seek to declare a person's home as a public area. The clause is there to declare areas such as malls and the like in Yulara, which may be partly owned by various concerns, as public places for the purposes of making bylaws. I think that is reasonable. However, the honourable members opposite have drawn the worst possible scenario - that the company would want to make life impossible for persons by declaring their private homes and backyards as public places. I do not see it happening but I will leave further comment on that to the honourable minister.

Exception was also taken to clause 12(2)(f). I find it hard to see what the exception is. The clause confers the power for an authorised person to have right of entry on to private land and the right to take such action as is necessary or convenient to inspect, repair, protect or remove the property of the development company, including that on private land. It would seem to me a perfectly reasonable proposition for looking after the property of the company. As I said, Yulara is a very different town to the norm. It will have to be kept a show place for as long as possible. I believe there will need to be a tight rein on the activities of many residents as compared to any other town in the Northern Territory. The concept of allowing people to park caravans in the streets, leave derelict cars in backyards or practise other activities that are accepted in most urban centres these days cannot be allowed to prevail in a place like Yulara if we are to keep it as the show place that it should be for visitors to the Northern Territory.

Mr BELL (MacDonnell): Mr Deputy Speaker, I rise to make a few comments in the second-reading debate. Of course, the Yulara Tourist Village is in the electorate of MacDonnell and I represent what is clearly a complex social and economic area. It may strike some honourable members as strange that I should describe it thus but a few words will explain what I mean. I crave the indulgence of honourable members whilst I make a few broad comments about the project in general and the future of tourism at Ayers Rock which is one of the most desirable tourist venues in our fine country. Certainly, Ayers Rock itself has given a great deal of pleasure, satisfaction and enrichment to me personally and it is quite easy for me to understand why it is such a tourist drawcard.

As honourable members have mentioned in this debate and other debates, tourism is potentially the most lucrative source of revenue for a Territory government, and a fecund area for economic development generally. For that reason, the success of the Yulara Tourist Village is of great importance, not only to the people who live in the area or the people who will visit it from the 4 corners of the globe but to all Territorians. It is of considerable importance in financial terms to the Northern Territory government. The honourable member for Braitling mentioned, rather cutely if I might say so, that no direct costs have been borne by the Northern Territory government. I think I have quoted him correctly there. The key adjective in that phrase is the word 'direct' because the Northern Territory government is bearing considerable costs. Honourable members who were present in the last Assembly will no doubt recall

the debate that ensued when it was brought to the Assembly's attention that the Northern Territory government would be indemnifying investors against capital loss in the Yulara project.

Mr Deputy Speaker, I would like something verified in the context of this debate. It may not be possible because it is fairly detailed information. However, it is clearly an important task that falls to the opposition in this Assembly to find out exactly how long it will be before the project will be in a situation to provide enough revenue to cover the interest costs of the \$150m development. My understanding is that interest costs will be greater than moneys derived from the project in the first few years. I would like to know who will be meeting that cost? My understanding is that it will be tens of millions of dollars over the first few years. I would like some explanation of how much of that the Territory budget will be required to cover.

Another point which I believe is well within the ambit of debate on this particular bill is the question raised by the Chief Minister's comments in question time this morning. I trust this is something the honourable minister will take up. It concerns the position of the executive officer with the Yulara Development Company mentioned in the definitions in clause 3 of this particular bill. I asked the Chief Minister in question time this morning whether he had seen this advertisement. In a fine performance, he averred that he had not and appeared to be totally unaware not only of the advertisement but of the fact that the previous executive officer of the Yulara Development Company was continuing to be employed by the Conservation Commission.

Mr Speaker, I am quite sure that, if you were to hear that the previous executive officer of the Yulara Development Company was continuing to be employed by the Conservation Commission, you would wonder why. You might ask yourself: has this man been promoted to higher things? You would be wrong. Has this man been shifted sideways or has he been removed for reasons of incompetence? Has he been demoted? The simple fact of the matter is that the previous executive officer of the Yulara Development Company made the regrettable faux pas of opposing this government at the polls, and not, I hasten to add, as a candidate - not as a candidate at all. He merely happened to assist somebody who had the temerity to oppose the Country Liberal Party. I presume that ...

Mr Hanrahan: Oh dear.

Mr BELL: I am very interested to hear the 'Oh dear'.

Mr Dondas: Come on Neil, get on with it.

Mr BELL: I will respond to the 'Oh dear' first. I am sure that the honourable member for Flynn finds it boring. Perhaps because of the company he keeps these days, he has come to be quite used to this hatchet operation. I hear the honourable Minister for Health interjecting. I am sure he finds it painful. The truth frequently is. It will not only be painful but embarrassing. I hasten to assure the honourable minister that I do not digress. I hasten to assure the minister that the architect of this bill has been moved sideways. A very capable officer has been moved sideways and the people of the Territory, the future tourists and the people who are going to work at the Yulara Tourist Village deserve a slightly better explanation than they have received hitherto. I trust that the honourable minister will be able to answer the question that the Chief Minister sloughed off this morning. I hope she will note it down. Did the honourable minister request or direct that that particular executive officer, the previous incumbent, be moved sideways? All I want is a simple yes or no.

I am going to dwell on this for a minute or 2. I regret the fact that I am embarrassing honourable government members but the fact of the matter is that I would also like to know how much it is costing the Northern Territory. I would like to know how much it is costing Territory taxpayers and Australian taxpayers for this little bit of political vindictiveness. The previous incumbent is still employed. Just how much has it cost to move this person sideways in that way? It was totally unnecessary.

One more issue that has come up in this regard, in a different context, is the matter of the takeaway licence. I believe that, in the context of this bill, that also is deserving of comment. Honourable members may or may not be aware that a takeaway licence for the Ernest Giles Tavern at the Yulara Tourist Village was applied for by the proprietor and a hearing was held before the Liquor Commissioner early in December of this year. That takeaway licence was not issued. The decision was given against the provision of a takeaway licence for the Ernest Giles Tavern due precisely to the complex social situation that exists in that particular area at the moment. It was a wise decision in my view.

Now, within 2 months of that, we have an application for a rehearing. I want to know why evidence given to the tribunal at that hearing was different on the part of the Northern Territory police and the Conservation Commission of the Northern Territory than the evidence that those 2 bodies gave in the December hearing. What exactly were the conditions that necessitated the changing of that takeaway licence between December and February? What exactly were the social or economic considerations or, dare I say, political considerations that necessitated the reversal of that decision?

Finally, in general comment on the Yulara Tourist Village, let me make one more point. I made some mild criticisms of the Chief Minister in my Address in Reply speech about his stance in relation to Ayers Rock during the election campaign. Some people chose not to regard them as mild but, by comparison with the way I felt, mild indeed they were. However, I think there is this constructive point to be made. It has been made many times in this Assembly. In debate today we have had reference to the issue of race relations in the Northern Territory. It is important. Even the honourable member for Sadadeen made reference to race relations today. That was fairly extraordinary. I suspect that Geoff MacDonald will be writing a new chapter about him accusing him of being a communist, shifting to the left or whatever Mr MacDonald and the member for Sadadeen usually find so abhorrent. However, be that as it may, I welcome the honourable member's comments on the issue of race relations, patronising as they may have been.

However, the issue in relation to the Yulara Tourist Village and the future of tourism at Ayers Rock is that it is extremely important that good relations exist between the many organisations involved in this extremely expensive project. I believe that it is extremely important for the future of the project that we have open channels of communication. I include here not just the Yulara Development Company, not just the Yulara Management Company, not just the Northern Territory government and agencies such as the Northern Territory Development Corporation and the Territory Insurance Office and the operators of the facilities, but also the Aboriginal community that has an interest at Ayers Rock. Honourable members may be interested to find out just how big is the Aboriginal community that has an interest in Ayers Rock. It stretches all the way from the honourable member for Victoria River's electorate up near Wave Hill right down to the Great Australian Bight. It stretches from over towards Kalgoorlie. Perhaps the most easterly extremity where it is important in traditional ritual terms to Aboriginal people is near Lake Nash. I do not claim



any great knowledge of traditional associations in that area of the Northern Territory. Quite clearly, that is a fairly big slab not only of the Northern Territory but of Australia. It is little wonder that Ayers Rock is so important to Aboriginal people.

The point I am making is that the government has a responsibility to give due consideration to the organisations involved: the Aboriginal Development Commission, the Pitjantjatjara Council, Mulga Trading Company and the Central Land Council. If I wanted to be critical, I would say a confrontationist attitude had been developed for political motives. At times, one cannot escape that conclusion.

Let us be content to say that it is just unfortunate that the Chief Minister's briefing notes from one of his closest advisers prompted him to refer to activists from the Pitjantjatjara Council. I do not know anybody who refers to himself as an activist. There are a number of people working with the Aboriginal organisations that I am referring to and none of them refers to himself as an activist. The honourable member for Sadadeen might refer to them as communists but we know he is off the planet so that does not matter anyway. There is nobody who refers to these people as activists. I must say - and I honestly mean it constructively - that there are better ways of doing it. There may be a certain short-term political benefit in it but it is of long-term importance that Territorians from Gove to Docker River, from Darwin to Finke and from Lake Nash to Hooker Creek are considered.

I am delighted that the honourable Minister for Education has made this offer and I am more than happy to be involved in bringing people together in that regard.

I know honourable members have been waiting with bated breath for me to address the bill itself. I will not go over the issue of the management process and the title arrangements that are the essential elements of this bill. However, I will add my voice to the comments of my 2 colleagues on this side of the Assembly in relation to clause 11. Those comments are clearly contrary to the comments of the honourable member for Fannie Bay who suggested that there was really no problem with this particular clause. Mr Speaker, I will read clause 11(1) again: 'The minister may, by notice in the Gazette, declare a road, park or other area of land' - curiously, it mentions 'other area of land' - 'in Yulara, whether or not it is owned and occupied by a person, to be a public place'. If I was living at Yulara, the management company would have the right to make my bedroom a public place. That is the effect of the legislation. There is a clear problem with this clause. I do not see how, in any sense, it can be tolerated.

It is quite simple to redraft that clause along the lines that the honourable member for Arnhem has suggested. He suggested that that particularly offensive phrase, 'other area of land at Yulara', be deleted. The honourable member for Fannie Bay suggests that there is no problem with it. I am a bit concerned that that demonstrates a scant regard for the rights of the individual from a man who is usually exceedingly zealous in these matters. I sometimes suspect that the honourable member for Fannie Bay is really concerned only about the rights of the individual when it comes to a particular and select few individuals making money. In this case, I will give him the benefit of the doubt and trust that his concern for the rights of individuals will extend to the residents of and visitors to Yulara who will not want their bedrooms declared a public place.

The honourable member for Fannie Bay said the clause was necessary to

cover, for example, public areas like malls and other areas where there may be problems. This amendment refers to declaring, as a public place, places to which the public is admitted or has access. That should cover clearly the case of the mall to which the honourable member referred. I hope he will join with the opposition now that I have explained our amendment to the bill in this way.

Finally, I want to draw to the attention of honourable members a comment that the minister made in her second-reading speech. She referred to an advisory board and mentioned that one would be set up. In her second-reading speech, she said that an advisory board for the corporation would be established to represent community interests before completion of construction. As the member representing that particular area, it is of considerable importance to me to know the constitution of that particular advisory board and the date on which it will commence. I will very much look forward to hearing the honourable minister's comments in that regard.

Mrs PADGHAM-PURICH (Conservation): Mr Speaker, I thank honourable members for their contributions to this debate. Most of the remarks were constructive although there was quite a bit of waffle and repetition.

Mr Bell: The pot calling the kettle black.

Mrs PADGHAM-PURICH: Mr Speaker, if the honourable member for MacDonnell thinks he can intimidate me by pointing his finger at me, he has another think coming.

I was very pleased to hear the honourable member for Stuart indicate that he saw tourism as the main hope for the Territory. He should know that it is our only hope for the Territory considering what his federal colleagues have done to mining in the Territory. They have practically put the kybosh on mining in the Territory ...

Mr Bell: Come on Noel, let's get stuck into the bill.

Mrs PADGHAM-PURICH: Mr Speaker, I shall show my good manners by not pointing my finger at the honourable member for MacDonnell. Please tell him to shut up.

Mr Speaker, at the moment, mining is our main source of income in the Territory. Second is primary industry, and tourism is third. In its effort to encourage tourism in the Northern Territory the government set up the Yulara Development Company and proceeded with the development of the township of Yulara. With the full weight of Treasury behind it and excellent advice gathered from other sources, the Northern Territory government has paid money and has promised to pay more money. I am not certain of all the terms that the financial experts use but the government has backed the development to the tune of about \$150m, which is no small sum. I think any fair-minded person would compliment the Northern Territory government on its foresight, boldness and sound business sense in the way it has gone about developing Yulara. I have visited the village site twice. I went shortly after my appointment as minister and recently I attended the opening of the Four Seasons Motel.

At the outset I will say that it was not the prettied-up, fancy buildings that impressed me. I was impressed by the supply of services, the appearance of the countryside, how the builders have gone about their jobs and how they have left sites. I observed the ordinary little things like that which are not pretty and which people often do not notice because their attention is focused on the end result which, in this case, is a very impressive motel. As well as

the supply of services, the cost savings that have been built into them and the conservation issues that have been considered, I was also impressed by the practical way that the Yulara Development Company has gone about fulfilling its charter in that it is fully conversant with and adheres to conservation principles. At most building sites one visits, one sees building impedimenta, large machinery here and there, unused material piled about and broken pieces of goods littered around. At Yulara, the builders work within very fine limits. Constraints are put on them by the Yulara Development Company so that, when a particular job is finished, there is very little cleaning up to do. The tourists can go down to the motel or to the finished visitors complex and walk around with ease while the builders are still on site.

Mr Speaker, one honourable member mentioned the significance of Ayers Rock, which everybody recognises - the Northern Territory government, the people of the Northern Territory, the tourists and the Aboriginal people who live there. But I am at a loss to know exactly what the federal government thinks about the development of Yulara and the fate of the buildings around the rock. It seems to me that the right hand does not know what the left hand is doing, although I do not think there would be too many right hands down there at the moment. Also, they do not seem to talk to one another; they seem to be on again off again with different ideas. They do not know whether they are Arthur or Martha.

I would have thought that the Minister for Aboriginal Affairs, before suggesting that the rather decrepit buildings remain around Ayers Rock, would have at least made sure that he was apprised of what has transpired already. If the honourable minister ever gets to read what is said in this debate, I would like to draw his attention to a decision that was made in 1972, a decision that was made in 1973 and a decision that was made in 1974. In 1972, Professor Derek Ovington chaired a committee which recommended that those old buildings around Ayers Rock be phased out gradually and that facilities be provided elsewhere for the Aborigines and the tourists. In 1973, there was an inter-departmental committee which also said the same thing: these old buildings should be phased out and services provided at another site outside the immediate precincts of Ayers Rock. In 1974, a select committee again decided on the same issue the same way. I would like to add that, in 1972, 1973 and 1974, if my memory serves me correctly, there was a federal Labor government in Canberra. These decisions were made then.

However, on or about 16 February, Mr Holding said at Ayers Rock - and it was heard by the press - that these buildings should be left there. I would refer him to the decisions that were made all those years ago.

Mr Speaker, the honourable member for Arnhem commented on the council-like functions that have been taken over by the Yulara Corporation. I see these functions as no better, worse nor different from council functions anywhere else in the Northern Territory. I have no fear, and I do not think any other member should have any fear, that these functions would be any different. They will probably be better in many respects. They are just the ordinary council functions of a city corporation.

Comment was made by the honourable member for Arnhem and other honourable members about the advisory board. They are thinking deep, dark thoughts about selections for the advisory board and how it is to operate. In so doing, they are implying that the Northern Territory government has certain sinister motives in regard to the advisory board. They must have short memories because they have only to think back to the way the Northern Territory government responded to the wishes of the people of Jabiru. The Jabiru Town Development Authority was formed at Jabiru. Once it was established, with people living there and

services provided, the people of Jabiru wanted more say in the running of their town. The Jabiru Town Development Authority had representatives from the government, different departments, ERA and observers from 2 other mining companies: Pancontinental and Koongarra. There was very little input from the ordinary people. The Northern Territory government passed legislation to enable the formation of the Jabiru Town Advisory Council. It was formed by calling for nominations from people in the community to express their interest and to stand for election to this council.

This council is very active. It provides advice to the authority on matters that affect the people living out there. My information is that everything is operating smoothly. I cannot see how it would be any different if an advisory board was formed at Yulara. I might say that this advisory board will not be foisted on the people down there if they do not want it. That is not expressed explicitly in the legislation but I think it would be understood by every sensible person that, if the people do not want an advisory board, then one will not be forced on them.

The honourable member for Arnhem was concerned about clause 12. He commented on the right of entry for authorised people with regard to the amenities provided by the Yulara Corporation. I do not consider this provision to be any different from what operates in other parts of the Territory. Where electricity, water and sewerage services are provided, it is quite normal for authorised people to go on to private property and to inspect and repair those services. It has been the custom of departmental officers to act in a polite and efficient manner. I cannot see any heavy-handedness operating at Yulara.

The honourable member for Braitling addressed himself to the provision of housing in Yulara. I understand that, in the early stages of Yulara, housing will be provided for the people who have reason to be there: workers, tourist service personnel and government officers.

The honourable member for Stuart commented on clause 8(2)(d) and the retrospectivity of rates being levied. He said that somebody already could be using water, sewerage services and electricity and, at some later time, charges would be levied for those services. It seems fair to me that, if somebody has been using those services, he should pay for them. If somebody has been using services and does not know what the price will be, he can be fairly certain that the prices will be on a par with those charged in other places in the Northern Territory. I might add that the services provided are second to none. I have inspected them and had them all explained to me and I have compared them with services offered in other places.

The member for Stuart commented on the bylaws that would be promulgated for people living at Yulara. They will be very similar to the bylaws pertaining to the people living at Jabiru.

Comment was also made about clause 19 which relates to partnerships. I think that this has been explained by the Treasurer.

In relation to clause 10, a comment was made about people taking their rubbish to the rubbish dump. Nobody is talking about stopping people taking their rubbish to the rubbish dump. We are talking about stopping the development of other water reticulation and garbage services than are already provided.

Several members mentioned clauses 17 and 18 which relate to easements. The main sections of the building complex have services: water, electricity, air-conditioning and sewerage facilities. These go from one building to another.

It is very important that easements be granted so that access can be obtained if anything goes wrong. I hasten to add, Mr Speaker, that I respect individual privacy more than most people but there comes a time when the rights of the community have to take precedence over individual rights of privacy. I think that any sensible person would understand that.

The honourable member for MacDonnell was talking about something he wanted. I was not quite certain what he wanted but, as far as I am concerned, what he wants and what he gets may be 2 different things.

Mr Bell: You'd better be specific, Noel.

Mrs PADGHAM-PURICH: You weren't very specific either.

Mr Speaker, I would like to add here that I feel that the member for MacDonnell must have an identity problem and wishes to substantiate his meagre authority by pointing his finger at me. If he was my little boy, I would smack him on the hand and teach him some good manners.

The honourable member for MacDonnell commented also on the takeaway licence. I think he said that the police and the Conservation Commission altered their submissions to the Liquor Commission in the appeal. I am not commenting on the submission put forward by the police but I cannot see why, if situations change or appear to be different, submissions cannot be different also. The takeaway liquor outlet has to be considered in the full context of who is living at Yulara. Whilst I recognise that some people in the community have drinking problems, not everybody in the community has a drinking problem. One must make the ordinary conveniences available to campers at the camping ground. They should be able to buy 6-packs in order to have a few beers with family or friends, or to take with them when they leave Yulara. Any trouble arising from the takeaway licence granted to the liquor outlet will be well-monitored by the Yulara Corporation, the police and the Conservation Commission officers.

I would like to conclude by saying that I was pleased to hear that the honourable member for MacDonnell assured us that he was taking a constructive attitude. Before he gets pig-headed about it, I assure him that we will not be making his bedroom a public place. I might be broad-minded, Mr Speaker, but I am not kinky. In conclusion, I am not averse to sensible amendments and I indicate to the honourable member for Arnhem that I will not be opposing his amendment to clause 11.

Motion agreed to; bill read a second time.

In committee:

Clauses 1 to 10 agreed to.

Clause 11:

Mr LANHUPUY: I move amendment 2.1.

This removes from clause 11(1) all words after 'other area of land at Yulara' and substitutes the words 'to which the public is admitted or has access to be a public place'. As indicated in my second-reading speech, I commend the amendment to the committee.

Mrs PADGHAM-PURICH: Mr Chairman, as I said earlier, I will not voice any objection to the amendment put forward by the member for Arnhem. I forgot to mention earlier that a comment was made that the Treasurer was quite happy to

continue with clause 11 as it stands. I think there was a misapprehension on the part of the honourable member on the other side because the Treasurer was aware that I would not voice any objection to the honourable member for Arnhem's amendment. If he lived in Yulara, this amendment would preserve the sacrosanct privacy of the honourable member for MacDonnell's bedroom.

Amendment agreed to.

Clause 11, as amended, agreed to.

Remainder of the bill taken as a whole and agreed to.

Bill passed remaining stages without debate.

#### JUSTICES AMENDMENT BILL (Serial 18)

Continued from 29 February 1984.

Mr BELL (MacDonnell): Mr Deputy Speaker, I rise to make a few comments in relation to this bill. The Attorney-General drew the attention of the Assembly to the fact that this bill validates the actions that have been taken by people who believed that they had been legally made Justices of the Peace but in fact had not been. The purpose of this bill is to ensure that any actions taken by those people when they were not, in a formal sense, Justices of the Peace - although believing themselves to be so - are made valid. In the course of his second-reading speech on this bill, the Attorney-General indicated that it was necessary in order to correct certain anomalies - that was the expression he used - because certain justices had not sworn oaths before the correct witnesses. Actually, as an applicant to be a Justice of the Peace, I have had a number of interviews with people in the course of that process. I find it a little strange that the appropriate oaths have not been sworn. I would like to hear from the Attorney-General of the administrative circumstances that have given rise to the inappropriate situation where oaths have not been sworn before the correct witnesses.

I am interested in the answers to a couple of questions in this area. I am interested to find out from the Attorney-General what sort of problems have been drawn to his and the government's attention in this regard because, as the honourable Attorney-General mentioned in his second-reading speech, it is rare that a Justice of the Peace appears on the bench. However, it would be quite possible for that to happen and for an unauthorised person, a person who imagined himself or herself to be a Justice of the Peace, to send down somebody without due authority. I am keen to find out whether this has happened and why the matter has been drawn to the honourable minister's attention, and secondly, why the administrative irregularities were permitted to exist.

With those concerns, Mr Deputy Speaker, I am pleased to report to honourable members that the opposition supports this bill. However, we look forward to hearing the honourable minister's explanation to the queries I have raised.

Mr EDE (Stuart): Mr Deputy Speaker, there is one point which I wanted to make. Given that we are supporting this bill, I want not only to be assured that what has happened will presumably be corrected by this amendment but also that action has been taken to ensure that it does not happen again. For example, will it be necessary to enact similar legislation in a year's time? Will we reach a situation where we will have a foul-ups amendment act or

something which we will enact yearly? If we can make one general enough, we could possibly cut out quite an amount of bureaucracy, although I do not think that that would really result in a satisfactory situation.

I would like to be assured that the minister will explain to us the administrative arrangements he will put into effect to ensure that henceforth the system of appointing Justices of the Peace and other officers of that ilk is performed correctly. I believe that, when something is signed, it goes to someone in Crown Law who checks that everything is correct. I cannot quite understand how this situation has existed for so long and nobody has realised the problem before. I raise those points but add that I definitely support the bill.

Mr ROBERTSON (Attorney-General): Mr Deputy Speaker, as I have quite often indicated in this Assembly, I do not like retrospective legislation either. I have some difficulty in answering the apparent queries which have been directed to me from opposite. I could not catch the exact questions, Mr Deputy Speaker, but I will certainly undertake to the Assembly to have my officers examine them. Certainly, I do not like retrospective legislation. I think it is a wholly undesirable thing to put before the Assembly.

As I indicated in my second-reading speech, prior to this unfortunate incident coming to my attention, I had instructed the department to conduct a complete review of the processes contained within the Justices Act for the appointment, the methods of swearing in and the controls over Justices of the Peace. It is not an office to be taken lightly. Personally, I have a view that we should have justices only where they are in a position to serve the interests of the public very clearly. The public need, clearly and demonstrably, is the essence of the requirement to appoint a Justice of the Peace.

If I may digress, it seems that there are many occasions upon which people make application to become Justices of the Peace solely for the purpose of hanging the initials 'JP' after their names. I will not have it. Nonetheless, there have been deficiencies within the system to which I am addressing myself and the department is addressing itself. Quite obviously, it should not have occurred that persons who purported to act as Justices of the Peace may have acted outside the strict interpretation of the Justices Act. It is not a simple matter; it is one of those things that are somewhat historical as far as appointments go.

The act itself has not been altered substantially since the early 1930s when there was only one Supreme Court seat in the Northern Territory. In those days, the rules were that a swearing-in process or ceremony - and I think it is a ceremony - occurred before the Judge of the Supreme Court where the person was within 35 km of the Supreme Court of Darwin. I am not sure about the 35 km, but it is of that order. The other provision related to the ability to be sworn in before a magistrate outside of that area or outside of an area of any local court - I think it was a local court rather than a court of summary jurisdiction - by a Commissioner for Affidavits. It becomes a very easy thing to create in the minds of people who are gazetted as being Justices of the Peace a confusion between the nomenclature of Commissioner for Affidavits and Commissioner for Oaths. Many police officers are Commissioners for Oaths but none are Commissioners for Affidavits and, in my view, therein lay the causative factor of the confusion: the difference between Commissioner for Affidavits and Commissioner for Oaths. It is not unreasonable to expect that a person who is untrained in the law would confuse the 2.

Those who have acted as Justices of the Peace and, because of the deficiency in the manner in which they were sworn in, probably acted in a doubtful way,

particularly in the signing of documents, are not to be blamed for it. Nor, in my submission, Mr Deputy Speaker, is the system to be blamed. It is the way the law has evolved and created confusion between the role of a person who is a Commissioner for Oaths under the Oaths Act, as it now is, and a person who is designated a Commissioner for Affidavits. That is the fundamental cause of the difficulty and that problem is the one that we are addressing.

I cannot, nor can any minister, ever stand up in any parliament and say these sorts of things will never happen again. It is regrettable. We are trying to design a system to overcome it and prevent it from happening again. Nonetheless, I cannot give any guarantees that it will not. Certainly, we must overcome that confusion of terms in the methodology of swearing in Justices of the Peace which has existed for the last 4 or 5 decades.

Motion agreed to; bill read a second time.

Mr ROBERTSON (Attorney-General)(by leave): Mr Deputy Speaker, I move that the bill be now read a third time.

Motion agreed to; bill read a third time.

COMPANIES (TRUSTEES AND PERSONAL REPRESENTATIVES) AMENDMENT BILL  
(Serial 5)

Continued from 29 February 1984.

Mr BELL (MacDonnell): Mr Deputy Speaker, I rise to make some comments in relation to this bill. The bill provides for the ANZ Executors and Trustee Company Limited to take over the trust business of the now defunct Executor Trustee and Agency Company. It does not authorise the new trustee as a trustee company. Application must still be made to obtain that status. However, the bill is aimed at assisting in what the Attorney-General referred to as a 'smooth transition'.

The bill also amends section 13 to require that biannual financial declarations by trustee companies be filed with the Registrar of Companies instead of the Master of the Supreme Court. This is seen as more appropriate as the Companies Office has the resources to analyse the material in the declarations.

The amendments are acceptable to the opposition. We support the bill.

Motion agreed to; bill read a second time.

Mr ROBERTSON (Attorney-General)(by leave): Mr Deputy Speaker, I move that the bill be now read a third time.

Motion agreed to; bill read a third time.

ADJOURNMENT

Mr HARRIS (Education): Mr Speaker, I move that the Assembly do now adjourn.

The other day the honourable member for Stuart asked a question which related to a place that I had never heard of before called Nyirripi, also known as Waite Creek. It is approximately 150 km west of Yuendumu. Since I have been in this job, I must admit that I have learnt the whereabouts of many places.



One that comes to mind is a place called Duck Creek or Djembere. I found out about this place the hard way by having representation made to me at Katherine.

However, I apologise to the honourable member for Stuart for not answering his question at that time. I understand that, since 1977, a request has been made for a school at Waite Creek. Since that time, senior officers of the department have been visiting that community on a regular basis. The department recognises that Waite Creek has potential for a one-teacher school but there appears to be some problem at present in relation to the status of that particular community. I will be having discussions with the Minister for Community Development in relation to this. Pending those discussions, Waite Creek is included on a short list for the 1984-85 capital works program for mobile schools for remote areas. In the meantime, the area will continue to be monitored carefully. Should conditions and or resources availability change, interim visiting teacher services for the area will be canvassed again.

Mr Deputy Speaker, I was asked a question this morning by the Leader of the Opposition in relation to the appointment of a consultant to assist with inquiries into the associate diploma of welfare work at the Darwin Community College. The answer with which I have been provided enables me to advise that a consultant has been appointed. He is Dr Richard Nies of the South Australian Institute of Technology. Dr Nies will be arriving in Darwin this weekend. In consultation with a representative of the Community Welfare Division of the Department of Community Development and 2 senior representatives of Darwin Community College staff, he will conduct an inquiry into the associate diploma. A report will be available in the near future and decisions will then be made on the future of a course.

Mr SMITH (Millner): Mr Deputy Speaker, on 26 March 1982, the then Northern Territory Minister for Lands gazetted a direct land grant for lot 5299 Town of Darwin to Gardens Hill Development. Mr Deputy Speaker, you will be aware that that direct land grant caused quite some concern and interest amongst the general population, primarily over the price of the land grant that was offered to the supposed developers. There was quite extensive debate at that time and what came out of it was that the government anticipated that the developers would spend considerable money to provide a large amount of up-market accommodation on the site. The government at the time, when pressed, said that the covenants for the block would provide for the spending of nearly \$8m. In fact, the developer was quoted at the time as saying that he would spend \$9.5m on the provision of about 120 up-market units.

Mr Deputy Speaker, almost 2 years later, in response to a question I asked of the Minister for Lands this morning, we learnt that no Crown lease for that block of land has been signed. Consequently, it is obvious that no covenants have been placed on the land that have been acceptable to the developer. No plans have been presented by the developer to the Planning Authority for permission to build on that block. In fact, the latest rumour that I have heard is that Gardens Hill Development is no longer interested in the provision of up-market accommodation and is toying with the idea of providing Housing Commission-standard accommodation on that block. All of that is most interesting when one reads the comments of the minister and other people at the time.

I would like to quote comments from a letter to the editor, from one Mr G.J. Lewis who is identified here as being Vice-president of the Country Liberal Party. This letter appeared either late in March or early in April 1982. This letter came at the time when the NT News had undertaken a piece of investigative reporting and had been quite critical of the government on a

couple of aspects of the Gardens Hill proposal. I want to quote 2 paragraphs:

*Your editorial comment uses words including 'dishonest' referring to our government when what our government is doing in this case and elsewhere is acting decisively and squarely to help alleviate the housing shortage which your newspaper never fails to squeak about whenever possible.*

Mr Deputy Speaker, I go back to the words 'is acting decisively and squarely to help alleviate the housing shortage'. Two years later, we do not even have plans for the first unit on the block. I continue from the letter:

*By allowing a project like Gardens Hill to proceed, under the auspices of a group of reputable developers, under a lease which will demand speedy progress, the government is ensuring that up-market residential accommodation will be available at the earliest possible time.*

Mr Deputy Speaker, those words ring hollow now. Not only do we not have a lease being signed but we certainly do not have any up-market residential accommodation available at all on the block, let alone at the earliest possible time. The letter goes on: 'Let any other developer capable of a quick investment of \$10m come out of the woodwork and put their claim to the government. Perhaps they too could anticipate the same encouragement'.

What I would like to ask the honourable Minister for Lands is where is this quick investment of \$10m and when are we going to see some proof of it. Is it not about time that he took some action to make sure that we have either some proof of it or the offer withdrawn so that other people who might have an interest could express that interest?

Mr Deputy Speaker, the other interesting article at the time was an article written by that ace political journalist, Peter Wilson, headed: 'Pitfalls balance out against development need'. It is what he calls 'a warts and all interview with the Minister for Lands, the honourable Marshall Perron'. This again came about after there had been a lot of criticism of the government. I guess that the minister undertook this interview in an attempt to clear the air. Mr Peter Wilson quotes the minister as saying: 'It also rigidly applied a principle that the first application for land would be processed through to a conclusion one way or another before any other application was dealt with'. That is a principle that I do not object to. I have always recognised that there is a place for direct land grants. I am not quite sure that they should take place in the residential area but this government saw fit to allow it.

My question is: how long do we have to wait until the application is processed through to a conclusion? The very clear impression was given in this article that the application had been processed through to a conclusion. That is why the gazettal notice was put there. Apparently, it was all stops out. But we find, 2 years later, that we do not have anything at all on the ground.

The following is a direct quote from the article and what the minister said: '"We believe it would be inappropriate to publish details of every application as it is received in order to forestall allegations of government secrecy". Mr Perron felt that there might be an argument for the gazetted notice to include information on the covenants being put on the land applied for'. It would be very useful if we had a covenant at this stage, let alone at that stage, 2 years ago.

Mr Deputy Speaker, we have a situation where this government has in fact tied up a piece of land for 2 years; where none of the original aims that the government had intended have been met after 2 years. The housing shortage has not been alleviated in any way by this development because there have not been any houses built. We have not had an injection of capital around the \$9m, or even around the \$9 mark, into the local economy as a result of the issue of this determination 2 years ago.

A number of questions need to be asked and need to be answered. Firstly, is the offer to Gardens Hill Development still open? Secondly, if so, when does it expire? Thirdly, due to the period since the original evaluation, if Gardens Hill Development decides to take up the lease, will the government seek a new valuation? Those questions are important. I would suggest it may even be too late for those questions and it may even be time for the government to take the land back and so give other companies an opportunity to apply to develop it when they know that it is available. They certainly did not know that the land was available before this original application was made.

Mr PALMER (Leanyer): Mr Deputy Speaker, Captain Cook, in discovering Australia, found a continent unique in many ways, a continent that for a millenia had remained isolated and undisturbed, a continent that had evolved its own unique flora and fauna, a continent quite unlike any other. Over 60 million years that flora and fauna changed and adapted itself to suit its environment and the threats presented by that environment. Captain Cook and subsequent European settlers presented Australian fauna with a whole new set of circumstances.

Mr Deputy Speaker, the early white settlers found Australia a harsh and inhospitable country, a country far removed and isolated from Mother England. As man is wont to do, the early settlers resolved to change that which was foreign to them to something that more closely resembled their motherland. In fact, for the early white settlers of Tasmania, the maternal bond was so strong, so congenitally ingrained in them, that not only did they attempt to alter their new home to resemble the immediate motherland, they attempted to turn Tasmania into an apple grove. The desire to alter the new environment was no doubt heightened by the isolation settlers felt and the lack of any real prospects they had for returning home to their motherland or ever seeing it again.

The modern emigres are afforded the benefits of international news services, international subscriber trunk dialling, and ethnic radio, television and newspapers. The only reminders of their previous homes the early immigrants had were those they had brought with them. The early settlers, in their ignorance, had no appreciation of the destructive effect some of their actions would have. Driven by the need for reminders of home, the early settlers introduced various forms of wildlife. Foxes and rabbits etc provided sport, food and daily visible reminders of their home. It is the descendants of those introduced species, combined with the number of domestic species returned to the wild, that presents us with the feral animal problems we face today.

It is my intention to warn the honourable members here assembled about a particular pest that has largely escaped notice in the past. Mr Deputy Speaker, I refer to that notorious carrier of vermin, a mudraker and lice-ridden bag of feathers: the sparrow. Poor bloody sparrow.

In Australia we are afflicted with no less than 2 species of sparrow: the house sparrow, *Passer domesticus*, and the tree sparrow, most appropriately named *Passer monotonous*. It is the latter of these 2 species that causes me most

concern. An infestation of house sparrows is likely to be discovered and easy to eliminate, given its attachment to man, and the likelihood that such infestation would occur close or near to centres of major population. On the other hand, the tree sparrow lurks in the far-flung rural areas and, therefore, infestations are only likely to be discovered by alert members on trips around those rural areas. The most susceptible areas are those in the southern parts of the Territory abutting the Western Australian and South Australian borders and ardent members, travelling in those areas, should be ever vigilant.

To assist members in their identification of *Passer monotonus*, Straeger describes the voice of the tree sparrow as being more twittering than that of the house sparrow. I would ask members travelling in those far-flung southern reaches who may find themselves confronted by a sparrow, twittering in voice, to dispatch it forthwith.

Mr BELL (MacDonnell): Mr Speaker, I see the problem the honourable Chief Minister has in keeping his backbench occupied and I congratulate him on the means devised to solve it.

I wish to continue the comments I was making in the adjournment debate last Thursday. I was going to make some comment in relation to the remarks of the honourable Minister for Education but I may take them up with him personally. It is suffice to say that the glossy picture he paints of aspects of the department's activities are quite understandable on the part of a government minister. But when those statements are related to Year 11 classes, for example, which in the first 6 weeks of the school year have had to put up with 5 different teachers, I think that the situation needs to be looked at a little more closely. I do not choose to dwell on that subject tonight.

I would like to return to a matter I referred to on Thursday. I spoke of the behaviour of a senior officer of a department who had accused me of applying political pressure to obtain the transfer of the principal from Alice Springs High School. I intend to write to the honourable minister on this subject so that the air can be cleared in that regard. I am not going to tolerate it. On Thursday, I declined to mention which senior officer of the Department of Education was involved. I no longer feel obliged to do that. I refer, in fact, to the Secretary of the Department of Education.

The reason I feel obliged to raise the behaviour of a public servant in these terms is because, quite clearly, the secretary of that particular department leaves me no alternative but to put on his actions a construction of political partisanship. Subsequently, I have been advised that the Secretary of the Department of Education is actively involved in the Country Liberal Party. He was actively involved on polling day in supporting the Country Liberal Party and I am forced to the conclusion that he was prepared to sow seeds of doubt amongst friends and acquaintances of mine by suggesting, behind my back, that I had performed actions which, quite clearly, I had not: to wit, that I had exerted pressure, either through this Assembly or, less formally, in administrative terms. I stoutly deny that. I shall write to the honourable minister to put my case to him in writing and I shall request some sort of explanation as I believe is my right in this regard.

Unfortunately, Mr Speaker, that is not the end of this fairly unsavoury chapter. I mentioned that the Department of Education had taken a decision to transfer the principal of the local high school. This was communicated to me in the way I explained to honourable members on Thursday night. As I said, I was entirely uninvolved in this and, of course, I respected the decision of the officers concerned. However, the honourable member for Braitling, who

unfortunately is not here, did not feel so constrained. In fact, he received representations from people in this regard and it was quite evident that he was able to obtain the reversal of this decision, I understand by making submissions both to the honourable Chief Minister and to the then Minister for Education, the honourable member for Fannie Bay. Exactly how that was done from there I am not sure. I am advised that the deliberations of the local high school council included comment from a local officer of the Department of Education to the effect that no decision had been made about the transfer of the principal of that school and then a member of that council piped up and said: 'Oh well, I have been told by Mr Vale that that decision is to be reversed, that the principal will not be transferred'. Mr Speaker, that convinces me, and I am sure it will convince you, that quite clearly a decision had been made to transfer the principal. Representations were made to the honourable member for Braintree and the decision was reversed.

That is improper. It should not and does not come within the purview of members of this Assembly to affect in any way what are, presumably, responsible professional decisions, made by officers of the Department of Education. When these issues were raised originally, the honourable member for Braintree first of all tried to tell people that it did not happen. That forced me to make public particular information that I took no joy in making public. However, I believe that it is of considerable importance that these subjects be aired. Time after time, we have heard about political interference in public service decisions. This is a particularly glaring example and it is entirely unacceptable.

I am not seeking to make any comment about it except to say that I feel personally that the principal of the school concerned was left without reasonable support. I might make a general comment that might be of interest to the honourable Minister for Education. There is a sad lack of expertise in the senior levels of the department in the area of secondary education. I have said it before and I will say it again. There is inadequate support for many people in that particular area.

They are the only comments I have to make. I intend writing to the minister to find out why the secretary of his department behaved in that way. There is nothing to explain of course. I suppose I would be interested to hear what exactly were the contents of the telegram the honourable member for Braintree sent to the Chief Minister or the Minister for Education and how exactly it was effected. Finally, Mr Speaker, allow me to say this: it was a grubby little episode.

Mr COULTER (Berrimah): Mr Speaker, I would like to address the Assembly on an occasion where I represented the honourable Chief Minister on the first voyage to Australia by the ship, Irena Greenwood. In an historical sense, not only was its first port of call Darwin but the history of the Irena Greenwood goes back a fair way in Northern Territory history. Irena Greenwood is still alive at the moment. She is 83 years of age and lives in Western Australia. I am told she is still very active in women's causes over there.

Irena Greenwood's family played a distinguished part in the life and development of the Northern Territory. One brother, the late Arthur Robert Driver, known as Mick I am told, was the Administrator immediately following the war and the suburb of Driver at Palmerston, part of my electorate, was in fact named after him. Another brother, the late John Henry Driver, was a surveyor with the Department of Lands and held the position of resident surveyor at Alice Springs. He also acquired Elkeldra Station. I understand that it is now run by a nephew, Roy Driver.

One of the other interesting points about the ship's call to Darwin was that the captain, Roy Marsh, has had a 46-year career at sea. He was the captain of the Nylander which came into Darwin after the disastrous Cyclone Tracy. He in fact set up Darwin's first communication channel with the rest of the world, some 4 hours after Tracy had come through. He spoke very highly of past mayors in Darwin and knew Tiger Brennan and Ella Stack quite well.

The other point of interest is that the Irena Greenwood had very sophisticated communications satellite navigation equipment. The member for Nightcliff was addressing issues about communications last week in this Assembly. I was interested in its ship-to-shore dialling. It has a facility whereby one can just pick up the telephone for a particular satellite and can dial a code anywhere in the world. It has a distress communication facility through this particular satellite system. Someone has only to press a button which would then indicate in London the whereabouts of that ship and, at the same time, the message would be relayed to every other ship within that immediate area. I bring these matters to the attention of honourable members for their interest.

Mr DALE (Wanguri): Mr Speaker, I would like to take this opportunity to expand a little on a question I asked of the Minister for Lands this morning relating to the Tracy Village complex and the radio installations next to it. After Cyclone Tracy, the Grollo camp was constructed on lot 4868 Town of Nightcliff. Next to it was a social club now known as Tracy Village. The Grollo camp consisted of a series of rooms constructed to house the many men who came to assist with the rebuilding of Darwin and a number of demountables which made up the kitchen and mess area together with the recreation room. The adjacent core unit comprised of a social club, several shops, a community hall and a swimming pool. The land of course is owned by the Department of Defence and permission was granted for the construction on condition that certain electrical appliances were not used as they might interfere with the RAAF radio installations on the remainder of the allotment. It makes you wonder how easy it would be to sabotage whatever equipment is there if, in fact, things like high-powered toasters and hair dryers could upset the radio installation.

After the rebuilding of Darwin was completed, it could be seen that a valuable community asset was falling into disrepair. There were no formal leasing arrangements for the social club or any of the other tenants. An estimate of \$2.7m was placed on the land and the capital improvements at the time and, in 1981, negotiations were completed between the Department of Administrative Services and Darwin City Council for the council to lease the land on a limited tenure of 10 years. Council then subleased the social club, shops etc to various organisations and businesses. There is now the Wanguri Family Centre creche, a betting shop, various other businesses, a very well-utilised community hall, and the social club which has been expanded to include a first-class bistro restaurant.

My advice is that the club is thriving and boasts some 1000 members. Club membership incorporates the East Darwin Sports Club which has teams in a number of sporting competitions. Applications have been submitted by the social club for funds to assist in the construction of sporting fields on nearby open land contained in the same lease.

To supplement the accommodation available at the old Grollo camp, it was decided by the Darwin City Council to construct the Pandanus Holiday Centre which now caters for a great deal of low-cost tourist accommodation in the old rooms and has of course built on to that now the new caravan and camping facilities. The swimming pool is maintained for the use of patrons and also members of the social club.

There is no doubt that the all-up capital improvements on the land would exceed \$2m. The lease expires on or before March 1991, in just 7 years time, with no compensation to the present users. I say 'on or before' because I have sighted a letter from the federal minister which states that the lease could be terminated prior to that date. Despite what could be called a rather cavalier approach to development on the land, the fact remains that the various facilities provide for the needs of the nearby community and the tourist industry.

The honourable Minister for Lands this morning, in answer to my question on this matter, agreed to reopen negotiations with the federal minister no doubt to seek to extend the term of the lease. However, I believe that one of the conditions of the present lease is that it can be terminated at any time. Clearly, that condition would have to be amended before agreement to an extension to the lease would be meaningful. The target for this government must be to have the RAAF installation removed from the area and to take over all of the land between Tambling Terrace and Lee Point bridge. Although there is some speculation that, with the development of Tindal, the installation will be removed, it is imperative that we tackle the situation immediately. It does not take too much imagination to envisage the pressure that will be brought to bear if the facilities of the Tracy Village and Pandanus Holiday Centre are bulldozed, despite the fact that developments were completed with full knowledge of the terms of the lease.

I have pointed out that the one and only entrance to the hospital is across the creek which is subject to flooding and, in the event of a major cyclone, when it would be likely to be most needed, there is every chance that the entrance would be blocked. A secondary entrance which does not cross the creek is urgently needed. This entrance would also be an asset in future years for emergency vehicles travelling from the Stuart Highway area. The only place for that road is along Lee Point Road and across the defence land. There is no doubt that, with the increasing population in the Darwin area, particularly the northern suburbs and out Palmerston way, emergency vehicles are going to have quite a deal of trouble getting across the main roads that are situated in that area to the Rocklands Drive entrance. It is quite ridiculous.

I am pleased that the honourable minister has agreed to write to the federal minister and I look forward to those negotiations achieving a quick result.

Mr VALE (Braitling): Mr Speaker, I will speak very briefly this afternoon on one point that was raised last week by the Leader of the Opposition. Before I do, this morning the Minister for Transport and Works, in reply to a question concerning signs, spoke about the Gap area of Alice Springs. There was quite a standing joke in that part of town. A sign was erected on every available post and tree. In fact, it would be accurate to say that, at one stage, you could not see the wood for signs. One huge red and white sign advised motorists as they turned down the street: 'wrong way go back'. Alice Springs being Alice Springs, one wag took to the sign early one morning. People got up and found pinned underneath the 'wrong way go back' sign another sign which said 'and miss 2 goes'.

Mr Speaker, last Thursday night in the adjournment debate the honourable Leader of the Opposition said that, in 1980, he attracted a vote of some 80% in his electorate of Arnhem. The figures supplied by the Electoral Office show that, in the 1980 election, in Arnhem the ALP gained 1346 votes, CLP 299 votes, Independent 72 and there were 128 informal votes. That made a total of 1845. In fact, the honourable Leader of the Opposition polled 72.9% of the vote not

80%. In Arafura, in the recent election the honourable Leader of the Opposition polled 48.4% of all votes cast which meant there was a swing of some 25% against him. Mr Speaker, I just seek to correct that information because the Leader of the Opposition claimed last week that he received 80%. The figures show 72.9%.

Mr HATTON (Nightcliff): Mr Speaker, I presented a petition to this Assembly this morning and I would like to take this opportunity to briefly expand on the matters contained in that petition. The event that led to the creation of this petition happened late last year. However, it is a matter that has been subject to some debate for several years. Late in 1983, the Darwin City Council wrote to the Minister for Lands asking that the reserve lease over Dudley Park be revoked. The residents sought to oppose that and, as a consequence, after a series of discussions around the neighbourhood, a meeting was arranged last Friday evening between the residents. Some 25 residents attended, 2 of the aldermen in the Chan Ward, the director of the parks and recreation section of the Darwin City Council and myself.

At that meeting I was quite surprised to hear from the council that it had taken the decision to seek an application to revoke the lease on an assumption that the residents wanted the land turned over into a house block. I would like to assure you, Sir, and the Minister for Lands that there is a virtually unanimous view of the residents in the immediate surrounds of that park that that park should continue. It is incomprehensible to me how an organisation such as the Darwin City Council could get its facts so back to front.

Following the discussions that occurred with the council last Friday, the council has undertaken to review the decision on that park. It is hoped that the council will reverse the decision and withdraw the application to revoke the lease. I must say that the residents in that area are very keen to have that park retained. They have been working to develop the park. They have planted trees and other plants in the area to beautify it and they have offered to the Darwin City Council that, if it makes the magnanimous gesture of actually connecting water to the block and putting a bit of top soil on it, they will develop and maintain that park as a community project. That is a project that we should support as far as we possibly can.

I would like to turn now to a far more important issue. It results from a statement by the so-called member for the Northern Territory in the House of Representatives as reported on the radio news this morning. I quote a transcript of that report in full:

*The local member, John Reeves, has called on the Territory government to introduce price controls on food and petrol. Mr Reeves says this sort of firm action was necessary in view of the finding of the Territory freight inquiry and was in the interests of all Territorians. He says the freight inquiry confirmed widely-held beliefs in the community that high prices for goods and services were not totally freight related. Mr Reeves says price controls would be both popular and effective, and could begin immediately as the necessary legislation was already on the books in the Territory. He says price control has been a fact of life in the Territory, and had been effective until dropped by the government shortly after self-government.*

I cannot let that nonsense go unchallenged. I do not propose today to deal specifically with the allegations concerning the freight cost inquiry, but will deal specifically with the question of price control. Mr Reeves claimed that price control has been effective. I say that is a falsehood. Price control in the 1970s had the prime result of increasing the rate of inflation, increasing



prices, decreasing competition and creating higher prices than we otherwise would have been required to meet. I can outline some of the facts of life that surrounded those circumstances. I will direct members' attention to them.

I find it quite amusing that the first decision that was made by the price controller at that time was to double the price of fish and chips. It never looked back after that. I came into my previous position in late 1975 and, being a firm believer in competition and the enterprise system, I expressed strong opposition to price control and thought that we should fight and lobby against it. A wise old head in business pulled me aside and said: 'Don't be stupid. We never get it so good as when it is under price control'. These are the facts of life that lead to it. Under price control, you must justify the price you pay for something; you must justify an increase. To justify an increase, there must be some formula to assess the increase in prices. In a period of inflation and moving costs, it is the easiest thing in the world to increase prices and get them justified before a tribunal. In doing that, the businessman abrogates himself from the responsibility for the price so charged as it has been assessed by an independent third party. The effect is that regular and frequent applications are made to price controllers and prices increase at a larger and higher rate.

Further to that, because you establish a maximum allowable price under price control, you can very effectively in business remove any competition over price because every retailer then charges the maximum recommended price. That was the experience during price control in the Northern Territory in the mid-1970s. I will refer particularly to the example of packaged beer. During the period of price control over packaged beer, every 3 months - and I remind you, Mr Deputy Speaker, that we were then in a period of quarterly cost of living adjustments, then called indexation on wages - an application was filed before the price controller for an increase in the price of beer as a consequence of wage movements. It was approved each time because it could be clearly demonstrated that costs had increased. Every 3 months prices went up. When eventually the government dropped price control, the price of packaged beer also dropped as competition bit into the market.

People could argue that, under those circumstances, you should do a very careful examination and squeeze down the margins to avoid any potential for super profits. That was attempted in Darwin in respect of rent control. The end consequence of trying to control rents and reduce the margins that landlords made on rents was, quite simply, that investors stopped investing in the construction of rental accommodation and exacerbated the already scarce rental accommodation available. It is only since the dropping of rent control that investment has returned into that field and we are now seeing an increase in the availability of rental accommodation and, because of the forces of competition, we are moving towards more equitable and more comparable rental rates. The statistics and figures demonstrate that. A fact of life is that it is only in the cauldron of full and open competition that you maximise efficiency and minimise prices. Those who would seek to ignore or swim against the facts of life are doomed to failure and to impose a bureaucratic nightmare and to achieve a result opposite to that which is their objective.

Some members will argue that we can impose draconian legislation and force people into a situation which, in their view, is one of equity. Of course, we then look back at history. I would like to refer to an introduction to a book called 'Prices Justification in Australia' by Russell Scott. It goes well back into history to demonstrate the effects of price control even in the days of the Roman Empire. It reads:

We are in the year 301 AD. The problem of ever-increasing living costs has reached crisis point. The Emperor Diocletian, although not optimistic, embarks on a course of price control. Moreover, Rome already had precedents for such measures. In 440 BC the government had fixed the price of wheat for the duration of 3 markets. In 19 AD Tiberius had taken a similar step, Nero and Commodus also, but with the result of increasing the scarcity of commodities and worsening the economic malaise rather than curing it. Despite these hardly encouraging examples, Diocletian, under the pressure of an outburst of public anger, published in 301 a price control statute, the Edict of Maximum Prices.

The document comes to the necessary remedy: the establishment of a maximum price for all commodities with no exception. The general principle is followed by a table of prices all fixed in denary. Foodstuffs, raw materials, manufactured articles, charges by the liberal professions, wages of workmen are listed in a complete and detailed fashion. Finally, sanctions: death for the merchant who contravenes the edict by selling above the fixed price, death to the buyer who is a party to such a breach and death too for those who corner or hold illegal stocks. The Edict of Maximum Prices had from the beginning one outstanding result: an enormous general increase in prices. The result was that the law soon became unenforceable and was abandoned.

Diocletian's attempt at price fixing was not the last by a Roman emperor. In 362 AD the Emperor Julian attempted to impose price control in Antioch in a similar attempt to hold down the cost of living which was rising dangerously. This was also a failure and attracted the following comments from the historian Amadeas Marcellinus: 'The edict of Julian had the same result as every other unskilfully applied measure for the reduction of prices: misery and famine.'

That has been the history of price control wherever attempted anywhere in the world. It is not an effective means of controlling prices and circumventing the natural forces of the economic process.

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

Mr D.W. COLLINS (Sadadeen): Mr Deputy Speaker, I think the honourable member for Nightcliff is trying to compete with the honourable member for Berrimah for the Adam Smith award which I mentioned in my speech earlier today.

I would like to refer to the retirement village which is being planned in Alice Springs for what is known as the Boxwood Swamps area or, as I prefer to call it, the Coolibah Swamp - those 2 names being synonymous. The members of the Northern Territory Council on the Ageing, Alice Springs subgroup, for a long time have been pushing for a retirement village in this particular area. A lady well known to you all, Mrs Margaret Hall, Citizen of the Year last year, has been in the forefront of this along with her husband, Rex, and others. One of the members of that particular organisation, Mr Bob Gregory, did a considerable service when he approached Mr Bob Ellis of the Sacred Sites Authority and was able to gain permission from that authority for a retirement village to go ahead. It is a significant area. Other members of the group who have been working to bring things to fruition include the president, Bob Hawley, and the secretary, Joe Arrano. The ideas have come from that group and it has also helped to bring the right people together.

An architect in town, Mr Barry Shanahan, has been extremely helpful. He drew diagrams of a retirement village at no cost to anybody at this particular stage. I also pay tribute to the southern director of the Housing Commission in Alice Springs, Mr Russell Poliwka. When we had a meeting with him, he gave us a wealth of information. He had been involved with similar projects in Western Australia. He learnt how such retirement villages can be funded and run. The government has now accepted this proposal. I look forward to seeing the project come into reality. The Alice Springs Council has been brought into the picture regarding the management of such a proposal.

High praise is due to the Alice Springs subgroup of the Council on the Ageing for its efforts. That group does not have any paid officers and does not cost the government very much at all. It receives a few shekels for such things as postage. My own secretary works with the group and types notices and other things. I know that her services are appreciated. A great job is being done by these people and, in the not-too-distant future, I hope we will see such a village in Alice Springs. It will be a great asset.

I asked a question this morning about conveyancing. I have read the Morris report which, no doubt, is a little outdated. It compared conveyancing in all the states. I intend to make a further study and update my information in this area. When you compare the states, the first impression is that the actual cost to the consumer is similar in all cases. However, the charges to the consumer are twofold. One relates to the government registration fees and the other relates to the conveyancing side. In Australia, conveyancing is done by 3 groups: solicitors, landbrokers, such as exist in South Australia, or, as in Western Australia, settlement agencies. It would seem that, in the places where the prices are lowest from the conveyancing agencies, governments seem to charge the highest government registration fees and this balances things out. In the Territory, our government fees are, as I understand it, the lowest in Australia. Unfortunately, the solicitors have a monopoly on conveyancing. They are the only ones who are allowed to charge.

An ordinary person can do his own conveyancing or, if he can persuade somebody not to charge a fee, then he is within the law. However, if that person were to charge a fee, he would become a criminal. Of course, it gives the solicitors a vested interest. I know that some conveyancing cases require the services of a solicitor. In South Australia, people in the landbroking business freely say that, on occasion, they bring in solicitors. They know exactly when a solicitor needs to be brought in. However, I have been assured that, in the Territory, 95% of cases are fairly simple and could be handled by conveyancing agents, landbrokers or settlement agencies, as they are in the states. The charges made by these organisations are considerably less than those of solicitors.

I will study and bring to this Assembly the latest details from the states on conveyancing. I believe that we will do the people of the Territory quite a service if we can give them some degree of freedom to choose the type of people to act for them. I believe that we can give them a far cheaper deal than they are getting now and, of course, that will make the cost of living in the Territory that little bit less.

Mrs PADGHAM-PURICH (Housing): Mr Deputy Speaker, I wish to mention my attendance at the 1984 Nguiu Football League grand final at Bathurst Island last Sunday. I must mention the outstanding exhibition of football by the Tiwi islanders which enhances growing admiration for them throughout Australia. Amongst the visitors was former VFL games record holder, Mr Ted Whitten, who is a national identity in the sport and currently a sports writer for a national

publication. All areas of the media were represented and all expressed their intention to report glowingly through their national offices of the day's events which could only help to promote the Northern Territory.

Mr Deputy Speaker, the standard of football, particularly the exciting overhead marking, bullet-like hand-passing and pinpoint foot-passing, was a wonderful promotion of the undoubted natural athletic ability of the Tiwis. The teams involved were Imaloo based at Pularumpi at Garden Point on Melville Island and led by former St Mary's champion Sidney Rioli, and Bathurst Island-based Tappalinga team coached by another NTFL champion of yesteryear, Edmund Johnston. Although Imaloo staged a courageous recovery to snatch victory in the last moments by 3 points, both teams, and particularly the Tiwi people, were the winners for their exhibition of sportsmanship and sheer, natural sporting talent.

Mr Deputy Speaker, honourable members will be well aware that the Tiwi islands were formerly part of my electorate. When I went over there, I renewed my acquaintance with the many friends I had made over the years when I represented the Tiwi islands. I would like to add that, in making a decision to stand in the electorate in which I did at the last election, I did so with great regret because I could no longer represent the Tiwi islands. However, I renewed acquaintance on Sunday with my many friends over there and I will be going there to see them from time to time.

I would like to comment on remarks made by the honourable member for Millner regarding the Commonwealth-States Housing Agreement. He spoke of the market rents that we should aim for. I am not certain of his comments but the term 'market rents' is confusing in that it does not mean the same in all states. We have the terms 'market rents', 'market-related rents', 'cost rents' and 'cost-related rents'. They are all much the same although they vary from state to state. He said, and I agree with him, that the present Commonwealth-States Housing Agreement requires that public housing rentals move towards market rents. Moving towards market rents from rents charged by the Housing Commission would mean that the rents in many cases would be raised. If we raise the rents, we are in a catch-22 situation. If rents are raised to the level of market rents, more Housing Commission tenants will not be able to afford them. A greater sum of money would then have to be funded for rental rebates and this would put a greater stress on the amount of money that the Commonwealth government pays us to keep this scheme going. A renegotiation of the Commonwealth-States Housing Agreement is currently under consideration and various aspects of this agreement were considered at the last Housing Ministers' Conference that I attended in Canberra. Final details will be thrashed out at a meeting of the ministers in Hobart planned for next May.

Mr Deputy Speaker, cost rents are based on the economic costs of rental derived from a compilation of maintenance, debt servicing and all involved expenses. I would like to add here that the honourable member was up a wattle when he was talking about high rents paid by Housing Commission tenants up here compared to those in the states. I would like to give figures on the situation here. Three-bedroom public housing rentals vary between \$63 and \$74.40 throughout the Territory. The Darwin rental is \$65 to \$80. The medium, private rental for an equivalent in Darwin is \$190. I think even the member can see a difference between \$65 to \$80 paid by Housing Commission tenants for a 3-bedroom house and \$190 paid in the private sector for its equivalent.

I would like to reiterate that the service offered by the Housing Commission in the Territory compared to that offered in other states is second to none. Approximately 70% of home purchase finance is provided by the Housing Commission for the Home Loans Scheme and only 22% is provided, on the Australian

average, for the same thing. Approximately 40% of private dwelling commencements in the Territory are made by the Housing Commission. In the rest of Australia, the average is between 6% and 12%. Approximately 20% of the total housing stock is held by the Housing Commission in the Northern Territory. In the rest of Australia it is 4.9% - that is the national average. In those 3 sets of figures that I mentioned, our Housing Commission is second to none.

The honourable member for Millner said that our government had a socialist approach to housing. I would like to reiterate what the Chief Minister said. Our approach may appear socialist, but the end justifies the means. Our government, in its approach to the housing situation, is definitely supporting the capitalist premise of private ownership.

Mr EVERINGHAM (Chief Minister): Mr Deputy Speaker, I would have liked to have tabled this petition this morning but, unfortunately, it is not in the correct form. However, I would read for you and for the benefit of all honourable members this letter I received from the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals, Northern Territory, dated 23 February this year:

*Please find attached a petition containing 292 signatures from within the Darwin community in support of legislation against the sale of livestock at flea markets. Our society would appreciate your support in tabling the attached petition in the next Assembly sittings. We have also sent a copy of the petition to the Darwin City Council. Our society's experiences on a regular inspection of flea markets indicates severe distress often resulting in death of animals including birds, rabbits, chickens, ducks, mice etc.*

*The distress experienced by these animals relates to their transportation to and from the markets as well as totally unsuitable conditions of the markets themselves. We have tried over 3 years to work with the individual vendors through education and gentle coercion but still unsatisfactory practices continue. Our society would be pleased to receive advice from your government on the appropriate legislative machinery which will put a stop to these practices.*

I think I referred it to the Minister for Community Development for attention. Mr Deputy Speaker, I seek leave to table the petition which has those 292 signatures attached.

Leave granted.

Mr EVERINGHAM: There are a couple of obituaries, Mr Deputy Speaker. It is with regret that I record the death of Albert George Young, more commonly known as Bogger Young, who died in Darwin on 7 December last aged 78. He was born at Finch Hatton near Mackay in Queensland on 22 September 1905 and, after schooling in Mackay, he left there at a young age and worked for a number of years in the Western Australian mining areas, particularly Kalgoorlie, Wilma and Meekatharra. At one time, he sold cars in Perth but, when the depression began to bite, he returned to Queensland and worked at Mt Morgan and Mt Isa.

Out of work again because of a strike at Mt Isa in 1933, Bogger Young then came to the Territory. He stayed for a short time in Tennant Creek and later Pine Creek where he worked at the Enterprise and Spring Hill mines. By this time he had earned his nickname of Bogger - the first man down the shaft after a blast, potentially a most dangerous job. About 1935 he had his own show at Mt Todd south of Pine Creek.

From the late 1930s he had an earth-moving business. He extended the old airstrip at Fannie Bay for the 1936 round-Australia air race and was involved in major roadworks. During the war, his family was evacuated to South Australia but until about 1943 Mr Young built airstrips and roads up and down the track until he went south and bought the Crystal Brook Hotel which he ran in conjunction with his wife's family, the Dowlings.

On 6 February 1935, he married Maysie Dowling, daughter of George and Ethel Maude Dowling and sister of Jim who now owns and runs the Parap and Berrimah Hotels. He was a man handy with his fists. At one time he had boxed professionally but he was always ready to assist a battler. After the war he bought the Commercial Hotel in Katherine and in 1959 built the new Pine Creek Hotel which he and his wife ran for some years. During the 1960s, he purchased Birrindudu Station for his sons to run and in 1968 he retired to Darwin.

He is survived by his widow, Maysie, and 7 children, Marlene, Russell, Warren, Glen, Leonie, Sandra and Suzanne. I am sure that all of us extend to them our sympathy for their bereavement.

Members: Hear, hear!

MR EVERINGHAM: I also draw the attention of honourable members to the death on 5 January 1984 of William John Crowson who first came to the Territory with his wife Vi to manage Nicholson Station after their marriage in 1935. He was born on 18 July 1909 at Jundah in Queensland, oldest son of William Arthur Hall Crowson and Katherine Crowson, nee Scanlon. William Crowson was a drover and a manager for Vestey's.

Mr Deputy Speaker, I should also record the retirement of the former Secretary of the Department of Community Development, Noel Lynagh. He retired from the Northern Territory Public Service at the end of January this year. He was one of the longest-serving public servants in the Northern Territory. With his 46 years of experience, his administrative skills were probably the most developed we had. Noel Lynagh started his public service career in the Commonwealth Public Service in September 1938 in Townsville as a telegraph messenger in the Post-Master General's Department as, it seems to me, many men who later have risen to very high positions in life have done. It might be a good place to start your boys off when they go to work - as post office messengers. They all seem to do pretty well.

In 1941, he was promoted to a clerical position in the Lands and Survey Branch of the Northern Territory Administration at Alice Springs after passing the Third Division clerical examination. He saw war service from 1942 to 1946 and, in 1946, Noel Lynagh returned to the Lands and Survey Branch. It could be said that, without him, no one in the Territory would have known who owned what after the war. He was personally responsible for the transfer of all Northern Territory land title documents from Darwin to Alice Springs before the bombing of Darwin in 1942 and their return to Darwin after the war.

Noel Lynagh remained with the Lands and Survey Branch until 1969 and rose through the ranks to the position of officer-in-charge of the branch. In 1969, he was promoted to the rank of Assistant Director, Executive Section, Public Utilities and Housing Branch in Darwin. In 1970, he was awarded the Diploma in Public Administration by the University of Queensland. He was then promoted to Director of Transport and Planning Branch in February 1971 and remained in this position until May 1974, when he was promoted to Assistant Secretary, Finance, Supply and Transport Branch in the Department of the Northern Territory. In 1975 he rose to the position of First Assistant Secretary, Management,

Legislation and Planning Division of the Department of the Northern Territory and, towards the end of 1976, he also acted as First Assistant Secretary, Lands and Community Services Division, in Darwin.

In July 1978, Noel Lynagh transferred from the Australian Public Service to the Northern Territory Public Service and, in August 1978, he was appointed as the first Co-ordinator-General in the Northern Territory Public Service. In July 1980, he was appointed Secretary of the Department of Community Development, which position he held until his retirement early this year.

I am sure that all of us would like to wish Noel Lynagh and his wife Jill, who will be staying in Darwin, a long, happy and prosperous retirement.

Members: Hear, hear!

Motion agreed to; the Assembly adjourned.

Mr Speaker Steele took the Chair at 10 am.

### PRESENTATION OF ADDRESS IN REPLY

Mr SPEAKER: Honourable members, it is my intention to present the Address in Reply to His Honour the Administrator at Government House at 4 pm today. I invite all honourable members to accompany me at that time.

### TABLED PAPERS

#### Draft Bills Relating to Aboriginal Land Claims

Mr EVERINGHAM (Chief Minister): Mr Speaker, I table 2 draft bills: a bill to vest in the Northern Territory Development Land Corporation an estate in fee simple in certain land and for related purposes, and a bill to provide, as part of an inseverable legislative arrangement whereby certain land of public importance is alienated from the Crown by the Territory Development Land Corporation (Vesting of Land) Act 1984 and other land may be applied for and dealt with in accordance with the act, for the excision of certain areas of land from pastoral leases and the granting of an estate in fee simple in those areas as living areas for the benefit of Aboriginals who are or who have been ordinarily resident on those pastoral leases, and for related purposes.

Mr Speaker, I seek leave to make a statement.

Leave granted.

### STATEMENT

#### Draft Bills Relating to Aboriginal Land Claims

Mr EVERINGHAM: Mr Speaker, I have now tabled 2 draft bills which the government proposes to introduce at the next sittings of the Legislative Assembly if necessary. Very similar bills were introduced into the Assembly in October 1983 but they lapsed with the proroguing of the Assembly. About 10 days ago, I agreed to a request from the Minister for Aboriginal Affairs not to reintroduce the legislation until he had decided on possible changes to the Aboriginal Land Rights Act. Honourable members will be aware that this act was the subject of review by Mr Justice Toohey and I tabled his report 'Seven Years On' in this Assembly last week.

The purpose of tabling these 2 draft bills now is to give you, Mr Speaker, and honourable members, the various land councils, pastoralist organisations, the mining industry and all interested members of the public ample time to consider their contents. So far as the vesting of land bill is concerned, this legislation is made necessary because of the anomalous situation in which Aboriginal people can lay claim to public purpose lands. By this, I mean stock routes, quarantine reserves, commonages, water conservation reserves and the like - not to mention, of course, national parks and recreation services.

The Territory government has fought hard to persuade the Commonwealth government to amend the Land Rights Act to prevent these claims but so far we have been unsuccessful. The Territory government has presented ample evidence to the Commonwealth in support of its argument that the federal parliament did not intend originally that public purpose land should be claimable. The most recent vindication of the Territory's position is found in paragraphs 146 and 147 of Mr Justice Toohey's report to which I referred earlier.



Mentioning the report of the Aboriginal Land Rights Commission in 1974 conducted by Mr Justice Woodward, Mr Justice Toohey said:

*146. It is a reasonable inference from the report that, as the Territory government submits, Woodward J did not contemplate the transfer of government reserves to Aboriginal ownership except subject perhaps to some leasing-back arrangement.*

*147. The question of land set apart for a public purpose under the law of the Northern Territory arises both in regard to existing reserves and land that may at some future date be set apart. At present, land so set apart includes public parks, camping areas, stock routes and reserves, commonages, public water areas and police stations outside towns.*

Several years ago, Aboriginal land councils decided to take advantage of this unintended result of the Land Rights Act and lay claim to dozens of pieces of land which, until then, everyone regarded as set aside for public purposes. In the case of stock routes and stock reserves, the land councils' argument for so doing was that there was no law in the Territory to provide for the excision of community living areas from pastoral leases except with the agreement of the pastoralist. The Territory government will be meeting this need in the cognate bill I have tabled - the Aboriginal Community Living Areas Bill. Unfortunately, the land councils seem to want it both ways now. They want to be able to obtain excisions from pastoral properties and, at the same time, claim the stock routes. The Territory government finds this to be completely unreasonable and unacceptable.

Mr Speaker, the Minister for Aboriginal Affairs, Clive Holding, has objected to the Territory introducing an alienation bill of the kind that I have now tabled. He does not seem to understand that the Territory government has been forced into it by his government's refusal to change the Land Rights Act to ensure that public purpose lands are not claimable. The vesting of land bill would be unnecessary if common sense prevailed with the minister. The enactment of the legislation will have the effect of vesting the public purpose lands described in the schedule as estates in fee simple in the Northern Territory Development Land Corporation. It is a shame and a disgrace that we have to resort to this. By this means, those lands will be removed from the category of land over which claims may be made under the Land Rights Act. If the same land had been set aside under Commonwealth legislation, it would not be open to claim. Such a situation is unreasonable. The care, control and management of the land will be vested in the Territory Development Corporation, not the Northern Territory Development Land Corporation, and the minister will direct the Northern Territory Development Corporation as to how the land will be managed.

The schedule to this bill does not include public purpose land which has already been recommended for grant by the Aboriginal Land Commissioner nor public purpose land which forms part of a land claim already heard by the commissioner but not yet reported on, nor land claims now being heard by the commissioner. Nor does it include that major disgrace, Mr Speaker, national parks.

The purpose of the Aboriginal Community Living Areas Bill is to establish a means whereby Aboriginal people can obtain title to community living areas on pastoral properties. It is intended that the title will be freehold. There is no suggestion that applications for land under the bill can or should be treated as Aboriginal land claims as provided for by the Land Rights Act. Aboriginal people who are ordinarily resident on a pastoral property when the act commences or who were resident some time previously will be able to apply for excision of a community living area. Alternatively, any Aboriginal people, resident or not, can do so with the consent of the lessee. We have thereby widened the criteria for eligibility in making these applications.

An application is made to the minister who can then agree to grant it forthwith. This will usually be the case where all parties, including the pastoralist, agree to it. If this is not the case, the minister may appoint a conciliator to bring the various parties together to see if an agreement can be negotiated. Whatever happens, if the minister has not approved an application within 90 days, it must be referred to the tribunal established by the bill. The tribunal consists of the chairman, who must be a Justice of the Supreme Court or a barrister of not less than 5 years standing nominated by the Chief Justice, one member who will be nominated by the relevant land council, and a third member who will be nominated by a prescribed organisation which, for the purposes of the bill, should be a body representing the interests of pastoralists.

The bill sets out the various functions of the tribunal and its procedures. In short, the tribunal will consider the application, listen to all the parties and report to the minister with a recommendation as to whether or not the land applied for or any other land within the lease should be granted. It is, of course, for the minister to decide whether he will accept the recommendation just as it is for the federal minister to decide on the Aboriginal Land Commissioner's report under the Land Rights Act. In making its report, the tribunal must have regard to the economic and social needs of the applicants and their historical associations with the area, the length of time they have lived on the land, the benefits that will come to them if the land is granted, the costs involved in establishing a living area on the land, their interests in any other land already granted to them or applied for and the extent to which the economic viability of the pastoral property will be affected by an excision. These matters are not exclusive and the tribunal can also consider any other matter it thinks fit.

If the minister approves an application, the land must be acquired. Fair compensation must be paid and it will be necessary for the Territory and Commonwealth governments to reach agreement on payment for compensation and survey costs. The Territory government cannot be expected to bear these costs itself. Any land granted under this bill will be held by land trusts which will not be able to alienate it by sale or lease without the approval of the minister, except that the trust can lease out land to an Aboriginal for a period not exceeding 5 years without the minister's consent. Of course, Northern Territory law will apply to land excised under this bill.

The bill will prevent repetitive applications over the same lease. Where an application fails, a similar application will not be entertained for a minimum of 2 years. Separately, an amendment to the Fences Act will make it clear that a pastoralist is not liable for any extra costs of fencing which result from the excision of land from his lease.

Honourable members will note that the 2 draft bills contain clauses which connect them legally in a direct way. This is to make it clear that, in the Territory government's view, the 2 must proceed together. However, I have offered to the Minister for Aboriginal Affairs to withdraw the vesting of land bill if he will agree to amend the Aboriginal Land Rights Act to exclude claims to public purpose land.

Finally, Mr Speaker, I have instructed my officers to discuss the contents of this proposed legislation and the Toohey Report with officials of the Department of Aboriginal Affairs, the land councils, pastoralists' associations, the mining industry and other interested groups.

#### TABLED PAPER Education for Aborigines

Mr HARRIS (Education): Mr Speaker, I table an information statement on Education for Aborigines.

I seek leave to make further comment on this statement.

Leave granted.

#### STATEMENT Education for Aborigines

Mr HARRIS: Mr Speaker, this is a particularly important document as it sets out the government's strategies for bringing about much-needed improvements in the academic performance of Aboriginal students in primary and secondary education. The Northern Territory has long been recognised as a leader in the field of Aboriginal education. Since taking over educational responsibilities from the Commonwealth, the Northern Territory government not only has maintained that leadership but has increased the commitment. Notwithstanding our support and the great amount of development work that has taken place over the past several years, an unfortunate fact remains: a significant proportion of Aboriginal children proceed through their schooling to Year 10 without achieving functional literacy and numeracy. They are therefore able to take only minimal advantage of the benefits which schooling can provide.

The information statement which elaborates on policies outlined in 'Directions for the Eighties' is a blueprint for rectifying the situation. It was prepared in close consultation with FEPPi, the Aboriginal education consultative group. The members of FEPPi, who are nominated by communities in 15 regions throughout the Territory, consulted wherever possible with people from the language and tribal groups which they represent. What we have, Mr Speaker, is a document which represents not only the views of educators but also what representatives of many Aboriginal groups regard as the best approaches under existing circumstances for bringing about a marked improvement in the academic performance of Aboriginal students.

Members should be aware, however, that the approaches set out in this document are flexible in recognition of the fact that circumstances and priorities in Aboriginal communities vary widely and often change, sometimes quite dramatically. If the new approaches which the government will be implementing are to succeed, it is essential that Aboriginal communities become much more involved in their children's education and this, in turn, will inevitably bring about further changes in approach in the future.

Mr Speaker, the most fundamental departure from current practice outlined in the information statement is the introduction of a system of student promotion based much more on academic achievement than on age. As I said a moment ago, many students in Aboriginal communities proceed right through their schooling without achieving functional literacy and numeracy. From now on, however, Aboriginal community schools will be restructured to provide a lower primary section and an upper primary section, and students normally will not be promoted from the lower to the upper primary section and from the upper primary section to the secondary school program until they have achieved the required levels of competence in core curriculum English and mathematics.

As part and parcel of this restructuring of the primary school programs, students with high academic potential will be identified and provided with special support and an appropriate set of curricula will be selected or prepared from the existing curricula recommended for Territory schools. While current curricula give many options and a wide choice of materials, what is needed for Aboriginal schools is a strong, positive thrust and this requires focus rather than wide choice in content and approach. A substantial curriculum writing exercise will be involved.

Mr Speaker, whilst there are many reasons for the Aboriginal school system of progressing through the various levels based on age rather than performance, it has been a failure academically. It also tends to perpetuate low achievement by removing the pressure to succeed, by lowering teacher expectations and by lulling Aboriginal parents into the false sense of security of believing that their children are succeeding where they are not. I am confident that the new system of promotion by achievement will, in time, reverse this situation. But if it does nothing else, it will achieve a great deal indeed if it helps Aboriginal community leaders to bring home forcefully to Aboriginal parents that, in order to succeed, their children need their support, need to attend school regularly and need to work hard.

Mr Speaker, a major effort will also be made to upgrade education programs for students of secondary school age. If the demand and aspirations of Aboriginal communities for more skilled and qualified local members are to be achieved, students must attain the required level of basic secondary education. Accordingly, secondary education programs will be introduced progressively in the larger Aboriginal community schools in place of existing post-primary programs. This will be done as soon as there are sufficient numbers of students capable of coping with lower secondary work. Future trial secondary programs will also be started in some of the large communities based on current trials at Bamyili and Yirrkala.

At the Kormilda and Yirara residential colleges, a number of measures will be adopted to improve the effectiveness of academic and support programs. While an open entry policy will be maintained for isolated students for whom attendance at Kormilda and Yirara is the best option, entry requirements will be introduced for the majority of students with the aim of selecting those who can cope with the urban social environment and secondary education beyond Year 10. Whilst living at Kormilda and Yirara, students who are capable of attempting matriculation, and other senior students, will be placed in normal high schools when they demonstrate readiness for high school work and the social ability to cope.

Mr Speaker, the role of Kormilda and Yirara in helping to raise the educational standards of students from Aboriginal communities should not be underestimated. These colleges have a particularly important role to play in the educational and social development of students who have the

desire and ability to go on to tertiary study by helping them to cope with western society. It is no coincidence that, in the Northern Territory, virtually all educated Aborigines, who have become spokesmen for their people in the wider community, have attended an urban residential college.

Mr Speaker, the information statement outlines a number of other measures which the government will be taking to create the conditions necessary for students to significantly improve their academic performance and thereby take advantage of training courses leading to skilled occupations and to higher educational qualifications. An important part of our effort will be to encourage greater parental involvement and informed community support for educational programs in Aboriginal communities. If standards are to be raised at the primary level, greater community support is necessary. If programs in Aboriginal communities are to succeed at the secondary level, strong community support is absolutely essential.

#### TABLED PAPER

Initiatives being taken by the Government in relation to Small Business

Mr EVERINGHAM (Chief Minister): Mr Speaker, I table for the information of members a statement on initiatives being taken by the government in relation to small business.

The statement refers to a number of initiatives taken by the government to assist small businesses. These include increased management education, promotion of the benefits of management education, more frequent general management workshops and training programs aimed at specific industries, expansion of the small business service, opening a shopfront small business centre, and a computer-based information system to provide up-to-date statistical information and analysis for a client's business proposals.

Mr Speaker, capital is also an important factor. In addition to the funds already provided and in concert with an expansion of the criteria for financial assistance to industry, extra financial assistance is available to small businesses through a subsidised consultancy scheme and a special loans scheme. These funds will not be used to prop up ailing firms without the prospects of success being sufficient nor will they duplicate normal funding sources provided by commercial financial institutions. The special loans scheme will be administered by the Northern Territory Development Corporation and, in the main, will assist businesses to expand. Applications will be assessed in accordance with the normal criteria used by the Territory Development Corporation and loans granted subsequently will be subject to the standard terms and conditions of the corporation.

Mr Speaker, I am pleased to announce that these measures are already assisting local industry. The support given to Pauls NT to expand its plant has coincided with an announcement that the company is looking to South-east Asia as a market for the sale of the local product. Another example is Northern Australian Plant Exports, a company which is being assisted with capital expansion and market promotion for the export of nursery stock to the Middle East. I believe we have assisted that company to the tune of \$150 000 in terms of loans and grants. Funds have also been set aside to assist in the marketing and promotion of small business production through specific industry exhibitions, promotion and advertising funds, product launches, the cost of brochures and so on.

Mr Speaker, to reflect the expanded role of the service, its title will be changed to the Small Business Service. The government recognises the crucial importance of small business to the Territory's progress. The Territory Development Act will be amended to allow representation of small business on the board of the corporation.

Mr Speaker, members of the Assembly will be aware of the importance of these measures to the expansion of the economy of the Northern Territory and members may feel the need to comment on the proposals put forward by the government. I would welcome feedback that they may care to submit in writing.

Mr Speaker, I move that the statement be noted.

Debate adjourned.

### ANSWER TO QUESTION

Mr EVERINGHAM (Chief Minister) (by leave): Mr Speaker, I said yesterday that I would try to obtain additional information relating to an executive officer for the Yulara Development Company. I am informed by the managing chairman of directors that the company entered into agreements under which it is charged with developing the international resort at Yulara and with its marketing and management. Those agreements were tabled in this Assembly on 26 May 1982. In fact, I brought them to the notice of the member for MacDonnell yesterday afternoon.

The first phase of the company's activities centred upon the physical construction of the facilities. Honourable members are aware that this task is proceeding to schedule and, within the overall cost plan we have set out, major elements are now being turned off as operational entities and this process will culminate in the opening of the Sheraton Hotel in about 6 months. During the construction phase, the Conservation Commission was nominated as the client authority in contract management for the approval of design, closely supervising the company's activity. Indeed, that commission seconded certain staff to a project office run jointly with the company so that the necessary expertise was centralised. This proved to be a vital complement to the achievement of the targets involved in such a fast-track project.

At the same time, the company - again using Conservation Commission officers on secondment - negotiated leases and management agreements covering the hotel's operation and the use of each of the shops and other facilities. The pattern has now been set. The whole orientation of the company's activity is changing from construction to management.

The company has its debt financing in place and is now negotiating with equity partners. The financing plan is very sophisticated. The loans and equity will run through until we have demonstrated profitability, at which time the assets will have a substantial value on the market. The agreements provide that any profit on eventual sale will accrue to the TIO. Consistent with the government's tourism policies and the maximisation of the resort's value, the company must now: (a) manage its finances very efficiently; (b) ensure that there is coordination of the marketing activities of the major facilities' operators who are bound to spend a proportion of takings on publicity and promotion, and the servicing of operators and the Tourist Commission; (c) administer all the leases; and (d) run the municipal affairs of the village in a professional manner.

To achieve these objectives, the company needs management of a high order. The advertisement now placed is consistent with that need. The executive officer will provide the new management skills in the discharge of all the ongoing responsibilities of the company, as distinct from its construction task. I trust, Mr Speaker, that the company will attract the best possible person, whether from within or outside the government.

Mr Bell: I wanted to say something.

Mr EVERINGHAM: No, I am just answering your question.

TABLED PAPER  
Second Report of the Subordinate Legislation and  
Tabled Papers Committee

Mr HATTON (Nightcliff): Mr Speaker, I present the Second Report of the Subordinate Legislation and Tabled Papers Committee.

TERRITORY DEVELOPMENT AMENDMENT BILL  
(Serial 27)

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 government is anxious to see that the backbone of business in the Territory, which is small business, is further developed and we have already taken initiatives in this direction. Members will recall my statement of a few moments ago. In the government's policy speech leading up to last year's election, I said that the Territory Development Act would be amended to give more emphasis to the development of small business in the Territory and to appoint a member to the board of the NTDC who would represent the interests of Territory small business. The bill before the Assembly charges the corporation specifically to assist with the development of small business in the Territory as part of its function, and provides for the appointment of a member of the corporation who is capable of representing the interests of Territory small business. I commend the bill to honourable members.

Debate adjourned.

STATUTE LAW REVISION BILL  
(Serial 26)

Bill presented and read a first time.

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

For the benefit of new honourable members, I should explain the purpose of the Statute Law Revision Bill. A Statute Law Revision Act, by whatever known name, is a device used in virtually every jurisdiction to correct minor errors and inconsistencies that, from time to time, occur in legislation books. These errors and inconsistencies may be brought about in a number of ways, such as: a gradual change in drafting style which leaves particular older statutes out of step with modern practice; the overlooking, sometimes deliberately, of insignificant consequential amendments to acts resulting from a change to or a replacement of a major piece

of legislation; sequential numbering of provisions being upset by amendments commencing in an order not anticipated when they were being drafted; provisions being kept on the books to cater for interim problems which, with the passing of time, no longer exist; and just plain error.

Mr Speaker, we have a nice mixture in this bill. There are changes proposed to the Weights and Measures Act to keep the terminology consistent. Amendments of a consequential nature are those proposed to the Bail Act, the Control of Roads Act, the Local Government Act and the Prisons (Correctional Services) Act. Sequential numbering problems are dealt with by 2 of the proposed amendments to the Police Administration Act and the Traffic Act.

Clause 2 proposes the repeal of regulations that no longer have a purpose and I will leave it to honourable members to test themselves in finding the errors. A clue might be for them to look at the suggested amendment to the new Building Act which has not yet commenced and section 86 of the Police Administration Act. Perhaps I should make special mention of clause 2. The regulations there dealt with were kept in force when the Motor Accidents (Compensation) Scheme was commenced to cover the interim period when there were still third-party insurance policies in force after the act came into operation. I am presently advised that no such policies remain in force and, after the respectable period of time that has now elapsed, it seems that the regulations can be safely repealed.

Another matter for comment concerns the recent amendment to the Planning Act. Under the replaced section 99 of that act, it is possible but not likely that, in a subdivision of land, a road may be vested in a manner inconsistent with the general provisions in the Control of Roads Act or the Local Government Act. The normal rules of statute construction would override the inconsistent general provisions in those 2 acts if such a vesting occurred. The proposed amendments are to make the matter clear.

As in the past, because the changes proposed in the bill are more or less of a technical nature, I invite honourable members who have queries or need further explanations to raise them with the Parliamentary Counsel who will be only too happy to assist. I commend the bill to honourable members.

Debate adjourned.

#### DARWIN PORT AUTHORITY AMENDMENT BILL (Serial 29)

Bill presented and read a first time.

Mr ROBERTSON (Transport and Works): Mr Speaker, I move that the bill be now read a second time.

This bill seeks to amend schedule 1 of the Darwin Port Authority Act describing the boundary limits of the port. The purpose of this amendment is to remove from the port limits the land area of Channel Island above the highwater mark and those waters from time to time occupied by the wharf, jetty, bund or other facility, the property of the Northern Territory Electricity Commission. In effect, NTEC is to gain ownership control over the island itself and NTEC assets as part of the overall construction, management and operation of the proposed coal-fired power-station on the site. This is in accordance with the long-standing policy and practice whereby land under the control of NTEC is in fact vested in it.



Mr Speaker, I hasten to point out that this move will in no way impinge upon the normal role and responsibility of the Port Authority for safe navigation, control of shipping movement and pilotage of vessels in the area. I commend the bill.

Debate adjourned.

MOTOR ACCIDENTS (COMPENSATION) AMENDMENT BILL  
(Serial 24)

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 makes a number of important amendments to the Motor Accidents (Compensation) Act which has now been in operation for almost 5 years. At the time of its introduction in 1979, it was an advanced piece of legislation in the motor accident compensation field in Australia. It represented the first real move out of the morass that compulsory third-party insurance has fallen into through the effect of higher and higher awards under common law. Such awards were making compulsory third-party schemes increasingly costly for motorists yet failed to compensate a significant proportion of people injured in motor vehicle accidents. Our legislation went further in developing the no-fault concept than either Victoria or Tasmania, the only other states to have no-fault schemes.

At that time, the Territory was feeling the effects of the escalating costs of third-party claims far more acutely than the states, largely because of its very high accident rate and the numbers of fatalities and serious injuries resulting from accidents. Although the picture has improved somewhat since then, the Territory still retains the dubious distinction of having the highest incidence of accidents of any Australian state. The figures speak for themselves. During the 12 months ended December 1982, 71 persons were injured in Territory motor vehicles for every 10 000 vehicles. This may be compared with an Australian average of 37. For every 10 000 vehicles, there were 10 fatalities in the Territory compared with a national average of 4.

Providing compensation arrangements that are fair and equitable at reasonable cost to the motorist is therefore a particular problem in the Territory. The 1979 legislation introduced in this Assembly went a long way towards providing an effective substitute for the cumbersome and often inequitable system that had previously existed and which required negligence to be proved as a prerequisite for compensation. The new no-fault scheme provided Territorians for the first time with an efficient system of compensation for death and injuries arising through the use of motor vehicles, a system not dependent upon proof of fault. It extended compensation to all those who sustained injuries, not merely those who could prove that their injuries had been sustained through the negligence of others.

The inequitable nature of the fault or common law system is readily understood when it is realised that, according to estimates in the states, approximately one-third of all injuries sustained through motor vehicle accidents are unable to be compensated under the fault system because negligence on the part of another person cannot be established. Such injuries may arise, for example, through a person experiencing a heart attack or a stroke while at the wheel of a vehicle or through animals wandering onto the path of vehicles or through a driver being involved in a single-vehicle accident. Even where negligence could be shown on

the part of another person, the fault of that person may have been merely a moment's lapse of attention or a rare instance of poor judgment. There is probably not a motorist anywhere in the Territory today who, if asked, could not truthfully reply that he or she had at some time suffered a moment of inattention or a lapse of judgment that had almost led to an accident.

Where a motorist is shown to be at fault, to what extent may other factors have contributed to that fault? Poor road design and inadequate maintenance are often cited as contributing factors in courts around Australia, particularly in those states which, for one reason or another, have not made adequate provision in their budgets for expenditure on roads. If the fault system itself is inequitable, the way in which it is financed is more so. In theory, he who is at fault should pay compensation to the person he injures. In practice, however, because of the very high damages often awarded, it is totally beyond the financial resources of the average motorist. Laws in each state therefore require that motorists must compulsorily insure for their potential common law liabilities for negligent acts resulting in injury to others. This results in the anomalous situation that the fault system, although based on fault to prove a right to damages, does not require the person at fault to pay those damages. All motorists pay through their third-party insurance premiums. To further compound the manifest inequities of that system, while all motorists are compelled to contribute to the insurance fund from which payments for damage are awarded, not all motorists are entitled to benefit. As I said, only those who can prove that their injuries were the result of negligence of another person can benefit.

While the weaknesses of the third-party system have been a cause for concern, the cost of that system has been a matter of greater concern for motorists and governments around Australia. High awards for damages by the courts, together with the high incidence of accidents giving rise to such damages, have been the primary causes of escalations in premiums under third-party systems. The Territory's small population and its high rate of motor vehicle accidents caused Territorians in 1979 to face the prospect of the highest third-party premium rates anywhere in Australia.

It was considerations such as these which led the government in 1979 to abandon the third-party system and replace it with a no-fault system. Honourable members will recall that there was apprehension in some sections of the community that this change would deprive persons of a basic legal right, the right to sue for damages. While some saw litigation of this sort as a right that should be retained, many saw it as a very expensive one for the community to bear, a right benefiting only some people.

On balance, they preferred to forsake this limited right to sue for damages and to replace it with the system that provided reasonable and automatic compensation for all. However, in the face of vocal opposition from a relatively small segment of the community, the government, in a spirit of compromise, agreed to retain one residual element of the previous common law system. It incorporated in the legislation the right to sue for pain and suffering for amounts up to \$100 000. This is now embodied in section 5 of the Motor Accidents (Compensation) Act.

Since the act came into operation, this provision has proved to be increasingly costly, as the 1982-83 financial results of this scheme announced last week show. There has been a tendency for claimants to pursue their rights under this section more or less automatically rather than take the scheduled benefits under section 17. This has been because of

an expectation that the settlements that could be achieved under section 5 would be greater than any benefits under section 17. Experience with the operation of the scheme since its inception has revealed that its most expensive elements are those residual common law provisions under section 5 and payments relating to lost earning capacity under section 13. These have accounted for some 50% to 60% of payments actually made in recent periods and have been responsible for the large loss incurred in the administration of the scheme during 1982-83, a loss amounting to \$3m.

This loss, and the likely continuation of that trend beyond 1982-83, with possible larger losses in the future, has made it necessary to review the level and nature of entitlements under the scheme. Actuarial advice has indicated that, if no action was taken to review entitlements, the level of contributions on a class 1 vehicle necessary to maintain a viable scheme would have to be raised to \$204 from its present level of \$151, an increase of \$53, with contributions on other classes of vehicles being raised proportionately.

The government has long held the view that the scale of entitlements should be related to the capacity of motorists to make contributions to the scheme and that entitlements which cause a burden on motorists in the way of excessively high contributions should be avoided. After all, it is Territory motorists who are financing the benefits provided to the injured and the disabled. They are therefore entitled to some say in setting the benefits that are to be provided. The government believes that an increase in contributions of \$53 or 35% would be excessive and the average motorist would consider this to be an unfair imposition. It has therefore been decided to amend the act to abolish the residual right of Territory residents to sue for damages at common law. This is to be replaced by an extended and increased scale of scheduled benefits which will increase the maximum benefit for the most serious injuries from its present level of \$28 000 to \$50 000.

The benefits provided under the act will be extended to include a number of new categories of injuries. As with the present schedule, the benefits payable will be a set percentage of the maximum benefit. Removing the residual common law rights from the scheme will not seriously disadvantage motor accident victims as they will continue to receive adequate compensation for lost earning capacity as well as lump sum benefits for loss of bodily functions. Victims will also continue to be eligible for benefits under sections 18 and 19 of the existing act in respect of medical and rehabilitation expenses and alterations to the victims' residences and motor vehicles necessary for rehabilitation.

In making these changes, the opportunity has been taken to bring the scheduled benefits under the Motor Accidents (Compensation) Act into line with those under the Workmen's Compensation Act. The latter were recently increased to a maximum of \$50 000. The differences between the 2 schedules are not very significant but the workmen's compensation schedule is more comprehensive and, as a matter of administrative convenience and logic, the 2 schedules should be identical.

It should be noted that the amendments proposed under this bill affect only the right to sue for damages in the Territory by Territory residents. The rights of non-residents are not altered by this legislation nor were they by the 1979 legislation. As well as these potential common law liabilities, the scheme will also continue to be exposed to possible common law actions arising from interstate accidents involving Territory vehicles. These can be very costly.

I would also like to bring to the attention of honourable members that there have been recommendations made in recent years by responsible legal bodies in New South Wales and South Australia which lend considerable weight to the amendments contained in this bill. In New South Wales, no lesser body than the Law Reform Commission issued a working paper which, amongst other things, examined the common law system operating in that state and the combined fault-common law system operating in Victoria and Tasmania. It concluded by not supporting either system and recommended instead that a pure no-fault system was preferable. I quote from pages 45 and 46 of the commissioner's report:

*The conclusion we reach at this stage in relation to transport accidents is that the common law negligence action should be replaced with a scheme providing no-fault benefits for victims of such accidents. The fault principle, which underlies the common law negligence action, is an unsatisfactory basis for determining the entitlement of transport accident victims to compensation for their losses. There is an urgent need to develop a more efficient system which, consistent with safeguarding of the rights of accident victims, provides adequate compensation to victims at the lowest cost to the community. In South Australia, the Chairman of the Premium Fixing Committee, Mr Justice Sangster, some time ago produced a paper that argued cogently for a no-fault system. At pages 4 and 5 of his paper, he says: 'In my opinion, the starting point for any reform in the law relating to compensation for road accident victims must be the abolition of common law liability for negligent handling of a motor vehicle. On the need for the abolition of common law liability, I am certain, beyond a shadow of doubt'.*

Mr Speaker, I now turn to other amendments contained in the bill designed chiefly to enable smooth administration of the act. These amendments follow a section by section review conducted by the Treasury and the Territory Insurance Office. The amendments proposed are as follows. Firstly, they vary the definition of resident so that, to qualify for benefits, a person must have at least 3 months continuous residency in the Territory or a written contract of employment or be a dependant of such a person. The current definition states that a person must have 6 months residence or have entered the Territory with the intention of so residing. The question of intention has proved difficult to establish in the past and this amendment should clarify the situation and, by reducing the period from 6 to 3 months, should make it easier to prove residency.

Secondly, an amendment to section 38 will enable the TIO to take recovery action against a person causing an accident whilst under the influence of alcohol or drugs and who is convicted accordingly. Persons causing an accident while under the influence are not eligible to receive benefits. However, other persons involved in the accident are so entitled. Whilst it is not expected that much will be recovered under this proposal, it is seen as a necessary power for the board to hold to discourage driving under the influence and to enable the board to take recovery action.

Thirdly, upon assent to this bill, regulations will be promulgated giving effect to the government's intention of raising the maximum benefit to \$50 000. Also, it is proposed that the level of benefits in the act be capable of being changed by regulation. The act is therefore amended,

where appropriate, to delete the reference to specific monetary amounts and will refer instead to prescribed amounts. This will enable more frequent updating of benefits and should be welcomed by all Territorians. The actual conditions of benefit and the type of benefit will remain within the act.

Mr Speaker, the amendments to the Motor Accidents (Compensation) Act that I have outlined represent the most significant amendments to the act since its introduction in 1979. The Treasury and the TIO are currently examining some aspects of the system of weekly benefits and I may propose further amendments to contain premium levels during the next sittings. The need for this flows from a recent tribunal decision which found that certain beneficiaries may be entitled to windfall gains as a result of this scheme. As the act provides weekly benefits for a totally disabled person, from the time of his injury to age 65, weekly benefits will become the most significant cost to the scheme after the present amendments are enacted. Weekly benefits are indexed to average weekly earnings and it can be expected that regular changes in contribution levels will be required and may also need to be indexed.

As I announced in this Assembly last week, actuarial advice indicates that rates of contribution on a class 1 vehicle would have to be increased to \$204 immediately to cover the costs of operating the scheme - an increase of \$53 or 35%. The measures contained in this bill will allow the increase to be contained to only \$5, effective from 1 July this year. This will mean that the contribution on a class 1 vehicle will increase from \$151 to \$156, with the contributions on other classes being adjusted accordingly.

The no-fault scheme that operates in the Territory goes further with this concept than the only other schemes operating in Australia - those in Tasmania and Victoria. With these amendments, it will become the first scheme in Australia to abolish completely the adversary scheme and provide a comprehensive system of benefits. As the Chief Minister mentioned when the scheme was first introduced, the substantial reduction in common law claims, as was then hoped, would enable immediate relief to those injured, without the need to resort to costly, and sometimes lengthy, litigation. The Territory government, in making the amendments proposed in this bill, is facing squarely the problem of compensation for motor accident victims and is moving to an equitable, economical and responsible, long-term position. I commend the bill to honourable members.

Debate adjourned.

#### EDUCATION AMENDMENT BILL

(Serial 31)

Bill presented by leave and read a first time.

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

This amendment is concerned with the processes of registration and, of course, deregistration of non-government schools. Prior to July 1979 when the Northern Territory Education Act came into force, there was no provision for the registration of non-government schools in the Northern Territory. At that time, there were 12 non-government schools operating quite effectively in the Territory, including 6 mission schools and 6 which

would be classed as independent schools. These 12 schools were all granted registration as soon as the registration procedures had been put into effect. Since that initial round, 5 schools and one pre-school have been granted registration and one organisation has indicated that it wishes to seek formal registration.

Throughout Australia, in recent years, there have been numerous instances of schools appealing against either a failure to be granted registration or subsequent deregistration. In most cases, these appeals have been dealt with by statutory bodies such as the Bursary Endowment Board of New South Wales. Very few have had to resort to the courts. As our legislation stands at present, the minister is responsible for the granting and cancellation of registration and any appeals must be lodged with the Supreme Court. Most members would recall the only Northern Territory appeal lodged so far - that of the Yipirinya School Council - and may remember how protracted and expensive that exercise proved to be. Incidentally, despite considerable cost to this government and probably a similar cost to Yipirinya, the matter was not resolved by the court. The 2 parties eventually got around the table again, changes were made to some aspects of school organisation and registration was finally granted.

Mr Speaker, the number of non-government schools in the Northern Territory in contrast to New South Wales is too small to justify the establishment of a statutory body to deal with appeals but I believe the present arrangements should be changed. Instead of having the minister register such schools and the Supreme Court hear appeals, I believe it would be far better if the secretary were to register and the minister to deal with appeals. The main thrust of this bill is to effect that change, and is consistent with the approaches being taken throughout Australia. Most states already provide for appeals to be directed to the minister or are moving in that direction.

Mr Speaker, registration is not forever and continued registration is dependent upon the registered school maintaining satisfactory standards and continuing to meet the specified criteria. Hence, the bill also provides for the secretary to cause non-government schools to be inspected from time to time - a provision which is lacking in the act as it stands.

Consistent with existing provisions of the Education Act, the bill also provides for prosecution of parents who send their children to an unregistered non-government school and of persons involved in setting up such a school. This is in line with legislation in the various states relating to the prosecution of parents who fail to ensure that their children receive a proper education. Mr Speaker, I commend the bill to honourable members.

Debate adjourned.

#### MOTION

Independent Economic Inquiry into Transport Services  
to the Northern Territory

Continued from 6 March 1984.

Mr B. COLLINS (Opposition Leader): Mr Speaker, in rising to support the motion of the Chief Minister, I indicate that I intend to move an amendment to it.

Mr Speaker, I move that paragraph 2 of the motion be amended so that, after the words 'Northern Territory government', the words 'and opposition' be inserted. The motion will then read: 'endorses the South Australian and Northern Territory government and opposition submissions to the Hill Inquiry'.

Mr Speaker, the reason that I move the amendment without hesitation is because the Chief Minister quoted yesterday from the opposition submission to the Hill Inquiry. For that reason, I have no doubt that the government is fully cognisant of the submission and what it contains. There may be some honourable members who may not be so familiar. Certainly, I do not want to go through details of the submission itself but I will simply quote from the opening which is entitled, 'The Scope of this Submission'.

*This submission does not attempt to duplicate work being done by the committee of inquiry in establishing the relevant costs and benefits associated with the construction of a railway and an all-weather road to national highway standard linking Adelaide with Darwin. The submission's purpose is to highlight what it considers to be key primary and secondary benefits of the railway option over the all-weather road option.*

The submission proceeds to do precisely that and indeed, in general terms, the submission is supportive of the government's submission to the Hill Inquiry.

Yesterday, the Chief Minister quoted from press statements I was alleged to have made. Unfortunately, once again, I was selectively quoted. The thrust of what I said related to the discrepancies between the information contained in the Hill Report and that contained in the Northern Territory government's submission - and, as we have now discovered, the discrepancies between the Northern Territory government's submission and the original joint Northern Territory-federal government report on the railway are quite significant. It was necessary to examine both documents carefully in order to try to reconcile these very severe discrepancies between the conclusions. I repeat again, and this is available for any honourable member to read, the Northern Territory Parliamentary Labor Party's submission into the Hill Inquiry was completely supportive of the Northern Territory government's submission. In fact, from memory, I think that members of my staff who worked on this did so in cooperation with officers of the Northern Territory government.

However, the Hill Report throws some new light on the long-running rail debate. For any Territorians who have a real interest in the railway debate as such, I can do no more than commend to them a reading of Ian Stevenson's book 'The Line That Went Nowhere'. Not only is it an immensely readable and entertaining book, it contains extraordinarily interesting historical information about the 100-year battle for the Alice Springs to Darwin railway link. Among other interesting titbits, it contains the fascinating information that one of the contractors on the line that ran from Adelaide to Government Bore - I think that was the name of the original start of the link that eventually ended in Alice Springs - was Malcolm Fraser's grandfather who was famous for all sorts of other things as well, I might add.

Mr Speaker, so far as the Hill Report is concerned, the Chief Minister made a number of criticisms which, to a great degree, can be borne out by

examination. There are a number of things I do not agree with however. First, there are the Chief Minister's attacks on Mr Hill personally. After the inquiry brought down its findings, the comment was made that he is just a hatchetman for the Labor government. I do not think any reasonable person who takes the trouble to have a look at his record, where he has been and what he has done, could make that statement. If the Hill Report had come down in favour of the railway, the Chief Minister would not have been quite so critical of Mr Hill personally. Indeed, Mr Hill is a more than competent economist. That has been acknowledged even by people who disagree with him so far as his economic philosophy is concerned. He is in charge of the largest state rail authority in New South Wales, an authority which has run for years and is still running at horrific annual losses. Indeed, the New South Wales rail system began over 150 years ago. One of the major reasons for the massive annual losses that that rail system has incurred is the extremely over-ambitious rail construction projects that were mounted in New South Wales. The current government is having to wrestle with the problem of dealing with those uneconomic services. In fact, Hill has been remarkably successful.

I have spoken to people on both sides of the political fence about this. He seems to be respected everywhere for his extraordinary administrative capacity and skill as a manager. He has curtailed, as no one else has, at least some of the losses that the New South Wales rail system has been incurring. Indeed, he has found himself in considerable trouble with some sections of the community for doing so. Therefore, I really do not think that the criticism can be sustained.

There were 112 submissions to the Hill Inquiry and only 3 of those submissions were in opposition to the railway. As I said before, the opposition's submission was in fact in support of the proposal. Of the 3 who were opposed to it, one was from the Queensland government. It not only opposed it but threatened to sue the federal government under section 99 of the constitution if it gave a penny to the Northern Territory for the railway. One of the other opposing submissions was from the Australian tourist industry. I cannot remember whom the third one was from. The other 112 were in favour.

I have already discussed the Queensland government submission so I will not go over that ground again. But I want to make a point which I have made before. I have made it in this Assembly in respect of other submissions that the Northern Territory government has made to the federal government. Yesterday, the Chief Minister levelled a lot of criticism at the Hill Report, some of which, on our initial appraisal, can be justified. He complained about the lack of methodology attached to Hill's conclusions. At the same time he said that, by comparison the Northern Territory's submission was a model of squeaky cleanliness. Even a casual perusal of the Northern Territory government submission shows that it is nothing of the sort. In fact, all of the criticisms which the Chief Minister levelled at the Hill Inquiry can be directed just as forcefully at the Northern Territory government's submission. I have made this point in respect of other matters. We are under constant attack in the Territory - an attack which any one with half an eye will see to be increasing every day in the extent to which we are funded federally. Every time I raise this matter in the Assembly, the troglodytes on the other side get up and say: 'Oh, he is embarrassed about the amount of money we are getting'. I am not saying we are getting too much. Have a look at the national press. Have a look at the editorials in the Financial Review. Have a look at the behind the scenes minutes that flow from the Department of Treasury.



All I am saying is that the Northern Territory government has a responsibility, in view of the entrenched and increasing opposition to giving money to the Territory, money to which we are entitled, to make as tight a case as possible when it is asking for funds from the federal government and not to embark, as it has done in its submission to the Hill Inquiry, on absolutely fanciful claims which can be knocked apart in 10 seconds. I will just cover a few. Unfortunately, we have not been able yet to go right through all of this paperwork. There are 600 pages of it covering both submissions. We are still working through it. Our work has been complicated as a result of the Chief Minister sacking 2 senior members of my staff immediately after the election, one being my economist. It is a little difficult for us to proceed with the same speed that we used to in these matters.

However, let us have a look at some of the points that I am talking about. The purpose of my contribution to the debate is this: if the Territory government is going to resubmit all these things to the federal government, as it says it will, then it needs to clean up the submission and omit some of the nonsense contained in it for the sake of the Territory and for the sake of the railway being built. The Northern Territory government's own appraisal of the Hill Report says:

*Forecasts of freight demand is a fundamental issue in assessing the transport requirements of the Northern Territory and must necessarily be made in order to make judgments about the future.*

I have no argument with that. The assessments of the freight tonnages are crucial. They form the absolute underpinning of the case for the railway. I would not dispute that - no one would. But, in making projections of future freight demands, the Northern Territory government report isolates numerous industries, industry sectors and individual enterprises. I want to draw attention to a few areas.

Volume 1, page 59, talks about freight demands derived from broad acre cropping in the Northern Territory:

*The Northern Territory does not have an established field crop industry. Development has been hindered by isolation and lack of technology infrastructure and farmers with appropriate managerial skills.*

Mr Speaker, this is an area of the Northern Territory's development and economy that I know a little bit about. So far as freight is concerned, it is absolutely clear that dry land, broad acre cropping is the area which involves the maximum amount of potential freight. The Northern Territory government's submission agrees with that. It is interesting that, when it talks about the problems of dry land broad acre cropping in the Northern Territory, it talks about lack of technology, infrastructure and farmers with appropriate managerial skills. No mention has been made of the major problem that has always been there - and this is referred to in the book I have just mentioned - that of the climate in the Territory. In fact, the problem was mentioned in an answer to a question this morning by the Minister for Primary Production in respect of the ADMA farmers.

The Northern Territory submission goes on:

*ADMA's role is, firstly, to facilitate the establishment of agriculturally-based farming systems in the Douglas-Daly areas and, secondly, to provide a range of marketing services including grain receival depots and the operation of grain marketing schemes. Stage 1 of the scheme is due for completion by 1985 with 6 project farms already operational.*

The submission goes on to state that 80 000 t of freight will be generated by this industry in 1992. It says that 73 000 t of freight will be generated by the horticultural industry by 1992.

I have no hesitation in saying this on the public record: as far as I am concerned, any estimate of 80 000 t of freight generated by broad acre cropping, that is dry land farming, in the Northern Territory - particularly when it is based, as it is, on the 6 ADMA farmers who are down there - is frankly laughable. It simply cannot be sustained; it is fanciful and it is quite extraordinary that this comes from a government that is quick to condemn the Hill Report for lack of methodology. Nowhere in the government submission is there any indication of how it reached this extraordinary figure. It is interesting that the government prepared its submission just after it had all the trouble with 4 of the farmers not wanting to sign new contracts. The minister himself referred to the wet weather this morning. They have already had one bad season. Weather is an important consideration in the problems of Northern Territory agriculture and that is not mentioned at all in the report.

The submission also talks about 'the effect on freight of a fully-integrated cement works on Quarantine Island'. Page 63 of the submission contains a photograph of a fully-integrated cement plant under construction and the report talks about that. The fact is that it is not a fully-integrated cement works. It is a clinker crushing plant and that is very significant in terms of the freight potential that is generated. A fully-integrated cement plant produces its own cement; it produces its own clinker in other words. The cement works does not do that. Not only is the statement in the Northern Territory government's submission patently false, inquiries that I have made in the industry indicate that the best estimate that can be placed on when it is likely to be a fully-integrated cement plant producing its own cement is the year 2010. It is described in the Northern Territory submission as being a fully-integrated cement plant; it is nothing of the sort. The government's own inquiry will demonstrate that the difference between a clinker crushing plant and a fully-integrated cement works in terms of freight potential is quite considerable. That needs to be fixed up.

It goes on to say that the likely market in respect of this plant is the Argyle diamond mine. A decision was taken in June last year, which received national publicity - and this was before the submission was written - that a township at Argyle would not be built. In fact the operators, and experience in the Northern Territory has demonstrated how useful it is when you can do it, will operate on a fly-in fly-out basis. Workers will be accommodated at the nearest major town and flown in to the mine. That decision was taken in June last year. On top of that, Ready Mix has installed a plant at Argyle to take care of the cement demands the actual mine itself will make. Thus, the prospect for the Northern Territory to be manufacturing enormous amounts of cement for Argyle is a phantom hope that is proposed as a solid fact, supposedly, in this submission. That needs to be fixed up.

Page 90 of the Northern Territory government's submission deals with 168 000 t of freight to be generated by the Frances Creek iron ore deposit. The government neglects the fact that iron ore prices are at an all-time low and, according to all of the industry reports, are likely to remain so for some considerable period of time. That is why Frances Creek is a non-operational mine. There is a world over-supply of iron ore, much to the comfort of the Japanese, I can assure you.

The submission argues strongly that the railway will provide competition for road-based transport services. This is interesting because the government's own freight inquiry shows that 17 independent freight operators are currently using the central road corridor across to Queensland and down to South Australia. If that is not competition, I do not know what is. In fact, the freight inquiry also bore out the fact that those truck operators are not overcharging in their freight rates.

On page 112 of the submission under 'remoteness from southern sources' it argues that the Northern Territory relies for virtually all its requirements on southern sources and this results in increased costs to consumers by way of additional freight, handling, forwarding and distribution charges. This is all information from the Northern Territory's own freight inquiry which indicated that in fact only 5% of the additional costs generated in the Territory are caused by that particular factor.

Volume 2 of the government's submission contains more information on specific projects. Again, Frances Creek iron ore deposits are mentioned in section 2.28. The iron ore mine operated at Frances Creek between 1967 and 1975. I hope that I get an extension of time. I am the lead speaker from this side in this debate.

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

Mr LEO (Nhulunbuy): Mr Speaker, I seek an extension of time for the Leader of the Opposition.

Leave denied.

Mr MANZIE (Community Development): After reading the Hill Report, I felt extremely despondent. Obviously, an appropriate name was chosen for this report because it is 'independent' of the information that was made available by both the Northern Territory government and the South Australian government. Also, many assumptions were made independently of accepted methods of projection.

Mr Speaker, I wish to address my comments to 2 aspects only of the inquiry, the first being the population-dependent, non-bulk freight. The Northern Territory government submission projected that 307 000 t of population-dependent non-bulk freight would be travelling on the railway. This was based in part on survey data of the recent past which shows a clear trend towards the use of the central corridor and supports the assumption that 60% of the freight would travel on the central corridor by the 1990s. Actually, the recent freight inquiry report tabled in this Assembly shows that 68% of our total freight travels on the corridor and 90% of that 68% actually travels on the railway. About 50% of our total freight component actually travels on that central corridor.

The inquiry claimed that the current upgrading of the Barkly and Landsborough Highways in Queensland will reduce this proportion to 50% but in no way was this supported in the inquiry's report. The inquiry's illustrative projection reduced the Northern Territory estimates in this case to about 220 000 t and included in that figure a 15% loading on mining which was intended to cover the general cargo component of mining. The latter assumption was made after previously arguing that the general cargo requirements for mining - that is, explosives and reagents - are a part of the non-bulk, population-dependent requirements of the Territory which was clearly an incorrect assumption.

Tourist requirements were completely ignored in this respect. Projections for tourist numbers were supplied by the Northern Territory Tourist Commission. They were based on a 5% growth to 1986-87 and a 7.6% growth from 1986-87 through to 1992-93. They were based on a travel survey that was carried out last year which showed that there were 146 890 tourists travelling through the Territory. Their average stay was 14.8 nights. The projection showed that, by June 1993, there would be 12 066 tourist years or tourists staying for the whole year. I do not know how the inquiry ignored this aspect. I do not know whether Hill thinks that tourists still work out of a tucker box up here as they did many years ago. Obviously, they could not be expected to carry 14 days' supplies with them. However, the Hill Inquiry seems to think that insignificant.

The second aspect that I want to look at is the mining industry freight. This is an area where the inquiry's forecast was most grossly underestimated and unjustified. The project analysis of the technical and economic data provided by relevant mining companies provided the Northern Territory government with the information to conclude that the expected freight to be generated by the mining industry in this north-south corridor would be 733 000 t. Full details of the methodology and expected inputs and outputs is provided in the Northern Territory government's submission. The inquiry, however, selected 2 substantially lower tonnages: 478 000 t and 578 000 t. It did not provide details of the methodology used and it did not justify the estimates.

Some of the reasons for the misjudgments of the inquiry could possibly be that, firstly, the inquiry took the view that some 158 000 t of the mining inputs included by the Northern Territory government as general stores in 1992 were really population-dependent, non-bulk freight. This is incorrect, Mr Speaker. General stores referred only to the material inputs used directly in the mining operation; for example, the supplies of explosives, drill bits, reagents, lubricants etc. It did not include food and drink and consumables that would be used by populations of mining towns. The Territory's case was supported by the action of the inquiry actually raising the population-dependent, non-bulk freight component for projected mining operations by 15%.

The inquiry ignored the expected freight contribution by a number of projects which have proven viable. The Territory estimated that these projects would total 405 000 t in 1992. Obviously, the Jabiluka and Koongarra deposits were completely ignored and this drops the freight estimate down by 87 000 t in 1992. That is an area that cannot be ignored. The uranium mining will have to go ahead. At this stage, we do not know exactly when but I consider that it will be in the next 10 years. Other current and expected developments that were discredited by the inquiry were the reduction of 12 000 t from the Argyle diamond mine, the Woodcutters

lead zinc mine - 30 000 t was missed out there - the Enterprise Gold Creek gold mine, the Peko Wallsend Tennant Creek operation, the Mataranka limestone venture and a number of others. Ignoring these cut down the tonnage to a significant extent. Yet the inquiry quite arbitrarily added another 150 000 t to cover bulk mine outputs, which it considered were from some of the above mines and some future mining. Even the Territory's most optimistic outlook could not see much extra in future mining but obviously Mr Hill decided that he knew better.

There was an inference that the existing and future projects that the Territory listed would soon exhaust their reserves. With the exception of the Koongarra and Warrego Gecko mines, all the other major mining concerns considered in the Territory government's submission have proven or inferred reserves adequate for operation beyond the year 2000 - that is at forecast production rates. The deposits could be much larger, but I do not think any mining company seeks to prove reserves if it has 20 years' reserves at present.

Another thing that I found very upsetting was the inquiry's rejection of the Frances Creek iron ore mine. One reason laid down by the inquiry was that it considered that iron ore was all of the one quality right throughout the country and that the ore being supplied from the Pilbara would do the job everywhere. I think that the ore available at Frances Creek is a specialist type of ore and examples of that were quite evident in the Territory government's submission. The other reason why the inquiry said that Frances Creek was not viable was that the bulk-loading facilities at the port were inoperable. It said that they were ruined by the cyclone. However, I think that that is indicative of Mr Hill's approach to this whole operation. He ignored anything that might support the concept of this railway. Actually, I think that is a good example of how poorly he has looked into facts in the Territory.

According to the Territory government submission, there is quite a steady demand from a number of small steelmakers for ore with the particular characteristics of the Frances Creek material. One of the problems has been economic transport from the mine to Darwin. On page 131, the Hill Report lays out the tonnages that were carried on the old narrow gauge railway. In 1973-74, it was 791 000 t. If you go back to 1970-71, there were over a million tonnes carried on the railway line. So the tonnages that are there are extremely significant. Possibly that was one of the reasons that Mr Hill did not wish to go into that particular area.

The inquiry also rejected road-rail transportation for Dorisvale Mine. It decided that Dorisvale Mine could be serviced by road. This was despite previous unsuccessful attempts to truck the ore to Darwin using single-axle trailer units. The alternative is not road transport directly from the mine to Darwin, as suggested by the inquiry, but rather rail-road transport. Obviously, a single trailer would be hauling the ore over 100 km to the highway, then linking up to road trains of probably 60 t or 70 t capacity which would freight to Darwin and then be brought into the wharf area 2 or 3 trailers at a time. That would involve considerable cost - 7 road trains travelling about 175 000 km a year each, plus truck interchanges and additional port unloading facilities. The road-rail system worked with the Mt Bundy mine. It worked quite successfully where the ore was transferred to a rail head and then it was taken directly to the port and the port stacker was used to bulk load ships.

Mr Speaker, as I said, I was rather disappointed in the Hill Report. I think it is indicative of the fact that the people who carried out the inquiry were not interested in trying to promote a Northern Territory railway. It needs imagination and vision to see that it would be of great benefit to the Territory both socially and economically. I am sure the people who carried it out were not very far sighted. I think the Leader of the Opposition pointed out that there had been problems in New South Wales with uneconomic rail use. I think that Mr Hill may have had a phobia regarding past planning in New South Wales. This caused an over-reaction by him. The result is the report that is with us today. I would like to commend the Chief Minister's motion, Mr Speaker.

Mr BELL (MacDonnell): Mr Speaker, I rise in this afternoon's debate to support both the motion and the amendment. The Hill Report is one of many reports into the viability of the north-south rail link. The 1980 Northern Territory-Commonwealth submission is the most recent prior to the independent economic inquiry. The Chief Minister makes much of a commitment by the erstwhile Fraser government to build the Alice Springs to Darwin rail link by 1988. Malcolm Fraser was dragged kicking and screaming into that particular decision and it is worth noting that, as the Chief Minister enjoys saying so frequently, \$10m was granted for survey work on the railway line by the erstwhile Prime Minister in 1980. However, by the time of the 1983 federal election, that amount was underspent by half. The incoming Hawke government, supported by the federal Minister for Transport, Mr Peter Morris, allocated \$5m to be spent in the 1983-84 financial year to complete the preliminary design work. In one year Labor has allocated as much money as Mr Fraser spent in the previous 7 years. Mr Hawke made an unequivocal commitment to the railway and the expenditure of that \$5m showed the federal Labor government's commitment. Mr Hawke was willing to maintain funding for the planning stage while Treasury fought to contain a \$9600m deficit, the product of 7 years of irresponsible financial management by the Chief Minister's colleagues.

By the time the Labor Treasurer, Mr Keating, brought down his mini-budget in the middle of last year, it was clear to all that the mess Labor had inherited from the Fraser government would cause big problems for the implementation of Labor's election platform. Not only would the new government have to reconsider the north-south rail link but tax cuts could not be made and new revenue sources had to be found. However, Mr Speaker, rather than dismiss the Northern Territory rail link out of hand, the federal government proposed an independent inquiry into the Territory's transport needs to give Territorians, South Australians and anyone else who had an interest an opportunity to participate in the great railway debate.

Mr Speaker, 112 submissions were received. The Leader of the Opposition and the member for the Northern Territory in the House of Representatives, Mr John Reeves, argued for the rail link. The Labor member for Gray, which contains the city of Whyalla, argued for the rail link. The Labor government of South Australia argued for the rail link. Mr Chris Hurford, the federal Minister for Construction, argued for the railway. Mr Hurford, of course, is a Cabinet minister. Even with all of that, Mr Speaker - 5 Labor members of parliament, a Labor Premier and a Labor Cabinet minister arguing for the line's construction - the recommendation from Mr Hill was that the line should not proceed at this stage.

Mr Speaker, there were only 3 submissions opposed to the railway line and one of those was a submission from the Queensland government. Another came from the Australian tourism industry. Members may recall the euphoria that was generated last July when the Queensland Premier, Mr Bjelke-Petersen, suggested that he would build a rail link from Mt Isa to Darwin, with spur lines to Borroloola and Alice Springs. Members may also remember the joint press conference between Mr Bjelke-Petersen, the Chief Minister and Mr Olsen, the South Australian Liberal leader, who all proudly announced the construction of the Mt Isa-Darwin standard gauge link.

Mr Speaker, at the time, the Territory Labor Party expressed its concern at the potential that this political grandstanding had to destroy the Alice to Darwin link. However, this did not deter the Chief Minister. He embraced the Bjelke-Petersen plan with both hands. Having thus worked his way into the great rail debate, the Queensland Premier proceeded to show his real colours. He was not proposing a railway line at all, as time has demonstrated. Mr Bjelke-Petersen's promises were election gimmicks.

Quoting from the Queensland submission to the Hill Inquiry, we find that not only did Mr Bjelke-Petersen oppose the Alice to Darwin link, he was willing to bash the Commonwealth with the constitution if it funded it. I quote from the Queensland submission to the Hill Inquiry, page 5, section 7.1:

*If the development of a central corridor is to proceed, Queensland will be severely disadvantaged. Development of a central corridor should be concurrent with the eastern corridor. Queensland would argue for some form of compensation for the loss of trade through Queensland and the lack of social and economic equality for the people of north Queensland brought about by the Commonwealth assistance in the development of the Northern Territory.*

We have more of it, Mr Speaker, in section 7.2: 'Section 99 of the constitution specifically states the Commonwealth shall not give preference to one state over another'.

Again, from section 7.3 of the Queensland submission:

*Similarly, fiscal equalisation is another principle long-enshrined in Commonwealth-state relationships. The primary objective of this policy of fiscal equalisation has been to enable states to carry out their responsibilities and provide services at a standard equal to that prevailing in other states.*

However, Mr Speaker, the real punch line comes in paragraph 8.3 which reads:

*Development of a central corridor will severely disadvantage Queensland unless development of the eastern corridor is undertaken at the same time. Without the concurrent development of the eastern corridor, Queensland would need to seek compensation for the loss of trade and for the social and economic inequality generated by the preferential treatment given to the Northern Territory government.*

The Northern Territory reiterates its argument that, in economic terms alone, the railway is justified and must be strongly supported on national, social and environmental grounds. Using economic resource costs and generally conservative assumptions, investment in the rail link would yield a real rate of return of at least 7% with the high likelihood that it would be even greater.

Mr Speaker, there was a brief mention of the 1977 Bureau of Transport Economics study. That study specifically said the rail would not be economic before 600 000 t.

Mr Speaker, this report is best described as a malicious joke, a travesty of research methodology and a tragedy for the Territory. However, the report does have a value; as compulsory reading for economic students on how not to carry out an economic analysis and as background reading for political science students on how to manipulate the system to evade election promises.

Mr SMITH (Millner): Mr Speaker, the member for Nightcliff has a cute way with figures. I refer to his remarks about the so-called deficit of \$9600m which he attempted to discredit. He knows as well as I know that that \$9600m deficit was a deficit that would have occurred if the spending patterns that the Fraser government had incurred had continued. It is to the credit - not the discredit - of the Hawke government that it was able to reduce the budget deficit to \$5700m and it is a credit to the Hawke Labor government that it was able to reduce the overall deficit for this financial year to \$8000m, which is quite a considerable saving of \$1600m over the \$9600m.

Of course, as a result of its successful attempts at reducing the budget deficit, the Labor government has been able to tackle effectively inflation, unemployment and interest rates. Mr Speaker, we very well know that that has gained the appreciation of business organisations like the one by which the member for Nightcliff was previously employed.

Mr Speaker, I was interested in the member for Nightcliff's comments about shifting transport modes and I have some basic agreement with him. I accept that it is realistic that, if goods start on a train in Melbourne, they will go all the way through to a terminal in Alice Springs and, when we get the railway, right through to Darwin by that transport mode. That is a good argument and one that we support. But, it is not the argument that this government used in that important part of its submission that dealt with the land bridge - the land bridge meaning that the port of Darwin would act as a conduit for goods to come by ship to Darwin and be transported by rail to other parts of Australia. That argument, of course, is contrary to the argument that was presented by the honourable member for Nightcliff and I hope that that will be recognised.

Mr Speaker, already some mention has been made of the shoddy presentation of parts of the Northern Territory government's report. I will come to that in a little more detail in a moment. I want to provide illustration via one photo at this stage. This photo is located on page 111 and depicts the Yuendumu store. Underneath is written: 'Yuendumu store. Typical of large, modern community stores which can expect to benefit through more efficient transport services'. Mr Speaker, we all know that the turn-off to Yuendumu is about 25 km north of Alice Springs. Yuendumu itself is about 200 km off the highway. How the community of Yuendumu, featured so prominently in this publication, is going to benefit from an extension of the railway line to Darwin, I do not know. That is a typical example of the shoddy approach



Another example is the carriage of refrigerated containers where the inquiry estimates rail would be just over half the road costs. It is equally accepted by both parties that there is a substantial shift in load from road to rail or from road-rail to rail. Once the Alice Springs to Darwin railway is in place, Mr Hill's report states that rail will capture 76% of total freight demand compared to the Northern Territory's estimate of 80%. This shift occurs well before the freight arrives in or leaves the Territory since it is unlikely that a shipper will change his mode of transport once the freight is committed to a mode. Therefore, in ignoring this substantial shift in mode to rail across the national transport system, the inquiry has deliberately underestimated the substantial and direct benefits available to Australia with the rail in place.

Mr Speaker, I now turn to the question of the application of costs to the project. It is difficult to comment in detail since the inquiry, unlike the Northern Territory, does not provide any documentation of the derivation and application of its cost assumptions. Nevertheless, the following criticisms may be inferred from the report.

The Hill Inquiry made no attempt to convert ANR's financial costs to resource costs except in the case of fuel where a direct conversion appears to have been made. Failure to apply the technique consistently to all elements of railway operating costs disfavoured the rail link by more than \$40m in its estimate of construction costs alone. Hill has not explicitly addressed the question of conversion to resource costs anywhere in his report nor has he attempted to report the Northern Territory's assumptions which are stated in appendices C, D and E of the Northern Territory submission.

Further, Mr Speaker, whereas the Northern Territory incorporates the cost of advertising, rolling stock, paint and equipment into our operating costs, Mr Hill has kept them separate. Either method is acceptable and there appear to be no grounds to object to Mr Hill's results except that, again, he has failed to recognise the difference between financial costs and resource costs. Applying a resource cost conversion factor of 0.95 would reduce the net project value of rolling stock and other capital costs by \$1.5m and that was for freight operations only. The Hill Inquiry has generously disregarded the operating loss of passenger services on the grounds that the fares plus the subsidy which would be necessary might together equate with the cost of an equivalent service. However, the cost of passenger rolling stock remains at a net cost to the project and, at \$41m, represents a significant proportion of the total claim negative net project value of \$373.7m.

The economic analysis should not include rail passenger operations. The method in the analysis is to select commodities and goods which can be attracted to rail due to lower costs. Since the justification of the passenger service is not economic in nature, it does not seem logical to include its costs among those of economically viable freight services.

Mr Speaker, by confining its analysis to the Alice Springs-Darwin corridor and heavily discounting the NT estimates of future demand, the inquiry has reduced the freight line haul savings alone by \$347m to \$124m in present value terms. Failure to apply resource costs to construction costs and the inclusion of passenger rolling stock costs reduces the benefits of a railway by just under \$100m. Other assumptions related to the cost of transport operations that are biased against rail operations complete the erosion of the benefits provided by the railway as identified in the NT submission.

submission have proved or inferred reserves adequate for operation beyond the year 2000 at forecast production rates. By normal mining standards they are exceptionally large reserves indicative of the quality of resources available for discovery in the Territory. Undoubtedly, the deposits are larger than their indicated reserves. The operators have no need to spend money today to prove resources which will not be mined for 20 years or more.

Typical of the subjective nature of the Hill Report is its rejection of the view that the Frances Creek iron ore mine can be reopened. The inquiry makes the mistake of believing that all iron ore is of one quality and hence should be supplied from the Pilbara. It also said that Darwin's bulk-material port loading facilities are inoperable. As we have already heard this afternoon, the port facility was damaged in Cyclone Tracy but repairs were effected several years ago. It is amazing that the Hill Inquiry did not know that.

Mr Smith: Perhaps the Northern Territory government's submission did not tell it that.

Mr HATTON: On the other issue, there is a steady demand from a number of small steel makers for ore with the particular characteristics of the Frances Creek material. However, even with the premium prices offered, the problem has been to arrange economic transport from the mine to Darwin.

To answer the member for Millner's interjection earlier, the mine closed when the Whitlam government dramatically increased the rail freight charges to the port of Darwin. That led to the closure of the mine.

The Hill Inquiry decided that the Dorisvale Mine should be serviced by road. This was despite previous unsuccessful attempts by the owners to truck the ore to Darwin using single-axle trailer units.

Mr Speaker, in the first instance, the Territory government's growth rates were derived from a rigorous assessment of planning projects. After 1992, the high growth rates will be less dependent on planned projects but will reflect the Territory's underdeveloped state and potential for a long period of rapid development. There is also a discontinuous jump in demand initially with the railway impacting on the regional economy, as recognised by the Territory government and the inquiry.

Mr Speaker, a second area of fundamental importance to the assessment of requirements and investments in Territory transport is whether to treat transport in the Territory as part of the national transport system or merely to assess its worth within the Territory alone. The terms of reference clearly state that the inquiry was required to examine the implications for Australia of major investment in the Territory's transport system. Not only does this include the impact on the national economy during construction and operation, quite obviously it includes the direct national transport implications. The Territory argues that costs and benefits attributable across the national transport system should be taken into account when assessing transport developments in a single corridor or component of that system. It is a fact accepted by both the inquiry and the Territory that there are substantial savings to be achieved from long-haul freight where long-haul freight is carried by rail rather than road. An example from the Hill Inquiry is line haul costs for bulk freight. Here the inquiry states that rail involves less than 60% of road costs.

Mr Deputy Speaker, the Northern Territory government's projection of 307 000 t, of population-dependent non-bulk freight is based in part on survey data of the recent past, which shows a clear trend towards use of the central corridor and supports the assumption that 60% of freight will travel by the central corridor by the 1990s. The inquiry's claim that the current upgrading of the Barkly and Landsborough Highways in Queensland will reduce this proportion to 50% is unsupported in the report.

The Hill Inquiry's illustrated projection reduces the Territory's estimate, in this case 220 000 t, and that includes a figure of 15% loading on the mining intended to cover the general cargo component of mining operations. This latter assumption derives from the previous argument that the general cargo required for mining, like explosives and reagents, is part of the non-bulk population-dependent requirements of the Territory - clearly a wrong assumption. It almost goes without saying that the tourist requirements are also ignored.

Mr Deputy Speaker, the mining industry freight forecasting is the area where the inquiry's forecasts are most seriously underestimated. Only after a rigorous, project-by-project analysis of technical and economic data provided by the relevant mining companies did the Territory government conclude that the freight expected to be generated by the mining industry on the north-south corridor in 1992 would be 733 000 t. Full detail of the methodology, expected inputs and outputs is provided in the Territory government's submission. The inquiry, however, selected 2 substantially lower tonnages for its analysis: 478 000 t and 578 000 t. The inquiry has not provided details of its methodology and has not justified its estimates.

What are the reasons for the misjudgments of the Hill Inquiry? The inquiry took the view that some 158 000 t of mining inputs included in the Northern Territory government's submission as general stores in 1992 were really population-dependent non-bulk freight. Its claim was that this was double counting. This is incorrect. As discussed earlier, general stores refers only to material input used directly in the mining operations; for example, the supply of new equipment and commodities such as explosives, drill bits, reagents and lubricants. It does not include food, drink and consumables used by the population of mining towns.

The inquiry has ignored the expected freight contribution of a number of projects which have proven viability. The expected freight generated by these projects totals 405 000 t in 1992. For example, does the inquiry have any reason, other than federal Labor politics, to exclude developments of the Jabiluka and Koongarra deposits? That omission alone reduces the expected freight rate by 87 000 t in 1992. It would be interesting to the people at Woodcutters to hear that Mr Hill obviously knows more about their freight requirements than they themselves know. Yet the inquiry has arbitrarily added, without any justification, a tonnage of 150 000 t in 1992 to cover bulk mine outputs from some of the above mines, including future exploration for petroleum products, the proposed Alice Springs oil refinery and inputs to the future Darwin cement works. I will discuss that later.

Strangely, the inquiry made no comparable forecast for mine inputs even though such a system is relatively simple to persons having a reasonable understanding of the economic geology of the Territory and of mining markets. With the exception of the Koongarra and Warrego-Gecko mines, all other major mining concerns considered in the Territory government's

We heard again from the member for MacDonnell this afternoon the story about the budget deficit. It is about time we laid to rest the fallacious argument perpetrated by the federal government and its colleagues. It claims that it was left with a \$9600m budget deficit last year. The fact is the budget deficit last year was \$5700m. Certainly, that is higher than the projection but nowhere near the propaganda statements that have been made. Further, this government, which is so concerned about budget deficits, by its own actions increased the budget deficit by a net \$1600m according to economists. It is wrong of the opposition and wrong of the federal government to keep perpetrating the view that they can get out of everything simply on the basis of a fanciful \$9600m deficit.

Mr Speaker, I propose to talk today on the technical evaluation of the Hill Report. In present value terms and with a real rate of return of 7% per annum, the Territory government estimates the project to have a positive net benefit of \$340m in 1984 prices. This contrasts with the Hill Inquiry which estimated a net loss of \$370m. The difference of some \$700m is chiefly attributable to 3 major deficiencies in the inquiry's analysis: firstly, forecast of freight demand and assumptions relating to growth in demand; secondly, an assessment of the project on a corridor basis alone rather than a national basis; and, thirdly, an incorrect application of costs for the project and an inadequate documentation of the assumptions on which the costs are based. The reduction in net benefits which results from these 3 deficiencies is multiplicative and not additive so the overall reduction is much greater than would at first appear.

First, I will deal with the deficiencies in the forecast. The fact that the Hill Inquiry chooses to call its forecast 'illustrative' is a clear indication of the approach of the inquiry to this key area. The forecast of freight demand is a fundamental issue in assessing the transport requirements of the Northern Territory and necessarily must be made in order to make judgments about an uncertain future. Equally, such forecasts must be cautious in approach so that, where judgments are made, responsibility is exercised in order to avoid excessive optimism or pessimism. The above approach was adopted by the Northern Territory, with its forecasting methodology clearly and comprehensively documented in its submission. With the resources available to the inquiry, it is surprising that the Hill Report does not document adequately the methodology used in producing its forecasts but chooses to report tonnages only. Furthermore, the inquiry places an apparent heavy emphasis on the Territory's own forecasts, something that is flattering to the Territory and rather contradictory to what the 2 previous opposition spokesmen said today. Indeed, it should be said that, in the absence of the inquiry's own work, the Territory's forecasts of transport demand in northern Australia are the most current and thoroughly documented in Australia. In short, they represent the best available knowledge on economic activity and consequent transport demands onwards to the end of this century. Therefore, it is difficult to comprehend why the inquiry has chosen to revise downwards the Territory forecast in an apparently arbitrary manner and to do so without prior consultation with the Northern Territory government.

The Hill Report has based its case on a freight tonnage 32% lower, in its illustrative projection one, than the Territory government's own estimate of rail freight generated by specific projects. We reject the Hill Inquiry's illustrative projections as it has failed to use the quantifiable techniques necessary to estimate with any degree of certainty the freight to be generated by Territory projects.

One is tempted to say that, if one has friends like that in Queensland, one hardly needs enemies in Canberra. If the Alice to Darwin rail link were completed, Queensland, in these terms, would hit the Commonwealth for compensation. The Chief Minister should be spending more time looking at the damage his friends and allies in Queensland are doing to the cause of the railway and the damage they are both doing to that cause we hear so frequently trumpeted from the other side of the Assembly: the great cause of northern development.

All Territorians are well aware of the problems of dealing with the federal Treasury. We have to fight hard for every cent we get out of the Commonwealth. We need to counter a massive institutionalised prejudice against northern development and against the Territory in particular. To Treasury, the Territory is overfunded and largely unaccountable for its expenditures. The Financial Review, as the Leader of the Opposition said, has been a constant critic of the Northern Territory government. I remind members of the scathing editorials published during the Northern Territory election and earlier this year. Because of this institutionalised prejudice, Territorians are being asked to argue their case for greater funding with greater care and precision. That is the nub: Canberra knows how the Northern Territory government wastes money on self-government celebrations, lobbyists in Canberra and unnecessarily enlarging the size of this Assembly. It pays close attention to Territory government requests for more money, especially in view of the budget deficit. That is why it was vital that the Northern Territory government submission argue our case not only strongly, not only copiously but logically as well. Although 112 submissions were received by the inquiry, the most important and the most weighty of those submissions was that of the Northern Territory government.

Mr Speaker, in 1977, the Bureau of Transport Economics' study into the Northern Territory's transport needs made the salient point that the viability of a north-south railway is heavily dependent on freight volume. Freight volume or freight tonnage is the key to the economic argument for the railway. The non-economic argument for the railway is often put by the Chief Minister himself: that the railway is a national act of faith in the Northern Territory. Members should be aware by now that the Northern Territory government submission ran to 3 volumes of about 300 pages. It was a lengthy document containing photographs, graphs, tables and computer projections - a document that, above all other submissions, carried the flag for the railway.

That submission came under close scrutiny and, in that light, the sheer size of the discrepancies between the Northern Territory government's submission and the 1980 joint Northern Territory-Commonwealth report are startling to say the least. The difference between the Northern Territory government submission and the Hill Report is stunning. Reference has already been made to the extraordinary exaggerations contained in the Northern Territory government submission: the iron ore, broad acre cropping, cement factories, sustained growth rate of 5% per annum for 50 years etc. The Northern Territory government estimated savings in road maintenance costs in 1983 to be \$12.7m; the independent inquiry calculates the figure to be \$1.1m. The Northern Territory government estimated the average freight haul distance at 1273 km; the inquiry suggested 972 km would be a more accurate estimate. In view of the fact that nearly all of the major mining and agriculture projects are within 600 km of Darwin, one is certainly left questioning the Northern Territory estimates. In 1993, the Northern Territory submission suggests a freight tonnage of some 1 250 000 t, more than

that this government has adopted to the Hill Inquiry and it is one of the reasons why this government has not done very well in front of the Hill Inquiry.

Mr Hatton: It is a spin-off.

Mr SMITH: It is a pretty big spin-off.

Mr Hatton: Why don't you talk about the report?

Mr SMITH: If you did not sidetrack me with irrelevant comments of your own, I would.

Mr Speaker, there is no doubt that the Hill Report and the other reports on the railway line only serve to increase the institutional prejudice against the Territory in the south. My colleague, the member for MacDonnell, has already mentioned the institutional prejudice that we face from Treasury in Canberra. We have all seen great evidence of that under both the Fraser and the Hawke governments. It is also evident in newspaper editorials, particularly those of the Financial Review.

It is clear that the Territory has to learn to counter this destructive institutionalised Territory bashing. One way we can counter this is to become more responsible in our own affairs by providing better information and more accurate reporting on the Territory's fiscal management and by producing a more accurate flow of information on the social structure of the Territory and on the ways we can begin to educate people in Canberra, Sydney and Melbourne.

We have already heard mention of the Northern Territory government's submission to Canberra for an instant university. It was laughed at, Mr Speaker. The numbers used in it were exaggerated and the principles of analysis were shoddy. The Northern Territory government's submission to the Hill Inquiry shares some of the same faults. As other speakers have mentioned, the Northern Territory government's submission clearly overstates the freight loads to be carried by the rail link. The report speaks of hundreds of tonnes of freight to be generated through the Douglas-Daly scheme and horticultural projects, and hundreds and thousands of tonnes of freight that would be generated by a cement works. The report predicts growth rates of 5% for the next 50 years. It is interesting to compare the freight tonnages projected in the 1980 joint report - that is 600 000 t. The best case considered by the Hill Report produces an annual freight task of 949 000 t which is in itself 50% higher than the 1980 projection. But, the Northern Territory government's submission argues for a freight task of some 1 250 000 t per annum.

Mr Speaker, wild assertions and obvious inaccuracies are only one aspect of the Northern Territory government's submission. There are more. Page 124 of volume 1 of the submission carries a model split; that is, whether the railway or road will be the preferred way of travelling for tourists. It contains an interesting footnote which refers to tabulated information. The footnote says: 'These estimates were prepared before relevant Australian National Rail data was received'. Without the relevant data from Australian National Rail, the Northern Territory government included bogus numbers instead of accurate numbers from the experts.

The so-called technical evaluation of the Hill Inquiry, which we heard 3 times this afternoon from 3 different speakers, is merely a defence of the Northern Territory government's exaggerated submission. Because it seeks to defend the Territory submission, it makes major errors. Firstly, it includes the Plenty River project in its freight task assessments. It is already on public record that the Plenty River project is no longer in operation. It is now on a care-and-maintenance basis. This state of affairs results more from world prices for its concentrates than from transport problems.

Mr Speaker, the technical assessment focused upon Frances Creek and it stated: 'Typical of the subjective nature of the Hill Report is its rejection of the view that the Frances Creek iron ore mine can be reopened'. Clearly, the author of this statement knows very little about the international market for iron ore. Nothing short of an absolute miracle will bring the Frances Creek iron ore mine back into production.

Here are some facts about the Frances Creek iron ore deposit. In the years 1967 to 1974, the mine produced approximately 6 000 000 t of high grade ore of 62% iron content. However, the mine closed due to a contracting world market and escalating energy prices. By mid-1974, the federal government had paid subsidies to the Frances Creek operators of over \$2m and an additional \$1.2m indirect subsidy due to rail losses on the rail link from Frances Creek to Darwin. A further \$115 000 was paid on another indirect subsidy due to losses incurred by the Port Authority in the loading of the ore. Mr Speaker, there is a large stockpile of ore at the moment, some 500 000 t according to the Northern Territory government. Australia currently has in excess of 5 million tonnes of iron ore stockpiled at Mount Newman and at Yampi. This stockpile is of 64% iron content. The iron content at Frances Creek is around 62% to 63%. If it is such a good submission from the Northern Territory government, it certainly has not spelt out the special qualities of this iron ore at Frances Creek and who exactly will use this iron ore. That is not clear in the report at all. The current world price for such ore, from information supplied by BHP, is US\$22.27 per tonne and BHP cannot sell its product at that price. In 1975, the price faced by Frances Creek was less than \$14 per tonne and this price was too low to encourage continued mining. That was only 10 years ago.

To further underscore the argument against the technical assessment in the area of iron ore, in early 1983, as a result of one of the Chief Minister's off-the-cuff comments on the prospects for establishing a steel foundry in Darwin, a study was commissioned by the development corporation. It was entitled 'A Study Into the Feasibility of Establishing a Foundry in Darwin'. The document argued the case for the establishment of a steel foundry in Darwin but it is interesting to note that nowhere in that report is there any mention whatsoever of the iron ore deposit at Frances Creek. Instead, the development corporation proposed a feedstock of scrap iron.

Mr Speaker, as we have said constantly, the case for the railway is clear. The Territory Labor Party supports the construction of the railway but we do not argue, as the government argues, that the line will be an instant success; that it will instantly move hundreds of thousands of tonnes of produce from the Douglas-Daly or haul hundreds of thousands of tonnes of iron ore from Frances Creek. The case for a railway is to be found in its employment-generating potential and in its social benefits. To present a report such as that produced by the Northern Territory government is to debase the case for the railway because it destroys the credibility of the Territory government.

The Chief Minister asserted yesterday that the Northern Territory government's submission was, and I quote, 'a comprehensive and professional assessment of the economic resultants and social effects of the construction of the railway in which all assumptions of future effects were clearly spelt out'. If that is the case, how does he account for the major discrepancies between his government's submission and the joint 1980 NT-Commonwealth submission? In the document headed 'An Evaluation of the Report of the Independent Economic Inquiry into Transport Services to the Northern Territory', the Chief Minister points to later documentation in the Hill Report. The Chief Minister said: 'With the resources available to the inquiry, it is surprising that its report does not document adequately the methodology used in producing its forecast, choosing rather to report only'. Nowhere in the Territory's submission is there any justification for the probabilities that are ascribed to individual projects, like the 80% probability ascribed to the likelihood of the Frances Creek ore deposit, and the 40% probability that the mine itself will be reworked.

The Chief Minister further accuses the inquiry of failing to use the rigorous techniques of the NT inquiry. The report by the Northern Territory government was an unnecessary exercise in trying to mislead not only Territorians but Australians, those people who would be footing the bill for this railway. It is now 5½ years since self-government and the government still has not learnt how to conduct itself in Canberra. If the government cannot become more responsible, the Territory will lose out.

The government has referred on numerous occasions to a report that it is producing for a free port. I would join the honourable member for MacDonnell and ask the government to be very careful in the preparation of that report and to make it available as a public document in a draft form so that the bugs that will inevitably be in it can be ironed out before it gets to Canberra and so that everybody can be guaranteed that the best possible case is being put forward. That way everybody in the Northern Territory, of whatever political persuasion, can get behind it and support it as far as possible. By now the government should be aware of the institutional problems faced by the Territory. Only by cool, honest and open debate can the Territory case be advanced.

Other speakers have referred to the Queensland government's submission to the inquiry and all members present will remember the simultaneous press conferences called by the honourable Chief Minister and the Queensland Premier. Territorians are entitled to ask what has happened to that promise to conduct a feasibility study into a railway line from Mt Isa. More than this, the Chief Minister should seek a meeting with Mr Bjelke-Petersen to clear up the matter of the Queensland government's threat to use section 99 of the constitution to oppose the rail link. He should clear up the matter of the Queensland government's threat to seek financial compensation from the Commonwealth in this matter.

Mr Speaker, the independent economic inquiry received 112 submissions and only 3 opposed the rail link. Obviously, the great majority supported it. The Labor Party supported the railway and the Northern Territory government supported the railway. The difference between our position and that of the government is that we do not consider that the policy of wild exaggerations and bogus claims, as exemplified by the Territory government's submission, enhances the case of the Territory. Mr Speaker, it serves only to compound the difficulties we have already.



Mr VALE (Braitling): Mr Speaker, I rise to support the motion of the Chief Minister. It is somewhat ironical that the man chosen to do the bidding of the Prime Minister and prepare a report on the proposed Alice Springs to Darwin rail link comes from a Labor state and presides over a rail authority with Australia's worst record of financial mismanagement. It is hardly any wonder that, with few exceptions, Territorians view cynically the findings of the Hill Report. Mr Speaker, if the inquiry's views had prevailed in years past, the Tarcoola to Alice rail line, the Indian-Pacific rail link, the Stuart Highway between Darwin and Alice Springs and many other national projects in Northern Australia would never have been commenced.

The Hill Report is purely and simply an exercise to bury an embarrassing election promise broken by the Hawke government. An opinion seems to be held in some quarters that the Hill Report sounds the death knell of the Alice to Darwin railway. But I and many thousands of Territorians would hope that this is not the case. I would like to point out that inquiries in the past have been held and brought down findings which have been in error. Indeed, a royal commission in the 1960s inquiring into the collision at sea between 2 Royal Australian Navy ships, the Voyager and the Melbourne, found that Captain Robertson of the Melbourne was at fault. However, after much public and parliamentary debate, a second royal commission found that the fault was not Captain Robertson's on the Melbourne, but lay in a navigational error on the bridge of the Voyager. Mr Speaker, if royal commissions can and do make mistakes, then logic suggests that a one-man inquiry can also make mistakes.

A former Premier of South Australia, the late Sir Thomas Playford, said several years ago that South Australia would receive tremendous economic benefits as a supplier state if mineral and tourist projects were to proceed in Western Australia and the Northern Territory. The boost to supplying industries in South Australia during the construction stage of this rail line would be of tremendous benefit, over an extended period of time, to industry generally but, in particular, to cement companies constructing rail sleepers and the steel town of Whyalla in providing the thousands of tonnes of steel for the rail line.

Mr Speaker, the Tarcoola to Alice line, which is much shorter than the Alice to Darwin line, used a massive 75 000 t of steel in its construction. I bet that Whyalla would like to obtain another order for that quantity of steel, let alone an order to supply the Darwin line which is almost twice the length.

The highly-trained men who worked on the Tarcoola line and the sophisticated machinery used for its construction are now being used temporarily in Western Australia. This equipment is the most expensive and sophisticated ever used in rail construction in the world. However, Australian National Rail cannot be expected to keep it sitting idle in rail yards for ever and a day. If it is not put to work in Australia, it will have to be sold overseas. This equipment and the men who operate it must be returned, and returned at an early date, to the Northern Territory to start work on the 'national act of faith': the Adelaide to Darwin rail line. Mr Speaker, we are a patient people in the Territory, we of the 'never ever', and whilst we all had high hopes of a rail completion date of 1988, to celebrate the bicentennial with the rest of Australia, that hope is fast fading. However, I am certain that all Territorians would now accept a slower or more protracted construction period to provide the

federal government with an extended payment period. This factor must also be considered when taking into account the vast amounts of money already spent on route survey work and the evaluation of water and gravel proposed for use in construction. That money will have been wasted if the line is not to proceed.

Mr Speaker, all members will remember the so-called energy crisis in the 1970s and, whilst Australia escaped that shortage with minor bruising, in terms of the energy supply, the cost penalties associated with the energy crisis when crude oil soared from \$2.08 a barrel to \$34 a barrel was a major factor in the economic recession that occurred in Australia and the rest of the western world. If we believe that we have come through the energy crisis then we delude ourselves. I firmly believe that, given the fact that the world economy is now starting to come out of the recession, the world price of crude oil is again set to start climbing and it will rise dramatically. Some experts predict that the world price could double within a few months and Hill has completely ignored this major factor in his findings. Given that rail freight is not necessarily efficient in terms of speed, in terms of the cost of fuel consumption, it is by far and away the most efficient and effective method of moving vast tonnages of freight overland on long hauls. For many years, the Central Australian Line, as it was known, from Oodnadatta to Alice Springs, was the only line in Australia which operated at a profit. But the heavy rains from 1966 on put paid to that line.

However, the new Tarcoola to Alice line has experienced an incredible increase in freight and passengers carried. It shows clearly that predictions about rail performances can be overly pessimistic, as with Hill. On the Tarcoola line in the first 6 months, passenger figures increased by an impressive 269%, requiring a second Ghan service. Freight figures are equally impressive and goods trains to Alice carried 329 500 t, an increase in 1980-81 of 93% on the previous year. Piggyback traffic of trucks and trailers carrying freight increased by a staggering 469%. These figures alone clearly show that Mr Hill has not done his homework, and it must also be noted that the unknown factor or factors can play a major role in determining or assisting economic development. Who knows what future mineral discoveries are yet to be made elsewhere in the Territory?

The Alice Springs oil refinery, whilst proposing to market in the Alice Springs to Tennant Creek area, could quite easily extend its markets further north and south, given a reliable rail link and a less expensive method of transporting large quantities of fuel across the Territory.

The federal government has made much play about a road or rail but not both. Someone should remind the Hawke government that the south road construction, the Stuart Highway in South Australia and the Northern Territory, is being funded by the Australian motorist under the bicentennial road fuel levy. Hawke and his cohorts must keep their grubby little hands off this vital road construction project.

Mr Speaker, Territorians have waited - and waited patiently - for over 70 years for the Adelaide to Darwin line to be built, and it will be built with or without the help of a Labor Party in the Territory or Canberra. The question now is: when will construction commence and when will it be completed?

Mr DALE (Wanguri): Mr Speaker, major discrepancies in the Hill Report already covered have been in the areas of estimates of freight, the attribution of costs, the errors in methodology and the like. The blatant subjectivity of these does not need to be reiterated. I would like to home

in on the social benefits angle discussed by the report. In endeavouring to identify a concept of social audit to be applied to this study and required within its terms of reference, the inquiry chose to use as a reference the Australian Labor Party platform and statements made by the Commonwealth Minister for Transport. If the inquiry had followed those guidelines with an objective approach, we would have had a quite different report. However, on page 186, the report states: 'The social audit cannot determine the truth about judgments made by others because all of these arguments are partly subjective'. As I said earlier, this inquiry's attitudes to arguments are all subjective and hence the result handed down.

The 1980 joint report concluded that social benefits added substantially to the case for the railway. The Hill Report states, in an attempt to knock that on the head: 'To what extent the social benefits are already measured by the direct benefits of the project: as shown in chapter 11 of this report, many of the so-called social benefits are already partly or fully accounted for in the measurements of direct benefits'. But, by turning to chapter 11, it is quite easy to see that this is not the case. Of the 19 isolated benefits cited, only 5 are already included in direct costs. Several are partly covered, one is largely covered and another can best be described as a possible.

Another spurious statement is on page 81: 'It is readily apparent that the overwhelming majority of submissions explicitly addressing the subject were in favour of the accelerated upgrading of the Stuart Highway'. However, only 18 out of the 112 submissions addressed the question. The other 94 submissions did not address themselves to the question at all. Compare that with the fact that 102 of the 112 supported the construction, only 3 were against it and 7 offered no opinion.

It is simple to go through the report in this way and discredit it further. The discrepancies are glaring. Let us look at some of the benefits not included in direct costs. One of the benefits is national pride and confidence. This is seen as being of benefit to the nation. The report itself states: 'It is possible that other projects could create a degree of national pride and confidence. However, the trans-continental railway from Adelaide to Darwin has a specific significance for the people of the Northern Territory and for many if not all Australians'. Is it not tragic that this positive statement is watered down in the final evaluation of the report to: 'Considerable weight could be placed on this factor'. So subjective was the attitude of the inquiry that, in the final result, it would appear that no weight at all was placed on it. Why not? Mr Speaker, for things like the Advance Australia Campaign, big dollars are being spent to build up confidence in ourselves as a nation and particularly through our involvement in national sporting activities and our Australian-made products. I do not know if the America's Cup was an economic success for Bond, but I do know that it was a social benefit goldmine for Australia.

We see in some of the TV ads promoting national pride that near enough is not good enough. A picket fence would never have been good enough for the Great Wall of China and an upgraded highway will never be good enough to take the place of a railway that genuine Australians with a vision for the future and for the nation have seen as a vital aspect for most of the past century. By the way, the report does not state that social costs are small. The underlying theme of this report is that the

road will do the same job as the railway for less money. I do not accept that. But, my understanding is that we would have been given the road anyway. This business of its being an and-or situation is a result of the Hawke government's soft-shoe shuffle of broken promises. The deal he wants is for us to sell out the Territory so far as the railway is concerned and our jelly bean for being good boys is a road a few years early.

The social audit was conducted by the inquiry; it was a cost-benefit analysis. The Hill Report eventually decided: 'Taking together the results of the investment analysis and the social audit, the railway represents a poor investment choice'. The missing disclaimer in that statement is: 'a poor investment choice based on the figures and logic of the Hill Report'. By using the Hill Report figures, the railway will not make a profit. But even if that is correct - and this government just simply will not wear that - we must remember that the current Commonwealth Minister for Transport is quoted at page 183 of the report as saying: A social audit 'improves the functioning of the market, costing all elements in the provision of a service. It does more than this, for it takes into account all economic, environmental and social benefits associated with a service, hence widens the calculation of benefits beyond the narrow concept of profit alone. Thus services to country people, other disadvantaged regions and many passenger services, which are not profitable in a narrow commercial sense, will be valued according to their wider social benefits'.

The Hill Report simply has not done this. In an earlier speech, the honourable minister said:

*Social audit would determine the most socially optimal system to fulfil each task. It is regrettable that, at present, the transport system chosen tends to be selected on the criteria of what yields the highest short-term return.*

How two-faced can you be? If every major project in Australia was based on the criteria which yield the highest short-term returns, we would have none. Why does the minister oppose this railway? Let me quote another prominent federal ALP member, the Hon C.J. Hurford. This is also in the report:

*One of the lessons of history is that it is easy to underestimate the potential volume of traffic on a new transport link. For example, consider the trans-Australia railway between Port Augusta and Kalgoorlie, born of government agreements at federation, built in the early part of the century and funded by a fiduciary issue when the population of Western Australia was less than 300 000. That undertaking must have seemed to many to have been the height of folly. A year after completion, the total annual tonnage conveyed on that railway was 120 000 t. Now, 65 years later, the railway link serves a total population of 1.3 million and carries 1.25 million tonnes a year, over 70% of the land transport task on the Port Augusta-Kalgoorlie corridor. It has become a most important element in the Australian National Rail network, and operates profitably in competition with road transport operations on modern sealed highways.*

*My point, of course, is that none but the most visionary could have seen this development prior to the railway's construction. This proves little but that cost-benefit analysis is easier in retrospect, but it does indicate the care that is needed to ensure that analysis leads to the right conclusion.*

What a crying shame for the Territory and Australia that, in this case, the required conclusion led to the analysis which makes up this report. All Territorians must reject it totally as a sham. It is simply another talon of the Hawke - the Hawke hell-bent on bringing this Territory to heel.

I have never in my public life quoted from the Bible but I do so now because the impact of this report on the people of the Northern Territory is best summed up in the Book of St John, chapter 11, verse 35. I quote it in its entirety: 'Jesus wept'.

Mr FINCH (Wagaman): Mr Speaker, after a short but very pleasant trip down the road, I would like also to take the opportunity to put in my tuppence worth on the so-called independent economic inquiry into rail transport. Like many others, I have not had time to study and fully comprehend the report from cover to cover. My conservative engineering background would lead me normally to make a detailed, digested analysis before providing critical comment. However, I would not like to miss out on this final opportunity to put forward at least my personal overview.

Much has already been said about the details of the report in relation to its contents and also to the methodology used and many other aspects. It is not my intention to elaborate on those details although I will take the opportunity later in the discussion to take up a few points put forward by other honourable members. Whilst the details of the report have been justifiably criticised, my main concern is that the report misses out on some fairly basic and fundamental points. It is acknowledged in major engineering projects of this kind that we need to undertake careful and comprehensive detailed planning prior to making decisions. This report, however, is both short and narrow-sighted and falls well below my expectations. Some criticism has been levelled at the Northern Territory government as to the extent of details submitted but, if you put it into perspective, in 4 months, we were expected to comment on a project which would have had ramifications well past the turn of the century. It would be rather optimistic to expect the submission to be totally comprehensive. Despite these shortfalls, I believe that there was sufficient evidence to justify the project on its own short-term viability. By 'short-term', we mean about 10 or 20 years and whether we talk about plus and minus 10% on population growth, on mining development potential and all sorts of other factors that have been considered really is insignificant. What we need to do is to stand back and look at the whole potential of the railway in full perspective.

My concern is that we should evaluate the railway project in toto. The railway is of national and long-term significance. It is not only a rail corridor that we should consider nor is it only the Northern Territory that we should consider, but the nation-wide economic effects, both outwards and inwards. It is not just the assessment through to 1987 or 2002 or any other year in what I would call the short term to which we should be addressing ourselves but the implications far into the future. We need to look at the cost, not only what the total cost would be to Australia, but the

short-term cost in perspective and compare it to such projects as the Sydney Opera House, the Snowy Mountains Scheme or even the national deficit. We can see that \$300m-\$400m is a relatively insignificant figure.

I would also like to point out that there is probably no better time to proceed with a major civil construction project. Construction costs, through tender systems in recent times, have been as low as they are ever likely to be relative to the state of the economy. We have roadworks tenders coming in at 40% and 50% below reasonable current estimates. In a recent contract let at the new power-station for steel fabrication, the figures were some 40% below what the tender estimate might have been. That is a reflection of the current state of the construction marketplace. To take advantage of the depressed market would be of benefit to Australia as a whole.

Further, I guess there is great merit, in these times of financial constraint and unemployment, in spending funds on what I see as a project that will have direct, immediate and long-term benefits to the Northern Territory and to Australia as opposed to spending money on those weed-pulling-type projects we referred to the other day. Almost every dollar spent on the railway project itself would go directly or indirectly back to the Australian public and alleviate some of the hardship caused by the present unemployment. That money would also provide a catalyst for and help to promote further development, particularly within the steel industry.

Aside from the total cost of the project, we need to ask ourselves: what is the total long-term benefit to the nation? It is not just the identifiable cheaper freight and it is not just those social benefits that we heard of earlier. More importantly, the railway will act as a catalyst for the recovery and future development of the nation's economy. The total future development which might result from this catalytic action should be credited on the plus side of the equation for the viability of the project as a whole. We should not be looking just at those immediate short-term and predictable assessments. Although we cannot see in our magic crystal ball what the long-term developments might be, we can all rest assured that they are there. Whilst we are not able to add those quantifiably to the equation at the moment, at least they should be accepted on the plus side.

Whilst, in the immediate term, the Australian National Railway will have some difficulty in showing a profit, particularly if full or substantial capital costs are taken into account in its expected balance sheet, there is no doubt, however, that Australia as a whole will benefit financially. It is total-in versus total-out. Every project that is developed directly or indirectly as a result of construction of the railway will be of 100% benefit to the nation's economy. We all acknowledge that north Australia and central Australia have tremendous untapped resources. I am quite sure there are many as yet unidentified resources as well. The Leader of the Opposition commented on the limitations of dry land farming. I am sure we can all recognise that there will be many other potentially viable crops that will be identified and developed as time goes by. In the mining area, people certainly will not be tempted to prospect or dig into their investment pockets until the basic infrastructure for realising a profit on their investments is there. Once again, that basic infrastructure, in this case, is the railway. Tourism and the development of technology-based industries will also play an important part in our future and the development of the Northern Territory.

In relation to agriculture, we have been told that much of the water capacity throughout southern and eastern Australia is already utilised fully. In some cases, the current water resources are over-utilised to the extent where soils are deteriorating. In fact, techniques are currently being developed for the re-use of water. As mentioned the other day, the northern half of Australia has approximately 50% of Australia's surface run-off of water and we are utilising probably only 1% of that identifiable yield. Therefore, it is obvious where one of our future potentials for agricultural development in Australia will lie.

I ask honourable members if they can imagine trying to develop the major sugar cane industry in north Queensland at the turn of the century without some basic rail transport system. As for mining and industry, we are likely never to find out what ultimate potential exists unless we first have a rail system which will provide that necessary infrastructure to encourage those prospectors and investors to get out into the field. It is not just a matter of projecting, as the report does, the production of the known and established mines. There is a great unknown out there which will remain a great unknown until there is some realistic incentive to find out.

The honourable member for Millner mentioned limitations on the Plenty River and Frances Creek mines. They are simply temporarily suspended due primarily to current marketability. I'll bet that, before my toes turn up, mines will be rejuvenated. One has only to look at what is happening at Pine Creek where developments in mining technology and marketability have rejuvenated mining. I am sure there will be many other examples of this. The completion of the rail transport link will be vital to the long-term development of the resources of this rich country.

The Leader of the Opposition mentioned the potential contribution of the cement industry. In regard to the Argyle Mine, for example, the provision of accommodation and infrastructure would make no difference. In fact, accommodation provided in a neighbouring town would be of a higher standard than in any temporary mining village that might be provided on site.

Further, he referred to the establishment of a ready-mix concrete company. Just for the record, I would like to enlighten the honourable Leader of the Opposition on the difference between cement and concrete. There is no way that a ready-mix concrete company can do other than use approximately 20% of raw cement in its product. Raw cement, as a matter of interest, is manufactured by a 2-stage process. Only the last of those 2 stages has been mentioned and that was the mixing of clinker and gypsum to produce the final product. Clinker itself is manufactured primarily from limestone. One of the reasons that Northern Cement Pty Ltd is not fully manufacturing cement, aside from the size of the market, is the non-availability of suitable limestone. I understand from information from the company that it is well down the line towards finding suitable deposits of limestone.

Not only would a railway increase its markets, it would provide also a suitable transport system to deliver limestone to Darwin for the manufacture of full cement products. The plant has been designed, I understand, to take into account full kiln production. The layout can be extended should suitable products and suitable markets become available. It is of interest to know that already Northern Cement has exported to Queensland and Western Australia. In fact, it had trouble maintaining the supply requirement to Mt Isa during the recent Queensland floods.

Three honourable members mentioned that only 3 submissions were opposed to the rail project. Two of those had parochial and vested interests. The main opponent may very well be off the rails with his heavy-handed approach. Just the same, there is no doubt that, in the long term, a link also to his state and to the west would be desirable Australia-wide.

Australia will not advance until it develops greater entrepreneurial skills. As any successful business entrepreneur will tell you, first you do your homework on the identifiable markets to see if you are in the right ball park. But, you do not expect to see any long-term potential until you have provided the basic facilities. It is a matter of putting the horse before the cart. As a transport operator, the honourable member for Nhulunbuy would appreciate that there is no point sizing up how much freight to put in the cart until you have bought the horse. In our case, the railway is the horse.

In conclusion, federal governments, and particularly the current federal government, have been big on reports such as the independent economic inquiry. But this government is not so big when it comes to action. It is very easy for governments to divert from their true and proper direction by calling for more reports. We need men of vision to lead the way. We do not need them with tunnel vision and closed minds.

Mr EVERINGHAM (Chief Minister): Mr Speaker, it is a shame that the Opposition's contribution to the debate today has centred not so much on the Hill Report but on the Northern Territory government's submission. Of course, the opposition discredits itself by seeking to discredit the Northern Territory government submission because the opposition spokesman on transport, the honourable member for Millner, who is now so critical of the Northern Territory government ...

Mr Smith: You can't even keep up with what responsibilities we have.

Mr EVERINGHAM: I am terribly sorry but is it even worthwhile keeping up to date with what responsibilities they have? In any event, Mr Speaker, if the honourable member for MacDonnell is now the opposition spokesman on transport matters, the opposition spokesman on transport at the time of the Hill Inquiry was the honourable member for Millner who, in fact, endorsed the Northern Territory government's submission to the inquiry. Now he seeks to discredit it and, in so doing, discredits only himself.

This afternoon, the Leader of the Opposition sought an extension of time and said that there had been an arrangement between the government and the opposition that lead speakers may have an extension of time. Mr Speaker, as soon as the opposition gets all the arrangements back into full play that were in existence before the last election, then arrangements that suit the opposition will come back into operation as well. When the opposition whip starts to cooperate with the government whip in organising the order of debate and all the rest of it, then the government will commence to cooperate again with the opposition.

Mr Speaker, the various points raised by the Leader of the Opposition were only designed to discredit the Northern Territory government's submission to the Hill Inquiry. As far as I heard, the Leader of the Opposition did not comment on the Hill Report itself at all. Obviously, the Leader of the Opposition did not read even the Northern Territory's



evaluation of the Hill Report which was attached to it when it was tabled yesterday and when he bucketed the proposal for the Frances Creek iron mine to reopen, the ADMA tonnages and the cement plant. Apparently, the Leader of the Opposition goes down the road with Mr Hill - the so-called 'independent' Mr Hill. We have heard the opposition repeating 'independent inquiry'. There was absolutely no vestige of independence about Mr Hill. Mr Hill has the biggest vested interest in Australia.

Mr B. Collins: Why did you agree to it?

Mr EVERINGHAM: We did not agree to Mr Hill. The Prime Minister forced Mr Hill on us without consultation. The very day Mr Hill was appointed, I said that Mr Hill would be seeking to cook the books, and Mr Hill has cooked the books. He has not even made a good job of cooking them. He has not used any published methodology. He has flown in the face of Bureau of Transport and Economics methodology and he has ignored the fact that there is a market for Frances Creek iron ore at premium prices, which of course the opposition refuses to recognise.

The Leader of the Opposition dismisses the ADMA scheme because it has had one bad season. The Leader of the Opposition says this tonnage will not eventuate from ADMA. Of course, it is not just a tonnage. All that the opposition has done this afternoon is seek to get its Canberra colleagues off the hook. This is the reason why the people of the Northern Territory cannot trust the opposition. It is not just small untruths, small fabrications, like the member for MacDonnell's statement that I held a joint press conference with Mr Olsen and Mr Bjelke-Petersen in respect of the railway from Mt Isa to Darwin. It is not just small fabrications like that that the opposition reads into the record - things that never happened and it knows they never happened. The reason that the people of the Northern Territory will continue to withhold their confidence from the opposition is that it will not face the fact that it has to stand up and fight for the Northern Territory and leave politics out of it. It has to push against its federal colleagues. The people on this side of the Assembly are prepared to fight against their federal colleagues at any time that it is needed where the interests of the Northern Territory are more important. Mr Speaker, this afternoon we have seen a pathetic display - nothing more than partisan politics under a veneer of attacking the Northern Territory government's submission. Those pathetic people over there will continue with attacks on the Northern Territory government saying that it wastes time and that it spends too much money on self-government celebrations.

Mr Speaker, I think the Northern Territory government's record of expenditure on self-government celebrations over about 5 years would add up possibly to about \$300 000. It has been said that the Northern Territory government wastes money on brucellosis and tuberculosis eradication and the Northern Territory government's insurance office ran at a loss. We are dreadful people, Mr Speaker. The Territory Insurance Office ran at a loss in the same year that the South Australian government insurance office and the New South Wales government insurance offices ran at enormous losses. Mr Speaker, unfortunately, this has not been a debate on the Hill Report by members on the other side of the Assembly; it has been an attempt to justify the renegeing by their federal colleagues on their solemn commitment and the people of the Northern Territory just will not stand for it.

Amendment agreed to.

Motion, as amended, agreed to.

MOTOR ACCIDENTS (COMPENSATION) AMENDMENT BILL  
(Serial 22)

Continued from page 286.

In committee:

Clauses 1 to 9 taken together and agreed to.

Clause 10:

Mr PERRON: Mr Chairman, I move amendment 3.1.

I do not think it really needs explanation. Honourable members opposite raised the matter of court costs being awarded in these circumstances. Whilst this amendment is really quite unnecessary, to show my incredible willingness to cooperate in this matter, I have agreed to an amendment. I understand the position at present is that, even without the powers we are giving it here to make rules, court costs can and have been awarded by the tribunal. However, to remove all possible doubt and all possible criticism, I have agreed to this amendment to show my eternal cooperation.

Mr SMITH: Mr Chairman, I indicate our support for this amendment. I am pleased that the minister has shown his 'eternal cooperation'. In my view, it started 2 minutes ago but I hope it lasts for the next 4 years.

Amendment agreed to.

Clause 10, as amended, agreed to.

Remainder of the bill taken together and agreed to.

Bill passed remaining stages without debate.

EDUCATION AMENDMENT BILL  
(Serial 11)

Continued from 6 March 1984.

Mr HARRIS (Education): Mr Speaker, in reply, I would like to say that I heartily agree with the member for MacDonnell's comment about the process of consultation in the establishment of committees. I can assure you that I am well aware of the enormous amount of energy which is expended on these particular committees. There is a need to ensure that that energy is directed towards positive action. I can assure you that I will be taking that particular comment of his on board. However, I would like to say that I believe we are now on the right track mainly because of the enormous amount of work that has been done since the Northern Territory government took over responsibility for education from the Commonwealth.

The Leader of the Opposition commented on the inclusion of the Katherine Rural College on the board. Similar boards throughout Australia have agricultural colleges represented on their accreditation boards. Those colleges are involved with practical skills as well as educational aspects. We should also note that some schools in the Northern Territory - and Taminmin is an example - are already planning secondary agricultural courses. The Katherine Rural College is our source of expertise in that area.

The other point to note is that teachers generally will be well represented on the board. The secretary's 5 nominees will be educators from different band levels in the service - for example, principals and subject specialists. In fact, teachers and educators could well form the majority of members on that board.

The honourable member for Millner raised the issue of Batchelor College not being represented on the board. I draw his attention to the fact that a representative of the Northern Territory Aboriginal Consultative Committee, FEPPi, is included on the board. It is possible for FEPPi to nominate someone from the Batchelor College.

Mention was also made of prescribed organisations. The Leader of the Opposition asked me to indicate what organisations had actually been included. I know the member for Millner also stressed some concern about the unfair representation for the independent schools as against the government schools. The organisations that are included as prescribed organisations are as follows: the Northern Territory Catholic Education Office, the Isolated Children's Parents Association, the Northern Territory Trades and Labour Council, the Northern Territory Confederation of Industries and the Federation of Parents and Friends Associations of Catholic Schools in the Northern Territory.

He also raised a query about equal representation from both the Catholic and non-Catholic sectors. That has not escaped my attention. In fact, when I approved the prescribed organisations, and accepted the last one, the Federation of Friends and Parents Associations of Catholic Schools in the Northern Territory, I put a note on the bottom to the effect that, whilst I approved the recommendation for 5, would they please write to their associations asking them to consider nominating a representative for the Catholic and non-Catholic parents.

Mr Smith: What was the first one?

Mr HARRIS: The first one was the Northern Territory Catholic Education Office. On the board itself, there would be 7 government representatives and 2 non-government representatives. It is something that I definitely will be keeping an eye on as Minister for Education.

Mr Speaker, the Leader of the Opposition also raised the issue of union organisation representation. This issue is raised from time to time. I understand that the Trades and Labour Council has been speaking to the Chief Minister in this regard. All I can say is that the government is aiming at having unions represented on these particular boards because it acknowledges that they do have a contribution to make.

The honourable Leader of the Opposition also commented in relation to the chairmanship of the Darwin Community College with specific reference to colleges of advanced education. Whilst the community college is similar in some respects to colleges of advanced education, it is not directly comparable. Indeed, I should point out that TAFE programs at the college account for nearly two-thirds of the Darwin Community College's activities. It is therefore not possible to make direct comparisons with other states. In addition, some states have ministers appointing all members of college councils. Six members of the DCC council are not appointed by the minister. Again, this makes direct comparison very difficult.

The Leader of the Opposition also said that he did not know of any other situations where chairmen were appointed. However, the nearest 2 comparisons that we can make are with Queensland and Tasmania. The chairmen of those 2 state colleges are appointed by the executive council on the recommendation of the minister. I would also like to reinforce the remarks made by my colleague, the Treasurer. Since the government has to bear the ultimate responsibility for the college, it is certainly this government's view that, in so doing, it must have some influence over who is appointed to the chairmanship of that institution. The existing situation, where a complete outsider can be placed in the position of chairman without government concurrence, is quite unacceptable.

Mr Speaker, another reason why we decided to have the chairman appointed was that, for many of the other educational bodies of the Northern Territory - for example, the Education Advisory Council, the Post-school Advisory Council, the University Planning Authority, Batchelor College, Katherine Rural College and the Northern Territory Teaching Service - the chairman is appointed either by the Administrator or by the minister.

I think those were all the questions that were raised by the opposition. The honourable member for Nightcliff has had discussions with me on other occasions about possible amendments to this particular bill. Most of his suggestions have been incorporated in an amendment schedule that has been circulated. I thank the honourable member for his concern and his efforts in this regard.

Mr Speaker, the board that we are setting up here is not just any old committee. It has an important role to play, one which will increase in importance as the years go by. It is a board that must have public confidence. It is a board that must have credibility, not only here in the Northern Territory but right throughout Australia. The education standards that are set must remain high. I believe that the way in which we have gone about the establishment of this particular board of studies will enable that to happen.

Mr Speaker, I commend the bill to honourable members.

Motion agreed to; bill read a second time.

In committee:

Clauses 1 to 3 agreed to.

Clause 4:

Mr HARRIS: Mr Chairman, I move amendment 1.1.

This amendment is necessary to ensure that one of the principles of the board, that of wide community representation, is maintained. Without this amendment, it could be possible for an organisation to gain representation on the board through 2 or more bodies. To put it more simply, 2 organisations with prescribed rights to membership, as the bill currently stands, could seek additional representation by having a nomination made on its behalf by one of the other prescribed organisations. This is obviously against the intention of the bill.

Amendment agreed to.

Mr HARRIS: Mr Chairman, I move amendment 1.2.

This amendment is necessary to allow the Administrator to terminate the appointment of the nominated member. Such termination may become necessary for many reasons other than those mentioned in the preceding subclauses of the bill; for example, the situation of severance of relations with the body responsible for that member's original nomination. In other words, an example could be that, if a member leaves the employment of the Department of Education, then that person's membership on the board may be terminated by the Administrator on the request of the secretary.

Mr SMITH: Mr Chairman, if I read it correctly, this amendment allows organisations to say that their representatives have either left their employ or do not have their confidence any longer and should be withdrawn from the board. If that is the correct interpretation, I congratulate the minister and the member for Nightcliff for their industrial nous. I express the regret that this government did not show that same industrial nous some time ago because we on this side are very much aware that, in the past, the government has been very insistent that a person once elected to such a committee or board no longer is a direct representative of a body but should be seen to act independently of it. That was a situation that we never saw as being feasible. We are very pleased with this amendment.

Amendment agreed to.

Mr HARRIS: Mr Chairman, I move amendment 1.3.

This amendment specifies the bodies that the board is required to consult. As the bill currently stands, any organisation could read the act and demand the right to be consulted by the board. The intention of the bill is that major or relevant organisations be consulted. This amendment specifies that only prescribed bodies engaged in education will be consulted.

Amendment agreed to.

Mr HARRIS: Mr Chairman, I move amendment 1.4.

By making this amendment, the role of the board will be defined more specifically. The amendment ensures the independence of the board in reporting and making recommendations to the secretary of the department. This was the intention of the original section which, however, has been open to misinterpretation. The amendment overcomes that problem and ensures that there will be no confusion or debate entered into when the terms of reference, role or responsibilities of the board are discussed.

Amendment agreed to.

Mr HARRIS: Mr Chairman, I move amendment 1.5.

This amendment is designed to reword the existing section that requires members to maintain a high degree of confidentiality. This amendment specifies a situation under which information may be divulged.

Amendment agreed to.

Clause 4, as amended, agreed to.

Remainder of the bill taken together and agreed to.

Bill reported; report adopted.

Mr B. COLLINS (Opposition Leader): Mr Speaker, I thank the Minister for Education for the explanations which he gave. The opposition does not agree with the matter of the chairmanship of the Darwin Community College but, as I indicated earlier, we recognise that that is not the major component of this bill. It is necessary for this board to have the confidence of the community. I simply wish to say that I am satisfied with the explanations that have been provided by the minister.

I must admit that I had some initial misgivings about the very size of the board in terms of its being unwieldy. I do not think that I would particularly like to be the chairman of the board. However, after checking the sizes of such boards around Australia, I discovered that it is one of the smaller ones. It is difficult to make comparisons because, in the states, there are some cases of multiple-organisations attending to the curricula, depending on whether it is primary, secondary or whatever. In fact, the Board of Studies in the ACT consists of 6 persons, which I imagine would be a far more workable group, but it deals with senior courses only. I wanted to indicate that the opposition is satisfied with the balance that has been struck on the board. I wish it well in its deliberations.

In closing, let me say that, during the tenure in the portfolio of education of the Leader of the House, there was a very high degree of cooperation between the opposition and the government. I can say with some honesty that that was to the benefit of the Territory in terms of the legislation that was produced during that time. I make that statement because of something which the Chief Minister said in this Assembly the other day in respect of complaints I made about certain courtesies being notably absent from this sittings. He said across the Assembly: 'What cooperation did we ever receive from you?' I must say that I am astounded with that statement because, in fact, the number of times the opposition has cooperated with the government are legion. One of the areas is education. Two major pieces of legislation, the Education Act itself and the vocational training legislation, were achieved with a great deal of cooperation between the opposition and the government. Indeed, the government on both those occasions accepted and supported many amendments that were proposed by the opposition.

I have to say that I did not enjoy such a great degree of cooperation with the subsequent Minister for Education, the honourable Treasurer. Indeed, I recall only too well the debate - I think it was some 3 years ago now - when the honourable Treasurer said, with some heat and passion, across the Chamber that he would never have a conversation with me again either inside or outside the Assembly. I must say that was an undertaking that he has observed scrupulously ever since. Mr Speaker, I place on record in the Chamber, as I have done previously, my great disappointment that such a ridiculous situation continues. It is not to anyone's benefit. The reason I make that point is that I hope and trust that, in the next 4 years, I will be able to achieve a workable relationship with the current Minister for Education, as existed to the benefit of everybody between myself and the Leader of the House when he was Minister for Education.

In closing, I simply reiterate that we support the composition of the board of studies. We are satisfied by the explanations given and I hope it performs extremely well and to the satisfaction of all Territorians.

Motion agreed to; bill read a third time.

### SPECIAL ADJOURNMENT

Mr ROBERTSON (Attorney-General): Mr Speaker, I move that the Assembly, at its rising, adjourn until 10 am on Tuesday 5 June 1984 or such other time and date as is notified by Mr Speaker pursuant to sessional order.

Motion agreed to.

### ADJOURNMENT

Mr EVERINGHAM (Chief Minister): Mr Speaker, I move that the Assembly do now adjourn.

Tomorrow, 8 March, will be International Women's Day, a day which can be traced back to 1908 when women garment workers from every garment factory in New York, Brooklyn, Philadelphia and Chicago protested against sweatshop conditions under which they then had to work. Their demands were for the organisation of all workers into trade unions, equal pay for equal work, an 8-hour day, a living wage and full citizenship for women. The result was violence, assault and arrest. Since that time, 8 March has been remembered every year as International Women's Day by women around the world who use the anniversary to express a plea for better social and economic conditions in society for women, to air issues of concern to women and to celebrate the achievements women have made.

In 1934, when the first Australian International Women's Day was celebrated, one of the major issues to receive women's attention was world peace. From 1938 onwards, marches, public meetings and functions have been held across Australia on International Women's Day. They have drawn women from an increasing range of socio-economic levels and the movement in the last 2 years has been to increase the role of social functions and celebrations which mark women's achievements thus lending the day a more positive note as well as to continue to press for greater equality in society.

Despite the fact that the Territory has proportionally more women holding responsible positions in government - indeed a woman minister - and on statutory authorities, women in Australia are nevertheless under-represented. The Northern Territory government is concerned that women should have an even greater say in the community. Major initiatives designed to give Territory women further input into government policy and to enable government to be more responsive to women's needs have been introduced since International Women's Day last year. The Office of Women's Affairs has been set up in the Chief Minister's department to advise government, through the Co-ordinator General, on aspects of government policy which are of particular interest and relevance to women and to liaise with community groups, government departments and agencies and to exchange information with similar organisations elsewhere in Australia.

The office will develop sources of information, including statistical information, in areas of particular interest to women and research and report on problem areas such as isolation, employment opportunities and sexual discrimination in the work-place and the effectiveness of current programs in such areas as child care and domestic violence. The Office

of Women's Affairs will be reviewing existing and proposed legislation to advise the government on particular implications for women and will liaise with organisations which deal with areas of concern to women.

Equal opportunity in the Northern Territory Public Service will be reinforced by the appointment of an Assistant Public Service Commissioner for Equal Employment Opportunity who will monitor areas of possible discrimination in the Northern Territory Public Service and ensure that everyone is given a fair go in career opportunities. There is already a provision in the Public Service Act prohibiting discrimination in the public service but the task of the assistant commissioner will be to ensure that the provisions are effective. As I mentioned in last week's sittings, the process of appointment to that position is still in train.

Another initiative undertaken by the Northern Territory government in the last year is the establishment of a Northern Territory Women's Advisory Council. The Women's Advisory Council is made up of 15 members drawn directly from the community. It is representative of just about every region of the Territory and represents the widest possible range of opinion on women's issues. The council's charter is to advise the Chief Minister and the government on all matters of interest to women. The Women's Advisory Council is a 2-way advisory council between Territory women and the government that represents them. Individual women and women's groups are able to take their opinions on women's issues to community-based councillors who convey them to government. In turn, information on government initiatives and policies that affect women is available through the councillors. It is hoped that the presence of the council representative within the community will raise a general awareness of women's aspirations and the difficulties they face in fulfilling them and will promote the concept of equal opportunity.

Another Northern Territory government initiative has been the establishment of a Women's Advisory Section at the Housing Commission to ensure there is no discrimination against women in obtaining housing and home finance. The section also serves to ensure that women know their rights and entitlements in obtaining housing. It is perhaps not widely appreciated by women that they are eligible for housing and housing finance from the Territory Housing Commission in their own right.

To mark International Women's Day, a careers day has been organised at the career reference centre to guide girls into appropriate subject selection in school and to encourage their consideration of careers not traditionally pursued by women. Further, the Territory government will sponsor a technical scholarship for a Year 10 or 11 girl going over into an apprenticeship or technical course as the first girl in the course. I hope we receive more applications for this one than we did for the others.

The Territory government's initiatives are intended to engender financial and social independence for women and to foster their ability to choose freely the future which best suits them. The changes have been based on principles of equity and fairness and are designed to correct any imbalance that persists in the involvement of women in today's society. Initiatives such as these will be self-terminating by their very nature. It is to be hoped that there will one day be no need to hold an International Women's Day on which women call attention to their inequitable position in society.



Similarly, government agencies and bodies designed to hasten the process of the equitable position of women in society, if they do their job well, will cease one day to be necessary. The Northern Territory government looks forward to the day when it may disband its agencies concerned with women's affairs. On that day, women will truly have a fair go in Australian society.

Mr BELL (MacDonnell): Mr Speaker, there are a number of items that I wish to address in the adjournment this evening. The first of them is to endorse the comments just made by the Chief Minister. I note that he mentioned that the Northern Territory government, for the first time last year, had decided to endorse the International Women's Day on 8 March, representing, as it does, such an important celebration in terms of the history of women in the Labor movement. I heartily endorse that. Being occasionally of a cynical frame of mind, Mr Speaker, I cannot help wondering whether it is a mere coincidence that, on 8 March, which of course followed closely on 3 March when there was a federal election, the Chief Minister found that the votes of women may be fairly important and something to be wooed. However, that would perhaps be a dark interpretation to put on it. I think I speak for all of us on this side of the Assembly when I say that we heartily endorse the approach that the honourable Chief Minister is taking in forming a Women's Advisory Council.

I would like to advise, particularly central Australian members of this Assembly, that the Alice Springs Women's Film Group is celebrating International Women's Day with a screening of a new film: 'For Love or Money'. It will be screened at the Araluen lawns on Friday night and all men and women are welcome. I am told that 'For Love or Money' traces the history of women's working lives in Australia through a compilation which, according to the report that I have here, comprises parts of more than 200 films produced in Australia between 1906 and 1983. It is said that the film shows how women's work in the home determines the kinds of jobs they do in the workforce: low paid, low status jobs. It goes on to say that 'For Love or Money' is also about revolt. It shows how women have fought and organised for equality and wage justice for more than a century, culminating in the 1980s with the challenges facing women in the nuclear age. Of course, that is a clear reference to the active opposition to nuclear war that has been characteristic of the women's movement throughout the western world. It visited us in November last year within the Northern Territory at Pine Gap in the form of a demonstration against the dangers of nuclear war. I am quite sure that the Chief Minister would join with me in heartily endorsing those sorts of ambitions and programs that the women's movement, quite rightly and very positively, stands for.

Mr Deputy Speaker, a more local issue was brought to my attention by the local paper: the casino causeway about which questions were asked and answered in this Assembly earlier in the week. For the benefit of honourable members, and more particularly for the honourable member for Flynn, there is for me a certain amount of déjà vu about the questions that have been raised about the all-weather nature of the causeway across to the casino. Just to adumbrate the previous interest I have taken in this subject, I would mention to the Assembly that, on my election some 3 years ago, I was interested that this causeway was to be constructed at a cost of some \$850 000. We were told in the Centralian Advocate that the casino causeway would be provided by the Territory government with a contribution from Federal Pacific Hotels. Some honourable members - particularly the honourable member for Sadadeen within whose electorate that

particular place fell at the time - would recall that, much to the consternation of central Australians, no contribution was forthcoming from Federal Pacific Hotels. The explanation given to us by the Minister for Lands 3 years ago was that it was to serve a housing division in the Mt John valley, which of course has yet to eventuate. The casino patrons have had 3 years use of this so-called all-weather causeway. It was not, in fact, an all-weather causeway. The Northern Territory taxpayers, who quite reasonably were asked to bear the cost of the headworks of the subdivision, had absolutely no use for it. That is a matter for concern.

When the honourable member for Flynn raised these matters in question time, I was somewhat surprised. I thought that I would mention some of these matters, particularly for his benefit, because he may not be aware of previous discussions on these topics either within this Assembly or elsewhere. The honourable member screwed up his courage and certainly indulged himself in what we have come to expect from the government of the Northern Territory when he suggested I should visit an eye and ear specialist. I have become quite used to that in the cut-and-thrust of debates. Rarely is an honourable member so unwise as to commit those thoughts to a press release. However, the honourable member for Flynn was quite happy to do so. I point out to him that these issues that he has raised here have been debated previously. Perhaps he should consult previous editions of Hansard.

In relation to the all-weather causeway at Heavitree Gap, I am delighted to hear at last that that will go ahead. I cannot help feeling that money was wasted by the government - some \$90 000 to \$100 000 - in putting street lighting through the causeway. It is rather strange that it is now considering a further causeway in that area.

I have already addressed the matter of the casino causeway. I think that historical perspective on that as well suggests that the government has been somewhat less than competent in arranging works in that regard. I think the honourable member omitted from his press release some comment about flooding in the Emily Hills area. I am delighted to hear that, at last, something is being done in this area. You yourself, Sir, as previous Minister for Transport and Works, mentioned in the Assembly in October last year that there had been a report on the problem of flooding in the Emily Hills subdivision and that the department was confident of being able to make a recommendation to the government on one of the options. I am delighted to hear that something is in hand. I certainly hope that action will follow so that difficulties suffered by my erstwhile constituents in that area no longer occur.

Mr VALE (Braitling): Mr Speaker, I had not intended to use up my credit rating tonight. I will make this very brief. I would like to take this opportunity to thank most sincerely the Clerk and staff for the assistance they have given me, and I guess yourself, in the last few days in settling into our new duties. From time to time, I watched the Clerk shudder when you or I attempted to rewrite the rule books on parliamentary procedure and practice. Having come from the Senate and watched previous experts such as Mr Pettifer and Mr Rodgers, I guess you and I have attempted to follow those 2 gentlemen by rewriting some of the rule books on parliamentary procedures. Jokes aside, Mr Speaker, I thank the Clerk and his staff most sincerely for the assistance they have given me in the last few days.

Mr FINCH (Wagaman): Mr Speaker, last Thursday in the Assembly, the honourable member for Millner raised the question of the registration of builders. This is a matter which previously has been given some attention by various groups, including the Master Builders' Association of the Northern Territory, the Institute of Architects, the Association of Consulting Engineers and, I believe, by the Building Board itself. It is a matter on which I also have a personal viewpoint. I guess the motivation behind the honourable member's suggestion is protection of the consumer. To this extent, I share his concern. However, I put forward the view that registration contains no guarantee to consumers above those which are already available or which can be implemented readily in other ways. However, registration has some counter-productive effects, particularly in relation to cost.

Before examining some of those alternatives, we need to put the problem into clearer perspective. Experience has shown that the majority of complaints fall into 2 areas. They are either financially based or related to quality of finish. Within the first group, I never cease to be alarmed and amazed at the number of people who enter into substantial arrangements, sometimes for the better part of \$100 000, for property which they expect to last the best part of their lifetime with less thoroughness and less contractual documentation than they might use in their annual subscription to Time magazine. The number of substantial building or building modification disputes which have come even to my notice where not even a comprehensive quotation was obtained is significant. Whilst a number of suitable standard proforma contracts are available from the Master Builders' Association, the Australian Standards Office and various other bodies, I feel that there is more that could be done to encourage all owners to enter into some satisfactory contractual arrangement prior to proceeding with their building works.

In regard to the quality of finish, much of the problem starts with the inadequacy of the documentation in the first place. In the plans and specifications, very little detail is laid down as to the standard or quality of finish that people expect. The owner usually and justifiably has high expectations regarding the final cosmetic finish of his dwelling. Unfortunately, usually these are in his own mind and are not readily interpretable through contractual documents.

A number of means already exist to protect the public in regard to building faults. First, there is the establishment of minimum documentation levels which are adopted by the Building Authority Branch. From time to time, even these come in for criticism. Those levels are minimums and the Building Authority Branch, through the application of those minimum requirements, goes some way towards guaranteeing the end product. Those details relate mainly to structural detailing and to basic architectural requirements and to conformity with Australian standards. Certainly, they are not comprehensive as regards the cosmetic finish requirements.

Secondly, a fairly comprehensive inspection system by the Building Authority Branch is available and contained within the very nominal fee that is charged by the authority. The authority lays down fairly comprehensive guidelines to the various stages of inspection that are required throughout construction. It is pointed out fairly clearly that the primary onus is on the owner to call for inspections at these various stages. Certainly, it is in his own interests to call for regular inspections by the authority which has some expertise in this matter.

Further assistance to owners in finding suitable builders in the first place is available by going to the Master Builders' Association. Banks and other lending authorities also are able to provide some input, particularly when they have had experience of defaulting builders. Certainly, the general public has access to referees, particularly previous clients.

The opportunity exists as always for owners with little or no knowledge in the building game to engage a professional architect or engineer or building consultant not only to design but to supervise construction on their behalf. The fees involved are also usually set on a percentage basis and in relation to the total construction costs. The option is there for people who are investing large sums of money to pay a rate to have a professional person oversee their work and, in fact, safeguard the end product. I am sure that even the members of the opposition might recognise that.

We already have adequate controls over plumbing, draining and electrical works provided through the relevant authorities. Stage by stage inspection is carried out there including final inspection. It is only prudent that developers should base their payments upon satisfactory certification by the relevant authority. If we availed ourselves of those free inspections, particularly plumbing inspections, we would not have sewers running up hills as the member for Millner mentioned. I should mention that we have a technical expression in the engineering game describing the difficulty in overcoming such flows of sewage uphill. I will leave that description for later.

When the Housing Commission is involved in providing finance, it provides some form of inspection to ensure that its investment is protected as well. A further option is open to the public to directly use Master Builders' Association members to utilise their standard contract documents. The Master Builders' Association assures us that there is some sort of guarantee there for the end product. Limited protection is available through the Consumer Protection Act and, finally, if necessary, through litigation.

Mr Deputy Speaker, I mention these existing means that are available to the general public but I believe that better public awareness in these areas will probably go much further than introducing further systems. Even where licensing does exist interstate, considerable problems have been experienced, particularly in the domestic building scene. These arise more because of the standard and limitations of documentation and contracts and arrangements that have been gone into than the degree of difficulty of the work. Some states are also faced with high costs and difficulty in policing unlicensed builders although they have licensing procedures in hand. Particularly in the larger states, such as Queensland and New South Wales, considerable effort is required by the government to provide the inspectors and various other people to handle complaints about unlicensed work and to take appropriate action. These things have quite a significant effect on the cost to governments and, in the end, to the public.

Other states have difficulty in balancing the insurance payments and premiums. Normally in other states, premiums are paid on the basis of an additional or higher building application fee. It has been suggested that that insurance premium to guarantee against bad workmanship by using a licensed builder will probably cost between 0.5% and 1% of the value of the

works. If we take our \$60 000 home here, we could be up for an additional \$600 purely for insurance, not to mention the cost involved in registration fees for the builder in the first place. He will pass them on. These days, builders are up against a tight enough market as it is without carrying these additional costs. We hear quite regularly that the builders, particularly subcontractors, are on the bread line.

We are seeing significant hardship resulting from uncontrolled development of the arbitration processes which are attached to the building and licensing legislation. Recently in Sydney, a friend of mine undertook some renovation work for his home. He got into a dispute with the builder over works to the value of about \$6000. Before he knew where he was, he was in front of an arbitration system which warranted not only representation by a professional architect but also by a legal representative. Some \$30 000 later, a decision was handed down - \$2000 one way and I do not remember which way it was. It is irrelevant anyway. It was a net sum - no costs were awarded to anyone - and my friend is behind the 8-ball. That is the sort of bureaucracy that has developed out of the introduction of registration and licensing systems.

Mr Deputy Speaker, as I mentioned, I guess the bottom line is who will pay for these additional registration fees, insurance costs and for the bureaucracy that is needed. That is without mentioning the secondary effects that come from any form of restrictions on open and fair competition. I believe that the honourable member for Millner would do better to devote his attention to greater publicity of effects than to the introduction of further bureaucratic processes.

Mr MANZIE (Community Development): Mr Deputy Speaker, I shall be brief. I want to take this opportunity to answer a query by the honourable member for Stuart on 1 March. He asked a question in relation to the place known as Nyirripi, also known as Waite Creek, which is situated about 160 km south-west of Yuendumu. The question was whether the government was doing anything to assist the people of Nyirripi in relation to the building of their airstrip.

I would like to let the honourable member and the Assembly know that the Northern Territory government is quite aware of the need for the airstrip in this area. A tender for \$20 000 has been let to Henry and Walker to carry out the work which will be commencing in the near future.

Mr EDE (Stuart): Mr Deputy Speaker, this morning I asked a series of questions of the Minister for Health on the way in which people requiring hospital drug supplies, through pharmacies, have been ripped off. He told me that nobody had been disadvantaged. It seems fairly obvious that it is a fair while since the Minister for Health went to an outpatient clinic and local hospital. If he had, he would no doubt have seen the disadvantaged people who utilise this service.

Some of the people, whom he has obviously written off, are very elderly people who go there for the service and find it rather difficult that another impost is placed upon them as they have then to travel to the pharmacy to put in their prescriptions and wait around for however long, in the heat of the day, before they can obtain medicines. We have illiterate people who previously were assisted by the doctor. When he gave them their medicine, he explained just when it had to be taken and how often. Physically-incapacitated people find it difficult enough to get from

their houses to the hospital and back. Now they have also to get down to the pharmacy and back. We have people who have language problems, who may have been able to obtain some assistance through the very meagre interpreter services that are provided through the hospital system. Certainly, those services are not provided at the local pharmacies. We have the very poor who also have to get the money for a bus. In places like Alice Springs, we do not have a bus. If things become too serious, they have to take a taxi and meet that additional cost. We have the mentally-incapacitated who find it difficult enough where they have a doctor beside them to explain matters to them and their relations. They then have to go along to the pharmacy. Last, but not least, we have the very sick who go down to see a doctor and have then to travel to the pharmacy for medicines and so on.

Previously, at the hospital, people who are chronically-ill or who suffer fairly extreme pain were given an extra quantity of a particular prescription on discharge or on attendance at the outpatients clinic so that they did not have to keep coming back. Of course, under section 18(6)(iii), prescriptions are to be restricted to quantities within the pharmaceutical benefits guidelines or in quantities sufficient to last until the next outpatient visit, whichever is the lesser. While we would all agree with that with regard to certain classifications of dangerous drugs, and the minister is no doubt aware of that problem in other states, I do not think that it should be applied generally in the Northern Territory.

This morning, I also asked who missed out. I had hoped that the minister would tell us. I know who missed out: many people in the Northern Territory missed out - those people who attend general practitioner and specialist outpatient clinics at the hospital. Section 18(6)(iv) says that all patients are to be given prescriptions to be filled at retail pharmacies at the patient's expense. For exceptions, one has to refer to attachment A. Let us have a look at what is in attachment A. You will find that it refers to cosmetic items or things which a pharmacy would not normally cover. The list does not cover the normal things that people require when they see a doctor at the hospital.

I would like to turn to what Dr Blewett said. The Minister for Health read the whole thing into the record this morning so I will not waste time reading the letter again. He said that, while they are not wholly obliged to provide drugs to outpatients, they are expected to endeavour to do so, either free or at a cost with the written approval of the Minister for Health. What they may not do is write NHS scripts for inpatients or outpatients.

I come to the second part of what we see as a very serious matter. The Northern Territory Department of Health, through tax-sharing arrangements, is being given assistance to provide these drugs free of charge to outpatients at those clinics. The Northern Territory Department of Health thought it would be a little bit clever however. It started writing NHS scripts for those people and sending them out to private pharmacists. NHS scripts are fairly expensive to the federal Department of Health. It provided enough funds for the Northern Territory Department of Health to purchase these drugs but now they are getting the drugs elsewhere allowing the Department of Health to reallocate moneys. Where, we do not know. I have not at any stage suggested any of the more obvious political uses to which it could be put. I do not intend to go into that now.

I would like to ask the government to be a little bit more careful in future. I am not going to refer back to the Northern Territory submission on the railway. I think that was given a fairly adequate canvassing this afternoon. However, it is very obvious that the federal Department of Finance has a very low opinion of the Territory's ability to look after funds. Indeed, other federal departments have told me that they believe that certain funds have been ripped off. I find it very hard to mount a defence against this with federal public servants when we have situations like this before our very eyes. For the good of the Territory, what we must do is to be a bit more careful in future. We must work out a fair agreement with the federal government and then resist the temptation to be a little bit tricky. I think that the result will be that the Territory government will be able gradually to build up a bit of credibility in this area. That will be the main basis on which fairer funding can be negotiated.

Mr HANRAHAN (Flynn): Mr Deputy Speaker, I am sure honourable members present share my affinity with beauty. Apart from all the connotations that are attached to that word, I intend to take some time to address the Assembly tonight on the beautification of Alice Springs. It follows naturally that, when I speak of the beautification of Alice Springs, I intend to revolve some of my comments around the environment.

I was born in Alice Springs. I still have visions of the Todd River as a river bed, abundant in river gums. The river gums themselves were rich with foliage which was very green and very normal. That is what I wish to base my comments on tonight. If you go to Alice Springs now, you will not find much green foliage attached to the Todd River gums. There are specific reasons for that. A lot of research has been done into the Todd River gums and most of it has revolved around salinity, dieback, the high watertable and so on. I will pay tribute to the Conservation Commission and certainly part of that tribute must go also to the ministers who have been responsible in the past 5 years through various portfolios for making sure that whatever research is necessary is conducted to make sure that whatever problems there are in relation to the beautiful Todd River are overcome.

Unfortunately, that plays but a small part in the visual aspects that we are faced with in Alice Springs. If we look at the way the Todd River was many years ago, we were confronted with barren banks. There was no real conformity. But today I would suggest to any honourable member who has the pleasure of visiting Alice Springs that he or she take a walk along the Todd River banks from Heavitree Gap through to the RSL causeway. An amazing difference will be seen. That difference is borne out in many earlier photographs of the Todd River. Now we have beautiful, grassed banks. It has been completely irrigated. Hundreds of trees have been planted and we have virtually what we should have always had - a very beautiful and natural park.

Mr Deputy Speaker, the parks that are in existence today and the grass that grows there will not die because they are man made, which brings me to why the Todd River gums are dying and ...

Mr Smith: What are you talking about?

Mr HANRAHAN: I am talking about several things. Really, it is a marvel to me that the gums are still in existence at all. The salinity level appears to be the total problem with the gums, coupled perhaps with the high level of the watertable. It is fair to mention that there has been no period in the recorded history of Alice Springs when such an increase in the rain level over a very definite and consistent period has occurred, and I refer to the last 9 years. We had an incredible drought in Alice Springs that broke in 1967. After it broke, the gums virtually started to deteriorate. The work undertaken in Alice Springs by the Conservation Commission is performed largely in association with the good work done by the Alice Springs Town Council.

We have a standing committee of this Assembly that is concerned with the environment. I would like the members of that environmental committee to take some time off from their deliberations on the aspects revolving around uranium mining and make a trip to Alice Springs to see if they can attempt to correlate some of the past information and studies that have taken place in regard to the Todd River gums. Certainly, it is a serious problem. It is a problem that is confined not only to Alice Springs. A few weeks ago, honourable members may well have viewed a program on the ABC which showed the upper reaches of the Murray Valley system. We were confronted with views and opinions that related to that particular system over some 15 years. At that time, the area was abundant with orchards and gum trees. We were then shown the man-made effects through irrigation and so on. We were confronted with a barren landscape - nothing but salt and dead trees. The effects of dieback also contributed to that.

Basically, what I am saying is that the state of the river gums in Alice Springs cannot be attributed only to salinity and the high watertable. A certain amount must be attributed to dieback. A great variety of groups have tried to ascertain exactly what is wrong. Unfortunately, none of them completely agree and the problem still persists. However, in recent times, we have tried to look at overcoming a couple of aspects - the salinity level and the high watertable. I notice, for example, that a motel in Alice Springs relinquished its basement about 7 years ago. I think they now hang towels on a rack on the way down to it; it has 6 feet of water in it. That is an example of the effect of the high level of the watertable in Alice Springs. Without doubt, that problem is faced everywhere builders go in Alice Springs. The level of the sand in the Todd River is the level of the watertable. Something needs to be done and I believe the Committee on the Environment of this Assembly should attempt to direct itself to consideration of that particular problem which is affecting the beauty of Alice Springs.

Mr Deputy Speaker, I was somewhat amazed to listen to the member for MacDonnell's comments this evening about my press release. I suggested in that press release that he take time out to see an ear and eye specialist and I said that specifically because, on Sunday morning, he took the liberty of making a comment - via a press release, I presume - through ABC radio that virtually said that the Northern Territory government was responsible for the development of substandard subdivisions. I took particular issue with that because I had raised the question with the Minister for Transport and Works who took it upon himself to answer 3 questions in response to one. What the honourable member for MacDonnell failed to mention in his previous little discourse is that I also paid him a compliment. Really, I am at a loss as to why he did not mention the compliment. I said that I commended him for his clairvoyant capabilities. In directing myself to that issue, he would have to be - if you believe the text of his press release - the only person who was capable of predicting the level of the flooding that occurred in Alice Springs in March 1983.



The Northern Territory government developed a subdivision at Emily Hills. We have to go way back before that area was even settled before we can come up with a flood that could possibly be considered to give some indication of that level of flooding. We have to go back to 1930. As I mentioned in my contribution to the Address in Reply the other day, during that particular flood people took refuge on Billygoat Hill. I commend the honourable member for MacDonnell for his capabilities in that direction and also for his ability to recognise the fact that this Northern Territory government has addressed itself to the problem and has realised that changing climatic conditions in central Australia do occur. I am sure that the Northern Territory government does not claim any clairvoyant capabilities, unlike the honourable member for MacDonnell. Hence, we have the answer from the Minister for Transport and Works who addressed himself specifically to the problems concerning the Alice Springs casino causeway, the problems of access to Emily Hills and the area that is directly affected - Heavitree Gap causeway. I am pleased to say that I have been able to make some representations on that. I am certainly sure - and I do not think it bears much more comment - that the member for MacDonnell totally neglected that particular area which previously was in the MacDonnell electorate.

Mr Deputy Speaker, the Todd River gums are dying. The banks of the Todd River are looking good but there are some very serious problems that need to be addressed by the environment committee of this Assembly and I would charge them with those deliberations.

Mr COULTER (Berrimah): Mr Deputy Speaker, I would have liked to have been able to present a petition to the Assembly this morning. Unfortunately, it does not meet the specified criteria for presentation. The problem seems almost perennial. In fact, it has been brought to the attention of this Assembly on many occasions by the Minister for Housing and Conservation on behalf of the constituents of her former electorate of Tiwi. The Deputy Leader of the Opposition has also raised it. I refer to the condition of the roads in the Secrett, Brandt and Thorak Roads area. I am well aware that there is indeed a NT government program to seal and upgrade these roads. It has been programmed for the 1983-84 financial year.

The people who live in this area have been paying rates at the same rate which the people in Darwin city area have been paying: 1.02% on unimproved capital value. Recently, their rating system within this area has been reduced to half that amount. Unfortunately, the roads are still a problem regardless of the amount of money which has been paid for their upkeep. The problem seems to be that the extractive industries which operate within this region use all of these 3 roads for access to the quarries which abound in this area. As recently as last week, the roads were almost impassable. The navy also operates through this area to approach its base at Shoal Bay. It is presenting problems also. Mr Deputy Speaker, I would like to read from the petition:

*The increased usage of Brandt Road, Berrimah and increased level of home construction on that road warrants a sealed road as soon as possible. Also the level of the watertable fell so low in 1983 that normal water usage was unavailable. Your petitioners therefore humbly pray that Transport and Works will commence construction on the sealing of Brandt Road, Berrimah as a matter of urgency, and also that Transport and Works makes available town water to residents of Brandt Road, Berrimah before the end of the 1984 dry season.*

Mr Deputy Speaker, I would like to support the petition. I seek leave to table the petition.

Leave granted.

Mr LEO (Nhulunbuy): Mr Deputy Speaker, I would like to address my comments to a situation that is rumoured to have been developing at the Gove District Hospital. I am gratified by the honourable minister's reply to me this morning. Unfortunately, he is out of the Assembly right now and I cannot thank him personally. The residents of Nhulunbuy will certainly be pleased that 1 or 2 wards that operate in that hospital will not be closed down and that what is envisaged is a reduction in the number of beds but not in their specific location. I am sure that they will be most gratified by the minister's answer.

However, I would like to comment on the matter of pharmacies. The honourable member for Stuart this afternoon has alluded to some of the problems of picking up prescriptions from commercially-operated pharmacies. In Nhulunbuy, there is only one chemist shop. Some prescriptions are very expensive and impossible to keep for a long period. Therefore, it is impractical for the pharmacy to hold such medications. I have had a number of representations from constituents who are unable to obtain medications from the local chemist shop for those legitimate reasons. However, these prescriptions are quite important to their health and well-being. Indeed, in some cases, the medications need to be taken on a regular basis. I would ask the minister to consider these people who require medications which cannot be kept by the chemist shop. In a community like Nhulunbuy, where there is only one chemist shop, where there is no large bulk store for these things to be kept, some people are quite seriously affected by the lack of these medications.

Another matter I would like to raise this afternoon is the Fourth Annual Report of the Racing and Gaming Commission. I understand that there is an in-house committee investigating the Northern Territory racing industry. Since it is not a committee of this Assembly, I feel that I can comment on the report. The report indicates clearly on page 5 that there has been a drop of 2% in revenue from betting. As I understand it, there has probably been an increase in population over the last 12 months of about 4% throughout the Territory. With the normal inflationary trends, one would expect at least a growth rate in betting turnover of as much as 12%. In the Territory, we had a 2% drop. This represents a loss to the industry in excess of 12% and a loss to the government of 2% as opposed to an increase of some 10%. Overall, the government has really dropped 12%.

On page 10, the areas of industry assistance are laid out. There has been a 12.1% increase in assistance. While I applaud the government for supporting the racing industry - it certainly is a significant industry in the Northern Territory - the government and the Northern Territory public need to remember that that is money from consolidated revenue. The very real built-in financial problems need to be seriously addressed. I look forward to hearing what the committee will have to say in May. I believe the minister said that it would present a report at that time.

Mr D.W. COLLINS (Sadadeen): Mr Deputy Speaker, there are indeed many different views on the Todd River and why the gums are dying. I have addressed that particular point on a number of occasions. The new member for Flynn mentioned how pleased he was about the green banks of the Todd River. On those very same green banks, there is a considerable problem.

The grass there is couch grass. It has extensive root systems and is very tenacious. It is different to the other types of grass in Australia. It holds the dust and the dirt that flows down the Todd and is gradually filling up the Todd River bed. Senator Bernie Kilgariff, who has lived in Alice Springs for many years, has pointed out to me, and again in the Centralian Advocate last week, just how much difference there has been in the level of sand in the bed of the Todd. Couch grass helps to hold that sand. It has been gradually filling up. As the Senator said, and I have said before in this Assembly, it exacerbates the flooding problem.

It also has an effect upon the trees because the gums in the Todd are river red gums and are very poorly protected against fire. As you would have observed yourself, Sir, when there has been a fire in the Todd and the couch grass has dried off in winter time and burnt, even young trees 10 feet high are burnt. They do not recover. They are not fire-tolerant trees. The old trees in the Todd may have been affected by dieback and they may have been affected by salinity levels. We will not be able to restore them. What I am interested in is nature's way of replacing the old trees with the young trees. If one studies the Todd with any interest, one will see that, many times throughout the year, hundreds of river red gums will come up in the river bed. They are in there with the couch. When the couch dries and someone drops a match, the young trees will die.

I believe the young trees will adjust to the salinity and to the water levels and nature will take over. For example, there is one by the footbridge on Undoolya Road Crossing which came up in 1973. It was right by the cement road. There was a bit of grass around it but it has managed to survive. It is a very nice young tree. The whole of the Todd could have similar trees if we eradicated the couch grass. What makes the banks look beautiful is actually causing the Todd River bed to fill up, which makes flooding more likely. It also hampers nature's way of replacing those old trees.

Mr HATTON (Nightcliff): Mr Deputy Speaker, during the week, a report was tabled from the Northern Territory inquiry into freight and related costs. Unfortunately, during the course of proceedings, we did not have a chance to debate this document. I would like to take the opportunity now to make some comments in respect of it. The inquiry was the subject of considerable publicity when it started and the results have been awaited with high expectations. It has answered many of the misconceptions concerning freight and related costs and has exposed some facts. However, Mr Deputy Speaker, it has left many questions unanswered.

I will deal with the matters listed. Most important is the issue which has received some public debate: the question of the applied difference between the price of goods and the costs attributable to freight. In that is an underlying implication that, somehow, the industry is ripping off the consumer. I will refer specifically to the report. Item 1.25 says that Darwin prices are 11.9% higher than Brisbane prices and, of that figure, 5.8% is attributable to the cost of freight and 6.1% is attributable to other factors. In comparison with Adelaide, prices in Darwin are 7.6% higher - 5.5% is attributable to the cost of freight and 2.1% attributable to other factors. It goes on with a similar statement about Alice Springs.

I will come back in more detail to that particular point but there is one thing that really fascinates me about this report. I cannot find the answer to it. It says that the Darwin price is 7.6% higher than the Adelaide price and it says the Alice Springs price is 6.4% higher than the Adelaide price. Then it goes on to say that the Alice Springs price is higher than the Darwin price. I do not quite follow those mathematics. I suspect that they result from the methodology used in the collection of the prices and the time differences. Obviously, there is a significant degree of flexibility in the accuracy of the percentages quoted. Those percentage differences could be 1% or 2% or more. In other words, one could be talking about an inaccuracy factor of 25% or even 50% in the figures produced. That may in itself be an indication of where the differences in those prices are.

There are other reasons in this report why those prices would be different. It reports only on the pure freight rate charged by the freight company and then compares that with the price differential. That is quite contrary to what the terms of reference of the inquiry imply that it should have been. If I could refer to the terms of reference, it says it should 'inquire into, report on and make recommendations within 6 months on the direct and indirect costs on all sectors of the economy of freight to, from and within the Northern Territory by road, sea, air and rail transport'. It then deals with other matters. The particular emphasis is on identifying the ways in which freight costs, general distribution costs and prices interrelate. That question has not been addressed at all in this document. I think it is a particularly significant reason why there is a so-called unexplained factor.

I would like to deal tonight as briefly as I can with the issues of the additional costs that are attributable indirectly to freight or as a consequence of the distribution systems that are necessarily used in the Northern Territory as a consequence of our distance from our source of supply. I refer to the food industry first. The great majority of Darwin's goods are purchased in Adelaide. They are purchased directly by the retailer in Adelaide and shipped by truck or road-rail to Darwin. There is at least one week from the date the order is placed - assuming it is placed by phone - before it is delivered in the store. It is often 10 days to 2 weeks between order and delivery. As a consequence of that additional delivery time, the storekeeper is required to hold additional stores on hand. Compare that to a business operation in a capital city where the retailer can receive supplies on a daily, twice weekly or more frequent basis. Assuming a 12.5% interest rate on goods, with the requirement to hold, at the very minimum, an additional 2 weeks' stock in hand, that represents an extra 0.5% on the cost of the goods just as a consequence of the stocks held, the overdraft and the cost of money. There are no other charges associated. Other charges include the additional storage space that is required and, in particular, the refrigerated storage space required. There is rent on that and higher energy costs for a larger refrigerator capacity. I am referring to the amount of energy required to operate the business. These may each be relatively small proportional costs but they are cumulative costs to the business.

There are other items in the Northern Territory that do not relate to freight but represent additional cost burdens on the business. One is the question of wage rates. Wage rates in the retail industry are 6% to 7% higher in the Northern Territory purely as a consequence of district allowances. I do not propose to debate the question of district allowances

here. I simply wish to make the logical point that, if you are paying an additional wage, it is an additional cost to the business and will reflect in the price of the goods.

If we are to examine this question of whether or not there is a rip-off, we must carefully examine the full cost differentials to find out whether those differentials are justified. It is simply not acceptable to have these implied assumptions floating around the community and castigate our retail industry without any serious examination and without any validation of the figures in the report and any serious examination of where those price differences may in fact be reflecting cost differences.

In that sense, the press statement by the honourable member for the Northern Territory in the House of Representatives on the freight inquiry confirmed the widely-held belief in the community that high prices of goods and services are not totally freight related. There is an implied assumption that they are super profits. There is an implication that businesses are making super profits. I think that is a totally unsubstantiated statement. An analysis of business costs in the Northern Territory would support my contention. If we really want to attack retail costs in the Northern Territory, there is a need to look at distribution methods and try to get the wholesale services as close to the retailers as possible. That means supporting the growth and diversification of local wholesaling operations, for example, in Darwin. Developments that are currently occurring, on my information, are going in the opposite direction. At the moment, there is an unconscious attack on the local wholesaling industry that could well result in the elimination of wholesaling in the Northern Territory and worsen our reliance on freight and on retailers to hold stocks on hand. As a consequence of Adelaide-based cooperative developments in this market, local retailers are faced with a cost pressure because of surcharges and other charges imposed through their cooperative participation. They cannot purchase locally even when the price available in Darwin is lower. One particular item was 7.6% cheaper in Darwin than purchasing via Adelaide but the business was not prepared to purchase that particular item because it would have incurred an additional 2.5% surcharge on all other goods purchased from the wholesaler in Adelaide. Such a practice is detrimental to the development of the commercial and distribution networks in the Northern Territory and it also should be very carefully examined.

I do not propose to deal in any more detail with this report. I urge members to read the report carefully. In the report, there are a number of inconsistencies and conclusions which are certainly questionable. There is certainly a need for much further investigation. I would urge the minister responsible to encourage the freight cost inquiry to continue to investigate not just barge operations but to complete and report on all matters incorporated in its terms of reference because, in my reading of that report, it certainly has not done that to date.

Mr SMITH (Millner): Mr Deputy Speaker, I am pleased that the honourable member for Nightcliff has commented on the report of the freight inquiry. Unfortunately, it is the only opportunity that members have had, and that in itself is disgraceful. In the June sittings last year, the government put forward a motion, which was supported by both sides of the Assembly, to establish a committee of inquiry into questions concerning freight in the Northern Territory. It was a motion to which the government attached some importance and so did we at the time. It was warmly welcomed by both sides of the Assembly. Nevertheless, we have the situation in this Assembly where the report of the freight inquiry has been snuck in the backdoor. The

minister responsible has not extended the courtesy of formally presenting the freight inquiry report. In effect, he has denied this Assembly the opportunity of formally debating at this sittings, or presumably the next sittings, the report of the inquiry. After the comments of the honourable member for Nightcliff, you start to understand why this has happened.

Mr Deputy Speaker, I put it to you that the government could well have set aside tomorrow for a discussion of this matter. I think that it is very important. People in the community were looking forward to the report. To cut off this sittings of the Assembly without providing it with the opportunity to debate the report is reprehensible. It is additionally so, Mr Deputy Speaker ...

Mr Robertson: If you want to bring all the staff back to discuss that, it is fine with me.

Mr SMITH: Okay, if you want to do it, we will be in it.

Mr Robertson: You love wasting money, don't you?

Mr SMITH: If you think it is a waste of money for 25 people in this Assembly to make their comments about a report that both sides agreed should be established and should work, it is on your own head.

Mr Robertson: Talk about it now.

Mr SMITH: If you cannot be organised enough to arrange reasonable time for this Assembly to discuss this important matter and if you cannot look forward enough to realise that we had a spare day and if you cannot give us enough time to organise ourselves, that is too bad.

Mr Robertson: I don't want to organise your side.

Mr Tuxworth: Can we talk about your submission too?

Mr SMITH: Considering that this government, which is responsible for setting the timetable for this Assembly, will not allow us to meet again for 3 months, Mr Deputy Speaker, it is an absolute disgrace. The question remains.

Mr Tuxworth: Let's talk about your submission ...

Mr SMITH: You had the opportunity in the adjournment debate.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! The honourable member will be heard in silence and address his remarks through the Chair.

Mr SMITH: Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker. The question remains, after all these interruptions which make it patently obvious that they do not want to debate this freight inquiry report at this sittings: what is there to hide? I rest my comments on this particular matter by saying that the honourable member for Nightcliff has obviously given a clue about what there is to hide. There is obviously much to hide because, quite clearly, the freight inquiry report has not fulfilled its charter.

Mr Deputy Speaker, I wanted to make one comment in reference to comments made by the honourable members for Flynn and Sadadeen about the changing climate in Alice Springs. I am informed by a reliable source that the climate is about to change back to its normal dry, arid state in the next 2 or 3 years. The reason is that the warm current that has been present over

the last few years in either the Pacific Ocean or the Indian Ocean - I forget which - is about to dissipate. Once that warm current goes, the people down there will very quickly forget what rain looks like.

Mr Deputy Speaker, on a more serious note, I would like to express my concern at some comments made by the honourable Minister for Housing yesterday. In response to comments I made about possible moves in the Commonwealth-States Housing Agreement on the concept of market rents and cost-related rents, she said basically that they are all very much the same thing. Mr Deputy Speaker, I am astonished and dismayed that the honourable Minister for Housing should show such a complete lack of knowledge of her portfolio area by saying that those things are similar or very close. There is a major and distinct difference between market rents and cost-related rents. Of course, the difference is that a cost-related rent is based on the cost of replacing a house. A market-related rent is based on the price that would be obtained if it were sold. We all know, particularly in the Northern Territory, that there is a substantial difference between those 2 valuations and they are reflected in the rents that would be charged.

There have been no figures compiled in the Northern Territory on that, but figures have been compiled in South Australia where, I submit, the differences are not as great between those 2 figures. The difference for the tenant between a market rent and a cost-related rent was the difference between \$53 for the market rent and \$40 for the cost rent. That is a substantial difference. I would hope that the honourable Minister for Housing would make herself more aware of what is going on in her portfolio area so that she can make an intelligent response to matters that are brought to her attention in this Assembly.

Mr B. COLLINS (Opposition Leader): Mr Deputy Speaker, I will not take up the time of the Assembly for very long. I want simply to say that I was out of the Assembly for some time during the adjournment this afternoon and it may well be that other members have raised this matter. I think it was most unfortunate and a matter of regret which does not reflect very well on this Assembly at all that the member for Nightcliff was forced by his own party to discuss the freight cost inquiry in the adjournment this afternoon. I do not think that reflects very well at all on the government.

We are rising a day early, Mr Deputy Speaker. I am as keen as any other member, at the end of a sittings, to get back to the other business of politics in the Northern Territory. However, no one could claim that we sit very often in the Northern Territory. Honourable members of the previous Assembly will recall that I have never complained about a lack of sitting days in the year. The important thing, so far as the proper parliamentary scrutiny of government business is concerned, is the frequency of the sittings, not just the number of days a year that we sit.

Some years ago, I made a practical suggestion in this Assembly which was agreed to by the Chief Minister. I can remember that there was press comment about what a desirable thing it would be and the press welcomed the fact that the government had agreed with the suggestion I had made. It was not to increase the number of sitting days per year but to increase the frequency of sittings by the simple expedient of having, on occasion, weekly sittings instead of 2-weekly sittings of the Assembly in order to suit the particular conditions that apply in the Northern Territory.

Mr Deputy Speaker, of course it can pose particular problems for members of the Assembly. At that time, there was an independent member but now there are none. It poses a particular problem on members of the Assembly who are not government members in seeking to pass their business through the Assembly because, as you know, Sir, we have a general business day every 12 sitting days. We shall not sit again until 5 June. It could well be August before we have a general business day. I have not checked the calendar to confirm that. Then a further 12 sitting days must pass before we have the opportunity to debate legislation we have introduced. Under that system, we may have some prospect of having legislation considered by the Assembly once every 2 years.

Mr Deputy Speaker, I do not think that that is a very desirable situation. However, it is one that probably we will have to live with. I now draw to the attention of the government again a suggestion that I made some years ago, which was agreed to by the honourable Chief Minister, but never implemented: the possibility of splitting the sittings up but not increasing the number of sitting days per year. Mr Deputy Speaker, I acknowledge the fact that, with our small Assembly, we enjoy the opportunity to speak almost as often as we like on most matters that are before the Assembly. Obviously, I do not want to see us sit simply for the sake of talking about nothing. I am not talking about more sitting days. However, it would be to the benefit of the Territory and taxpayers that the Assembly have the opportunity to meet at more frequent intervals.

There have been many occasions when matters of considerable importance have arisen in the Northern Territory that deserved to be debated in the Assembly. At times, 3 months or more elapsed before we had an opportunity to raise them in the Assembly. Mr Deputy Speaker, that problem is exacerbated when the government by its own decision in the conduct of the business in the Assembly implemented what, personally, I consider to be an excellent initiative that was long overdue: the commissioning of the freight inquiry and report. We all know that every Territorian is vitally interested in the freight inquiry. I do not know how much the inquiry cost but I am sure it was not cheap. However, in my view, the money was well spent. Yet, this afternoon, we had a government member seeking to bring it to the attention of the Assembly. It was a tabled report with no accompanying statement. The member was forced to discuss it in the adjournment debate. In fact it should have been brought before the Assembly in the proper manner and debated.

This afternoon, we had a railway debate. I am not denigrating the railway debate or the need for such an important subject to be brought before the Assembly. I said to some people earlier that, in terms of number of members who spoke on it, it almost achieved the status of the uranium debate. A couple of speakers from each side of the Assembly could have said everything that needed to be said. A person would need to be fairly one-eyed not to agree that a reference to Hansard will show that there was repetition from both sides of the Assembly. The same arguments were repeated. I do not mind that; I think it is necessary.

However, I do not think that the way in which the government managed its business at this first sittings of the new Assembly reflects very well on the Assembly. The freight inquiry is of such real interest to Territorians that not to have the opportunity to debate it in the Assembly is a matter of great regret. That is particularly true when we are to rise one day earlier than we need to. Indeed, the Assembly can sit tomorrow as scheduled.



Mr Deputy Speaker, I want to conclude with another matter. I want to record on the last day of this sittings my great regret at the changed approach by the honourable Chief Minister to the business of the Assembly itself. I referred to this in an earlier debate. Mr Deputy Speaker, over the last 6 years, an examination of the records will show that there has been a very high level of cooperation between the government and the opposition in the Legislative Assembly. I have commented before, with some degree of pride, Mr Deputy Speaker, that we stand up very well in comparison with other parliaments around Australia. I have sat through a sittings of the Queensland parliament and I do not particularly want to repeat that experience. I have been in the New South Wales parliament which is considerably worse. Indeed, it is a matter of some regret to me that the federal parliament, particularly over the last 5 or 6 years, seems to be heading very much in the same direction. I think that is a matter for great regret.

It is almost a case of survival in the Northern Territory to have a degree of cooperation that we have simply because of the size of the Assembly. We are a very small parliament indeed. If we are to engage in the non-stop partisan performance which is exhibited in many parliaments around Australia now, it would become almost literally impossible, in my view, to continue to be involved in politics in the Northern Territory. We are just too small for that; there are too few of us. I found it a matter of great regret that the degree of cooperation that has existed for 6 years in the Assembly demonstrably appears to be grinding to a halt.

In view of something the Chief Minister said, I think it is nonsense to say there has been a lack of cooperation between the respective whips which has resulted in the government's behaviour. I am quite interested that the Chief Minister did not think even to defend the very obvious moves that he has made during the sittings to destroy the foundation of cooperation that has existed here. I think it is regrettable that I heard about it across the floor of the Assembly rather than having the matter brought to my attention by the Chief Minister or indeed the Leader of the House early in the sittings. If there had been a lack of cooperation between the whips, I would be just as concerned about that as anyone. But, judging from the words of the Chief Minister, that is the reason for the way in which he personally behaved during the sittings: to deny the opposition the normal courtesies during debate. I am aware that the government has the capacity at any time to move the gag. But, it denied the courtesies that have been accepted on every occasion during the sittings by the government itself concerning the right of response to a motion moved in the Assembly. That is the first time that has happened in the 6 years I have been here. To have removed those sorts of courtesies simply because you do not happen to like what the opposition was saying at that particular moment is not a particularly good start to a 4-year Assembly term.

The honourable Treasurer, of course, has always been the best example in this Assembly of this lack of cooperation. I suppose we all have particular styles which we become identified with very easily. The honourable Treasurer certainly has his and it is something which we have heard him deliver again and again in this Assembly. His attitude is quite simple. Mr Deputy Speaker, the attitude of the Treasurer to the operations of parliament is: 'You wait until you win an election and you get the numbers' - and I think I am quoting him almost exactly - 'and then you will find out the information you want'. He has demonstrated that again during this sittings. In fact, he said almost exactly that in a debate earlier this week. That might be all very well if you completely take the attitude that the Assembly is unimportant and you will run the Territory from the Chan Building across the road. That, of course, is the way the Treasurer would like to do it.

Mr Deputy Speaker, the Northern Territory is in an interesting position. We do not know who the next Chief Minister of the Northern Territory will be simply because of the actions of the Chief Minister himself. I think that it is an intolerable position to be put in just 2 months after an election, particularly given the level of support demonstrated for the CLP. At the beginning of a 4-year term, we do not know. It is not simply a question of not knowing who the next Chief Minister will be; consequential upon that is that we do not know who the next ministers will be. I certainly know the position I would be in if I were in a similar situation. There is no obligation on the next Chief Minister of the Northern Territory to accept the ministry which is currently sitting in this Assembly. Indeed, I am sure that the next Chief Minister of the Northern Territory, whoever that may be, will want to exercise his or her right to make changes to the ministry that he or she may find desirable.

It is not idle speculation. It is a fact that, almost certainly this year, we will have not just a new Chief Minister but also changes in other ministries. Personally, and I have to say this because it might be the final boost he needs to put him in the position, I would be mortified by the current Deputy Chief Minister of the Northern Territory achieving that role...

Mr Tuxworth: What are you picking on Nick for?

Mr B. COLLINS: Mr Deputy Speaker, I am sorry. I mean the honourable Treasurer. Nothing wrong with Nick. Only on one other occasion have I given advice to the government about what I thought it should do with one of its members. It does not seem to have done him any particular harm because he is now on the frontbench. I said, if you remember Nick, that he should have been Speaker.

Mr Deputy Speaker, I personally would be mortified, despite the fact that I know the honourable Treasurer is a hardworking and competent man, by having that extraordinary arrogance matched only by ignorance...

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

Mr B. COLLINS: ...put in at the top of the tree.

Mr ROBERTSON (Leader of the House): I cannot let that go, Mr Deputy Speaker. I think the Leader of the Opposition is either trying to have a lend of us or is deliberately having a lend of himself. That was one of his more scintillating performances since he sent a telegram to a certain member on this side of the Assembly who went to Alaska. It would be one of his brighter contributions, Mr Deputy Speaker.

I would just like to make a very brief comment in relation to the inquiry which the Leader of the Opposition got completely wrong. He was waving this document around - which is not the document that he was referring to of course. We cannot really blame the Leader of the Opposition for getting things confused at this hour of the day because he gets them confused at 10 o'clock in the morning anyway. Nonetheless, the document which was produced by the committee on freight costs was an interim report, not the full report. The honourable Leader of the Opposition, quite obviously, was confused. I recall tabling in this Assembly in about 1976 the interim report of the select committee of inquiry into landlord and tenant relationships which subsequently led to the Tenancy Act. That document was not debated either because it was precisely what was presented to this Assembly in this

case: an interim report. It is the intention of the government that the report would be thoroughly debated at the appropriate time. As the Leader of the Opposition said, it is a very important document. When it is tabled in its final form, it will receive the attention it deserves.

Mr Deputy Speaker, I must point out to the Leader of the Opposition that, had he really wanted to debate the interim report, he had 2 opportunities to do so. One was at the time of the tabling of that report. All he had to do was to so indicate to this side of the Assembly or simply move that that report be noted. His second opportunity was at the time of moving the motion for an extension of the committee's time to inquire into the matters that were referred to it. Thus, 2 separate occasions were available for the Leader of the Opposition or the honourable member for Millner to have the interim report debated. Let us not have these platitudes that have been presented here today that the government has prevented this sort of debate. It has not had that intention.

Indeed, the honourable minister responsible for this particular report asked me this morning whether or not he ought to bring it on of his own volition. I may have ill-advised him. If I did, I accept responsibility for that. He did seek my advice. I said that it was apparent to me that no one seemed particularly interested on the 2 separate days last week when it was presented to this Assembly. I did not think that it was worth moving a specific motion to bring it back on. I assure the Assembly, and the opposition in particular, that the minister responsible for this area did ask me whether or not it ought to be brought on. Given my greater experience over him, I accept responsibility for any error made.

With respect to cooperation between this side of the Assembly and the other side of the Assembly, I do not know whether the Leader of the Opposition had a chance to read what I had said. It will be in the Hansard of last Thursday. I can assure the opposition that, falling particular exigencies that may occur in the government program - after all we are elected to control the government program - I can assure the opposition that it is not my attitude that gags will be applied. I find that an insidious manipulation of what we are paid and elected to do. I made the point very clear on Thursday night that that is my policy as Leader of the House. I will maintain that policy other than on those rare occasions - and I hope they are very rare - where action to terminate debate is necessary having regard to the circumstances. As the Leader of the Opposition quite correctly says, there are not many of us. We do not represent large electorates. We do not sit all that often. Therefore, this place is for the purpose of debate and to represent the views of those people who put us here to represent their views. We ought to do so. By and large that will be my policy. I can assure honourable members that that is also the view of the Chief Minister. It is certainly my view and I can progress that way from here on in.

Mr PALMER (Leanyer): Mr Deputy Speaker, the Leader of the Opposition berated the government because we will not sit again until 5 June. He expounded the theory that we should sit more often. The Leader of the Opposition also said that only once every 12 days is there a general business day. I would remind the Leader of the Opposition that, whether we sit for 3 days every month or 6 days every second month, it will not bring about his twelfth day any more quickly.

He piously attacked the honourable member for Braitling the other day. He told the Assembly that he himself was one member who took cognisance of the need to save money on behalf of the taxpayer. He was the one member in

the Assembly who most recognised the need to save the taxpayers' money. He should also take cognisance of the fact that 10 members represent rural electorates - and I assume they all live in those rural electorates - and it would cost the taxpayers of the Northern Territory much more money to bring them in every month.

The Leader of the Opposition also attacked the Treasurer.

Mr B. Collins: Why don't you resign; we will save \$50 000 straight off.

Mr PALMER: The bullfrog. The Leader of the Opposition attacked the Treasurer. In attacking the Treasurer, he attacked the basic principle of government by Cabinet. I would ask the Leader of the Opposition if he would prefer that the Northern Territory of Australia be governed by public opinion or media manipulation? In fact, would he prefer...

Mr B. Collins: I hope it is by public opinion. This is a democracy.

Mr PALMER: ...that we elect one president and that president employ McNair Anderson to seek the opinions of the electorate and, from those opinions, govern the country? Then we could dispense with this whole Assembly.

Motion agreed to; the Assembly adjourned.

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