

NORTHERN TERRITORY OF AUSTRALIA

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

Third Assembly
Second Session

Parliamentary Record

Tuesday 15 March 1983
Wednesday 16 March 1983
Thursday 17 March 1983
Tuesday 22 March 1983
Wednesday 23 March 1983
Thursday 24 March 1983

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

NORTHERN TERRITORY LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

Third Assembly Second Session

Speaker	John Leslie Stuart MacFarlane
Chief Minister and Minister for Lands, Industrial Development and Tourism	Paul Anthony Edward Everingham
Opposition Leader	Bob Collins
Treasurer and Minister for Education	Marshall Bruce Perron
Minister for Primary Production and Conservation and Minister for Community Development	Ian Lindsay Tuxworth
Attorney-General and Minister for Mines and Energy	James Murray Robertson
Minister for Transport and Works and Minister Assisting the Treasurer	Roger Michael Steele
Minister for Health and Housing and Minister for Youth, Sport and Recreation and Minister Assisting the Chief Minister	Nicholas Dondas

Members of the Legislative Assembly

Alice Springs	Denis Wilfred Collins
Arnhem	Bob Collins
Barkly	Ian Lindsay Tuxworth
Casuarina	Nicholas Dondas
Elsy	John Leslie Stuart MacFarlane
Fannie Bay	Pamela Frances O'Neil
Gillen	James Murray Robertson
Jingili	Paul Anthony Edward Everingham
Ludmilla	Roger Michael Steele
MacDonnell	Neil Randall Bell
Millner	Terence Edward Smith
Nhulunbuy	Daniel Murray Leo
Nightcliff	Alline Dawn Lawrie
Port Darwin	Tom Harris
Sanderson	June D'Rozario
Stuart	Roger William Stanley Vale
Stuart Park	Marshall Bruce Perron
Tiwi	Cecilia Noel Padgham-Purich
Victoria River	John Kevin Doolan

Price, including postage, \$7.50 per calendar year. Subscriptions, made payable to the Collector of Territory Moneys, should be sent to the Editor, Hansard, P.O. Box 3721, Darwin, N.T. 5794.

The Committee of the Whole Assembly

Chairman —Mr Harris
Deputy Chairmen —Mr D. W. Collins
Ms D'Rozario
Mr Vale

The House Committee

Mr Speaker
Mr Dondas
Mr Leo
Mrs O'Neil
Mr Vale

The Standing Orders Committee

Mr Speaker
Mr Bob Collins
Mr Dondas
Ms D'Rozario
Mr Robertson

The Publications Committee

Mr Bell
Mr Doolan
Mrs Padgham-Purich
Mr Steele
Mr Vale

The Privileges Committee

Mr B. Collins
Ms D'Rozario
Mr Harris
Mr Perron
Mr Tuxworth

The Subordinate Legislation and Tabled Papers Committee

Mr D. W. Collins
Mr Harris
Mrs Lawrie
Mrs Padgham-Purich
Mrs O'Neil

Sessional Committee — Environment

Mr B. Collins
Mr D. W. Collins
Mr Harris
Mrs Lawrie
Mrs Padgham-Purich

Sessional Committee — Parliament House

Mr Speaker
Mrs Lawrie
Mrs O'Neil
Mr Perron
Mr Steele

THIRD ASSEMBLY - SECOND SESSION

15 March 1983

On Thursday 25 November 1982, the Assembly adjourned. The Assembly was prorogued by His Honour the Administrator under the provisions of the Northern Territory (Self-Government) Act on 1 December 1982 until 15 March 1983.

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

Mr Speaker MacFarlane took the Chair.

The Clerk read the notice of prorogation.

Mr SPEAKER: Honourable members, I am informed that it is His Honour the Administrator's pleasure to attend in this Chamber forthwith to make a statement concerning his declaration of the causes for calling the Assembly together.

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

ADDRESS BY HIS HONOUR THE ADMINISTRATOR

The ADMINISTRATOR: Mr Speaker, honourable members, I have called you together at this time for the dispatch of business and to outline the balance of my government's legislative program as we move towards the end of the fifth year of a self-governing Northern Territory.

In what is a testing time for the economies of most countries of the world, my government looks with confidence to maintaining the objectives of social, economic and political growth that have characterised the last 4½ years in the Northern Territory. Much has been achieved. There is scope for a great deal more.

The commitment by the Australian government to complete the rail link between Alice Springs and Darwin by 1988 will enable my government to formulate plans allowing Territorians to capitalise to the greatest possible extent on the largest current railway construction project in the world. Not only will the \$550m railway project give additional impetus to economic growth, it will considerably enhance the social amenities of the Territory. That aspect of the Territory - the past lack of services that most Australians take for granted - has been a brake on growth, and has caused disruption to family life and settlement.

In this context, my government will strive to strengthen the Territory's present educational structure by continuing forceful representations to the Australian government for funding to establish a fully-fledged Territory university.

Housing will continue to be a major priority of my government. With planned and committed capital works projects amounting to \$4500m, continued rapid population growth can be anticipated and will have to be catered for. As well as expending considerable funds for both home construction and home loans to assist all Territorians, my government wishes in particular to assist women to obtain the goal of home ownership more readily. It is recognised that, whilst women are, in theory, on the same footing as men in relation to both Housing

Commission home purchases and loans, there are practical problems which restrict the capacity of women to own their homes in their own right. My government is addressing these problems and hopes to announce a new housing policy of greater advantage to women before the end of this year. My government acts in the hope that its lead will encourage banks and other financial institutions to follow the same course.

Recognising that persons desirous of owning their own homes must, in most cases, make considerable financial effort and sacrifice, it is nonetheless clear that financial institutions need to examine rigorously the methods by which they help Territorians, and all Australians, to meet that objective. In order to expedite the construction process, it is expected that a new building bill will be laid before parliament at this sittings. The bill will introduce a more integrated approach to government approvals required to maintain construction standards. It will enable the formulation of a code which will take particular recognition of the needs of the disabled.

Land ownership is still a cornerstone of our society, and my government will do all in its power to ensure ready availability of land at realistic prices. Planning is in hand for the expansion of serviced land at Katherine and provision of associated facilities in the likely event of the re-establishment of the RAAF base there. Recognising the needs of local government and the shortcomings of the present legislation, a new valuation of land bill will be formulated and brought before this Assembly in the course of the session.

At the same time, my government is desirous of modernising and improving the law relating to the registration, training and practice of surveying, and a bill for that purpose should be available shortly for consideration by this Assembly.

The Local Government Act itself is under complete review. This process will take quite some time but it is hoped to put forward a bill within 12 months.

While supporting the principle of land ownership for Aboriginal people, my government is concerned to minimise the effects of large-scale alienation of public land on the whole community. A resolution of the problems which the implementation of Aboriginal land rights has brought about and which my government, uniquely among Australian governments, has experienced will be pursued. My government sees the successful future of the Territory as being reliant upon the maintenance of good relations between all sectors of the community, especially between black and white Territorians. This requires considerable understanding and compromise which necessarily is a two-way traffic. As part of that effort, wherever appropriate, my government will continue to give legislative recognition to Aboriginal customary law.

Education is vital to the future of all Territorians, but especially to Aboriginals. My government is determined to ensure that young Aboriginals can achieve a primary and secondary education, enabling them to aspire to tertiary qualifications at university, CAE and technical level. Aboriginals must be able to meet and match other Australians educationally; only in that way will they be able to overcome their present status as a largely disadvantaged people.

In the wider educational sphere, my government will be tabling a major document on education policy for debate in due course.

Delivery of health services of a high standard to all Territorians remains a key priority for my government. The emphasis will continue to be on prevention rather than cure, and programs will continue to upgrade environmental living

standards in remote communities. Bearing in mind figures that show the high incidence of alcohol-related illness, every effort will be made to educate Territorians to the dangers and problems associated with the abuse of alcohol and other drugs. Community health centres will be established in new areas as the Territory's population grows and as existing urban areas expand.

With the youngest and most active population in the country, facilities for sport command much attention from my government. Territorians are beginning to make their mark on the national sporting scene. To ensure that this trend continues, sport and recreational venues, such as the Marrara indoor stadium, will continue to receive support. Whilst firmly believing in the principle of self help, my government will continue the travel subsidy program that has given so many of our sportsmen and women the opportunity to face national and international competition and thus to make their mark on the sporting scene. To develop sporting skills at home, there will be increased assistance for coaching. My government will foster the establishment of youth centres and similar facilities where they are needed and is moving to implement the recommendations of the Manzie Committee Report. It is also expected that the new juvenile justice and child welfare legislation will be introduced during this sittings.

Community welfare and development programs will be carried forward, but my government will do all it can to minimise the need for such programs by encouraging the growth of the Territory economy. Prosperity is the best antidote to the need for welfare assistance and my government aims to maximise employment prospects for Territorians.

More and more older people are remaining in the Territory and the need for supportive services for them grows. Positive efforts, such as the pensioner air fare scheme, have been made to encourage this trend, and my government will continue to enhance its program for the elderly.

New prospects are opening up in agriculture and horticulture. Whilst the cattle industry remains the mainstay of the Territory rural scene, the future is looking bright in other rural industries, despite setbacks in crop production this year due to the unseasonably dry weather. The relevant government agencies will continue their supportive role, particularly during periods when factors beyond anyone's control have cut into production figures. Legislation will be introduced for a Northern Territory grain marketing board which will involve growers in the process of marketing their crops.

In the fishing industry, for which high hopes have been held, the future remains less clear. Considerable re-evaluation will have to take place within the prawning sector of the industry. Also, the worth to the Territory of current overseas fishing arrangements made by the Australian government is questionable. Nevertheless, efforts by my government to secure better management of fisheries resources and an enhanced contribution by fishing to Territory growth will continue.

The provision of reliable and economic modes of transport is of unceasing concern to my government. Every industry - mining, tourism, manufacturing, pastoral and agricultural - requires reliable and cost-competitive transport because of the long distances involved. The Alice Springs to Darwin rail link will revolutionise transport in the Territory and, in the light of that development, my government will examine the necessity for a reorientation of its roads policy. Towards this end, my government has committed itself, if the approval of Aboriginal land owners can be obtained, to construct a sealed road to Nhulunbuy. This should lead to considerably improved services for isolated communities along the way.

Notwithstanding its new wharf, container crane and roll-on roll-off facilities, the Port of Darwin will be expanded further to enable it to meet present demands and gear it to the needs of the future, in particular looking towards completion of the railway and the promotion of the land-bridge concept. It is envisaged that my government will submit to the Australian government, during the course of this year, a proposal for a free trade zone associated with the Port of Darwin. This will be of considerable importance to the port and assist in developing the stronger links which this Territory seeks with the countries to our north.

With the completion during the course of this year of the sealed Petermann Highway from Alice Springs to the new Yulara tourist resort at Ayers Rock, one of the obstacles to further expansion of the tourist industry in the Territory will have been removed. However, other obstacles still remain. High domestic air fares and poor international air services very seriously restrict the ability of the tourist industry to grow beyond a certain level. With the commencement of, and projection for, construction of a large number of tourist hotels in both the Centre and the Top End, these difficulties will have to be overcome. Accordingly, the effort to convince the airlines that it is in their best interests to assist in ways to reduce air fare costs for people wishing to visit the Territory will continue.

My government will be treating expansion of the job intensive tourist industry as a major priority for the balance of its term. Tourism can become the backbone of centres such as Tennant Creek, Katherine and Gove. Studies are now being undertaken, hopefully with the cooperation of relevant Australian agencies, to determine the nature and level of visitor facilities required in the Alligator Rivers area.

My government judges that the tourist industry has the greatest potential of any for Aboriginal training and employment. Attempts in the past to encourage Aboriginal participation in the industry have been piecemeal and have produced little result. It is now proposed to appoint an experienced officer to the Tourist Commission for an initial period of 2 years with the specific task of explaining the nature and potential of the industry to Aborigines. Where involvement is requested, that officer will provide and coordinate support.

My government believes that Aboriginal people aspire to genuine self-reliance in the longer term. This cannot be achieved in isolation from the wider community, and it is the government's duty to assist where required to help to realise those aspirations.

The mining industry, a most important one for the Territory, is passing through a time of mixed fortunes. Whilst the weak demand for metals by the world economy continues, the industry cannot hope to do much better than hold its own. Whilst recognising this cyclical downturn, my government will do all it can to promote increased exploration activity to bring to light the untapped resources of the Territory.

On the energy side, construction of the Palm Valley to Alice Springs gas pipeline has commenced. Negotiations for the national marketing of central Australian gas are proceeding steadily. My government expects to introduce new legislation relating to exploration for, and mining of, hydrocarbons in the course of this session.

There is scope for greater employment for Aborigines in the mining industry. This will require training and persistence on the part of both Aborigines and mining companies.

My government has established the first conservation commission in Australia. The commission is the envy of other states and provides a range of services few can equal. A program of Aboriginal ranger recruitment and training is to be embarked upon shortly, which will complement the numerous positions in the commission already occupied by Aboriginal people. Urban beautification will continue to consume a considerable percentage of the commission's resources for the foreseeable future. The program of developing plans of management for Territory parks will also proceed as a priority area within the commission. During the course of this year, it is hoped that the first marine national park in the Territory, and possibly Australia, will be established at Cobourg Peninsula.

The Police Force will continue to modernise and, where necessary, expand to meet changing Territory conditions. This year too should see the passage of the Criminal Code, following exhaustive consultation with interested parties. Arrangements providing for common administration of police, fire and emergency services have been in existence for some months and appear to be working satisfactorily - so much so that it is expected that new legislation covering fire protection will be introduced during this sittings.

The cost of freight is a matter of concern to all Territorians, situated as we are at the opposite end of the continent to most areas of industrial production. There are numerous complaints of the unfair nature of charges for freight. My government will move later in this session to establish an inquiry into freight costs and the way they are passed on to consumers. Terms of reference will be settled in the near future and a board of 3 will be set up in due course to conduct the inquiry. This will, it is hoped, either prove or dispel once and for all the large body of Territory folklore which exists concerning freight charges.

In broad terms, my government will use the balance of its term to consolidate achievements to date, and act to promote expansion of and investment in the community to which it is responsible.

Policies will be designed to maintain a record of achievement that has, for the first time, alerted both other Australian and overseas interests to the potential of our part of this great island continent.

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

His Honour the Administrator withdrew.

Mr Speaker resumed the Chair.

PRISONS (ARBITRAL TRIBUNAL) AMENDMENT BILL
(Serial 288)

Bill presented 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 day.

Motion agreed to.

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

ADDRESS IN REPLY

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

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

Mr Speaker, I move that the address be agreed to and 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.

Debate adjourned.

MOTION

Restoration of Bills to Notice Paper

Mr ROBERTSON (Leader of the House)(by leave): Mr Speaker, I move that the proceedings on the present Poisons and Dangerous Drugs Bill (Serial 216), the Water Supply and Sewerage Bill (Serial 257), the Plumbers and Drainers Licensing Bill (Serial 258), the Soccer Football Pools Amendment Bill (Serial 266), the Real Property Amendment Bill (Serial 267), the Pounds Amendment Bill (Serial 272), the Dangerous Goods Amendment Bill (Serial 276), the Prisoners (Interstate Transfer) Bill (Serial 277), the Justices Amendment Bill (Serial 278), the Territory Parks and Wildlife Conservation Amendment Bill (Serial 279), the Local Government Amendment Bill (Serial 280), the Police Administration Amendment Bill (Serial 281), the Superannuation Bill (Serial 246) and the Northern Territory Development Land Corporation (Vesting of Land) Bill (Serial 282) which were interrupted by the prorogation of the last session be resumed at the stage which they had then reached and that the resumption of the debate on the question that the bills be now read a second time be made an order of the day for the next sitting day.

Motion agreed to.

MOTION

Restoration of Bills to Notice Paper

Mr LEO (Nhulunbuy)(by leave): Mr Speaker, I move that the proceedings on the Intoxicated Persons Bill (Serial 268), the Police Administration Amendment Bill (Serial 269), the Summary Offences Amendment Bill (Serial 270) and the Territory Development Amendment Bill (Serial 274) which were interrupted by the prorogation of the last session be resumed at the stage which they had then reached and that the resumption of the debate on the question that the bills be now read a second time be made an order of the day for the next general business day.

Motion agreed to.

ADJOURNMENT

Mr ROBERTSON (Attorney-General): Mr Speaker, I move that the Assembly do now adjourn.

Motion agreed to; the Assembly adjourned.

Mr Speaker MacFarlane took the Chair at 10 am.

PETITION

Lot 1937

Mr PERRON (Stuart Park): Mr Speaker, I present a petition from 119 citizens of the Northern Territory relating to the proposed rezoning of Lot 1937. The petition bears the Clerk's certificate that it conforms with the requirements of Standing Orders. I move that the petition be received and read.

Motion agreed to; petition received and read:

To the honourable the Speaker and members of the Legislative Assembly of the Northern Territory of Australia, the humble petition of the undersigned citizens of the Northern Territory respectfully sheweth that the undersigned are aware of the proposal to rezone Lot 1937 from R2 residential to B3 business and strongly object to the proposal. Your petitioners therefore humbly pray that you will cause a public inquiry to be held to ascertain the effects of this plan on the current residents of Stuart Park and your petitioners, as in duty bound, will ever pray.

TABLED PAPER

Executor Trustee and Agency Company of South Australia Limited -
Annual Report

Mr EVERINGHAM (Chief Minister): Mr Speaker, I present the annual report for 1982 of the Executor Trustee and Agency Company of South Australia Limited.

COMMONWEALTH DAY MESSAGE

Mr SPEAKER: Honourable members, I read for you the Commonwealth Day message from the Chairman of the Executive Committee of the CPA:

Commonwealth Day is an appropriate occasion to focus our attention on the values which characterise this unique family. Built on the foundations of friendship and equality, one thousand million people, representative of the world's races, cultures and religions, are members of a unique and voluntary community. This community of 47 nations, large and small, developed and developing, is served by a vital network of concern and cooperation. These are expressed in many areas: education, health, development, law and parliamentary institutions.

It is in its pursuit of the positive ideals of parliamentary democracy that our association will continue to make its particular contribution to the Commonwealth itself, the parliaments and legislatures which are its constituent members and the citizens we represent and serve.

During the past few years the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association Working Capital Fund has allowed the association to expand and diversify its activities, but always in furtherance of the association's aims and objectives: to foster understanding and cooperation between members of Commonwealth parliaments, to support the rule of law and individual rights

and freedoms, and to promote the study of and respect for parliamentary institutions.

As we examine the future growth of our association to see how it may best achieve its objectives in a changing world, let us reaffirm those values intrinsic to our association: friendship, equality, parliamentary democracy. These values have characterised our association in the past and are the best guarantee of its future growth and strength.

*Gerald Ottenheimer
Chairman of the Executive Committee.*

Honourable members I wish to inform you that His Honour the Administrator, acting with the advice of the Executive Council, in pursuance of section 18A(4) (a) of the Public Service Act, on the recommendation of the Speaker, appointed Mr Raymond Chin as Clerk of the Legislative Assembly on 16 December 1982.

Mr Chin, who is well known to you, has served this department for over 14 years. His career in the public service exceeds 30 years. On your behalf, I extend congratulations to Mr Chin on his appointment and very best wishes to him for the future.

Members: Hear, hear!

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Alice Springs to Darwin Railway

Mr EVERINGHAM (Chief Minister) (by leave): Mr Speaker, I would like to formally advise members of the decision of the Commonwealth government to complete the Alice Springs to Darwin rail link by 1988. The announcement was made by the then Prime Minister on 14 January 1983 and, although there has been a change of government since that time, from the statements that have been made by spokesmen for the new government, the Territory anticipates that the commitment of the previous government will be honoured.

The announcement made by Mr Fraser has already cost me one bottle of champagne and I am quite willing to provide another to Mr Hawke for the same assurances - although, noting Mr Hawke's abstemious habits, it may not be put to quite the same good use. He might in fact give it back to me so that I can drink it.

The intention to construct the line is a decision which goes beyond the bounds of political interests. It is a decision not only of primary importance to Territorians but one which warrants the support of all Australians. The railway will complement the network of national railway systems and form part of the basic infrastructure of this nation. Apart from any social and economic considerations, the decision will be seen historically as honouring a promise the Commonwealth made at federation and later endorsed in legislation under the Northern Territory Acceptance Act of 1911.

The promise of the rail link was made as much to South Australians as it was to Territorians. The benefit of the railway to our southern neighbours is recognised today by the South Australian government, and both the present Premier, Mr Bannon, and the former Premier, Mr Tonkin, gave their support to my government's campaign for construction to be completed by 1988. An agreement is currently being drafted between the Territory and the Commonwealth to give a formal basis for the construction.

The linking of the completion of the railway with Australia's bi-centennial year, with the full endorsement of the Bi-centennial Authority, is an achievement in itself and highlights my earlier point: this is an event which will make all Australians feel a sense of national pride. It is a time, therefore, to look forward rather than lament the fact that we have waited for 70 years to complete this vital transportation link. The commitment to the construction of the railway, leaving aside defence and economic justifications, has been most aptly described by the former Chairman of Australian National Railways, Mr Keith Smith, as a national act of faith. It is, however, worth while reflecting that the completion of the railway line in 1988 will have historical significance in that the first train from Darwin to Adelaide River ran 100 years ago in 1888.

Mr Speaker, when the line is completed, Territorians will have a fast, efficient, national surface transport link which will form part of the Australian standard gauge system. The implications for the Territory are enormous if one observes the trends which have occurred worldwide when rail systems have been introduced. It is an established fact that development follows railways not vice versa. A look at trends in both freight and passenger traffic which have occurred in just over 2 years of operation of the new standard gauge service from Tarcoola to Alice Springs shows that the assumption is valid. Since the opening of the line, freight traffic has more than doubled and passenger numbers have similarly increased. New opportunities for trade and passenger traffic are being opened up with New South Wales and Victoria, and the pilot Sydney-Adelaide-Alice Springs passenger service has proven an unqualified success.

South Australia, which was estimated to have lost some \$70m worth of trade into the Territory because of unreliable surface transport links, is fast winning that back. It is a matter of record that over 20 South Australian exhibitors were present at the trade fair in Alice Springs to mark the inaugural Tarcoola to Alice Springs standard gauge rail service in 1980. At the June expo this year, representatives of South Australian trade and industry will similarly participate in a Territory-based exhibition to promote South Australian goods. It is an initiative which is to be welcomed and commended. Trade is a two-way affair and, with improved transport links to the south, Territory companies will obviously look to penetrating the larger southern markets.

With the completion of the railway and the upgrading of the port, the Territory will have reliable transportation links with South-east Asia. I predict that the day is not too far away when we will have regular shipping to our port, transporting Territory and Australian goods overseas and acting as a receiving point for national imports. The use of an uncluttered port such as Darwin may provide an economic alternative to the congested ports of the south and this will be backed up with a reliable rail service to all southern capitals. As long as ships have to wait in Sydney for 2 weeks and then sail away without discharging their cargoes, the future of the port of Darwin to me looks bright. In other words, the land-bridge concept will become a reality. The markets to the north will be opened up to us and the concept of establishing a free trade zone, which this government intends to pursue actively in the months ahead, will become more than just a hope.

In the course of negotiating with the Commonwealth on the need for the railway, convincing arguments emerged as to the importance of the rail link from the point of view of defence of the nation. While I am pleased to say that a threat to our country is not perceived by the defence experts at this time, it is reassuring to know that we will have a rail link that is capable of assisting in the moving of our defence forces northwards should this be necessary. There is an interesting parallel in the fact that the Stuart Highway was first sealed

for defence purposes during the Second World War. However, examination of defence logistics has now proved that roads alone cannot support highly mobile defence logistical needs and railways are an essential. The rail link will complement in a very real way the development which is likely to occur at Tindal in the next few years and will become a distinct asset in the shipment of fuel and other supplies to that important base.

Mr Speaker, my colleagues in the ministry will be addressing the Assembly on the impact of the railway on their portfolio responsibilities. I will now turn to the effects of the railway on my areas of responsibility.

Many of the benefits to industry of the railway, during both the construction and operational stages, will be obvious to honourable members. The railway construction will directly employ around 300 people. These jobs will be in earthworks, bridge and culvert construction, sleeper and track laying and so on. Additionally, the manufacture of the enormous quantities of concrete, steel and rock metal needed in the track laying will create at least a further 1000 jobs. These figures are conservative. If the laying of the track commences from both Alice Springs and the Top End, construction employment will be accelerated and increased.

To maximise the Territory benefit from this construction activity, the Territory Development Corporation will be holding a series of discussions and seminars to help identify products and services able to be provided by local companies. If the decision is made to commence building the railway from both the north as well as the south - and I am pressing for this approach - major opportunities will be offered to a number of existing and potential industries. Cement could be supplied from numerous plants. Metal casting could be done at a ferrous foundry likely to be established in Darwin. Other general opportunities involved are immense.

After construction, the obvious need for maintenance will create a further opportunity for local industry. Besides its impact as a thoroughfare for trade between southern and northern markets, it will also enable local goods to penetrate new markets. Territory-made clay bricks and fibre cartons could be distributed to other Australian markets. Improvements to the port of Darwin to the tune of \$25m will complement the rail link. Increased usage of the port will result in an increased need for mercantile services provided by customs and shipping agents, freight and insurance brokers, and other related professions. These services will provide the necessary infrastructure web for the development of Darwin as a major commercial import and export centre. All industries would benefit from the railway. Minerals, beef, grain, horticultural products, manufactured goods etc would all be freighted by cost-effective rail transport. Coal, fuel and minerals could be carried in the near future.

Transport costs have played an increasingly significant part in the tourist industry recently. Australia has seen tourism suffer because of high fuel prices. Trends in the industry are towards cheaper, more efficient, methods of travel. The family car, coaches and railways are all increasing their importance as a means of tourist travel. In this context, the Alice to Darwin railway will significantly bolster the number of tourists coming to the Territory. The passenger use of the Alice to Adelaide rail service has far outstripped expectations.

I spoke earlier of the Sydney to Alice Springs rail trips. Eight services are planned for 1983, each with a capacity of 320 passengers, a total of over 2000 tourists. Bookings indicate that these visits will become more regular in future and this will be assured when Darwin becomes the rail terminal.

Think of the horizons that the railway will open up for the budget conscious traveller. Let's face it, who is not budget conscious these days? On one holiday, people would be able to witness the panorama of Ayers Rock and the red Centre and then visit the contrasting Top End and the waterways of Kakadu. Packages will be put together offering the tourist alternatives of rail, road and air travel. The railway will place the Territory in a comparable position with the states in offering a range of transport modes to the tourist. Indeed, the rail link will be a much more exotic proposition than rail journeys in other parts of Australia.

Whilst the construction of the line and ancillary facilities is a Commonwealth responsibility, it will also impact on the operations of the Department of Lands. Its involvement includes assistance in identification of route, acquisition of the reserve, survey of the reserve, planning and development of the rail service, industrial land and support infrastructure. I am pleased to advise that the acquisition program is well under way.

Honourable members will be pleased to hear of the consideration being given to Aboriginal interests. Changes to the alignment, particularly between Alice Springs and Devil's Marbles, have been agreed upon. The degree of cooperation extended from all sides in identifying sacred sites and extending clearance from the alignment of the railway is commendable. This work will be completed before the end of the year. Of course, like all Territorians, Aborigines stand to benefit substantially from the railway. Employment opportunities along the route of the railway, during both construction and maintenance phases, will assist people in the more remote locations. The social and economic impact upon such communities will open up opportunities that have been available to date. I will not attempt to say what they will be because that will be up to the communities to decide. I only say that they will be there.

Mr Speaker, the task of constructing the railway is an enormous one by any yardstick. It involves laying 1500 km of track, 156 000 t of standard gauge rail and 2.4 million sleepers. The commitment to the railway is the result of the untiring efforts - I should really say 'tiring' efforts - of my government, Territory public servants, Australian National Railways staff, the South Australian government and our Territory federal representatives.

The political badgering is not over yet. I am to bring to the full attention of the Commonwealth government the benefits of starting the construction of the rail from both ends of the line. An early commencement of a Darwin to Katherine rail line would have considerable benefit for the construction of the Tindal air base. Supplies and equipment could be brought in through the port of Darwin and rail freighted to Tindal. I understand that defence officials would support the logic and cost savings behind this approach.

Mr Speaker, I call upon all Territorians to give continued support to see this project through to completion by 1988. I also call on honourable members from both sides of this Assembly and our Canberra counterparts to continue their bipartisan endeavours to have the railway completed on time.

Mr Speaker, just before I move that the statement be noted, I would particularly like to record the efforts of 3 officials: Mr Ray McHenry, now the Chairman of the Northern Territory Development Corporation and then co-ordinator-General, supported me tremendously in this campaign; Mr Allan Morris, the present Deputy Director-General and then Director of the Office of Policy and Planning, extended the same sort of selfless support; and Mr Bill Fu in the Department of Transport and Works. I would also like to thank the people who

work for those men, the Government Printer and those people in the public service who had good ideas such as the bits of railway line that we made into keepsakes that are sought after nationally. I would like to extend my personal thanks to all those people because, without their efforts, it just would not have happened.

Mr Speaker, I move that the Assembly take note of the statement.

Mr B. COLLINS (Opposition Leader): Mr Speaker, I will speak briefly in reply to the statement in order to get it off the Notice Paper. I would hate to force another prorogation of the Assembly. I will speak briefly to the statement because there is very little in it with which the opposition has any disagreement. The main reason why I wish to speak is because of a great deal of misinformed speculation that occurred in the press yesterday in respect to the rail link and some statements that I obtained from both the federal Minister for Transport and the Treasurer in respect of those statements.

Mr Speaker, there is one paragraph in the Chief Minister's statement that I would like to comment on. It points up something that was brought home to me yesterday: people talking about the irresponsibility of politicians, particularly during election campaign periods, in unreasonably and unrealistically lifting the people's expectations. There is a classic paragraph in this statement that demonstrates how this can be done when people get carried away with political euphoria. I would just like to bring the Chief Minister down to earth a little bit on the question of the railway and perhaps ask a few questions that he might like to answer for me at some later stage. I will read the paragraph: 'Besides its impact as a thoroughfare for trade between southern and northern markets, it will also enable local goods to penetrate new markets'. There is no argument with that. He went on to give 2 examples of this new horizon that will be opened for the Territory: 'Territory-made clay bricks and fibre cartons could be distributed to Australian and other markets'. We know why the Chief Minister put that in there: we have a fibre carton factory in Darwin and a clay brick kiln has recently opened for business. Everyone wishes those industries very well.

I ask the Chief Minister a couple of questions. We both know why those industries are here in Darwin, and why they have a good market even though the cost of their products is certainly higher than the equivalent cost of those products in southern states. We know we pay a little bit more for bricks and cartons in Darwin than people pay down south. However, that is offset by the freight because there is a high freight component on those goods. We know that, by producing them locally, we can offset that cost and sell those products at a competitive price here in the Northern Territory. However, does the Chief Minister seriously expect people to believe that we will shift bricks 2500 miles down south to market them in high growth building areas that are supplied with southern bricks? Perhaps he could give me some information as to the economics of that nonsense. Does he seriously expect anyone to believe that a fibre carton factory - and I might say it is welcomed by the Labor Party - which was established to offset the freight costs of importing those great bales of fibre cartons into the Northern Territory will be able to ship its fibre cartons on the railway 2500 miles south or somewhere else?

Mr Speaker, if one is to make a case for a railway or anything else, at least make it a believable one and not some cloud-cuckoo, fantasy-land project such as we have in the statement. We are going to ship Territory bricks and fibre cartons on the railway to 'Australian and other markets'. Is the rail link going to go to Indonesia? Is it in fact going to go north of Darwin? Is this a new scheme the Chief Minister is currently proposing? I would ask the Chief

Minister what other markets south of Darwin ...

Mr Everingham: New Zealand.

Mr B. COLLINS: The Northern Territory railway is going to tranship Darwin bricks to New Zealand. I think that the Chief Minister has just confirmed the nonsense that I am pointing out.

This country is in the throes of an economic disaster. The Chief Minister referred to buying a bottle of champagne for Bob Hawke. Having recently been to Parliament House in Canberra, I can advise the Chief Minister that not only is Bob Hawke not interested in drinking the Chief Minister's champagne, no one else is either. I arrived at Parliament House on Friday some hours after a new crop of ministers had just been sworn in. I did not expect to see ministers tripping along the corridors wearing party hats but I would have expected to see quiet celebrations occurring around the place but I can tell the Chief Minister that there were none. The ministers that I saw that afternoon were in their offices up to their ears in work wondering how in the hell they were to implement the needs of their portfolio areas with a \$10 000m deficit to look after. There is not a lot of champagne around Parliament House at the moment, particularly not in Treasury. Considering that considerable restraint will be applied by Treasury, the Chief Minister does his case no good at all when he seeks to support the promotion of Northern Territory interests by arrant nonsense.

Mr Speaker, the Chief Minister said, by way of interjection and by way of answer to my question, that the other market he is talking about for our clay bricks and fibre cartons via the railway is New Zealand. Seriously, does the Chief Minister expect to advance the Northern Territory's interests by that kind of rubbish? I can assure the Chief Minister that, if he is to make a case for the railway, the new Minister for Transport, Peter Morris, who is a very down-to-earth fellow, will not be impressed with that. In promoting the Territory's interests, it is foolish to peddle nonsense. It is foolish to raise unrealistically the expectations of Territorians and indeed Australians.

Mr Speaker, I want to put on record something about the story which appeared yesterday on the front page of 'The Australian' purporting to come from somebody from the Treasurer's office saying that the railway had been targeted for extinction - not cutback or restraint - in the programs of the new Labor government. Considering what both the federal Minister for Transport and the Treasurer told me yesterday, those statements were pure press speculation and had no basis in fact. A financial review committee is being set up by the Treasurer to overview the question of the deficit, and I will be saying more about that later in this sittings. I will not dwell on it now. The composition of that committee has not been established at this time. It is hoped that it will be established towards the end of this week. But it is not even clear yet who will be sitting on it, let alone targeting areas for specific restraint.

What I have been told by the Minister for Primary Industry, John Kerin, in respect of the BTB program for the Territory, by Morris in respect of the transport needs of the Territory and by all the ministers I spoke to in respect of commitments to the Territory is that all of their programs will be subjected to the same degree of review that every other minister's portfolio area receives. No statement was made by any spokesperson from Keating's office or Morris's office or indeed by the ministers themselves. I simply want to correct the record on that.

In conclusion, I say to the Chief Minister: if he wishes to make a case to advance the Territory's interests in getting our railway, at least make it a believable one.

Mr ROBERTSON (Attorney-General): Mr Speaker, I find it a shame that one has to rise in a debate before one is ready. I had hoped to address the Assembly in some detail in relation to how members opposite perhaps saw the railway affecting portfolio areas. Nonetheless, having listened to what the Leader of the Opposition has just said, I feel obliged to say a few words now.

Mr Speaker, the Leader of the Opposition seems to have learnt nothing from the foolishness of his predecessor. He cannot control himself at all. He has the remarkable propensity that all members of the ALP have, particularly the leaders, for knocking everything and everyone no matter how stupid the tactic used to do the knocking. The Leader of the Opposition belittled himself in a puerile effort to belittle illustrative examples put forward by the Chief Minister in relation to new and expanding Territory industries which have resulted from initiatives of this government.

The honourable member finds that this propensity for knocking is so overpowering that he must denigrate even the establishment of those 2 industries. In his hell-bent desire to knock, he has totally ignored the existence of Katherine, Tennant Creek and Alice Springs in respect of those same 2 products.

Mr B. Collins: Read the ...

Mr ROBERTSON: Mr Speaker, I listened to the honourable gentleman in silence. He not only does not extend the Territory's new industries the courtesy of reasonable understanding and consideration but he does not extend members of this Assembly that sort of courtesy either. I would suggest that the honourable member be quiet, listen and he might learn, although I very much doubt it.

Mr B. Collins: So do I.

Mr ROBERTSON: Mr Speaker, the very products that the honourable member referred to are at this very moment being imported into Alice Springs in huge quantities by rail from South Australia. The cost to do the same thing with Territory bricks from Darwin to Alice Springs will be equal. Why not promote the idea of a rail link? I note that he is merely going to make submissions to Canberra. I dare say they will be about whether or not the rail will go ahead.

Those same bricks come from South Australia and from Melbourne. Packaging material comes from Perth. How much more cheaply can Alice Springs receive these goods via this rail? The Chief Minister, notwithstanding the constant knocking from the Leader of the Opposition, worked with the previous federal government to achieve such objectives. It is not only relevant to say that it will assist Darwin's secondary industry by supplying these goods to Alice Springs, which currently come from as far away as Perth and Sydney, but the honourable member clearly forgets about Katherine and Tennant Creek as well. They are even closer to Darwin manufacturers and even further from manufacturers down south.

I find it extremely disappointing that the ALP still has this total mind-block in terms of anything positive for the Northern Territory. The 2 items selected for ridicule by the Leader of the Opposition were purely illustrative examples. All of the other matters relating to the positive points put forward by the Chief Minister were ignored, as indeed every single thing of a positive nature in the Northern Territory is ignored by the Labor opposition.

Mr SMITH (Millner): Mr Speaker, it is quite obvious that the Attorney-General and the Chief Minister did not get together before this debate to sort out what the paragraph means. It is quite clear to an unbiased observer that the Chief Minister's comments are directed to the wider Australian market

and not the Territory market. In that sense, the Chief Minister has been somewhat careless and certainly has not benefited the case for a railway by that paragraph.

Mr Speaker, we have acknowledged over a long period the efforts of the government in reaching this stage in the achievement of the railway line in the Northern Territory but I think the point that needs to be made at this time is that the government has become hung up on the fact that it has come very close to achieving the railway line. It has not put its efforts into making sure that the railway line works for the benefit of all Territorians. This is a point that I made in the Assembly in the November sittings when I called for a transport task force to make sure that the most effective utilisation of the railway is achieved. Judging by the address delivered by the Administrator yesterday, it is a point that the government hinted that it would accept. He recognised that there were a number of problems associated with maximising the input of the railway line and said that the government would address those problems. I think that the government is very close to taking up my idea of a transport task force - not that I expect that I or the member for Sanderson who floated the idea a number of years ago will receive any credit for it. It is obvious that that has to be done and it is equally clear that, while it is not being done, we will get stupid comments like that made by the Chief Minister and referred to earlier.

Now that the railway line is almost here, I think that it is time that everyone contributes to the effort to make sure that we get maximum utilisation of it. We should all start thinking about how that should be done so that we can present a united and better case to the federal government, and whoever else is involved, to make sure that it is completed and runs effectively.

Debate adjourned.

LEAVE OF ABSENCE

Mr Bell

Mr LEO (Nhulunbuy): Mr Speaker, I move that leave of absence be granted to the member for MacDonnell for the duration of this sittings. By way of explanation, the member for MacDonnell is at present representing the Northern Territory Legislative Assembly at a CPA seminar.

Motion agreed to.

ADDRESS IN REPLY

Continued from 15 March 1983.

Mr EVERINGHAM (Chief Minister): Mr Speaker, His Honour the Administrator, in concluding his address to honourable members yesterday, referred to the government using the balance of its term to consolidate achievements to date and to promote expansion of investment in the community. I am happy to accept that charge, Mr Speaker. It seems to me that it reflects a proper balance between the various objectives which we have for the Territory.

It is appropriate to talk about consolidation because much has been achieved in recent years. We are fortunate that the Territory is growing. Each year our population is increasing at close to 5% which is well in excess of the Australian average. This population growth is supporting general growth in the economy with new projects, new industries and new opportunities. Our approach has been to foster the broadest possible improvement for the Territory community through a process of maximum economic growth. I accept that this course should be continued.

We have our problems in the Territory: unemployment levels are certainly higher than I wish to see and the cost of living and the cost of doing business in the Territory continue to rise. We have come through the last year in much better shape than the rest of the country. We have seen more than 1000 new jobs created in the last 12 months. That is a rate of job creation which is far in excess of anything that is happening in other parts of Australia. Private sector investment continues to be attracted to the Territory and we have taken measures to attack unemployment directly with special programs for school leavers and an unemployment program under the general wage-pause arrangements. Continued growth gives the greatest possible security to the people of the Territory for their future.

We have had some very good news for the future of the Territory over recent months. The news that the Alice Springs to Darwin railway is to be constructed and completed by 1988 has certainly lifted my spirits and, I think, the spirits of all Territorians. We have had confirmation also that the redevelopment of Darwin airport is to go ahead. A coordinating group has been established to ensure that the project is implemented smoothly and efficiently. Similarly, the Northern Territory will benefit from the basing of a squadron of FA18 aircraft here, probably at Tindal. Planning is well under way for the necessary consultation and coordination between the Commonwealth, the Territory government and, in anticipation that the base will be at Tindal, the Katherine Town Council.

It is important for the Territory that we make the most of projects such as these. There are Territory firms which are capable of contributing to all stages from early design consultancy through to construction. We have taken steps to ensure that the Commonwealth will use local Territory businesses, wherever possible, in the implementation of these projects. In fact, I am making and have made submissions to the Commonwealth government that it re-establish the regional office of the Department of Housing and Construction in Darwin. Mr Speaker, you will recall that, close to self-government, the Commonwealth Department of Housing and Construction, as it then was, removed its regional office from Darwin to Adelaide. By far the greatest amount of work the Commonwealth has been and will be doing in the South Australia-Northern Territory region will take place in the Territory. I venture to say that the move was far from being a political one but was rather more bureaucratically inspired. Certainly, I shall continue to press that the regional office be re-established in Darwin, that senior executives be based here and that architectural, engineering and other specialist staff also be based here.

His Honour the Administrator also spoke of an expansion in investment. There is certainly a basis for optimism in this regard. It is my view that further investment in the Territory economy will be achieved and our growth impetus will be maintained. A specific program is now in place to promote the Northern Territory actively throughout Australia and overseas, particularly in South-east Asia and Japan. Honourable members will have seen recent advertisements in major national journals. This campaign is to be supported by an extensive program of ministerial visits to Sydney and Melbourne in the first instance and, in due course, to other places where investment interest in the Territory is growing. Later in the year, our investment focus will also extend to South-east Asia where there continue to be substantial opportunities for the Territory. Australian and Asian investors and Territory businessmen are becoming increasingly aware of the significance of the Territory's strategic location. With the inevitable growth of financial and trade interests between Australia and South-east Asia, there are opportunities for further business growth in the Territory. We have reached the point at which we can begin a

major marketing of that potential.

The Northern Territory Development Corporation will have a critical role to play in this process. Later in this sittings, I will be making a comprehensive speech on new directions and procedures for the Northern Territory Development Corporation. These activities are designed to maintain investment interest in the Territory and to tap new areas of interest. Our success in generating economic growth so far is the result of considerable effort and enthusiasm. We are not about to move to a strategy of complacency now.

Tourism is one area where this outward-looking approach by the Territory is likely to have a significant pay off. His Honour the Administrator mentioned a number of programs which will boost the potential of the tourist industry. Tourism is a major Territory industry and it offers great potential as a cornerstone for further growth. Over the next few years, we will be working to develop new accommodation facilities and other tourism services and to attract more and more tourists to the Territory every year to take advantage of these facilities and services. We are embarking on a strategy which is designed to boost both the numbers of tourists and the facilities to handle them.

We have already made some progress. Yulara is well advanced and, indeed, structural steel for Yulara is being freighted by rail from as far away as Perth. The Mindil Beach casino is to open next month. Other tourist and hotel projects, including the Darwin Performing Arts Centre, are beginning to take shape and we have begun to investigate options for substantially improving tourist access in the Alligator Rivers region. We have had discussions with experts in designing tourist facilities to blend in with environmental surrounds. We recognise the need for consultation with the Commonwealth and other interested organisations, and those committed to developing the tourist potential of the Kakadu region.

These developments are attracting new investment into the Territory and creating jobs in the building and construction and associated industries during the construction phase. Of course, the impact goes well beyond that. Tourism is employment intensive, and its indirect benefits are felt across a range of service and retail activities. As the number of tourists to the Territory continues to grow, there will be a continuing strong basis for further employment growth. It is one way, Mr Speaker, of getting population as it were when you do not have population.

Particular initiatives are to be taken to encourage greater participation of Aboriginals in the tourist industry. His Honour the Administrator foreshadowed the appointment of an officer to the Northern Territory Tourist Commission specifically for this purpose. We still have some way to go in achieving the generally-agreed objectives of self-management and self-reliance for Aboriginal people. A number of Aboriginal communities are now looking for ways to develop an economic base for their people. Some have made very encouraging progress. In other communities, opportunities are limited. The tourist industry can have an important role to play. Not all communities will want to exploit the opportunities to participate in tourism and not all communities will have much opportunity. For some, the opportunities and the interests are there and it is appropriate that we should now step up our efforts to develop the means.

Mr Speaker, as the Territory grows, so the opportunity to build a better social and community environment also grows. During the course of this sittings, my colleagues will be announcing details of further progress in areas such as education, health, sport and recreation. Some of these initiatives have been addressed by His Honour. However, because it is of such vital importance, I want

to say something in particular about housing.

His Honour referred to the government's continuing efforts to improve opportunities for the people of the Territory to own their own homes. Over the last few years, the government has accepted that adequate housing for Territorians is its most vital objective. The efforts we have made over this period are becoming more and more apparent. Progress is being made and the housing situation is no longer the black cloud over the Territory that it was a few years ago. I accept, however, that the task is by no means finished and so I am pleased to give an assurance that housing remains a top priority for the government. A very substantial part of the government's resources have been devoted to housing in recent years. I understand that up to one-fifth of the total budget has been expended on housing, land and ancillary matters.

Money spent on housing is, of course, money which has not been available to spend on other things. Because we have given such a high priority to housing, it has restricted our ability to do some of the things we would have liked to do in other areas. For instance, we might have been able to build Yulara for cash instead of having to borrow the money. It has been our judgment that housing needs must be met first because housing is essential to any hopes for the growth of a stable population and a community which is committed to the Territory. For this reason, the emphasis on housing will continue. While there is a need, that need will receive priority. The government will continue to build flats and houses, to offer generous assistance to help people to buy their own homes and to help those in need to meet the cost of accommodation.

No one could question that there is now a wider range of services available in local Territory communities than ever before. In the major centres, in particular, these services more than match those available in centres of comparable size elsewhere. Mr Speaker, can you remember back to self-government when there were not even bus stops around Darwin? It is growth that has brought this about, Sir. A buoyant economy, rapid population growth, a pipeline of new projects and continued investment in the Territory have established the circumstances in which it has become possible to provide these services. It will be our very proud record of growth which more than anything else will establish our firm case for a university and will enhance our ability to establish new community health centres and our capacity to tackle improved environmental living standards in remote communities.

We have been working to a pattern for the growth of the Territory and the enhanced well-being of all Territorians. The foundations of infrastructure are well on the way to being laid. The transport network is being expanded. Land and power are available for residential, industrial and commercial needs. New housing developments are helping us meet the backlog of housing needs and loan schemes are helping Territorians in growing numbers to become home owners. Community infrastructure has been established and secure financial arrangements have been negotiated with the Commonwealth.

Now the policies to ensure that these facilities are used as a basis for growth are being developed. Investment incentives have been put in place. Assistance is available to appropriate industries. We have a system of Territory taxes and charges which offers advantages to businessmen if they locate in the Territory and which are, in most cases, the lowest in Australia and we are working on new proposals to complement the infrastructure developments. The free trade zone proposal is a good example of this.

The point of this approach is to sustain the circumstances in which there will be improved well-being for the whole community through ever-increasing

employment opportunities, through a diversified and hence a more secure economy and by meeting the needs and aspirations of individuals and families who are the key to future prosperity.

Mr B. COLLINS (Opposition Leader): Mr Speaker, in speaking to the address in reply, I intend to canvass as the major aspect of my address what I think is a matter of major concern to the future of the Northern Territory. Before I do that, I wish to give some attention to the reasons for the prorogation of the Assembly. In fact, I responded publicly yesterday to a statement made by the Attorney-General as to the reasons for the prorogation and indeed the address that consequently followed it. I think my response needs to be recorded in the Assembly record.

Mr Speaker, I am always willing - I think I have demonstrated that over the last year - to give the maximum degree of bipartisan support for any government actions if the opposition is dealt with honestly. But I do tend to get my back up when people are dealt with dishonestly and have their intelligence and their basic understanding of the procedures of the very parliament we work in insulted to the extent that they were by the Attorney-General.

In his public statement, Mr Speaker, as I am sure you will recall - and I have no doubt it was reported accurately on the ABC news - the Attorney-General said that the reason for the prorogation was an administrative one in order to clear the Notice Paper. As we all know, that is something that could be done at any ordinary sittings of the Legislative Assembly by way of a motion in about 10 seconds. If so inclined - and we have done it that way before - we can call on the business of the day and, by agreement that nobody would rise in their place, the matter simply drops off the Notice Paper. We do not need to prorogue the Assembly and then have a ceremonial reopening in order to accomplish that end. In fact, it should not even have been advanced as a reason for the prorogation. A comment made to me by someone outside the Assembly yesterday after our 30 minutes in here sums it up best: 'What was all that about?' I am not sure.

As far as new initiatives announced by the government are concerned - I stress 'new' initiatives - let us examine the statement. Let us forget about things like the railway. As everyone in this Assembly knows, and the Chief Minister demonstrated amply this morning, all government ministers and, certainly, the Chief Minister himself, can, by way of major ministerial statements, use the time at their own discretion because they are in charge of the business of this Assembly. At any time they so wish, they can raise a matter of importance in the Assembly by way of a ministerial statement. The Chief Minister did so this morning. Having listened to his speech, which was simply a reiteration of everything His Honour the Administrator said yesterday, to do it again by way of a ministerial statement makes one wonder why it was necessary to cause His Honour to make the speech which the Chief Minister basically simply repeated this morning.

Mr Speaker, did we really prorogue the Assembly in order to announce that we are to get a comprehensive statement on education - something which the previous Minister for Education promised this Assembly 18 months ago? We have waited 18 months for that statement. I am delighted that, finally, under the new minister, we are to receive this statement. One could hardly describe that as a new initiative. Did we really prorogue the Assembly to be told that? Did we really prorogue the Assembly to be told that the Northern Territory Tourist Commission was to get an additional member of staff for 2 years? That was one of the new initiatives announced by the government.

I would mention one of the more significant new initiatives by the

government, one that this opposition supports wholeheartedly because it is our policy, and that is the initiative to set up the freight industry. The press of Darwin will recall that that welcome initiative was, in fact, announced at a press conference in my office by the now federal Minister for Transport, Peter Morris, when he visited Darwin during the election campaign. Peter Morris impresses me as one minister who is well and truly on top of his job. In a very comprehensive statement to the press, he talked about the crippling problems posed by freight, not just in the Northern Territory because we are not Robinson Crusoe in this respect as the government knows, but in the isolated areas of Western Australia, the top end of Australia generally, in the isolated areas in the north of South Australia, north-western New South Wales, the west of Queensland and the many other places in Australia that suffer the same problems that we do in respect of what people - and I think with some reason - think are inflated freight costs. Peter Morris announced a major inquiry into the reasons behind that. As he explained, it is not just the blokes who drive the trucks that cause the problems with freight. It is necessary to go right back to the source because many of the additional charges are involved in handling as well as freight. Certainly, I hope that the inquiry goes into it in that degree of depth. I am sure it will. It is not simply putting the stuff on the road or the railway track that adds to the cost. All the steps taken in between - right back to the factory where the product was made originally - have to be looked at.

I have no doubt that Peter Morris will welcome the initiative just now announced by the Northern Territory government. I suppose one thing Peter Morris will want to know is how he can coordinate or even draw from the work done by the Northern Territory inquiry into freight costs with respect to the national inquiry into freight costs which he was proposing in Darwin when he visited here during the election campaign. I welcome that new initiative, but really, that disposes of that very short statement itself.

It is appropriate in the debate on the address in reply to address what is obviously - to the Territory more so than anywhere else in Australia - a most pressing problem facing the government for the rest of its term. Of all communities in Australia, this community is far and away the most mendicant in Australia. It is an unpalatable fact; it is a fact of life that I, as a Territorian, find distasteful. I do not like to acknowledge it. I do not like acknowledging it because we have only 130 000 people here and no major internal domestic economy. We are a mendicant society.

During the recent appeal to raise money for the bushfire victims of Victoria and South Australia, the honourable Treasurer appeared on television to ask Territorians to donate and they did so in an extremely generous fashion. He intimated that we should help these people out because we should acknowledge that we have a \$1000m budget most of which comes from them. I take no exception to what the Treasurer said because it is true. We have a \$1000m budget. The majority of that is public money which comes, as it must, from the pockets of other Australians, most of whom live in the southern states of New South Wales, Victoria and South Australia and south Western Australia and the southern part of Queensland. No community in this country depends more on public funding than we do.

Mr Everingham: No, that is not correct.

Mr B. COLLINS: Of our entire budget, 75.6% is a direct input on a per capita basis.

In response to the interjection of the Chief Minister, so far as total funding is concerned, of course, that is not correct but let us work it out on a

per capita basis and let us have a look at it then.

Mr Everingham: No, no.

Mr B. COLLINS: Mr Speaker, perhaps I could ask the non-interjectors opposite once again not to interject.

We are reliant to a considerable degree on that funding. Therefore, any serious impairment of the ability of the Australian government to raise funds obviously will have unwelcome repercussions on the Northern Territory. During this sittings, it is appropriate that considerable attention be given to the most significant event that has taken place in Australia since honourable members of this Assembly last met. The address in reply debate provides the most appropriate opportunity to do that. I am referring, of course, to the federal election and the resultant victory of the Australian Labor Party.

I know that I speak for the majority of Territorians - at least the polls bear me out - when I say that Australia desperately needed a change of government because the economy was, is and will remain for some considerable time in a desperate state because of the ineptitude, almost beyond belief, of the previous government. Australia has been railroaded into a position of economic paralysis by the former government. To quote the Australian Financial Review headline of last Wednesday, what the incoming Labor government has inherited is 'an economic mess'. Without exception, economists of repute are stunned by the magnitude of our economic problems which have been revealed for the first time. The deficit has blown out to horrendous proportions, \$9600m in 1983-84, and unemployment is rapidly approaching, if it has not reached it already, a level of national crisis.

Mr Speaker, a former Liberal Prime Minister and Treasurer, Sir William McMahon, gave an insight into the immensity of our economic turmoil in a recent television interview. He said the economy under Mr Fraser's government was out of control. He said that the news of the deficit had left him speechless. I understand, on very authoritative sources, that it took 4 cups of coffee to revive him. I can appreciate Sir William McMahon's reaction. Anybody with the slightest understanding of economics must be horrified by the projected deficit. In simple terms, it means that Australia has been living beyond its means on a massive scale. It also means, however, that the Labor government will have to rethink its policies and adjust its programs in the immediate term to reduce spending and bring balance back into the economy. With all the good intentions in the world, there is no doubt that the policy of restraint which the government needs to take will result in some of the Labor Party election promises being revised.

Mr Everingham: Hmm.

Mr B. COLLINS: In response to that interjection from the Chief Minister, if he cannot have the honesty to acknowledge that, then he is trying to have somebody on.

In the circumstances, it is not only reasonable but essential that the timing of the projects promised by the Labor Party be rescheduled on the basis of this country's capacity to pay. We do not hold some special role in Australian society. We will have to cop that restraint along with the rest of the Australian community. My only objection to it will be if we are asked to bear a greater burden of that restraint than anyone else in the community. I will object if that happens and I am sure the Chief Minister will also.

I remind all honourable members that Australia is facing an incredible

economic crisis - a crisis which was of the making of the former government. The electorate may have brought an abrupt ending to its tenure on March 5 but that act alone, swift and decisive as it was, does not immediately resolve the problems of the economy. I suspect that, in history books, 'Fraserism' will take on a whole new meaning once the economic reality of our present predicament begins to sink in.

Mr Speaker, there is another aspect of this matter that deserves attention. In essence, it is a matter of honesty and timing or, more correctly, dishonesty and electoral expediency. It is patently obvious that, in their desperation to stay in office, the former holders of those offices not only turned a conveniently blind eye to the true state of the deficit but deliberately misled the Australian people by understating that deficit by thousands of millions of dollars. With employment currently at 750 000 and racing towards 1 million, home mortgage payments getting dearer and prices leaping unchecked, Mr Fraser and Mr Howard no doubt believed they had enough problems on their plate without adding fuel to the electoral fire.

To put these events in perspective, it must be remembered that the original deficit forecast for 1982-83 was \$1700m. This figure was later revised by the government to \$4000m after it acknowledged that it had submitted some pretty rubbery figures in that previous deficit and as unemployment and other negative economic forces reached new peaks. Two days before it was to assume office, the Hawke government was confronted for the first time, along with the rest of Australia, with the reality of Australia's economic problems. Not only had the deficit for 1982-83 jumped from \$4000m to \$4300m but the 1983-84 projections indicated a \$9600m deficit.

Let us take a closer look at what was indeed a monstrous deception by the former government of Australia - a criminal deception. The key characters are the former Prime Minister, Mr Fraser, his Treasurer, Mr Howard, and the former Industrial Relations Minister, now the Leader of the Opposition, Mr Peacock. Between them, they tried to cover up the evidence of their own economic blundering and, at the same time, instil fear into the community by misrepresenting Labor's economic policies. Information which has come to light since the election clearly indicates that Mr Fraser and Mr Howard not only knew that the impending deficit would reach horrific proportions but they acted to keep that information away from the Australian public. The reason was a vain attempt at political self-preservation. Prime Minister Fraser had discussed the projected \$9600m deficit with Mr Howard at least 4 days before the election. In his inimitable fashion, Mr Fraser ruled that the information was not to be made public while Mr Howard proposed at least a middle line statement hinting that the deficit could blow out even further than the talked about \$6000m, not exactly untruth but, by the same token, hardly the truth either.

Apparently, Mr Fraser was not content even with this. He was compelled to deliberately inflate official Treasury estimates of the cost of the Labor economic program. I am sure that we will all remember the former Prime Minister talking about the \$4000m that Treasury said Labor's proposals would cost. It is now public information that the official Treasury estimate of the cost of those programs was in fact half that amount, \$2000m, a fraction more than the \$1800m costed by the Labor Party itself. He obviously believed that the \$2000m did not provide him with enough of the electoral ammunition he was looking for to attack the Labor Party. He solved the problem by simply doubling the figure that he was given by Treasury. He ignored Treasury advice and went bold faced to the electorate claiming that the program would cost \$4000m.

It has also been revealed that Mr Howard gave instructions to Treasury -

and this almost beggars the imagination - fully 2 months before the election that no forward deficit estimates were to be prepared by Treasury. Obviously, he feared that the damning evidence of economic mismanagement would be leaked to the media and provide a major embarrassment to the government. Not only did they say that they did not know, they did not want to know. The financial irresponsibility of a government which actually directs the Treasury not to prepare forward estimates of a deficit takes the breath away.

Mr Howard had made frequent reference during the campaign to a deficit in 1983-84 of about \$6000m. He has now admitted, after the event, that that was his own figure and not that of the Treasury. The former Treasurer publicly admitted that he had not made up the figure but that he had used the figure in a press conference as the order of magnitude that could be expected in the coming financial year and that represented his own personal estimate.

The former Treasurer also conceded that he had been told by the Secretary of the Treasury and 2 other senior officials 6 days before the election that there had been a review of the state of the finances of the country and this had revealed that the starting point for any estimate of the deficit for the next financial year would be at least \$9000m. The day before the election, Mr Howard had been informed by the head of his department that the exact estimate had in fact been increased to \$9600m. Despite the prior knowledge that was available to the former government on the Monday before the election, Mr Fraser and his ministers continued to provide patently false information to the Australian community. It is also important to remember that the \$9600m blow out of budget deficit confirmed by the Treasury secretary did not include departmental bids. The thrust of the Liberal campaign against the then opposition has now been shown to be totally hypocritical.

What of the performance of the new Leader of the Opposition? On 17 February, he predicted loudly and publicly that Australia would be forced to devalue the dollar in the order of at least 15%. The result was that Australia's reserves fell by more than \$2700m. That was economic responsibility? Now that he is trying to re-establish his position, Mr Peacock has since conceded publicly that that statement was a foolish remark for a minister with a senior economic portfolio to make and that it would have had an adverse effect on the confidence of the market - which it did, fairly dramatically.

Meanwhile, Mr Howard was vainly trying to defend his comments on devaluation which also assisted in promoting the dramatic outflow of capital from Australia. After the election, he described those comments as being 'flashy oratory' and said that it was a little naive to believe that people react to some of the rhetoric of an election campaign. Like the former Prime Minister, he knows how false that statement is. They were the people who, during the election campaign, told people that they would be better off taking their money out of the bank rather than face the prospect of a Labor government coming into power. After the event, they said: 'People do not pay attention to that'. We had the Secretary of the Commonwealth Bank publicly stating that the bank received panic phone calls from all over the country asking the bank if it was true that they would have to take their money out because the government could steal it if they did not. Both Fraser and Howard know that, whether made in an election campaign or not, when such statements come from the Prime Minister and the Treasurer of the country, they would have that effect. After the event, when they are trying to get back into what is a dishevelled and tattered opposition with no reputation, it is no good saying that it was all 'flashy oratory' and that no one would have believed it anyway.

In other words, what the former Treasurer is saying is that we have to take

his remarks with a grain of salt but not blame him if there is a massive outflow of capital from the country. I hope that he is prepared to be consistent and that, in opposition, he is prepared to maintain that we cannot really believe anything he says and that we had better take it all with a grain of salt as 'flashy oratory'. We will see. How naive is the former Treasurer in believing the community would not react to his remarks which one would think were prefaced with a degree of careful consideration. He knew that they would be.

Mr Speaker, the exposure of the magnitude of the economic problem of this country is also in stark contrast to the departing statement of Mr Fraser. The greatest untruth of all, Mr Speaker! It is worth reminding this Assembly what exactly Mr Fraser said: 'Whatever our problems, Australia has been handed to Mr Hawke's new government in a condition that is equal to or better than any other western country'. As we all know from even a very casual look around at our major trading partners, that was the greatest lie of all. My reaction to that is, 'Heaven help those countries if it were true'. We know that it was not.

Against this background of a burgeoning deficit and a campaign of untruths and half-truths, the new Prime Minister, Mr Hawke, chose to devalue the dollar by 10%, a course of action which the Chief Minister and I acknowledged was the only choice he had. It was a decision widely welcomed by most sectors of the economy and Mr Hawke was praised for the decisiveness of his actions.

He faced 3 options. First of all, he could have undertaken massive borrowing overseas on the government account to prop up the exchange rate. No one wanted to do that with the deficit the way it currently is. Secondly, the Prime Minister could have maintained the approach of the former Liberal government; that is, the use of the crawling peg approach to make small daily adjustments in the exchange rate. This approach would have seen the continued outflow of money until the market was satisfied the exchange rate reflected the true value of the Australian dollar. The third option was the one taken by Mr Hawke, and has subsequently been seen to stop dramatically the outflow of capital from the country. I think there have been so far about half a dozen upward revaluations of the dollar since it was devalued.

Mr Fraser began a spending program that has now been exposed as generating a deficit in the order of \$10 000m, a situation that he described as being a result of the Hawke-led Labor government gaining power. He said that a deficit of those proportions - I have the good fortune to have most of those public statements on tape - under a Hawke-led government would spell 'the end of the modern world as we know it today'. I am quoting the former Prime Minister talking about his own deficit.

Mr Howard misled the Australian people in going against the official Treasury estimates about the deficit that were made available to him some 6 days before the election took place, while Mr Peacock promoted an exchange rate crisis for the country. What the people of Australia, and that includes the Northern Territory, have just done is to expel from office a government that had totally lost touch with the reality of the situation, a government that was deceiving the Australian community and one that was in fact deceiving itself about the realities that had to be faced. If anyone wants any confirmation of that, I would refer them to the new Leader of the Opposition's press conference, which he held immediately after achieving the office of Leader of the Opposition, and at which he discussed the deficit. What an unbelievable performance that was for someone who now is trying to tell everybody he would be an alternative Prime Minister. I am sure everyone who saw that press conference will remember his reaction: 'What was the figure we talked about in Cabinet? What was the figure? Was it \$6000m or what was it?' Mr Peacock was talking to someone off camera. That is

the kind of economic expertise that was running the country.

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

Mrs O'NEIL (Fannie Bay): Mr Speaker, I move that an extension of time be granted to the honourable Leader of the Opposition.

Motion agreed to.

Mr B. COLLINS: Mr Speaker, it is now patently obvious to everybody why Mr Fraser was moved to call an early election. The facts were that he was compelled to go to the people early because of what he knew was the rapid and dramatic decline under his management of the Australian economy.

Before concluding, I would like to briefly pass some general remarks about the election specifically and the election campaigns that were run by the 2 major parties, both here and nationally. As honourable members know, I have been involved in a number of Territory elections and was a close observer of a few federal ones. The distinguishing feature of those past elections and the recent federal election was the campaign tactics of the Liberal Party which can best be described as slanderous and distasteful. The campaign without doubt reflected a new low in the tactics of the Liberal Party and, to a lesser degree, the complementary campaign run by the CLP in the Northern Territory. Who would have thought 2 or 3 years ago that you would have heard a comment such as we heard this morning on ABC radio? The Liberal Party of Australia was described on AM this morning as a spent force. Who would have thought it? It was deservedly so.

Mr Speaker, never before can I recall a government stooping to such a low level in its quest to stay in power. In the space of 3 weeks, the Australian Labor Party was accused of being in league with communists, plotting to steal the savings of little old ladies, opening the door to control of the government by the unions, proposing economic policies which would spell the end of Australia's place in the modern world and planning to govern under terms of a socialist manifesto. I remember during the election campaign the Prime Minister, who was presiding over an economy with 700 000 people out of work, making a statement in Brisbane that a vote for the Labor Party was a vote for unemployment. That really took my breath away.

The CLP campaign in the Territory was a little less extreme, I must say. But it too campaigned on a platform of fear instead of addressing many of the real issues facing the Australian economy. Notable low points in its campaign were accusations that the Labor Party would deny the Northern Territory an acceptable level of Commonwealth financial support. Sports personalities were giving voters in the Northern Territory a serve about how Mr Fraser was personally responsible for Australia having one of the best junior tennis training programs in the country. That is with three-quarters of a million people out of work.

The Liberals missed the point. They did not gauge the mood of the electorate; they did not gauge the concerns of the electorate. The same can be said for the Territory. The scare tactic of claiming the sky would fall in under a Labor government was an insult to the intelligence of the electorate. One of the high points of the election campaign, which again I have on tape, was the Chief Minister's high noon walk down the Mall. We will all remember that.

Mr Everingham: It must have been a good commercial.

Mr B. COLLINS: Well it wasn't very good because the Labor Party got 55% of the vote in his electorate.

Mr Everingham: Not for the first time either, but I'm still here.

Mr SPEAKER: Order, order! Honourable members will be silent.

Mr B. COLLINS: Over the last few days, I have been asked by a number of people: 'Goodness me, why is the Chief Minister being so conciliatory? Why is he being so careful with the new government? Why isn't he going to Singapore and telling them not to deal with the rest of Australia like Joh Bjelke-Petersen whose methods he has copied in the past? Why is he doing all those things? Why isn't he attacking Bob Hawke?'

Mr Everingham: He's a nice guy.

Mr B. COLLINS: It's a little more pragmatic than that. My reply was that, if 55% of my electorate had just voted for someone else, I would tread fairly carefully myself.

Mr Speaker, the Labor Party during that campaign, whatever the deficiencies of the campaign, at least promoted policies that the voters could think about. They may have objected to them, they may have picked holes in them, but at least we did talk about policies.

In conclusion, this country is facing a \$10 000m deficit. We currently have rapidly escalating unemployment. We now know that the estimate prepared by the Parliamentary Research Service - which all members who have ever used it will acknowledge is an excellent service - that there will be 1 million unemployed by the end of this year if things are not reversed, is likely to be true. We have in fact an economy totally out of control. An economic summit conference has been called. The Chief Minister has been invited to attend this conference and he has accepted. We have a prices and income policy with the unions and employers.

The interesting thing that has happened over the last week in respect of both those things is that, prior to the final truth being told by the Labor Party about the extent of the mess that this country is in, both the economic summit conference and the prices and incomes policy were - and I am not going to argue with it - viewed with a considerable degree of scepticism by many sectors of the business community of Australia. Have a look at the press. Most of the business community viewed those proposals with some degree of cynicism and scepticism. But now that the true state of this country's economy has been revealed, that has been totally reversed. Everyone that I have spoken to in the business community, and there have been many, knows that at the moment this country's economy is skating on very thin ice. They know that, if the deficit which is hovering close to \$10 000m goes beyond that, we are likely to get into a situation - as Bob Hawke said quite rightly - where, if we had waited any longer for an election, the economy of this country would have been damaged beyond repair.

The attitude towards that economic summit conference, even on the part of the Queensland Premier, who originally said that he would refuse to attend it, has completely turned around. Everyone in this country, now that people know what the situation is - including Territorians - is hoping very much that that summit conference produces results. I am hoping for it; everybody is hoping for it.

There are even people in the business community who are now hoping that the prices and incomes policy, which they criticised so trenchantly before the election, will at least accomplish some of the goals that it is setting out to achieve - to attain some degree of reconciliation and some degree of moderation. That is not just in respect of one sector of the community, as was the case with the wages freeze. That was bound to fail. They are hoping for some degree of moderation across the whole of the Australian economy.

Mr Speaker, we are very largely dependent on Canberra. We are dependent in the Northern Territory on the whole Australian community. Along with every other Australian, I hope that the new government - and I say this irrespective of whatever political complexion it is - is able to achieve some success in that area for the sake of us all.

Mr TUXWORTH (Primary Production): Mr Speaker, in rising to make my remarks this afternoon, I would like to set aside my prepared notes for a moment because I have become a little concerned and alarmed at the tenor and the approach of the Leader of the Opposition to debates this morning. This concern is worthy of comment.

Mr Speaker, I was one of those who campaigned against the Labor Party during the election campaign because I believe - and I guess it is about to be rammed home in one form or another - that its attitude towards money is little short of being reckless. In fact, it has a philosophy of printing money when the time comes to solve its electoral problems. That is an historic thing, Mr Speaker. I did not raise it as a big issue during the campaign because history will repeat itself. However, certain things happened continuously through the campaign. During the campaign, the now Prime Minister was illustrated by cartoonists throughout the country, from time to time, as a man capable of walking on water. On one particular occasion, I believe in Perth, he said to a rally: 'Do not listen to the conservatives. Throw away your calculators, and come follow me'. Mr Speaker, I have always doubted the ability of the Prime Minister to walk on water whatever the press may think.

I accept the fact that the people have spoken and that Mr Hawke is now Prime Minister. I have a personal commitment to work with anybody who will further the lot of Territorians and help us improve the development of the Northern Territory in any way. I consider that any man should be supported if he believes in and is committed to: the creation of 500 000 jobs, reduction of taxes, increases to pensions, the return of some petrol excise money to the consumer, provision of zone allowances for the benefit of all Territorians and the meeting of commitments made by the Liberal government to Territorians. I refer to electoral promises made to complete the railway between Alice Springs and Darwin, establish a RAAF base in Katherine, build airport facilities in Darwin and continue with the bi-centennial road program to the great advantage of all Territorians. As a member for an electorate in this Territory Assembly and as a minister, I assure the Labor Party people both here and in Canberra that I will be happy to work constructively and positively to that end.

Mr Speaker, there is a trend which is starting to firm up and which concerns me. The trend is that, since just before and immediately after the election, the headlines have started to emphasise the fact that Labor may not be able to meet its promises and that things may not be as rosy as the country would like to think. I accept that there will be argument and debate on who is to blame and what the damage is and so on. That will go on for months. Nevertheless, there is a message for the Territory that is being broken to us very gently by the Leader of the Opposition in the way that he is handling things at the moment. The Leader of the Opposition told us today that he went to

Canberra and came away in quite a sombre mood and, in fact, things are not as good as we would like. I would just like to propose a scenario for you, Mr Speaker. The Leader of the Opposition, who was used quite constantly during the campaign as a message boy for the now federal government - the federal opposition at that time - has been given another message for the people of the Northern Territory. The message is a pretty simple one: all election bets and promises are off.

Mr B. Collins: Are you scaremongering again?

Mr TUXWORTH: Just be patient; don't rock the boat; follow the party line; be the good, faithful citizen and supporter; if you get a chance, blame Malcolm Fraser for all the mayhem we have around us; if there is an opening, drag in Peacock and Howard, tip a bit on them, make them look muddy too; and, every chance you get, soften up the electorate for the bad news because there is plenty of it. I would suggest that, up to date, the Leader of the Opposition has been carrying out his orders pretty well so far as the electorate is concerned. I would suggest too that it is his role to take this aggro and do this job because of the political sensitivity of the new member who is there with a very fine margin, and that is accepted. Mr Speaker, I make the point that our new federal member will not be representing the Northern Territory in Canberra; he will be representing Canberra in the Northern Territory, and that is a totally different concept.

The propositions that the Northern Territory has been looking forward to are based on electoral and political commitment and promise. The Leader of the Opposition said this morning that he becomes upset when people are not honest with him. I know exactly how he feels. That has never been one of his heavy points. It is probably not unreasonable that he and his party should level with us. If there is bad medicine about and, as the honourable Leader of the Opposition says, we take it with everyone else, let us get it out into the open and accept whatever it is and not have this softening-up process which will now go on for months.

If you want to be politically pragmatic about it, the financial position the Labor Party finds itself in in Canberra is pretty difficult. With one seat in the federal House and 60 000 votes and the amount of capital commitment in the Northern Territory, we are a very cheap, political, sacrificial lamb. I put it to you, Mr Speaker, that we are about to reap the benefits of our new government.

This morning, in a very cursory manner, the Leader of the Opposition dismissed the Chief Minister's paper on the railway line. He picked on 2 points that he thought had holes in them and said that, if we want this railway, we must have better arguments than that. I am one of those people who are of the view that we have the railway. We are not arguing the case anymore. We are arguing the when, not the if.

Mr Speaker, the honourable member then reflected on the financial situation of the Commonwealth and I accept that it is not rosy by any means. He did his best to drag Malcolm Fraser, Andrew Peacock and John Howard into disrepute and, at the same time, set the way for softening up the electorate for the broken promises to be announced. I have a philosophic problem with the Leader of the Opposition's path at the moment because, in my view, we are Territorians first and members of political parties second. Our objectives for the Territory transcend our politics. We should not follow and kowtow to our federal machines just because they happen to be in government in another place. It is in the interests of all of us to put forward the Territory view and try to maintain the

greatest pressure possible on the federal government to honour its promises. Every time the honourable member says softly, softly about how the railway might have to be looked at in terms of the national financial situation, it makes it easier for the federal government to walk away from that promise.

Mr Speaker, I will move on to the points that I wish to raise. The first one that was touched on in the Administrator's address was the government's commitment to have an investigation into the freight practices in the Northern Territory. I accept that there are good reasons why products in the Northern Territory should cost more than they would in other parts of Australia given that we import most of them 2000 miles across the country. But, a stage has been reached in the development of the Territory where sometimes costs are passed on in a rather heavy-handed manner and that extra cost is classified as freight. What the consumer is expected to pay is not discussed or negotiated. I have received many representations from dissatisfied consumers. Most of the complaints relate to people who trade nationally in Australia and not just Darwin firms. I am concerned also that many of the businessmen complain that they feel they are at the mercy of some freight-forwarding organisations and do not get a fair deal. When they take their complaints about the levels of charges and the handling of goods back to the originators of the charges, they are given short shrift too.

Mr Speaker, I am not prepared to point the finger of blame at any one person or group in the Northern Territory so far as the high level of freight is concerned but I believe that it is time for us to have a look at how freight practices are conducted in the Northern Territory and give all citizens - the consumers, the businessmen and freight-forwarding agencies etc - an opportunity to lay on the table the problems they have. If necessary, when the report is brought down, perhaps members could look at some constructive way of dealing with the problems. I would like to emphasise at this stage that it should not be a witch hunt. I believe there are great problems for people in business in the Territory who are using freight services. I believe that there are some unscrupulous businesses and some customers who have unreasonable expectations. Setting all that aside, I think it is about time we had a look at the problem.

The Leader of the Opposition mentioned this morning that he felt the BTB program is one that would be back into the pot for consideration by the new federal government. This is a matter of some concern. I have already contacted the federal minister on this matter.

The Northern Territory's program for eradicating brucellosis and tuberculosis this year is about to get under way. If, as the Leader of the Opposition says, the funding for this program will be considered in the light of budgetary problems, that is a matter of great concern. My proposition simply is that this is a disease control program and should be above all politics. It is not a CLP or ALP prerogative. It is an Australian problem and it affects all Australians, both consumers and those in the beef industry. The great difficulty is that, if we do not make progress in the Northern Territory with the eradication of these diseases, it is possible in the years to come that the cattle industry will draw a line around the Northern Territory which could exclude it from markets. We should proceed as soon as possible this year with the program that was approved by the former federal government and all the state ministers at the Agricultural Council because it is in the interests not only of the Northern Territory but of the whole nation.

Mr Speaker, there are several things happening in the respective fisheries of the Northern Territory that need highlighting. Honourable members would be aware that we have made conscious attempts over the years to reduce the level of effort in the barramundi fishery. This is to continue. I might add for the

benefit of members that surveillance in the barramundi fishery will be increased this year in an effort to stamp out unreasonable practices. This will be the first year of operation of the new regulations relating to product. The idea is to protect the integrity of our barramundi product in the eyes of southern consumers. It is becoming an important aspect of the fishery and must be dealt with every day.

Mr Speaker, the Thai government recently sent to the Northern Territory a delegation of ministers and businessmen who were interested in a joint fishing venture with the Northern Territory. I am happy to say that, so far as the Thai and Northern Territory governments are concerned, the commercial arrangements agreed to by the respective parties are satisfactory and that the proposition that has been arrived at will be forwarded to the new federal minister for Primary Industry for his imprimatur. I might also add that the optional joint fishing arrangements will also be subject to FIRB requirements and approvals. We are awaiting a response to the FIRB on that proposition.

I would just make a point that this is a very exciting prospect for the Northern Territory because it will offer market outlets for Northern Territory low-value species, such as shark, on a scale that we have never had before. The Thais pointed out while they were here that the 200-mile zone that has been declared around the world has created difficulties for them. In fact, they have lost the equivalent of 400 000 t of catch per annum as a result of the declaration of the new zone. They are now seeking joint fishing arrangements with many countries around the world to try to obtain the level of fish that they were consuming previously.

So far as the prawn fishery is concerned, my government is very concerned that there is too much effort in the prawn fishery. Currently, we have 292 licensed boats in our prawn fishery, and 200 of them are active. Theoretically, we have to catch 17 000 t of prawns each year for everybody to make a living. The reality is that we have taken about 8000 t of actual catch. The Northern Territory will be arguing with the Queensland, Western Australian and Commonwealth governments for tighter management of the prawn fishery so that this overfishing and high level of effort can be reduced.

Mr Speaker, we would very much like to develop to a greater level of sophistication in the small fishery that we have in the Northern Territory. In doing that, the important thing is for the industry and the government to coordinate our product, our transportation, our storage systems, our distribution methods and our markets in an orderly fashion. I am happy to say that the government is currently talking to consultants in this field who are prepared to put together a proposition that will enable the government to establish a small fishing facility that would cater for 90 boats. I do not believe that this will happen quickly. It is one of the things that we must do if the prawn fishing sector is to increase and do well. I might add that the 90 fishing boats that we intend to cater for would be triple the number that are currently using the facilities we have available.

Mr Speaker, on the subject of the export of horse meat from Australia, the matter will need to be raised with the federal government because it has control of export licensing. The government's report from last year is currently being assessed by people within the primary industry area. I believe that negotiations are taking place at the moment between the Northern Territory Development Corporation and a private party who is interested in establishing a horse meat export works in the Territory for regular export.

Many members had the opportunity to inspect the farms that are being run

by ADMA. I had the good fortune to visit each one of them last week. I must say that congratulations should be bestowed on those people who are involved in the project. It is extremely exciting. Considering that the projects have been in operation now for 2 years, each farmer has cleared about 100 ha, fenced his property, had 2 crops and built his farmhouse and his shed. Much work has been done and the prospects are looking very encouraging despite the terrible weather that we have had this year. I would also say that the establishment of the new silos in the Douglas and Katherine areas will go a long way towards assisting the future development of these farm areas. Once the produce has been grown, it must be handled. The new facilities that have been established are excellent.

So far as horticulture is concerned, I would like to emphasise the government's commitment for the Northern Territory to become more self-sufficient. I think it is a basic premise in any developing area that, if you want to develop soundly, you cannot use your export earnings just to buy food and survive. You must become self-sufficient in the production of the food. That will be one of the challenges that the government, the department and people in primary industry will be faced with in the years to come. I would like to advise the Assembly that there is a very definite commitment in that area.

The other thing we are finding is that the Northern Territory has a seasonal advantage with many products it exports to the southern states. Tomatoes, grapes, rockmelons and other products come on much sooner in the Territory than they do in the southern states. Last year, for instance, the grape growers in the Ti Tree district had the Adelaide and Sydney markets to themselves for 2 to 3 weeks because their product came on early. That was a great boon to them and it was very satisfactory to the people in the retailing game.

Mr Speaker, I would just like to comment on the fact that the Northern Territory, like other parts of Australia, has had a late Wet. In some cases, the late Wet has been quite damaging. It has affected the farmers in the Douglas-Daly area and that is to be regretted. I would like to reaffirm for those farmers in the Douglas-Daly area that the Northern Territory government will stand behind them and assist them with their commitments.

Turning to the Conservation Commission for a moment, I can only say that any member of the Assembly who has not yet had an opportunity to see the Yulara tourist development would be well advised to see it in its present state. It too, Mr Speaker, is a very exciting project and one that all Territorians should be extremely proud of. I think that people on all sides of the Assembly should be promoting that destination in any way that they can. One of the best ways to do it would be to show support by going down and having a look at it. It is hoped that, by the middle of the year, the Northern Territory will declare its first marine park at Cobourg Peninsula. During the year, we hope to set up the first Aboriginal training program in the conservation field. It is the government's intention to continue with the urban beautification program that is sponsored by the Conservation Commission. I believe this program has involved a great deal of work and people concerned deserve great credit.

Mr Speaker, on the community development side, I make the point that this year we will be dealing with the child welfare, local government and juvenile justice legislation. It will be fairly complex legislation and will deserve the support of all members. I do not expect to agree with everybody on all aspects of that legislation but I would reiterate that I am quite happy to discuss any of it at any time with any member and try to reach common ground. I welcome propositions from either side of the Assembly on that legislation.

Ms D'ROZARIO (Sanderson): Mr Speaker, I would like to contribute some remarks in reply to His Honour's statement and, in passing, reflect on a couple of matters that are of particular interest to my own electorate and to which His Honour made reference yesterday.

In case any members of the Assembly are in doubt about this, the opposition in this Legislative Assembly does have a vision for the Northern Territory and that vision includes the completion of the Alice Springs to Darwin railway. In the time that I have sat in this Legislative Assembly, I have on numerous occasions articulated what I believe would be a good infrastructure arrangement for the whole of the Northern Territory's transport needs. I think that the term 'land bridge' was first used by myself in this Assembly, and that was a good many years ago. At the time I was speaking about that particular concept, it was specifically in relation to the port facilities which we were talking about. I recall that the opposition, through myself as the shadow transport spokesman, put forward a view that, if we were to obtain the best benefit from the coming railway, the modes of transport in the Territory ought to be coordinated and that the Port of Darwin should be upgraded in order to provide not just a national land bridge but indeed a transport bridge to our neighbours to the near north. In the time that I have been with this Assembly, I have been very pleased indeed to see some of the improvements that have been made to our transport infrastructure. I have been able to witness the significant upgrading of the Port of Darwin and also the installation of the roll-on roll-off facility. In case there are any allegations that the opposition knocks the concept of the railway, I would remind honourable members that the commitment of this opposition to that particular capital project has never been in any doubt as far as I am concerned.

Mr Deputy Speaker, I was interested that His Honour the Administrator yesterday referred not only to the railway but also to somehow accommodating a free trade zone in our part of the world. It was raised some years ago. There was actually a group which formed itself into a citizens' lobby group to lobby for the implementation of a free trade zone. I was interested to hear His Honour refer to it yet again. However, my curiosity was not entirely satisfied because the major concern, which I had at that time and which I still have, is the implementation of this free trade zone. We were not advised as to how this was to be implemented or indeed if there were any constitutional barriers to our doing so. Nevertheless, I think that it is a concept well worth looking into. Some significant moves have been made in improving trade links between the Northern Territory and South-east Asia and I think that interest in the free trade zone ought to be maintained.

I notice that, in the last 2 years, many countries have looked at the installation of free trade zones as being a mechanism for further development. Various regional governments in Britain and America have been canvassing the possibility of what I think they call 'investment protection zones' in order to provide some impetus to trade development. I think that the efforts to enhance trade between the Northern Territory and South-east Asia are to be commended but I do not think that there is any cause to be complacent about this particular relationship because one notices in reading the South-east Asian press that this is becoming a more and more competitive area of activity. Even our near neighbour to the east, Queensland - and I sometimes wonder whether it is still part of the Commonwealth of Australia - has trade representatives in many of the South-east Asian nations and is competing actively for trade business with those parts of the world. I imagine that the recent sojourn of the premier of that state had to do with this very point. It is just too bad that, in doing so, he had to make some hysterical remarks about the economy of this country and, in particular, its monetary stability.

I am convinced that the construction of the Alice Springs to Darwin rail link is the single most important capital project that this Territory will see till the end of this century. I am also convinced that its effects on economic development in the Territory will be immeasurable. I have some doubts as to whether the railway will be used to convey passengers in the numbers suggested by the Chief Minister earlier this morning. I believe that the railway mode is no cheaper than other modes that are available. In fact, most members will recall that, when the Indian Pacific railway was in operation, the fare between Perth and Sydney was quite a deal more expensive than the air fare over the same distance. Nevertheless, I think that the major effect of the railway will be its contribution to reducing transport costs within the Territory and there will be several secondary effects including increased industrialisation within the Territory.

Mr Speaker, I was very interested to hear from His Honour that the government intends to maintain its commitment to housing. I would like to take up a point which has been raised several times by myself and for which I wish to commend the Minister for Housing. His Honour stated that the Territory government would continue its commitment to home ownership both by way of making money available to purchasers and also for construction. I have never expressed any disagreement with that particular course of action. However, on several occasions in this Assembly, I have canvassed the cause of those persons who have not been able to be in the happy position of being house owners. I refer to those people who, for whatever reason but mainly for economic reasons, have not had access to home ownership and have always rented accommodation.

Some years ago, I raised with the then Minister for Lands and Housing in the context of a budget debate that some assistance ought to be given to low-income families who had difficulty in meeting their rental payments. At the time, I put forward the view that rental rebates should be made available to tenants other than tenants of the Housing Commission. At the time, this proposal was not taken up. In fact, it was severely criticised by the then Minister for Lands and Housing. It was said that the Housing Commission was there to provide cheaper rents for people and that this was the correct way of going about it. I pursued this by pointing out that only the people who were fortunate to become tenants of the Housing Commission had access to the rental rebate scheme that was then in force. Those people who were not on a Housing Commission waiting list or those who had a lengthy period to wait had to pay very high market rentals and did not have the opportunity to apply for any rental assistance.

In the last few weeks, I was very heartened to see that the new Minister for Housing, the honourable member for Casuarina - and I heartily commend him for this - has introduced a scheme whereby people who are not tenants of the Housing Commission may be assisted in meeting their rental payments. I commend this particular scheme not only because I suggested it 4 years ago but because I have been very concerned over the plight of low-income households. Whilst we accept that some households are assisted in order to make food purchases, the government up to now has never contemplated that some families may require assistance in the matter of shelter. I commend the Minister for Housing. I am very pleased indeed that this scheme has been brought in. It will certainly alleviate the plight of many households in my own electorate.

Mr Speaker, I was very pleased indeed to see that some practical rather than theoretical assistance is to be given to women who wish to take on the headship role in their own families. His Honour the Administrator conceded that, in theory, women are on the same footing as men but that, in practice, there are a few deficiencies. In fact, at this very moment, I happen to be dealing with some constituent representations on this very point and I would like to outline

the attitude of the Housing Commission to this matter.

I am very pleased that women are to have the same access to housing as men. I wonder whether the attitude of the Housing Commission expressed only a few weeks ago is known to the Minister for Lands and Housing. At this moment, believe it or not, a married woman cannot even have the tenancy in her own name, let alone buy the house in her own name. At this moment, I am pursuing on behalf of a constituent a correction of this particular matter with the Housing Commission.

For the benefit of the Minister for Housing, the situation is that a woman may not apply to be a tenant if she is married. The tenancy must be in her husband's name. I cannot see the reasoning behind this. I would have thought that, if 2 people consulted with each other and made a decision as to who was to be responsible for providing housing, this should be of no concern at all to the Housing Commission. But, the Housing Commission enters into these relationships without invitation and very often to the detriment of some of my constituents. I hope that the minister will instruct the Housing Commission on his government's attitude to this matter. I noticed that some reference was also made to the fact that, if the Housing Commission adopted the attitude of giving a more practical recognition of women's role as providers of housing, the banks might follow. It is to be devoutly hoped that credit institutions will afford women the same opportunities for loans and mortgages that they give their male customers.

Reference was made to the fact that encouragement should be given to financial institutions to play a greater role in helping Australians, particularly Territorians, to meet the objective of home ownership. Here again, I must put forward a view that I have put forward before. There is a very effective way of encouraging financial institutions to do just that, and that is to enter into direct competition with them. I state again that I am of the view that the Territory should establish its own bank for the purpose of accepting deposits from Territorians and also to give them loans for housing. It was never more obvious to me that competition is the best way of encouraging the banks to lift their game, as it were, than during the recent events that took place in connection with the merger of 2 banks. The moment one of those banks started offering a service, it was taken up within days by its competitors. If the Territory government is really genuine about encouraging financial institutions to assist with home purchase, it ought to think seriously about the establishment of a Territory bank. Too often, we have been held at the mercy of banks with headquarters in Melbourne. The Territory bank would not only be a vehicle of assisting home ownership but also, indeed, of economic development. I commend that course, which we have suggested before, to the honourable Treasurer.

Mr Speaker, another matter of current interest in my electorate is that of facilities for youth. I was interested to hear that the government intends to maintain its commitment to sport and recreation and, in particular, to the Marrara indoor stadium. However, I would like to make the point that not all the problems of youth can be solved by the installation of recreational facilities. The basic problem of youth that I observe in my own electorate is very high unemployment. I hope that programs to increase employment among youth will also be instituted along with the programs for recreation. Whilst I think that facilities for recreation are essential to the good health and well-being of our young people, I also happen to think that employment is a rather more urgent problem facing us today.

Numerous recommendations have been made in relation to the provision of youth facilities. The latest are contained in a recently presented report

generally known as the Manzie Committee Report. I think I have mentioned before in this Assembly that that report suggested fairly achievable objectives. The terms of reference were very limited and, as a consequence, the recommendations were limited also. I hope that this will not be the last word on facilities for youth in the area. I think a number of organisations would be willing to cooperate in the provision of youth facilities and it is to be hoped that this one report will not be seized upon as being the solution to all our problems. I think that the problems are rather more complex than those that that report addressed.

I was very pleased to see that some recognition was given to a further Labor objective and that is for the institution of an inquiry into freight costs. I do not think that there is a lot of folklore relating to freight costs. I believe that most of the complaints that members of this Assembly receive are very genuine indeed. There is a large volume of dubious practice in the transport industry and in the freight industry. I hope that the inquiry into freight costs will reveal some of these practices and that some effort will be made to overcome the problems that are evident.

Too often, people tend to think that, when one decides to buy something, one just pays the freight. That might be all right from the point of view of the individual consumer but it is a very great impediment to the fostering of industry when freight is such a large component of its costs. I hope that this inquiry will address not only the problems of consumers buying individual items but also the effect of high freight costs on the development of secondary industry in the Territory.

Mr Speaker, I would like to take up a few remarks that were made by the Minister for Primary Production and Conservation in relation to a recent event of national significance. We all agree that hard times are being faced nationally and that, of course, these problems will not be solved overnight. Some extremely unfair comments were made by the minister in relation to the attitude of the Labor Party to the economy. I believe that the attitude of the Labor Party to the economy was reflected in the vote last Saturday week and also in the high and responsible degree of commentary on economic initiatives that the Labor Party had put forward at the time. This, of course, was contrasted to the panic-stricken, hysterical screechings of certain members of the federal government at the time. I have never seen such a poor display of campaigning as I witnessed at that particular time. To accuse the Labor Party of having a reckless attitude towards money when the Prime Minister at a public rally exhorted people to remove their deposits from banks showed the degree of panic. By contrast, the then Leader of the Opposition, Mr Hawke - now Prime Minister, I am happy to say - was extremely responsible in his attitude. I think that the electorate, the last arbiters, proved the point that I am making.

Mr Speaker, no doubt there will be reviews of projects and there will be reviews of election commitments. That is no reason to say that the Leader of the Opposition here is in any way 'softening the electorate up', which I think was the phrase used by the honourable minister. We are trying to adopt a realistic approach to the circumstances as they exist.

The Chief Minister has been given an invitation to the Prime Minister's economic summit conference. I believe that he intends to hold his own conference with interested parties in the Territory before he attends. I hope that the Chief Minister will adopt a more realistic attitude to the economic conditions which are facing, not just the Territory but the nation as a whole, than that exhibited here today by the honourable Minister for Primary Production and Conservation. I think that that approach will get us a lot further than the

remarks made in this direction by the minister this afternoon.

Debate adjourned.

POISONS AND DANGEROUS DRUGS BILL
(Serial 216)

Continued from 24 November 1982.

Mrs O'NEIL (Fannie Bay): Mr Speaker, this bill consolidates all existing Northern Territory legislation covering drugs and poisons. They are the Prohibited Drugs, Dangerous Drugs, Poisons and Methylated Spirits Acts, all of which are to be repealed if this bill is passed. They are listed in schedule I of the bill. The opposition believes this move to consolidate the law in the area of poisons and dangerous drugs is most desirable and, therefore, supports the bill. The bill provides 8 categories of poisons and dangerous drugs in addition to the prohibited drugs. The prohibited drugs are listed in schedule II of part A. The poisons and dangerous drugs are in schedules 1 to 8 in part B.

Recently, professionals working in this area raised some questions with me in relation to listings in schedule 8 in particular. Schedule 8 deals with substances or preparations which are addiction producing or potentially addiction producing, including those so classified by the United Nations Organisation or its agencies. It has been pointed out to me that this includes the amphetamines. There are in fact 5: amphetamine, dexamphetamine, methylamphetamine, methylphenidate and phenmetrazine.

I am informed that, under existing legislation, these drugs, which are exceedingly dangerous, can only be prescribed for 2 conditions: narcolepsy and hypo-kinetic brain damage in children. There is some concern that those restrictions are not carried over in this bill. I bring that to the attention of the minister. It has only been brought to my attention today. Perhaps that concern can be addressed. I understand that, in New South Wales, for example, a medical practitioner wishing to prescribe these substances must apply to the equivalent of the Secretary for Health in writing for authority to prescribe them. It has been suggested to me that this would be a useful practice.

Another matter which has also been raised with me is the question of labelling of drugs and poisons. It was suggested that the provisions in the act will not ensure that accidents do not occur. Perhaps that is something that the minister or his advisers can look at.

The classifications in the schedule are based on the Uniform Poisons Standard of the National Health and Medical Research Council. I must say that the opposition supports this method of legislating in respect of these substances. There is a provision in the bill which will allow the minister to amend, by gazettal, the schedules in accordance with changed recommendations that might come forward from time to time from the National Health and Medical Research Council. Indeed, I understand that, in the few months that have elapsed since the bill was introduced by the former Minister for Health, changes have already taken place. That is why members will find something like 80 pages of amendments to the schedules. It is obvious, therefore, that this proposal that the minister may make these changes to the schedules by gazettal is a very sensible one indeed.

There are some interesting provisions in the bill which we support. One relates to the licensing of pest control operators - something that will be

welcomed by the community. Another minor but nevertheless important one, bearing in mind the small dispersed population in the Northern Territory, would allow for emergency drug kits to be held in isolated areas.

Having said that it is clear the principles of the bill and its logical and scientific arrangement of poisons and dangerous drugs are supported, I must say that it reflects how badly we deal with problems of drug and poison abuse socially when, in a legislative or scientific sense, we can deal with them so well. I draw honourable members' attention to the disparity that exists in our legislative and social handling of a number of different problems. The major one is the problem of alcohol abuse. We all agree on that. However, for all sorts of historical, social and fairly obvious reasons, we do not consider an alcoholic beverage as a poison or dangerous drug at all. Yet it clearly is. We legislate regarding its management and its sale but we do not legislate about it in the sense that it is a poison or a dangerous drug even though it causes us the most problems in the Northern Territory.

Another obvious area of drug abuse, a very tragic one, is petrol sniffing which from time to time is mentioned in this Assembly. Once again, I think correctly, the Assembly has recognised that this is not something that can be addressed by legislation. It is a social problem.

I draw honourable members' attention to some provisions which might be anachronistic and which we have carried forward in this bill. I refer firstly to the provisions relating to methylated spirits. The drinking of methylated spirits is an offence and the sale of methylated spirits for that purpose is an offence and that has been the situation in the Northern Territory since about 1936. That legislation has not been amended since 1964. It is certainly my impression - and people ring me about this from time to time - that it is not effective legislation. Prosecutions rarely ever take place and have not done so for a while. It is therefore my view that we should be looking at whether this is an appropriate method of dealing with persons who might wish to drink methylated spirits.

It is said that methanol is a poison and therefore we should stop people drinking it. It is true that methanol is very poisonous as opposed to ethanol which is what we normally find in alcoholic liquor. I am reliably informed that the substance which is sold as methylated spirits in the Northern Territory and presumably elsewhere in Australia has a very small proportion of methanol, at the most 2%, and that, in that sense, it is not a poison. The alcohol in it is mostly ethanol. I feel that it would have been an appropriate time to review the law relating to the sale and consumption of methylated spirits in the Northern Territory.

I am told that it is mostly consumed, if it is at all, by poor alcoholics who might wish to use methylated spirits to spike the cheap wine that they buy to give it a bit of a charge. It seems to me they are not really doing anything different to the rich alcoholic who might be able quite legally to buy a bottle of vodka and drink it. Perhaps for historical reasons, we have overreacted to this problem of methylated spirits drinking. We believe that it is offensive to the community because people do not like to see drunks around the place and methylated spirits is what drunks can afford to drink. Nevertheless, it is not a dangerous poison in the sense that many of the other drugs covered by this act are.

I have also noted that the prohibited drugs provisions of the existing acts have been carried over. That includes the provisions relating to cannabis. I have said before in this Assembly - and I will not dwell on it - that, bearing

in mind that this drug is well recognised by all scientific experts as of psychological addiction only, not a physical addiction, it does not compare with many of the other dangerous drugs which people might consume. Certainly, it is much less dangerous than alcohol but nevertheless there is a very heavy fine of \$500 for a first offence of possessing less than 50 g. For possessing more than 50 g the penalty is 7 years jail. As I said before, these penalties are quite out of proportion, bearing in mind the comparatively small danger that this particular drug poses to our community.

Mr Speaker, the opposition supports the attempt in this bill to deal logically with the management of poisons and dangerous drugs in our community. I offer those comments in a constructive sense to the minister because I believe that the inconsistencies will sooner or later have to be addressed if we are to retain the respect of the community for the way that we manage these substances. It is well known that young people say that older people are hypocritical because they drink alcohol but they will not let them have cannabis. When one looks at this bill, it is clear that we are continuing with what they see as hypocrisy. I believe that we can in the future justify a searching look at the management of poisons and dangerous drugs.

Mr HARRIS (Port Darwin): Mr Speaker, I rise to speak in support of the bill. It has taken a long time and a great deal of work to consolidate this Poisons and Dangerous Drugs Bill. Pharmacists throughout the Northern Territory, on occasions, have indicated their concern about the shortcomings of the existing Poisons Act. I know that they have been worried about the slow progress of this particular legislation coming before the Assembly. I have asked questions as to the reasons why this has occurred and I am very pleased to see that we are discussing that legislation today.

However, there will be a number of problems until all states of Australia come into line by introducing uniform legislation. Once again, we have a situation where the Northern Territory has implemented uniform legislation that has approval from the Commonwealth and other states. It is high time that the other states also looked to enacting uniform legislation as quickly as possible because problems exist between the states in this regard. To have a situation whereby a certain drug is obtainable in one state without prescription yet, in the Northern Territory, that same drug requires a prescription causes not only suffering to the people who are in need of that particular drug but also a great deal of confusion. I am very pleased to see that the proposed amendments will correct that situation and people who come to the Northern Territory on holiday will be able to obtain these drugs without too much bother.

In relation to poisons, I wish to refer specifically to poisons for agricultural purposes and pest control. We see important changes proposed in the legislation. Hopefully, this will bring back some common sense and reason into the poisons debate. Over a long period, poisons have received a lot of criticism, and quite rightly so. There has been much abuse in communities. Indeed, some of the abuse has caused tragic circumstances to arise. It is no wonder that people in those communities have lost confidence in the use of poisons generally. I would like to point out that poisons play an important part in the community. They can benefit the community because they perform the task of controlling diseases, pests and weeds. Because misuse has caused a great deal of trauma and reaction from the community at large, people have lost their confidence in poisons generally, particularly in the use of hormone sprays and other poisons. If these poisons are used by people who know what they are about, they do no harm to people and can be useful to the community at large.

Hopefully, by making it a requirement that people who are either holding

certain poisons - schedule 7 substances - and those who are distributing those poisons be registered or licensed, as the case may be, the situation will improve and the community will regain some of its lost confidence with regard to use of the poisons. Generally, the successful farmer is not the one who abuses poisons. In most cases, these people know what chemicals and sprays are required for a particular function. The problem generally arises with the would-be farmer or the in-between grower, the person who thinks he knows what it is all about but really knows nothing. This is where there is a very serious problem. These people can cause others to react violently against the use of poisons generally. Often, these people do not read labels and do not use protective clothing, goggles, masks or whatever. In fact, I can recall occasions when people have used hormone sprays from a knapsack on a bare back. All they were wearing were shorts and thongs. These are the people who cause citizens in the community to be concerned about the way poisons are used generally. If people understand poisons and use them correctly, there are no great problems.

The home gardener is catered for by the poisons covered under schedules 5 and 6. I do not believe that there will be any problem with that section of the community. I believe the major concern has come from the person who thinks he knows everything but really knows nothing.

I have not been able to check out the lists of poisons on the schedule and, judging from the raft of amendments, it would require an expert to investigate this further. I accept that using the National Health and Medical Research Council is the best possible method of ensuring the poisons are included in the correct schedules. Before a herbicidal poison is accepted into the community, it is required that it undergo very stringent tests indeed. In fact, just about every department in the country would be required to give that particular poison clearance before it is able to be used. I do not really believe that there is a chance that a poison will slip from one schedule to another without passing these stringent tests.

One thing that we will need to watch out for is the situation that eventuated in England. I quote from an editorial in a monthly magazine that comes out in England.

Mrs Lawrie: What is the magazine?

Mr HARRIS: It's called 'Riding'. I quote:

One of the less desirable consequences of EEC membership is that of the occasional blanket regulation which is imposed regardless of national need and without as much as a by-your-leave to the people concerned. The most recent nonsense is perpetuated under the new Medicines Act Regulations which confine the sale of horse-worming preparations to pharmacists and veterinary surgeons and thus cut out the consumers' principal source of supply, the saddler's shop. The result of this bureaucratic interference in a system which worked perfectly well is that the sale of worming preparations has dropped by 20%. What this means is that the number of ponies being wormed drops commensurately, and that is the most important reason why rigorous efforts should be made to abolish the existing regulations and return to the ones which served us quite well enough in the past. Neither the veterinary surgeries nor chemist shops are satisfactory point-of-sale sites for worming preparations. The former will certainly not attract the bulk of horse and pony owners whose animals are probably in the greatest need of a wormer and the latter, very few of which, even in country

areas, operate veterinary departments, are more associated in the public mind with worth than worms. Unless prescribed as a result of a visit to a veterinary surgeon, the best place for the day-to-day sale of worming products is in the saddler's shop where they can be displayed adequately, priced reasonably and where sound advice is usually obtainable.

Mr Speaker, that is the type of situation that we must watch out for. If there is a danger to the community from a poison, then we have to act and change our laws to introduce controls. But let us check everything out thoroughly before this happens.

The 2 major changes in this particular bill are: the requirement for people involved in agricultural and horticultural activities to apply to the Chief Medical Officer for authorisation to hold schedule 7-type substances and the major provision that pest control operators are to be licensed. There may be some reaction to the requirement for those people involved in agriculture and horticulture to apply for registration or authorisation. I have not been able to speak to these people about this but I believe that they will accept it. In the main, they are responsible people and I do not believe that the requirement will disadvantage them in any way whatsoever. As far as the pest control operators are concerned, I believe that they should have been licensed a long time ago. These people deal with the public. They use poisons in houses. The way I have seen some of them use them, I would not license them to spray anything. The community should have had protection from pest control operators a long time ago. I support this licensing requirement wholeheartedly.

The only other comment I would like to make is in relation to those people who will be distributing the poisons. I think it is necessary for them to have a complete briefing from officers of the department to inform them what the law is all about. This is extremely important to enable the law to be administered correctly. Provided people can receive this briefing, I do not think there will be any problems in the administration of the legislation.

Mr Speaker, I welcome the bill. As I said earlier, I think that all the states of Australia should lift their game a little bit and try to enact uniform legislation faster than they have to date.

Mrs LAWRIE (Nightcliff): Mr Speaker, the honourable member for Port Darwin addressed his remarks largely to the control of poisons. In Darwin between 15 and 20 years ago, I remember the tragic case of a little girl whose family had their home sprayed by a pest control company. She ran about with bare feet and, as a result of the ingestion of the poison through the soles of her feet, she died. From that time, people in the legislature have advocated control of the distribution of poisons for pest control, and the registration of companies. Like the honourable member for Port Darwin, I welcome that control as it will now be exercised but can only say that it is about 10 years too late to my knowledge.

Mr Speaker, I rose to speak particularly of proposed legislation yet again making the possession and use of cannabis such a heinous offence. With the honourable member for Arnhem, I gave evidence to the Royal Commission inquiring into the possession and use of cannabis which was established some years ago and chaired by Mr Justice Williams. I went along with the protection of appearing before a Royal Commission and was somewhat surprised at my reception by His Honour. For the record, I do not smoke cannabis. I do not even smoke cigarettes. I regard cigarette smoke as a pollutant. Personally, I find it highly offensive and I am not a reformed smoker. I have simply never smoked. Thus, my interest in that area is non-specific and certainly non-personal.

Like other members of this Assembly who have had the courage and the wisdom to speak what is known generally as the truth, I am aware that I am one of the few people in the community who do not smoke pot. As we all know, it is not just a group of young people or high school students rebelling against society; it is right across the community. In the professions and in industry, people smoke cannabis, yet we continue to ignore this.

Mr Perron: What about politicians?

Mrs LAWRIE: The honourable Treasurer asked: 'What about politicians?' I do not know. I am a politician and I do not smoke but I would guarantee there are people in this room who do, and that is what annoys me. We gather here time after time and pontificate about the evils of smoking cannabis and how we cannot possibly tolerate it, yet we all tolerate it every day of our lives. I certainly recognise the smell when I am in the same room as someone who is smoking pot. It is only slightly more offensive than cigarette smoke, which I do not like either.

Mr Speaker, honourable members think this is some kind of joke. It is not. We are making criminals of a very large proportion of our community who indulge in this habit. They will continue to indulge in it and view us as the ultimate hypocrites when we continue to attach such a high penalty to pot smoking.

A previous leader of government members in this Assembly, Dr Goff Letts, had the intestinal fortitude to get up and say that he would not vote for legislation which made criminals out of pot smokers to this degree because it would not be in line with his thinking. When he was a humble back-bencher, the present Chief Minister also said that he thought decriminalisation of the personal use of marijuana should probably come into force although he also said at the time that he probably would not be the first person in Australia to suggest it or to introduce it. We have had 2 leaders of conservative parliaments of the Northern Territory both saying the same thing, in essence: that the decriminalisation of the smoking of marijuana would probably be beneficial to society and would not result in the Sodom and Gomorrah which is sometimes postulated as a result of this widespread practice.

Mr Perron: What happened to the one-man band?

Mrs LAWRIE: I do not know where the one-man band comment came from. The relevance of that escapes me totally.

Mr Speaker, in giving evidence to that Royal Commission, I also pointed out that, at the time, which was about 4 or 5 years ago, there was a great upsurge of public opinion against the use of drugs. Most of us use drugs from time to time. Sometimes these are prescribed and sometimes bought over the counter - simple analgesics - with great beneficial effect. That is well known, yet in the debates which ensue we find this focus on the use of drugs as totally tragic, abhorrent and non-acceptable. Any rational person, having a second thought, will realise how ridiculous that is. In the days of Culpepper and before, certain substances were known to be beneficial to man and we must always keep sight of the fact that many drugs, used properly, are beneficial and certainly not harmful.

Of course, we must have regulations for control of dangerous substances. With the exception of those parts which relate to cannabis, I support the legislation which is before us. However, having travelled around the world, I am a bit amused that the definition of dangerous drugs varies from place to place and from social group to social group. What may be considered as highly

dangerous in one society is acceptable as normal and very beneficial in another. The reasons are not always scientific; they result from prejudice more often than not. One example, which we see again and again, is in schedule 8: 'Substances or preparations which are addiction producing or potentially addiction producing, including those so classified by the United Nations Organisation or its agencies'. We find here the humble coca leaf. If one travels through the Andes, one will take great delight in buying coca leaves, infusing them and making what is known as mate de coca, coca tea.

If the honourable members are tea drinkers, as I am, they will know that the drinking of a nice hot cup of herbal tea produces, after about 20 minutes, a rather nice result - a very slight feeling of well-being. It is not euphoria but one does feel a little better than one did before one had the hot cup of tea. That is exactly the same effect one gets if one drinks coca tea. The straight coca leaf infused and drunk is not as harmful as the ingestion of alcohol. It does not alter one's perception of space, distance, time or colour. However, for the purposes of the Australian legislation, this particular substance is regarded as dangerous and to be prohibited. The honourable member for Fannie Bay pointed out that we continually close our eyes to the dangers and addictive qualities of alcohol and yet we sit here calmly legislating in 1983 to make potential criminals out of a large number of people, right across the stratum of our society, who smoke pot. With that exception, I accept the legislation but I am a little tired of the hypocrisy enshrined in that particular section.

Mrs PADGHAM-PURICH (Tiwi): Mr Speaker, in rising to support this legislation, my remarks will be brief. I find this piece of legislation to be most comprehensive and I do not think it will sit too hard on the members of the community. I found it easy to read and it certainly satisfies a long-felt need for safety in dealing with poisons and dangerous drugs in a comprehensive way.

As the minister said in his second-reading speech, it repeals the existing Poisons Act, Dangerous Drugs Act, Prohibited Drugs Act and Methylated Spirits Act. The legislation deals meticulously with every basic substance contained in the pharmacopoeia, the garden shed, the farm or the dark room, to name but a few. It deals with every poisonous, therapeutic, dangerous, restricted, hazardous substance, or its derivatives by implication, that we are likely to use. As other honourable members have said, there has been a need for this legislation for some time and I welcome its introduction now. I think it will be welcomed by the community, by the people who use the drugs and poisons legitimately and by the people who may not use but who fear misuse of drugs and poisons by others in the community. This legislation is not draconian. It seeks to anticipate situations which could arise with misuse of dangerous poisons and drugs before they occur and to prevent them happening by proper control.

In reading through the legislation, I see that it covers adequately registration from manufacture through the wholesale, retail, medical, dental, veterinary and pharmaceutical fields to the end use of the chemical by a person or for a person or for an animal. I was particularly interested in clause 62 dealing with the possible ingestion of methylated spirits. I know this has been a problem in the Northern Territory for some time, more particularly in the past. I can only speak for the Darwin area but I have been told that there are shops where people can buy, say, 3 bottles of methylated spirits and a carton of orange juice. It is quite obvious the orange juice will be mixed with the methylated spirits for a cocktail. According to this legislation, the shopkeeper can refuse to sell the methylated spirits to the person wanting to buy it. I know that people who are financially embarrassed are the ones who usually buy methylated spirits for the kick that the alcohol can give. I would hope that,

when the shopkeeper refuses to sell methylated spirits to Aborigines - and I know white people as well as black people drink it on occasion - the subject of discrimination will not be raised because the health of the people has to be considered, whether they are black or white, if they intend to buy the methylated spirits for ingestion.

I was particularly interested to read clauses 42 and 43 relating to medical kits and to the storage in certain circumstances of poisons and dangerous substances. The cases of the St John Ambulance workers and isolated communities on stations, settlements and small mining camps would be covered by those clauses. It appears that responsible people may be given permission, under certain circumstances, to administer schedule 4 and schedule 8 substances. After the schedule 4 or schedule 8 substance has been administered, the person administering it has to report in writing to the Chief Medical Officer.

I would like to think that clause 42 would cover not only the holding of substances for human ingestion but also substances used for veterinary purposes. There are communities where responsible people make their living from animal husbandry but are not always in a position to call in the services of a vet, mainly because of distances or because of the weather. I would like to think that clause 42 covers this so that responsible people can hold schedule 4 and schedule 8 substances for administration to animals.

Like the honourable member for Port Darwin, I was particularly concerned with the administration of the poisons and dangerous drugs in schedule 7. It has been of concern to me for some time that we use weedicides and pesticides in our gardens with gay abandon and without any real concern for the possible after effects. One of the great dangers in using weedicides and pesticides because they happen to be the latest thing that science has found will kill a particular bug that is eating a favourite plant in the garden is that the danger is not stressed. Only their beneficial properties are mentioned. This can be insidious. If one inadvertently ingested poisons such as strychnine or cyanide, one paid the penalty straight away. With many of the modern garden sprays, weedicides, pesticides and poisons used for pastoral and agricultural purposes, the effect on the human and animal body is not usually evident for a number of years. At that time, it is too late to do anything even if one can gauge adequately that the particular problem results from having been in the vicinity of such sprays earlier.

I know a little bit about keeping cats and dogs and other animals. It is a known fact that dogs in the Northern Territory generally do not live as long as dogs down south. It is true that there are more internal parasites here which contribute to this. However, one of the contributing reasons for this is that we tend to use poisons on our dogs a lot more than we should. In the long term, this shortens their lives. I do not have any scientific data to back up my statement but, from observation over a number of years, I feel that my statement is correct.

I am very pleased to see that the pest exterminators are to be licensed. I am also pleased to see that they are obliged, by this legislation, to undergo periodic medical checkups. As one who does not use weedicides and pesticides except in extreme cases, I feel that it would be a good idea to launch a campaign pointing out the dangers of these chemicals and explaining the old-fashioned ways of controlling pests in agriculture and horticulture. They take a lot more time perhaps and are more labour intensive but, to put it bluntly, I would rather have a few cockroaches in the house than have the house fogged.

Mr Speaker, I am very pleased to see that there is a tightening up of the regulations pertaining to the ownership and administration of poisons. I was particularly pleased to see that schedule 8 substances that are administered in hospitals are subject to 5 checks. That should please anyone who has the concern of the community at heart. The first check is when the pharmacist delivers the particular schedule 8 drug to the nurse. When the nurse administers the drug to a patient in the hospital, there is a further check. It must be under the direction of a medical practitioner. The third check is that an entry must be made in the relevant records before the substance is administered. The fourth check is that the charge nurse must enter all such administrations into a register. The fifth check is that a schedule 8 substance must be administered in the presence of another person who can speak English.

As this legislation consolidates so many pieces of legislation dealing with poisons and dangerous drugs, I would have liked to have seen the transport of poisons and dangerous drugs included, as is intended with the meat industry legislation. The inspection of meat and the carriage of meat from the abattoirs to the wholesaler, to the retailer, to the butcher and to the consumer will come under the one piece of legislation. I hope the 2 pieces of legislation can work in tandem otherwise there will be a deficiency in this legislation. As far as it stands, this legislation is very good but there might be loopholes in the safekeeping of drugs and poisons and dangerous substances when travelling from the wholesaler to the retailer or the manufacturer to the wholesaler etc. I hope that point is covered by other legislation.

I am pleased with this legislation, especially as it relates to schedule 7 substances. I do not think the proposed control will inhibit their legitimate use because I feel responsible people in the community would not have any worry about applying to the Chief Medical Officer for permission to use these drugs. I support the legislation.

Mr DONDAS (Health): Mr Speaker, I seek leave of the Assembly to take charge of this bill through all remaining stages.

Leave granted.

Mr DONDAS: Mr Speaker, the Poisons and Dangerous Drugs Bill (Serial 216) was introduced at the last sittings of the Assembly. You will recall that this bill consolidates all existing legislation in the Northern Territory in relation to poisons, dangerous drugs and methylated spirits.

The bill is based on the Uniform Poisons Standards of the National Health and Medical Research Council, and the council constantly revises and updates the poisons standards. Consequently, this bill provides that the minister may amend the schedules in accordance with the recommendation of the National Health and Medical Research Council. Since the bill was introduced, the council has amended the standards and I propose to move an amendment in committee to update the schedules while the bill is before the Assembly. This will mean that the bill will have the most up-to-date schedules of any poisons legislation in Australia.

Mr Speaker, there are 8 schedules. Schedule 1 includes extremely dangerous substances for which the sale must be recorded. Schedules 2 and 3 include therapeutic substances for which no prescription is required but which may be distributed by pharmacists, doctors, dentists or veterinarians. Where there is no pharmacy, schedule 2 substances may be distributed through general dealers in medicinal poisons.

Schedule 4 contains the more common drugs supplied on prescription.

Schedule 5 includes substances of a hazardous nature which must be readily available to the public but which require caution in handling, use and storage. Schedule 6 contains poisonous substances which must be readily available to the public for domestic, agricultural, pastoral, horticultural, veterinary, photographic or industrial purposes or for pest control.

Schedule 7 includes substances of exceptional danger which require special precaution in manufacture and use as well as specific labelling and distribution regulations. The bill limits the use of these substances to specially authorised persons. Schedule 8 includes the dangerous drugs, including the drugs of addiction for which there is a valid medicinal role. The supply of schedule 8 drugs is by prescription only.

The bill provides for the licensing of pest control operators and includes special provisions to enable persons in remote areas of the Northern Territory to use special medical kits which may include drugs which would otherwise be supplied only on prescription. The use of these drugs in emergencies must be specially reported and the bill should prevent possible abuse.

You recall that, although the Minister for Health will have general responsibility for the administration of the provisions of this legislation, it is the intention of government that the Minister for Primary Production and Conservation will administer matters involving substances used in the agricultural, horticultural and pastoral industries.

Mr Speaker, the honourable member for Tiwi queried clause 42. Her query related to medical kits. Her query was whether it would be possible for people in remote areas to administer a particular drug to their animals. The Chief Medical Officer may, in writing, authorise a person to possess a specified quantity of specified poisons where the poison is included in a medical kit. It is a point that we can take up at some other stage.

In regard to her query regarding the transport of dangerous goods, that is covered by clause 92 of the bill. If the honourable member would care to read it, she will find that clause 92 will allow the transportation and the handling of those particular substances. That should satisfy her.

The honourable member for Nightcliff raised the cannabis question. I would like to put on public record that I do not smoke marijuana. The honourable member inferred that members of this Assembly use it. I have been in this Assembly since 1974 and I can quite honestly say that I know of no person in this Assembly, or even previous Assemblies, who has used marijuana. That is to my knowledge. I reckon I get around as much as the member for Nightcliff.

The question of marijuana has been discussed in this Assembly on many occasions. I am on the record as saying that, whilst 50% of the world's experts say marijuana is dangerous and 50% of the world's experts say that marijuana is not dangerous, then I shall sit on the fence. When one of these experts crosses the fence and changes that balance, I may consider what the honourable member has said and become a supporter of decriminalising that particular drug.

The honourable member for Fannie Bay queried the use of amphetamines. I understand that the Chief Medical Officer will have the power to control the supply of all schedule 8 substances in the Northern Territory. There are 2 references, one in clause 30 and the other in clause 36. Another query by the honourable member for Fannie Bay concerned labelling. This will be handled by regulation.

Mr Speaker, I agree with the honourable member for Nightcliff that legislation on pest control is certainly overdue. She spoke about a delay of about 10 years. I think that might be a little bit exaggerated in some respects because there have been attempts in earlier Assemblies and Councils to debate the control of pest control operators. I am happy that most members today support that particular direction because, several years ago, there was a division amongst members of this Assembly concerning the introduction of controls over pest control operators.

I thank honourable members for their contributions and I foreshadow amendments to the bill. Most of them can be explained in the committee stage.

Motion agreed to; bill read a second time.

In committee:

Clauses 1 to 28 taken together and agreed to.

Clause 29:

Mr DONDAS: Mr Chairman, I move amendment 144.1.

This is a minor amendment to clarify clause 29(1). If a medical practitioner supplies a schedule 1, 2, 3, 4, 7 or 8 substance, he may do so in accordance with this bill and any other law in force in the Northern Territory. Thus a medical practitioner must supply substances in accordance with the provisions of the Medical Practitioners Registration Act as well as with provisions of this bill. He is not licensed in any way by this clause to treat animals. This amendment should remove any legal doubt.

Amendment agreed to.

Clause 29, as amended, agreed to.

Clauses 30 to 36:

Mrs O'NEIL: Pursuing the matter of clauses 30 and 36, which the honourable Minister for Health tells me deal with the question of the use of amphetamines, those clauses certainly enable the Chief Medical Officer to obtain details of prescriptions that have been filled by a pharmacist. As I read them, they do not address the question of the purpose for which the drugs are used. That was the query that was raised with me. Certainly, the Chief Medical Officer will find out when prescriptions for those substances are written and filled and how often it is happening but not for what purpose it is happening.

Mr DONDAS: Mr Chairman, clause 30 really gives the Chief Medical Officer the power to direct a pharmacist to hold certain limited stocks of schedule 8 substances. The current practice is that the Department of Health holds sufficient stocks of dangerous drugs to supply local pharmacies without their having to hold them on their shelves. That is the real effect. The Department of Health will hold those stocks and supply them on a needs basis.

Clauses 30 to 36 taken together and agreed to.

Clause 37:

Mr DONDAS: Mr Chairman, I move amendment 144.2 as circulated.

This amendment allows a pharmacist to supply a drug on a telephone request from an interstate doctor in an emergency. Occasions arise when interstate visitors find themselves without medication and are unable to see a local doctor to obtain a prescription in time. The amendment extends the meaning of a 'medical practitioner' to include interstate medical practitioners. Of course, the pharmacist must satisfy himself that it is an emergency and that the medical practitioner is registered.

Amendment agreed to.

Clause 37, as amended, agreed to.

Clauses 38 to 52 taken together and agreed to.

Clause 53:

Mr DONDAS: Mr Chairman, I move amendment 144.3 as circulated.

This corrects a typographical error. The word 'substance' has been included after 'schedule 7'.

Amendment agreed to.

Clause 53, as amended, agreed to.

Clauses 54 and 55 agreed to.

Clause 56:

Mr DONDAS: Mr Chairman, I move amendment 144.4 as circulated.

The reference in this clause should read 'section 55'.

Amendment agreed to.

Clause 56, as amended, agreed to.

Clauses 57 to 62 taken together and agreed to.

Clause 63:

Mr DONDAS: Mr Chairman, I move amendment 144.5 as circulated.

This should make reference to proportions specified in section 60 and not section 88 which was the original numbering.

Mrs LAWRIE: Mr Chairman, if the honourable member has another look, my copy of the original bill says section 60, not section 88.

Clause 63, as amended, agreed to.

Clauses 64 to 80 agreed to.

Clause 81:

Mr DONDAS: I move amendment 144.6.

This is a minor amendment to correct an error in a reference. Clause

81(1)(a) should read 'an offence against section 64(a)'.

Amendment agreed to.

Clause 81, as amended, agreed to.

Clauses 82 to 92 agreed to.

Schedules:

Schedule 1 agreed to.

Mr DONDAS: I move amendment 144.7.

The schedules to this bill follow the recommendations of the National Health and Medical Research Council. Since this bill was introduced, the council has produced some changes in the schedules. These changes include the deletion of the general term 'antihistamines' in schedule 3. Henceforth, antihistamines are referred to by their specific names and are found in various schedules. Various new drugs are found in schedule 7. References to packages in schedule 2 now include mention of sachets of granules, where appropriate. Maximum doses in packs have been varied slightly; for example, atropine in schedule 2 can now be supplied in 0.6 mg packets of 6 where previously it was 0.5 mg packets.

The clinical name of a drug has been adjusted in some instances to cover advances in science; for example, vinca alkaloids in schedule 4.

Members will be interested to note that thalidomide has been included in schedule 7 for very restricted use in the treatment of leprosy.

During the course of the afternoon, the Attorney-General brought to my attention particular substances that are in the wrong schedules. As we said earlier, these particular schedules can be amended at a later stage by gazettal. Consequently, I am quite sure that the medical profession will find plenty of things in the wrong schedules. We will be able to sort that out as it occurs.

Mrs LAWRIE: Mr Chairman, I really find that explanation quite unacceptable. I am not trying to delay the passage of this bill. The minister has presented us with over 80 pages of technical terms in this amendment schedule. They were presented earlier today. I number amongst my friends, acquaintances and advisers pharmacists and doctors who have displayed quite a keen interest in the bill as it was originally presented. The very least this committee could have expected as a matter of common courtesy was to have been circulated with a brief outline of just what the amendments proposed.

The minister incredibly has said: 'Oh well, do not worry too much about it. The Attorney-General has shown me that we have made a few boo-boos but we will fix it up later'. That is not a proper way for the Assembly to proceed. If there are problems, I would suggest that the minister could meet with his advisers overnight and make sure that, when this legislation goes to His Honour the Administrator for approval and gazettal, it will be in as good a form as the committee has been able to devise.

Having heard his explanation that there are deficiencies, problems and mistakes, could he say why it would be impossible to hold this over for 24 hours or, indeed, till next week to fix up those mistakes? We will make ourselves a laughing stock if we agree to pass legislation having been advised by its

sponsor that it is incorrect.

Mr DONDAS: I have no particular worry with the suggestion that the honourable member for Nightcliff has made. But even since we prepared these amended schedules, changes have taken place. Changes are taking place all the time. For example, in the 1982 Prescription Proprietary Guide, there are some S3 products that were sold in South Australia which are S4 products in Tasmania, Western Australia, the ACT and Queensland. In NSW, they are S4 products. They are changing all the time. I was not being flippant when I said the Attorney-General mentioned to me one particular item which appears to be in too high a schedule. Many people use the product for the cleaning of lenses.

I can postpone this for a week but what will that achieve? These schedules are being changed all the time. As far as the medical profession is concerned, I am quite sure that the rapport between the Department of Health and the industry will continue. I am quite sure that, if the pharmaceutical industry or the medical profession has a problem in relation to the schedules as presented today, then eventually we will be able to pick them up by gazettal.

Mr B. COLLINS: Mr Chairman, I am sorry but that is just not good enough. The honourable Minister for Health knows it. The stand he has taken is just absolutely ridiculous. There is no excuse whatsoever for this Assembly to put anything through the committee and have it printed and sent off to the Administrator for signature when the minister actually introducing the bills acknowledges to the committee that the legislation he is putting before us is defective.

Mr Dondas: I did not say that at all. The schedule...

Mr B. COLLINS: The schedule. If that is not part of legislation, correct me, but it used to be. Why don't we just fix up what we know is wrong with it. We are all aware that schedules in legislation are changing all the time in respect of every matter that comes before us. Surely we have an obligation to do the best job we can on the legislation that is in front of us.

It is just absolute nonsense for the minister to say that he knows there are mistakes in the schedule but put it through anyway for the sake of doing it this afternoon. That is not good enough. We are not asking him to defer the thing for a week. The request made by the honourable member for Nightcliff was 24 hours. That seems to be not unreasonable. Fix it up overnight so that we can send it out from here in its best form rather than send it out with acknowledged mistakes. That is just nonsense. We would have to oppose it.

Mr ROBERTSON: Mr Chairman, I think I owe both my colleague and, probably as a result of what I said to my colleague, the committee an apology. The minister was trying to listen to the debate while I was talking to him. I should have perhaps left it till a later date. The product I was talking about is the material called carbon tetrachloride. It is quite correctly inserted in the schedule by the honourable minister because that is the schedule in which it appears nationally. It is agreed where it ought to be. What I was leading to is that we need a certain education program in respect of that substance because it is very widely used in the electronics industry as a contact cleaner. Indeed, I have it at home as part of a kit for servicing my radios and that sort of thing. The honourable member for Nightcliff would certainly be very familiar with the substance. I am not saying it should not be there. I am saying there will be difficulties in informing industry that people will need a permit to have it.

Mr B. Collins: Don't confuse him in future. He is easily confused.

Mr ROBERTSON: It seems that I did. It is possible that there might be another technical term where more is used instead of less. If the committee wants to deal with technical things like that, which are inevitably settled in the presentation copy, then we can waste the committee's time. But I apologise to the minister. I was speaking to him while he was trying to concentrate on the debate. In fact, I am not disagreeing with it being in the schedule. I am merely pointing out that it is a very commonly-used substance in the electronics industry. It appears in schedule 7 which means that permits will be required for possession.

Amendment agreed to.

Schedules, as amended, agreed to.

Title agreed to.

Bill passed remaining stages without debate.

WATER SUPPLY AND SEWERAGE BILL
(Serial 257)
PLUMBERS AND DRAINERS LICENSING BILL
(Serial 258)

Continued from 23 November 1982.

Mr LEO (Nhulunbuy): Mr Speaker, these 2 bills result from suggested amendments to 2 former pieces of legislation that reached the second-reading stage in this Assembly. From memory, I think they were serials 182 and 183. Those amendments were largely brought about by members of this Assembly putting forward their various points of view. I will go through the amendments that I managed to spot. I believe they were addressed in the former minister's second-reading speech.

The main amendment in the Water Supply and Sewerage Bill is to clause 33(2) which would make the payment of excess water bills the responsibility of the tenant or occupier of a building or block of land rather than the owner. I suggested in my second-reading speech to the earlier bills that perhaps it would be better if occupiers or, indeed, the users of water were better acquainted with the cost of water and perhaps the best way to do that was to tickle their hip pocket consciences.

I believe I asked the former minister whether or not any of this legislation would apply in places outside a water supply district or a sewered district. I see that clauses 12 and 13 relate to water supply areas and sewered areas. I hope the minister can indicate to me whether that will have some application to my own electorate in the near future.

The Plumbers and Drainers Licensing Bill is perhaps the more important piece of legislation, not because of the amendments that have been incorporated but because it will require that plumbers practising in the Northern Territory become part of a reciprocity agreement between Australia and New Zealand. This will have a 2-way benefit. It will benefit the Northern Territory in that we will have properly qualified plumbers whose qualifications are recognised throughout Australia and New Zealand. Also plumbers trained in the Northern Territory will have their qualifications recognised throughout Australia and New Zealand. I think that that will be to the benefit of the Northern Territory generally.

Clause 39(2) now allows householders to replace washers and carry out other minor repairs and subclause (3) allows for bores to be connected for some minor reticulation and irrigation purposes. As I indicated on serials 182 and 183 when they were originally introduced, the opposition welcomes these bills and supports the amendments.

Mr HARRIS (Port Darwin): Mr Speaker, I rise to speak in support of the 2 cognate bills that we have before us. Before I make my contribution to this debate, I would like to make it quite clear that I regard very highly the protection of health of the community. This is something paramount and we should all seek to ensure it is protected. I am also very wary of the necessity to have plumbers and drainers licensed and I would go further and say that, if any of the proposals that I have been part of should cause any decrease in the degree of safety in the community, then I would withdraw those proposals immediately. I think it is a very serious matter and one that we have to address in that light. I would like to make that quite clear at the start of my comments.

The 2 bills have been around for some time, Mr Speaker. I am very pleased to see the amendments that have resulted from comments that were made on the earlier bills. I think that it is quite reasonable that we allow simple maintenance tasks to be carried out by people without requiring them to go through a process of notification and licensing or whatever. It is quite reasonable for people to be able to change tap washers without going through these processes.

We also looked at proposals to allow the handyman to do work around his yard or house. I had in mind projects such as the building of orchid houses where perhaps the framework may carry the water that would be used for irrigation or the building of a fish pond or installation of an irrigation system - these types of things. It is reasonable to expect a handyman to be able to carry out such tasks. I also believe that it is necessary for us still to have control over those people. I do not like putting controls on anyone but the trouble is there are handymen and handymen, the same as tradesmen and tradesmen. Some are proficient at their work and others are not. It is still necessary to have certain controls on these handymen, and I think this is covered adequately in this bill.

We tried also to ensure that people involved in farming would not be placed in a position where their area was declared a water division or a sewerage division so that they would have to get a licensed plumber to come out and install an irrigation system. I think that would be a ridiculous proposition. I am very pleased to see that that proposal has been carried forward in these particular bills. In any situation where the Darwin water supply is not tapped, this bill will have no application. Provided there is no risk to or interference with the main supply to the community, I cannot see any problems. I am very pleased to see provisions under which mature trees at least have an option of staying with us. It is a costly option but, if someone is prepared to meet the expense, then that particular tree is able to remain. I think these amendments are sensible and realistic.

The only area that still concerns me is clause 57. I have stressed my concern to the minister and to the people involved in the drafting of this bill. I am pleased to see that amendments have been made to this particular clause so that approvals will not be able to be held up indefinitely. The clause as it was previously worded could have been used to stop high-density development and I do not believe that bureaucrats should be able to do this.

I am aware of the serious problems associated with waste disposal units.

I know that, in the city area particularly, where there are a number of restaurants and coffee shops opening up, the disposal of grease and fats through waste disposal units can cause very serious problems in sewerage systems. I would support any move to try to identify where such waste disposal units were situated. I support that wholeheartedly but I do not believe that the method laid down in the bill for finding out where these units are is workable.

Clause 57(3) says: 'Where, at the commencement of this act, a water disposal unit or bidet is installed in premises, the owner of the premises shall, within 3 months after that commencement, notify the director in writing of that installation'. If that is not complied with there is a penalty of \$500. In the debate on the earlier bill, I indicated that I could not see how that could be made to work. It would require a massive education program to make people realise that, once this became law, it would be necessary to notify the director in writing that one of these waste disposal units had been installed. There are thousands of them today. I believe the responsibility should be on the government and not on the owner of a building who has had a unit installed for 2 or 3 years.

I believe that the government could carry out a survey. I realise that a survey could be expensive but I do not believe it will compare with the cost of an education program to tell people that they will be required to notify the director that one of these machines has been installed. If it is thought that all that is necessary is passing this in the Legislative Assembly and the media publishing an item stating that, from such and such a date, it will be necessary to notify in writing that one of these things has been installed, I do not believe that it will work at all.

I have looked specifically at the inner city area and there are very serious problems associated with the use of these machines. I am not denying that at all. The only way to find out effectively where these machines are is to get into those areas which have been identified. Even if it is a matter of going from shop to shop or whatever to find out, it will be a worthwhile exercise and something that will bring results. I feel that, the way this legislation stands at the moment, not only would it be impossible to administer, but it would not achieve the required results. That is the only area I am concerned about as far as this particular bill is concerned. The initiative should come from government. A survey of problem areas will ascertain the number of these waste disposal units in those areas.

In closing, I would like to say that, as far as licensing and regulation of plumbers and drainers is concerned, I have left that entirely up to those people who are involved in those industries. They are the people who will be affected directly and they should make the comment. Particularly in situations where uniform standards are to be met, they are the people who know what the standards are and they know how the industries will react to the various recommendations that have been made.

The amendments that have come forward here are reasonable and sensible. I query whether or not I support what they seek to do as far as the waste disposal units are concerned - I query if in fact that will work - but otherwise I support the legislation.

Mrs LAWRIE (Nightcliff): Mr Speaker, I have only one specific problem with the Water Supply and Sewerage Bill, and I speak from bitter personal experience. Clause 61 deals with trees and shrubs and prescribes that, where an owner has a tree within 1.5 m of a sewerage easement and roots have entered the sewerage pipe, the owner will repair the sewer and restore the surface condition of his land,

and adjoining land, if necessary, at his own expense. There is just one small problem that members representing inner city electorates may be interested to hear about. The sewerage pipes in Nightcliff, Rapid Creek, Stuart Park and, I believe, some areas in Port Darwin are old, substandard ...

Mrs O'Neil: That applies to Fannie Bay.

Mr Smith: And Millner.

Mrs LAWRIE: ... and Fannie Bay and Millner and other electorates. I will leave it to honourable members to espouse their own causes.

The old earthenware pipes that were laid over 20 years ago are fracturing now because of old age and not simply because of tree roots. They fracture with the passage of time. They are not PVC. Because of the nature of the material they carry, they attract tree roots. There are very healthy trees growing in those areas. The owner or the occupier of land where there is one of these easements can be up for a substantial amount of money under this legislation or, indeed, presently. What is not expressed in this legislation anywhere is that the existing sewerage system should be brought up to a modern standard before these strictures are applied. When the Department of Transport and Works finds it is necessary to replace some of these old pipes, it uses PVC pipes which do not attract tree roots, do not fracture and do not cause the same problem. But the older areas of Darwin, and perhaps Alice Springs - I do not know about Tennant Creek and Katherine - have what are now substandard pipes, owned by the Crown, which cause problems for which, under this legislation, the poor, hapless occupant will have to pay.

Mr D.W. COLLINS (Alice Springs): Mr Speaker, I would say at the outset that there are many aspects of these 2 bills that I welcome very strongly. I am pleased to note that, in these 2 new bills which replace those which were debated in this Assembly at some length, considerable improvements have been made. I particularly welcome those which relate to home owners and occupiers and give them greater freedom to do certain things about their own castles. The truth of the old saying that man's home is his castle has been somewhat eroded these days. In fact, in the Australian on Monday, there was an article on Karl Marx and the new federal Minister for Science was quoted as talking about how many ways a man's castle has been eroded. I am pleased to see that these changes allow a man to be a bit more in command of his own castle.

You will remember, Mr Speaker, that the previous bill allowed an owner-occupier only to change a washer in his tap and that was as far as he could go. I am very pleased to see that he will be allowed to repair existing cold water plumbing provided he uses materials which are of a similar or better standards to the damaged materials. The bills before us lay down a code of standards which will be upgraded as newer and better materials become available. That is certainly very welcome and will be policed easily by ensuring that the people who stock plumbing supplies only stock those standard materials. Thus the problem will be overcome. The other thing that we have to watch is the quality of workmanship and see that it meets the plumbing code. I note also that repairs to cold water plumbing do not have to be inspected or notified to anyone.

I am pleased to note also that the installation of drip irrigation is allowed provided the connection is only to an outside tap and there is a barrier between the irrigation system and the water supply. I have been assured also that new work outside of the house could be done by the owner-occupier. However, there is one proviso there. When he connects to the water supply, he has to employ an advanced plumber to make the connection and also have the job inspected.

There are concerns which remain with me. They are not only mine. I express them on behalf of other people who have looked at this bill. I believe it is my duty as a member to express those concerns although I do not believe that I will get much further than what has been achieved so far for the home handyman.

There is an inconsistency in what I have just spoken about. For example, an iron pipe rusts and springs a leak. There is nothing to stop the handyman obtaining a new plastic pipe, which is very easy to use, to replace the old pipe. The system has been open to the elements. It could pick up contamination although I find that very difficult to believe actually because the pressure is inside and moving out. It is difficult to imagine contamination getting in there. However, it must be repaired and that can be done without inspection or checking. If the handyman wants to extend the line to install another tap so that he does not have such long hoses for his garden, he must get someone to break the line for him and join it up. For that he will need to call an advanced plumber and an inspector. It is difficult for me to reconcile those 2 particular cases.

Clause 38 specifies who can contract to do plumbing and draining work for fee or for love. We have the exception of the owner-occupier who is an advanced plumber or drainer or both. It takes 7 years minimum to become an advanced plumber and drainer. It involves a 3-year apprenticeship, an examination and then another 2-year training period before a person becomes a journeyman. A journeyman needs an extra 2 years under an advanced plumber and must sit for more examinations before becoming an advanced plumber and drainer. The examinations involve management qualifications which are no doubt desirable. Some would suggest that it is a little impertinent to demand that of someone. Finally, the tradesman enters the business world and can run things for himself.

Licensing is a good thing but I would suggest that there is no real guarantee that, after 7 years of training, a person will do a good job. I think this is tacitly recognised in the bill by the requirement for inspection. If the licence was all that is necessary to guarantee that the work would be done to the highest possible standards, then there would be no need for inspection. It suggests that there is no foolproof guarantee. Poor work is more often related to fraud than to lack of ability. There are laws which apply to fraud.

As we have said, anyone with less than an advanced plumber's and drainer's certificate cannot, for reward or otherwise, do jobs which the handyman or owner-occupier is permitted to do around the house. I do not think it is in the spirit of what we are trying to achieve to say, for example, that a dear old lady of 75 years who is an owner-occupier can attempt to do certain plumbing work that her journeyman grandson cannot legally do for her. The basic aim of the legislation is that we are interested in the safety of our water supply and the disposal of waste materials. I would suggest that there is more than one way of achieving this, particularly in the home situation. Outside the home situation, the government has considerable control anyway by only letting contracts for public works to people who have the qualifications and the reputation and who can be checked out.

However, I am particularly interested in the home situation. I believe that we could achieve the same result with a system of inspectors-cum-advisers who actually serve the handyman and are paid for by the handyman. It would require the proviso that, before there is any connection to the water or sewerage system, the work must be thoroughly inspected and passed by the inspector. If the job is not done properly, the inspector says: 'It is not right here. You

must do this, this and that'. That is where he becomes an adviser. In fact, he could be an adviser before anybody even started. A person could be advised by the inspector and pay for his time. The user will be paying for it. He will be doing a lot of work himself. He would not be outside the law. Provided the inspector passed the work, I do not see any difference in the system except that it would save a lot of money for the handyman. What is the difference between an untrained person working under a journeyman who, in turn, is working under an advanced plumber who, in essence, is working under the inspector, and an untrained person or handyman doing the job working under the inspector? It does not matter who does the job as long as the job is done correctly and is inspected.

Mr Dondas: Why should an inspector do a handyman's job for him?

Mr D.W. COLLINS: He is not really doing the job. He is giving advice.

The implications of this bill in terms of cost to the owner are fairly large. Only the other day, a friend of mine who owns some flats had his work done through an agency. He showed me a bill for \$129 to repair 3 leaking taps. Licensed plumbers know how to charge.

Another area of concern that has been put to me concerns remote areas where there is no advanced plumber. One suggested to me is the little town of Batchelor. One fellow has a property there and a handyman carries out any minor plumbing repairs. If he is to obey this particular law, as I am sure he will, he will have to drag out an advanced plumber. There is no point sending an apprentice to do the job because the apprentice must be supervised. It all boils down to having an advanced plumber and then an inspector. I see considerable administrative difficulties and a tremendous amount of time and cost to a person who is trying to keep within the law in a remote area. I am told Batchelor will have water and sewerage.

I am sure that there are people who welcome this bill, particularly those qualified to be advanced plumbers. It will give them some degree of protection from competition. I am sure the bureaucrats will be happy too. There will be a few more public servants along the line. Unfortunately, I believe that we will upset a considerable number of handymen who will be breaking the law if they continue to do plumbing work. You only have to go to a plumbing supply shop on a Saturday morning to see just how many people are looking after themselves. I suggest that one person known to a few of us who might be upset would be Bert Kelly.

Mr SMITH (Millner): Mr Speaker, it is very difficult to follow the honourable member for Alice Springs. I will attempt to keep my comments brief and sensible.

I have some concern about the proposal to make the occupiers of premises liable for excess water charges. I speak of these concerns in relation to my own electorate which, to a large extent, has become a staging suburb to the northern suburbs electorates. There is a considerable turnover of people within my electorate. It seems to me that there may be a danger that the administrative costs for the Department of Transport and Works in administering this new scheme could be quite considerable. I would have been a bit happier if there had been a few more details supplied by the sponsor of the bill as to what was envisaged in terms of additional costs in administering this change.

I would like to support particularly what is probably a minor area in the bill: the taking of the code of workmanship out of the regulations and giving the power to the director to issue changes in the code of workmanship from time

to time. I come from a plumbing family, not that you would know it and not that I have any plumbing skills. Certainly, there have been dramatic changes in the technology of plumbing and draining over the last few years and I am quite certain that these changes will continue to occur. It is reasonable and sensible that flexibility be given to the director to take account of these changes as they occur and not have to go through the process of making changes by regulation.

The third area that I wanted to comment on briefly concerns the disposal of noxious liquids. The bill quite properly says that, if you have to dispose of noxious liquids, there are certain limitations. In fact, one has to obtain the permission of the relevant authority to do so. Obviously, that is quite sensible and it is something that we would all support. However, the problem, as I understand it, is that there are no clearly defined alternative mechanisms for the disposal of noxious liquids at present. There is a Dangerous Goods Act which was assented to on 9 January 1981. I notice on the Notice Paper for later discussion in this Assembly there are amendments to that act. I am informed that no regulations have been proclaimed under the Dangerous Goods Act as yet and that currently makes the act unworkable. I am also informed that there is presently a submission going forward to Cabinet on regulations to accompany the act. I think it is an urgent requirement that Cabinet look at this matter quickly and produce regulations to accompany the act so that we will have proper and safe disposal methods for noxious liquids.

Finally, the Millner area, like longer-established areas, has many problems with sewerage lines. These problems were brought home to me most forcibly in the recent period of heavy rain. I had a number of approaches from constituents whose sewerage lines were not operating because they had been flooded by storm water. I understand that the Department of Transport and Works has a budget allocation for work in the Millner area this year. I intend to ask the minister what progress has been made in spending that money in the Millner area. However, I would like to take this opportunity to urge the department, in carrying out the work, to be most careful in the way it goes about making contact with the residents and entering onto property. I know that a number of residents have built over their easements and, legally, there is no excuse for this. Certainly, I am convinced that, in a number of cases, this was done in genuine ignorance. The buildings are not necessarily formal buildings but have been designed to improve the appearance of the yard. I am thinking particularly of a couple of quite large aviaries in the backyards of Millner houses. It would be a pity if some arrangements could not be entered into to save those aviaries in this sewerage rehabilitation process. With those comments, Mr Speaker, I reiterate my support for the bill.

Mrs PADGHAM-PURICH (Tiwi): Mr Speaker, in rising to support these 2 cognate bills this afternoon, I must say at the outset that I was overpowered by the minutiae of the clauses in both bills. I must applaud the meticulous attention to detail of the draftsman. I found them a little bit difficult and convoluted to read but, after a little bit of attention, all became clear. I hope that, when they are read and administered by the relevant people and when they are read by the people in the trade, they will prove successful. It has been said to me that we must not lose sight of the wood for the trees. I find it rather ironical that we have such minute details describing the registration of plumbers and drainers. There is more detail than is contained in legislation relating to the registration of any professional people in the Northern Territory. However, looking at it very realistically, plumbers are just as important as doctors. One group deals with one aspect of human health and the other one with another aspect of human health.

I was particularly pleased to note that the 2 new bills take note of the

particular conditions of the people in the rural area. They are not to be overpowered by regulations and will still be able to manage their own affairs regarding plumbing and draining provided their properties are not connected to the government water supply.

My remarks today relate mainly to the Water Supply and Sewerage Bill but I will touch briefly on the Plumbers and Drainers Licensing Bill. I was pleased to see clause 13: 'Subject to subsection (3), the board shall furnish to the minister, not later than 31 December in each year, a report on its operations during the year ending on the preceding 30 September'. This is required to be tabled in the Legislative Assembly within 6 sitting days of the Assembly. I hope that this is followed through exactly. I am a member of the committee which deals with reports and tabled papers. Although most of the reports are up to date now, not so very long ago, we were dealing with annual reports 2 and 3 years old. That was absolutely ridiculous. What is the point of having an annual report if we have to consider 2 years' reports at the same time. If any discussion arises from that particular report, it is all old hat by the time we receive it.

I queried the certificates of competency of plumbers and drainers. There are 2 periods of 5 years and 1 period of 4 years mentioned. As it was explained to me, it takes much less time to qualify to be an adequate drainer than it does to be an adequate plumber. I understand that this time of 4 years may be reduced even further. No doubt the legislation will have to be implemented first to see how it works before this will come about.

There is a typographical error in clause 27 which I pointed out to the draftsman. It is only a very small matter and it does not alter the sense of the clause.

I was rather concerned - and I hope that it does not arise in the administration of this legislation - with the hearings that plumbers and drainers have to attend if they have done the wrong thing in their trade. There is the possibility of their registration card or licence being cancelled. As I read the legislation, it appears to me that the hearing implies that the journeyman or the tradesman has definitely committed the offence and therefore he could not be proved innocent. It appears that no regard is paid to the possibility of the tradesman or journeyman being innocent. I hope that, when the legislation is in operation, the inspectors will not come down like a ton of bricks on tradesmen for first minor infringements of the legislation. No doubt, common sense will prevail. I hope that a person will have reasonable warning before he is brought before a hearing because, once he is brought before a hearing, the legislation does not take any account of his being innocent. His registration card or licence may be cancelled, suspended or he may have a warning issued to him. I hope that good sense will prevail in the administration of this legislation.

Part V relates to offences. Clause 38, carrying out of work when unlicensed, relates to the rural area. Clause 39 deals with the non-application of clause 38. Work can be carried out in a water supply area or a water district where the installation is or is intended to be connected to a bore on that land and not connected to the government water supply. I do not want to see my constituents penalised at all. I want them to be treated equally with other people having regard to public health. If they decide to stay with their own bores as their source of water and not tap into the government water supply, they should be permitted to make their own plumbing and water supply arrangements as this bill says they can.

Turning to the Water Supply and Sewerage Bill, clause 4 relates to sewerage

districts, water districts, sewerage areas and water supply areas. The rural area is a water control area under the Control of Waters Act which relates to the siting of bores and septic tanks. The water district in the rural area is the planning area too. It refers to government control over plumbing work if connected to the government water supply. I understand that no parts of the outer rural area have been declared water supply areas as yet although government reticulated water has been connected to certain small areas. No doubt parts of the outer rural areas - I am talking about the area from the 15-mile out - will be declared water supply areas. When this does happen, I hope that the continuity of supply of water to the people in the rural area will be the same as that to the people in town and not be subject to the whims of the users in the city. When there has been a heavy usage of water in the city area and the storage capacity has not been sufficient, the people in the rural area have suffered in the past. Their water supply has often been reduced to a trickle. This usually happened in the Dry when they most needed water. I understand that the village centre at Humpty Doo will probably be declared a water supply area in the near future also.

As far as I can make out, there are no plans to declare the rural area a sewerage district because, to my knowledge, there are no sewerage areas out there. The village centre at Humpty Doo may be declared a sewerage area and perhaps the minister will declare a sewerage district there.

I was a bit concerned at the definition of an 'owner'. To my way of thinking, it left in limbo anybody who had a lease of less than 5 years. However, I understand that it is implied that the person is a tenant. If the person has a lease over 5 years, he becomes an owner. The owner pays the basic rate for the water and the tenant pays the excess. This is fair because, if the tenant has to pay the excess water rates, he will be a little more circumspect and husband his water resources better and benefit the whole community.

Clause 11 relates to notice of operations. It appeared to me that the director could go on to property and do certain things to sewer lines without having an easement granted. I was told that it was not necessary to have an easement to put in a drain or to do work in that area. If the owner objects most strongly, I understand the director can make an order that the land be acquired.

I was concerned that clause 14 indicates that radio is to be the medium of distribution of information regarding water restriction times. However, looking at it sensibly, not everybody in the Territory receives TV and perhaps not everybody receives local newspapers. Therefore, radio would be the most suitable medium to convey news about water shortages and restrictions.

Clause 16 relates to an application for a service pipe. I was unable to work out the difference between supply to a single residence and to multiple residences on land. However, I was told that, depending on how many residents are living in the multiple residence, the diameter of the pipe will change. The diameter of the water service pipe to a single residence will be the same but it may vary in relation to the number of flats or apartments in a multiple residence on a block of land.

Clause 18, relating to conversion from bore to the government water supply, is sensible. I am very pleased to see that people in the rural area can still do their own plumbing and sewerage work on their own blocks if they stick with their bore water. If, at some future date, they decide to change over to the Territory water supply, they will have to undergo certain inspection procedures. I have no argument against that and I do not think any sensible person would have any argument against it.

Clause 32, power to assess consumption, puzzled me a little. Clause 32(1)(b) says: 'Where water which had already passed through the meter has been lost due to a leakage in the Territory-owned part of the service, the minister may assess the consumption of water by a consumer'. Legally, a person cannot tamper with a water meter. I could not understand how, once the water had passed through the meter, there still could be a leakage for which the person could be billed. I am told that there are male and female parts which form a join next to the meter and this is very prone to leaking. This is in the meter capsule so the ordinary consumer cannot touch it but, if it does leak, he should not be penalised. By this legislation, he will not have to pay for the water that leaks there.

Clause 40 relates to a 'commence work' notice. Prior to plumbing work being done in a building, one has to make application for the work to be carried out. I cannot see why it is still necessary to apply for a 'commence work' notice. Everybody knows that such plumbing work is done before the main part of the house is built. If it is necessary to correct this plumbing work later on, major breaking down of the building is necessary. If one has competent plumbers and drainers working and one has sufficient faith in their qualifications, surely it is not necessary to know when they want to commence work so that the inspector can be breathing over their shoulders all the time.

I was a bit concerned that clause 44, inspection of materials, penalised people in the rural area. However, I find it does not. It relates to plumbing materials on sale in shops. At the moment, the Northern Territory does not have any standards to which plumbing materials for sale or supply have to comply. We take the plumbing standards of the states and apply them to the Northern Territory and buy our fixtures and fittings according to those standards. No doubt, at some time in the future, the Northern Territory will have its own standards control, but I think it will sit lightly on the plumbing trade.

I was pleased to see there will be control of trade waste. Perhaps the Northern Territory is not a large manufacturing region at the moment but I hope, in the future, the manufacturing industries will grow. Unfortunately, however, with such industries the amount of waste material will increase. Whilst we must have manufacturing growth, we must take care also to control the output of trade waste from particular industries so that not only industry proceeds satisfactorily but the environment is protected from waste.

Clauses 37, 38, 39, 40, 41 and 53 relate to the rural area. I reiterate my pleasure that this legislation takes into account my constituents there.

Clause 49(3) and clause 75 seem to contradict each other. By clause 49, the director may relocate or divert a sewer if it goes under the birdcage mentioned by the honourable member for Millner but the person who is responsible for this diversion, because he built something near or over a sewer, is responsible for any extra expense involved. Under clause 75, the approach is not so lenient. It says that the person has to remove the building structure or other thing within such period as is specified in the notice. I hope that, when this is administered, the relevant minister or director will not direct arbitrarily that structures erected inadvertently over easements must be demolished. I hope that there will be some consultation with the owner of the land about the structure.

I conclude my remarks, Mr Speaker, by saying that this legislation has my support, and I think it will meet with the approval of people living in the rural area.

Mr STEELE (Transport and Works): Mr Speaker, I seek leave of the Assembly to take charge of these bills through all remaining stages.

Leave granted.

Mr STEELE (Transport and Works): Mr Speaker, legislation on this subject first came before the Assembly in February last year. It has been subjected to a fairly rigorous examination by industry and people concerned with plumbing and, of course, by legislators who have examined it. I was pleased to receive comments from everybody here today.

The member for Nhulunbuy spoke about the effect the amendments will have there. He also spoke about clause 33, power to assess. The water and sewerage systems serving Nhulunbuy are owned and operated by Nabalco. During the debate in the Assembly on 26 February 1981, the Chief Minister stated, amongst other things, that the government has nothing to do with the provision of or charging for water and sewerage services in Nhulunbuy. The water and sewerage charges in Nhulunbuy are set by the corporation which is funded by Nabalco. While the government has no control over the water and sewerage charges in Nhulunbuy, it does make an infrastructure payment to the Nhulunbuy corporation and Nabalco. As my colleagues have stated on a number of occasions, the Northern Territory government would welcome Nhulunbuy achieving the status of a self-governing Territory town under the Local Government Act. Indeed, the government is continuing negotiations with the joint venturers to that end. It is anticipated that resolution of the complex issues involved will take some time. It is clear that the honourable member is not suggesting that Nabalco's water and sewerage system in Nhulunbuy is of an inferior standard to similar systems elsewhere in the Territory. However, when the town is brought under the umbrella of the Local Government Act, it will then be possible to look at extending the provisions of these bills to apply to water and sewerage systems in Nhulunbuy.

The member for Port Darwin was enthusiastic about the legislation and offered his support in the best interests of public health. He commented on the flexibility provided for the handyman to work in his own backyard and also for work on water supplies from bores. He went on at length about the effect of clause 57 which deals with waste disposal units. I give him an assurance that the department will take steps to register its own information in respect of waste disposal units. Every opportunity will be given to property owners and unit dwellers to provide that information without penalty in the first instance. I think that is only fair.

The member for Nightcliff spoke about clause 61 concerning old sewerage pipes. I understand that clause 61 does not provide any new conditions that affect landholders. The requirements are similar to those under the old legislation. I sympathise with her about the problems of trees encircling sewerage pipes and the renewal costs.

Mr Speaker, the member for Alice Springs gave his support, although he was concerned somewhat about the status of a partly-trained plumber who might do some work for his 75-year-old grandmother. Obviously, no legislation ever produced anywhere will stop people doing work for someone in the situation he described. He said: 'This would put outside the law many people who are interested in being handymen in respect to plumbing and draining'. Mr Speaker, there is no yardstick except an arbitrary one in consideration of these factors. There is no half-way measure. Either we must go all the way and have licensed plumbers or not have licensed plumbers.

The conditions we have accepted have been around for about 10 years except that the licensing conditions will now be law. In fact, if I could just go through some notes, the proposed bills provide that minor maintenance can be carried out by an owner on his own property provided the work does not extend or alter the original design, the materials used are of at least comparable standard to those replaced and the whole job is workmanlike and satisfies the code on quality of work.

In May 1982, the situation in southern cities was researched and it was found that, in Perth, Melbourne, Sydney and Brisbane, there is a total ban on plumbing of any nature by a person other than a qualified and licensed plumber. Adelaide's law prohibits non-licensed persons from hot water plumbing and is silent on the cold water plumbing question. However, the standards people in Adelaide are working towards a complete ban such as operates in other capital cities. Mr Speaker, we are not doing anything different from what exists in the rest of Australia. It seems to follow from the above that, in most states, the changing of a washer or other maintenance work by non-qualified persons is not permitted. However, spokesmen in both Perth and Sydney said they would not discourage a person from changing a washer as this was in line with their interests in conserving water. The approach taken in the bills with regard to do-it-yourself plumbing is thought to be a realistic and progressive one whilst not representing any threat to public health.

The member for Millner raised some interesting examples of problems which are experienced in his electorate with the application of these laws, particularly the application of maintenance and replacement of sewerage pipes on some of those properties. In respect of buildings that are placed above easements, I think the responsibility must rest with the owner of the property. All plans that I am aware of have easements indicated and I can only say that we hope that people will apply a degree of common sense and courtesy in the application of any of these regulations. He asked a question about the budget allocation for Millner and there is a report, which I am due to read in the very near future, on the application of those funds to the renewal of pipes in the Millner area. Mr Speaker, I will be looking at that matter very sympathetically.

The member for Tiwi spoke at length about the rural area considerations as they affect her and her electorate. She was most concerned about the administration of the act. I will not try to deal with the various aspects that she raised but she was concerned that inspectors would come down like a ton of bricks. Mr Speaker, I share that view and I will send a copy of her remarks to the Director of the Water Division and ask him if he would furnish a copy to the inspectors in charge of the administration of this legislation.

Motion agreed to; bills read a second time.

Mr STEELE (Transport and Works) (by leave): Mr Speaker, I move that the bills be now read a third time.

Mr LEO (Nhulunbuy): Mr Speaker, I seem to have missed the point. I appreciate that the minister's answer was prepared in good faith. However, the Plumbers and Drainers Licensing Bill relies upon certain clauses of the Water Supply and Sewerage Bill, particularly the application clause, clause 4: 'This act applies to, and in relation to, work carried out in the sewerage districts and water districts declared or deemed to have been declared under section 10 of the Water Supply and Sewerage Act or in sewered areas declared or deemed to be sewered areas under section 12 of the act and water supply areas declared under section 13 of the act'. The legislation's application is to those areas which come under the Water Supply and Sewerage Bill which means that none of the

plumbers in Nhulunbuy will necessarily have to be members of the Australia-New Zealand Reciprocity Agreement. I understand it also means that any apprentices trained over there will have questionable trades certificates. I ask the minister to clear that point up before the bill is passed.

Mr STEELE (Transport and Works): Mr Speaker, I am advised that the 2 questions are unrelated in respect of the qualifications of apprentices and the licensing of tradesmen in the Nhulunbuy area. They still have to comply with the licensing requirements of the bill.

Motion agreed to; bills read a third time.

SOCCER FOOTBALL POOLS AMENDMENT BILL
(Serial 266)

Continued from 17 November 1982.

Mr LEO (Nhulunbuy): Mr Speaker, the main amendment is to section 91 of the act to increase the percentage payments to the government by 2.5% for the first \$100m. I do not know what the subscription payments in the Territory are. I doubt they would be \$100m yet. If they go over \$100m, then the subscription payments increase to 35%.

It is a result of a change in the Soccer Football Pools. I believe the pools company has a brand new game to play. The new percentage relates to the duty required by the government on subscriptions to Sports Lotto. Mr Speaker, the bill has the support of the opposition.

Motion agreed to; bill read a second time.

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

Motion agreed to; bill read a third time.

REAL PROPERTY AMENDMENT BILL
(Serial 267)

Continued from 23 November 1982.

Mr B. COLLINS (Opposition Leader): Mr Speaker, this bill is to amend the schedule in the Real Property Act to update fees paid to the Registrar-General. The opposition supports the bill.

Motion agreed to; bill read a second time.

Mr ROBERTSON (Attorney-General): Mr Speaker, I seek leave to assume control of this bill.

Leave granted.

In committee:

Clause 1 agreed to.

New clause:

Mr ROBERTSON: I move amendment 143.1.

This is an update of fees. These fees are designed purely to recover costs and not as a revenue-raising measure. Nonetheless, if we are in the midst of a wages pause, I think it only reasonable that the government avoid increasing charges wherever it can. It is proposed to commence this particular act at a time commensurate with the end of the wages and prices freeze.

New clause agreed to.

Remainder of the bill taken as a whole and agreed to.

Bill passed remaining stages without debate.

PRISONS (ARBITRAL TRIBUNAL) AMENDMENT BILL
(Serial 288)

Continued from 15 March 1983.

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

The intention of this bill is to allow the appointment of a commissioner of the Australian Conciliation and Arbitration Commission to be the Chairman of the Prison Officers Arbitral Tribunal. The current act at section 11A(2)(a) specifies that a judge shall be the chairman of the tribunal. The Chief Justice has expressed the wish that his court be divested of the burden of unaccustomed duties of the tribunal. I point out, Mr Speaker, that the Police and Fire Brigade Tribunals, both of which function under a commissioner, have a most satisfactory record of service in their respective areas.

The appointment of a commissioner to this tribunal would then simply be an extension of proven and sound policy designed to deal with the increasing complexity of industrial relations issues being brought before the industrial tribunals today. More and more submissions are being made based on a wide range of industrial cases familiar to the commission but alien to judges. It is the recognition of this fact by the parties that enabled ready agreement by all concerned that a change should be made.

I stress that, in preparing to introduce this legislation, the government made full use of the consultative process. All industry parties except the prison officers wanted a sole commissioner to constitute the tribunal. The government has heard the prison officers in this case and opted for a continuation of the tripartite tribunal. The only change we seek is in the appointment of a chairman.

The wording of the proposed amendment deliberately uses the word 'person' to give the minister other options if a member of the commission is not available at any time. Honourable members will be aware of the need to write into our legislation provisions that are flexible enough to cope with any contingency especially as no commissioner is yet based permanently in the Northern Territory. Mr Speaker, I commend the bill to the Assembly.

Debate adjourned.

ADJOURNMENT

Mr ROBERTSON (Attorney-General): Mr Speaker, I move that the Assembly do now adjourn.

Mr B. COLLINS (Opposition Leader): Mr Speaker, the behaviour of the Premier of our neighbour state, Queensland, on occasions does beggar the imagination but some of the behaviour of the Premier of Queensland in the past few days really has disturbed me deeply. I will not say the Premier's behaviour on a recent visit overseas infringed upon those areas for which people used to be hanged, but it certainly came within striking distance of it. I do not think any reasonable person could condone a statement which, as the chief minister of state for the state of Queensland, the premier made in a very public fashion to senior representatives of a foreign government. I think it extremely regrettable that the head of any state of this Commonwealth should - whilst on a visit overseas - say publicly to senior representatives of another country that they should not deal with the government of Australia because that government was riddled with communists and so on. I am sure most honourable members, if not all, read those highly publicised statements where the Premier of Queensland advised the government of Singapore not to deal with the government of Australia but, in fact, to deal with Queensland. I think he exceeded even himself on that occasion. But I do not think it was in the best interests of this country and I consider it a matter for some regret.

The Premier of Queensland is also known for his opposition to self-determination for the Aboriginal people of that state. That is hardly surprising when he does not appear to be able to offer that same degree of self-determination to his own wife. I noted with some interest the story on the front page of Tuesday's Age which is headlined: 'Bjelke-Petersen slams veto on plan to promote his wife Flo to the front-bench'. It is an interesting story indeed and I quote from it:

The Queensland Premier, Mr Bjelke-Petersen, yesterday vetoed plans to promote his wife, Senator Flo Bjelke-Petersen to the opposition front-bench. Mr Bjelke-Petersen told the National Party leader, Mr Doug Anthony, he did not think his wife should be given a shadow portfolio. Senator Bjelke-Petersen later endorsed her husband's judgment and said that she had not known that she had been offered a position in the shadow ministry. Mr Bjelke-Petersen spoke to Mr Anthony by telephone yesterday after reports appeared suggesting that the Opposition Leader, Mr Peacock, wanted to appoint Senator Bjelke-Petersen as opposition science spokesman. Mr Bjelke-Petersen said: 'Mr Anthony did not offer any portfolio; I got in first and said that she would not want it'. Asked about Senator Bjelke-Petersen's likely role in the state elections due in November, Mr Bjelke-Petersen said: 'I expect she will be helping me'.

Mr Bjelke-Petersen's veto of the elevation of his wife to the front-bench came just hours after he criticised the new federal Labor government for its failure to appoint more than one Queenslander to the ministry. Senator Bjelke-Petersen said she knew nothing of the shadow ministry proposal. 'I thought it was just a story in the newspapers. I knew Joh would telephone Mr Anthony in the morning. I did not know that there would be any talk of shadow portfolios. If Joh said that, he is quite right'.

Mr Speaker, during the course of last week, with my colleague, Mrs Pam O'Neil, I had the pleasure of attending the field day at the Douglas-Daly research station. I was very interested to read in the latest copy of the ADMA newsletter that the Minister for Transport and Works had opened a number of bridges adjacent to that Douglas-Daly scheme on the day we were there. I can attest to the fact that he did not. In fact, there were no government representatives there at all. Perhaps the ADMA newsletter should report what

the minister does rather than what he says he does.

Mr Speaker, I would like to congratulate all the people at Douglas-Daly for the fine work that has obviously been done at the research station. Given the exceptionally dry season we have had this year, the farms certainly look good. In respect of that, honourable members will recall that the Minister for Primary Industry flogged the fact that it had been a very late wet season. I hope, Mr Speaker, that, by making those remarks earlier, he was not trying to soften up the Northern Territory electorate for a statement from the government in due course that the returns from crops under the ADMA scheme are not going to be anywhere near the projections of the government.

One of the major themes of the field day was very clearly the need for diversification in the Northern Territory's agricultural development. Firstly, I would like to comment on the progress being made by ADMA in stage 1 of the Territory government's agricultural development program. At the Douglas-Daly field day, the agricultural economist with ADMA, Mr Michael Whereat, stated that the ADMA program was in fact now half way through stage 1. Mr Whereat said the stage 1 program involves 6 farms covering an area of approximately 70 000 ha. He said that, of these 6 farms, 4 would still require considerable development work to be undertaken in the coming dry season. This would suggest that 4 of the 6 project farms will be limited in the extent to which they can provide reasonable data on the commercial viability of the development. As I recall, the original proposal for the Douglas-Daly region was the establishment of 4 project farms. In fact, initially, there were to be only 3. According to the ADMA annual report for the year 1981-82, the Bureau of Agricultural Economics, in its inception report, noted that the proposed 3 farms represented a sub-minimal sample and recommended more farms be added. It would appear that these farms would have been added too late to be of any significance in respect of collecting data. Again, according to the authority in its 1981-82 annual report, it was stated that the BAE economic analysis of the project would probably commence in 1984 while there would be an in-house analysis of data from all farming in the area to commence during the financial year.

Mr Speaker, given that the act contains a sunset clause which provides for the termination of the Agricultural and Development Marketing Authority on 30 June 1985 and, without attempting to argue here and now why the project has been slow, the ADMA program will not be in a position to provide sufficient relevant data to allow an informed judgment to be made about the future of agricultural development in that area. On this basis, we need to look at our position now. We need to look at that sunset clause in the legislation and reassess the time required for a data base that will allow us to win the money argument we will inevitably have in Canberra. I hope that no honourable member considers that to be a reflection on the current state of the economy. We always knew, and the government knew years ago when it proposed this scheme, that getting the original proposed \$65m out of any government would be a battle. And it will be.

Mr Speaker, I have one other concern, and this also was highlighted by my recent trip to the Douglas-Daly field day. This relates to the types of crops currently being used as part of this agricultural development. I refer to sorghum. To this point, sorghum has been dominant among crops planted in the Territory and, if the statistics from the department are considered in the 1980-81 growing season and again in the 1981-82 growing season, sorghum accounts for more than 70% of the total area under crop. It is becoming increasingly apparent that the economics of sorghum production in the Northern Territory are such that the only market available to growers is the domestic market, although perhaps, following on what the Chief Minister said this morning, once the railway is in, we may be able to export sorghum to New Zealand. This means that

there are major constraints on the extent to which we can expand production. At this stage of development and agronomic research into varieties and production costs, disposal is limited to the domestic market.

If we look back to the beginning of the ADMA scheme and look to the guidelines that were then to be applied, we find that commercial viability was seen as an essential part of any agricultural development in the Top End if the industry was to become a long-term contributor to the health of the Territory's economy. If we are to have an industry of any scale here, we must be able to produce crops that are competitive in an international commodity market. The solution to our problem lies - and this was highlighted at the field day - in a significant increase in research efforts in agriculture. It is in this area that I question the performance of this government.

Mr Deputy Speaker, you may recall that, in the budget debate last year, I pointed out to the then Minister for Primary Production that he was failing to give sufficient support to research. In that speech, I pointed out some basic statistics to the minister which illustrated clearly a downgrading in the government's commitment to agricultural research. Given the concerns that not only I have but now many people have about agricultural development here, I will repeat the information for the new minister.

For the areas of the department covered by research services and research stations, the budget allocation for the financial year 1980-81 made allowance for the employment of 114 people. In the financial year 1981-82, there was an allowance for 111 people to be employed in these key research areas. However, by the end of that financial year - that is, by the end of June 1982 - there were in fact only 74 people actually working in the field of research services and on research stations. The allocation for this current financial year was for the employment of only 76 people.

The minister's response to my concern about a significant downgrading in the government's support of research in agriculture was that the 1982-83 figure represented an allowance for an increase of only 2 people in that area. Therefore, I ask the new Minister for Primary Production to consider, as a matter of urgency, the current position within the project farm in the Douglas-Daly area and to look to an adjustment in the government's stage 1 program so that we might be able to gain sufficient information to make a reasonable judgment on our future in this particular area. I would also ask the new Minister for Primary Production to very carefully consider, when forming his bid in the construction of the forthcoming Territory budget, the importance of research in this area. It must be given due financial support such that we can make the agricultural industry viable in the Northern Territory.

Mrs LAWRIE (Nightcliff): Mr Deputy Speaker, this morning the honourable member for Sanderson asked a question of the Chief Minister regarding remarks made by his Women's Adviser at an open meeting some days ago. The remarks related to the ratification of the United Nations Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women. The honourable Chief Minister did not like the question so he did not bother to answer it. He skirted around it but would not give a definitive answer to the pertinent question of whether those views expressed by Mrs Ryan, who had been invited as the adviser to the Chief Minister, were her personal views or his government's view. The honourable Chief Minister said in the final parts of his so-called reply to the question that she was always at liberty to express her personal views within the framework of the organisation. Mrs Ryan was not invited to address that meeting on International Women's Day to give us the benefit of her personal views. She was invited as the ministerial adviser, the Women's Adviser to the Chief

Minister, a highly paid and, one would have thought, prestigious position.

The honourable Chief Minister admitted also in his reply that he was not present; he was elsewhere. Then, in his generalised manner, said nobody from this Assembly was there either. Well, he is quite wrong. I wonder how he made that judgment if he was not present. I was present but not all the time because, on hearing the remarks of Mrs Ryan, I did not want to be seen to be participating in any way or to be associated with her illogical tirade. I was embarrassed by the puerile speech put forward by a senior person on the Chief Minister's personal staff. Most certainly, I did not want to appear on camera in the same frame as Mrs Ryan for fear someone would think I was endorsing any part of her remarks.

Mr Deputy Speaker, the honourable Chief Minister also stated that we must give her credit for having brought the United Nations convention to the attention of women in the Territory. What a lot of rot. The first person to bring it to the attention of the Territory was myself when I raised it as a matter of importance on 11 March 1982 and moved that this Assembly support the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women and urged the government to take all necessary steps to enable the ratification of the convention by the federal government. I then went on to quote a reply that the Chief Minister had given the Leader of the Opposition. I initiated the debate and there was participation from both sides of the Assembly. The members for Sanderson, Fannie Bay, Tiwi and the Chief Minister, amongst others, spoke. The Chief Minister's remarks were significant. He introduced his speech by saying, and I quote directly from page 2019 of the printed Hansard: 'Mr Speaker, I rise to support the motion also'.

However, let us see what his Women's Adviser said the other day. First of all, it might be interesting for honourable members to be aware that the support of the Chief Minister for the ratification of this convention was supported at the federal level by Mr Ellicott, the Minister for Home Affairs, and indeed by Senator Peter Durack. Mr Ellicott, as Minister for Home Affairs, wrote to the local Women's Electoral Lobby in Darwin some time ago stating that he was very pleased to sign the convention on Australia's behalf and that he considered it to be a major step towards raising the status of women. I am quoting from his letter: 'In moving towards ratification, the Commonwealth will work in cooperation with the state and Northern Territory governments. As you are aware, the convention covers the wide range of topics many of which fall within traditional state and Territory legislative competence'. He said that all Australian governments were consulted before the decision to sign was taken, further consultations would be held with a view to ratification and he looked forward to a cooperative effort. That is very good, Mr Deputy Speaker. That is exactly what the women of the Territory were hoping they would hear.

A further letter was sent to the Women's Electoral Lobby signed by Mr Ellicott in which he again stated he had signed the convention on behalf of Australia in Copenhagen. He then said, and I quote directly from his letter: 'I am sure you will be pleased to learn that the Attorney-General, Senator Peter Durack QC, announced on 9 November 1980 that, at the meeting of Ministers on Human Rights held in Alice Springs on 6 November 1980, all state and Territory governments agreed to work actively towards ratification of the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women. A copy of the press release is attached'. It just said what the honourable minister said in his letter.

We had no lesser person than the Attorney-General, along with the Minister for Home Affairs, accepting the convention and announcing that all state and

territory governments agreed to work actively towards its ratification. Yet at the meeting held on International Women's Day, the Chief Minister's own adviser made this astounding claim: 'The ratification of the convention is not legislation on behalf of women but a revolution in federal-state relationships. It involves the complete erosion of states' rights. Australia is at the cross-roads. We must ensure that our great nation remains free, prosperous and happy. This can only happen if people of goodwill stand up and speak out against the destructive forces openly attacking our political, social and moral institutions'.

Mr Deputy Speaker, those destructive forces, who have endorsed ratification, are no lesser personages than the Chief Minister, the Liberal Party Attorney-General and the Minister for Home Affairs. It seems a very strange way to go about putting the government's attitudes in front of women on International Women's Day.

The honourable Chief Minister on 11 March also stated: 'It is quite clear that this government does support the convention, and the support has been expressed by us to the Commonwealth on a number of occasions. No person in our society should be penalised simply because he or she is of a particular sex. My government believes in equal opportunity for all members of the community and is opposed to unfair discrimination whenever or wherever it occurs'. I congratulated the honourable Chief Minister on his enlightened and wise attitude at the time and I do so again today, unless of course his attitude has changed. But I have no reason to believe that it has. That is a statement of support which women throughout the Territory welcomed.

The honourable Chief Minister said that the members of the Legislative Assembly who happen to be female had not done much to circulate the statement or to bring it to the attention of the populace in general. That is quite incorrect. I circulated my speech, which is my prerogative, hell, west and crooked to women's organisations and to other interested parties not all of whom happen to be women. I had to wait until the printed Hansard was available to show those same interested parties other members' speeches. But the printed edited version of Hansard is a public document and that has been shown far and wide within the Territory from my office. It has been welcomed.

There was a bipartisan approach to this motion. There was no purely party political bias evident from any member. All members were working towards an aim which the women of the Territory see as commendable. Indeed, the most conservative elements in the Country Liberal Party federally see it as commendable, not to mention Dame Beryl Beaurepaire, a senior Liberal Party member of international repute, who travelled to Copenhagen with that party and recommended that the convention be signed.

All this has happened and yet the Chief Minister's Women's Adviser's final remarks, which so upset the people, particularly when they were heard on television, are as follows: 'Australia is at the crossroads. We must ensure that our great nation remains free. We, the Northern Territory, can show the way. We must lead the way and stand up and speak out about the destructive forces openly attacking our political, social and moral institutions. The community needs to take action now to stop Australia ratifying the convention'. She went on to urge people to speak personally with their elected representatives to this end. 'Speak up for the future of little Australians', she says. 'Become involved. Don't quit. We have a voice. Let's use it to ensure a safe future for Territorians and all caring Australians'. That is in the context of her remarks in the same paragraph: 'The community needs to take action now to stop Australia ratifying the convention'.

Mr Deputy Speaker, surely now the Chief Minister understands why this matter has been raised in the Assembly and why women are concerned, upset, angry and feel betrayed that the remarks which they have seen in Hansard of 11 March coming from the Chief Minister himself are now completely at odds with a statement put forward at a public forum by his own Women's Adviser who was asked to speak in that capacity.

The honourable Chief Minister ought to thank us for giving him the opportunity to again put the record straight as to his government's intentions because Senator Durack and Mr Ellicott made it quite clear. Subsequently, the Chief Minister stated that he is in favour of ratification of the convention. Of course, he said there could be problems in some parts of it and that his government would study its particular applicability to the Territory. That is what we would expect of any government: that the ramifications be thoroughly discussed. Nevertheless, it is quite clear that, at the meeting in Alice Springs, general approval for ratification was reached by the Commonwealth and all states and the Territory. Because of those approvals and his subsequent remarks, women of the Territory are now waiting to see the Chief Minister explain if he has dramatically changed his mind or, if not, how that speech could be put forward in a public forum by one of his ministerial advisers.

Mr Deputy Speaker, many people have asked me, to use the vernacular, who the hell wrote that. I did not want to apportion blame to any of the Chief Minister's speech writers most of whom I know. I really did not think they could possibly have written it. I have decided today, in coming back to the nitty-gritty of politics, that that speech could only have been written by the member for Alice Springs, Mr D.W. Collins.

Mrs PADGHAM-PURICH (Tiwi): Mr Deputy Speaker, this afternoon I intended to discuss a question from this morning as it relates to my electorate. However, I cannot let go the remarks of the honourable Leader of the Opposition when he spoke on agriculture in the Northern Territory.

I was particularly interested to hear his recommendations that the Northern Territory and its farming projects diversify and spend more money on research. I thoroughly agree with him, or at least with his adviser. I expect to hear further that he recommends also going into more rice production. That would give me a pretty good idea of who the adviser is.

Mr Deputy Speaker, even blind Freddy would know that, if we are to have agriculture going on apace, we must spend more money on research. I think this government is cognisant of that fact. I have great faith in the future of the Department of Primary Production with the appointment of a new secretary. The new Secretary of the Department of Primary Production is a man with qualifications in agricultural science. To my knowledge, he is the first person with qualifications in agricultural science to head that department since the early 1960s. Whilst I do not say that previous departmental heads have done it any harm, I feel more interest will be shown in the development of agriculture with somebody like Baden Cameron as secretary. I think that there is a new interest and enthusiasm in the department at the moment and this augurs well for all programs undertaken by the department.

Whilst I said I agree with the Leader of the Opposition that more diversification in farm projects is necessary and more money must be given to research, I also think that he must temper the remarks he made subsequent to that with a bit of common sense. He said that sorghum would not pay off and he made rather derogatory remarks about other programs instituted by ADMA and about some crops that were grown. He questioned whether they would get a market up here

and whether they would compete on world markets. I think that it is early days yet.

What will do the project a lot more good and what will do those farmers down the Douglas-Daly a lot more good is a little more enthusiasm from members of this Assembly for what they are working damned hard to produce down there. That is despite the adverse conditions that we have had recently regarding the growing season. Not only must we offer a little enthusiasm for the project to the farmers on the Douglas-Daly but we must also show common sense when we consider how the end product is to end up. I would like to see a little time expended by the Leader of the Opposition, not only to consider what should be grown at the Douglas-Daly and knocking agricultural projects that the Northern Territory government initiates but also to consider where these products go.

Recently, constituents came to see me, as did farmers from Douglas-Daly, about their concerns. The crops have been chosen with a lot of thought and we cannot go into diversification straight off. We must proceed slowly and we must give a lot of thought to how these crops will be marketed and at what price. That is very important when we are considering the grain crops from Douglas-Daly. They must not only be grown successfully by the farmer but he must have every chance of a good return from them. He must receive encouragement from the government for the money that he pays for his crops - portage, carriage and storage.

It is very important that the end consumer of the product also receives encouragement and support from the government - I do not mean handouts - in the market price for that grain. It rather concerned me in reading one of ADMA's newsletters that the price paid for grain in the Northern Territory was greater than the price that it was offered for in Adelaide. I feel that there is a discrepancy between those 2 prices. Sorghum was sold at \$141 a tonne in Adelaide and \$146 a tonne in the Northern Territory.

Whilst it is only a difference of \$5 a tonne, 99% of the time, the end users of this grain will be egg producers and pig meat producers in the Northern Territory. Most of them have kept their prices fairly constant. They have not raised their prices for a number of months. I think the egg producers have not raised their prices for 8 months. If the prices that they have to pay for their grain in the Northern Territory are greater than those paid in Adelaide, then I feel that we may be in for a rise in the price of eggs and the price of pork. This is to be deprecated in that the housewife or househusband will pay this increase in the end. That will not be to the benefit of any members who have egg-producing, egg-eating and pork-eating constituents because they will be screaming about the high prices they must pay.

Mr Deputy Speaker, it is too early to put the kibosh on any crops that are grown down the Douglas-Daly unless full regard is given to the conditions under which they are grown and unless full regard is given to the encouragement of agriculture. I believe - and I know that the government believes it too - that the only way it can be carried out is with family-orientated agriculture and not company-orientated agriculture.

The next subject on which I would like to speak this afternoon is the condition of the roads at Berrimah. No doubt honourable members are sick and tired of hearing me speak about the conditions of roads, especially at Berrimah. I was pleased to hear from the honourable minister this morning that a very important road will be upgraded shortly.

Recently, there was a meeting of residents regarding the condition of roads

at Berrimah. There will be another meeting of residents regarding the condition of roads and also regarding the main highway that will go through Berrimah. I have been hitting my head against a brick wall for a long time regarding the upgrading of roads at Berrimah. The people at Berrimah are the only people in the rural area who pay rates. I may be cynical but I expect that, when the new police complex is established, there will be no way that the Police Commissioner, senior policemen or traffic police will use those gravel roads in Berrimah. No doubt, therefore, the people in Berrimah can look forward to an upgrading of their roads to the correct standard for the rates they pay.

I was interested to hear the remarks of the honourable Minister for Community Development on the appointment of people to the advisory council to consider the subject of local government in the rural area. I have my personal views on the appointment of different people on this council. I have my personal views on the necessity for this council. I will not make those public at the moment, Mr Deputy Speaker. Only time will tell whether the advisory council will come up with the decisions that most of the people in the rural area want to hear. The advisory council has been set up to attempt to arrive at a consensus of opinion in the rural area about many facets of the question of local government. I will be looking forward to its reports and I will be following the progress with great interest.

Ms D'ROZARIO (Sanderson): Mr Deputy Speaker, I think politicians who go out of their way to alienate the goodwill and support of large sections of the electorate do so at their own ultimate cost. I was interested to read that one of the reasons for the defeat of the Liberal government last Saturday week was attributed by Miss Katherine West, a highly respected commentator on the Liberal Party, to its total lack of touch with the women's vote.

The Chief Minister has obviously treated the remarks of his ministerial adviser on women's affairs with a certain degree of flippancy. He will probably reap the cost of that attitude in due course. There were 2 ways of going about this and Mrs Ryan could have chosen either one. If she believed that she was being invited to speak personally, she could have made that point clear. People often do. When one who is in a politically sensitive position has been invited to speak at a public meeting and wishes to express personal views, it is a convention to preface one's remarks by giving some sort of disclaimer such as: 'The views that I am about to express do not reflect the views of my employer, the Chief Minister'. Mrs Ryan did not do that and that is the reason why many members of this Assembly, certainly on this side, have had representations from women in the electorate as to what the meaning of her remarks were and whether they in fact signalled a retraction of the government's previously stated support for the United Nations convention to which Mrs Ryan made reference.

Mr Deputy Speaker, I consider that I have given the Chief Minister an opportunity to distance himself from the remarks made by Mrs Ryan, but he has chosen not to do so. When Mrs Ryan made these remarks, I believe she was quite ignorant of what had already occurred in progress towards the appointment of a women's adviser. Members of this Assembly will remember that women's groups in the Northern Territory had for some time been lobbying for the appointment of a women's adviser and, prior to the appointment actually being made, they were treated to some amazing statements and performances by the Chief Minister himself. When this matter was first raised, the Chief Minister said that there was no necessity to have a women's adviser on his staff. He claimed that he had his wife who is a charming lady. The people wanted somebody who could apprise the Chief Minister of matters of specific interest to a large part of the electorate, namely, women.

Mr Everingham: Why couldn't my wife do that?

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order!

Ms D'ROZARIO: After some time, the Chief Minister relented a little and said that he intended to appoint a women's adviser. This was welcome news indeed to those who had been lobbying for the creation of the position. In due course, an appointment was announced and the groups which had been lobbying welcomed Mrs Ryan to the position, looked forward to working with her and expressed support for what she would attempt to do.

Mr Deputy Speaker, far be it from me to tell a women's adviser how to do her job. However, I would have thought that one of the first things that a women's adviser would have done would have been to examine what commitments from the government were on the public record. Obviously, Mrs Ryan did not do that because she seemed to be quite ignorant not only of the fact that the federal government signed on behalf of Australia the United Nations convention to which she referred but also of the fact that it had been debated at great length - almost a whole sitting day - a mere year ago.

Mrs Ryan could have chosen to speak for herself. I believe that, during a radio interview, she was asked whether she was speaking for herself and she said that she spoke as she saw it. She was asked: 'Do you think your comments were received appreciatively yesterday by the rally organisers?' Her response on After Eight was: 'Well, the rally organisers invited me. Now, if they expected me to get up and speak in favour of socialism, then they made a mistake. I am not in favour of socialism, and I spoke as I felt'. She did speak as she felt. She was not being asked to speak about socialism. She was asked to participate in a significant event: the commemoration of International Women's Day. I do not think that anyone appointed to such a highly sensitive and prestigious post could be of any doubt whatsoever that she was not being asked to speak personally but rather in her capacity of Women's Adviser to the Chief Minister.

These remarks have caused a great deal of disquiet amongst women's groups in the community. There were some amazing statements made by Mrs Ryan. Among other things, she alleged that, under the convention, a committee of foreign nationals had been given sweeping powers over our government and that it would oversee our progress towards the kind of unisex society that was ideal in the USSR. Not only did she make such remarks but, when she was invited to expand on her remarks on a radio show, she referred to a program which is of great interest to women in my electorate, namely, child care.

I think that any members of this Assembly who have had much to do not just with women's groups but with young families in their electorates would realise that the funding of child care centres has been an extremely sensitive and delicate issue. It has had its ups and downs. Funding has been withdrawn and reinstated for certain facilities, and all kinds of events have occurred to make these people feel extremely insecure about their additional funding. Mrs Ryan did not help because, when asked whether she agreed with child care centres, she said that she believed that, if any subsidies were to be paid for child care, those subsidies should go to the parents and not to the child care centres.

Quite apart from all the amazing political philosophies that she propounded on 8 March, her belief that subsidies should not be paid to child care centres has caused enormous disquiet in my electorate. If the Chief Minister or the Minister for Community Development would assure me that this advice from the Women's Adviser has not been accepted, I would be very pleased indeed. Already this morning I have given the opportunity to the Chief Minister to do so.

I thought it was rather ironic that, in talking about this army of foreign nationals who are to invade our country and tell us how to run it, Mrs Ryan was herself completely ignoring the fact that elected representatives have already made some arrangements in respect of ratifying the United Nations convention. Mrs Ryan said on her radio interview: 'I think the fact that, if Australia signs the treaty, foreign countries can, with an objection made about the treatment of any situation in Australia, form a committee, and they in turn can come in here and investigate and make judgments over the government of the state'. Isn't that ironical? Mrs Ryan obviously objects to the fact that some one should come and make a judgment on a government. However, she feels no inhibition at all about the fact that this matter was dealt with in the Assembly and supported by the government and all parties in this Assembly. She is now making a judgment on our resolution by calling in a public place for the rejection of this treaty. Let us make no mistake about it, Mr Deputy Speaker, Mrs Ryan said: 'The community needs to take action now to stop Australia ratifying the convention'. Let us be in no doubt whatsoever about what Mrs Ryan was speaking.

I hope that the Chief Minister will take the opportunity to disabuse the electorate of any view that it may hold - and it can be forgiven for holding this view - that Mrs Ryan was speaking on behalf of the government. It is sincerely hoped by all members in this Assembly who have worked very hard indeed to obtain recognition for the position of a women's adviser that advice of this sort to the Chief Minister will be rejected out of hand.

Mr EVERINGHAM (Chief Minister): Mr Deputy Speaker, I have so many things to say this afternoon that I do not really know where to begin. Perhaps, I should start with a brief reference to the remarks of the opposition - which I thought were well dealt with by the honourable member for Tiwi - in relation to the Agricultural Development and Marketing Authority. I too have heard the impassioned words of the Leader of the Opposition's principal adviser on agriculture. I have heard these every time I go to a field day or anywhere near the upper Adelaide River research establishment. He is an unofficial adviser, in this case, but well meaning nonetheless. I am sure that that gentleman, who acts so officiously for the Leader of the Opposition, would like to see considerable research spread over all sorts of fields.

The fact is that the Northern Territory has only so much money that it can spend on research. I suggest that, if comparisons were made between the funds that the Northern Territory spends on research of this nature and funding by other state governments, it would be found that the Northern Territory would spend relatively more. The fact is that we have to concentrate our research rather than spread it. In my humble opinion, not being a technical or a scientific man but at least someone who can make judgments, our research in the past has been spread out like a flood and has wasted itself away, in many cases, on the desert sand. We must concentrate our research attack in the future and not allow it to be frittered away as has been the case so often in the past.

As to the sunset clause, the government is perfectly well aware of this. It was put in by way of a review mechanism to enable this Assembly and the government to look at the worthwhileness of ADMA after a period of 5 years. We will certainly be reviewing the situation well in advance of the 5-year period. I do not think that anyone at this stage would not say that, on the face of it, there would be a need to continue the work of ADMA for at least a further period of years.

Mr Deputy Speaker, it does the member for Nightcliff little credit to pile ridicule upon ridicule or sarcasm upon sarcasm on the person who occupies the office of my Women's Adviser - someone who cannot be here to answer the ridicule

and sarcasm of the honourable member for Nightcliff. It is very easy to attack someone in her absence like that, but it does the member very little credit. The government's attitude is and always has been quite clear, as I made plain this morning. The government supports the treaty; it has never changed its attitude.

I think the remarks of the member for Sanderson are hardly worth dealing with. She is incensed that someone else should dare pass judgment on a resolution passed here. The implication is: the hide of someone to question the judgment of the Northern Territory Legislative Assembly in passing a resolution. Well, what has happened to freedom of speech? I think that is what some people are worried about: once a resolution is passed here, no one can question it. That is what the honourable member for Sanderson said.

Mr B. Collins: No, she didn't.

Ms D'Rozario: Why don't you listen?

Mr EVERINGHAM: She jolly well did.

Ms D'Rozario: Why don't you read Hansard tomorrow?

Mr EVERINGHAM: I suggest that honourable members refer to Hansard tomorrow because it will certainly show that the honourable member for Sanderson believes that no one should question anything once the Assembly passes a resolution.

It is rather disappointing to many people in northern Australia - loosely described as that area stretching from the Queensland border across to, say, Geraldton in Western Australia - that only 1 minister in the new federal government has been selected from that area. It is a shame. There may well be good reasons for it. Mr Hayden is the 1 minister selected from the area. He was elected by his peers, we must remember, and not selected by the ALP leadership. The other significant fact is that almost all the other ministers are from the southern cities. I hope that is not an indication of the new ALP government's thinking. I hope that is not an omen for the Northern Territory.

Mr Deputy Speaker, I understand funding required this year for the Alice Springs to Darwin rail link is \$15m. Certainly, that was the figure mentioned to me by the previous Minister for Transport and by ANR officials. Apparently, to get the railway construction under way this year will require \$15m. Our new Prime Minister has spoken of candour and frankness in his dealings with the Australian people. I certainly support him. I want to see candour and frankness in government dealings with the people.

The honourable Leader of the Opposition claimed there is a massive \$10 000m deficit and talked to us of considerable restraint. The Prime Minister said that documents and projections will be made available for consideration by delegates to the National Economic Summit Conference. He made that commitment in his original telex. He did not indicate exactly when the documents would be received. I am concerned that - and I say this of the former Liberal National Party government - at premiers' conferences, documents were often handed round immediately before one was expected to deal with them. What I am afraid of is that Commonwealth governments do not so easily change their spots.

At the moment we are all talking in a vacuum about this alleged \$10 000m deficit. The former Prime Minister, Mr Fraser, this morning claimed that the deficit should be nowhere near \$10 000m. Well, whether that is so or not is hard for us to judge. Obviously, the real size of the deficit will be a very critical

factor in discussions at the economic summit conference.

I suggest to the new government that it release immediately full details of the alleged deficit because only in that way can anyone, let alone the other governments that are supposed to help run the country, make any sort of informed and reasoned judgment of what their position should be at that summit. We have been asked to collect views in our communities to take to the summit conference. How can one make an informed judgment unless one knows, as soon as possible, the true position? Therefore, I have asked, and will continue to ask, that documentation including the details of the alleged deficit be made available to state and territory governments at the very earliest date. In the interests of frankness, candour and openness in dealing with the Australian people, I believe that the new federal government should move on that very quickly. It obviously has the documents. There is enough talk about them. Therefore, they should be easy to make available to the people most affected.

Mr Deputy Speaker, I would like to mention some unfortunate deaths that have occurred in the Territory since the last session. You, Sir, and all other honourable members would have heard of the untimely death of Robert Bedford Jackson, a Superintendent of Police, only the other day in Adelaide. I believe it is proper that we record our regret at his passing. Mr Jackson was born on 31 October 1934 and joined the Northern Territory Police Force on 23 February 1961.

During his long and distinguished career in the Territory, he served in many sectors of the force including the CIB. He was involved in many successful major investigations whilst a detective. At the time of his death, he was a superintendent in the Operational Services Command and had special responsibility for VIP protection and forensic services.

Superintendent Jackson was a devoted family man and, in recent years, had been very active as a committee member in the Darwin Police and Citizens Youth Club. He was also involved in service and social organisations in Darwin. He was held in very high regard by his colleagues as was evidenced by the very high turnout for the memorial service held at the Uniting Church in Darwin at the same time as his funeral in Adelaide, which was where he collapsed and died.

Mr Jackson is survived by a widow, Penny, and 2 children. I would like to express formally here to Penny my sincere regret at Bob's death. In the past, I very much valued the friendship which we formed many years ago in Alice Springs.

I also record, with regret, the death of George Kafcalouides in Darwin on 26 February this year at the age of 71. The Kafcalouides family were amongst the early settlers from the Greek island of Castellorizo, arriving in Darwin about 1917. During their early years here, the family lived on the hill which is now known as Gardens Hill. At that time, there was quite a multicultural community there. As far as I know, there still is.

Mr Kafcalouides senior was a builder and his son, George, followed in his footsteps, becoming apprenticed to Harold Snell. From about the mid-1930s until ill health forced his retirement a few years ago, Mr Kafcalouides was reputed to be the best builder in Darwin and was responsible for much of the development which took place post war. The late Mr Kafcalouides was a prominent member of the Darwin Turf Club and served as treasurer of that club for many years. He was described as a moderate punter - whatever that is - and at one time a part-owner of several horses. Another interest of his was freemasonry. He was, for many years, an active member of the Port Darwin Masonic Lodge. He is survived by his wife and son.

Mr Deputy Speaker, I should also draw to your attention the death of Willy Walilipa MBE on 20 February this year. He was born in 1904 at Melville Bay and, on the death of his father, was adopted into a Milingimbi clan, the traditional owners of Galiwinku. For many years he worked on the boats supplying the settlements along the Arnhem Land coast and was eventually the master of the Larrapan. In 1942 he went with the Reverend Harold Shepherdson to set up the present Galiwinku settlement which was, at that time, a Methodist overseas mission station. He was a very significant Aboriginal leader who contributed to many settlements in Arnhem Land. He was regarded as a father to all the tribes in the area. He was awarded an MBE for his services to these communities in the New Year's honours in 1979. The honourable Leader of the Opposition will remember the circumstances. He was a man of courage, fighting on behalf of his people for land rights and bringing peace and reconciliation into the communities. He was a firm friend to all people, both Aboriginal and European.

In later years, he went with his son to establish the homeland centre at Cape Wilberforce, close to the place where he was born. Many of his family are taking leadership roles in the Northern Territory today. He was an excellent example to them and challenged them to follow in his footsteps.

An Aboriginal man in central Australia, Tim Langdon Jabanardi, died on 18 January 1983. He was a tribal elder from Yuendumu. The late gentleman, a member of the Walpiri tribe, was born at Keridi Creek on Mount Doreen in 1917. As a youth he worked for Bill Braitling on Mount Doreen Station as a stockhand and stockman. During the Second World War, he was employed by the army as a driver and saw service between Alice Springs and Darwin, and later Malaya, where he was wounded. Post war saw him in and around Alice Springs driving trucks and during that time he served for 8 years in the Northern Territory Police Force. When Yuendumu was being established, he took on the responsibility of tribal leader and adviser, and generally assisted the community to get on its feet. During his lifetime, he had 5 wives and 11 children. In the New Year's honours in 1979 he received an MBE for service to the Aboriginal community.

Mr Speaker, it is with deep regret, I am sure, that all of us noted the passing on 31 December last year of Nellie Flynn. She will be mourned by her family and friends and by hundreds of Territory folk who will remember her tenacity in entering the Walkabout sporting event until her age kept her on the sidelines. The facts about Nellie Crawford Flynn read like the history of the Northern Territory itself. Her father was Lindsay Crawford. His father was E.J.F. Crawford who spent many years in Adelaide although originally from New Zealand. Mr Crawford senior was associated with the South Australian newspaper in the 1850s and 1860s and was later a brewer at Hindmarsh. John McDouall Stuart remembered him in his first overland journey to central Australia in 1860. He named Mount Crawford near Barrow Creek on that journey after Lindsay Crawford's father. The father and son combination had an interest in the Territory and it is thought they came to Palmerston in 1873. It is believed Mr Crawford senior made the first attempt at a brewery in the Territory at Doctor's Gully. Ill health forced him to leave and, in January 1874, he gave instructions to V.L. Solomon, a merchant here, to dispose of his residence at Peel's Well which was the name by which Doctor's Gully was originally known. Lindsay's father returned to Melbourne and died at Sale in 1880. Lindsay Crawford was a junior telegraph operator in Adelaide when Goyder returned from Darwin in 1869. In March 1874, he joined the overland telegraph staff. He resigned in 1877 and tried his hand at business at Southport but handed his business over to Robert Cooper in June 1878.

Mr SPEAKER: Order, the honourable member's time has expired.

Mr SMITH (Millner): Mr Deputy Speaker, I want to address myself to a couple of local government matters, one of which coincides to some extent with the matter already raised by the honourable member for Tiwi.

A couple of weeks ago, I had the opportunity to attend the rates seminar held by the Darwin City Council. It was obvious from the number of people at that seminar - there were 40 or 50 people - and from the points of view expressed at the seminar that there is widespread dissatisfaction with the system of rating, at least as it applies in the Darwin area. I suspect that that feeling of dissatisfaction is also evident in other local government areas. It is not only the feeling of the city traders, who have special problems, with what has been happening in the rating area but it is also a wider feeling that the unimproved capital value system that we have at present is not really meeting the needs of the people in the Darwin area. One of the major problems people have is the discrepancy in rates between the inner suburban areas and the northern suburban areas. Of course, one can adopt the intellectual argument that says that it is quite reasonable and reflects demand for those properties but I do not think that anybody is terribly happy with the system as it applies at present.

It was interesting to hear the comments of the 2 guest speakers, Justice Else-Mitchell and the Valuer-General, Malcolm Coleman. In fact, I thought the more interesting one at the time was that of Malcolm Coleman because he was most straightforward in coming out with a completely new system to the unimproved capital value system. The system that he was advocating, and apparently Valuer-Generals throughout Australia basically now advocate, is the capital value system. There was some toing and froing on the values of that particular system but the point that I want to make is that I think we have reached a stage in the Northern Territory where we need a complete review of the valuing system. In the last 20 years, each of the states has had a complete review. They have not come up with the same answers but at least they have had reviews to establish the system that they think will work best in their state. From His Honour the Administrator's speech, I am aware that the government thinks it will take another 12 months to come up with a local government act. I submit that, at this stage, we really cannot wait 12 months for proposals for a new rating system. I do not think it appropriate to do it in the context of the revision of the Local Government Act. I suggest to the government that we have reached the stage where we need to begin an inquiry quickly on the most satisfactory rating system.

There are at least 3 major things that such an inquiry should look at. One is an examination of all rating systems and recommendations on which one would best suit local government in the Territory. The second is an examination of what freedom local governments should have to determine the type of rates they will impose. The last one is an examination of each local government and the peculiarities associated with each of them.

The other interesting thing that came out of the rating seminar was the philosophical question of how much control local government should have over what types of rates should be set. Everybody here is aware that local governments are very bound by the Local Government Act which states that they shall set the general rate and specific rates they have the power to set based on the unimproved capital value. An argument was presented that local governments should have the authority to look at the rates that they want and to determine which one would best suit them and then have the ability to strike that rate. I think that is an argument that should be canvassed either in terms of the inquiry or independently. I think it needs to be canvassed at a wider level than at the rating level. When dealing with local government and examining the review of the Local Government Act, there is a general philosophical question to be discussed as to what powers local governments should have. Are they to be

tightly-controlled powers, given by this Assembly, or are they to be general enabling powers which would give local governments flexibility basically to determine their own future and to take responsibility for their decisions on their own shoulders?

As I said, I believe that is something we should be starting to talk about. Again, I suggest to the Minister for Community Development that he should consider issuing a general statement of philosophy on the Local Government Act. I think it would be possible to come out with a 2 or 3-page statement on the general philosophical grounds that his department is looking at in the revision of the Local Government Act. It should take into consideration those matters that I have just mentioned. I will write to the minister explaining the proposition and asking him to reply on it.

My second concern on local government, and where I overlap with the honourable member for Tiwi, concerns the neglected area in Berrimah where the residents pay rates but at present do not seem to be getting many services for those rates. The area we are talking about is the area of McMillans Road and north of the Stuart Highway. They pay rates not to the Darwin City Council but to the Department of Community Development. Therein lies the problem. Because they pay rates to the Department of Community Development, they do not at present have any democratic rights in voicing where their rate money should go. It is purely an administrative decision. There is certainly no formal process by which they can determine where they would like their rates to go.

They have had a problem for a long time. They believe they have been neglected. In fact, one of the residents was so incensed that he was moved to write to the Department of Community Development and ask where in fact his rating money was spent. He was told the rating money was spent in 5 basic areas. One was mowing and litter collection along the roads. He accepts that, on request, that is done. He has been there 3 years and it has been done once a year. The second is the maintenance of roads. We have already heard from the member for Tiwi on that question. I must add that, on Saturday - in the midst of heavy rain, I admit - I ventured down that way and those roads were awash. They are in a dreadful state.

Mr Everingham: So was Bagot Road.

Mr SMITH: So was Bagot Road but the water was not lying on the road for up to 72 hours. There were no streams instantly forming and cutting across Bagot Road as was happening out there.

The third area was garbage collection. That does take place. The fourth area was the contribution towards maintenance of the dump at Leanyer. The fifth area - and this is the one that gets me - is to subsidise electricity charges for street lighting. I did not see terribly many street lights in the area where I was. In fact, I would be very surprised if there are any out there at all.

I think they have a legitimate complaint. They are really not seeing much benefit for the rates that they are paying at present. They are paying 1.02¢ in the dollar and they again quite legitimately compare that with what people in Palmerston pay. Palmerston residents are only paying 0.75¢ in the dollar.

I raise the matter at this stage because I think it is an object lesson to the Advisory Council on Local Government in the Rural Area of how not to go about providing services and extracting rates from residents in that area. I would hope that the advisory council has a very close look at that area and, in its deliberations, makes sure the people in the Berrimah area are considered. Quite

obviously, this situation cannot continue. It has to be rationalised one way or the other. If they are going to continue to pay rates, they must be given representation. They must be given value in return for the rates that they pay. I would hope that the Advisory Council on Local Government in the Rural Area makes sure that it addresses that problem in its deliberations in the next few months.

Motion agreed to; the Assembly adjourned.

Mr Speaker MacFarlane took the Chair at 10 am.

PETITION
Air Services to Nhulunbuy

Mr LEO (Nhulunbuy): Mr Speaker, I present a petition from 622 residents of Nhulunbuy and citizens of the Northern Territory relating to air services. Mr Speaker, the petition bears the Clerk's certificate that it conforms with the requirements of Standing Orders. I move that the petition be received and read.

Motion agreed to; petition received and read:

To the 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 their anger and concern over the withdrawal by Airlines of Northern Australia of their Sunday services from Cairns through Gove to Darwin, leaving the town without any air services on this day of the week. Your petitioners therefore humbly pray that the Legislative Assembly, through the executive member responsible for granting the rescheduling of Airlines of Northern Australia flights, review this position, and your petitioners, as in duty bound, will ever pray.

DISTINGUISHED VISITOR
Senator B. F. Kilgariff

Mr SPEAKER: Honourable members, I draw your attention to the presence in the gallery of Senator B. F. Kilgariff. On your behalf, I extend to Senator Kilgariff, a former Speaker of this Assembly, a warm welcome.

MOTION
Public Broadcasting of Proceedings

Mr ROBERTSON (Leader of the House) (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 public broadcasting of proceedings on such occasions during this session of the Assembly as Mr Speaker may determine.

Motion agreed to.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT
Meat Industry Bill

Mr TUXWORTH (Primary Production) (by leave): Mr Speaker, I would like to take this opportunity to advise members about the government's intentions concerning the Meat Industry Bill which was introduced to the Assembly during the last session by the former Minister for Primary Production. As members would be aware, the bill lapsed with the prorogation of the Assembly. I must assure members that the government recognises the need to reintroduce the bill as rapidly as possible.

When the bill is reintroduced, it will address issues recommended by the Royal Commission into the Australian Meat Industry, including the establishment of a single, integrated national meat inspection service. The Commonwealth is shortly to submit a proposal to the Northern Territory government that will involve the expansion of the new export inspection service to the Territory. This will bring the Territory into line with recent developments in

New South Wales, Tasmania and South Australia. It is also anticipated that the single service will soon be established in Victoria and Western Australia.

Mr Speaker, in this context, the Meat Industry Bill will be reintroduced to the Assembly as soon as possible after consultations between ourselves and the Commonwealth are completed.

MOTION

Broadcasting of Proceedings to Office of NTDC

Mr EVERINGHAM (Chief Minister) (by leave): Mr Speaker, I move that the resolution of the Assembly relating to the broadcasting of its proceedings passed on 7 March 1979, amended on 31 May 1979 and 19 August 1981, be further amended by the insertion of this additional resolution: 'that this Assembly also authorises the broadcasting of its proceedings to the Office of the Chairman of the Northern Territory Development Corporation'.

Mr Speaker, obviously the reason why the Chairman of the Northern Territory Development Corporation would like to be connected to the broadcast of proceedings is that the names of former Chairmen of the Northern Territory Development Corporation have cropped up fairly frequently in debates. Obviously, it will enable him to keep abreast of comments in this Assembly which relate to the affairs of the corporation.

Motion agreed to.

PUBLIC HOLIDAYS AMENDMENT BILL (Serial 295)

Bill presented and read a first time.

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

Mr Speaker, honourable members will be aware of my views on the observance of our national day. Currently, Australia Day is celebrated by a public holiday which, unless 26 January happens to fall on a Monday, is transferred to the next Monday whatever that date happens to be. I consider those arrangements to be quite inappropriate.

At the June 1982 Premiers Conference, the Commonwealth submitted a proposal which was a far more suitable way to mark Australia Day. The Commonwealth proposal was 'to officially observe and have a public holiday on 26 January and, where that date falls on a Saturday or Sunday, the public holiday to be observed on the following Monday'. I welcome the proposal as a contribution to the proper observance and celebration of Australia Day.

I am disappointed to say that so far the only other outright support for the Commonwealth proposal has come from New South Wales. I have said publicly, Sir, and in correspondence with the Commonwealth and the states that, if agreement cannot be reached along the lines of the Commonwealth proposal, the Northern Territory would be prepared to go it alone. Consequently, Sir, I am introducing this bill to amend the Public Holidays Act at this time. I appreciate that business people and others have trading arrangements, work rosters and the like to make and, accordingly, need a clear indication of the government's intentions.

The Australia Day Council of the Northern Territory fully supports the proposal as do local government bodies. The Australia Day Council will, with

my government's encouragement, be endeavouring to mark the day in an appropriate way with events held in the various centres in the Territory.

Mr Speaker, surveys have shown that the majority of Territorians, and I believe the majority of Australians, are in favour of celebrating Australia Day on 26 January but they will not be inclined to celebrate it as a community unless they get a lead from the leaders of their community. I stress that, although a holiday will be granted on the following Monday if 26 January falls on a Saturday or Sunday, I am determined that the event should be and will be celebrated on 26 January. That is our national day, Sir, and should be appropriately marked.

Mr Speaker, I commend the bill to honourable members.

Debate adjourned.

CONSUMER PROTECTION AMENDMENT BILL (Serial 284)

Bill presented and read a first time.

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

Mr Speaker, the Consumer Protection Act 1978 has proved both useful and effective since its commencement on 7 August 1978. The intention of this amendment is not to alter the scope or intent of the act but to overcome what has emerged as an administrative problem.

The Commissioner of Consumer Affairs has certain powers and responsibilities under the act. Not the least important of these is the power given to him by section 18 to demand information. This power may be exercised not only by the commissioner but by a person authorised by him in writing, and then only as regards the matter specified in writing. These are penal provisions and, consequently, the act has been designed so that demands are not made lightly.

The appointment of a commissioner is made by the Minister for Community Development or his delegate. It requires the preparation of an instrument. There could be a number of circumstances arising where an investigator, reaching an impasse, might require prompt authorisation to demand information to enable resolution of a consumer complaint. It is the practice to appoint an alternative commissioner when it is known in advance that the commissioner is to be absent. However, a sudden absence or even his attendance at a meeting could create a situation where, because alternative arrangements cannot be made quickly, unfortunate consequences could flow.

The Motor Vehicle Dealers Act provides for the appointment of a deputy commissioner of motor vehicle dealers. This provision has been useful and has not given rise to any problems in the operation of that act which commenced nearly 3 years ago. A similar provision is now sought for the Consumer Protection Act as a means to improve its effectiveness. I commend the bill to honourable members.

Debate adjourned.

TRAFFIC AMENDMENT BILL (Serial 275)

Bill presented and read a first time.

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

The bill has 2 aims: firstly, to remove special driving licence provisions and, secondly, to simplify the evidentiary requirements for speed-detecting devices.

In 1970, section 558 of the Traffic Act was created and allowed for the granting of a special licence in circumstances where a person could demonstrate that the loss of his driving licence would impose considerable hardship. It was always intended that special driving licences would be available only to those who had to drive to earn their living and could satisfy the court that they would not be a danger to the public.

Mr Speaker, although the objectives of the act were admirable, it has led to considerable exploitation by people who see the section as a means of avoiding the full repercussions of their action of driving under the influence. The section has been amended twice to try and put a stop to the exploitation but, quite clearly, it is continuing to be abused.

The Department of Transport and Works recently studied 294 cases of applications for special licences. Of those 294 cases, all but 8 involved drivers with more than 0.15% blood-alcohol level. Quite understandably, this has led to magistrates expressing concern at the judicial system being exploited. Hardly had magistrates cancelled the licence for 3 cases of driving under the influence, than the self-same drivers were back pleading hardship, hardship which obviously was not a consideration when they committed the offence. Anyone who has had time enough to get an alcohol content of over 0.08% has had time enough to think of the repercussions of that drinking.

The government is not prepared to condone the continued abuse of the judicial system in an attempt to protect people from themselves. The bill therefore seeks to amend the Traffic Act to remove special driving licence provisions. Drunken drivers will have to accept the full consequences of their own actions.

The other purpose of this bill is to simplify the evidentiary requirements for traffic-speed analysers. This is the comprehensive term which covers radar guns, amphotometers and other devices which police may use to detect speeding offences. In a recent case, it was necessary to go to great expense to bring an expert from Western Australia to prove to the court that the police were using their equipment correctly and that the equipment was accurate. In his summing up, the magistrate suggested that legislation should be enacted to allow a radar gun's reading to be prima facie evidence of the speed the vehicle was travelling. Should a person wish to defend the charge of speeding, the provisions in the bill require the defendant to prove that the police were not operating the equipment in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions or the equipment had not been correctly tested. Mr Speaker, I commend the legislation.

Debate adjourned.

POLICE ADMINISTRATION AMENDMENT BILL
(Serial 286)

Bill presented and read a first time.

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

There are 2 main objectives to be achieved through this bill. The first relates to the appointment of persons to be members of the force. It is considered appropriate that persons appointed to the Police Force should be on probation for at least 12 months. Previous regulations made under the Police and Police Offences Act and repealed on 1 August 1979 with the introduction of the Police Administration Act contained provisions for probation. They were not carried over into current legislation. The Commissioner of Police has had to use the Public Service Act which provides in part for appointments to the public service to be probationary for 6 months with a possible extension of 6 months. This provision has doubtful application to the Police Force and, in any case, is inadequate for police needs.

Appointees to the Police Force are recruited from all sections of the community and embark on a career that, in most respects, differs considerably from their former lifestyles and which contains demands which they never fully envisaged. Experience has shown that signs of an appointee being unsuitable for police work usually become evident during the first 12 months of his service. It is essential therefore for the general management and discipline of the force that the commissioner be provided with powers to confirm or annul an appointment, to dismiss a member at any time during probation or to extend the period of probation for up to 6 months if the situation is not clear. The grounds for dismissal should be able to be stated as generally as possible so that a member on probation who is unlikely to become an efficient member of the force can be discharged with minimal prejudice and without appeal to the Police Appeals Board. Action taken to annul an appointment under the proposed provisions is considered to be quite different in nature from normal action. If it is necessary to simply discipline a constable on probation, then the normal provisions of part V, division 3 of the Police Administration Act will be used and access to the Police Appeals Board will be available. In some cases, because of illness or doubtful performance, a further period of probation, though not exceeding 6 months, might be required, and provision is made for this eventuality.

The second object of this bill is to align the method of determining remuneration and allowances for police aides with that used for all other members of the Police Force of and below the rank of Chief Superintendent. Although police aides are appointed under the Police Administration Act and are part of the Police Force official establishment, their salaries and allowances are currently determined by the Administrator. Any limitations on their powers, privileges, duties and obligations as compared with a constable are specified by the Commissioner of Police in the instrument of appointment. It is difficult to interpret how other general conditions of service are to be determined. It is considered inappropriate that the Administrator continue to determine their salaries and allowances in view of the possibility of industrial dispute. As police aides are even now members of the Police Force, though with limited powers, it is considered appropriate that they be given access to the same arbitral processes as other members of the force and that their conditions of service, including salaries, be determined in the same way. Mr Speaker, I commend the bill.

Debate adjourned.

MUSEUMS AND ART GALLERIES AMENDMENT BILL
(Serial 229)

Bill presented and read a first time.

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

Mr Speaker, this bill is short and straightforward. It is established government policy that, where authorities, boards, commissions and other bodies are subject to ministerial direction, the ministerial power of direction should extend to both the performance of the various bodies' functions and the exercise of their powers. Examples of this are section 22 of the Conservation Commission Act in respect of the Conservation Commission and section 15 of the Agricultural Development Marketing Act in respect of the Agricultural Development and Marketing Authority. The reasons for this policy are obvious, particularly in these days of financial restraint when governments have a particular need to monitor and control the expenditure of all bodies.

Under the Museums and Art Galleries Act, the Museums and Art Galleries Board is subject to ministerial direction in the performance of its functions, and I refer to section 17. An anomaly, however, is that it is not subject to the minister in the exercise of its powers. I would ask honourable members to compare section 18 of the Museums and Art Galleries Act to section 17 which I have just referred to. This bill amends the Museums and Art Galleries Act to ensure that the Museums and Art Galleries Board is subject to the direction of the minister, both in the performance of its functions and the exercise of its powers. This is the effect of clause 5 which adds a new section 18A to the act. Clauses 3 and 4 of the bill simply provide for formal consequentiality of amendments to the act resulting from the addition of new section 18A. I commend the bill to honourable members.

Debate adjourned.

ADMINISTRATION AND PROBATE AMENDMENT BILL (Serial 285)

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, it has been of concern that, as the law presently stands, the spouse of a person who dies without having made a will is entitled only to the first \$10 000 of the estate. Any balance in the estate is divided between the surviving spouse and any children or their descendants. If, for example, there was one child, the spouse would get half the balance of the estate and the child the remaining half. If there were 2 or more children, they would get two-thirds, the remainder going to the spouse.

Certain personal goods such as household furniture and the family car are excluded from these calculations and would automatically go to the spouse of the intestate. I believe that the present state of the law could well cause hardship to people. It could leave, for example, a wife without the right to keep the family home simply because it was in her husband's name and because he had not made a will. There is no doubt that all persons should endeavour to make their wills. Unfortunately, not everyone does and this can and indeed does cause many problems.

The amendments to the act before the Assembly will allow the amount of the estate to which the spouse is entitled before others can share in the estate to be fixed by regulation. If the amendments are accepted, it is proposed that the regulations will fix the initial amount over and above which the persons other than the spouse can share in the estate at \$60 000. The existing formula in schedule 6 of the act in which others can share in the estate will apply after that amount. If the estate is \$60 000 or less, the spouse will obviously receive the whole of the estate. The advantage of the fixing of the amount by

regulation is that it could be varied from time to time to take account of inflation without the necessity for the Assembly's time being devoted to minor amendments.

It could be argued that \$60 000 may be too high. The right exists, however, for anyone objecting to the spouse getting such a proportion of his estate to make a will. I again emphasise that making a will is a highly desirable action. Of course, husbands should not hold all the property in their own name either because that causes other difficulties. It should be in normal joint tenancy. In fact, if everyone did make a will, the particular amendment allowing the figures to be fixed by the regulations would not be necessary.

In addition, the regulation-making power would allow some future time for the spouse to be entitled to a fixed percentage proportion of the estate before schedule 6 applies if this is considered desirable. Regulations would also be possible in relation to other matters, no regulation-making power having existed previously in the act. For instance, fees could be prescribed by regulation. The bill proposes to repeal the third schedule of the act which relates to fees charged to executors against whom summonses for non-lodgement of an estate's accounts are filed and the accompanying section 153 of the act. Such fees would be reviewed and in future will appear in the regulations. Mr Speaker, I commend the bill to honourable members.

Debate adjourned.

CONTROL OF ROADS AMENDMENT BILL (Serial 287)

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 purpose of this bill can be simply stated. It is to improve and simplify the procedure for the opening, alteration or closing of roads whilst, at the same time, preserving the rights of interested persons. Part IV of the Control of Roads Act governs these procedures and, under existing provisions, the ultimate authority to open, alter or close roads which adjoin private or occupied properties is the Administrator. The bill proposes to vest this power in the minister responsible for the administration of that part of the act, thus removing the need for consideration by Executive Council and the Administrator. The recommendation of a municipal council in terms of section 318 of the Local Government Act will still be required for proposals for roads vested in that council.

The bill proposes a further amendment in that road proposals will be notified in a newspaper circulating in the relevant locality as well as in the Gazette as is presently required. Duplication of the information in the newspaper will ensure wider circulation of the proposal and increase public awareness of government actions.

The existing provisions of part IV of the act make repeated references to copies of road plan proposals. For simplification, the references to 'copies' have been dispensed with and all wording is directed to the use of the words 'plan or proposal'. The provision of copies, when required, is an administrative action and it is not necessary for it to be included in this legislation.

The bill I think is a good example of the government's commitment to

simplify, wherever possible, the processes of government. I commend it to honourable members.

Debate adjourned.

MOTION

Leave of Absence for Members

Mr ROBERTSON (Leader of the House): Mr Speaker, I move that, if the time between the determination of 1 sitting day and the commencement of the next sitting day is 2 months or more on any occasion during this session, all members of this Assembly shall be deemed to have been granted leave of absence for such interval between the sitting days.

Motion agreed to.

MOTION

Adjournment of Assembly

Mr ROBERTSON (Leader of the House): 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 sittings of the Assembly, which time shall be notified to each member in writing.

Motion agreed to.

MOTION

New Parliament House Committee

Mr ROBERTSON (Leader of the House): Mr Speaker, I move that, during the present session of the Assembly, a committee to be known as the New Parliament House Committee and comprising Mr Speaker, Mr Perron, Mr Steele, Mrs O'Neil and Mrs Lawrie be appointed; that 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; that the committee arrange for the conduct of a competition to attract architectural proposals for a new parliament house and publicly exhibit entries received; that the committee report and make recommendations to the Assembly on these matters from time to time; and that the committee have power to call for persons, papers and records, sit during any adjournment of the Assembly and to adjourn from place to place.

Mr STEELE (Transport and Works): Mr Speaker, I understand that the previous committee was arranging with the Department of Transport and Works for a competition to be held to attract design proposals for the building. The department advised me that a discussion paper on the possible forms the competition could take and the most appropriate methods of public and professional involvement will be available for discussion by the committee next month. The current assumption is that the parliament house will be completed by 1988, at the time of the Australian bi-centennial celebrations. I understand that representations have already been made to have the item admitted to the 1983-84 capital works design list. The acceptance of the brief towards the end of this year for the proposed architectural competition will allow 2 years for the design to be developed to tender stage with construction starting in early 1986.

Motion agreed to.

MOTION

Sessional Committee on the Environment

Mr ROBERTSON (Leader of the House): Mr Speaker, I move that, during the present session of the Assembly, a committee to be known as the Sessional Committee on the Environment consisting of Mrs Padgham-Purich, Mr D.W. Collins, Mr Harris, Mr B. Collins, and Mrs Lawrie be appointed; that 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; that the committee have the power to send for persons, papers and records, to sit during any adjournment of the Assembly and to adjourn from place to place; and that the committee be empowered to authorise the release of transcripts of evidence taken during public hearings and to publish information pertaining to the committee's activities from time to time.

Motion agreed to.

ADDRESS IN REPLY

Continued from 16 March 1983.

Mr STEELE (Transport and Works): Mr Speaker, I would like to touch briefly on 3 aspects of His Honour's opening remarks: the Australian Bi-centennial Road Development program, the development of aviation facilities in the Territory and the development of the port of Darwin. The basic objectives of the ABRD program are to complete the national highway system to acceptable standards by 1988, assist the development of major urban and rural arterial roads, accelerate the construction of current developmental road projects, including roads of national and tourism importance, and enable local government to upgrade the road system by 1988. The revenue to fund this program will come initially from a fuel levy of 1¢ per litre until June 1983 and 2¢ per litre thereafter to December 1988. Total funds for 1982-83 will be \$3.73m and, under Commonwealth ABRD legislation, estimated funds for 1983-84 will total \$11.1m for the Northern Territory.

Projects that may be funded under this program in the future include upgrading of the Stuart, Barkly and Victoria Highways, construction of Frances Bay Drive to Bowen Street, Winnellie, construction of McMillans Road between Mueller Road and Vanderlin Drive, continuation of the sealing of the Plenty Highway and continuing work on the local road network. Territorians have often claimed, with considerable justification, that their major road difficulties lie beyond the Northern Territory's borders. The bi-centennial program will enable rapid headway to be made in remedying the situation. A large part, more than 40%, of the additional funding that will become available under this program will be directed to national roads for which the Commonwealth government assumes financial responsibility. The major objective is to develop the national highway system to a dust-free and virtually flood-free standard by 1988.

In aviation, planning is continuing in respect of Darwin airport. The Department of Transport and Works is liaising with the Commonwealth government on matters of joint interest. Construction of the new Darwin airport will begin in 1983-84. Honourable members will recall that the then federal Minister for Aviation, Mr Fife, said in Darwin that tenders would be called in September 1983 for initial works. The new Commonwealth government has made a commitment to upgrade Darwin and Alice Springs airports. The Northern Territory contribution to Darwin airport upgrading is by way of road access from McMillans Road to the airport boundary at a cost of about \$600 000.

The government continues to place a high priority on the provision of a realistic internal airline system. New schedules for Airlines of Northern Australia were approved on 6 March and that airline has withdrawn its application to the Independent Air Fares Committee for an 8% air fare increase. If schedules were maintained at present levels, that airline would have lost \$1.3m this financial year, and the result would have been large air fare increases. Members will be aware that both Ansett and TAA have reported a 10% drop this year in domestic traffic. In the case of ANA's milk run service, the drop this year has been closer to 15%.

In relation to services to Gove, honourable members will be aware that TAA has decided to cancel its Cairns-Gove-Darwin Saturday flight, returning Darwin-Gove-Cairns Sunday flight, which will deprive Nhulunbuy of a Sunday air service. I have discussed the implications of this in some detail with the Gove Confederation of Industry and Commerce, and the government arranged for a meeting in Nhulunbuy on 9 March between the confederation, TAA, Ansett and ANA with a view to examining whether an additional Nhulunbuy to Cairns flight was feasible. The airlines are currently carrying out their own appraisal of the proposals put to them. Members are aware that this government has no control over the scheduling of flights interstate.

Mr Speaker, turning to port development, the Northern Territory ports, along with most other ports around Australia, have experienced a fall off in shipping movements and cargo throughput as a result of the international economic downturn. The Northern Territory government is taking a long-term view and is developing the port of Darwin for a brighter future. In the last couple of years, including the current financial year, we have committed more than \$20m to developing new facilities. The new land-backed wharf was opened last year at a cost of \$4.6m. The new Ro-Ro facility, built in Singapore and floated to Darwin, is now in position. Design of the Ro-Ro incorporates one of the largest link-span bridges ever to be used in such a facility in order to contend with our extreme tidal range. A new container park with 64 electrical outlets for freezer containers is under construction adjacent to the new wharf and the Ro-Ro railroad facility. A contract has been let for a 35 t container crane equipped with a grab for bulk cargo handling and having a heavy lift capacity of 75 t. The new Fort Hill wharf is to be extended by 150 m.

Apart from these initiatives, planning work is proceeding to allow for the Alice Springs to Darwin standard gauge railway to be linked to the port. Members will be aware that one of the world's major shipping lines is to start a regular shipping service to Darwin from May of this year. The West German Columbus Line will collaborate with Bank Line to provide a monthly service for Territory exporters to Europe.

Mr Speaker, I would like to briefly touch on some aspects of my electorate which were referred to in the last address in reply debate 2½ years ago. During my speech in the address in reply debate 2½ years ago, I made a pledge that I would try to have the 2½ mile depot removed to provide additional residential land in Ludmilla. I am pleased to report this is now well in progress.

The present bus depot in Ludmilla is to be turned into a training centre for apprentices to reduce present overcrowding at the training school in Stuart Park. It is expected that this use will continue for about a year and the site will then revert to residential use. My constituents have been advised of this.

The Oasis Store, which I referred to at that time, has been tidied up

considerably and the disturbing thoroughfare has been closed and landscaped to the credit of the owners of the shopping centre.

Provision for new parks is taking place in the Coconut Grove area and work is proceeding. Nation Crescent has been connected to Dick Ward Drive and this area has been considerably tidied up. This area is now developing into a very pleasant suburb and the credit must go to the residents who take an obvious pride in their surroundings.

I support entirely the thrust of the Administrator's speech and, as far as my portfolios are concerned, I am delighted that reference has been made to the important areas of transport and communications.

Mrs O'NEIL (Fannie Bay): Mr Speaker, in speaking to the address in reply to His Honour the Administrator, I must say that I was extremely disappointed to see the very low priority which the health portfolio has once again been given by this government. If honourable members and members of the public glance at the speech, they will notice that there are just a few sentences devoted to this very important area of great concern to the people of the Northern Territory. One has only to read letters to the editor columns in newspapers, listen to talk-back radio programs or examine complaints to members of the Assembly from their constituents to realise how important the issue of health services is to the people of the Northern Territory and how they are disturbed continually by trends they have seen emerging in this area during the term of this government.

It is true that many of the problems people have experienced relate to the iniquitous user-pays health scheme, the fifth version of health insurance introduced by the Fraser government in something like 8 years, which has clearly now been rejected by the people of Australia as well as the Territory. Indeed, the former Minister for Health in this Assembly conceded that it was inappropriate and that 60% of the people of the Northern Territory were unable to pay and would be classified as disadvantaged under that scheme.

However, the problems have been exacerbated by decisions of this government to downgrade the importance of the health portfolio. I pointed out in this Assembly in last year's budget debate that the Northern Territory government financial allocation to the Department of Health was reduced by nearly \$10m between the 1980-81 and 1981-82 financial years. That is a very significant reduction which indicates that problems people have experienced with health services have not simply been related to decisions of the federal government but also to financial decisions of this government to give the department less money.

If members read the annual report of the Department of Health for the year 1981-82, they will be interested to see the decrease in staffing levels experienced by that department in that year. There was a decrease of 12 in the number of doctors and dentists employed by the department. The Minister for Health might say that it is possible there has been an increase in the private sector. That might well be true. That is not much consolation to those people who do not have access to the private sector. There has been a decrease of 16 in the number of matrons, tutors and senior sisters. Clearly, those positions would not have been taken up by the private sector. There has been a decrease of 32 in the number of other sisters and a decrease of 17 in hospital assistants. In the total nursing area, there has been a decrease of 99, nearly 100 staff. In that financial year, there was a decrease of 109 in the number of industrial staff employed by the Department of Health and a total decrease in staff in that department of 268. It is evident that that trend is continuing this financial year.

Mr Speaker, the people of the Northern Territory must be extremely concerned to see what is happening to their health services under this government. Some people had rather hoped that, with the new minister and perhaps the new federal government, the Northern Territory might have seen the wisdom of changing its ways but that evidence is not before us at this stage. In fact, the evidence that I have received is rather to the contrary.

In recent times, from your own electorate, Mr Speaker, I have had many complaints, which have been confirmed, about the lack of replacement of maintenance staff at the Katherine Hospital. It has led, I am told, to a lack of maintenance of important equipment in the hospital. In turn, it could lead to industrial accidents. That is very serious for the department. While the Minister for Health has now assured us that some positions will be replaced, the fact of the matter is that several positions have been left vacant for many months. It is most distressing and is undoubtedly due to the lack of money which that region of the department has been given to maintain its services this financial year.

Mr Speaker, I continue to receive complaints about people being turned away from hospitals in the Northern Territory. Recently, there was a disturbing report of a woman in labour, about to give birth, who could not get a bed. We do not expect that in the Northern Territory but it is happening. Unfortunately, there is no indication in this address before us that the situation will change. As I said, if you look at those staffing figures - and we do not have staffing indications for the current financial year - I imagine we will see further reductions.

The government boasts an increase of one employee in the Tourist Commission. I ask the Minister for Health and the public to compare that situation - which the government sees as worthy of bringing to the public's attention - with the decrease by hundreds of people in this vital area of service to the Northern Territory.

Mr Speaker, I certainly hope the Northern Territory government will grasp with both hands the opportunity, which will now be given to it under the new health care arrangements which will be instituted by the new federal government from, I understand, 1 January 1984, to review its financial arrangements in the health area to ensure that the people of the Northern Territory receive the level of service that they deserve.

The new health scheme is to be funded by an income-related levy - 1% of taxable income. It will enable people to have access, without direct charge, to public hospital accommodation and to inpatient treatment. It will also provide a medical benefit of 85% of the scheduled fee with maximum payment by the patient for any one service of \$10. The introduction of this scheme will clearly mean a complete rearrangement of funding within the Department of Health. Therefore, the government will have the opportunity to review its priorities in this area. There has also been an undertaking from the new federal government to inject \$20m into community health programs within Australia, which will simply restore that funding to the 1975 level.

Mr Speaker, community health programs are of particular importance to the Northern Territory. I have said that many times before but it needs to be repeated. Despite some joy we might take from the statement in the Administrator's speech that community health centres will be provided in new areas, nevertheless, the policy direction of the Department of Health in recent times has been to downgrade this service.

I understand the Northern Territory Nurses Federation is opposing the

proposal to eliminate the career structure for community health nurses in the Northern Territory. That is entirely contradictory because this is the first year of a very welcome postgraduate nursing course for community health nursing at the Darwin Community College. Now the department is apparently proposing an administrative reorganisation which will entirely remove a community health career structure for those valuable professional people. Naturally, their organisation is opposing that proposal through the appropriate industrial channels. It certainly indicates how serious the matter is when such a responsible group of people feels compelled to place it before the Arbitration Commission. Clearly, there is no satisfaction in this matter for the government.

I understand there is also a proposal within the department which once again is causing concern, particularly in the Darwin region. That proposal is to bring under the control of the Darwin Hospital what is left of the community health services in the Darwin region. It is causing very grave concern to the people in that area. I am sure it would cause concern to the public which has the greatest admiration for the services which are provided in that area. Community health in the Northern Territory has led many other Australian states in the development of this type of health care. But it is very distressing for people to hear of government support and then see the continued whittling down of staff in these areas, the destruction of the morale of these very worthwhile public servants and the reduction of their autonomy.

Mr Speaker, I only hope that for the remainder of its term, this government reviews the policies that it has pursued in relation to the Department of Health. The people of the Northern Territory are clearly concerned by the trends evident in funding and staffing arrangements. I hope the government has the courage to review its course.

Mrs LAWRIE (Nightcliff): Mr Speaker, I share the sentiments of the Leader of the Opposition about the prorogation of the Assembly, which certainly gives the opportunity to the government of the day to indicate its legislative program. That normally occurs at the commencement of each Assembly. It would have been simpler and more direct to have had a statement from the Chief Minister outlining new areas he intended to attack in the Northern Territory, the need for which has been brought about by the recession. However, we saw the pomp and ceremony of yet another opening which I believe was highly inappropriate late in the life of this Assembly.

One must assume that the Chief Minister had one speech written and, following the events of 5 March, ripped that up and started again. Nevertheless, His Honour's speech deserves the attention of all members, and I am following the convention in speaking to it.

I noticed with pleasure the statements regarding a new housing policy and initiatives to be taken to enable women to own homes in their own right. May I suggest to the honourable minister responsible for the Housing Commission and to the Chief Minister that, when addressing this particular problem, they ask the advice of groups which have already gathered data on the subject and which have a certain expertise to offer. One is the Women's Electoral Lobby, which has been following for some years this problem facing women. Another is the Coalition of Low Income Earners which has some valuable input that it would be pleased to make to the question of home ownership and home occupancy by women in our community.

I noted, in particular, the statement in His Honour's speech that education is vital to the future of all Territorians but especially to Aborigines. He went on to say that his government is determined to ensure that young Aborigines

can achieve a primary and secondary education which will enable them to go on to tertiary studies, either at university or colleges of advanced education. It is nice to know that independent members of this Assembly have a useful role to play because I was the first member to suggest just that on 30 April 1980.

The debate at that time centred around the closure of Dhupuma College. I said on 30 April 1980: 'I wish to speak to the statements made by the honourable the Minister for Education and some of the points made by the honourable member for Arnhem who is opposition spokesman on education affairs. I have a particular interest in Aboriginal education which I have had since I was first elected in 1971. I have this belief that education does not do any harm to anybody; it does only good. To give people an appreciation of the world around them which can only advance those people ...'. Members would be surprised at the number of people who think that education is harmful. Maybe they would not be surprised if they listened to a few statements of some anthropologists around the place who would like to keep a whole race of people in sublime ignorance so they can study them at leisure.

I also said on that day 3 years ago: 'It is tragic that secondary school students who happen to be Aborigines leave school and do not complete studies which would allow them to continue into the tertiary education field. It is too simplistic to say that we do not need to educate them to that extent but should train them to be mechanics and home economists etc. All those things are nice and of course not all European people become doctors or lawyers or members of other professions, but a percentage of us do and a percentage of full-blood Aboriginal people should and could'. I went on to expand on that theme.

Mr Speaker, it would seem that my words fell not on stony ground but on fertile ground. It is now the declared policy of the Liberal Country Party government to advance exactly that cause. I have no hesitation in saying that it has my complete support. It is something I have worked for since 1971. Any policy which allows for the full development of these people deserves support from all sections of the community. As I have said in an article published today, it will not be easy for the Country Liberal Party government to implement this excellent policy. There are powerful people with vested interests who wish to keep Aboriginal people subjugated so that they will have to employ outside advisers because they do not have the skills themselves to advance their own cause.

It is easy to say that white lawyers assisting Aborigines are stirrers because some sections of the European community do not like the advice those lawyers are giving to the Aborigines. That too is simplistic. Of necessity, Aborigines employ white lawyers because there are no black ones. That position cannot change for nearly 2 decades because it will be a very gradual though worthwhile exercise to get Aboriginal people to conclude their secondary schooling and undertake tertiary studies. I look forward to Aboriginal doctors practising not only in their own communities but in hospitals attended by the general public - Aborigines, Europeans and all the other cultures which make up this country. If one looks at the example of black Africans in particular and other aboriginal minority groups in other western societies - Eskimoes, American Indians etc - one sees that it needed government at both federal and state levels to implement firm policies for these people. They have benefited dramatically, not only in being able to help their own people but in making otherwise judgmental Europeans realise that they have the capacity to obtain tertiary education qualifications which, in our world, are considered worth while and certainly contribute to the general benefit of mankind. I cannot say too much in my support of an education policy for Aboriginal people.

There will be definitive debate on education. Some of the remarks I intended to make to the address in reply, I shall save for that debate. However, I advise the Minister for Education that any suggestion that the children of parents who register their opposition to corporal punishment in schools will still be subjected to corporal punishment in schools will meet wide community resistance.

Mr Speaker, His Honour spoke of health services and said that prevention rather than cure is the aim of his government. Again, I have no hesitation in supporting that statement. The trouble is that it is in direct contrast to what has been happening in health services in the Northern Territory. The honourable member for Fannie Bay outlined some of the problems with the health services. I would like to touch on another.

If prevention is better than cure, why is it that a new policy on screening schoolchildren has been implemented? There has been a reduction in screening in schools by community health sisters so that, after screening at pre-school age, either at a community health centre, which they prefer, or at pre-school, there is no further screening of children in Territory schools until year 6 at age 10. In fact, there is a 6-year gap. This is a cutback on what existed up until last year. Prevention is certainly better than cure. The best prevention is screening at 2-year intervals, if necessary - an automatic screening process.

Mr Speaker, Nightcliff Primary School, with which I am closely associated - I am the chairman of its council - held its annual general meeting last week. We invited a representative of the Department of Health to come and state the department's case, which she did with clarity and honesty. However, it did not satisfy the concerns of parents, and particularly teachers who, it is now admitted, are expected to pick up deficiencies, particularly in eyesight and hearing, and refer them to the community health centres for assessment. Teachers are not lay health workers. They do the best they can. Particularly in primary schools, they have to be all things to all people. To ask them to be the prime detectors of physical or mental problems in a young child for 6 vital years is an extra burden they should not be asked to bear. If the government's policy is that prevention is better than cure, it had better reverse this ridiculous position and again have more screening of school-children rather than less.

His Honour also referred to the increasing number of older people remaining in the Territory. That is true and it benefits our community. I have been wondering how to raise the problems which have been put to me about Chan Park Nursing Home in this Assembly. If I can give credence - and I do - to the statements in writing that I have been given by semi-professional and some professional people, Chan Park Nursing Home is nothing less than an absolute disaster. I would ask the Minister for Health, not necessarily in the context of this debate but in a general statement on his health policies, to outline to the Assembly the ratio of staff to the elderly occupants, the qualifications of those staff, what programs are available to those elderly occupants and what oversight his departmental officers - at what intervals and at what levels - have over the Chan Park Nursing Home.

I would also ask for an assessment from the Department of Health and any other interested bodies as to effects on severely handicapped children who have been transferred to that home and who are mixed in with geriatric patients. The information which has been laid before me leads me to believe that it has been disastrous for the children, that they have regressed and that children with severe difficulties such as blindness and deafness are non-responsive and are almost in a vegetable state.

It is easy to make statements but I would not have done so unless sufficient people from a wide number of backgrounds had come to my office. In fact, one was in tears over what she had seen and heard happening at Chan Park. I asked if she was willing to put her allegations in writing. She not only put them in writing but she signed a statutory declaration and said that, as long as she was protected, she would be happy to give evidence on an affidavit or to a commission of inquiry as to what she had seen and knows.

All I ask the honourable Minister for Health to do is give me the answers that I have asked for. I would be happy to talk to him in private and to recommend to people who complain to me that they should go to see him. However, he would need to assure them a degree of confidentiality. They have professional status to uphold and, in some cases, it may put them in a difficult position.

Mr Speaker, I have confined my comments to a couple of areas only of His Honour's speech. It was not of great substance in itself. The only completely new initiative I saw, and which I welcome wholeheartedly, is the commitment to furthering educational opportunities for Aborigines.

Mr D.W. COLLINS (Alice Springs): Mr Speaker, it gives me a degree of pleasure to reply to His Honour's address. Unlike some of those people opposite, I believe that it is worth while to pause and assess the goal which the government has for the remainder of this term.

His Honour mentioned the railway. This is due for debate as a result of a statement by the Chief Minister and I do not want to spend much time on it. I am disappointed, however, that some shadows have been cast upon the likelihood of this railway eventuating. Yesterday it was hinted that we might have to justify to the new government in Canberra the need for the railway. If that is so, I am sure we will do it in the same manner that it was done to the previous government.

I was very pleased to note the \$4.5m allocated for capital works projects. The NTDC put out a booklet recently, a copy of which I am sure all members have received, which indicated the investments which have been decided on and those which are being considered.

There are many opportunities in the Territory and we are doing all we can to attract investment. I believe the reason for this is that people see the Territory as a very vibrant place, a place where things are happening. Very often people visiting from the south of Australia comment that the Territory gives the impression of being a place on the go; things are alive. New things are to be seen while down south everything is old and rusting and development is way down. I have heard this very often. It is the government's aim to keep things that way.

However, this leads to a problem in the area of housing. Because there are job opportunities and workers are attracted to the Territory, there is massive pressure on housing. The Housing Commission has a list as long as my arm. I am pleased to say that in my own area, Alice Springs, contracts have been let for Sadadeen stages 2 and 3 and the first land should be released in July. The Housing Commission tells me the first houses on that land should be available in January. It is still completing the last houses in the Sadadeen stage 1 project. New houses are being completed all the time. This problem occurs naturally. Where jobs are available, they attract people and those people must be housed. The government is attending to this as quickly as possible and certainly welcomed the private development of this land. The Housing Commission tells me that the contractors can put this land on the market

at what is considered to be a very reasonable price.

Like other members, I welcome the initiatives which will make it easier for women to own their own homes. There is no reason why they should not other than perhaps the tradition that the man is the owner of the home. This change will be welcomed by many and certainly no one whom I know would attempt to oppose such a thing.

A new building bill was mentioned to maintain construction standards. I have not seen this bill or discussed it in any way. I hope that it is not a move to eliminate the owner-builder who is prepared to roll up his sleeves and expend sweat and energy to reduce his costs.

Land rights were mentioned. This is an area of considerable complexity and no doubt was included with the hope that things would work out. I think that we all agree that there are problems. We may differ on how we see the nature of those problems but we agree that they exist. I find it rather ironical that a government, which gave this Territory self-government and a high degree of autonomy, should also impose upon it land rights legislation which, by the court's interpretation in the case of Utopia, really provides a mechanism by which, eventually, much of the Territory could be taken back into Commonwealth control. This could leave the Territory government controlling the towns and very little else. I think that we all agree that that would not contribute to racial harmony. We have to look at this as a matter of urgency.

Education is a key concern to all parents. Nowadays parents are happy to keep their children in the Territory and not send them away for their education. The Aborigines certainly need to be brought into the wider community. I am concerned about moves to separate Aborigines from the rest of the community. They need to be brought in. One of the best ways of doing this is through the education system, particularly at an early age, at which time all sectors of our community rub shoulders and prejudices are not built up. People learn to accept one another. I believe that is the greatest hope for the Aborigines.

Aborigines have problems over and above those which other people in the wider community may have. A truancy problem makes it very difficult indeed for them. Of course, if children have an unsettled home life because their parents move in and out of town, that makes it even more difficult. These things have to be recognised and tackled. I am particularly interested to see what the education policy document contains.

In the matter of health, I think it is generally agreed that prevention is far better than a cure. That is an area for emphasis. There may not have been many words in His Honour's address in this particular area. That does not mean that things are not happening. Many people welcome new initiatives on the problem of alcohol and drug abuse. It is a problem that will not go away. It is one that is being tackled.

In the area of sport, we are a young population. The government has a record to be envied in its support for sport in many different areas. It is good to know this effort will continue. It is encouraging excellence. I believe we all bask in the reflected glory of our Territory athletes when they win through. I believe that it helps to break down the barriers in the Territory. There is a feeling in Alice Springs that Darwin people think that the Territory stops at the 6-mile. When Territory people are involved, we are all proud. We bask in the glory and that is good.

The travel subsidy is well supported in the community as are moves to

obtain top-line coaching. That way our interstate competitors can be given the greatest opportunity to win through and bring further glory to the Territory. Might I say that those people who go away to represent the Territory are to be commended because they act as tremendous ambassadors. They create much interest in the south. They promote the Territory and, no doubt, people visit the Territory because of them.

In spite of the poor season, the future is indeed ripe for agriculture, particularly in the Top End. I have always been interested in horticultural development. We have not done as much as we would have liked to do. I believe the opportunity is there. Possibly with the depressed conditions down south, if we can get an ADMA-type scheme going in an appropriate area, we may well be able to attract experienced people from down south who are willing to give it a go in the Territory. A lot of money leaves the Territory for fruit and vegetables from South Australia and Queensland. We cannot produce everything but we do have unique advantages. We have been able to produce things out of season.

Interestingly, Australia supplies about 5% of the market in Singapore. They want high-quality grapes. In the Adelaide market, they cost \$5 to \$8 a box. In Singapore, they have been picking up \$30 a box. The Territory, particularly the Alice Springs area, has the potential to produce high-quality table grapes. We have an airport. We could transport to Singapore and gain many export dollars. That, of course, would add to the wealth of this country.

Another little venture in Alice Springs has turned into a success story. Carnation growers in the Adelaide hills could not grow carnations all the year. They are now growing carnations in Alice Springs to fill the gap in their own season. Carnations are beautiful, marketable flowers. Properly treated, they will last a good 3 weeks. You can throw 500 or 600 blooms into a box.

I was very keen to get into this area myself and use the sewerage water from the ponds at Alice Springs, but it was too difficult. The Department of Health cleared the use of the water. Getting the land was the problem. It is one area of entrepreneurial activity which has not needed any government support. It is wide open for someone to get the expertise and plough into it.

In many ways, the tourist industry is our biggest industry. It is certainly one of the biggest from the employment side. That is what we are interested in. Yulara has been mentioned. The south road is really just a broken link in a chain which includes Queensland, New South Wales, Victoria, South Australia, Western Australia and the Northern Territory. I drove down it last Christmas. I have done that 10 times in the last 13 years. It is good to see that there are extensions on it. There are only 700 km of it left. Tenders have been let for the area north and south of Cooper Pedy. I might say that the remaining 700 km are the roughest I have ever seen. It seems as though very little work has been done. It seems to be a low priority of the government of South Australia. It should realise that a two-way circle through the states, which this road will allow, will mean more people will travel and South Australia would stand to gain. When that road is completed, our accommodation facilities and the tourist facilities will benefit greatly. The government is aware of this and is acting.

I am also pleased to note that Aboriginal involvement in tourism is mentioned. That is important. It is an area where Aboriginal people can be involved with the rest of the community and become economically independent. People down south are interested in Aboriginal culture. It is wide open for proper and careful development.

The Criminal Code is a massive undertaking. It has not been hurried. It has been carefully considered and altered many times. We all know that people are interested in it. We have a high rate of crime in the Territory. Law abiding citizens are very interested.

I welcome the freight inquiry. The system seems to be that, when one buys goods down south and brings them up here, one adds the freight and handling costs to the price - the mark-up - and that is what one charges. It seems that everybody does it. In one sense, we are ripping off one another. As a result, goods cost considerably more. It also gives us an artificially-high inflation rate. That is the gut feeling of many people.

Mr B. Collins: There is nothing artificial about it.

Mr D.W. COLLINS: It is real, I would agree. But it is higher than the situation down south. Maybe that was the wrong choice of words. The only person who wins is the tax man. I certainly welcome the inquiry.

When I entered this Assembly 2½ years ago, I said that I considered that we were living in an exciting time. That still holds. There have been many achievements in that 2½ years. One has only to look around to see how we have grown. There are many things to look forward to. I believe His Honour's address listed them. I believe that the government is creating the right climate to achieve the goals that have been set.

Mr SMITH (Millner): Mr Speaker, I want to commence by referring to a comment made by the honourable member for Alice Springs concerning the railway. I thought his comment was fair, responsible and sensible. He referred to the possible shadow that has been cast across the future of the railway line. I just want to reiterate the position which is that the Hawke government, on assuming office, has found itself in a substantially worse situation than it expected before it attained office.

Mr Perron: Why was that?

Mr SMITH: Why was that? The reason was either that the Fraser government could not do its sums or - perhaps more likely - the Fraser government was basically dishonest in its dealings with the electorate in the days leading up to the election. It is obviously responsible for any government faced with such new information to review all its commitments. As the Leader of the Opposition said, all commitments are being reviewed at this stage.

Mr Robertson: Just come clean and say it is going to be chopped.

Mr SPEAKER: Order, order!

Mr SMITH: All commitments are being reviewed at this stage. It is obviously in the interests of everybody in this Assembly to present a unified front to the federal government in the next few weeks to ensure that the railway does proceed.

Secondly, Mr Speaker, I would like to pick up the point made by the honourable Minister for Transport and Works this morning. His comments were directed towards coastal surveillance - the Grumman Trackers and their arrival in the Northern Territory. I had the pleasure over lunch to speak directly to the federal Minister for Transport, Mr Morris, and the situation, in the short term at least, is that the Grumman Trackers are not seen as a replacement for coastal surveillance aircraft but as a means to extend the present surveillance limits further out to sea. I was assured by Mr Morris that the

present contractual arrangements that have been agreed, and the contractual discussions that are taking place for the area of coastline immediately around Darwin, will continue. Of course, the problem with NTAW in that context is that the previous government significantly altered the ground rules when calling for tenders. If we are to have the situation where NTAW gets the work, it will be largely the fault of the previous government for changing the ground rules and making it almost impossible for Nomads to compete on an economic basis and much more likely that the less suitable aircraft, the Shrike Commanders, will get the job.

Mr Speaker, I was interested to hear in His Honour's speech that the government is edging towards the adoption of my recommendation on the establishment of a task force to ensure that the most effective use possible is made of the railway. As I said yesterday, I recommended that in November and I certainly do not want to spend all that much time on it today. I would like to point out to the government that there is a need to have a coordinated look at its development.

I will suggest some of the things that such a task force might look at. Certainly, it is not a comprehensive list. It could, for example, look at the relationship between road transport and the railway line. It could look at the relationship between sea transport and the railway line. It could look at an effective means of running the railway line into the port. I am happy to acknowledge that the Minister for Transport and Works stated this morning that that is being looked at. My point is that it should be looked at as part of an overall package rather than in separate little packages. It could look at the development of the land bridge and certainly that is a subject I want to return to later in these sittings. The land bridge is a concept that will not materialise on its own and a lot of work has to be done on it.

The task force also could look at the encouragement of tourism along the railway line. It could look at the impact the railway line will have on the regional economies of Katherine and Tennant Creek. There is considerable scope to strengthen those regional economies but, again, it will not happen without work and it will not happen unless there is a coordinated approach to determine its effectiveness.

I was interested yesterday to hear the Chief Minister call for the establishment of a regional office of the Commonwealth Department of Housing and Construction. I would like to welcome him to the group which has been working on that matter over the last few months. It is interesting that the honourable Chief Minister did not, as far as I am aware, publicly call for this regional office before the recent federal election. He has become more public in his comments on this matter since the election. But he can be assured that many people have been interested in this matter over the last few months. A number of approaches have been made, both by myself and the professional groups affected, to the previous minister and the current minister. Again, if we all work together, there is a possibility that a regional office can be established. There is no doubt that the need is there. The sooner it happens the better.

As the Leader of the Opposition commented yesterday, we support the freight inquiry. It is long overdue. I guess one of the most relevant questions is: why has it not happened before? Perhaps it is not coincidental that it has been called by the Northern Territory government shortly after the public statement of the now Minister for Transport that he intends to conduct a national inquiry himself. I intend to speak on the proposed Territory inquiry later today. At this stage, I would like to make the point quite clearly that I think the 2 proposed inquiries are complementary. The national

inquiry, in my view, will look at something that is complementary to but not the same as what the Territory inquiry will look at. I would urge most strongly that the Northern Territory government agree, along with the state governments which have already signalled their agreement, to join the proposed national inquiry into the road freight industry.

The broad terms of reference of this proposed national inquiry are as follows: the economy and efficiency of the industry; the impact of regulation on the industry; the involvement of heavy road vehicles in road crashes; the effect of existing truck financing practices; the effect of competition from rail on the industry; and the need for a national research program relating to the road freight sector. These are questions that everybody in this country is interested in. They should have been tackled some time ago but, because of problems with section 92 of the Constitution and free trade between the states, there have been difficulties in getting together and coming up with an effective mechanism for examining these matters. But I believe that the proposed inquiry outlined by the federal minister...

Mr Robertson: Is that an excuse to delay the railway - competition between road and rail?

Mr SMITH: I wish the honourable minister would not reveal his ignorance. The traditional history of competition between rail and road is that there have been problems because state governments have always tried to give as much work as possible to the railway line, hence making it difficult for road transport to operate. I do not think that it is his government's intention - and it certainly would not be our intention - to use government regulation to give one transport mode an advantage over another transport mode. This inquiry will sort out the economics of both and make both function effectively. If he is not prepared to support that, he should stand up and say so. I will be glad to hear it and glad to pass it on.

Mr Speaker, during my discussion with the federal Minister for Transport, he indicated that it is one of his government's priorities and that, as soon as the necessary paperwork is done, he will be writing to the various states and territories seeking their cooperation and agreement. We hope that it will be forthcoming from this government.

The last subject I want to deal with is the subject of housing. I must admit that, on this side, we were a little disappointed at the thinness in His Honour the Administrator's speech of the government's response to the question of housing. We welcome the intention of the government to remove some of the present barriers that exist for women buying their own homes. We note that it has been a problem for some time. It is still a very general proposition that the government is putting up. We hope that it treats the matter with some urgency and removes the discrimination that exists.

One of the major weaknesses in the housing section of His Honour's speech was that there was no mention of the problems that are facing people who require rental accommodation. One of the things that has concerned me even in my short term of office is that the waiting time on the government rental accommodation list, particularly in Darwin, has blown out quite considerably. When I first took office, it was 12 months. There are now people on the government housing lists who have been waiting between 20 and 21 months. I acknowledge that this government has poured considerable funds into the housing sector. Everybody acknowledges that. But there is a problem. There are a number of people who are increasingly unhappy with the length of time they are waiting. I would have thought that the government would have addressed that matter in His Honour's speech.

Another matter that concerned us was that there has been correspondence between the honourable member for MacDonnell and the previous Minister for Lands and Housing, the member for Stuart Park, on the possibility of establishing some low-cost housing display homes in Alice Springs. As late as November last year, the then Minister for Lands and Housing indicated that proposals were being examined and he hoped to make an announcement quickly. It is now 4 months later and we still do not have any announcement of the government's intention in that area.

Mr Everingham: Neil can't be reading his mail.

Mr SMITH: Perhaps the honourable member may not have read his mail in the last 10 days. Certainly, as far as he is aware, there have been no government initiatives and, certainly as far as the public is aware, there has been no announced government initiative on low-cost housing in Alice Springs. I would have thought that a perfect opportunity to put forward the plans, if there are plans in this matter, would have been in His Honour the Administrator's speech.

We would have thought there would have been some comment particularly with the change of government, on the government's attitude towards the Commonwealth-States Housing Agreement.

Mr Everingham: We are just waiting for the goodies to roll in.

Mr B. Collins: That is your cargo cult mentality.

Mr SPEAKER: Order!

Mr SMITH: We would have thought that this government, which is so aggressive and so thrusting in all areas, would have had the foresight and the wit, in this most important speech delivered by His Honour, to make some comment about where it thought the Commonwealth-States Housing Agreement should go. We did not hear a word about it.

We are also somewhat concerned that there was no mention of the people living in caravan parks. All members are aware that the percentage of people living in caravan dwellings in the Northern Territory is 24 times higher than the national average. That is an area that could well have been addressed in His Honour's speech.

I would also appreciate a comment from the government speaker who follows me on whether it is the intention of the government to ensure that its inquiry into freight costs covers the housing industry. Quite clearly, the additional costs associated with housing in the Northern Territory are extremely high and are a burden to people wishing to purchase or build homes in the Northern Territory. I think it should be quite clearly written into the terms of reference of the freight inquiry that costs in the housing industry should be investigated. If it is believed by the government that this does not fit into the context it sees for the freight inquiry, perhaps there could be a simultaneous inquiry on costs in the housing industry.

Mr Speaker, to sum up, I must agree with previous speakers on this side that really, for a government with 18 months to go in office, not many new initiatives have been indicated to overcome some of the burning problems that face us in the Northern Territory, particularly in the areas that I have mentioned.

Mrs PADGHAM-PURICH (Tiwi): Mr Speaker, it gives me much pleasure to rise

this afternoon and take part in the debate on the address in reply to His Honour the Administrator's speech. Firstly, I hope that the honourable member for Millner, by his comments on the rail link and his reference to the transport inquiry, is not softening us up for the possibility of the federal government somehow or other not fitting in with our plans to build a railway in the Northern Territory or to have us accept less money for our national highways here. I say that because, when decisions of that sort are made, they are not done suddenly. There is usually a softening up period to get people used to them.

Mr Speaker, I think the commitment to build the rail link between Alice Springs and Darwin mentioned by His Honour the Administrator in his speech relates to one of the most exciting things to happen in the Territory since I have been here, which is quite a few years. If you ask people in the street what they think is the most exciting thing that has happened in the Territory since this government has been in power, I think they will say the same thing. Everybody, no matter what their calling or position in the community, is looking forward to the completion of this railway and the benefits it will bring to the Northern Territory.

The Administrator mentioned briefly the subject of a university in the Northern Territory. This project has received a minor setback to its program of development, but I feel certain it will go ahead. For many reasons, I think that this government is right in planning for a Northern Territory university. I have mentioned them before but I will go over the main points again.

A university in the Northern Territory would be in a unique position to engage in research programs and teaching programs in tropical agriculture and tropical medicine. A university in the Northern Territory would be the nearest university to South-east Asia. We have a stable government in Australia, the only stable government in the tropics if one looks around the world, and this is very important in relation to research programs and exchange programs with other countries. These views are also held by other members of the Institute of Agriculture in the Northern Territory. The climate in the Northern Territory ranges from tropical in the north to arid in the desert region in the south of the Territory. This will give great scope for any research programs and postgraduate and graduate work undertaken by the university. We are connected to the rest of Australia and this will be of benefit to those people who will come from South-east Asia to study at this university. No doubt, when the university is established, not only will we have graduate and postgraduate students from South-east Asia but we will have students from other countries also.

Despite what the honourable member for Millner said in his deprecations of our housing policy, I would like to mention something rather personal in relation to my perception of accommodation in the Northern Territory. Recently, I had occasion to advertise for somebody to work for me on the farm where we live. With the job, furnished accommodation for 2 is supplied. It is not very grandiose accommodation but it is safe and secure accommodation. Believe it or not, an officer in the Commonwealth Employment Service said to me: 'Madam, you may have trouble filling that job because most people who apply could have other accommodation'. I thought I was doing the right thing by offering accommodation for 2 with the job. I received quite a number of applications for this job. I would say that more than 50% of them, without even seeing the accommodation, said that they did not want it because they had other accommodation. I do not know where this lack of housing and accommodation is in the Northern Territory because I personally have not struck it.

The honourable member for Millner spoke rather sadly of the people who live in caravan parks. No doubt, there are many people living in caravan parks who would prefer to live in houses. However, he must take cognisance of the fact that, for many reasons, people want to live in caravan parks. In my electorate, there are 8 or 9 caravan parks which cater for all sorts of people. They have good facilities for people who go there. I think the people who go to caravan parks from Berrimah right down the highway get value for their money in terms of the services that are offered to them.

The Administrator mentioned that our government will offer greater facilities for women to buy homes. I heartily approve of this. If a woman is the bread winner or if she is standing on her own 2 feet and can afford to buy a home or take out a loan, I cannot see why she cannot do so.

I would like to raise 1 point to illustrate the disadvantage of my constituents in the rural area: the situation on stamp duty payable on a first home purchase in the Northern Territory. Anyone buying a first home in cities or towns in the Northern Territory does not have to pay stamp duty but people who want to buy a house for the first time in the rural area, on their 5 or 20-acre blocks, must pay stamp duty. The reason given is that 5 or 20-acre blocks need not only be for residential purposes. Whilst I agree that a person living on a 5 or 20-acre block may have a little business on the block, a person who buys a 0.25-acre block in town could also run a little business from his house. No regard is paid to this. A person in town can run a business from his or her house; for example, dressmaking, a telephone answering service, child-minding centre etc. It is an iniquitous situation. I hope it changes in the future and I intend to follow it up.

I was pleased to hear in the Administrator's speech reference made to education being vital to all Territorians but especially to Aborigines. I think the honourable member for Nightcliff said that education is no load to carry through life. I do not care who you are, education is no load to carry. It is to the betterment of all Territorians, both children and adults, to receive the highest education possible. Only by making an effort to receive an education can we broaden our horizons and get a greater appreciation of ourselves and our place in the community.

I am very interested in the bilingual language program that is being undertaken in several Aboriginal communities in the Northern Territory. I heartily applaud this. At the same time, cognisance must be taken of the fact that, whether the people who recommended this idea like it or not, English is the language spoken in the Northern Territory. If Aborigines learn English as a second language, I hope that when they reach the high school level - this happens on the Tiwi islands - English is recognised as the main language. With the best will in the world, tractor manuals come in English in most places. Nursing manuals come written in English in most areas.

If Aborigines are to take their place in the wider community, as an increasing number of young educated Aborigines want to do, then not only must they learn their own language as a written language but they must also have full knowledge of the English language. There is no problem with this in the Tiwi islands. The standard of education in the schools on the Tiwi islands is excellent from the points of view of the children, the teachers, the leaders in the communities and the councils.

The honourable member for Fannie Bay deprecated the standard of health services offered by this government. I will not dispute her figures at all. I know her to be a person with intestinal fortitude. Nevertheless, I think we must realise that, generally speaking, the Northern Territory has a younger

population than the states. Because many members of our population are young, they tend to be more healthy. The older people get, the more time catches up. We become a little less healthy and more susceptible to illness, we get broken bones and all sorts of things happen to us. I do not think that the fact that staff numbers in the Department of Health have been reduced is a strong indicator that our standards of health are any less in the Northern Territory than those in other parts of Australia. I would hate to see in the Northern Territory a situation which occurred in Great Britain. When free health care was brought in there by a Labor government years ago, doctors' waiting rooms were filled with chronic hypochondriacs to the detriment of those who were really sick.

Mr Speaker, first of all, we should encourage people to stay healthy by conducting education programs in sickness prevention. Tied in with this is the need for programs directed to discouraging people from drinking too much alcohol. I did not agree with certain aspects of the program run in the Territory in relation to this. The pictures and the posters associated with it were not very tasteful. Also, they could have been better distributed to create more impact. Nevertheless, the basic idea of the program, which was to encourage people to drink less alcohol and keep themselves healthier and to reduce the number of road accidents, is to be applauded.

His Honour the Administrator mentioned the pensioner air fare scheme offered to pensioners living in the Territory. This is to be applauded. I do not think that this exists in any state in Australia. I know that this will be of great benefit to people in the Territory travelling from Darwin to southern states and from Darwin to other centres in the Territory. There are many old timers who were born here or who came here years ago and retired here. For many years, the Territory has been their home. Many of them do not have any ties down south but they do have ties with other centres such as Tennant Creek and Alice Springs. I know the honourable minister on one occasion gave a reduced fare to an elderly lady who wanted to go down to Tennant Creek to see her relatives rather than go down to Adelaide. She could have elected to go to Adelaide and only have gone to Tennant Creek but, to her, this was not completely honest.

The honourable member for Nightcliff spoke at great length about the bad points of the Chan Park Nursing Home. We have to recognise that this home opened just before Christmas. Perhaps everything is not as we would like but it has only been in operation for 4 months. I have been there a number of times. The government should not intervene in the lives of these elderly people. Community groups and individuals can make a great contribution to the welfare of these older people by going to talk to them, taking along music, singing to them, listening to them tell of their earlier days and generally being friendly to them. My mother can no longer look after herself and I had no hesitation in booking her into the Chan Park Nursing Home.

The next subject the Administrator mentioned was legislation for a grain marketing board in the Northern Territory. I am looking forward very much to seeing this legislation. In all states, a grain marketing board is established only in times of glut to control the prices so that the farmer gets a fair go for the money and work he has put into his crop. In the Northern Territory, the situation is the reverse. There is no glut of products up here from the farms. I do not want to see such rigid and overall bureaucratic control of grain marketing that the little fellow cannot grow a few acres of whatever grain the marketing board will control and sell it to his neighbour or grow it for his own use. I will be looking forward to reading that legislation.

The Administrator mentioned the sealing of the Petermann Highway from Alice Springs and also that the tourist industry has potential for Aboriginal training and employment. I heartily applaud this idea. I would like to comment that the Tiwi people have already commenced a tourist project to bring tourists over to Bathurst Island and, in doing that, have brought an income for 4 major projects over there: Tiwi Designs, Bima Wear, the pottery and also a shop which sells artefacts. There is also a store which sells goods for every day use. If the government is going to give encouragement and training for Aborigines to enter into the tourist industry, I would urge the people implementing the policy not to forget that there are other people - perhaps not Aborigines - in the community who would also like such encouragement.

The Administrator mentioned that our government has established the first Conservation Commission in Australia. People would have to be blind not to see what the Conservation Commission has done around the countryside and in towns. Everyone would applaud the efforts of the Conservation Commission. However, this is no reason to be complacent. The Conservation Commission is doing a good job at the moment but it can do a better job in the future. There are many things that equivalent government departments in the states are doing that our Conservation Commission could pick up.

The Administrator mentioned that the Police Force will continue to modernise and, where necessary, expand. I would like to say a few words in relation to police aides. They are one of the great success stories of the Aboriginal people working to control their own communities. I know the police aides at Bathurst Island very well. I also know the aides in other places. I know they take great pride in their work and I know that other members of the force also take great pride in working with Aborigines. It has proved a happy marriage of black and white working in the Police Force for the good order of black communities and white communities. It has also brought responsibility to Aboriginal communities in that some Aboriginal communities have declared themselves dry. However, other Aboriginal communities allow a certain amount of liquor. As in other parts of the Northern Territory and Australia, undesirable situations can develop when too much liquor is drunk. In such circumstances, the police aides are out on their own controlling the situation.

In his speech, the Administrator spoke about the consolidation of existing government projects and indicated new projects that will be undertaken during the remainder of this government's term. Members of the opposition mentioned - and these are my words - that there were no flashy or showy projects. If you have been in the Territory as long as I have, you will know that flashy, showy projects are not usually the ones that continue. It is much better to be sure of your facts, start in a small way and then gradually build up.

Mr DOOLAN (Victoria River): Mr Speaker, the speech delivered by His Honour the Administrator did him great credit indeed. Among many things which impressed me was that his speech seemed to bring a message of hope to the Aboriginal population of the Territory. His Honour mentioned this most significant sector of our community in relation to land ownership. He hoped for the maintenance of good relations between all sectors of the community, especially between the black and white Territorians which requires considerable understanding and compromise and which necessarily is a two-way traffic. He gave us an assurance that the government will continue to give legislative recognition to Aboriginal customary law.

His Honour mentioned that education was vital to the future of all

Territorians but especially to Aborigines. He said that the government was determined to ensure that Aborigines could achieve a primary and secondary education enabling them to aspire to tertiary qualifications at university level.

His Honour went on to say that this government judges that the tourist industry has the greatest potential of any for Aboriginal training and employment. He remarked later that genuine self-reliance in the longer term cannot be achieved in isolation from the wider community and that it is a government duty, when required, to help to realise these aspirations of self-reliance. His Honour recognises that there is scope for greater employment for Aborigines in the mining industry as well as the NT Conservation Commission and that conditions which presently obtain in these areas would be recognised by our present government.

Mr Speaker, all of these things which His Honour mentioned would help to alleviate what he described as the Aborigines' present status as a largely disadvantaged people. Aboriginal people are not only disadvantaged but even the less disadvantaged of them are still generally regarded as second-class citizens.

I would like to comment briefly on some of the points the Administrator mentioned in relation to the Aboriginal residents of the Northern Territory. I do not dispute for one minute that the Administrator spoke in all good faith but I cannot agree that the CLP government has been doing many of the things for which it is trying to take credit and says that it has done. Let us examine some of the things which were said. Land ownership for Aborigines: has this government really supported the principle of land ownership for Aboriginal people? I think not. The government, either overtly or covertly - and usually overtly - has opposed each and every land claim which has been made, and not just as a token opposition but fiercely even to the extent of taking cases to the High Court of Australia and at the expense of the taxpayers of the Northern Territory.

Mr Speaker, the Administrator mentioned the desirability of offering equal education opportunities to Aborigines, not only primary and secondary education but to endeavour to offer these advantages to them to inculcate aspirations to tertiary qualifications at university level. They were fine words and noble aspirations indeed. However, on the ABC news yesterday morning, a news item was broadcast that a scheme had been initiated to admit Australian Aborigines to the University of Port Moresby because the Papua New Guinea government felt that our own indigenous people are totally neglected at the tertiary levels. That is a most generous gesture from a nation which is generally regarded as fairly backward and disadvantaged. At least it is a nation which has similar problems with its indigenous people and enough perspicacity and generosity to realise that it is obliged to assist indigenous people of a relatively wealthy neighbour to help them achieve a tertiary education.

Having listened to the aspirations of the CLP government in respect to really worthwhile things, such as land ownership, education, the mining industry etc, I was appalled to hear the statement that the CLP government judges that the tourist industry has the greatest potential for Aboriginal people in training and employment. I can only say that this is possibly the most ill-conceived, ill-considered and arbitrary opinion that I have heard in this Assembly or elsewhere for a long time. Such an opinion from a government member could only have been proffered by someone who has little if any experience of Aborigines at all, and certainly not from a person who has spent any length of time on Aboriginal communities and seen Aborigines' positive and obvious

resistance in the main to very ill-mannered tourists who continue, despite literary and media education, to regard Aboriginal people as freaks and curiosities. They are photographed at will without permission, spoken about as if they were not present and discussed and criticised as if they were totally non-conversant with the English language and, in fact, as if they were not even present at the discussion.

Mr Speaker, in an earlier speech in this Assembly, I advocated a crash course in manners for tourists to be instituted prior to the promotion of further tourist activities in Aboriginal communities. I still feel that way. If we are to promote tourism, let us educate the tourists first.

As the Administrator said, there is scope for greater employment of Aboriginal people in the mining industry. Apart from employment organised by BHP on Groote Eylandt, I do not believe that Aborigines have ever had any significant employment or employment opportunities offered to them by mining companies in any other areas. I believe, as the Administrator said, that opportunities for employment have been given to Aborigines by the Northern Territory Conservation Commission. I can only hope and trust that such opportunities continue and increase.

I would like to make some comment on the Alice Springs to Darwin railway. In regard to this railway, I would like to state categorically that I am totally in favour of its construction. I always have been. I cannot conceive of any Territorian who would not believe that, when constructed, this railway would be of inestimable value to the Northern Territory. What I believe the honourable Leader of the Opposition was endeavouring to do yesterday was to point out that, despite its unquestionable value to the Territory, some government members would have us believe that it will be the be-all and end-all of all the Territory's difficulties in relation to economic, unemployment and social problems which besiege us at the present time. It is a wonderful thing but it will not solve the whole of the Territory's future.

I have said that it will be a wonderful boon to the Territory and I believe sincerely that it will be. In fact, reference to earlier Hansards will back up the fact that I have on several occasions over the years since 1977 tried to convince the government that it would be one of the most worthwhile ventures that the Territory could possibly undertake. The Chief Minister has without question pushed for the construction of the Alice Springs to Darwin railway with the utmost vigour for quite some time, and all credit is due to him for his efforts. Nevertheless, I feel obliged to go on record once again to point out that, when the Commonwealth Railways made a decision to shut down the railway in the Territory - I think it was in 1975 - there was not one word of protest from the CLP government.

Mr Everingham: That is not true.

Mr DOOLAN: It is you know. It is my recollection that almost all the protests which were forthcoming came from a variety of unions and, as a result, they were branded ratbags and reds. Despite the eloquent silence in 1975, this government, and in particular the Chief Minister, is now demanding all the kudos and all the credit because the Labor government agreed to one of the promises made by the Fraser government. I for one am certain that the Hawke Labor government will honour this promise.

Mr Speaker, when the Northern Territory railway was closed down in 1975 - and I reiterate, there was scant protest from the CLP government - what were the results of the closure? Apart from a loss of employment which affected over 200 people, the closure of that railway resulted in several small townships

virtually dying, ceasing to exist. Places like Adelaide River, Pine Creek, and Larrimah were most adversely affected. I believe that even now Pine Creek and Larrimah have not shown any significant recovery from those times. The people who lost jobs were mostly long-time Territorians. In some cases, railway jobs were such that they were more or less handed down from father to son. As you well know, Sir, railway employees lived permanently in many small Territory towns, contributed largely to the economy of those towns and, in fact, formed the backbone and the mainstay of those places.

It should also be placed on record that Australian National Railways never ever honoured its promise that something like one-third of railway employees would continue to be employed and remain in their jobs in order to carry out continuing maintenance on the railway. Now, Mr Speaker, if you look at that railway, the ballast is all shifted and the culverts are burnt out. No maintenance has ever been done. This promise was never fulfilled and this promise was never honoured.

Debate adjourned.

ADJOURNMENT

Mr ROBERTSON (Attorney-General): Mr Speaker, I move that the Assembly do now adjourn.

Mr Speaker, after consultation with the honourable member for Nhulunbuy, the Opposition Whip, I would like to advise the Assembly that I will be informing the Clerk that the next general business day will be Wednesday 23 March 1983.

Mr B. COLLINS (Opposition Leader): Mr Speaker, yesterday in the adjournment debate, I mentioned some recent activities of the Premier of Queensland. I must say it was of great interest to me this morning to hear about the events in the Queensland parliament yesterday. Indeed, probably all of us found it rather extraordinary to hear of these great changes which were introduced into the Queensland parliament which has been infamous for years and has been such a slap in the face of the democratic Westminster system in this country. Certainly, it was of great interest to me to hear that the government of Queensland, to its eternal shame, opposed the recommendations of the Standing Orders Committee and voted against them. Fortunately, the 13 Liberal members realised that, to continue the reputation of that parliament in such a way would be against the best interests of Queensland and they crossed the floor and voted with the opposition. Of course, as we will all know, coalition parties in parliament do not take action like that lightly. They must have felt a fairly heavy burden of responsibility to cross the floor in such a large group and vote against the government.

But what extraordinarily radical changes that government voted against! It voted against the opposition being able to participate in question time. Basically, the opposition was to be able to speak during debates or to be in Parliament House while the House was sitting. Queensland alone, of all the state parliaments, perpetuated for years not only a remarkable scarcity of sitting days but a quite extraordinary process whereby the House was more or less simply a debating chamber for the government of the day. The opportunity for the opposition party to raise matters of public importance, for example, which all other parliaments in Australia take for granted as part of the proper process of parliament, was denied the opposition in Queensland.

I picked up a fascinating document from Queensland which is really quite a serious matter. I have written to the Queensland Department of Health to ask

it to do something about this. As a person involved for many years in horticulture and having had to use, with a great deal of reluctance I might say, quite large amounts of toxic chemicals over the years, I was quite horrified to receive a copy of this document. It is a guide produced for Queenslanders called: 'Play Safe with Pesticides', published by the Queensland Health Education Council under the direction of the Queensland Division of Industrial Medicine. It lists all of the common pesticides and weedicides used in the state of Queensland and categorises them into lists. The relevant chapter is called the 'Danger Guide' and says that, in the lists provided, the pesticides have been graded according to toxicity and then graded into areas: high toxicity - containing such chemicals as gusathion, parathion, dieldrin and so on; moderate toxicity - chlordane, delnav, trithion metasystox etc; and low toxicity - DDT. In fact, DDT has been banned in this country for years and in the United States for even longer than that. In the section headed - and I stress this - 'nil toxicity' - no toxicity at all - is listed: dioxin, hormone weed killers, 2,4D, 2,4.5T and Tordon. Members would know that, drop for drop, few chemicals known to man are more toxic than dioxin, that particularly unfortunate component of Agent Orange which even in minute doses can cause the most horrific health problems. It was with some degree of concern that I saw this listed in a widely-distributed publication of the Queensland government under a heading of 'nil toxicity'. I have written to the Queensland Minister for Health asking for that to be corrected.

Mr Speaker, the main reason I am speaking in the adjournment debate this afternoon is in an effort once more to correct the public record in respect of statements made by the honourable member for Tiwi. The member for Tiwi seems to have considerable difficulty in following debates in this Assembly. As always, I am prepared to accept responsibility for everything I say in the Assembly. What I do not like is criticism for things I have not said, particularly when such comments follow hot on the heels of my speech. I ask the member for Tiwi if, in future, she has criticism, that she criticise what I said and not what she thinks I said.

The honourable member for Tiwi is not an unintelligent person although at times the honourable member's tongue and brain seem to work independently of each other. I think a clue to the cause of that problem has been found. I refer to yesterday's adjournment debate and a comment which I think sheds some light on why the member has such a problem. The member was speaking of difficulties she was experiencing in getting some roads at Berrimah fixed. I quote from notes I made, Mr Speaker: 'I have been hitting my head against a brick wall for a long time'. I think the results of that process are only too apparent.

I take this very seriously. I made some comments about the ADMA scheme. There is no stronger supporter of that scheme than myself in the Northern Territory. I think the public record bears that out. It was only because of my concern for the future health and prospects of that scheme that I raised the matter yesterday. The honourable member said that she expected to hear further recommendations from me that there be more rice production. I refer the honourable member to my speech and I defy her to find a single reference to rice anywhere in it. There are none.

She then made some rather broad hints as a result of the comments that I was supposed to have made about rice - which I had not - concerning the identity of my so-called agricultural adviser. I wish to disabuse the honourable member in this particular area. I confess I seek advice widely on legal matters, and even more widely on economic and various other matters. But, in the area of primary production, I prefer to come to my own conclusions rather than seek the advice of others. In respect of the further remarks made

by the Chief Minister about the person concerned, I must say to him and to the honourable member for Tiwi that I would act with some degree of caution before criticising so widely the efforts of that gentleman in the pursuit of better agriculture for the Northern Territory. It is indeed a fact that - and I could refer them to no better authority on the subject than the honourable member for Elsey who has over past years commented to me on it - there is no one in the Northern Territory - and I do not like people being singled out in this way and that is why I am responding - who has been more single-minded in pursuit of the improvement of Territory agriculture than he. In fact, he has devoted nearly 17 years of his life to it.

Mr Perron: He was paid for it, wasn't he?

Mr B. COLLINS: We all get paid for it.

Mr Perron: Right, but he's looking for thanks.

Mr B. COLLINS: What a crass, ignorant ratbag the Treasurer of this Assembly is. All of us are paid for our efforts.

Mr Perron: You are too right.

Mr B. COLLINS: I might point out to the ignorant Treasurer that we routinely and properly pay tribute to many people in this Assembly. Indeed, I go along to Government House gladly and sit in at investiture ceremonies and watch medals being handed to people who are also paid for their efforts but who, quite rightly, receive public recognition above and beyond money - which is the only thing that concerns the Treasurer - for the efforts that they put into the community.

Mr Speaker, I want to say something that the honourable member for Tiwi probably knows already. I know her connections with the rural sector of the Northern Territory well. I say to the honourable member that, before she makes any further attempt to forestall the efforts of that particular officer of the agriculture division, she should have a chat to some of the people who work in the rural sectors of the Northern Territory and to some of the people who work in the grazing sectors of the Northern Territory and she will find that that gentleman is held in very high regard for his work and efforts. As I said before, I am sure the honourable member for Elsey will bear me out on that.

The honourable member for Tiwi went on to say, ostensibly in relation to a statement by me: 'He said that sorghum would not pay off'. I refute that statement utterly. It is difficult to present a reasoned argument to the member for Tiwi and expect an intelligent response. What I said is that there is a very healthy domestic market for sorghum in the Northern Territory - about 8000 t a year in fact - for the very purposes to which the member herself referred: poultry and pig production. However, on the current level of development of varieties - and I point to the excellent product obtained in the area last year - and the current returns available for the crop in respect of the prices that are paid for sorghum from other areas, there seems to be an upper limit to that market. Can I point out to the honourable member for Tiwi, whom I know is academically qualified in this area, that one of the most important aspects of agriculture these days is agricultural economics. There is no harder-nosed variety of people on the face of the earth than farmers. They are a very pragmatic bunch of people indeed. If they are spending \$1 an acre to produce a crop, and they are getting 80¢ back for it, they know they are losing money. You do not need a degree to work that out.

If any members of the government had bothered to attend the Douglas-Daly field day - it was one of the best attended field days I have been to for some time and much to my surprise there was no one there from the government - they would know that nothing I said in my adjournment debate last night about the problem of sorghum is very remarkable. In fact, it was discussed all day. The adjournment speech I made last night and the press statement that I put out the other day were drawn from the discussions that were held at the field day. Saying that there is an upper limit at the current stage of development of the industry will not come as any news to the people who are growing sorghum. I am not knocking the industry. The farmers in that area know full well the personal encouragement and support that I give to the industry. Everyone acknowledges, and it was publicly discussed at the field day, that it takes 3 to 4 years of planning to establish development programs in agriculture that will be of benefit. If you plan a course of action and diversification today in crop varieties, you are unlikely to get the data back on which to base any further development for 3 or 4 years. You can hardly say you are rushing into it.

I stress that this is a very important subject indeed and that is why I am correcting the record this afternoon. Those things need to be looked at now. The thrust of what I said was that, because of the late entry into data collection of some of the farms down there - through nobody's fault, and I stress that - some thought needs to be given to the sunset clause in the legislation. This is the first time I have heard this raised publicly. If the honourable member wants to take exception to that and say that it was irresponsible to raise it, then she can do so. I certainly intend to send complete copies of all the debates on the subject in the Assembly this afternoon to the very farmers with whom I had prolonged discussions at the field day. Those discussions indeed were the basis of the remarks I made last night.

She then made an incredible statement about the price of sorghum. As I said by way of interjection last night, and I know the honourable member has a degree in agricultural science, you cannot have it both ways. She said at one end of the scale that the farmers have to obtain a decent price for their product, and indeed they do otherwise they would go out of business. At the other end of the scale, she said that they should keep their price down otherwise it would increase the price of poultry and eggs. I think she talked about all those members who have constituents who eat pork and eggs. I simply point out the basic fact of farming life to the honourable member: you cannot have it both ways.

She said that sorghum is selling in the Northern Territory at a higher price than it is selling in Adelaide. She then went on to say: 'I feel there is a discrepancy in those 2 prices'. Indeed, that would follow naturally. The discrepancy in fact is something like \$5 a tonne. If you are a sorghum grower, you cannot sell the product at anything less than a break-even price. It happens to be a fact that, if we want those ADMA farms to flourish, they have to sell their product. I was surprised to hear the honourable member advancing a proposal that the Northern Territory government should continue, by way of injection of further public funds, to artificially keep those prices down. That is an irresponsible approach to take and a dangerous one. This government and indeed the opposition, were it in government, would not be prepared to continue to pump a considerable amount of public money into artificially sustaining prices. We would like the ADMA scheme to get its foot into the market on as independent a basis as possible. It is no good propping up these schemes artificially.

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

Mrs PADGHAM-PURICH (Tiwi): Mr Speaker, I was very pleased in listening to the honourable Leader of the Opposition, to see that he read my speech. Thus, there were 2 of us who read it. I was very pleased to hear that he has some knowledge of agriculture. For him to reply like he did, I must have hit a nerve somewhere.

Mr Speaker, if he reads my speech properly, he will see that I agreed with his views on diversification and research. I cast no aspersions on the qualifications or the work done by the person we are referring to. In fact, I have a high regard for him in his academic field. He has been up here a long time and I know he has worked hard. He is held in high regard by the people he works with and the farmers he advises.

The honourable Leader of the Opposition said that I had said that the government should keep prices down artificially. I assume he meant the price of grain to the end user. In fact, I made mention of the fact that the people who are buying this grain do not want handouts. Perhaps he does not know what a handout is. I thought anybody with common sense would know what a handout is.

The end consumers of the grain must also make a living. ADMA has given a lot of care and time to the establishment of this primary industry in the Douglas-Daly area. It is also giving some time and care to the disposal of the end product. I would like to see the end users - the egg producers and the pig meat producers - also reap some benefit from the growing of grain in the Northern Territory. If they cannot reap some benefit from the growing of grain in the Northern Territory - either because of better quality or availability of supply - they will rely on their hip-pockets to tell them where to get it. That could be from interstate, which could be to the detriment of this infant industry at the Douglas-Daly.

Recently, I received a copy of a letter from the council at Pularumpi on Melville Island expressing great concern about the higher education of people at Pularumpi. It concerns the replacement of their adult educator. They have an excellent adult educator. He has been there for a number of years. His name is Mr McRoberts. He is well liked and held in very high regard both for his personal qualifications and also for what he has done in the teaching field on Melville Island. I hope the problem has been settled. Mr McRoberts is going on long service leave for 7 months. He wants to return to the community when his long service leave is up. The community wants him back. His students want him back. The council wants him back. Everybody wants him back. The problem is that his departure will create a gap of 7 months. The Department of Education has said that there is no person to take the place of Mr McRoberts during his absence.

I have not found out if a replacement has been found for the adult educator at Garden Point yet but I will mention briefly the education program as it relates to the TAFE program there and the work that Mr McRoberts has done. I think it will be quite an eye-opener for honourable members. I will read directly from the copy of the letter that was sent to me. The council is most vehement in its request to have Mr McRoberts back, and he wants to come back. But it also wants a replacement. It does not want to see the good work that has been done already going down the drain. TAFE went to Pularumpi as a response to community training needs. The Department of Education offered continuing support to local training and local training initiatives. The council feels that, as the department has offered continuing support, it should be able to find a replacement for the 7 months Mr McRoberts will be away.

The program at Garden Point has received the acclaim of the Department of

Community Development, following guidelines set down by the Northern Territory government. It has supported the program. The Department of Transport and Works, as an agent of the Department of Community Development, has actively supported this TAFE program. The Department of Employment and Industrial Relations has actively supported the program. The council supports the program. The community supports it. The main reason for this program is to educate the young people to work in their own community for their own community.

The TAFE program has helped train local bookkeeping staff, health staff, essential services staff, council staff and housing management staff to a degree unprecedented in the Territory's history. The present training includes correspondence courses in boiler attendance, marine diesel engine driving, mechanical engineering, accountancy, remedial mathematics and health care. It also includes training for the essential services section, the health clinic and the council as well as onsite training in bookkeeping and management, and driving for the council, the tourist industry, the school, the health centre, the women's group and other groups at Garden Point. The TAFE program also includes provision for pre-training in mathematics and English for the special needs of the various trades. It is not a static training program. It also has plans for the future: the training and recruitment of new office staff; a store staffed by trainees from this program; further involvement in remedial literacy for the police aides for both Tiwi islands; development in literacy, numeracy and nutrition skills for the health workers; and work experience for school leavers.

Mr Deputy Speaker, I cannot understand why the Department of Education cannot find a replacement adult educator for Garden Point for those 7 months. If one is not found, I feel that it will be to the great detriment of the community.

I would like to mention briefly a Land Board meeting which was convened recently by the government. I went along, as did the member for Millner. Government representatives were also present.

The discussion was wide ranging but the main topic was the operation of recent amendments to the Crown Lands Act which led to the revamping of the Land Board. Land tenure and how the Land Board will operate in future was discussed. All in all, I found it a very interesting meeting. Unfortunately, I could not stay till the end. It was a very interesting initiative taken by the government in this particular field. Consultations took place with the people on the land and others connected with the land before the amendments to the Crown Lands Act were introduced.

I applaud the initiative taken by the government in calling a meeting where things can be discussed and thrashed out so that everybody's views can be aired simply and easily. People gain much from it.

Mr Deputy Speaker, a constituent from Victoria River electorate saw me recently. He was rather concerned that he would not receive all the necessary permits to start a small business in the rural area. He wanted to set up a caravan park. He had the land. It was in the correct area. He went to every department that he had to and received all the requisite permits to start his business. Unfortunately, there were 3 objections to his proposed caravan park. His application was turned down. It is still subject to appeal.

I am not entering into further discussion on that particular matter but wish to point up how objections to different businesses are dealt with. There is another business conducted in the rural area about which people can

object until they are blue in the face and still nobody pays a blind bit of attention. I am referring to people who do not even live in the rural area but who conduct a sand and gravel portage business in the rural area to the detriment of all the people who happen to live along the particular gravel road that services the sand and gravel pit.

Whilst I want to see small businesses go ahead, I think it is worth comparing the 2 instances. There were 3 objections to the proposal for a caravan park and that put the kibosh on the venture. However, no matter how many objections there are to sand and gravel mining, they do not seem to stop it or to bring relief to the people in any way. I conclude my remarks by saying that I will be pursuing the matter further. Whilst I know the sand and gravel is used for the development of the Territory in terms of building materials and roadworks materials, nevertheless, the continual passage of the trucks over the gravel roads in the rural area is to the detriment of my constituents.

Mrs O'NEIL (Fannie Bay): Mr Deputy Speaker, there are 2 issues I want to raise this afternoon and they both relate to health matters. The first relates to a comparatively small problem but, nevertheless, a matter of great concern to the individuals concerned. Unfortunately, it is a matter of some injustice towards those individuals. I refer to the receptionists in the community health centres. There are not very many of them and, of course, they are all women. Honourable members will recall that, on 1 September 1981, new health funding arrangements were introduced by the federal government. These resulted in consequential changes in the Northern Territory and, as a result, charges were introduced for the first time at community health centres. Looking at Hansard, I see that this was foreshadowed by the then Minister for Health in August 1981. Those charges were introduced from 1 September 1981.

Clearly, this resulted in a change of work being carried out by the receptionists in those clinics who became receivers of public moneys. As people familiar with public services arrangements will know, this meant that their jobs needed to be reclassified because I understand that it is the practice within the Northern Territory Public Service for people dealing with public moneys to hold at least an A4 position within the public service. Those conscientious public servants naturally expected, and I am told they were led to expect, that their positions would be upgraded to an A4 level when they commenced to collect that money for the Northern Territory government from 1 September 1981. It is noteworthy that we in this Assembly, through legislation and through regulations, made arrangements to ensure that the Northern Territory government could start collecting that money on 1 September 1981. However, I think it is a great shame to note that nobody was so enthusiastic about ensuring that those public servants were appropriately remunerated for their extra work involved in collecting that money on behalf of the government.

The situation dragged on for a considerable period until it was brought to my attention. I can now inform honourable members that those persons, and there are only about half a dozen of them, for the first time last Thursday, 18 months after they commenced their new duties, were paid at the A4 level, the appropriate level for people performing these financial duties. In fact, they received back pay to December last year, about 3 months back pay. There was, however, a period of 15 months in which they performed these higher duties and for which they have not received remuneration. We are doing a great injustice to these ordinary public servants who are doing their duty and not trying to make waves because they have not been appropriately rewarded for their work. We in this Assembly have received substantial increases in salary in that time and many leading public servants have received substantial

increases. However, it is the people at the bottom of the tree who miss out.

Mr Deputy Speaker, I have spoken with appropriate authorities to see what can be done about ensuring some retrospective payment for these people and I am told that the system just does not allow it. I am told that they have been back paid to December 1982 even though their work at the new rate commenced on 1 September 1981 and there is no way by which it can be further back-dated. I find that very difficult to believe indeed. I raise this in the Assembly in the hope that the Minister for Health or the Chief Minister, who is responsible for the Northern Territory Public Service, can do what is necessary to ensure that this small but nevertheless clear injustice is rectified.

There are a number of reasons for the delay. I am told that indeed some of it lies in the laps of both the Chief Minister and the Treasurer. They are members of a committee which, I understand, is called the Establishment Review Committee. The approval of the change in category of these staff had to be approved by the committee and the application waited on the decision of that committee for some months. I do not know why such a comparatively minor matter should require the attention of these eminent people but apparently it did, along with the attention of the Public Service Commissioner and the Under-Treasurer who are also members of that committee.

There are other people to whom one could apportion blame if one wished to. Perhaps their union was tardy in representing these employees. One might say the department did not seem to act enthusiastically to ensure that their rights were met. Certainly, the same could be said of the Public Service Commissioner's office which is formally their employer. It is a small but important matter of justice to employees in the Northern Territory Public Service. I hope the responsible ministers will see whether, in their ministerial capacity, they can take the action necessary to ensure that these half a dozen or so employees are appropriately remunerated for the work they did for that 15 months.

Mr Deputy Speaker, one other health issue has been raised today by both the members for Nightcliff and Tiwi. It relates to the Chan Park Nursing Home. I had a series of questions which I also intended to address to the honourable Minister for Health on the matter of the Chan Park Nursing Home. Since it has been raised today, I will give the minister notice of it this afternoon rather than leave it till next week because he will undoubtedly be pursuing the matter over the next few days.

This is a matter of some delicacy. One does not want to concern the patients or their relatives by raising questions unnecessarily in the public mind about the operation of such an institution. Nevertheless, it is true that it is a matter that is causing considerable debate in this community, particularly among those concerned with the welfare of the aged and those concerned with welfare of severely handicapped children. Groups in both of those categories are resident in the Chan Park Nursing Home.

I have had the pleasure of visiting the home. I was there at the opening and I have met the managers. I have met the matron, who was formerly at the Darwin Hospital, and I have also met the owners. I must say at this point that I believe that they are all well-intentioned people who are trying to do their best. Despite that, there are concerns in the community - and concerns which I share - which I think are worthy of the attention of the minister. In fact, I understand they have been brought to the minister's attention and to the attention of his predecessor and other ministers.

My first question relates to the legislative status of the Chan Park Nursing Home. There was a seminar held on 5 March in Darwin, organised by the Council of the Ageing, relating to care of and facilities for the aged. I was disturbed to find that the impression was given to people at that seminar that the Chan Park Nursing Home was a private institution which had nothing to do with the Department of Health. I therefore ask the minister to confirm that the nursing home is registered under the Northern Territory Private Hospitals and Nursing Homes Act and therefore is governed by a number of the provisions in the act, including a requirement that it must be inspected by the Department of Health.

My second question to the minister relates to those inspections. I ask the minister how often the Chan Park Nursing Home has been formally inspected by the Department of Health pursuant to section 23 of the Private Hospitals and Nursing Homes Act. It has been suggested to me - I do not know whether it is true or not - that some subsidy is provided by the Northern Territory government to this institution. That would surprise me. Nevertheless, in order to clear the air, I ask the minister: does the Northern Territory government provide any direct subsidy or indirect financial assistance to the Chan Park Nursing Home? If so, what is the amount or extent of that assistance? In passing, I might say that this nursing home would receive a subsidy from the Commonwealth government - a bed subsidy for caring for people therein.

I ask the minister further: if it is true that, before the opening of Chan Park Nursing Home, adult patients in Harry Chan Ward at Darwin Hospital were regularly treated by Department of Health physiotherapists and occupational therapists and that, since those patients were transferred to Chan Park Nursing Home, they have received no such treatment from professional therapists? This question has been raised with me by a number of people including professionals in that field. The honourable member for Tiwi said that the home has only been open for 4 months or so and we must give it a chance to settle down. That is true. But 4 months is a very long time for patients to go without treatment, such as physiotherapy, if they need it. It can cause irreversible damage to their health. I understand the Chan Park Nursing Home has or had in its employ a craft worker. I point out that that is not the same as an occupational therapist. Nobody would suggest that it is. If a craft worker is employed, which is desirable, it should be in association with, and under the supervision of, an occupational therapist.

Mr Deputy Speaker, I wish to direct some questions to the minister regarding the residence of handicapped children at that home. I raised this matter in this Assembly last year before the decision was taken. I understand it has been raised by other people with the Chief Minister. There is a great deal of concern, which I share, and disagreement with the housing of those multi-handicapped children in the Chan Park Nursing Home alongside geriatric and other patients who have a multitude of disabilities. Therefore, I wish to ask the minister, in view of this continuing concern about the use of Chan Park Nursing Home as a residence for handicapped children, what action he is taking to have more appropriate accommodation provided for them. I have heard that discussions have taken place with organisations representing disabled persons and handicapped persons in Darwin and with some private welfare organisations about the possibility of providing a separate institution for those children. I think they deserve the best that we can give and, with respect, I do not think the Chan Park Nursing Home is the best we can offer them. I hope that we can work towards a situation where they can have a separate facility. I would suggest that Darwin Hospital is not the right place to house them either. I agree wholeheartedly with the government on that but I do not think that the nursing home is a much better option. I ask the minister if he is aware of any other nursing home in Australia in which

geriatric patients and handicapped children are cared for in such close proximity.

As I said, this is a delicate matter and should be treated as such. However, it is obvious to me, as it is to the member for Nightcliff, that there is a great deal of interest in, and concern about, the operations of this institution in the Northern Territory. It is our first such institution. I believe that the community, and indeed all members of this Assembly, would hope that we could offer the people who need such care the very best in the Northern Territory. People believe that it is the responsibility of the Department of Health and the Minister for Health to ensure that such care is provided and that we do not say: 'Well, it is a private institution; it is up to it'. The government has the responsibility and the minister has the responsibility. For that reason, I urge him to address these matters to ensure, in cooperation with the owners of the private institution, that the best is available for the people who need it.

Mr LEO (Nhulunbuy): Mr Speaker, I would like to address my remarks this afternoon to the honourable Minister for Housing and the Minister for Education on their responsibilities in my electorate.

I believe that the Minister for Education has received some representation on the matter of the teacher turnover within the electorate of Nhulunbuy. It is an ongoing problem. Parents in Nhulunbuy have witnessed their children suffering 3 and 4 changes of teachers a year. In primary grades this can be very disrupting to a small child's education. I believe that the biggest, single factor contributing to turnover of teachers is the housing problem.

Fortunately, this year we have managed to overcome the housing problem in Nhulunbuy somewhat and it is my understanding that all teachers are housed in one manner or another. Unfortunately, the rental rates for teacher accommodation in Nhulunbuy differ remarkably. Some teachers are housed in Department of Education housing, which is subsidised as would be expected in a very isolated community where houses cannot be purchased. Some teachers are housed in Housing Commission accommodation which is not subsidised. Those teachers are disgruntled, which I think is understandable. They are forced to pay normal Housing Commission rents in an extremely isolated community where normal consumer prices are higher than anywhere else in the Northern Territory. They see their colleagues in other places which are equally isolated receive the Department of Education subsidised housing.

I ask the Minister for Education to address this discrepancy in rental rates for teacher accommodation and, in the shortest possible period, to resolve the problem. Already this year a number of teachers have left the Nhulunbuy Primary School. In my mind this question of housing contributes to the turnover of teachers in the community. I would ask him to assess realistically the rents paid by teachers in that extremely isolated community with the view to contributing to a lower teacher turnover than is at present experienced.

The second comment I would like to make is directed to the honourable Minister for Housing who, unfortunately, is not present. Last year, I was given numerous assurances that Housing Commission houses would be sold to interested tenants in Nhulunbuy. I have been very patient on this serious matter. Honourable members will recall that I have patiently asked questions on this very subject sittings after sittings. I was assured by the previous Minister for Housing that some agreement had been reached with the leaseholder that would allow the sale of Housing Commission houses in Nhulunbuy to interested tenants and that all that was required was an assessment by the

Valuer-General of the price of that accommodation. He said that tenants of those houses should expect to receive some notice that they would be able to purchase those homes.

I am a Housing Commission tenant in Nhulunbuy and I have received no notice that I will be able to purchase the home that I am living in at the moment. I know that no Housing Commission tenant in Nhulunbuy has received any such notice. I can only assume that the Housing Commission is still unable to sell those homes to interested tenants in Nhulunbuy. We have spent many hours in this Assembly discussing ways of encouraging people to stay in the Territory longer. We argue that they should own homes here and settle here.

To date, the Housing Commission, to the best of my knowledge, is unable to sell houses to tenants in Nhulunbuy. Nhulunbuy has an extremely transient population and one way of introducing more stability into that community would be to offer people the opportunity to purchase their own homes. I cannot stress enough the absolute need for this. It will certainly contribute to the stability of the population in Nhulunbuy. I ask the new Minister for Housing to pursue the cause of Housing Commission tenants in Nhulunbuy in the interests of achieving some population stability within that community.

Mr SMITH (Millner): Mr Deputy Speaker, I wish to return to the question of the freight inquiry. It is quite obvious that the cost of materials has been a talking point in the Territory for a long time. It is good to see that the government will do something concrete about it.

There are 2 examples that have been brought to my attention within the last week that I think illustrate the sort of problem that the freight inquiry hopefully will tackle. One of my constituents came to me with a story that 1 firm in Darwin was charging a basic freight factor of 15% on the cost of all items. This constituent was particularly concerned because it was a relatively light item that had been freighted up. It cost \$800 and the 15% freight was put on top of that. Whether that is true or false, I do not know, but that is the sort of story going round.

The second story, which I think is true, involves a freight forwarding firm in Alice Springs which contracted to deliver a number of items to Alice Springs at a unit cost of 43¢. Employees delivered the items and the next day they went into the retail outlet to which they had been delivered to buy one of the items at retail price. They were staggered to find that the freight component had been costed out at \$4.30. I think that is the sort of problem that hopefully this inquiry will tackle.

At this stage, the details of the inquiry are very vague. I would like to spend a little time suggesting some of the things that I think should concern the inquiry. First of all, I think the government should ensure that the inquiry covers all modes of transport; that is, road, sea, air and possibly rail, particularly to Alice Springs. It should certainly be more than just a witch hunt in which the government attempts to catch out transport operators who have been inflating charges if, in fact, there have been transport operators who have done that.

If we are talking about the cost of freight in the Northern Territory, what we are in fact looking at is the cost incurred immediately after the production of an item right through to the time when the item is sold at the retail outlet. Any worthwhile inquiry must therefore look into the total distribution costs in the Territory, not simply the transport costs. The non-manufacturing portions of prices consumers pay for their purchases can amount

to about 60% of the total cost of the product and a large element of this relates to distribution costs. When we talk about the cost of physical distribution, we are talking about the following: word processing, warehousing, inventory management, transport facilities, consumer services where they relate to credit control, depot and or warehouse location as well as the most appropriate channels of distribution. The level of service is also an important factor and may be defined in terms of either the number of days that it takes a company to deliver an order or a proportion of orders that can be filled from stock at any point in time.

This is obviously a problem in the Northern Territory and is clearly one important area that needs investigation in this inquiry. It must also be appreciated that operating a fleet of vehicles involves dealing with a relatively inflexible cost structure. Once the decision to operate a vehicle has been made, the cost of licensing, taxing and insuring the vehicle as well as depreciation or lease payments must be met irrespective of the work done. Furthermore, a driver must be employed and paid no matter how much or how little work is done. Fuel, oil and tyres are the only true variable costs. So once a decision is made to put a vehicle on the road, management automatically limits to a large degree its ability to vary the level of costs that will be incurred due to the existence of the vehicle.

Mr Deputy Speaker, the situation is that management's contribution to the cost effectiveness of transport activities must be related to maximising utilisation rather than minimising or attempting to reduce costs. The impact that government policy has on this cost structure is another important area that requires investigation and hopefully will be covered by the proposed inquiry.

Warehousing costs are another important area. An emphasis on the economies of long production runs coupled with the demand for a high level of service shows the need for strategically-sited warehouses. The cost of warehousing might make up 50% of the distribution costs so they must be carefully controlled.

Another area to be considered is materials handling. The importance of costs associated with materials handling becomes apparent when one realises that handling materials increases their cost without adding to the value of the materials handled. That of course is one of the prime problems that has to be faced and overcome if the land bridge concept is to work: the cost of transporting the materials from 1 transport mode to the other. It follows that the cheapest way to handle materials is not to handle them, at least not to handle them unnecessarily. If the need for handling materials can be controlled and reduced, then the cost of this function can also be controlled and reduced.

Another important area for consideration is inventories and their control. Inventory management should aim to facilitate the manufacturing, distribution, marketing cycle at a minimum cost for a given level of service. In any study of inventory costs as part of an overall study of distribution of goods, there is a need to take into account the following points: the sales requirements; the length of the production-order cycle; the storage facilities, including capacity; carrying costs; and capital requirements. Following this, 2 major questions must be answered: how much to order and when to order it.

I would ask the minister, when it comes time to consider what direction his proposed inquiry might take, to do the job properly and to undertake a thorough inquiry into all aspects. In other words, he must look at all costs involved in the distribution of goods in the Territory. The Territory will

receive very little return from a simple attempt to catch out the odd freight forwarder who has been overcharging.

Mr PERRON (Treasurer): Mr Deputy Speaker, insurance companies do not normally offer flood insurance in normal household coverage. This is particularly relevant in the Territory having regard to events of the last few days. The Territory Insurance Office offers flood coverage under its normal household insurance policies for, I believe, 0.3% extra premium. Honourable members would probably appreciate that that is quite a small additional impost. However, it is an optional impost and persons taking out insurance are required to request such extras specifically. Unfortunately, throughout the Northern Territory, there have been only a handful of people who have taken out flood insurance in their household insurance.

At present, there are probably quite a number of people in Alice Springs who happen to be Territory Insurance Office policy holders who will wish they had taken out flood insurance now. I understand there has been some concern expressed in Alice Springs by those people who are finding out for the first time that their normal household insurance policy does not cover damage by flood. I point out that in fact no household policy covers against flood and, indeed, one would be very hard pressed to find an insurance company which allows one to take out flood coverage for whatever amount anyone may offer.

There was one unfortunate incident at the Territory Insurance Office when a customer was obviously very infuriated to find that his policy did not cover flood damage to his house. The normal storm and tempest clauses cover such things as water damage but it must be appreciated that, in assessing water damage, some sort of ruling must be made as to how the damage occurred - whether it was water damage in the ordinary sense or water damage through flood. That is an area where lawyers may perhaps be brought in. I am sure there is a whole raft of legal precedents on where insurance cover against damage by storm and tempest finishes and flood-type coverage comes in if it is applicable.

I thought it appropriate to offer that brief explanation before the Assembly rose today.

Motion agreed to; the Assembly adjourned.

Mr Speaker MacFarlane took the Chair at 10 am.

DISTINGUISHED VISITOR

Mr D. McKinnon MP

Mr SPEAKER: Honourable members, I draw your attention to the presence in the gallery of Mr Don McKinnon, government whip in the New Zealand parliament. On your behalf, I offer him a warm welcome to an enjoyable stay in the Northern Territory.

Members: Hear, hear!

TABLED PAPER

Palmerston Development Authority Annual Report 1981-82

Mr EVERINGHAM (Chief Minister): Mr Speaker, I table the second annual report of the Palmerston Development Authority.

It gives me great pleasure to table this report. At the time the authority was formally established in June 1981, the government came in for much ill-informed criticism about the development being premature. As this report and more recent events clearly show, the commencement of development was indeed timely.

The objectives of the authority are: to maintain an adequate and timely supply of land; to introduce greater competition into the supply of land and housing in greater Darwin; and, to ensure that private rental accommodation is more readily available and reasonably priced. These objectives have been, and are continuing to be, met. I am pleased to report that, since private developers started to turn off land in Leanyer and Karama in 1980, the price of Darwin land has held firm, thus containing inflation. The organisation set up involves a 4-man authority under whose direction a small core team manages the entire project. This has worked efficiently and has gone a long way to achieving the objectives that the then Minister for Lands and Housing, Jim Robertson, expressed when he delivered his second-reading speech to the bill in March 1981. I commend the foresight of the developers who have taken up the challenge of a new area. It is a sign of the times that many of these are local people.

In October last year, appropriately during the International Year of the Tree, landscaping of the main arterial roads into Palmerston was begun. So far, 3500 trees have been planted, half of those along the verges of the main roads and the others in nature strips in suburban streets. Before Christmas, 10 000 trees will have been planted to provide a pleasant and healthy environment for the residents.

It was my pleasant duty to hand over the keys of the first Housing Commission house completed in Palmerston last year. That was in December, just 18 months after the Palmerston Development Authority was formally established. However, they were not the first people to live in Palmerston. A couple moved in earlier to build their own home. Although their house was not finished, they had been living there for some time.

A significant number of applicants on the Housing Commission waiting lists have expressed a preference for accommodation at Palmerston. Several have indicated that they wish to buy houses there. I have spoken to several people who are eager to move to Palmerston and I have no doubt that, as development progresses, Palmerston will continue to justify the government's decision to go ahead with the project.

Mr Speaker, if you know that land as well as I do - I walked over it many times in preparation for a certain acquisition case years ago - you would know that there is some very prime residential land there, with magnificent views out across the water and back towards Darwin. It is a great spot and the landscaping has been first class. It is well worth a visit, Sir, if you want to see the result of some reasonably good planning.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT Australian Time Zones

Mr EVERINGHAM (Chief Minister)(by leave): Mr Speaker, a recent inquiry from South Australia caused the office of the Co-ordinator-General to research the matter of the 3 time zones currently used in Australia and this has produced some very interesting results. Until 1895, the time used for official purposes was the mean solar time of each capital city in Australia. The multiplicity of times resulted in confusion and inconvenience so a compromise was reached in 1895 by our colonial legislators and a system of 3 standard time zones was adopted for Australia.

These 3 time zones were based on longitudes 120° east, Western Australia, 135° east, South Australia and Northern Territory, and 150° east, Queensland, New South Wales, Victoria and Tasmania. The standard times for each of the 3 zones were 8, 9 and 10 hours ahead of Greenwich Mean Time respectively. In 1898, South Australia and the Northern Territory adopted the mean solar time of longitude 140° 30' east which placed us 9.5 hours ahead of Greenwich Mean Time and only half an hour behind time in the eastern states. These 3 time zones, which are the ones currently in use, are shown on a map which I shall table with this statement.

Curiously, the 142° 30' meridian on which the Northern Territory and South Australian time is based, nowhere runs through the Northern Territory or South Australia. Its course runs through the middle of Cape York in the north and slightly to the west of Warrnambool in the south. The 150° meridian, on which Eastern Standard Time is based, runs just to the east of Canberra, more or less through Goondiwindi and close to Rockhampton. It was most interesting to discover that places such as Melbourne, Geelong, Ballarat, Bendigo and the towns of western New South Wales, western Queensland and western Tasmania, together with Cairns and most cities of northern Queensland are, in fact, closer to the 142° 30' meridian Central Standard Time than they are to the 150° meridian Eastern Standard Time which means that the sun time of these places is closer to central than to eastern time.

It is therefore proposed that the Northern Territory seek the adoption by the eastern states and Tasmania of Central Standard Time. In so doing, they would be required to move their clocks half an hour backwards. This would have the effect of dividing Australia into 2 time zones - Eastern and Western Standard Times, one and a half hours apart. This move would be both convenient and cost effective, making for simpler transport timetables and better television network coordination, quite apart from considerable practical advantages to industry and commerce. Of course, summer time adopted by New South Wales, Victoria, South Australia and Tasmania will again cause a divergence of one hour during that season but, even then, the Northern Territory would still be on the same time as Queensland.

As I have pointed out, the change would represent no disadvantage at all to places in the western half of the eastern time zone, and should be accommodated without difficulty by Brisbane, Sydney, Newcastle, Coffs Harbour and the cities on the eastern seaboard of the continent. If, however, this proposition proves to be unattractive to the eastern states, a second option

would be to split the difference and base the new eastern standard time on a meridian halfway between the 2 currently used which would require an adjustment of only 15 minutes by each time zone to produce uniformity. The new meridian for this option could be 146° 15' which passes just to the east of Cairns and in close proximity to Charters Towers, Charleville, Griffith, Sale, and Burnie in Tasmania. I suggest that a 15 minute variation from current time would go largely unnoticed.

Mr Speaker, I would welcome the reaction of honourable members to these proposals which I am happy to take further if that is their wish. Mr Speaker, I table the map.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Superannuation Arrangements for Government Employees

Mr EVERINGHAM (Chief Minister)(by leave): Mr Speaker, as honourable members will be aware, the Superannuation Bill 1982 has been restored to the Notice Paper at the stage of deliberation reached on prorogation of the Assembly last December. I wish now to bring honourable members up to date on the current state of preparations for the commencement of the Northern Territory Public Service superannuation scheme.

When I introduced the Superannuation Bill in September 1982, I highlighted the importance of the consultative process. Public service unions have now had the bill available to them for consideration for 6 months. I am advised that only the largest union has commented formally so far, and then only in the last 3 weeks. The ACOA wants a higher commutation factor, voluntary transfer from the Commonwealth scheme, more flexible composition of the superannuation board, clarification of the issue of benefit classification certificates for war injuries and a counselling service. The Public Service Commissioner and the Manager of the Superannuation Fund met with union representatives to discuss these matters. I must say that I cannot see any real obstacle to coming to some sort of agreement with them pretty quickly on all the points raised bar the first 2.

The first issue is the scale of commutation factors to apply. As I explained before, commutation is the process of turning an annual pension entitlement into a single lump sum payment. The actuaries, who are expert in this process, calculate the factors to be applied to a pension to get an equivalent lump sum. In doing this, they presume that a certain level of interest earnings will be obtained by the recipient over the remainder of his or her life. The results of these calculations are included as schedules 11 and 12 of the bill.

Several points need to be made about this aspect of the proposed Northern Territory scheme. Firstly, the Commonwealth superannuation scheme does not permit its members to commute employer-funded pensions in this way. Secondly, to offer additional benefits to Northern Territory employees, the government has had to balance the obvious attractions to its employees against the costs to the Territory budget. Thirdly, commutation brings the superannuation liability to be met by the government forward in time. Fourthly, obviously the Commonwealth government will not give us the money to meet the cost of the Territory initiative. Thus, in bringing the payment forward, we have to be mindful of what the Northern Territory can afford.

The unions say, quite correctly, that the government should save money in the long run because future pension payments replaced by immediate lump sum payouts would have been indexed to the cost of living. They should remember, though, that by exercising the option to take a lump sum, their members can

achieve a substantial degree of flexibility in the manner in which they enter retirement. They can obtain a substantial sum to discharge home mortgages, make investments or even to take a trip, to mention only a few advantages. I would emphasise that, whatever each individual's perception of the lump sum, advantageous or disadvantageous, there is no compulsion for that individual to take it. The rock solid guarantee of an indexed pension remains a right. The pensioner can choose to take a lump sum instead if he or she wishes. I would like to think that the commutation option will be an attraction for high quality public servants to remain and that the lump sum will provide the capacity to retire in the Territory.

The Public Service Commissioner has been authorised to discuss with employee representatives some modest increases in the commutation factors as part of a final agreement on the terms of the scheme. Unreasonable bickering over the size of the benefit the government is proposing without recognition of its cost would not help to achieve that objective.

The second thing that the union wants is voluntary transfer into the Territory scheme. The government cannot agree to this proposal. It would be very wrong, in my view, where we have a single career service which is oriented to the Territory's needs. In practical terms, split channels for payroll deductions, duplication of record-keeping by staff sections and general mixups would make administration of the 2 schemes a nightmare. In any case, the bill contains the guarantee that superannuation conditions will not drop below those a member enjoys on transfer. The wording of that guarantee has been tightened up at the suggestion of the employee representatives. If it is still not solid enough, we will look at it again. I cannot see that we could be any more positive than that.

Honourable members will be pleased to learn that substantial agreement has been reached with the NTEC trades category employees on a superannuation scheme which allows for their special circumstances. That scheme will be implemented within the scope of the bill now before the Assembly. The government has authorised this new arrangement to be concluded formally so that it can be activated as soon as the act comes into force.

Each time I have spoken here on the topic of superannuation, I have made the point that we will not take over this responsibility from the Commonwealth government until proper financial arrangements with it are in place. A great deal of time and effort has been spent by Territory officers and their Commonwealth counterparts in preparing the details of inter-governmental agreement essential to cover this. I agree that this side of the preparations may come to nothing, however, if the Commonwealth government does not put enabling legislation through during the autumn session. Therefore, I cannot give an unqualified assurance that the new scheme will commence on 1 July 1983. I can assure honourable members that, in the Territory, we have done everything possible to meet the deadline.

Mr Speaker, I take this opportunity to foreshadow a range of amendments which I will introduce in the committee stage of the consideration of the bill in May. They are consistent with the policies that I have outlined to date and are essentially of an administrative, technical or presentational nature. I will make sure that a copy of the draft of these amendments, as they now stand, is forwarded to every member this week. They will also be made available to employee representatives as a part of the consultative process.

Mr Speaker, I move that the Assembly take note of the statement.

Debate adjourned.

DENTISTS REGISTRATION AMENDMENT BILL
(Serial 289)
MEDICAL PRACTITIONERS REGISTRATION AMENDMENT BILL
(Serial 290)
OPTOMETRISTS AMENDMENT BILL
(Serial 291)
PHARMACY AMENDMENT BILL
(Serial 292)
RADIOGRAPHERS AMENDMENT BILL
(Serial 293)

Mr DONDAS (Health): Mr Speaker, I move that so much of Standing Orders be suspended as would prevent 5 bills relating to certain professions within the health field being presented and read a first time together and one motion being put in regard to, respectively, the second readings and the committee report stages, and the third readings of the bills together, and the consideration of the bills separately in the committee of the whole.

Motion agreed to.

Bills presented and read a first time.

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

Honourable members will be aware that professional boards have been established for the registration of medical practitioners, dentists, pharmacists, nurses and so on. Administrative support to enable these boards to carry out their functions has been provided by officers of the Department of Health at an annual cost to the department of approximately \$150 000. Revenue received from the boards by way of registration fees was only \$7743 in 1981-82. This was due to the fact that current registration charges and annual fees are either very small or non-existent.

Mr Speaker, the boards provide a service to the various professional people who have registered with them. They also provide a service to the public by ensuring that only qualified people are registered to practise their profession. It is not unreasonable that some proportion of boards' operating costs should be met from public revenue. This government considers, however, that the various registration boards should make a more significant contribution towards their costs of operation than they do at present. In order that relativity between boards' costs and revenue can be maintained at an appropriate level, registration fees need to be adjusted from time to time. Currently, this can only be achieved by statutory amendment which places an unnecessary burden on the Legislative Draftsman, Cabinet and this Assembly.

Mr Speaker, this burden can be eliminated by amending the relevant acts to give the minister power to determine registration fees by notice in the Gazette, as was done in the recent revision of the Nursing Act. This is the purpose of the 5 bills now before this Assembly. The proposed amendments are not complex. What has been done is simply to delete from the various acts any reference to fees as prescribed in any form of registration or certificate and to give the minister the power to determine such fees by notice in the Gazette.

Mr Speaker, I commend the bills to honourable members.

Debate adjourned.

POUNDS AMENDMENT BILL
(Serial 272)

Continued from 23 November 1982.

Mr SMITH (Millner): Mr Speaker, this short bill does a number of things, all of which the opposition supports. First, it provides for the devolution of delivery of pound services to local government. It allows the minister or a council to enter into an agreement with a landholder to use a portion of his property as a pound and for the landholder to act as the pound keeper. It increases penalties from \$4, \$10, \$20, respectively to \$100, \$500 and \$1000. There is a new provision which enables the recovery of reasonable costs from the owner of the stock for the delivery of cattle to the nearest public pound. Regulations will prescribe a realistic scale of sustenance charges for the maintenance of cattle in a pound. All those provisions are quite simple and the opposition supports them.

The last thing it does is add the word 'buffalo' to the existing definition of 'cattle' so that we now have a most peculiar definition of cattle which reads: 'includes an entire horse, mare, gelding, colt, filly or foal, a bull, cow, ox, steer, heifer or calf, and a sheep, camel, ass, mule, goat, pig or buffalo'. What could be more sensible, Mr Speaker? I checked with the Legislative Draftsman, who assured me that to change 'cattle' to 'animal' - which to me seemed to be logical - would result in all sorts of problems. I have accepted that assurance on the matter, and we have pleasure in supporting the bill.

Mrs PADGHAM-PURICH (Tiwi): Mr Speaker, it gives me pleasure to rise to support this bill today. I know it will be welcomed by people living in the rural area. For the information of the honourable member for Millner, I believe the word 'cattle' was a definition of all those animals that used to be used in England about 300 or 400 years ago.

Regarding the definition of 'animal', I spoke to relevant public servants about the inclusion of 'sheep' which I regarded as completely unnecessary because there would not be many sheep in the Northern Territory. Certainly, they would not stray because anybody who has sheep looks after them. In any case, they are included under the definition of 'cattle'. It demonstrates a degree of ignorance of the stock situation which I do not like to see in legislation. Nevertheless, I have had my say about it.

There have been numerous cases of stock straying in the rural area, usually cattle, buffalo and horses. They have caused inconvenience to property owners and road users in my electorate. In one particular case, a motor-cyclist was killed on the Arnhem Highway. This bill will go a long way towards alleviating the nuisance of straying stock in the rural area in that it will allow the minister to establish a pound outside a local council area and will give him the power to enter into agreements with people and organisations who own land to take over the responsibility of a pound under certain conditions.

For the information of honourable members, a pound is established already in the rural area. It is gazetted only for the intake of dogs and cats from the municipal area. It follows from the establishment of a pound on a rather ad hoc basis by Mr Fred Gray through his kennels at Berrimah about 15 or so years ago. Mr Gray entered into an arrangement with the Darwin City Council for the keeping and disposition of dogs that came from the municipal area. The pound moved with Mr Gray out to the 19-mile. He continued there until the SPCA established its own pound in McMillans Road which took over the role

of the gazetted pound for dogs and cats brought in from the municipal area.

When this legislation is enacted, I expect the minister will call for expressions of interest in running a pound from people in the rural area. The minister would have to check the credentials of people or organisations making application to see who would have the most chance of success. It would not require a large capital investment. Once the first lot of straying stock is impounded, there may not be any more. I think it would be more useful to enter into a contract with a landowner in the rural area who already has appropriate facilities.

In the minister's gazettal of a pound in the rural area, I expect he would define the collection area for the stock. Coupled with this, there must be close cooperation between the person or people who set out to catch the stock. If stock proves impossible to catch and is causing a nuisance, there must be a good working relationship with a reputable pet meat shooter.

I do not know if the minister or the Commissioner of Police has given any thought to where a pound would be located in the rural area but I would like consideration to be given to the Police Youth Club stables at Wongabilla which is just past Berrimah. This place has several things to recommend it including the stock-handling expertise of the police personnel who staff Wongabilla. The police are often called in anyway to catch or shoot straying stock. If they cannot shoot the recalcitrant stock, they have the authority to ask a reputable pet meat shooter to do it. There are facilities for holding stock at Wongabilla. No doubt these could be enlarged at a minimal cost compared to other establishments. Revenue from pound fees, catching fees and perhaps auction proceeds could help in the running of Wongabilla in its present form as a youth recreation establishment. Wongabilla is in the rural area. It is next to the abattoir and the government farm at Berrimah, from both of which stock have escaped on occasion.

When a pound is established in the rural area, it will remove the very serious danger of stock straying on the roads and it will enable owners to claim stock which they have not been able to catch themselves. Therefore, the responsible owner of stock which has strayed will be only too pleased to go along to the pound and pay the fees to retrieve the stock. It will probably reduce the problem of cattle duffing in the rural area. No doubt, impounding officers travelling around in the rural area will keep their eyes open. This will deter light-fingered people who take a liking to the odd steer in somebody's front paddock.

Motion agreed to; bill read a second time.

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

Motion agreed to; bill read a third time.

PRISONERS (INTERSTATE TRANSFER) BILL (Serial 277)

Continued from 24 November 1982.

Mr B. COLLINS (Opposition Leader): Mr Speaker, this bill, as its title implies, concerns the transport of prisoners and relates to 3 categories: prisoners from other states or the ACT whose normal place of residence is not in the Northern Territory and who wish to serve their sentences in their home state; prisoners to be transferred for trial; and prisoners transferred for

appeal or subject to warrant. The bill will provide machinery for the transport of prisoners and, to the extent that it represents the agreement reached between the state, Territory and Commonwealth Attorney-Generals, it is non-controversial. On the whole, the legislation is supported by the opposition.

Part II of the bill deals with the transfer of the prisoner for his welfare and clause 6 provides that 2 criteria need to be satisfied: the minister must receive a written request by the prisoner for transfer to a participating state; and the minister must be of the opinion that the transfer is in the interests of the welfare of the prisoner. The minister therefore has total discretion in the matter. Despite the finality clause 6(2), the decision would be reviewable judicially on the accepted concept of breach of natural justice were that appropriate.

Mr Speaker, overall, this bill would reflect a consensus form of legislation for each state and, on that basis, would be uniform with other states' laws on transfer. One point of interest in the minister's views on the use of the transfer was that he could not see many prisoners from other parts of Australia being transferred. He thought that, if they committed their offences here, they should serve their sentence here. I think there would be a sustainable argument along the lines of why should the Northern Territory continue to bear the cost if it has the opportunity to transfer the prisoners. It seems to be a deterrent-based argument. Real deterrence relates to detection not sentence. If the government is concerned to deter crime, it should concentrate its resources on that aim.

The opposition supports the bill. Originally, we suggested a small amendment to the minister and he indicated that he had no objection to it. However, he thought that it could cause some slight problems in that it had not received the concurrence of the states. I can see that argument very clearly. The amendment would have provided for the legal representative of a prisoner to make the request under clause 5(a). This would be useful because some prisoners are illiterate and some may be ill or in some other way incompetent. That simple amendment would have overcome the difficulties associated with that particular problem should it arise. However, because this is uniform legislation with the states, it would not be proper to proceed with the amendment. I indicate to the Assembly that it is my intention to withdraw the amendment.

Mrs PADGHAM-PURICH (Tiwi): Mr Speaker, in rising to support this bill, I will say at the outset that I think the bill has 2 main thrusts. First, it relates to the welfare of and concern for the offender from his own, the Northern Territory government's and state governments' points of view. Secondly, it results from a reciprocal agreement between the states and the Northern Territory and demonstrates once again the Northern Territory government's approach towards maturity and equal standing with the states.

In his second-reading speech, the minister said that he wanted prisoners who stood trial in the Northern Territory to stay in the Northern Territory. I cannot see any argument with that at all. In fact, from what I have heard from people who have been in prison up here and those who administer prisons, I think our prisons are pretty good places to be if one must be imprisoned. I agree with the content and the spirit of this bill. I also agree with the Attorney-General's strong statement that prisoners convicted here should stay here. After all, we must realise that offenders are imprisoned for good reasons. When they are in prison, they forgo certain community rights. One of the rights that they forgo is the right of free choice of habitation.

In the 2 prisons that I have visited in the Northern Territory, I have seen good conditions. Good rehabilitative prospects are available to prisoners through the courses that are offered to them. I have seen and heard of the health services that are offered to them in prison. I know individuals and community interest groups who visit prisoners. Such visits are more frequent than in southern prisons. I support the bill.

Mrs LAWRIE (Nightcliff): Mr Speaker, I rise to support the legislation and to speak particularly about the minister's remarks alluded to by 2 previous speakers. He said that it would be the norm for prisoners convicted in the Territory to serve the rest of their sentences in the Territory. Be that as it may, deprivation of liberty is punishment enough for a crime committed. Certainly, society has not reached a stage where it can do away with penal institutions. Sadly, we seem to be building bigger and stronger prisons, though not necessarily better ones.

It is well acknowledged that a term of imprisonment can place a tremendous burden on a prisoner's family. It is not only a matter of the family perhaps becoming a single-income family and one parent having the additional burden of looking after children alone; it can also have a very traumatic effect on wives and children if they are denied access to husbands and fathers who are imprisoned. Lack of communication with family is an additional punishment for a prisoner. However, it must be remembered also that it is a tremendous punishment inflicted on otherwise innocent parties. I have visited 23 prisons around Australia and the most common cause of complaint, not only by prisoners but by prison administrators, is the distress caused when prisoners have no access to family visits because they have been imprisoned in a state where it is impossible for the family to visit. Any move which will alleviate the distress of the innocent parties is to be commended.

It may be that the minister will review applications by certain prisoners in the light of my remarks today. Imprisonment in any state of Australia is not exactly a pleasant experience. The member for Tiwi said that the prisons in the Northern Territory are, in relative terms, good institutions. For the women prisoners, they are boring, stultifying and lacking in some of the amenities offered to women prisoners in other parts of the country. I have asked questions on notice about this previously and I will continue working to try to gain for women prisoners in the Territory some of the privileges enjoyed by male prisoners.

Honourable members will be aware that prisoners are subject to assessment by prison authorities as to whether they present a security risk and also as to their job skills. Many male prisoners are transferred subsequently from one Territory prison to another. Low-security prisoners enjoy the relative freedom of Gunn Point. Whilst at Gunn Point, male prisoners may go swimming or fishing from time to time under supervision. They undertake horticultural and agricultural pursuits under supervision and this is very beneficial. Women prisoners remain either at Berrimah or Alice Springs. They do not have access to swimming or fishing, either with or without supervision. They remain in the boring and stultifying compounds of prisons in Berrimah and Alice Springs.

I have not heard any member suggest that Gunn Point and the mooted prison farm at Alice Springs are not a good idea. The most conservative members have acknowledged that it is an incentive for good behaviour whilst in prison to be offered the opportunity of a more relaxed atmosphere in a minimum-security prison. I say again that it is appalling that such facilities and such inducements are unavailable to women prisoners in the Territory. In looking at programs for women prisoners throughout Australia, such as the lack of work

release and weekend detention, the same argument has been put forward by ministers and prison administrators: the numbers do not justify the range of facilities. I find that a specious argument and one which should be discarded. People from all walks of life and both sexes will find themselves imprisoned. To offer facilities to one group and not to another, simply on the ground of sex, is discrimination of the worst sort.

Mr Speaker, some time ago, I was instrumental in arranging the transfer back to Darwin of a prisoner held at Yatala Labour Prison to serve the remainder of what was a life sentence. Subsequently, he was released in Darwin. Through the agency of the Catholic Church and various people concerned with parole, this gentleman did not have to return to prison. His greatest suffering whilst in Yatala was caused by his complete divorce from family and friends, and from the climate of the Top End in which he had lived all his adult life. Those bad old days have gone and prisoners are not automatically transferred south if they receive a long sentence or a life sentence. Honourable members may not be aware that the rationale behind the old policy, whereby anybody receiving a sentence longer than 2 years was to be transferred south, was to abide by the United Nations Convention on the imprisonment of people in tropical areas. It was considered cruel to have a person of European extraction imprisoned for longer than 2 years in the tropics. Times have changed. The application of that policy in fact engendered hardship in many cases rather than alleviating it. With this new policy of reciprocity between jurisdictions and the possibility of transfer of prisoners, I hope that the minister may take a somewhat more lenient view than he has yet indicated if he can receive reports from the various welfare agencies as to the effect upon the families of the prisoners requesting transfers.

The honourable minister will be aware that there will always be strange anomalies with requests for transfers and, indeed, with the issue of police warrants and the bringing back to stand trial in the Territory of people who have fled interstate. One example which springs to mind is that of a chap who arrived in my office a few years ago after being released from the old Fannie Bay Gaol. He had been convicted and had served a 6-month sentence for false pretences. The false pretences consisted of passing valueless cheques to pay to fly back to his family in Perth when he lost his job in the Territory. He was extradited on a police warrant and brought back to the Territory, served his sentence and was turned out at the gate of Fannie Bay Gaol with approximately £3 in his pocket. He still had to get back to his family, who were a stable family unit, in Perth.

I approached the relevant authorities at that time. They said they would not assist him to return. He had been convicted here and he had been released here. It was his problem. I said to him: 'Well, I have tried. What are you going to do?' He said: 'I will fix that, missus. I will write another cheque'. Fortunately, sanity prevailed and a welfare agency gave him a bus fare to enable him to return to his family.

Mr Speaker, I hope the minister will take to heart the kind of instance I have outlined today and keep it in mind when he has to make what can be quite difficult decisions. It is not only the welfare of the prisoner that has to be considered but most particularly that of his family, who are often the innocent sufferers.

Motion agreed to; bill read a second time.

Bill passed remaining stages without debate.

TERRITORY PARKS AND WILDLIFE CONSERVATION AMENDMENT BILL
(Serial 279)

Continued from 24 November 1982.

Mr B. COLLINS (Opposition Leader): Mr Speaker, this bill comes before the Assembly as a result of the government's stated intention to move towards the establishment of marine parks in the Northern Territory. The bill provides a very simple amendment to add a further notion to the concept of land to include the seabed and the sea above it in areas covered by Territory law. The legislation clears up any difficulties in the application of the principal act to the sea and seabed covered by Territory law and the opposition supports the bill.

Mrs O'NEIL (Fannie Bay): Mr Speaker, this is a very simple bill which I support. However, it allows me the opportunity to raise a matter of concern about the coastal area of my electorate. We spoke this morning about the future of the East Point Reserve. Off East Point is a reef which is exposed and accessible from the land when very low tides are experienced a few times a year off Darwin. I have been informed that people have been seen removing marine life from the reef at those times. It has been suggested to me, therefore, that this reef might be in need of protection.

When marine life is removed from reefs, by inexperienced people, it has little chance of survival. Nevertheless, people - quite innocently - see it as an opportunity to catch fish for the home aquarium or for some other purpose. As we are examining possibilities for East Point Reserve and there is a paper before the Subordinate Legislation and Tabled Papers Committee relating to the introduction of new boundaries for it, perhaps an opportunity will arise to incorporate the reef within the boundaries of that reserve. Certainly, it needs protection under the Territory Parks and Wildlife Conservation Act.

Mr Everingham: Are we going to prosecute all those kids?

Mrs O'NEIL: The honourable Chief Minister interjects that they are kids. I am assured that they are not kids. The people seen removing marine life were adults. As I said, some of them may do it quite innocently but others may not. It is not an area in which I claim any expertise nor, I would suggest, is the Chief Minister likely to. But people who are experts in this matter brought it to my attention. In that situation, their fears are worthy of investigation by the appropriate authorities. I am sure the minister responsible for the Conservation Commission will take the matter up in that light.

Mr PERRON (Treasurer): Mr Speaker, this small bill is indeed very significant. It is a move by the Northern Territory government into a new area. Preservation of marine areas of interest is receiving attention from the Australian and state governments although I am not exactly sure to what extent. Some 71% of the earth's surface is covered by water. Even though man has been living on land since history began, he is still endeavouring to explore, survey and map the land masses and assess their capacity for exploitation, enjoyment and perhaps for preservation. We have a long way to go when one considers the world scene. Some countries are very advanced in setting aside areas for retention in a natural state and other countries, no doubt, have not even considered the subject and probably will not do so for a very long time. I point out that, although we have a very long way to go, we should not be daunted. The passing of this bill should not be looked down upon because it is only a small step towards preservation of more natural areas.

Man knows relatively little about the sea and the seabed compared to what he knows about land. There is so much of it and, of course, beneath the sea there is every type of terrain that is above the sea: mountains and valleys and areas of very specific geological interest and, indeed, beauty. There are also deserts, not dissimilar in some respects to the deserts we have on land, and areas of enormously intense marine life activity even as we have areas on land of very specific interest. Quite often, these are very small areas which in fact shelter 1 or 2 very rare species of animals, in some cases never identified elsewhere on the earth. Man's attempt to conquer the seas, as it were, to really begin to explore them in order eventually to preserve them is really in its infancy. Of recent years, there have been applications of the most modern technology in a series of small experiments around the world of getting man to go beneath the sea and live there for longer and longer periods. He must do this if he is ever to have a chance to understand it. Honourable members may well have heard of attempts to place men at various depths under the sea for periods of some weeks to experiment with the effects that such an environment has on man. This work is similar to experiments which are still conducted from time to time in outer space by putting men in space for a period of time, particularly to determine their capacities to do greater things in the future.

Resources within the sea can only be guessed at but certainly some experts on the subject have indicated that they believe that a cubic mile of seawater, correctly used, could produce almost enough to feed half of the world's population. We are, of course, a long way from that but that is the sort of theory that is postulated from time to time. The sea contains even more minerals than we have on land. Minerals, oil, gas, food and chemicals are more prevalent in the sea and the seabed than on the land as we know it today.

Of course, man must come to terms with his use of the sea and the seabed as a disposal point for his wastes. This is a matter which, no doubt, would concern all honourable members in this Assembly and most sensible people. We do not have all the answers at present to be able to cope with the waste that society produces. I am thinking of things as mundane as sewage as well as more toxic wastes. We are a long way from resolving those problems so that one day we can stop simply diverting those wastes into the sea. At present, we do it because, if we empty it into the sea, it seems to disappear. More and more evidence is coming to light on how that activity, if continued, will backfire on us. In fact, we will destroy large areas of the seabed and no doubt change the nature of the sea itself in many areas if we persist in the practices we are following today.

The sea will be used increasingly as an area which man stocks and farms by methods similar to those he uses on land. Of some note in Darwin recently were reports about the commencement of an artificial reef in Darwin harbour. Some of the deserts in the seas, which do not contain a great deal of sizeable marine life, certainly contain microscopic marine life. Some of these deserts can be turned into areas which could be very productive by the creation of an environment there in which larger forms of sea life, which man is more interested to exploit, tend to proliferate. An artificial reef is certainly a start to that sort of thing. It is much like going out into the deserts and turning them into productive lands. That is being done more and more. Artificial reefs will be constructed and designed carefully to attract specific types of marine life and will provide areas of interest not only to amateur fishermen in closely populated areas such as Darwin. By extending the idea a little further, they could be adapted for full-scale commercial harvesting of marine life in areas which have not produced for years.

The honourable member for Fannie Bay mentioned the reef off East Point, which I am reasonably familiar with. I must be a pessimist in this particular case. I believe that, if this exposed reef has not already been destroyed, it is certainly not the reef it was a few years ago. Eventually, it will be destroyed simply by people walking across it. They walk across it at present either to have a look or to collect specimens. One can collect specimens from a reef and completely remove certain species from it altogether, even in a very short period of time.

However, I believe that, to salvage an exposed reef like the one at East Point and return it to its natural state, it would be necessary to prohibit persons going across it or to institute a very expensive system of walkways a couple of feet above the reef and restrict people to those walkways. That in itself would have all sorts of problems even if one had a great deal of money to spend. Whilst I am not happy at the thought, I think that the East Point reef, if not lost to us now as a very interesting and complete sample of reef, will be lost to us within a few years no matter what we do about it at present.

I have been fortunate enough to spend a little time under water near the Cobourg Peninsula in the area where it has been indicated that the first park may well be declared under this legislation. Whilst I was fortunate to go under water, I guess I was more fortunate to come back because they tell me of some interesting marine life that exists in the Cobourg Peninsula area. I could not say that that particular area was unique. In fact, the nature of the reef and seabed there is probably duplicated many times around our coast. However, that is not particularly important. We are not seeking unique areas in order to preserve them. We are seeking areas which we feel could be preserved without unduly upsetting other activities. The area around Cobourg is very interesting to an underwater visitor. Its marine life is abundant. I think that it would be an ideal place to start with in the implementation of this legislation. We have to start somewhere.

After Cobourg Peninsula, I urge the minister to have a study undertaken to identify further areas around the Northern Territory coast which might also benefit from being proclaimed marine parks. We should not go overboard and simply draw great squares on maps just to say that we have more square kilometres of marine park than anyone else. That would be irresponsible. But areas can be identified and certain rules drawn up concerning such parks that prohibit some activities but certainly allow others. The bill has my full support.

Mrs LAWRIE (Nightcliff): Mr Speaker, I rise with much pleasure to support this bill which extends the Territory Parks and Wildlife Conservation Act to include a definition of land which now says: 'includes the sea above any part of the seabed of the Territory'. It is rather difficult to arrive at a definition of 'seabed'. However, I have with me the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, the final act and resolutions of the Law of the Sea Conference and the list of signatories. Reference is made to the normal baseline: 'Except where otherwise provided in this convention, the normal baseline measuring the breadth of the territorial sea is the low-water line along the coast as marked in the large-scale charts officially recognised by the coastal state'.

Mr Speaker, one area which concerns me very much, and I think the honourable Treasurer also, is that between high-water mark and low-water mark which, with particular reference to the Territory, can be quite wide, can include estuarine areas and can indeed be an area of great fragility. I hope that, at some later stage, the honourable sponsor of the bill will indicate to the

Assembly what protective measures will be taken over those areas between high water and low water on which so much of our marine life depends.

Having registered my concern for estuarine and mangrove areas, most of which are included in that definition, may I say also that I support the present government's intention to establish a marine park in the Cobourg Peninsula area. There are other areas of the Northern Territory which merit consideration. Along with you, Mr Speaker, I recognise the Maria Islands as being another area which should be the subject of scrutiny by the Conservation Commission in giving advice to the relevant minister.

A problem which concerns me and many people in the Territory who have made representations is the overall lack of protection given to marine mammals. If we are to establish marine parks, and all members so far have indicated their support for this concept, it is to be noted that marine mammals within those parks would be totally protected. At present, they are not. Along with other wildlife, they are only protected against being taken by people of European descent.

Studies available to all members indicate the well known fact that sea mammals, dugong in particular, have a high level of intelligence. I find it quite surprising that members of the Australian public can make representations to the International Whaling Convention time and time again seeking to prohibit the taking of whales for all purposes, including that of sustenance - and whalemeat is a traditional diet of the Japanese people - but we allow the taking of dugong for the purposes of ingestion by some of the people of the Northern Territory. I mean, of course, full-blood Aborigines. If we are to have any credence in the international market when we talk about preservation of marine mammals, we cannot exclude dugong from our representations to international forums on the protection of porpoises, whales in particular, and all marine mammals.

Mr Speaker, some of the members have spoken about the marine life adjacent to the Cobourg Peninsula. It has been my good fortune to travel in that area quite extensively in a dinghy. Going up towards Victoria settlement, it was the norm 10 years ago to be greeted by turtles, swimming happily around the dinghy, and porpoises which, as all the textbooks, comic books and TV programs would have us believe, do indeed accompany a boat. They make squawking noises and evidence a delight in this human intervention and a playfulness which any person who has experienced the dolphin syndrome would be pleased to attest to.

Mr Speaker, quite deliberately, I raise this issue this afternoon in support of this legislation so that I may, in the near future, elicit the views of the present government of the Northern Territory and, hopefully, of the opposition members, on the total protection of marine mammals when marine parks are established, and also in waters that are not necessarily included in marine parks.

Mr ROBERTSON (Attorney-General): Mr Speaker, as honourable members would be aware, I am standing in for the minister responsible for conservation. Personally, I have taken an interest in every comment made in the debate on this bill. I have a long time interest myself in conservation and matters pertaining to it. I became involved in it for 2 reasons. One was as a young hunter of natural wildlife both fauna and fowl life. I knew no better. More recently, I became interested but not as a hunter at all, except to cull, on specific occasions, those animals which are not desirable. But I have had a very long association with conservation. I have noted with great interest the comments made by members in relation to this very short but very important

bill.

The honourable member for Nightcliff raised a number of issues which I think are well deserving of close study by the government, by the minister responsible for this area of administration and by the Conservation Commission. I will undertake to the Assembly personally to draw to the attention of the honourable minister those matters raised by members. I am quite certain that the Conservation Commission itself will read the views expressed here with interest.

Mr Speaker, on behalf of the sponsor of the bill, I thank members for the contributions made by both sides of the Assembly to this very important move to establish within the jurisdiction of the Northern Territory a marine conservation park. As the Treasurer indicated, there are other areas which the government would like to look at. Quite obviously, if tourism or even sport fishing is to become a significant attraction, then measures must be found whereby those resources are protected for the general enjoyment of the public in terms of sport fishing and, of course, for the purposes of Aboriginal people who rely upon them as a source of food.

The debate has been very valuable in terms of giving a broad indication of the views of the Assembly on matters related to conservation generally and to conservation within marine areas in particular. I think the question raised by the honourable member for Nightcliff as to the legal relevance of the Law of the Sea Conference and Conventions which has arisen and may arise in the future is a matter for another day. The law of the sea, as I understand it, is not necessarily binding upon legislatures. It is an agreement resulting from a series of conferences but there has been no unanimity. But her points are noted. The area she referred to between the low and high-water marks and its conservation requires significant attention by government and all people interested in conservation. Mr Speaker, I thank honourable members for their contributions.

Motion agreed to; bill read a second time.

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

Motion agreed to; bill read a third time.

ADDRESS IN REPLY

Continued from 17 March 1983.

Mr PERRON (Treasurer): Mr Speaker, during debate on this motion, there has been some discussion about the reasons for the prorogation of the Assembly. The Leader of the Opposition made some fuss about the exercise being a waste of time. I could not help thinking during the course of his remarks that it was a bit of a shame that he bothered to come along on that ceremonious occasion. No one forced him to come. I guess he did it to be polite and in order not to detract from the dignity of parliament. He has made some fuss from time to time about the dignity of proceedings in the Assembly. After acceding to attend on that occasion, he torpedoed that dignity completely by going in front of the television cameras and saying that it was just a good excuse to have some free booze. I thought it not very becoming of a member who professes to want to uphold the dignity of this Assembly.

Mr Speaker, I would like to touch on some matters relating to the recent change of federal government, as did the Leader of the Opposition. In

doing so, I shall quote a couple of lines from several parts of a document called 'National Recovery and Reconstruction Plan of the ALP'. This is one of its major policy documents and was issued just before the election and, no doubt, assisted it in getting the ALP message across. The document condemns the former federal government's policies as being completely off the mark. It states: 'The Fraser government's deficit phobia has directly undermined its declared objective'. Later, it states: 'Another false assumption underlying the Fraser government's policies concerns the relationship between budget deficits and inflation'. Further on: 'Many countries with much larger deficits as a percentage of national income have interest rates well below Australia's'. Mr Speaker, the point it was trying to make in the preamble to the document is that the coalition government was wrong in its phobia about having a deficit grow too big.

We turn then to the ALP's economic strategy as outlined in its document under the heading 'Labor's Economic Strategy'. I quote: 'The principal thrust of Labor's economic strategy will be to reject the policies of contraction and embrace the policies of expansion'. The article goes on to say that at least 500 000 jobs will be created by the ALP by the third year of office and that Labor will bring Australia to a position of 5% economic growth. All this will be done by a program of 'national consultation and loosening the purse strings'. On page 12 of the document, it states that Labor will not wait until the 1983-84 budget to commence this recovery program: 'Immediate action will be taken to stimulate activity in key sectors'.

As one would expect, the document also addresses the cost of the initiatives proposed by the ALP. These initiatives will be expansionist because the coalition government had it all wrong in not being expansionist. The cost of the proposals is outlined on page 17 under 'Budgetary Implications'. It says: 'The total cost of Labor's expansionary measures would be of the order of \$2.75 billion in our first full year. However, the impact on the deficit of these measures would be far below this level'. Here we have an example of a little underselling of the effects on the deficit. The implication is that we should not worry too much about blowing the deficit out a bit further than it is at present. The way that they will reduce the impact, the cost, of their proposals is to recoup lost taxation from bottom-of-the-harbour schemes - \$0.75m. They will stamp out tax evasion and enter into leaseback arrangements with governments taking up office space and so on, thereby cutting down the upfront cost. That is all good stuff, Mr Speaker.

On page 18, we read: 'Accordingly, the net first year impact on the budget of Labor's recovery program would be an increase in the deficit by a maximum \$1.5 billion or less than 1% of GDP. In the circumstances of severe economic malaise now affecting the nation, this is a modest and responsible move to increase demand and commence the arduous task of sustained economic recovery'. Mr Speaker, we are told here the addition of a mere \$1.5 billion to the budget deficit would be a modest and responsible move by any government taking up office. Of course, we are all aware that this was written prior to the election. What more could we ask for except modest and responsible moves by our federal government? To reinforce the point, on page 19, it says: 'An increase in the deficit of the order Labor proposes would not, therefore, have the effects that our opponents will claim. But in any case, the issue is not whether we have a larger deficit or not but rather what kind of increased deficit we have'.

Here we have a completely new twist. Now we can consider deficits not so much by size but by kind. A Liberal deficit, of course, is bad. A Labor deficit, no doubt, will be good. To reinforce this point, to make it absolutely clear, the document states: 'The choice is whether we have an

increased deficit under the present government, flowing from continued economic depression and ever-growing unemployment, or a deliberate, temporary rise in the deficit under a Labor government, leading to economic recovery'. The attitude espoused by Labor is that we should not be paranoid about big deficits. Let us not be fussed about them.

Mr Speaker, the present Minister for Defence, Mr Scholes, spoke in a budget debate in the federal parliament in 1976 which was a short time after the Whitlam regime. I quote from page 509 of the relevant Hansard: 'Certainly, there is no magic amount of deficit which should or should not be achieved in one year. I suggest that, at present, the economy is more likely to require stimulus than a restriction on credit, which would appear to be the outcome of this budget'. He was, of course, criticising the coalition government's budget in 1976 and making the point again that expansionist policies were needed and not contractionist ones. In February of the same year, Mr Hurford then shadow Treasurer, said in a debate on the Australian economy that the government had a mania about budget deficits which should not exist during a time of underemployment of men and resources. Mr Willis said, in the same debate, that the government was totally mesmerised by the deficit. He was saying that the coalition government could not use the deficit inherited from the Whitlam years as an excuse not to implement election promises. Mr Speaker, it appears to me that the boot is on the other foot now.

I am sure there are some people, if not in this Assembly then in the community, who are not aware of the much talked about projected deficit for which many figures have been cast forward. The currently popular one of \$9600m is not, of course, for the financial year ending 30 June 1983. The current speculated figure of \$9600m is the projected likely outcome in June 1984. Mr Speaker, that is 15 months away. That is a deficit which some are speculating would occur if the former government's programs remained unchanged. Not only are we expected to believe that the former government's program will be left unchanged for the next 15 months but we have a new government and we expect it will do something so we must also assume a whole range of unknown factors and project them 15 months ahead. There are unknown factors such as wage movements. I am sure there are not too many people in the country brave enough to speculate exactly what the next 12 months will bring as far as wage hikes are concerned. As we know in this Assembly, that is a most significant factor in any government budget. There are inflation levels. That is simple crystal-balling. Interest rates and oil prices change. Within a very short time of the new federal government taking office, there has been a major change in the international oil price which obviously will affect very significantly any deficit that is run up in the future. Unemployment is an enormous drain on federal government coffers and affects deficits very significantly. So we are told that, if all these things remained on some hypothetical basis established today and if the federal government did not take any initiatives but let matters roll on exactly as they are today, then we would have a deficit in 15 months time of \$9000m.

Mr Speaker, all the shocked horror expressed by the Leader of the Opposition in this debate relates to the coming financial year even though the new federal government has yet to sit down to determine its exact budgetary strategy and change the direction of this country, which it has said it will do. Why should we have this nonsense about an inherited deficit and projected figures which simply will not be there? They have the opportunity now to do it their way, to do it the right way. We have been told many times how it has all been wrong for the last 7 years and the country has been off the rails. Now they have the opportunity to put it back on the rails.

The Minister for Community Development said early in this debate that he

felt the sort of message we have been given by the Leader of the Opposition here was a softening up message because he had somehow received some marching orders, along with Labor premiers around the country, that there was a message to be passed on early after the new government had been elected. I think he was doing it very carefully. While the Leader of the Opposition was picking up his marching orders down in Canberra, Territorians expected him to adopt a strong and convincing supportive role for the Territory and to take every possible opportunity to push the Territory cause for Territory progress. If anyone hoped for such a stand by the Leader of the Opposition, that hope was dashed during his contribution to this debate. I was astounded to hear that the Leader of the Opposition has so little regard for the Territory and its future that he is actually embarrassed by the amount of Commonwealth assistance already provided to the Territory.

Mr B. Collins: You found that in my speech?

Mr PERRON: He can read it again. He knows well what he said. He was embarrassed that 85% of the Territory budget comes from the federal government. He said in this Assembly last week that such reliance was an unpalatable fact. His words were that he found it embarrassing and that he did not like to acknowledge the fact. That is an appalling attitude from someone who is supposed to be an advocate for Territory advancement. Such a view could only come from gross ignorance. He obviously does not realise that all the states in Australia receive over half their budgets from the federal government - the less populous states, of course, receive more per head of population than the larger ones - under formulae which have existed in this country for 50 years. The biggest, richest states, Victoria and New South Wales, have no hesitation in taking between 50% and 60% of their funds every year from the Commonwealth. Not only do they have no hesitation, they are always screaming that it is not enough and they want more.

Mr Speaker, the Territory is getting no more than it deserves, no more than it has a right to receive, no more than it can justify and no more than it is entitled to. For the benefit of the Leader of the Opposition, and any other members opposite who may share his embarrassment, I quote from the Grants Commission 1981 Report on State Tax-sharing Entitlements and I suggest they listen very carefully:

The Australian intergovernmental financial system is based on the principle of revenue sharing, an important element of which is fiscal equalisation. This basic philosophy, which has been accepted by successive Commonwealth and state governments, has as one of its primary objectives the establishment of a political and economic environment within which all states are provided with an adequate level of financial resources to enable them to carry out their constitutional and financial responsibilities and to provide services at standards not appreciably different from those prevailing in the other states of the Commonwealth.

Mr Speaker, obviously the Leader of the Opposition has never had these fundamental principles of the Australian financial system explained to him otherwise he would realise that there is no need for embarrassment. The Northern Territory is getting its just deserts. When we negotiated the self-government financial agreement, we did not seek handouts. We sought a deal which recognised past Commonwealth government neglect - which apparently the Leader of the Opposition is not prepared to recognise - and past Commonwealth government mistakes in the Northern Territory. We inherited them; they are all around us every day in government. We also sought the capacity to provide progressively government services to Territorians at a level Australians elsewhere have come to expect. We all know that it is a very expensive place

in which to live. That is why we get 85% of our budget from the Commonwealth government. It is not a handout; it is what we deserve.

It is a shame that a man in the position of Leader of the Opposition has to confess publicly that he is embarrassed. How on earth can we expect someone with a background of embarrassment at what we are getting already to fight for the Territory. We are getting just exactly what the Commonwealth state financial arrangements are all about, and what the memorandum provides for. We can only hope that anyone who ever goes to fight for the Territory does so in future with just determination and not embarrassment.

Mr Speaker, we also heard during this debate about some of the low points of the recent election campaign. I would like to mention a few myself. The Leader of the Opposition brought forward a couple of his pet ones. I have 3 small ones which are worthy of the Assembly's attention.

One of them is a press release by a Mr John Reeves dated 21 February 1983: 'Most pensioners in the Territory will receive up to \$38 extra per fortnight in their pension cheques after 5 March'. It cannot be much clearer than that. Who are these 'most pensioners' in the Territory who will receive \$38 extra per fortnight? The first fortnight has gone and I understand that there was no extra money in the pension cheques. We find that the people who will get the \$38 per fortnight, if and when the federal government gets over its new-found deficit phobia and begins to implement its policies, are those in zone A. The allowance would be \$7 a week for a single pensioner, \$12 for a couple and \$3.50 for each child. That would give a couple with 2 children an allowance of \$38 per fortnight. The 'most pensioners' referred to are families consisting of 2 adult pensioners and 2 dependent children. I think you would be hard pressed in the Territory to find very many of them but 'most pensioners in the Territory will receive up to \$38 extra per fortnight in their pension cheques after 5 March'.

Here is another one. This one was handed out during the election campaign this month. It was produced by the Trades and Labour Council and was authorised by Mr Jamie Robertson. Amongst various claims, it says: 'Housing: In the Territory, we have seen the only source of cheap accommodation given away to cronies of the government'. I did not realise that there were so many cronies of the government out there in the community. Is he talking about the government's cheap Home Loans Scheme? Indeed, it is cheap - it starts off at 4%. It is very cheap accommodation by any standard in this country. A couple of thousand Territorians have taken advantage of that scheme and that is exactly what it was designed to do: accommodate them. To describe them as cronies of the government - the people entitled to benefit from these schemes - would cause many of them to take offence. If the comment refers to Housing Commission accommodation, which is also relatively cheap accommodation, then thousands of Housing Commission tenants would take great exception to being called cronies of the government. That is an example of what I consider a low point in an election campaign.

I have one more, which I am sure will tickle the fancy of the honourable member for Millner. It came from the Teachers' Federation which went to a great deal of trouble and expense to support the ALP in the campaign. Much as it tried to argue that it was not supporting any particular political party, it poured buckets over all parties other than the ALP, and said a few kind things about the latter to boot. One was most unbecoming on the part of the teachers. I am aware, through phone calls to my office and correspondence I have since received, that quite a number of teachers are furious that the campaign was conducted by the Teachers' Federation, and I am not surprised. One would expect teachers to be pretty accurate in their figures. I quote one

small paragraph from a poster: 'In 1982 alone, disadvantaged government schools with 350 000 children received \$24m while wealthy private schools with 127 000 children were allocated \$50m'.

Mr Speaker, that is a comparison between apples and pears. It compares funding for disadvantaged schools to recurrent funding and that is particularly unfair. If we compare apples to apples and take the financial assistance provided by the federal government to disadvantaged private schools, the true figure is not \$50m but \$4m. Disadvantaged government schools received \$24m under those programs and disadvantaged private schools received \$4m. There is a deliberate distortion of \$46m in this document. Of course, heads were ducking everywhere when the matter was raised. Parents would be rather alarmed that that sort of information emanates from an organisation which can afford hundreds of thousands of dollars to support political parties, an organisation of people who are supposed to be teaching their children.

The honourable member for Fannie Bay told us of marvellous proposals to revamp the financing of the health system. I think she even went as far as to use the term 'free health system'. She had better revise that if indeed she used it. We heard about being charged 1% of taxable income to cover the costs of health services and that we are still to be left with 15% of the bill.

Mr Speaker, I wonder if I have overlooked some fundamental principles somewhere. I have difficulty understanding how a scheme which charges someone on \$30 000 per annum twice as much as someone on \$15 000 per annum for the same service is supposed to be equitable. It seems to me that the person on the higher income is supposed to become twice as sick or, perhaps, become just as sick, twice as often. It would be too much to ask whether this scheme will allow persons who consider that they can look after their own affairs adequately to opt out of the 1% levy on taxable income to pay for health services. Let us wait and see. An equitable scheme would allow people to opt out and look after their own medical affairs and those of their families.

Mr B. Collins: Are you going to apply that to your Superannuation Bill?

Mr SPEAKER: Honourable members, I object very strongly to the running commentary. Interjections are one thing but a running commentary is quite another. I will take appropriate action if it continues.

Mr PERRON: Mr Speaker, the scheme as I see it - and I appreciate that I am biased; most of us are - is an unsubtle way to redistribute wealth. There will be many other such schemes where a flat charge, based on income, is imposed for a common level of service. It is one of those sorts of things on which I have always disagreed very strongly with socialist theories. I look forward to seeing the Commonwealth government's health proposals as they relate to funding the states. Certainly, we will not be embarrassed about getting our share. Per head of population, it will be a very substantial share compared to anywhere else in this country, but we will have no embarrassment whatsoever about picking it up.

Mr Speaker, the honourable member for Nightcliff offered her support for our proposals, which at that stage were very sketchy, to have Aboriginal students attain to a much higher level of academic achievement. I will mention in this regard a few problems that we face in the move to assist Aboriginal students to achieve much better academic results than they have in the past. At this stage, I will not go into the initiatives that we shall take. Further information will become available during the course of these sittings when I table the education policy. The types of problems that we

face at present in primary schools and, of course, high schools, where that level of achievement is reached, are poor attendance, low motivation of students and parents and, very importantly, a low expectation we believe, in many cases, by parents and teachers and, of course, students. Expectation is a very important part of getting someone to come through an education system.

The existing system is a problem. Students are promoted from one grade to the next higher grade on social rather than academic criteria. The department advises that this results in over 90% of Aboriginal children being left behind in school work. What is lacking is pressure on students to achieve, a positive policy of identification and encouragement of students with high potential and awareness by parents, community leaders and their advisers of what is required for academic success. There is also a failure to heed Aboriginal leaders who have asked constantly for stress to be placed upon competence so that Aborigines can manage their own affairs. Those remarks relate to problems generally. We are not saying that all students are poorly motivated or have poor expectations for themselves. Neither do they apply to students or parents across the board. But, they indicate a significant part of the problem and honourable members will hear more of what we will do in the future to try to improve the situation.

Mr Speaker, in conclusion, may I say that the Administrator painted a picture of continuing growth for the Northern Territory with the exception of a grey cloud over the unresolved land rights issues. There are a number of them of which this Assembly is well aware. Our continued prosperity, however, is dependent upon the fulfilment of a series of federal government commitments and clear promises. A shadow has been cast over these by the Leader of the Opposition during this debate. However, since his admission here that he is embarrassed at the level of assistance the Northern Territory government receives already, I think that we should discount greatly the value of any opportunities the Leader of the Opposition may find available to him with regard to the change of federal government.

We need fighters at present, particularly for things like the railway line and the university. Both require a minimal amount of capital expenditure to start them. Any argument that such projects would blow up the deficit so far that the country could not handle it is simple nonsense. We need fighters in Canberra at this time and as many as we can get. Whilst we can expect little support from the Leader of the Opposition, this government will do everything in its power to continue to see that every Commonwealth government undertaking towards the Northern Territory is fulfilled.

Mr DONDAS (Health): In rising to speak to the address in reply this afternoon, I find that the approach of the honourable members to this debate has been negative. On the outskirts of town, the member for Millner is considered to be the messiah for sporting organisations but he hardly made one reference to sport when speaking to this motion. Of course, this government places great importance on sport and its development in the Northern Territory. Some 60% of our population is under the age of 40 and some 70% of that 60% is involved in sport in one way or another.

I would also like to mention the cowardly attack on the management of the Chan Park Nursing Home made by the member for Nightcliff and also the mischievous attack on the health services made by the member for Fannie Bay.

The only thing that I could conclude from the contributions of the members opposite was that they were suffering from a case of sour grapes because this government knows where it is going. We are not talking about sport in Darwin only but about planning and developing sporting facilities throughout the whole of the Northern Territory. In Gove, we are negotiating

to install a small BMX track. Negotiations and discussions are also taking place for the establishment of some recreational facilities on the oval there. I am not going to bring up our past performance at Gove and other Territory centres at the moment, but where we are going in the area of development of facilities. In Katherine, further discussions will take place for a golf club and bowling club. In Alice Springs, we are talking about an indoor recreation centre. We will also be discussing and instigating procedures and proposals to upgrade Traeger Park. In fact, in the last 12 months, the Centralian Football League has negotiated a successful lease with the council there which will allow us to help it to upgrade the facilities.

I referred this morning to the fact that the government is considering, as a high priority, the development of stage 2 at Marrara, which is a basketball stadium. I hope to be in a position to make an announcement on that very shortly in conjunction with the construction of a national standard indoor stadium which should be completed, as I said, around October of this year. We can talk about cycling velodromes in Alice Springs, basketball stadiums and, of course, Marrara. No mention was made of Marrara by the honourable member opposite. The Northern Territory government, in association with the council, has spent many hundreds of thousands of dollars to develop that facility. In 3 or 4 years time, when it is completed and in use by the members of the community, not only the Darwin community but people from other town centres, when they come up here for Territory championships, will have the benefit of those facilities.

We are talking about drop-in centres in the northern suburbs. At the moment, we are finalising arrangements with the YWCA to construct a drop-in centre in Malak at a cost of some \$200 000 to the government with a \$45 000 to \$50 000 contribution by the YWCA. I am actively negotiating with the Housing Commission the surrender of the old Malak Housing Commission site office to a community organisation for the development of youth facilities.

Over the last 3 years, our travel subsidy scheme has proven to be a boon to Territory sportsmen and has given them the opportunity to participate at national level, to gain experience and to bring that experience back to the Territory. There was not one word about travel subsidies from members of the opposition. The Administrator mentioned that we will be embarking on a coaching program. It is the intention of this government to provide every sporting organisation with a full-time coach by about 1985. I hope that we will be able to obtain funds through the Sports Development Fund to enable that. At least, we have aims and objectives. That is a lot more than is happening on the other side.

The member for Millner referred to the housing situation. This government sees housing as a high priority. The budget certainly indicated that the government is true to its word. The allocation for housing is 12.5% of its budget. The Northern Territory spends some \$230 per person and the national average is about \$20 per head. From 1 October 1979 to 28 February 1983, 2600 loans were made available to Territorians to buy or build their own homes. At this stage, \$107m has been put into the loans scheme for Territorians. For this financial year, some \$62m has been committed. Some \$50m has been allocated for the 1982-83 capital works program.

The honourable member for Millner referred to the waiting list for housing. I think we must apologise for the length of time people must wait. A 3-bedroom home, which is the type most in demand, has a waiting time of 13 months. I do not necessarily consider that to be an unreasonable length of time but I consider it to be unreasonable if people are living in caravans or substandard accommodation. This government is taking every possible measure

to try to overcome the long waiting periods. The situation is no different with staff housing. In fact, for a 3-bedroom house in the Darwin area, the waiting time may be as long as 22 months. In the Alice Springs area, it is 14 months and, in Katherine, it is 17 months. There is no waiting time in Tennant Creek and Nhulunbuy. The waiting time for a 3-bedroom house on the general public housing list is 13 months in Darwin, 13 months in Alice Springs, 12 months in Katherine, no waiting time in Tennant Creek and 12 months in Nhulunbuy. Certainly, we are taking steps to try to overcome that problem.

The Administrator referred to the development of a housing policy offering better opportunities to women. Women are already entitled to loans for home purchase. However, His Honour said that there are practical problems that restrict their capacity to own their own homes in their own right. I expect to announce a new policy within the next few months.

Mr Speaker, on every occasion on which the honourable member for Fannie Bay has made a statement about health matters, she has attempted to denigrate the health services of the Northern Territory. She has made incorrect assertions about downgrading of services, finances, staff reductions and complaints. The honourable member for Fannie Bay has stated that, according to the annual report for 1980-81, some 268 people were laid off. I am not denying that; it is a fact. The important thing is that taxpayers' money must not be spent irresponsibly.

The honourable member has come up with a figure of \$10m reduction in spending in this area. This was reported in Hansard, the Northern Territory News and also in a copy of a transcript that I obtained from the ABC. That particular statement leads me to believe that the honourable member for Fannie Bay cannot count. For example, in the 1980-81 financial year, we spent \$79.123m. In 1981-82, the figure was \$88.596m. Is that a \$10m reduction, Mr Speaker? That is an increase. There was an 11.9% increase in spending between the 1980-81 and the 1981-82 financial years. Those figures are in the annual report and the budget papers. For the financial year 1982-83, we are looking at \$93.3m being spent on health services in the Northern Territory. The claim that there is a downgrading because of lack of money is simply not true. I am sick and tired of hearing the honourable member for Fannie Bay come out with that statement. She cannot add up.

Expenditure is expressed on a per capita basis. The state and local government health expenditure per capita for 1981 was: New South Wales \$260.27, Victoria \$244.18, Queensland \$238.97, South Australia \$282.83, Western Australia \$363.55 and Tasmania \$314.21. The per capita figure for the Northern Territory is \$687.81. Where is the downgrading? Those figures are available from the Australian Bureau of Statistics catalogues 5504 and 3101.

She spoke about staff reductions. The funded staff of the department as of 28 February this year is 2875. That is only 180 down on the 1981 figures quoted by the honourable member for Fannie Bay. She said it was a reduction of 268. But I would pay tribute to the former Minister for Health, who worked very hard to get our health service into a better financial position with more efficient operation than it had when we inherited it. It takes time. We pared back some of the industrial positions and some others but the important thing is that - and I have per capita figures on hospital beds which will astound the honourable member - the Northern Territory government makes no apology for responsible management and the spending of public moneys. Changes have been made in the past 2 years to organisation, service delivery and cost effectiveness in order to improve patient care. The changes have been considered and deliberate, and not mindless cuts as the honourable member has said outside this Assembly.

I will give you the staff-per-bed figures: Geelong has 484 beds and 2.6 staff per bed; Townsville has 524 beds and 1.9 staff per bed; Box Hill, Victoria has 306 beds and 3.7 staff per bed; Dandenong has 334 beds and 3.3 staff per bed; Bendigo has 296 beds and 2.5 staff per bed; Mt Isa has 157 beds and 1.5 staff per bed; Broken Hill has 260 beds and 2.2 staff per bed; Cairns has 367 beds and 1.7 staff per bed; and Darwin has 333 beds and 3.3 staff per bed.

The honourable member kept referring to staff reductions. She went through the document and said: '12 doctors have left, 16 nurses have left' etc. Well, 268 people out of 3000 have gone. We have pared it back to what we consider to be a reasonable level. We have since raised that level because of the increase in services. The important thing is that the figures indicate that the level of services required has dropped over the period in question. Outpatient service requirements dropped by 26.5%. Why have all those people on staff if a quarter of your business has walked out the door? Occupied bed days dropped by 5.3%. Surely no excuse is needed to improve departmental or hospital efficiency. Over the last 2 weeks, the number of beds has been increased to 333. To cater for the increased activity, we employed an extra 25 nurses.

The honourable member for Fannie Bay made great play about the maintenance section of the Katherine Hospital. She said the people employed in the maintenance section were not there, nobody was looking after the equipment, and it was deteriorating. What a load of bunkum, Mr Speaker! The electrician resigned on 2 March 1983. It is 22 March today. The honourable member said that for those 2 weeks, no electrician was employed there, Mr Speaker, and that is in your electorate. You would be more aware of the situation than anybody in this Assembly. Local contractors were employed to maintain and service that equipment. No equipment was left unattended. It is only another scare tactic from the opposition. On top of all that, the hospital maintenance supervisor's services were terminated. Discussions are taking place between the Katherine Hospital Board and the union to overcome that particular problem. There was no basis for the statement by the member for Fannie Bay that there was no money. Once again, she has distorted the facts. I can assure honourable members that no equipment has been left unattended.

We talk about hospital admittance procedures. I am one member on this side of the Assembly who has criticised our hospital admittance procedures. The honourable member for Fannie Bay spoke about it on talk-back programs, was quoted in the newspapers and wrote letters to the editor. That has happened and has been there for all to see. At the same time, we are talking about the hospital. There are peaks and troughs. There are times when the hospital is full and times when the hospital is running at a lower capacity. The administrators try to gauge the level of staff requirements in those particular peaks and troughs.

The honourable member for Fannie Bay made great play about a lady who was in labour who went to the hospital and was refused admittance. That is not true. The lady may have gone to hospital thinking that she was in labour but, in fact, she was not in labour. She may have experienced a particular pain. On that day, the hospital was busy. That lady was rather young and it is my understanding that she did not go to any of her pre-natal courses. At the same time, she was not quite sure of the procedures. It was a false alarm. Some women do go to hospital thinking that they will have their babies immediately but they are not born until 3 or 4 days later. In this case, the birth was induced 2 days later. She had misconstrued her own feeling and that is not an abnormal occurrence. The honourable member for Fannie Bay said that that lady was refused a bed. In an emergency, a bed will

be found no matter how full the hospital is. Over the Christmas period, we found that patient intake into the hospital had increased and so we increased the number of beds by an extra 20. The honourable member was not aware of that. She is ill-informed and she makes statements that are designed only to scare people. The opposition uses scare tactics because it is afraid that, before it can implement its policies, the Darwin Hospital and other hospitals throughout the Territory will be working efficiently.

The honourable member spoke about the Commonwealth government's health policy. We will be going to Canberra and fighting for every dollar that we can get. Unlike the member for Fannie Bay, I do not think our money worries are over. Once the Hawke government starts chopping up its pie, there will be very little left after it pays for all the promises that it has made.

Much has been said about Medicare. All I have to say about that is that you get nothing for nothing. The honourable member asked me a question last week about a free in-patient service and our policy on that. Somebody will have to pay for it. I asked her to place the question on notice. I agree with the remark of the honourable Treasurer: 'Nothing is for nothing'.

In relation to the community health program, the honourable member for Fannie Bay again spoke about downgrading. Community health services make an essential contribution to health care. In 1981-82, the Northern Territory government spent \$24.5m or 28% of its budget and, in 1982-83, \$29m or 31% of its budget on the community health program. Where is the downgrading?

The honourable member for Fannie Bay spoke about \$20m that the new federal government would put into health care. The Northern Territory will be lucky if it receives \$200 000 out of that but still it will be welcomed as far as I am concerned. If the honourable member for Fannie Bay took the time to really study the Kirton and Whiting Report on the review of urban-based community health centres, she would see that we are beginning to reshape our thinking about the direction community health services and centres should be taking in the 1980s.

She spoke about career structures for nurses. She spoke about problems between the department and the Royal Australian Nursing Federation, no doubt because of a press article by a member of the Royal Australian Nursing Federation regarding grievances. The Secretary of the Department of Health sent that organisation a telex:

'A decision has been made to replace nurses' - you are aware that no such decision has been made. 'The senior sisters are to be replaced by clerical staff' - you are aware that no decisions have been made or contemplated. 'That if the government had its way, nurses would lose their involvement in identifying the needs of the community' - I am at a complete loss to understand where this idea could have come from.

Members will be further interested to hear that the Secretary of the Royal Australian Nursing Federation telephoned the department and agreed with remarks made in the telex and apologised for the misinformation contained in the press article. The federation was unable to identify the so-called RANF spokesman. The honourable member for Fannie Bay seized upon that opportunity to try to cause a rift in the good relationship between the department and the RANF.

The proposal for an area health service for Darwin was another question raised by the honourable member for Fannie Bay: that all regions be structured to include hospitals as a functional part of their organisational framework.

The proposal referred to by the honourable member is detailed in a discussion paper drawn up by the department's Director of Extended Care Services, Dr Lu Mykyta, to canvass amongst staff at all levels the provision of an area health service in the Darwin region. Dr Mykyta recently joined the Department of Health. He is nationally recognised as an expert in the field of community health and his qualifications and experience have been drawn upon for the formulation of the discussion paper now under attack by the opposition.

For the benefit of honourable members, recently the paper was circulated within the Department of Health. It is a proposal to provide an area health service in the Darwin region. It is not, as suggested, an attempt to place the Community Health Service under the control of the Darwin Hospital. The proposal is one which has been used to great effect in a number of parts of Australia. It recognises that the modern acute care hospital has the majority of resources in the health care system and it makes these resources available to workers in the wider community. The proposal aims to facilitate more effective allocation of resources between the hospital and the community and thereby provide a more effective transition for the patient between the hospital and the community and allow for earlier discharge from the hospital. Improved liaison between the hospital and the Community Health Service should ensure better patient care. In areas where this system has been implemented, the Community Health Service has actually expanded and taken a more prominent role in the delivery of health care; for example, the Hornsby Area Health Service in New South Wales has been a tremendous success.

Mr Speaker, it is disappointing when issues are distorted and the normal channels of communication are perverted. I wonder if the honourable member for Fannie Bay is attempting some political haymaking once again.

MR SPEAKER: Order, the honourable member's time has expired.

MR ROBERTSON (Attorney-General): Mr Speaker, I move that the honourable Minister for Health be granted an extension of time to allow him to conclude his speech.

Motion agreed to.

MR DONDAS: Mr Speaker, I have a letter from the Royal Australian Nursing Federation. I will send a copy to the honourable member for Fannie Bay to make her aware of the federation's thinking. It reads:

Dear Dr Fleming, we thank you for the copy of the discussion paper on a proposed area health service. The Royal Australian Nursing Federation accepts in principle the concept of an integrated health system and requests that negotiations take place with the Department of Health immediately.

We would appreciate copies of relevant organisational charts that are being considered for this concept.

That letter is dated 21 March and is signed by Mrs Joan Wilkinson, Secretary of the Royal Australian Nursing Federation.

Mr Speaker, the honourable member for Nightcliff sought a venue to discuss a problem that has been placed before her. I really am amazed at the attack on the Chan Park Nursing Home made by the honourable member for Nightcliff, supported by the honourable member for Fannie Bay. The honourable member for Nightcliff has in her possession a statutory declaration signed by a group of professional people who apparently are not happy with the service

that is being provided by the Chan Park Nursing Home. The secretary of the department and I went out to the Chan Park Nursing Home yesterday. We spoke to the manager and to a couple of the patients. My understanding is that, at the moment, the Chan Park Nursing Home is full. It has 40-odd patients. Honourable members opposite have asked for some statistics. I will provide those statistics in a few moments.

The outstanding fact that emerged from the whole exercise yesterday - and I might be wrong and they might be wrong - is that the people I spoke to informed me that the honourable member for Nightcliff had never been to the Chan Park Nursing Home. She may say that is not true. We can go into that later. But she made an attack in this Assembly, under parliamentary privilege, on a private organisation although, as I understand it, she has not put her foot inside the place.

Mr Speaker, I have known the honourable member for Nightcliff for many years. In the past, when she has had a problem that related either to her electorate or to the community at large, she would ring me or she would write me a letter and would say: 'Look, I have heard about this' or 'this particular problem is certainly aggravating some of my constituents. Can you please look into it?' Where possible, we look into it. If we can rectify the problem, we do. But the honourable member for Nightcliff has been sitting on this information for about 10 days, as I understand it.

Mrs Lawrie: How about giving me the information I asked for?

Mr DONDAS: You will get it in a few minutes.

Mrs Lawrie: We are waiting.

Mr SPEAKER: Order, order! If the honourable member claims she has been misquoted, she can seek redress later.

Mrs Lawrie: I am not claiming to have been misquoted.

Mr DONDAS: Mr Speaker, we can only wait to see what is in the document. I have asked the honourable member if I could have a look at it. I have even offered to the honourable member some confidentiality. But I am becoming sick and tired of people who are too frightened to come out and speak when there is something wrong. They hide behind a veil of secrecy because they fear to lose their jobs. I ask members opposite to point out one person who has lost his job because he had the guts to speak out against the system.

Mrs Lawrie: How long do you have?

Mr DONDAS: It is a statutory declaration. Why won't the honourable member make that available for us to have a look at so that we can at least investigate the problem? At the particular time, the honourable member said it was nothing short of a disaster. If those people out there are being ill-treated or are not being looked after, the honourable member for Nightcliff has made them wait nearly 2 weeks before something can be done. I am disturbed. It is a very delicate matter, Mr Speaker. I do not know how to broach the subject with the honourable member other than in this Assembly because she has not come to me and said that she wants to talk about it or set up a meeting. That was last Thursday and today is Tuesday.

Honourable members opposite asked some questions. I have a brief here that will give them the information they require. But I would remind members that there are appropriate channels for lodging complaints of this nature.

They are enshrined in our legislation. I refer the member for Nightcliff and the member for Fannie Bay to sections 26 to 28 of the Private Hospitals and Nursing Homes Act which allows the Chief Medical Officer to revoke a licence if need be. They are pretty strong words when there is a \$1.5m operation out there. Why hasn't the member for Nightcliff brought forward the information she has?

Mr Speaker, the allegations by the honourable member reflect on the professional care of the patients in the home. It is not sufficient to speak with the protection of parliamentary privilege. The Chan Park Nursing Home is licensed by the Department of Health pursuant to the provisions of the Private Hospitals and Nursing Homes Act. The staff-patient ratio at Chan Park is based on nationally-developed Hospital and Allied Services Advisory Council guidelines which are supported by the Commonwealth Department of Health. It is further increased by 2 student nurses who are rostered at the home on a rotational basis. This is a new scheme which is of benefit to the School of Nursing and the nursing home patients. I understand that there are approximately 46 people - it varies from day to day - employed at the Chan Park Nursing Home and approximately 34 of those people are involved with care of patients. The others would be administrative, domestic or industrial staff.

Another question asked was about staff qualifications. All staff are trained. They are either registered or enrolled nurses and all are appropriately registered by the NT Nurses Registration Board. This is unique to Chan Park and is not the situation in private nursing homes in other parts of Australia. It is indicative of the quality of nursing care provided at Chan Park. The Director of Nursing at Chan Park was formerly in charge of the nursing home ward at the old Darwin Hospital and the present Darwin Hospital. She had experience and training in long-term care and holds a geriatric nursing certificate from the Concord Hospital, New South Wales. I believe that matron would be the first to know if any of her patients regressed as the honourable members opposite stated. As far as possible, the aged residents at Chan Park have access to the aged-care facilities in Darwin. Some attend the Kokoda Industries sheltered workshop. While the secretary of my department and I were out there yesterday, 5 of the children were at the Henbury Avenue Special School. They go there every day except when they do not have transport. We are trying to fix up a bus with suitable seats to take the children to that special school every day.

Residents who, in the opinion of their medical attendant, require physiotherapy or any other specialised treatment can have this provided to them in the same way as other members of the community. Physiotherapy is a specific form of treatment and should not be confused with the diversional therapies such as those carried out by an activity therapist employed by the home. Moves are under way to provide physiotherapy and occupational therapy services on site and these have departmental support. It should be noted that it is unusual for such services to be provided in private nursing homes anywhere else in Australia and even voluntary charitable nursing homes, which are fully government-funded, do not always avail themselves of this opportunity.

The honourable member also asked a question on inspection. The Northern Territory Private Hospitals and Nursing Homes Act requires an annual inspection of nursing homes. The first such inspection was carried out by Dr Jacobs, the then Darwin Regional Director, on 18 November 1982 and the home was registered. Strong links have been forged with the department and many informal visits have been made to the home by departmental officers. In fact, I understand the Secretary of the Department of Health has been out there 4 or 5 times this year already. Officers of the Commonwealth Department of Health inspected the home on 16 November 1982 and approved its application for the Commonwealth

bed-day subsidy.

The honourable member for Nightcliff implied that there could be detrimental effects to children as a result of being housed with the elderly. There is no evidence to support that suggestion, Mr Speaker. In fact, I checked with an outside source, Matron Martin, who is in charge of the Old Timers' Home in Alice Springs. While she does not have any children in her facility, she is considered to have some experience in those matters. She thinks it is a fantastic idea because there is great interaction between children and the elderly. The Northern Territory government subsidises the care of patients at Chan Park over and above the subsidy paid by the Commonwealth and any pensioner contributions.

Mr Speaker, the honourable member for Nightcliff raised a point regarding school screening. As a result, the department has given me a full briefing on it. I refer the honourable member to page 5 of the Kirton and Whiting Report where the fourth recommendation states:

That school screening and infant health clinics as task groups be rationalised under the corporate heading of child health with a view to identifying the needs and priorities for each catchment area rather than relying on the present level of standardised practices which do not demonstrate their effectiveness in relation to present time and resource allocation.

That was the end of November 1982. The report, which was an independent assessment of the department's community health programs by an expert in the field, identified areas where present practices need to be changed. As a result, the department obtained information from Australian and overseas sources on screening procedures. A number of programs have been studied and work has commenced in the department to prepare a comprehensive child health policy which will include child screening. To develop such a comprehensive program requires liaison with specialists inside and outside the department. Infant health and school screening procedures will be amalgamated with child and adolescent health services. This will provide an overall assessment service for children from birth to school leaving age.

Regional directors have been advised that they may wish to implement and evaluate the draft proposals during this year. This is not a direction; the regional staff have the option to continue existing procedures. If there are any changes to former procedures then they have been taken as an initiative of the regional staff themselves and not as a result of policy change and direction. It will take about one year to develop and implement a new policy.

Studies so far have shown that there is no evidence that blanket screenings at arbitrary intervals, such as every 2 years, are an effective preventative measure. If the honourable member for Nightcliff has any evidence to show that they are, then I would be pleased to see it. On the contrary, the information available to the department at this stage shows that it is more effective to screen for particular developmental deficiencies or major diseases at appropriate ages. I regret that the honourable member for Nightcliff was told or believed that school teachers would be 'expected to pick up deficiencies, particularly in eyesight and hearing'. I agree that teachers are not lay health workers and it is not the intention of my department that teachers should perform child health assessment functions. I am assured that, when the department's new policy is developed, it will provide appropriate mechanisms to detect hearing and eyesight problems.

There is no such thing as free health care. The only people that I would really be worrying about are the 6000 employed by health funds. They are the people who will feel the pinch when this new health system is introduced. The honourable member for Fannie Bay's statement has the effect of undermining the excellent work being performed by the Department of Health and its staff and causes needless anxiety to people who seek its services.

Mr HARRIS (Port Darwin): Mr Speaker, I have much pleasure in rising to speak on the address in reply. I would like to open my remarks by commenting on some of the statements by previous speakers.

I was very interested to hear from the honourable member for Fannie Bay on health matters and I must comment on her remarks. She said that she was very disappointed to see that the Northern Territory government had placed a low priority on the health portfolio. She also inferred that it had placed a low priority on the health portfolio in the past. The member for Fannie Bay and all other members in this Assembly know that that is not correct. The Northern Territory government has placed a very high priority on health matters, and so it should. It is disappointing that that comment is being put across to the public generally by the honourable member for Fannie Bay. People should be aware of the efforts made by the Northern Territory government and, in particular, the efforts made by the previous Minister for Health who fought very hard to have health services and facilities provided in the Northern Territory equal to, if not better than, those provided to people in other parts of Australia.

The member for Fannie Bay fails continually to recognise that, in the past, we have been spoilt. I am not saying there is anything wrong with being spoilt. We should try to obtain the best possible deal for our people and there is a need to bargain in certain instances. When there is a trimming of the fat and certain changes are made - changes which will not put the health of Territorians at risk - and those changes are misrepresented to the public as putting health care at risk, that is dishonest. It is important to realise that the health services provided to the people of the Territory are as good as, if not better than, those provided in the rest of Australia.

In previous debate, I spoke about the comparison between the health budgets of the Northern Territory and South Australia in terms of the populations catered for. The Northern Territory has a health budget of \$87m to cater for a population of 130 000 people. In South Australia, a \$200m health budget caters for 2.5 million people. It is no wonder that the states are starting to say: 'Look what the Northern Territory is getting on a per capita basis compared to us'. We fight very hard and we do well in what we receive.

In addition to the statistics given by the Minister for Health in the debate today, I would like to refer members to a speech made by the Chief Minister on 9 March 1982 in a debate on a matter of public importance related to health care. In that particular speech, he referred to bed availability and staffing levels. It is important that members of this Assembly and also media representatives make themselves aware of that situation. I ask them to refer back to the comments made by the Chief Minister during that debate.

Mr Speaker, I would also like to raise today the subject of the Grants Commission. We all know how important the Grants Commission is to the successful development and progress not only of the Northern Territory but also of the smaller states. We rely very heavily on the Grants Commission. We see that the Labor government is proposing that the Commonwealth Grants

Commission come under the administrative umbrella of Treasury. In the past, the Grants Commission has been an independent body. I am very concerned to see that proposal has been put forward. I would ask all members, including the opposition, to make strong representations that the Grants Commission retain its independence from departmental pressures. That is very important to the success and development of the Northern Territory. Northern Territory people are a proud people who do not like handouts. They fight for what they can get but I believe that Territory people accept that they will have to make a reasonable revenue-raising effort. They do not want handouts; they are proud to fight for what they can get but they are quite prepared to pay their fair share. The Northern Territory government is continuing to make every effort to provide health services in the Northern Territory that are equal to, if not better than, those provided to people in the rest of Australia.

The member for Fannie Bay also spoke about people being turned away from the hospital and people being treated poorly. I listened to the comments of the Minister for Health and I took note of them. I believe that there is another problem - that of public relations. I have also had complaints from people who have had problems in being admitted to the hospital but, in most cases, the trouble has stemmed from poor public relations.

It is not only in the area of health. In many other departments, there are problems with public relations. In tourism, government departments and in the private sector as well, there is a real problem. Some people are very proficient in their work but, when it comes to addressing the public or acting as the first point of contact with the public, they are absolutely useless. This has a strong effect on someone who calls on that department, goes to the hospital or whatever. The first point of contact is very important. It is an area that we will look at in future. In the private sector, similar incidents occur in shops. There are no smiles, no please or thank you. It is a problem that goes right across the board. Many issues that are raised through the media, through talk-back shows or letters to the editor are a result of poor public relations, and I believe that that is an area that this government should look at very closely in the future.

Mr Speaker, the member for Nightcliff supported, as I do, the statement made in the Administrator's speech regarding the initiative to enable women to own their homes in their own right. I feel that every member who has spoken on that particular issue has also supported that initiative. The member for Nightcliff mentioned that she believed that the government should seek advice from groups in the community. She referred specifically to the Women's Electoral Lobby and the Coalition of Low Income Earners. She suggested that the government should seek their advice when addressing this particular problem. The only comment I make here, Mr Speaker, is that the government is always willing to listen to and accept advice and to hear comments from the public and even suggestions for the introduction of new initiatives from the public. Indeed, the member for Nightcliff acknowledged this when she referred to Aboriginal education.

Mrs Lawrie: Which I initiated.

Mr HARRIS: She raised the issue in 1980 and the government responded. I would suggest, Mr Speaker, that organisations or groups that have an interest and want to have input should write to the government and comment now. It is not for the government to contact them.

There have been occasions, and I respect the government for it, where it has tried to contact interested groups with regard to an initiative that it has set in progress. It has been rather sad that the response on some

occasions has not been all that great, but the government is willing to listen to comments that are made. I would say to those people now: 'if you wish to comment, comment as soon as you can'.

Mr Speaker, the other point is that we are fortunate in the Territory to have low constituency numbers. We are accessible. There are members in the Assembly who are still interested in making their comments known without waiting for a politically opportune time. I would call on everyone to comment continually on the initiatives of government. It is important and it is the only way that the government can obtain a reflection of the community's feelings.

Mr Speaker, the member for Victoria River made a contribution to the debate on the address in reply. I utterly refute his comment that the Aboriginal people are 'still generally regarded as second-rate citizens by Territorians'. There are instances where this line of thinking has been promoted throughout Australia. I am not denying that, but to say that Territorians, generally, regard Aboriginal people as second-rate citizens is just not on.

His comments regarding the government's initiative to encourage the participation and involvement of Aboriginal people in the tourist industry were also way off the mark. The Aboriginal people themselves will decide whether or not they wish to become involved in any industry. They do not have to. The government has provided them with an opportunity. If they wish to become involved in the tourist industry, a very important industry in the Northern Territory, then they can receive assistance from the government. I want to make it quite clear that it is up to them. They are the ones who will decide whether or not they wish to become involved in this very important industry. I am surprised the honourable member feels so bitter towards the government which has continually supported Aboriginal involvement in matters that concern them.

Mr Speaker, unlike some members in this Assembly, I find that so many subjects were raised in the Administrator's speech that it would be impossible to comment on all the initiatives. I would like to address 3 issues: the port, local government- for which we are considering a complete review of the Local Government Act- and the Conservation Commission.

I was pleased to note in the Administrator's speech that continued emphasis is to be placed on the importance of the Port of Darwin. There is no doubt that improved port facilities will play a major role in the future development of the Northern Territory. I have always said that the port is the key to economic development of the Top End. It will have a spin-off for the rest of the Northern Territory with the completion of the railway line. However, we must make sure that companies and people who use the port see it as being able to provide a reliable service. I think all members will recall the problems that were associated with the waterfront back in the 1960s and it is a pity that many potential users of our port facilities remember those problem years. I believe that people are regaining confidence in the port and more and more use will be made of what should be one of the cheaper modes of transport. I welcome the emphasis placed on the continued development of the port of Darwin.

Local government is continuing to develop and progress in the Territory. It has reached the stage where local government is a very important part of the whole governmental system. We need to ensure that the legislation under which it operates is legislation that can work. In the past, comments have been made in this Assembly in relation to the shortcomings of the Local Government Act. I would ask the people who are reviewing that act to refer

back to the debates in this Assembly and take note of those comments. It is important that they produce legislation that can work. This review is long overdue. I look forward to the introduction of amending legislation in this Assembly in due course.

Mr Speaker, finally, I would like to comment on the government's intention to continue its beautification program throughout the Northern Territory. This has not received much public comment or praise. I would like to take this opportunity to say that the Conservation Commission is to be congratulated on the tremendous work that it has done in relation to the beautification of the towns of the Northern Territory. It has done a magnificent job. The work done on the median strips and verges that line our highways is excellent and attractive. It is a credit to all those people who have been involved in those particular projects. Those of us who can remember the areas before that work was carried out by the Conservation Commission are aware of the tremendous enhancement of the environment. I am pleased to note that this work will continue. The government should be very proud indeed of the tremendous work that the Conservation Commission has done to beautify the towns of the Northern Territory.

There are many other issues that I could touch on: the Darwin to Alice Springs railway, the airport, Tindal, housing, education, the increase in police intake and the continued assistance to sport. All of these government initiatives are welcomed.

In closing, Mr Speaker, I would like to say that the Administrator has indicated again that the Northern Territory is a place that is on the move. We should be proud to live here. It is still the best place in the world to live. I am very pleased to see that the future is very bright indeed for the Northern Territory under a CLP government.

Debate adjourned.

ADJOURNMENT

Mr ROBERTSON (Attorney-General): Mr Speaker, I move that the Assembly do now adjourn.

Motion agreed to; the Assembly adjourned.

Mr Speaker MacFarlane took the Chair at 10 am.

TABLED PAPER

Northern Territory Schools - Direction for the Eighties

Mr PERRON (Education): Mr Speaker, I table the document entitled 'Northern Territory Schools - Direction for the Eighties', the document setting out the government's policy framework for primary and secondary education.

Honourable members will recall that, in mid-1979, the government inherited from the Commonwealth the system of education which, although well resourced and administered within the parameters in which it existed then, lacked many of the essential characteristics of a state-type education system. The administrative structure, the approach to curriculum development and the teaching service were designed for both the ACT and the Northern Territory and did not suit the emerging and unique Northern Territory education environment.

The Northern Territory government inherited a range of daunting problems: high staff turnover, poor attendance patterns in rural areas, including several thousand children who have never enrolled in school, a lack of common curricula and materials and a lack of comprehensive policy. Following the transfer of the education function from the Commonwealth to the Northern Territory in mid-1979, the government's efforts were initially focused on developing an appropriate curriculum and certification pattern. It was essential to provide a common curriculum throughout the Northern Territory to lessen the effects of high student and teacher mobility within the Territory and, at the same time, provide our students with a curriculum compatible with that of the other states. The government was also concerned with establishing a Northern Territory teaching service and a system of administration that would be far more responsive to local needs.

Once these tasks were in hand, the government turned its attention to the development of an education policy framework to meet the many challenges of the 1980s. Honourable members will recall that the process commenced in 1980 with a wide distribution of a draft Green Paper. Subsequently, a Green Paper was tabled in this Assembly in February 1981. A very wide public response was received. That community reaction was examined and assessed by a specially-appointed committee comprising a broad cross-section of education and community interest groups.

By November 1981, however, a number of issues remained unresolved. Some proposals, for example, required extensive discussions with the Commonwealth authority before progress could be made. Consequently, it was decided to develop a series of individual policy statements which could be issued separately while policy was formulated on other matters.

My predecessor indicated in November last year that it was better to get the act right first time than to keep on patching it up and that the process of assessing the impact of all these policies on neighbouring policies must be addressed before a definitive statement could be made. Early this year it became increasingly clear that, with the work already completed, with new work in progress and with additional reports I had called for, we were in a position to develop a comprehensive statement setting out the government's objectives, goals and expectations. Sufficient work had also been done for this statement to be followed up by a set of supplementary information statements to be issued by the Secretary for Education providing more detail on specific topics.

Direction for the Eighties has a dual purpose. It is intended primarily for use by clients of the education system, parents, students and the wider community. It will also serve as a framework for those who plan and administer education programs within the Department of Education and in schools. While the education policy framework set out in this document is comprehensive, it is also intended to be evolutionary. For example, on the question of whether secondary colleges should be developed in Darwin and Alice Springs, the policy on post-compulsory education has set a clear framework within which the government can make a decision following further community and school input. Similarly, on the question of the way in which students should progress through the early childhood years, the government will seek input from parents and teacher groups before implementation in 1984. When public opinion is clear on these issues, the document may be amended accordingly. The government also recognises that new issues will continue to arise in the future and will need to be dealt with in a similar way.

Mr Speaker, the document sets clear objectives in areas of priority concern. These include the need: to maintain a uniform curriculum throughout the Territory; to encourage students to stay at school longer and provide high-quality alternative courses for senior students who do not wish to undertake matriculation studies; to prepare students to cope with advances in computer technology; to provide for the special education needs of exceptional children; to improve services to isolated students; to ensure that parental and community expectations are reflected in school programs; to promote self-discipline and respect for the rights of others; and to provide a firmer educational foundation for students of Aboriginal descent. In addition, as well as confirming many policy directions taken since 1979, over 40 new initiatives and statements of direction are made.

I am confident that, in Direction for the Eighties, the government has set clear objectives and goals in a way which will enable schools to develop the kinds of programs and activities required to equip our children for life and work in the 1980s.

Mr Speaker, Direction for the Eighties is the culmination of an extensive consolidative venture in educational policy development. In commending it to the Assembly, I wish to express my sincere appreciation to the many Territorians who have contributed in so many ways to its development.

Mr Speaker, I move that the Assembly take note of the paper.

Debate adjourned.

TENANCY AMENDMENT BILL (Serial 300)

Bill presented and read a first time.

Mrs O'NEIL (Fannie Bay): Mr Speaker, I move that the bill be now read a second time.

The purpose of this bill is to allow permanent residents of hostels and similar institutions to benefit from the protection provisions of the Tenancy Act. When the Tenancy Act was introduced some years ago, a number of exclusions were listed in the definition of 'premises'. These were the guest house, hotel, motel or boarding house, premises used in the tourist industry, a caravan park and premises leased principally for business purposes whether or not the premises may be used for residence or residence is permitted under the lease.

Last year, the Assembly amended the act to bring permanent residents of caravan parks under the act. This was in recognition of the fact that caravan park dwellers are not by any means all tourists but rather that caravans are a form of permanent accommodation for many Territorians. The use of caravans as permanent accommodation is a comparatively recent trend in housing although clearly a rapidly growing one.

There is 1 type of permanent accommodation which has a much longer history in the Northern Territory, and that is hostels. Hostels have in the past provided the bulk of the accommodation for single workers in the towns of the Territory. There are some people I know who have actually lived in hostels for over 30 years. They have been permanent residents indeed. Whilst this is a declining trend, nevertheless, there are significant numbers of Territorians, particularly single people on low incomes, who will continue to reside in hostels either by necessity or by choice. Public housing policy in the Northern Territory at the moment denies access to single persons, except for pensioners, and while there is some public service accommodation available for single public servants, the amount in stock is very limited.

Honourable members will be aware that a large group of government employees has resided in those hostels formerly known as Commonwealth hostels. Ownership of these hostels was transferred to the Northern Territory government and subsequently they have been leased to private enterprise. One of those large hostels is in my electorate. During the last 9 months, since those hostels were taken over by new lessees, I have received many complaints from my constituents resident in those hostels about disputes between them and the management. Mr Speaker, I must say that this contrasts with my earlier experience when I received absolutely no complaints at all of that nature.

It is clear to me now that disputes are regularly arising and that some simple mechanism for resolving them needs to be provided for the benefit of my constituents and other permanent hostel residents. The obvious mechanism which already exists in the Tenancy Act needs to be available to these Territorians who are permanently resident in this type of accommodation. These people deserve the protection of the Tenancy Act as much as other citizens who reside in caravans, flats or houses. Therefore, I commend this bill to honourable members.

Debate adjourned.

MOTION

Attitude of Government towards Issues of Importance to Women

Mrs O'NEIL (Fannie Bay): Mr Speaker, I move that the Assembly notes with concern the attitude of the Northern Territory government, as expressed by its Women's Adviser, towards issues of importance to women in the Northern Territory.

Mr Speaker, there is a premise in the wording of this motion which is obvious to all and which must, I believe, be addressed first in this debate. That premise is that, when government advisers, whether they be ministerial staff or public servants, are invited to speak publicly and do so in their official capacity, then those persons are speaking on behalf of the government and their duty is to outline the policies of the government. Let there be no confusion about that in the debate. Those government advisers officially speak on behalf of the government. From time to time, such persons may and indeed will have opinions of their own which differ from those of the government. But when asked in an official capacity to speak, their task is to speak on behalf of the government.

From time to time, in public forums, a question might arise on which such an office holder might wish to express his or her own view. It might be, for example, a question of detail on government policy which has not been spelt out. Invariably, in those circumstances, the official concerned indicates if he or she is expressing a personal view which is not necessarily that of the government. But the premise is well established in the Northern Territory as it is throughout Australia and, in my experience of public life in the Northern Territory, it has never been deviated from. To be frank, I do not expect the government to say that, if any person had tried to do so, he or she would not have lasted very long.

Mr Speaker, we must now apply this premise to the occasion which has caused so much comment and so much concern to so many people in the Northern Territory. That was the occasion of the address by the Chief Minister's Women's Adviser to a public gathering to celebrate International Women's Day on 9 March in Darwin, and some subsequent statements. I have had inquiries made to confirm the circumstances of that speech and I have had confirmed that the government's Women's Adviser was asked to speak in her official capacity, agreed to do so and, at no stage before or during that speech at the public gathering, indicated that she was not doing that.

Therefore, in logic, I can reach no other conclusion than that the views expressed on the occasion were the views of the government. That is the conclusion that was reached by all other observers. I shall just summarise a few of the more important of those views presented on behalf of the government: opposition to the ratification of the United Nations Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women; the view that child-care centres should not be directly subsidised; and the view that women's centres or refuges set up by women who are identified as feminists are exploitative of other women and should therefore be closed.

Mr Speaker, it is no wonder that members of the public, particularly women, who have been personally involved in these issues over a period of time were deeply disturbed and will continue to be so for as long as it remains on the record as the official view of this government on these issues of such great importance to them. We like to think in the Territory that we are different from everywhere else but the world is a small place and our major social concerns reflect those of other places.

Figures which are graphically quoted internationally to illustrate the status of women in the world today are worth repeating now. Women are half the world's people, receive one-tenth of the world's income, work two-thirds of the world's working hours and own only one-hundredth of the world's property. Whilst the position of women in the Northern Territory is undoubtedly not half as bad as that and certainly, thank God, is not as bad as that of women in many other countries, it is nevertheless true that those areas which we look at to illustrate the status of women in a society, if applied to the Northern Territory, indicate that women in the Northern Territory have a long way to go if they are to gain equality with men. Undoubtedly, they receive considerably less income than men in the Territory. They own vastly less property. They do a considerable amount of unrewarded labour. They are less well educated. They are employed at the lower ranges of remuneration in the public service and so on.

It is thus particularly disturbing to women in the Northern Territory to find that the United Nations convention, which is aimed at addressing these universal disadvantages suffered by women, is being presented as a threat to our sovereignty and an international plot against us.

My colleague, the member for Sanderson, took the first opportunity available - question time on Wednesday 16 March - to ask the Chief Minister about this crucial issue. In my view, the member for Sanderson was throwing the Chief Minister a life-belt, enabling him to extract himself from the position in which he had been placed. Unfortunately, the Chief Minister instead chose to answer in a typically flippant and arrogant way which women have come to expect from him in dealing with these issues of concern to us.

The legitimate questions of the member for Sanderson were designed to clear up the confusion that had been created. All the Chief Minister managed to do was to confirm in the minds of all observers the low priority which he places on these issues which are of critical importance to half the population of the Territory. The member for Sanderson did us all a service in that she was able to extract from the Chief Minister an undertaking that the government still supports the ratification of the convention in accordance with the resolution of this Assembly last year.

The convention addresses itself to the rights of women in political, economic, social and cultural fields throughout the world. It calls for national legislation to ban discrimination, recommends temporary special measures to speed equality between men and women, and action to modify social and cultural patterns that perpetuate discrimination. It addresses itself to equal access to education, non-discrimination in employment and pay, and guarantees of job promotion. Mr Speaker, many of those issues, particularly the financial ones, will be addressed by some of my colleagues during the course of this debate.

I am happy to say that the new federal Labor government is committed to the introduction of legislation on sex discrimination. The main purpose of that legislation will be to assist women to gain full participation in Australian society and, when enacted, will help to implement Australia's treaty obligation under the international convention signed by Australia in July 1981 with the intention to ratify. Therefore, it is notable and extremely disappointing that the Northern Territory government rejected anti-discrimination legislation when it was introduced by the opposition in this Assembly some time ago. As a result, the Territory is one of the few places left in Australia which does not have the benefit of such legislation.

Mr Speaker, a matter raised during the discussion on International Women's Day, and which concerns an enormous number of Territorians, is the issue of child care. As I said before, the statement of apparent government policy was to the effect that government money for child care should not be paid to child care organisations or centres and, if any money is paid - and even that was questioned - it should go directly to the parents. Given the comparative youth of our population, it is no wonder that this is considered a crucial issue in our community. We have so many young people and very many young parents. Our population in the Northern Territory differs significantly from the overall Australian population in this regard. Nevertheless, it is an issue of vital concern to the Australian community and particularly, for obvious historical reasons, to Australian women. It has been addressed by the National Women's Advisory Council. I take the opportunity to quote from its annual report of 1981-82:

Since its inception, the council's attention has been drawn repeatedly to the needs of Australian women for adequate child care. Council investigations into the problem of both migrant and disabled women indicate the lack of child care was a major problem to them also. Following representations from women, and in the light of widespread community concern over the present level and rationale of funding for

the children's services program, the council decided to nominate child care as its major priority for investigation in 1982. Ready access to satisfactory child care which is appropriate to the needs of both children and their parents at a reasonable cost is fundamental to the well-being and independence of women. It is of equal importance to a woman who is a full-time homemaker as it is to a woman who is in the full-time or part-time paid workforce.

The council approached this issue in 1982. It commissioned a consultant to provide a report. So extensive is this matter that the council was unable to complete its investigations in that year and they are continuing. Nevertheless, that council representing all Australian women, a council whose members were appointed by the Fraser government and whose convenor was Dame Beryl Beaurepaire, a most distinguished Australian woman not known as a socialist, recommended that the Commonwealth government re-examine its criteria for establishing special needs for children's services, having particular regard to geographical, social and economic disadvantages, and made a number of other recommendations.

Mr Speaker, it is unfortunate, therefore, that the attitude of the Northern Territory government on the extremely important issue of child care - in so far as any attitude can be determined at all from time to time - seems to be one of low priority.

I do not think any government should apologise for addressing its attention to the needs of children. It is self-evident that our children are the people on whom the future of our society depends, and we should give them first priority. Yet I cannot recall this Northern Territory government ever outlining in any depth policies relating to children's services apart from in the more traditional area of education. Certainly, there has been nothing in the area of child care. Now we have this statement, apparently a statement of government policy, that funding should not go to child-care centres.

Since these things are a matter of negotiation between federal, state and territory governments, it is appropriate to point out that the new federal government is committed to a children's services program which will provide services for children from birth to 15 years to complement - I emphasise that word - the care they receive from their parents. The aim of such care is to provide all children with developmental and social activities in safe surroundings provided by skilled and caring people for the range of hours which meets the children's needs and those of their parents or guardians. The primary task of Labor's children's services program will be the development of new child-care services in areas of highest need.

These people who have developed child-care services in the Northern Territory, particularly over the last 10 years, are to be congratulated. I am happy to say that the level of service that parents and children in the Northern Territory enjoy is much higher than that in some states. That is because members of the community, particularly women, have put enormous effort into providing it. I cannot emphasise to the government how disappointing and upsetting it is for them to feel that they do not have the support of this government in the provision of those services.

I was happy to attend the first child-care conference in the Northern Territory, held in Tennant Creek in February 1982. It was attended by about 50 delegates from as far afield as Alyangula and Alice Springs. At that time, the range of facilities which had been built up within 10 years in the Northern Territory was pointed out. There is one company-subsidised centre at Alyangula and 30 registered centres in Darwin, Katherine, Tennant

Creek, Alyangula, Batchelor, Alice Springs and Nhulunbuy. There are handicapped children in care. In the family-day-care centres, there are over 400 children in Darwin and 110 enjoying that service at Alice Springs. In addition, there are holiday programs, play groups, youth clubs as well as family care by private arrangement. Child care is a substantial industry now, Mr Speaker, yet the government does not seem to care about it.

The Minister for Community Development at the time distinguished himself by coming to that conference and telling the people that they did not really know what they were talking about. They were most disturbed by that. That first child-care service conference was an opportunity for the government to outline its policies in the area yet, unfortunately, it was turned down.

I take pleasure in informing the government and the new minister that there will be a second Northern Territory child-care services conference in Darwin on 15, 16 and 17 April. I invite the government, if it does not take the opportunity in this debate - and I hope it does - to outline its policies on child care for the benefit of the people who will be at that conference. If this motion achieves the aim of inviting the government to outline in some depth its policies on child care, I for one will be satisfied that it has served a purpose.

Unfortunately, in addition to the government's attitude to that first child-care services conference, there have been other indications to people in this field that it is not of any significance to this government. Four years ago, at a public meeting, the then minister - and I think there have been 3 in this area over the last several years - undertook to review the regulations relating to child care, particularly in relation to the ratio of staff to children in registered centres. Despite that promise, those regulations have not been reviewed. While it is true that the act has been under review, nevertheless, the opportunity should have been taken for those regulations to be amended at the request of people in the industry who are concerned about the welfare of children.

Last year, I am told, the Northern Territory Public Service had one full-time position, known as the Children's Services Program and Planning Officer, within the Department of Community Development. I am informed that this position has been downgraded and the officer is only performing that task part-time, if indeed program and planning is taking place at all.

Mr Speaker, it is clear that this is an area that the government needs to address itself to and to inform the public what its views are. If its views are those expressed publicly and officially by its advisers that the little child-care money that is expended by government should not be expended on child-care centres and other institutions, then I am afraid that parents and children in the Northern Territory face a fairly difficult future.

Mr Speaker, there is one other issue for which the air needs to be cleared. It relates to public statements expressing the government's view. Some of those statements were factually incorrect as well as damaging. They related to the history of the Women's Centre and refuges in Darwin. That history is not very different from that in Alice Springs. There has been a trend, a policy almost, in Australia as elsewhere in the world to divide women into goodies and baddies. Authorities do this all the time; it is known as divide and rule. A very eminent Australian, Dr Ann Summers, wrote a book about the role that history gives women in Australia. The title of that book was 'Damned Whores and God's Police'.

Unfortunately, women in the Northern Territory see that the Northern

Territory government's approach is to divide women into goodies and baddies so that their urging of the government to address issues of concern to women will be ineffective. In no area is this more evident than in the history of women centres and shelters in the Northern Territory. I was involved very closely in the establishment of the Darwin Women's Centre. It is something that I am extremely proud of and so I can tell honourable members the true history of that and not the falsehoods which are now being circulated.

It was established in 1974-75 to provide refuge services, which were not available in Darwin at the time, health services and counselling services to women as well as referral to other agencies. It was funded through the federal health authorities. It received the support of an enormous range of people and institutions in the Darwin community. I can recall the very generous support of the Salvation Army and all the women's groups such as the CWA, the National Council of Women and the YWCA. It functioned very well indeed. I would like to emphasise that that institution provided a marvellous and unique service to women in relation to health matters. It was experimental but I do not think that even the government members would deny that women have special health needs which history indicates have not been fully addressed in the past. That centre had positions funded for a full-time and experienced nursing sister, as well as a doctor on a sessional basis.

The statistics, which were available to the Department of Health at that time, indicated how welcome the service was to women. To me it was a great shame, as it was to other women, that the government withdrew funding for this valuable service. It is now no longer available. It is something which I would like to see reintroduced. I urge the new Minister for Health to seek advice on that matter, and I would like to say that a Labor government in the Northern Territory would ensure the provision of that sort of service to women. That is 1 service that has been withdrawn by this government.

The other service that the Darwin Women's Centre established for the first time was a refuge for women. As elsewhere in the world, this service did not exist. In the last 10 years or so, refuges have been set up throughout the world by women who are quite happy to call themselves feminists. Whether or not they are socialists is another matter. They are mostly feminists and, with the support of other members of the community, they were the first to establish refuge services in the Northern Territory, in Australia and throughout the world. It is a crying shame that now this government, and its spokesperson, are belittling that marvellous service which is now provided to women in the Northern Territory who seek refuge from situations of domestic violence.

A statement was made by the government's adviser to the effect that the Dawn House Women's Refuge was established in 1980 and funded by the government after the withdrawal of funds from the Darwin Women's Centre. That is a falsehood, Mr Speaker. The Dawn House shelter is an excellent institution. I am very pleased that the government supports and funds it. The opposition supports it and I visited it myself earlier this year. It was established out of the Darwin Women's Centre. The women's centre offered a refuge for women from 1975 but the building proved to be too small, as anybody who looks at it will see. The need was there and so in 1978 or 1979 that valuable community organisation, Somerville Homes, offered the women's centre an additional house in Rapid Creek so that an adequate shelter service could be provided in Darwin. Subsequently, it moved to the northern suburbs. Certainly that was prior to 1980, and it was not established after the withdrawal of funds from the Darwin Women's Centre; it was established as part of the Darwin Women's Centre. I believe that the record on that ought to be made clear. A lot of nonsense to the contrary has been peddled by people.

Mr Speaker, as I said, these services were set up by women just as child-care services have been set up by women. Other advances which women in this community enjoy have been initiated by women, and they seek the support of the government which has a role in providing those services in support of women to ensure that their place in society is properly recognised and that ultimately they achieve equality with men in our society.

It is a grave disappointment to the women of the Northern Territory that statements are made on behalf of the government which indicate a lack of support on these issues. It is for that reason that I have moved this motion. I urge the government to come to grips seriously with the issues that have been raised and to outline what its policies are on the issues of child care and the provision of refuges, whether established by feminists, people who call themselves feminists, men, church groups or anyone else. I urge the government to indicate support for these projects, for health services, on other issues and in other areas which are not currently addressed by it so that women in the Northern Territory can see that they have the support of this government. They doubt very much that they have it at the moment.

Mr EVERINGHAM (Chief Minister): Mr Speaker, only the tortuous and thwarted thought processes of the honourable member for Fannie Bay could have devised the motion that we see on the notice paper this morning.

People who are fairly rational in their thought processes pointed out to me this morning that the motion appears to be in error. I use their words: 'as you have said, both in the Assembly and to the media, your Women's Adviser's comments do not reflect government policy'. Really, I shall be very short, Mr Speaker, because I have said that both in this Assembly and to the media. On the program the other night I noticed the honourable members for Nightcliff and Sanderson rattling the tin about this matter again, as the honourable member for Fannie Bay is trying to do by this motion. She is clutching desperately at straws in an attempt to do anything she can to alarm women in the Northern Territory. She asks for indications of government policy. One reason why she is indulging in tin rattling is simply that there have been strong indications of government policy and of government support, in the best form that that support can take, in the form of dollars to women's institutions and to child-minding centres throughout the Northern Territory over the entire period of this government's office.

The only area that the honourable member for Fannie Bay can pick to cavil about is the matter of the Darwin Women's Centre. Mr Speaker, I do not argue with her that, when the Darwin Women's Centre was commenced back in the early 1970s - and I remember that too - it had the support of many people in the community. I was one of them. If the Darwin Women's Centre had maintained the ethics it had at that time through the people who operated it, there would have been no cause to review government support for the centre.

There are 1 or 2 curious and interesting things happening in the honourable member for Fannie Bay's electorate regarding women. The honourable member for Fannie Bay has been assiduous in reporting to us on occurrences in her electorate: the need to look after the shoreline reefs in front of her electorate and the need to improve intersections that run across her electorate. But she does not seem to be concerned about considerable property damage that occurs in her electorate, considerable property damage that occurs in the principal shopping centre in her electorate. She does not report on these things to the Assembly. It is curious indeed to see some of the things that have been sprayed on the wall of the Tai Hung Tol restaurant at Parap; for example, 'Dead men don't rape' and 'War on men'. These are the curious things that the honourable member for Fannie Bay and the other harpies on the other

side of the Assembly, in attacking...

Mr SPEAKER: The honourable Chief Minister will withdraw that remark.

Mr EVERINGHAM: ... the other members on the other side of the Assembly, Mr Speaker, in attacking the person of my adviser, do not mention. They have attacked the person of my adviser in a most unrelenting, persevering, unremitting and unsatisfactory way when, in fact, I have said twice now in this Assembly that my adviser did not consult me before she made that speech. She did not reflect government policy when she made that speech.

I have spoken personally in this Assembly, as the honourable member for Nightcliff knows, in support of the United Nations Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women. The Northern Territory government has supported, as fully as any government in Australia, the actions being taken in relation to the bringing into effect of that convention in Australia. These members opposite choose to ignore all that and act on the statements of 1 person to condemn the government. They choose to ignore all the facts and accept statements made by someone who is not a politician but a politician's staff officer. They say that these staff officers can promulgate government policy. Policy is promulgated by politicians, I hope.

Where members opposite choose to go on and on, I can only assume that they are very concerned at the tenuous grip that their party must have on the affections of women in this Territory. Women in the Northern Territory have occupied leading positions. We have had 2 women mayors. This government has appointed a female magistrate. We have senior women executives in the government. We have anti-discrimination legislation embodied in the Public Service Act and, I believe, in the Housing Act. The policy of the government towards housing for women, which I consider to be most important, has been even-handed. There are problems, of course, as His Honour referred to in his speech the other day, in relation to the actual enforcement of the policy for the simple reason that banks and other institutions, for various reasons, do not seem always to regard younger women as good lending risks.

This government has consistently militated against discrimination against women. We have done all we can. I believe that women in this Territory are assuming what is their proper position in society. Indeed, how can honourable members opposite say that government policy is against supporting child-care centres when they well know that people such as myself have also made use of these child-care facilities.

Mr Speaker, the whole tenor of this debate, as evidenced in the wording of the motion itself, is totally irrelevant. It is irrelevant because I have already answered their questions and told them what the government policy is. I believe it is motivated by personal hostility against my Women's Adviser. I believe that the continuation of this debate and this campaign is nothing other than a hostile personal attack on that person whom some people in this Assembly and elsewhere are determined to undermine if they possibly can.

Ms D'ROZARIO (Sanderson): Mr Speaker, I do not think that women of the Northern Territory are in any need of efforts on the part of the member for Fannie Bay to alarm them. I think that the Chief Minister does that sufficiently well for all of us.

I would like to get rid of this cant and hypocrisy once and for all. We have heard from the Chief Minister that this is a sustained attack upon a

particular person who is not a politician. It is most unfortunate indeed that the person whose position is mentioned in this motion happens to be a personal appointee to the Chief Minister's staff as his Women's Adviser. If the honourable the Chief Minister does not wish his Women's Adviser's views to be attacked, then he should not permit her to speak contrary to government policy.

This is not an attack upon the person of his adviser. It is an attack upon the views expressed, views which he acknowledges were those of his representative at that particular meeting. As the honourable member for Fannie Bay has mentioned, this particular matter was raised in the Assembly last week and, because of the unsatisfactory response of the Chief Minister on 2 occasions, this motion is now brought before the Assembly.

When the Chief Minister was ridiculing members of this Assembly for allegedly not being present at that rally, he said that it was a shame that his Women's Adviser was the only government representative present. If that does not indicate that the lady was representing his government, then I do not know what does. The Chief Minister cannot have it both ways. He cannot say that the lady was speaking on her own behalf and then claim that she was representing his government.

We also heard from the Chief Minister that members of this Assembly, particularly the members for Nightcliff, Fannie Bay and myself, were 'rattling the tin'. We rattle the tin on this matter because women of the Territory are concerned about the attitudes of the Chief Minister. If they need any convincing - if they have not had enough already - they have only to refer to Hansard.

The Chief Minister also told us that this motion was in error because he had advised this Assembly of his views in the matter. I can only repeat that we gave him that opportunity last week and he refused to take it. In fact, he ridiculed the substance of the questions and took no opportunity to dissociate himself or his government from the remarks of his adviser. Mr Speaker, we bring this matter forward because of those circumstances which pertained last week.

The Chief Minister told us that he had said twice that the person concerned was not speaking on behalf of his government. We may have heard it twice. I certainly heard it once in the media but I have not heard it in this Assembly which is where it should be heard. That is the whole point of this motion. If the Chief Minister would rather give the views of his government to television and radio interviewers, that is his affair. The reason this motion is brought forward is because an opportunity was given to him to give those same views to the Assembly and he did not take it.

Mr Speaker, I now move on to what the motion is about. There are a number of issues which are of importance to women in the Territory and they have had precious little attention to date from the Chief Minister or his adviser. It has been said by people with rather better minds than the Chief Minister can muster that the position of women is the best criterion of a civilisation, a people and an age. I think that that statement was made here in the debate on the United Nations convention about a year ago. Our concern and the concern of women in the Territory is that, if the government's views as expressed - in its own acknowledgement - by its Women's Adviser on 8 March was any indication of the government's support in matters of concern to women, then Territory women indeed have a bleak future.

As outlined already by the honourable member for Fannie Bay, among the

attitudes expressed on that occasion - in the words of the Chief Minister, expressed by a government representative - was support for the closure of Darwin Women's Centre and rejection of the United Nations Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women. On that occasion, the government's adviser also called for the rejection of the notion that the state should provide services normally provided by the family. A specific matter which gave rise to 'rattling of the tin' by women in the electorate was the specific mention of child-care centres.

Mr Speaker, we have gone through some of these issues at great length before. We have particularly gone through the matters raised in the United Nations convention which the representative of the government seems to see as a sinister socialist plot being inflicted upon us by foreign powers which are hostile to the notion of a stable Australian family life. The Chief Minister pours scorn on the legitimate concerns of women at his own peril.

As I mentioned last week, we had Ms Katherine West, a highly regarded commentator on Liberal Party affairs, pinpoint the failure of the former Fraser government in relating to women in the electorate. Yesterday, I heard the Director of the Liberal Party in Queensland, Mr Gary Neate, say that his party was in absolute disarray and what it had to do in order to become a force again in Queensland politics was to garner the women's vote.

Mr Speaker, members on this side pay some regard to the legitimate concerns of women. It is because we consider that women are equally capable and should be encouraged to take part fully in the life of the Northern Territory.

I wanted to speak about some specific matters which the Labor Party believes in and which the government obviously wishes to ignore. They are in the very important area of employment. One of the articles of the United Nations convention, which we were all exhorted to throw out the window a mere 2 weeks ago, is as follows:

Article 3 - Parties shall take in all fields, in particular in the political, social, economic and cultural fields, all appropriate measures, including legislation, to ensure the full development and advancement of women for the purposes of guaranteeing them the exercise and enjoyment of human rights and fundamental freedoms on a basis of equality with men.

That is hardly something that threatens the basis of Australian society. There is a further article of crucial importance to women of the Northern Territory:

Article 2 paragraph (b) - to adopt appropriate legislative and other measures, including sanctions where appropriate, prohibiting all discrimination against women.

Mr Speaker, the honourable Chief Minister has told us that, in the Public Service Act and the Housing Act, there are inbuilt anti-discrimination measures for women. This is what I refer to as passive aggression. We do not have any statement from the Chief Minister on what should be done to particularly encourage equal participation by women. We merely have him passively suggesting that there are sufficient inbuilt safeguards in the legislation. As the honourable Chief Minister admitted in the next breath, these do not always work, as in the case of the Housing Act which I believe the Administrator made reference to in his address to us at the opening of this session.

The honourable member for Fannie Bay has already given the example of the Anti-discrimination Bill which was presented in this Assembly in November 1981. The government threw it out. It did not support it in any shape or form, not because it considered it was not a worthy objective but because it continued with this fallacy that there are sufficient legislative safeguards. Well, there are not. If one looks at the picture of employment, in particular in the Northern Territory, one will see the concerns that are expressed by women. One has only to look to labour force participation, to the rates of unemployment amongst women and to the relative skills in education which women have accumulated to see the fallacy of the Chief Minister's statement. It simply is not good enough to say that we do not discriminate against women because, in fact, Northern Territory society is replete with examples of discrimination against women. We have only to look at the record of the NT government itself as an employer. We have only to look at the report of the Public Service Commissioner to see that women employees are concentrated in the lower ranks of the public service in the A1 to A4 categories. There is only 1 woman in the category of E2 and above, which is the executive level of the service, and the Chief Minister stands there and says we have no discrimination against women.

If what the Chief Minister is saying is that we do not have sufficient qualified women, I would ask him to look at the reasons why this is so. Here again I refer to the skills and education opportunities which are available for women to acquire. I do not think even the Minister for Education for 1 minute would claim that there was no discrimination against girls in the education system. He might not encourage it and he might not be responsible for it but the fact of the matter remains that the education opportunities in particular categories for girls in the Northern Territory are severely limited. As an example, I point to the number of women in apprenticeships other than hairdressing and cooking.

Mr Speaker, if we look at the economic picture which emerges with respect to women, I think it will become very clear why women are concerned about their own economic situation. We in the Labor Party have a policy that every person of working age, man or woman, should be entitled to a permanent source of income. It is impossible to achieve that objective without the government taking a lead. As I say, it is okay to say that the government does not encourage discrimination. I would like to see from this government some positive lead to the rest of the community, not only by discouraging discrimination but indeed taking action to eliminate it wherever it occurs, including in the private sector.

I will give some of the reasons why women are concerned. The participation rate of women in the labour force is increasing. There is no doubt about that. It has certainly increased in the last 20 years or so. In the 1981 census we were able to see that 44.7% of women of working age participate in the workforce. Although this is a very dramatic increase from earlier years, it reflects that not only are women entering the workforce but that their whole behaviour pattern has changed, particularly in respect of their domestic commitments. I think the honourable the Chief Minister would be hard pressed to dispute the fact that the majority of women are, in 1 form or another, financially responsible for themselves, and at least in some cases responsible for dependants. So the myth that women are supported by men cannot be sustained, certainly not be reference to the 1981 census.

We have 80% of single-parent families headed by women - an enormous economic burden on the women of Australia. The Bureau of Statistics further finds that, in 41% of married couples, both husband and wife were in the paid workforce. Again, that is a reflection upon changing attitudes towards women's

participation in the economy and, I would have thought, a cue for governments to look at the reasons for this and also to provide some relief as far as their commitments to their families are concerned.

We also have the information to hand that the large majority of people on social security benefits were in fact women. This proportion was 61.2%. We are speaking here of social security welfare recipients and beneficiaries, including those on unemployment benefit. But if we exclude unemployment beneficiaries, we see that the proportion of women rises to 67.3%. Of those people receiving supporting parent benefits, 95% are women. The reasons for this might be several. One is the changing responsibilities of women in caring for their families. I do not simply mean those women who perform unpaid tasks - numerous hours of unpaid labour on behalf of their families - but those women who participate in the paid workforce. That is the point that I wish to emphasise.

Mr Speaker, we also have the undisputed fact that women tend to live longer than men. Therefore, they tend to be better represented as far as social security recipients are concerned. These are cues for people involved in public policy. They are not there to be accepted passively as facts. They are there so that the situation can be ameliorated because we are talking about a change in the demography of Australia.

When we look at these facts and look at the employment of women in the Northern Territory, we can see that, despite the fact that the government is happy with its Public Service Act and with its Housing Act, there are a number of things which still could be done to improve the participation of women. It has been touted widely in the rest of Australia that the Northern Territory is very good at creating jobs. There is no doubt that there has been some job creation, specifically in the mining industry. I would like to ask the government: in this area of rapid employment growth, what has been done to ensure that women get their fair share of the job opportunities? I suggest that the answer is nothing.

Other states - probably not as advanced as the Northern Territory but nevertheless states that have the welfare of their women citizens at heart - do such things as devise equal opportunity management plans. They are getting away from the passive acceptance of the situation to actually wanting to change that situation. So the New South Wales government, along with some other governments, has instituted an office of equal opportunity in public employment, something that we would like to see in the Northern Territory. Despite the fact that there is allegedly no discrimination against women members of the Northern Territory Public Service, we could do something about the Public Service Commissioner's report which states where the women in the Northern Territory public service are: at the bottom of the ladder.

I would suggest to the government that, if there are all these employment opportunities to be availed of, it should do something to ensure that sufficient numbers of women are able to participate in this economic development which is about to overtake the Territory and that sufficient numbers of employment opportunities are made available for women participants. I stress that women are represented in the workforce more and more.

Mr Speaker, what has the government done in respect to the development of equal employment opportunity plans? No matter that it has not done it for its own employees, but I would have thought that any government which is serious about its women citizens would have consulted with private developers in order to ask them what their arrangements were for the employment of women. It can be done. I had an example of this not so long ago. I had the opportunity

late last year to visit a gold mine in Western Australia called Telfer. It is wholly-owned by private enterprise. It is the enterprise of an American company. I was surprised to see that it had some positive policies for the employment of women. Although the population is only 320, there were large numbers of women employed in areas which have hitherto not employed women; for example, mining, heavy plant operation, storage and ore sampling. I was extremely pleased to see the number of women who were actually working as miners and as operators of heavy plant and equipment.

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

Mr TUXWORTH (Primary Production): Mr Speaker, I rise to speak against the motion put forward by the honourable member for Fannie Bay this morning because I think that it is based on several premises that do not stand up to a great deal of scrutiny. The first is that there will always be people who work for the government, whether as actual advisers in ministerial units or within departments, who speak and give their views on various things. But they do not necessarily reflect the views of the government, and in particular my views, unless it comes from a minister because that is where policy is ultimately determined.

Setting aside that aspect of disagreement which I seem to have with the honourable member for Fannie Bay, I would like to touch on a few other things that I think are really pertinent.

Mr Speaker, I do not accept the premise that, because a government or a section of the community concentrates on 1 aspect of something that is important to women, it reflects the attitude of the government or the community group to women per se. In fact, I think that, in a few moments, when we have investigated the facts, we will find that the Northern Territory government, in many facets of its dealings with the community, demonstrates in very practical terms that it supports women, women's groups and the things they aspire to in very practical ways.

I will deal firstly with the issue of women's centres. Mr Speaker, the honourable member for Fannie Bay spoke in very glowing terms of her perception of the activities of women's centres. Maybe, in the days when she was involved with them, her perception was very real and that was the way the centres operated. I became involved with women's centres in about 1978 or 1979 and I was left with some pretty unpalatable situations on my plate. At the time, there were 4 women's institutions that I had to deal with. There was the Rape Crisis Centre in Darwin, Dawn House, the McLachlan Street Centre, and the Hartley Street Centre in Alice Springs. The only institution of any real importance, as far as I could ascertain, that was showing any vestige of credibility, sincerity and accountability in what it was doing, was the Dawn House centre. I might add that the good work that was being done at Dawn House is acknowledged and has been acknowledged ever since by the support that the government has given it in practical and financial terms. As for the other centres, I can tell honourable members that the financial mismanagement was absolutely appalling. In fact, the abuse of funds was such that no one could allow such a situation to continue. I believe that honourable members opposite, if they had been in my position, would have found themselves with no alternative than to do what I did at that time.

The Alice Springs house was spending \$50 000 a year of taxpayers' funds. It did not keep any books of any kind and it objected to being audited. Without any doubt, it was misappropriating funds and there was no option but to withdraw funding from the centre.

In Darwin, I went to the Rape Crisis Centre. It had black velvet furniture, carpet about 3 inches deep and a telephone recorder system on the wall that took messages so that people could go out and help the people in crisis. That was not exactly my idea of the way a rape crisis centre should be run. Perhaps people might say that my perception is wrong and does not meet the views of other people. That may be the case but I take the point of view that I am the one who must cop the flak in the end. I believe that, when we give people government money, there are certain responsibilities that go with it, and being accountable is one of them.

It is notable that, every time the Labor Party would like to highlight one of its platforms or policies, it raises a matter of public importance. That might be a reasonable proposition for the ALP but it certainly wastes the time of the Assembly.

Mr Speaker, I would like to touch on the facts concerning what the government has done in support of women, women's groups and particularly child care in the Northern Territory because the honourable member for Fannie Bay, in a few throw-away lines this morning, led us to believe that there was absolutely nothing being done by the government and that it was insensitive. I would like to read into the record a list of the government's contributions from the Department of Community Development over the last 3 years so that people can obtain a better perspective of the areas in which the government does show an interest. It might help put to rest some of the rhubarb that has been bandied around for the last 2 hours.

I start with the commitments in 1978-79 when the government came to power. Child-care centre grants were made to the Darwin city corporation for child-care centres at Nightcliff and Casuarina to the tune of \$344 000. The Darwin Toy Library received \$1000, the Nhulunbuy play group received \$200, parents with children with special needs received \$5000 and the Aboriginal Women's Resource Centre, which is a mothers' workshop and has joint funding from another government department, received \$6000.

In 1979-80, Parents without Partners received \$2750 for operational activities and the Play and Learn Playgroup Association was given \$500. In the same year, the Down's Syndrome Group received operational expenses of \$2000 and the Darwin Family Centre received \$5806 for a family adviser. In the same year, the Aboriginal Women's Resource Centre received \$3000 for the assessment of child-care needs.

In 1980-81, the Darwin Family Centre was given \$19 560 for a fun bus project and another \$9529.10 for a family adviser. The Aboriginal Women's Resource Centre was given \$2089.79 for child-care needs and the Darwin Toy Library received \$708.85. The Jabiru Playgroup was given \$2380. The Galiwinku Community Homemaker Centre received \$4500 for child-care facilities in that centre. Two other Aboriginal groups at Alice Springs received \$4830 for play equipment for children. In the same year, the Areyonga Housing Association women's centre, which has child-care facilities, received \$7000 and the Lyappa Congress was given \$1111 for play equipment. In the same year, the Central Australian Toy Library was given \$2000 for its operation. Funding for the Migrant Resource and Settlement Centre's employment, ethnic and children's services worker was \$16 000. That is not a bad spread for a community of our size, and all from 1 department.

In 1981-82, Parents without Partners received \$2142, the Darwin Toy Library was given another \$2000 and the Down's Syndrome Group was assisted with another \$2531. The Elliott Housing Association, which is an Aboriginal group, received \$4000 and the Spastics Association received \$21 861 for respite

care for handicapped children. The Aboriginal Women's Resource Centre was given \$13 914 for a family support project and the Darwin Family Centre was given \$21 348 for a family adviser. The Aputula Housing Association, which mainly builds houses, was given \$2330 for activities for women and children and the Docker River Council was given \$2290 for activities within its own community. The Darwin Family Centre's family fun bus was given \$18 398 and the Play Group Association was given \$4000 to establish resource pits. In the same year, \$15 300 was allocated to the Northern Territory Spastics Association for a child-care centre. Lastly, \$2500 was set aside for the Darwin City Council to purchase play equipment for handicapped children.

In 1982-83, the Northern Territory Spastics Association received \$50 441 for child care and handicapped children. The Darwin Toy Library was given \$4000, the Katherine Toy Library was given \$2000, the Nhulunbuy Play Group was given \$1000 and the Aboriginal Women's Resource Centre was given an additional \$14 081. The Darwin Family Centre was given \$19 560 for a bus and \$22 550 for a family adviser. Parents without Partners was given another \$1500 and the Alpurrrurram Community Inc was given \$13 120 for a family support project. The Imanpa Community was given \$13 710 for a family support project, and the Mutitjulu Community was given \$7952 for family support.

Mr Speaker, all that was from a government described as not caring for women and children, and we have not started yet. Other Northern Territory government involvement in child-care centres since the government was formed includes the registration of child-care centres under the Child Welfare Act. I might add that 35 centres are registered now in the Northern Territory providing 946 places for children. The Family Day Care provides additional care for over 400 children in Darwin and Alice Springs.

The Department of Community Development provides information on child-care centre management options, service types, requirements for registration and the means of achieving those requirements. Officers also monitor, visit and inspect centres regularly to ensure that standards are upheld to regulation requirements. So far as the development of new services is concerned, the government has funded the building of 2 new centres, providing 80 places, at Casuarina and Nightcliff in 1979 and 1980. The construction of child-care centres as a part of the infrastructure of Palmerston has been incorporated into the planning of that area. I might also add that, in Tennant Creek, an area that I know well, half of the old Tennant Creek hospital is set aside for day-care facilities and the operational costs of running that building, as I recall, are still absorbed by the Department of Health. It plays a very important role in the town. I believe that facility was vested in the Tennant Creek Town Council which is the operating body for it.

Quite by chance, last week before all this blew up, I had a visit from a very well-established organisation in Darwin which indicated that it would be very interested in establishing family and child-care support facilities, with government assistance, in Malak, Palmerston and Marrara. If the discussions that have already started come to fruition, that is likely to happen this year.

Mr Speaker, the honourable member for Sanderson went on to make an issue of areas of particular support that government could show towards women by giving them a little more priority in terms of employment. I think that is very relevant and it is an area where the Northern Territory government has done very well. Let me start, particularly, with the Aboriginal Health Workers Program. There are some 230 Aboriginal health workers in the Northern Territory and about 200 of them are women. That complement makes up about 10% of the Department of Health staff and it is a program that has not been copied

anywhere else in this country. It is unique and it is a credit to the people who have been involved in setting it up and running it. It has brought a level of professionalism, prestige and self-satisfaction to the women who work in it that they would not have found in any other sphere within their communities.

Also, the Department of Health set up the Nurse Aide Training Program, another program which has benefited women. Normally, young women would have to go to another part of Australia to obtain their training in that particular area. Again, this is funded by the government and it is a program of which we can be proud. My colleague, the Minister for Health, tells me that currently 15 Territory girls are being trained in that program. The well-established Nurses Training School at the Darwin Hospital is another program that is supported very strongly by this government and one which adds greatly to the professionalism and expertise of our health service.

An initiative that has developed in the last 12 months as a result of manpower studies that were conducted is the establishment of the Midwifery Training Program. I think it fair to say that women in the Northern Territory will be the beneficiaries of this program.

Mrs Lawrie: Well, that is pretty logical.

Mr SPEAKER: Order, order!

Mr TUXWORTH: It does not hold automatically, Mr Speaker, that women will be the beneficiaries because some men practise as midwives. However, that is another initiative where the community will benefit from the government's interest in women.

With the help of my colleague, the former Minister for Education, this year we started the community college based Community Nursing Program. It is another first for the Northern Territory and a program that is envied by many nursing bodies in this country. It is another instance where women will be employed. The women and young children in the community who are served by these nurses will benefit. I believe that level of activity and support by the government for women cannot be overlooked.

Also during the last 12 months, the government has given very heavy financial, physical and moral support to the Down's Syndrome Group, a group of very hard-working people who are looking after children with Down's Syndrome. They are now under the wing of the Department of Health and are getting a great deal of assistance. That is another initiative that has been accepted by the government and carried with full support.

My colleague, the Minister for Education, tells me that we have a primary schoolteacher training program at the Darwin Community College. Again, young women in our community will be the beneficiaries from that as well as the children who will ultimately be taught by them.

I forgot to mention 2 other important aspects of development in the health field: the refresher course for nurses that is being run continuously for the benefit of women, and a program to establish a child assessment unit in the Northern Territory, again for the benefit of the whole community.

Mr Speaker, the honourable member for Sanderson said the government lacked interest because there were not great numbers of women in certain places in the public service and that, if we were a caring government, they would be there. I can say from personal experience that we are often

disappointed at the very low numbers of applications we receive from women for certain jobs. Quite often, women just do not apply and so cannot be appointed to jobs. I thought I heard the honourable member for Sanderson say this morning - and she can correct me now if I am wrong - that, as far as she understood, there was only 1 women at level E2 or above in the Northern Territory Public Service. If that is the honourable member's perception of the performance of women in the Northern Territory Public Service, then she is very misguided and poorly informed. Could I say that, from my own experience, women are really the backbone of the Department of Health.

Ms D'Rozario: How many are E2 or above?

Mr TUXWORTH: Just be patient. The honourable member has asked how many are E2 or above. I will come to that in a minute. Could I make the point that, at significant management levels in the department, women predominate and they really are the backbone of the department.

To be specific for the honourable member, in the Department of Health, the following women are employed in executive positions: Margaret Doherty, the Assistant Secretary of Nursing; the Director of Personnel, Sharon Mulholland; legislative drafting, Diane Allwright; and Kathleen Campbell in administration. They are all at E2 level and there is no doubt in my mind that they will all go higher. While we do not have in the nursing profession the level E2, I can say that all the senior hospital administration matrons, medical supervisors and their assistants would be in that category. You would find that the Assistant Superintendent of Darwin Hospital, Assistant Superintendent of Alice Springs Hospital, Director of Nursing in Darwin, Matron of Darwin Hospital and Matron of Alice Springs Hospital would all be equal to the E2 category although the medical classifications might be different. I think it really is a fallacy to say that women are not given a go.

Mr SPEAKER: Order, the honourable member's time has expired.

Mr ROBERTSON (Attorney-General): Mr Speaker, I move that the honourable member be allowed an extension of time to allow him to complete his speech.

Motion agreed to.

Mr TUXWORTH: Mr Speaker, in the Northern Territory, despite the fact that numbers are not as high as we would like - something over which we do not have much control because people do not apply - we do have magistrates, engineers, geologists, personnel officers, doctors, lawyers, school principals, a director of arts and a range of other professional people who all hold very high executive and advisory positions within the government. I think it is unreasonable to put forward the premise that women do not get a go in the Northern Territory Public Service.

In closing, I would just like to make the point that the government does not profess to be perfect and it does not have all the answers for all the problems that members raise. However, as Minister for Community Development, I am always happy to receive propositions from members of the Assembly or other people in the community about how we can address important community issues. I accept that it is important to provide support services for women such as child-care facilities. As communities spring up, develop and expand, we will make proper assessments.

Mr Speaker, I would like to say to the honourable member who moved the motion that I believe she has missed the point. The fact is that the government does much for women and children in the Northern Territory. It

is interested. It is happy to expand its level of activity and its level of interest. I would commend to the honourable member that it would not be an unreasonable proposition for her to withdraw her motion.

Mrs LAWRIE (Nightcliff): Mr Speaker, after the gratuitous insults thrown at this side of the Assembly by the Chief Minister, to his shame, I suppose we needed a little light relief - and we have just had it.

The honourable the Minister for Community Development has himself completely missed the point and tenor of this entire debate which, I advise him, did not blow up last week. His words were: 'Someone visited me last week before all this blew up'. It was in fact the week prior to the sittings that the controversy arose. It was as a result of remarks made by a highly-paid adviser to the Chief Minister. That is when the controversy erupted.

I assume Country Liberal Party members have received a number of representations from concerned citizens of the Territory, both male and female, concerning those most unfortunate remarks. Indeed, the Chief Minister does seem to have acknowledged that the remarks in that context aroused a degree of concern in the community which was not warranted because we are now being told that it was purely a personal opinion from the person concerned.

Mr Speaker, one must be amused at hearing the Minister for Community Development state the obvious. Every agency from the United Nations right down to the minister's own department knows that women predominate in the caring professions, which is why those professions are so badly paid and why their conditions of service lag behind other industries. Of course, we have nursing schools where women predominate. Every single country in the world has the same situation. By and large, women comprise the health workforce, delivering primary care to patients. We did not need the Minister for Community Development to earn his salary by telling us that. That was overstating the obvious.

Mr Speaker, previous speakers put forward the proposition that the Assembly as a whole should take greater cognisance of women in the workforce in Australia and the particular problems they face. In some senses, one could almost say 'peculiar' problems. Single male parents also face tremendous difficulties in the workforce. However, as the member for Sanderson said, 80% of single-income families are headed by women.

I will not juggle statistics but I will read a couple of straight figures from the census of 1981 which are the latest figures that we have relating to women in the Northern Territory. That census showed that there were 57 907 female persons. Of that figure, 18 736 were less than 15 years old. A simple subtraction of the latter figure leaves 39 171 women of working age. I have not been able to subtract from that figure the number of women over 60, but the proportion would not be as high as those under 15 so it may not make a significant difference. Nevertheless, even allowing for the older women in our community in that figure, we now see in the Territory 39 171 women available for work. Statistics show that the employed female workforce was 20 091. Thus, a dramatically high proportion of women able to work were in fact employed.

The world being what it is, many of those women who had children would have faced the additional burden of being primarily responsible for the welfare of those children right through from birth to their teenage years. It is impossible really to say that 1 section of one's childhood is more important than the other. I disagree with the simplistic view of people who say that, whilst the child is under the age of 5, the mother must be at home

but, after that, the child can cope. Quite often, it is age 5-10 or 10-15 where a particular child needs extra help and sympathy. One cannot generalise. What one can say is that society has a legitimate interest in ensuring that children from birth to the age of 18 receive the maximum care possible, both at home and in the form of ancillary services provided by the state. That is hardly a novel concept although it does appear to be somewhat novel to some of the members opposite.

What members may not realise is that the withdrawal of state-funded health services for young children does not mean that one or other of the parents shall return to the home to step in to fill the gap. It means that a lesser care service will be offered for children. That is the point that the Treasurer did not appreciate and, certainly, the Women's Adviser to the Chief Minister does not appreciate it. If the services are withdrawn, only a very small percentage of mothers will withdraw from the workforce. The only sufferers will be the children and the families who may be stretched almost beyond breaking point in trying to do the best for their kids whilst significantly contributing not only to their own well-being but to the country's well-being.

It is a great pleasure for me to know that women in the workforce are applying for shop steward positions and are interesting themselves in union affairs because they realise that, by raising their own status, they raise that of those around them. Women have been forced to take their destiny in their own hands and to insist on reasonable conditions of labour and employment. They are now insisting on reasonable conditions for the support of the family. Families are not tiny, isolated units living within 4 walls. They cannot be divorced from the wider society and any person who tries to do that in this day and age is extremely foolish.

All cultures make some provision for the general support of all families, particularly those with children. We recognise it in legislation. If the parents were the be-all and end-all of child care, we would not need any laws dealing with the prevention of cruelty to children. We know, from bitter experience, that the biological parents may not necessarily be the best couple to raise a child. We know, from bitter experience that, if the biological parents are no longer alive, the foster parents may not necessarily be the best people to raise that child. We acknowledge it through the offices of child care and through senior departmental people exercising an overall view of all children in the community. They can step in. They have the reserve power to interfere in a family if it is apparent that a child is being unjustly treated. That is a perfectly logical thing to happen. How can we have advice tendered at a public forum that funding in the wider community sense should be withdrawn and that somehow it strikes at the fabric of society to have the state assist in family support?

Mr Speaker, I have spoken of the emergence of women in the workforce as employees deciding to better their own terms and conditions. Honourable members, particularly the honourable member for Port Darwin, must be aware that there are women in the Northern Territory running highly-successful businesses. Their entrepreneurial skills are the envy of many of their male competitors. Women are not simply performing as nurses, nurse aides, health workers, dental therapists and primary schoolteachers. The emphasis on these professions by the Minister for Community Development was in a way even more frightening to people who care about our developing community than the remarks of the Women's Adviser. First of all, he said that his government supported programs for women but then he confined his remarks to the castles within which women have been imprisoned for so long.

Mr Speaker, the honourable member for Alice Springs finds some amusement in that. I doubt if any women in the workforce will share his amusement.

When the honourable member for Port Darwin rises to speak specifically on the problems facing older people in our community, as he often does, all members of the Assembly contribute. We listen to him and we listen to him with courtesy. Members from this side have supported his remarks because he has brought forward, in the people's forum, specific problems facing a section of the community. However, today the member for Fannie Bay brought forward specific problems and concerns of a section of the community, indeed 50% of it - the females - and we heard the Chief Minister, the chief government representative in the Assembly, descending to personal abuse and snide remarks, attempting to bring this Assembly into disrepute. He used the familiar old saws: 'rattling the tin' and 'clutching at straws'. He used a term, in a pejorative sense, in an endeavour to belittle the 3 female members on this side of the Assembly. Mr Speaker, in your wisdom, you asked him to withdraw his remark.

More than 1 person in this Assembly has had a classical upbringing. I am well aware that 1 of the definitions for the term that the honourable member hurled at this side of the Assembly is 'the bringer of divine vengeance'. Well, Mr Speaker, in that sense, I would not mind that phrase being used because I think the divine vengeance of about 50% of the population may well start to come upon the honourable Chief Minister's head.

Mr SPEAKER: The term was withdrawn, honourable member.

Mrs LAWRIE: Mr Speaker, it is a pity that the broadcasting of the proceedings of this Assembly to the community has not commenced. It has been spoken about. Certainly, I would support it. I cannot wait for the day when those who care to listen will not have to come to the public gallery to hear their elected representatives.

Besides the emphasis on the caring professions, the Minister for Community Development really only made a couple of other remarks and they related specifically to the women's centre. He attempted to portray the Darwin Women's Centre as not handling its funds correctly. He used the word 'mismanagement' and some other terms, specifically with regard to Alice Springs. The honourable member was twice advised in this Assembly by myself that, at the very latest, in August last year, the Darwin Women's Centre, supported by the Women's Electoral Lobby, was asking a minister of the government to meet with it to discuss any points of difficulty which the government felt were inherent in its operation with a view to overcoming them. The Women's Electoral Lobby wrote to the government in those terms in August and, until November, did not receive the courtesy of an acknowledgment.

In the Assembly in September and November, I outlined some of the work being done by the Darwin Women's Centre, which honourable members opposite would prefer to ignore. I was going to read out again figures relating to the use of the centre, but they were referred to in a debate of 16 November and in a further debate of Thursday 25 November. I stated that, since its establishment, 7000 women had used the Darwin Women's Centre and I went into detail about the nature of that use. Suffice to say, Mr Speaker, I have given references in Hansard. Any member opposite, who may care to review present policy, can refer back to those debates and perhaps question the out-of-hand closure of the Darwin Women's Centre at a time when the collective was happy, indeed eager, to make figures available to any minister requiring them, to meet with any minister and to put its case face to face. Notwithstanding that concern of the women and of the Women's Electoral Lobby, which is

representative of women right across the social and political spectrum, the centre was closed.

Like other members, I have no quarrel with Dawn House. I have been there quite often because I am one of the people in this Assembly who is constantly receiving distressed women in their office asking for assistance with quasi-legal problems - and they are referred to Australian Legal Aid or to Aboriginal Legal Aid - with health problems - and I refer them to the various agencies - or with immediate emergency accommodation crises.

Mr Speaker, we need more than Dawn House to cope with the problems of women in our community. I object to the tone adopted by the Chief Minister. It reflects no credit on him and little on his Cabinet. My criticism of the Minister for Community Development has been that he has only stated the obvious that women are in the caring profession. He has ignored largely the problems of women in the workforce generally and has consistently refused to meet women wanting to run shelters and services for women but whose appearance or politics he does not appear to agree with.

Mr B. COLLINS (Opposition Leader): Mr Speaker, I would like to comment firstly on some of the remarks that have been made in this debate so far. One statement in particular by the honourable Chief Minister caught my ear. He said: 'Government policy is enunciated by politicians not by public servants'. I would simply like to point out to the Assembly what the Chief Minister knows already: this government, and particularly the Chief Minister, is extraordinarily adaptable when it comes to these sorts of ground rules and changes the rules when it suits the particular game that it is playing at the time.

The Chief Minister knows full well that I expressed some concern to him in writing some time ago about what I thought was an alarming tendency of senior public servants - his Women's Adviser is a senior public servant - to express themselves publicly on government policy to the extent of putting out press releases in response to criticisms of their departments made by members of the opposition. I found it unacceptable at the time that, when politicians criticised government policy or government direction, they were responded to by senior public servants putting out press statements. The honourable the Chief Minister will know that I actually put pen to paper and wrote to him on the subject complaining about the practice ...

Mr Everingham: Well, the Chairman of ADMA caught you out in an untruth.

Mr B. COLLINS: The Chief Minister has, by that interjection, once again confirmed how totally adaptable and how totally flexible he is with those sorts of ground rules. He has just done so again. I am delighted at the interjection. It is 1 rule for the Chief Minister and 1 rule for everyone else in the Northern Territory. That is the way he operates. We are all aware of it.

The Chief Minister replied to my letter complaining about this practice. In response to the Chief Minister, I point out again to him something that he knows full well.

Mr Everingham: Why don't you read my reply. Don't misrepresent the facts. Read my reply.

Mr B. COLLINS: Pull your head in. It was in fact not just the Chairman of ADMA who was carrying out that practice but other heads of departments.

Mr Everingham: You wrote about the Chairman of ADMA and no one else.

Mr SPEAKER: Order, order! I must request the honourable the Chief Minister not to interject.

Mr B. COLLINS: I would point out, Mr Speaker, for the benefit of the Chief Minister, that he still has the adjournment debate today in which to carry on to his heart's content.

In that response, as the Chief Minister has indicated by his interjection, he said that he totally supported the Chairman of ADMA in enunciating government policy on that occasion. It is good enough to support the Chairman of ADMA when it suits the Chief Minister but, when it is his Women's Adviser - just as senior a person in the Chief Minister's Department...

Mr Robertson: No way.

Mr B. COLLINS: Well, he is at some difference then with the Chief Minister. When she is making statements in the Mall, then the Chief Minister disowns that particular public servant and says that policy is to be enunciated by politicians. It is when it suits him, Mr Speaker. We know that applies to just about everything the Chief Minister does.

The other criticism I have of both the Chief Minister and the Minister for Community Development is their practice of responding deliberately and quite maliciously to legitimate criticisms of ministers of this government by saying quite incorrectly that those criticisms are personal attacks on their public servants. The Chief Minister speaks about cowardly attacks. Nothing could be more cowardly than this practice. We do not have public servants in this Assembly; we have ministers of the government. They have this great facility for turning attacks upon themselves into attacks on the public service. It has been pointed out by previous speakers in this debate that that was not the case.

The honourable Minister for Community Development talked about how dreadful it was that the opposition was wasting the Assembly's time by raising Labor Party policy in the Legislative Assembly. As I have said to the honourable minister before, we never hesitate to do that. That is precisely how this form of government is supposed to work. As I have tried to point out to many members opposite, that is precisely how this parliament is supposed to work. I point out to the honourable minister that it is particularly appropriate to conduct that sort of debate on general business day.

Mr Speaker, some attention was paid by the honourable Minister for Community Development about his motives for closing down the women's centre. Again, the government appears to be extraordinarily selective in the way in which it relates its policies to organisations that do not measure up to proper accounting procedures. Could I point out the obvious to the minister. If the same policy of closing down organisations that do not provide proper accounting was applied across the board, then the government would have closed down the Northern Territory Development Corporation and evicted its tenants with 3 days notice.

I point out to the honourable Minister for Community Development that a far more constructive and more positive approach that could have been taken by the government - but which was not taken on this occasion - would have been to clean up the operations of that organisation if indeed it had problems.

I see from the activities of the honourable Leader of the House that his

reluctance to take his turn on his feet was deliberate.

Mr Speaker, I see in the actions of the minister what every one else in Darwin saw. The Darwin Women's Centre was given 3 days notice to quit the premises at Christmas time. That was 3 days before Christmas. A plea was made, a very reasonable one I thought, to delay that eviction by simply 3 weeks to allow the people involved to pack up with some degree of dignity, having been there for 7 years. That was denied them. They were thrown out with 3 days notice during the Christmas holiday break. I would like to see the honourable minister and other ministers apply that same policy or action to other organisations that do not do their accounting properly. It would be quite interesting. There would be little groups of people all over the footpaths of Darwin.

Criticism was cast on the very reasons for the debate. We were told that, because the Chief Minister put everything right on Territory Tracks the other day, that should have been the end of the matter. As was quite properly pointed out, the public record of the Northern Territory's affairs is in those blue volumes in the middle of this room, to which everyone can refer. Transcripts of 'After 8', 'Territory Tracks' and various other media programs are not so readily available to the public. When ministers go on public record, it is in the Hansard of this Assembly. It is the appropriate forum for this particular debate.

Mr Speaker, I might say that, in respect of that tedious list of statistics and figures that were trotted out by the honourable Minister for Community Development, the reason for the debate is simply this: it was not the past actions, or even the present actions, of this current government that were in dispute; it was the doubt and confusion thrown upon the future actions of this government that we wished to debate. No one doubts the government's commitment, as reiterated by the honourable Minister for Community Development, but it is a matter of considerable concern to me as well as to a great many other people in the community. A great many women who have rung my office I know personally to be of a very conservative political ilk. They have complained about the statements made by the Chief Minister's Women's Adviser. They expressed a legitimate concern, Mr Speaker. She was appointed to the position to provide specialist advice and - according to the Chief Minister's own words - she was there representing the government. She was the only government representative present. Since she enunciated potential future directions, it is a legitimate concern that this government indicate clearly what her advice to the Chief Minister is. If that is not a legitimate matter of concern to the women of the Northern Territory, I do not know what is.

I rise to support this motion with a certain sense of déjà vu. Once again we have been shown by the Chief Minister's performance today - and I single him out - that he chooses not to address himself directly to the issues at hand until he has put members of this Assembly and members of the public through completely unnecessary periods of uncertainty. He did that in this Assembly last week. Two cases come quickly to my mind: the Labor Party's call to establish a TIO and for improvements in the operations of the Northern Territory Development Corporation. In both instances, the government took a great deal of pleasure in bucketing the suggestions and then in the end moved to support the opposition's policy.

Instead of taking the opportunity that was offered to him by the honourable member for Sanderson last week in the Assembly, the Chief Minister chose instead to treat the matter of statements by his Women's Adviser in a flippant manner in the Assembly. Only in an interview with the ABC several

days later did he make clear the government's position. In doing so, he put a large section of the community, in particular the many people who have worked so hard to seek support for the convention treaty and those who put so much effort into getting support for child-care facilities in the Northern Territory, through a period of completely unnecessary anxiety. I am sure that everyone involved in those areas will have been relieved and pleased to hear the Chief Minister state publicly that the government intends to stand by its commitment to the United Nations convention and to its commitment to child-care facilities. I hope, Mr Speaker, that he will go a stage further and contact all groups which expressed concern over this issue and reaffirm the government's support. Certainly, we shall be doing that.

Mr Speaker, I have another comment on the Chief Minister's contribution to this debate on a point that cannot go unnoticed. The Chief Minister may well have a personal view on the place of women in Northern Territory society. We know from the statement the Chief Minister made last week that he defers to his wife's advice in matters affecting women. Certainly, he sees no problem with his wife playing that role. He has made statements about the role that women should play in other areas of the Northern Territory's public life. But the Chief Minister cannot help giving himself away on this time after time. The one place where the Chief Minister does not see women participating in the Northern Territory's public life is here in this Legislative Assembly. He gives himself away time after time. Last week, Mr Speaker, during debate on this same issue, the Chief Minister - and everyone will recall this; it was reported in the public press - referred to the women members on this side of the Assembly as the squawky members opposite. Today, Mr Speaker, he referred to the women members on this side of the Assembly as harpies...

Mr SPEAKER: He withdrew that remark.

Mr B. COLLINS: Mr Speaker, a statement that he had to withdraw. But as I say, Mr Speaker, by these little slips of the tongue, the Chief Minister indicates clearly that he does not find it very comfortable having to work with women members of the Legislative Assembly. He shows that by constant references to them. They might hold all sorts of positions in the public service of the Northern Territory but, clearly, the Chief Minister does not like them being in the Legislative Assembly.

Mr Vale: Neither did Mr Isaacs.

Mr B. COLLINS: Is that going to be the only contribution he makes to this debate? I am pleased to hear the honourable member for Stuart say something during this sittings. I thought he was dead.

Mr Speaker, I think anyone with even the barest understanding of the movement for equality for women in the Territory would know that the 3 women members on this side of the Assembly have made very considerable contributions to the women's movement in the Northern Territory. The only reason that I mention particularly the 3 women members on this side of the Assembly is because I am more familiar with their activities than I am with those of the honourable member for Tiwi. I do not denigrate her efforts in any way by making that distinction.

Apart from the fact that these women have stood for, and won, parliamentary representation in this Assembly, they have all participated in various important moves to establish women's refuges and child-care facilities and to encourage reformist legislation in relation to women's issues. Certainly, they have not been silent on these issues, as the Chief Minister said they were last week. They have been very public and very vocal on these issues,

Mr Speaker, and I reject the Chief Minister's statement that they have not spoken out on these issues. It was a nonsensical statement for him to make and it is unfair and mischievous.

I think all members would acknowledge that the contribution made by the women members of this Assembly is very significant. Indeed, the honourable member for Nightcliff has been part of this Assembly longer than most of the government members and the honourable Deputy Leader of the Opposition has to my knowledge the privilege to be the first woman in Australian history to hold a position of such parliamentary leadership. It is pleasing to note that the Democrats in South Australia and the Liberal Party in New South Wales have followed the Northern Territory's lead. I think this Assembly can take some considerable pride in the fact that women have had such a high proportion of representation in the Northern Territory's parliament despite the obvious displeasure of the Chief Minister at that development.

All 4 women members of this Assembly spoke at length last year supporting the ratification of the United Nations Convention for the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women, as did I and several ministers, including the Chief Minister.

Mr Speaker, is it really so surprising then that so many people were deeply concerned when the Chief Minister's Women's Adviser, speaking in a public forum as the Chief Minister's representative on women's issues, took a completely contrary position? No one in the Labor Party would deny people the freedom to speak of their own convictions on any matter. But when a person is asked to speak because it is understood that he or she is representing a particular person or group, obviously the audience expects the comments made by that person to reflect the views of the person or group represented, unless there is some disclaimer. That is the normal course of events. It is something I am always careful to do if I am expressing a personal opinion and not that of the Labor Party. I say simply that that is what I am doing. I expect other people to do the same. That disclaimer was not made.

I believe that this situation, which angered and upset many people who had worked hard for these genuine concerns for Territory women, was completely unnecessary. I hope that the government, and the Chief Minister in particular, will take this opportunity - and certainly he has done so - to change its approach to such matters.

The Prime Minister and the new Labor government have clearly indicated the priority that will be given to women's issues and elimination of discrimination based on sex during this first term of the Labor government. Prime Minister Hawke has taken the women's affairs portfolio into his own area of responsibility and has appointed Senator Susan Ryan, whose hard work in obtaining breakthroughs for women in Australia is well acknowledged everywhere, as his special minister advising the Prime Minister on women's issues. Clearly, the new Labor government believes this issue to be of high priority. I hope that the Territory government will follow that example not only to make clear its policies on women's issues but to work to improve those areas, including reforms to legislation, which still need to be dealt with in some detail. I hope also that we will not see a repeat of this unfortunate approach to matters of sensitive and important public concern and I hope particularly not to see any further denigration of the women members in this Assembly by the honourable Chief Minister.

Mr ROBERTSON (Attorney-General): Mr Speaker, I have heard today 3 different interpretations of the motivation behind the motion put forward by the opposition. Certainly, each differed from the others. I think it

necessary to deal with the description of the purpose put forward by the Leader of the Opposition.

The Leader of the Opposition indicated that he believed that the purpose of the debate was to ensure that no confusion remained in the public mind as to where the government stands in relation to both the convention and the promotion of the well-being of women in the Northern Territory. Contrary to the words used by the honourable member for Nightcliff and the honourable Leader of the Opposition, what my colleague, the honourable Minister for Community Development, was referring to was the very broad range of endeavours in which women have been successful in the Northern Territory. It is not true, as the honourable member for Nightcliff put it, that he was confining himself to the care areas of governmental responsibility. He was outlining, in some depth, the executive roles taken by women in the Northern Territory government on matters of general administration at executive policy level.

Mr Speaker, this government can feel quite proud of the advancement which it, through its policies, has provided for women in the Northern Territory.

I come back to the motive for the debate - as the Leader of the Opposition put it - the removal of doubt. I think the best way to effect that is to move formally an amendment to the motion. I have had one drafted and typed this afternoon.

Mr Speaker, I move that the motion be amended by omitting all words after 'notes' and substituting 'the positive initiatives taken by the Northern Territory government to advance the cause and well-being of Northern Territory women and reaffirms its commitment to the principles contained in the United Nations convention relating to the prevention of discrimination against women'.

That will put beyond doubt where the government and this legislature stand in relation to that convention. It does not seem to me to have profited any of us to have gone through this unnecessary exercise. We have heard a great deal of inconsistency from members opposite. On the one hand, we heard the member for Sanderson telling us that the Chief Minister should not allow his advisers to speak contrary to government policy. On the other hand, the Leader of the Opposition said that it would be far from the Labor Party's view to stifle free speech and initiative.

To summarise the entire attack of the opposition, what a dreadful fuss has been made. The Leader of the Opposition said that she should have made a disclaimer. All this has come to pass as a result of the omission of about 4 words. The lady is not a senior officer of the public service. If I may say so, she was chosen for the task because the Chief Minister obviously believed she could reflect the views of a broad spectrum of the community in the nature of personal advice. She was not chosen to provide in-depth understanding of the complexities of the public service or the complexities of relationships between officers of the public service - and she is not a member of the public service - and the office of the Chief Minister or any other minister. Had the Chief Minister chosen such a person, one who had years of experience and operational understanding of relationships between ministers and personal staff, in my view, the Chief Minister, quite rightly, could have been criticised for appointing someone who, because of that experience, was not in a position to properly advise him.

All of this has resulted from the omission of 4 words in the form of a disclaimer. Within its resources, this government has done all in its power

to advance and nurture the cause of women. I do not think any other legislature in this country has so often and so consistently directed its legislative attention to the needs of women. The Criminal Code, which I shall be introducing, goes further in the protection of women, married and unmarried, than any other law pertaining to the criminal jurisdiction in this country. We have had extensive amendments to acts such as the Administration and Probate Act, one of which passed through this Assembly just a week ago. It was designed specifically to protect women and to put them in their proper place in relation to the family estate. I mention also such things as common and joint tenancies to which women ought to address themselves.

This government is constantly conscious of its responsibilities to women. It has expended considerable money, and not unwillingly or improperly. As has been pointed out, women constitute almost 50% of the population in the Northern Territory and they are equal in every sense. Where this government has identified a need which women perceive, we have acted accordingly. There have been rafta of laws passed through this Assembly in relation to the family, family law generally, births, deaths and marriages, the role of children and their relationship with mothers and in relation to marriages which are of a common law rather than a statutory nature. No other legislature or government in this country in recent years has addressed itself so untiringly to these very issues. No one can deny the record. For that reason, Mr Speaker, I put forward the first part of the amendment.

Mr Speaker, I think I have already covered the second part. It will reaffirm, in an amendment put forward by a minister of this government, the unequivocal commitment of this Assembly to the convention ratified recently by many nations of the world, by every state, by this Territory and by the Commonwealth through the auspices of the Standing Committee of Attorneys-General.

Mr Speaker, but for the sake of 4 words, this would not have occurred. Perhaps if the honourable members opposite could read, it would not have occurred anyway; that is, if all the Leader of the Opposition was seeking was a clear statement of future intent. I will read from unrevised Hansard, Mr Speaker. This has been cleared by the Chief Minister. They were his words and he verifies their accuracy. On 16 March, last Wednesday, the Chief Minister said in answer to the question on which we are told no definitive answer was given:

The honourable member for Sanderson was in the Assembly at the time of the original debate on the convention and needs only to refresh her memory by reference to Hansard to see that the Northern Territory, together with all other Australian governments, including the federal government, was at that time examining the convention. I think it had been signed, at that stage, by the federal government and was subject to a federal clause.

The Chief Minister in a constructive and positive way - and not in a way alleged by the opposition - explained during the question time - and it is odd that that did not appear - what a federal clause is so that we all understood what he meant. The Chief Minister then went on to say:

This, of course, entailed ratification. The convention was being examined clause by clause and, in due course, that process was finalised. The convention is supported by all Australian governments.

That was in question time last Wednesday. 'All Australian governments' includes this government unless, in its belittling fashion, the opposition

does not consider the Northern Territory to have self-government. Nothing could have been clearer. Since the opposition has such terrible difficulty in understanding and listening to elementary English, I am putting forward this amendment to help it understand a simpler form of language.

I move that the motion be put.

Mr B. Collins: The gag - terrific!

Mr SPEAKER: The question is...

Ms D'ROZARIO: A point of order, Mr Speaker! We have a question before the Chair that the amendment be agreed to.

Mr ROBERTSON: There is no debate on the matter, Mr Speaker.

Ms D'ROZARIO: There is a debate on the point of order, Mr Speaker.

Mr SPEAKER: There is a debate on the point of order but the Standing Orders are quite specific. The question is that the question be now put.

Motion agreed to.

Mr SPEAKER: The question is that the amendment be agreed to.

The Assembly divided:

Ayes 10

Noes 7

Mr D.W. Collins
Mr Dondas
Mr Everingham
Mr Harris
Mr MacFarlane
Mr Perron
Mr Robertson
Mr Steele
Mr Tuxworth
Mr Vale

Mr B. Collins
Mr Doolan
Ms D'Rozario
Mrs Lawrie
Mr Leo
Mrs O'Neil
Mr Smith

Mr SPEAKER: The question is that the motion, as amended, be agreed to.

Motion agreed to.

INTOXICATED PERSONS BILL
(Serial 268)

SUMMARY OFFENCES AMENDMENT BILL
(Serial 270)

POLICE ADMINISTRATION AMENDMENT BILL
(Serial 269)

Continued from 25 November 1982.

Mr DONDAS (Health): Mr Speaker, I rise to speak against these bills which were introduced in the Assembly last November. Their aim is to replace provisions in the Police Administration Act relating to protective custody of people intoxicated in a public place. Those provisions are in sections 128

to 133.

The Leader of the Opposition's bill is almost identical to the New South Wales Intoxicated Persons Act. A number of his provisions are identical to those in the New South Wales act. The honourable Leader of the Opposition stated that the New South Wales Intoxicated Persons Act had resulted in a dramatic relief to the New South Wales police. In fact, some two-thirds of the intoxicated people detained in that state are still held in police cells. Very few people detained by police are taken to the non-government-operated proclaimed places. The people who use those places are usually taken there by non-government pickup teams or are self-referred.

The honourable Leader of the Opposition also stated that, in New South Wales, 95% of the people who are habitually intoxicated in public places have to go to the proclaimed places. Only 5% are dealt with by the police. In fact, most intoxicated people picked up by the police are detained in the cells and not in proclaimed places. If 50% of detained people were placed in proclaimed places and 50% in the cells, both police and proclaimed place operators would be very happy.

Mr Speaker, I understand that the honourable Leader of the Opposition has misinterpreted the former Minister for Health's media releases of 2 September and 27 October 1982, which referred to the establishment of sobering-up centres or shelters. These facilities aim to provide overnight care for people found intoxicated in public. The Leader of the Opposition referred to them in the Assembly as detoxification centres. That is incorrect. Detoxification centres are usually hospital based to provide 7-10 days care and treatment for people wishing to withdraw from alcohol. These facilities are quite different from overnight-care or sobering-up shelters.

The major differences between the existing Northern Territory legislation and the Leader of the Opposition's bill can be seen to be that non-government welfare organisations, in addition to the police, will be empowered to hold people found intoxicated in public. They will be detained in proclaimed places or in police cells. Authorised persons in addition to the police will have power to take into custody and detain people found intoxicated in public. The authorised persons would be the staff of the proclaimed places and their associated pickup teams.

Another difference is the definition of 'intoxicated'. Existing legislation includes alcohol or a drug. The opposition amendment is for alcohol only. Another difference is the criteria for detention. Existing legislation provides: 'intoxicated in a public place or trespassing on private property' and meeting one of the criteria. Of course, we would be aware that the bill before the Assembly will seek to remove these criteria. The opposition amendment seeks to use 2 broad criteria and these are detailed in clause 4.

Another difference is the period of detention. Existing legislation stipulates until intoxication passes, 6 hours or 7.30 am, plus judicial review. The opposition amendment stipulates until intoxication passes or 8 hours.

Other provisions in the Leader of the Opposition's bill are: transfer of an intoxicated person to another proclaimed place, keeping of records, authorised persons can restrain intoxicated persons, detained intoxicated persons can make a phone call, detained intoxicated persons can demand a breath test for the presence of alcohol and legal protection for authorised persons. A person who commits an offence cannot be detained under this act;

he must be charged with having committed an offence.

Mr Speaker, I support the new provisions and recognise the value and the intention of the honourable Leader of the Opposition. However, existing provisions that are not in the opposition bill are provisions for judicial review of a person to be detained more than 6 hours and a person detained cannot be charged with an offence. It is possible that we will need to legislate along the lines suggested by the Leader of the Opposition to provide legal protection for people, other than police officers, who care for these intoxicated people who are placed in their custody as an alternative to police cells. In addition, it may be necessary for us to legislate to provide that, once a person is taken into protective custody, the person who takes him into custody has to first attempt to place the intoxicated person with a responsible person. Only if that is not a viable option, can a person be held in custody.

Mr Speaker, I would like to quote a passage from the honourable Leader of the Opposition's second-reading speech:

Provisions exist in the Northern Territory, and I might say very broad provisions, for apprehension by police of persons who are believed by a member of the police force to be intoxicated by alcohol or a drug. There is some similarity in approach between the provisions in the Police Administration Act and the intent of the provision of this major bill. The main difference is that the Intoxicated Persons Bill is predicated on a belief that voluntary organisations and social welfare organisations will, in fact, assume a greater role in relation to these proclaimed places of detention, and that the responsibility will not be assumed exclusively by the police and police stations.

Mr Speaker, the reason why I used that quote was because last year my colleague, the former Minister for Health, outlined the program to establish non-government-operated shelters for intoxicated persons throughout the Northern Territory. The first shelter to be operated as a pilot project by the Salvation Army will be funded through my Department of Health in its grants-in-aid program. The program itself is well advanced and will be commencing very soon in McLachlan Street, Darwin. A working party made up of representatives from the police, the Drug and Alcohol Bureau and the Salvation Army will monitor this pilot project.

On about 21 March, I wrote a letter to the opposition spokesman for Health, inviting her to a briefing with the Director of the Drug and Alcohol Bureau. Members on this side were fortunate enough to attend a briefing with that organisation. We saw some pretty slides and some not so pretty slides. It gave us a good understanding of the problem and how the Drug and Alcohol Bureau is at least making some attempt at tackling the problem. I thought it would be a very good idea for opposition members to view the screening and have the briefing. My understanding is that, on 21 February, a letter was sent by my office to the honourable member for Fannie Bay. The letter read:

I write to you in your role of shadow Minister for Health. The Drug and Alcohol Bureau of the Health Department has prepared a briefing presentation on sobering-up facilities in the Northern Territory which has been shown to the Northern Territory Drug and Alcohol Advisory Committee, senior officers of the Department of Health and myself.

Officers of the Drug and Alcohol Bureau have investigated these facilities in New South Wales and South Australia. They are currently discussing with community groups throughout the Territory the development of

appropriate sobering-up facilities in the light of the investigation and the unique regional characteristics of the Northern Territory. If you and your colleagues in the Legislative Assembly would like to be similarly briefed, please contact the Director of the Drug and Alcohol Bureau, Mr Kevin Larkins.

I included a telephone number. It is a bit of a shame. By the sound of it, my letter has gone astray. It is very unusual. I thought at the time that a month away from the Assembly sittings would have given the members opposite a chance to get an evaluation of what the Drug and Alcohol Bureau is attempting to do.

Mr Speaker, when delivering his second-reading speech, the honourable Leader of the Opposition had the impression that this bill 'would not be allowed to proceed even to the second reading'. That is an unreasonable statement because this government has taken several measures to overcome and resolve the issue of drunkenness. In supporting the defeat of this bill, I do so after evaluating the advice from the experts and not just because it is a proposal put forward by the Leader of the Opposition.

Existing legislation, namely protective custody provisions of the Police Administration Act, is adequate for the pilot project. It can go ahead without further legislation at this stage. I am advised that, until the shelter has been in operation for some months, the extent of legislation needed will not be known. Opposition members will see that the government is well advanced in developing a process which will lead to the establishment of further appropriate facilities. I believe it is too early to say whether or not legislation will be required and also too early to define this legislation, if it is needed. When the pilot project has been evaluated will be the time to assess whether or not legislation is required. I expect to be able to advise members some time after July whether or not the government considers substantial legislation to be necessary. Mr Speaker, I do not support the bills.

Mrs O'NEIL (Fannie Bay): Mr Speaker, these bills presented by the Leader of the Opposition last year are a very worthwhile attempt to address this ongoing, major and serious social problem in the Northern Territory. On that, unfortunately, we all have to agree. The thrust of the Leader of the Opposition's major bill was to treat problems arising from abuse of alcohol in a way that recognised this as a social problem and recognised also that the legislative prohibitions on the behaviour of people who are drunk simply do not work to alleviate this problem.

Last year, the government introduced what is known as the 2 km law. It had been preceded by a period of something like 6 months when, as I understand it, there was no law against drinking in public places in the Northern Territory at all. There was no evidence during that 6 months that problems were worse than they were before or than they have been since this law was introduced. Only today I was informed reliably that the Darwin City Council, which is intimately involved with this issue in this area, as other town councils are throughout the Territory, has a report before it which says that the 2 km law banning public drinking is not working in the city. Only 20 actions were taken in the period 1 January to 1 March. These involved 15 Europeans and 5 Aborigines. The incidents occurred mostly at a certain time of day: between 2 pm and 7 pm. The Darwin City Council's finance and policy committee is seeking talks with the Police Force about this problem. It says that it feels that the 2 km law is not working.

Mr Speaker, as he stated quite clearly, the Leader of the Opposition's bill was based on the experience of New South Wales. It allowed for persons

who had been drinking excessively to be taken to a place where they could sober up and dry out, preferably under the care of persons of goodwill, with experience in this social problem and in whom they would have trust. I am sure that in most members' minds there is no doubt at all that it is persons in organisations such as the Salvation Army, who have such immense experience in this area, who are best able to cope with the management of persons who have drunk too much alcohol. Certainly, the law as it stands calls very heavily on the members of our Northern Territory Police Force for its administration. It is a very difficult task for them. It would be preferable for the Police Force to spend its time dealing with, and hopefully preventing, serious crime in our community.

Some years ago, when the Liquor Bill was introduced, the honourable member for Port Darwin said how happy he was sure the police would be if they did not have to worry about liquor licences and so forth any more, an area which they have had to involve themselves in traditionally in the Northern Territory and which had caused them some problems historically. At that time I was reminded of a story about a member of the Police Force in the 1920s who accidentally shot himself while arresting what was colloquially known as a bumboat runner - Galloping Jones the bumboat runner - in the top end of the Northern Territory at that time. He was arrested by a policeman who had a gun in the belt of his uniform. The gun went off and unfortunately the policeman died as a result of severing his femoral artery. Quite clearly the police had good reason for not wanting to be involved in liquor laws and, while I hope that none of them end up being killed while looking after drunks, it is probably always a risk. There is no doubt that some drunks are very violent. The police find this is a very onerous task indeed, although I am sure they perform it as best they can. Certainly, I am convinced that it is more appropriately placed, when it can be, in the hands of those excellent voluntary agencies which have indicated that they are prepared to take the work on.

The opposition supports the establishment of shelters and welcomes the pilot project to which the minister referred. I hope that it will demonstrate a different method by which we can address this serious problem in the Northern Territory. I disagree with the minister in that I do not think that we should see how the pilot project goes and then introduce the legislation. I think it would be useful to have the legislation in place to back up the pilot project and enable it to work more effectively.

Mr Speaker, the honourable Minister for Health referred to a letter which I understand he sent to me in February regarding a briefing from the Drug and Alcohol Bureau. Unfortunately, I must inform him that I did not receive such a letter. My experience is that Australia Post is an efficient organisation most of the time but, undoubtedly, letters go astray in one place or another. Nevertheless, I accept his invitation as it was issued today. I am sure members of the opposition and the member for Nightcliff would be interested to receive a briefing from the Drug and Alcohol Bureau. When we receive that invitation, we will be happy to take advantage of it.

There is little more I can say on the matter of alcohol abuse. In the Territory, it is of continuing concern to us all. I am pleased that the minister has indicated that legislation of this nature be contemplated by the government after the evaluation of the pilot project. I am sure that such action will be welcomed by the community.

Mr EVERINGHAM (Chief Minister): Mr Speaker, in rising to oppose the passage of these 3 cognate bills, might I say that, since taking office, this government has been, one might almost say, preoccupied with the anti-social

effects of the abuse of alcohol in the Northern Territory. One of the first major pieces of legislation passed by this Assembly, at the instigation of the government and after exhaustive consultation by the then Minister for Health and the present Minister for Community Development, and myself, was the Northern Territory Liquor Act which, whilst it may not have been an unalloyed success, has been, in many respects, a step forward in the administration of liquor licensing and the containment and handling of the problems of alcohol abuse in this Territory.

There are 3 acts involved in the proposal put forward by the Leader of the Opposition. He seeks to repeal part VIA of the Summary Offences Act, which relates to the 2 km drinking law. The Police Administration Bill seeks to repeal part VII of that act, which relates to the protective custody of persons intoxicated with alcohol or drugs. The Intoxicated Persons Bill, which was more or less directly lifted from NSW legislation, refers to taking intoxicated persons from a public place, by police or other authorised persons, to a proclaimed place. The Intoxicated Persons Bill does not refer to persons intoxicated by a drug or trespassing on private property and 'public place' has a more restricted meaning than that in the Summary Offences Act.

The bill is meant to control behaviour but the provisions allow for damage to be done before action can be taken. Interruption of the causative agent is necessary to prevent the behaviour but the bill will require that an offence has been committed before the police or authorised persons can act. The present legislation will prevent that occurring.

The definition of 'intoxicated' leaves a lot to be desired. An intoxicated person detained under clause 4(1) must be given a breath test if requested. This will not prove intoxication and no figures are given in the bill as to when a person is intoxicated by reference to the reading. A breath analysis reading does not prove that a person is drunk. One person can give a reading of less than 0.08 but could have less control over his actions than another who gives a reading in excess of that.

Drunkenness in the Territory was decriminalised long before 1979, when NSW introduced its Intoxicated Persons Act which effectively decriminalised drunkenness. In consequence, there has been no misallocation of police, court and correctional services. Drunkenness is not a victimless crime. Society is the victim of drunkenness. Drunkenness is a serious problem in relation to mental hospital patients, drownings, road deaths, time loss in industry, loss in efficiency, sick days off from work, domestic disturbances, domestic violence, pollution, family disruption and separation, assaults, bad health and crimes generally.

At this stage, the bill is unnecessary and has nothing to do with the 2 km drinking law. The present law relating to drunkenness provided for under sections 128 to 133 of the Police Administration Act is adequate for the time being. When detoxification centres are established, the Police Administration Act can be amended to provide that police or authorised persons can have discretion in placing an intoxicated person in a cell or a detoxification centre. As the Minister for Health has said, we are at this moment embarking on a pilot project. When that project has been working for some months - not till after June - it would be time to consider legislation in the light of the Territory experience.

If authorised persons or others running proclaimed places are to be volunteers, as suggested by the honourable Leader of the Opposition, who will be responsible for their actions, their lack of actions or their neglect of duty? Can they be charged for committing wrongful acts? For instance,

members of the Police Force can be disciplined. Territory legislation already provides for the detention of intoxicated persons. A person may only be detained while he is intoxicated. If he is still intoxicated after 6 hours detention, a justice of the peace may authorise his detention for a further period. To ensure that a person is not released on the streets after midnight, he may be kept in custody until the following 7.30 am. Under the act, an intoxicated person may be released into the custody of a capable, acceptable and willing person and, whilst in custody, cannot be charged with an offence, questioned by police in relation to an offence or be photographed or fingerprinted. In those respects, Territory legislation is more complete.

The 2 km law is aimed at preventing offences in relation to drinking in certain areas. The Police Administration Bill is aimed at keeping drunken persons away from public places and from trespassing on private property. The bill does not give an alternative to the 2 km drinking law and is inferior to the current protective custody provisions. For those reasons, I oppose passage of the legislation.

Mr B. COLLINS (Opposition Leader): Mr Speaker, one of these days I will have the surprise of actually hearing criticism from the government benches on what I said or proposed and not, as the Chief Minister has once again done, on what they think I said or proposed. For example, I wonder why the Chief Minister thinks I suggested that these authorised people were volunteers. I wonder if the Chief Minister could point to any suggestions of mine that they would be volunteers.

To refresh the Chief Minister's memory on the subject, I have had exhaustive discussions with voluntary agencies around Darwin. Not for one minute did I think these people would do this sort of duty without being paid for it. I simply said that the agencies that I had spoken to had told me what everyone accepts to be the truth: that the people best fitted for this task are those who have suffered in former times from the problem itself. Where the Chief Minister's assumption that I talked about volunteers came from, I do not know.

Under the definition, 'authorised person' means a person engaged in the conduct of a proclaimed place. I predicted that these people would be 'engaged' in every sense of the word. I draw the Minister for Health's attention to the fact that every inquiry that has been carried out in states more populous than the Territory has come to the conclusion - and nobody who really knows the situation denies this - that, in many ways, the police and the courts are the people least suited to deal with this particular problem. As I pointed out in my second-reading speech in support of these bills, the situation in NSW is that the police still act very largely as 'authorised persons' and police cells are used as proclaimed places because it takes some time to put into place what is required.

There is one thing on which the government and I do not disagree. I spoke to the people who are responsible for implementing this legislation and asked them what they considered to be the major failing of the legislation. Not surprisingly, I was told that the greatest failing was that, if they could do it again, they would have the sobering-up centres in place before the legislation was enacted. I will be pleased indeed if the government's move in that direction has been accelerated in any way by these bills before the Assembly. I would not disagree with the government that this legislation is really doing it the wrong way round. In opposition, I am perfectly able to introduce legislation to the Assembly in the form of private member's bills but, unfortunately, I am unable to approve expenditure on setting up sobering-up centres. Indeed, if I referred to those places as 'detoxification centres',

I was in error. As the Minister for Health pointed out, those are in fact hospital facilities. I am sure that the honourable minister would appreciate from the context of what I was saying that overnight shelters and sobering-up centres were precisely what I was talking about. Even the Chief Minister would acknowledge that this Assembly has been very tardy in bringing this development about. As has been discussed in the Assembly before, the Chief Minister himself, as the member for Jingili, was demanding in 1974 in this Chamber that these sobering-up centres be provided. Here we are 9 years later and these things are still not in place. In fact, the Assembly has been calling for the provision of these facilities for years.

The opposition is pleased to see that they will be provided. We are anxious to see how they are to operate. However, I freely concede that the sobering-up centres - the overnight shelters - should be put in place before the legislation is enacted. This legislation was an attempt - and it has paid dividends - to focus attention on the problem of providing this kind of facility.

The Chief Minister said something else which was nonsensical. That is not surprising. He does that often. It shows just how totally out of touch he is with what goes on in the real world. Perhaps he does not mix with the sort of people I mix with. He said something which is totally wrong. He said: 'The opposition's legislation, in not providing for this 2 km drinking law, simply fixes up the problem after it occurs. The 2 km law prevents the offence of being drunk in a public place and being offensive to people occurring'. What absolute nonsense that statement is. I would refer the honourable Chief Minister to his colleague, the honourable member for Barkly. I discussed this with the honourable member himself after a recent visit that I made to a municipality in his electorate, where the problem of public drunkenness was absolutely horrific. The police confirmed in discussions I had with them on the very afternoon that I was there that there were no offences occurring under the 2 km law. I saw that myself. I have a very close interest in this matter. I toured up and down the main street of that town every hour for most of the day that I was there. There was nothing going on in public that could have been taken care of under that 2 km law. Yet the street offences, if you could call them that, that were being committed were rife. But nobody was drinking in a public place. There was not a can in sight. There were no bottles or cans that could be emptied but the problem was rife.

For the Chief Minister to say that the 2 km law prevents the offence occurring is just absolute nonsense. Simply, the offence of drinking in a public place has resulted - certainly in the case I witnessed - in the people accommodating themselves to the new law. It has not stopped the offences from being less offensive.

Next time, the Chief Minister should do me the courtesy of reading my second-reading speech. He made some reference to breath analysis referred to in the bill and how there had been no indication in the bill of the blood-alcohol level involved in the breath test and so on. I simply refer the Chief Minister to the arguments I put at the time. The question of the breath test - which, in any case, was not something I intended to go to the wall on when debating possible amendments to the legislation - was simply a protection for somebody taken into custody who was not intoxicated at all. If the Chief Minister had done me the courtesy of reading my speech - just as I read his speeches - he would have seen that clearly explained. So his arguments in that respect were once again nonsense.

I am sure that at least 1 member on the opposite side of the Assembly

would know of 1 particular type of problem that I have witnessed on a number of occasions in past years: the behaviour of people in a diabetic coma. In many cases, the behaviour exhibited by those persons is indistinguishable from that of someone who is drunk. Indeed, this was simply a further protection for somebody who had not consumed any alcoholic liquor whatsoever, and taken into custody by the police by mistake.

The Chief Minister referred to victimless crimes. Again, I hope he is not ascribing any statement to me to that effect because I certainly have never made one. I am very much aware that the last offence on earth that you could name as a victimless crime would be the over-consumption of alcohol. Anyone who made that statement would have to be bereft of any intelligence at all. What about the carnage that is caused on the roads of this country every year by people who drink alcohol? How could anyone assume that the over-consumption of alcohol was a victimless crime? I certainly hope that he did not ascribe that statement to me because I never made it. Nevertheless, he did spend some time talking about it.

He also went on to speak at some length - and I do not know why - about sick days off work, marital breakup and all the things that we know are caused by this problem. Is he seriously suggesting that the 2 km drinking law, which this legislation seeks to replace, will solve all those problems? What nonsense that is. As I have already put to him, I hope that the legislation passed in this Assembly is not specifically designed for Darwin or particular localities but is designed for the whole of the Northern Territory. In the case of some other urban centres in Darwin, the 2 km drinking law is totally ineffective in even stopping the basic problem of people being drunk in a public place. I have witnessed that with my own eyes. If he wants any confirmation of that, he should talk to the member for Barkly.

Mr Speaker, publicity has been given today on the front page of the Northern Territory News to an alleged failure of the 2 km drinking law in Darwin. I know what has happened to drinkers in Darwin. Very many of them have accommodated themselves to the new law by drinking where they are out of sight. There is a disturbing trend. I have had this reported to me by the proprietors of some supermarkets in the Darwin area. In fact, the particular comments that were made to me were prompted by certain things that I noticed adjacent to a supermarket check-out one day. I had a chat afterwards to the proprietor of the supermarket. Some of his customers have accommodated themselves to this new law by switching from wine to methylated spirits. Indeed, there was a gentleman at the check-out opposite me in the process of buying methylated spirits. That was in the middle of the afternoon. When I inquired how much of that was going on in the supermarket, I was told that that bloke did not normally drink methylated spirits but that he was frightened of being caught with a flagon in the park opposite. He started buying methylated spirits because of the new 2 km drinking law.

What I would suggest to the government, and I have no doubt that it would be prepared to look at it again, is that a number of disturbing side effects to the new law are becoming obvious. The question of drunks in Darwin moving to other places is a problem which has been referred to me time and again. It certainly has not solved any of the drinking problems. It may have had some cosmetic effect by removing some of the drinkers from the obvious places they were drinking at before. If anybody thinks - and I certainly support the report of the staff who reported to the council - that the 2 km drinking law has solved the problem of drinking in a public place in Darwin, I can assure him that it has not. If anyone is foolish enough to think that it has solved the problem in Tennant Creek, I can assure him, from my own experience, that it has not.

In conclusion, Mr Speaker, might I say that the bill was introduced to focus the attention of the government and the Assembly on our approach to the problem. I am pleased to hear from the comments of the Minister for Health that that appears to be happening. Thus, I think that this exercise has accomplished something very positive. I am pleased to hear that, after the introduction of these overnight shelters, some attention will be given to further amendment of the legislation. I have no argument with the government at all in saying that the provision of those sheltered places should in fact come before the passage of this legislation.

Motion negatived.

LEAVE OF ABSENCE

Member for Tiwi

Mr VALE (Stuart): Mr Speaker, I move that leave of absence be granted to Mrs Padgham-Purich for the remainder of this sittings due to a family illness.

TERRITORY DEVELOPMENT AMENDMENT BILL

(Serial 274)

Continued from 25 November 1982.

Mr EVERINGHAM (Chief Minister): Mr Speaker, I hope that my contribution to the debate this afternoon will allay any fears in respect of the NTDC which were raised by the opposition during debates in this Assembly in the course of last year. As foreshadowed last year, a full review of the NTDC's policies and objectives has been undertaken. The administrative review of the NTDC was commissioned well before the departure of the former chairman. Those reviews have involved consultation with other government departments and with private industry. I want to acknowledge the contribution by many persons and organisations who have been consulted. The process will be an ongoing one. I am pleased to be able to inform honourable members that the findings of the review are virtually complete and a number of changes to the NTDC have already been made. Procedures for loan security arrangements, increased accountability and more streamlined operations should all meet with the approval of both sides of this Assembly.

Full consideration has been given to the points raised by members of the opposition in debates and by the member for Sanderson in introducing this bill. Obviously, the government does not concur with all of them. However, I do acknowledge the contributions made. For the benefit of honourable members, I think it would be worth while to make a detailed statement on the government's broad economic policies and how the newly-revamped Northern Territory Development Corporation ties in with the policies.

The prime objective of the government's industrial development policy is to achieve optimum private-enterprise-sponsored growth. In broad terms, the government's role is to provide the physical infrastructure, including water, power, roads and the all-important climate for investment. Therefore, the government's role is to facilitate development whilst the role of private enterprise is to initiate development. By attracting and fostering industrial development, the government hopes to secure maximum gross Territory product, maximum employment, a strong and diversified economy, orderly and stable growth and industries with long-term profitability. The ultimate goal is opportunity for an improved standard of living for all Territorians.

To achieve those objectives, the government sees the need to encourage

an increased level of sophistication in all sectors of industry. This extends from the need to use the latest technologies in the production of goods and services to the need to adopt modern, sophisticated approaches in financial, legal and other aspects of business. The principal arm of government in fostering growth and attracting investment is the Northern Territory Development Corporation. Through its contact with private industry, in a close liaison with other government departments, the NTDC is able to support private enterprise in bringing about rapid economic expansion in the Northern Territory.

Industry generally in the Territory is in sound shape, especially when compared to the parlous state of affairs of southern counterparts. Strong economic growth has taken place since self-government. Let me, for the record, illustrate where this growth has taken place. Tourist numbers have been growing at over 10% per annum. The recent Roy Morgan survey puts the direct value of the industry at \$108m. With multiplier effects, this adds up to about \$250m in terms of benefit to the whole Territory economy. That the future of the industry is assured is judged by the number of projects under way or planned. Yulara, Darwin's casino and hotel, and the convention centre are well under construction and further international hotels for Darwin and Alice Springs are likely. The list goes on.

The groundwork is being laid for the increased Territory processing of pastoral products. The Tennant Creek abattoir established in 1980 has significantly increased local slaughtering capacity. There are plans for the rendering of untreated abattoir wastes in the Top End. A major hide processing plant and large-scale horse slaughtering for the export market is also proposed.

The government has shown its commitment to helping broadacre agriculturalists establish in the Territory through the farms being set up by ADMA and the assistance provided to farmers through the contract scheme. Horticultural production is rapidly expanding and the government's superphosphate subsidy is a major contributing factor to this. Projects like the mango plantation at Manbulloo and the soon to commence large-scale growing of onions and potatoes in the Katherine region are examples of developments in this sector, both assisted by the Northern Territory Development Corporation.

Although only embryonic, the manufacturing industry is expanding to take up the opportunities afforded by a growing population. ACI, North Brick Industries and the soon to be constructed Northern Cement clinker grinding and fully-integrated cement plant are all examples. Not only are these industries planning to supply the local markets but there is a strong likelihood that Australian and overseas markets will eventually be penetrated.

Other examples of the government's record of achievement are illustrated by the growth in the workforce of around 10% between 1981 and 1982, population growth of close to 5% per annum and an increase in overseas exports of between 30% and 40% over recent years. These developments have not occurred without government support. For example, the NTDC has provided loans to industry totalling \$24.4m over the past 4 years in generating projects whose total cost and value are far in excess of this figure.

I have already stated that a central feature of the role of government is to set the preconditions which will create a favourable environment for economic development. Much of this has already been achieved. The Northern Territory is stable politically and the government is strongly committed to assisting and encouraging the private sector in bringing about the economic growth of the Territory. The Northern Territory has a record of open government and quick decision-making and I invite comparison with southern

state governments where decisions on redevelopment projects, mining projects, power-stations, casinos etc are often found difficult to make. The Territory also has an enviable record of industrial harmony.

These factors are of vital importance in fostering confidence within the business community. Without such confidence, it becomes an impossible task to stimulate and maintain a level of investment necessary for continued economic growth. That the confidence is there is evident by \$4500m worth of committed and planned major projects, and they are only those projects that we know of. Of this total, about \$2500m is private sector investment. The multiplier effect of these new initiatives and the natural growth of the economy will provide substantial new business opportunities well beyond the projects in the pipeline.

The Northern Territory is part of the western Pacific region and is therefore situated in the most dynamic region in the world today in terms of economic growth, trade and investment. Although accounting for only 15% of the world's land area, the region has a population of over 1500 million. The western Pacific region experienced average yearly real economic growth of more than 5% in the period 1970-80. Trade within the region also expanded at a faster rate than overall world trade. Apart from being a huge potential market for Territory products, the region is also a potential major source for investment, technology and cost-effective imports.

Much of the necessary infrastructure within the Territory for further industrial development is already in place or about to be commenced. Good roads, water supply, telecommunications, the north-south railway, new port facilities, a new power-station for Darwin and the new Darwin airport terminal will all play a part in establishing an environment for development. We will then have an infrastructure base which compares with that which the states have had since federation and which will give us a better opportunity to compete with them for new investment. We have a young, vigorous and well-educated population with many of the skills needed by an expanding and growing economy and the capacity to train others through our educational and training institutions.

These factors will not, in themselves, necessarily guarantee the further development we seek. What is also required is a clear view of how we are to proceed over the coming years to secure the optimum rate of development. For this to occur smoothly rather than haphazardly, the government will ensure a policy of consultation is adopted between government departments and industry. I have instructed government departments to take an inter-disciplinary approach to the development of programs in such areas as mining, tourism, agriculture, fishing and manufacturing. In this regard, I envisage bodies like the Tourist Commission, in conjunction with the tourist industry, setting a development path on the future needs and direction of the industry. The Department of Primary Production, ADMA and the Department of Mines and Energy will have similar roles. The role of the NTDC will seek to provide incentives to ensure the needs of industry are met. The provision of new facilities for the establishment of new industries will often require coordination between several arms of government and arrangements for this to occur are already largely in place through the Co-ordinator-General.

The government fully appreciates the importance of continuing other infrastructure support such as provision of industrial land, transport and communication systems and essential services including water, electricity, sewerage, housing, health, education and other community services. In a very competitive national market for investment finance, the government is conscious that industrial land and the essential services, electricity, water and

sewerage must be provided at a realistic cost to the developer. It will also be necessary at times to use other incentives to attract development. All options must be considered in the mix of incentives which may be required for this purpose.

I recognise that the population of the Territory is small and that it will be necessary to import a certain amount of skilled labour to fill shortfalls in certain skilled areas. Additionally, it is important that we continue, and perhaps increase, our skills training programs tailored to the projected needs of developing industry. Special attention also needs to be given to the encouragement and development of entrepreneurial skills.

If the Territory can project an image of having a natural geographical advantage for trade, a stable political climate, a government committed to private sector leadership in economic development, and a high-quality, established infrastructure with land and essential services readily available at reasonable cost, the task of stimulating further development and attracting investment should be an easier one.

But success will ultimately depend on the establishment of viable markets for Territory products and services. The government will, therefore, promote and develop markets and trade opportunities wherever they may exist. To this end, a trade promotion program has been developed by the NTDC. I have already stated the importance I attribute to the \$4500m in major investment proposals for the Territory. Certainly, there will be a multiplier effect in the use of Territory goods and services arising from major development projects such as the railway and Jabiluka. I know the NTDC will make every effort to ensure that local firms have the maximum opportunity to participate.

It must also be realised, however, that these projects provide short-term markets and that peak benefit is derived principally during the construction phase. The Territory is, in reality, a very tiny market in economic terms. Although there is some scope for Territory products in the south, the long-term future for the Territory lies to the north. The government must look to achieve optimum trade-initiated development and to do this we must look beyond the markets and technology constraints of the Territory and even Australia. An ongoing program of market probes and trade missions into the western Pacific region will serve not only to identify and secure markets for goods and services already produced in the Territory but will allow us to identify market opportunities for new industries. As I have already stated, some Territory companies are already broadening their horizons beyond the local market. It is not inconceivable that many Territory products will soon be exported outside the Territory and into South-east Asia.

The government will encourage a broadening of the Territory's economic base by the expansion of existing industries and the establishment of new industries geared to the larger markets of Asia and the Pacific. We must encourage industry to adopt a progressive approach, to respond to projected changes in the market place, and to develop a capacity to restructure rapidly for technological advances and economic circumstances.

Mr Speaker, having outlined what I consider to be the preconditions for development, I now propose to address the question of the specifics of attracting investment into the Territory. I need not restate that the government will continue its efforts to attract investment into the Territory. These efforts will be directed at attracting a broad range of entrepreneurs and corporate entities, capital inflow, both debt and equity, entrepreneurial expertise and experience, ideas and proposals for innovative development and

market linkages. Our investment attraction strategies seek the expansion of existing Territory industries and the establishment of new ventures using investment attracted from local, interstate and overseas sources.

It is government policy that local businesses will be provided with every opportunity to expand their existing operations and to move into new areas. It is crucial, however, that investment takes place only in those projects which show some good prospects of reaching and sustaining long-term viability. The identification, therefore, of areas for profitable investment is an important aspect of any investment attraction program. Identification will remain the primary responsibility of investors though the government will facilitate the process in a number of ways. The first way will be through the dissemination of a wide range of information and data concerning the structure of the Territory economy, its current growth and prospects for the future. Among the methods which are and will continue to be used are: routine briefings to local, interstate and overseas businessmen; organised group briefings to VIPs, Chambers of Commerce and trade delegations; trade missions and establishment of investor contact points, both interstate and overseas; promotional campaigns; expos; trade fairs; advertising campaigns; publications such as *Indus*; and so on.

The extensive advertising campaign which has commenced is aimed at increasing awareness of the Territory and at encouraging investment into the Territory. This campaign will be followed by ministerial missions to Sydney, Melbourne and Canberra in May and to Asia in June. In addition, a local advertising campaign will be run to encourage existing Territory businesses to take up the supply and support challenges of servicing the Territory's major development projects. Opportunities will also be identified through key input investigations for the major projects mentioned above. The opportunities for local involvement identified by these studies will be the subject of seminars for local businesses organised by the NTDC in conjunction with the project proponents. Both the smaller Territory companies and the large national developers will benefit from this approach. A further method of investment opportunity identification will be the use of market probes, especially into South-east Asia and the whole western Pacific region.

In addition, the corporation will continue, when necessary, with its past practice of commissioning feasibility studies of possible investment projects. The foundry project and horse slaughtering at Territory abattoirs are 2 examples where this process has been used.

Finally, the government will monitor activities in the high technology area - the industries of the future - and will attempt to foster their establishment in the Territory. The NTDC's Invention Assistance and Research and Development Scheme is designed for this purpose. Already we have industries like Microwave Systems, a company which supplies advanced telecommunication equipment to the rest of Australia, and possibly to South-east Asia in the near future.

It is vital that investment attraction is aimed at industries which will survive - in other words, those industries with markets which do not need protection. The government will continue to promote exploration for minerals and fuels. It will continue its efforts to achieve large-scale resource development.

The Territory is now moving out of the initial phase. Many of the easiest and obvious investment chances have been taken by private investors. If sustained economic growth is to continue, we must now compete successfully, not only with the rest of Australia but also overseas, for markets for our

products and for the investment dollar. Mr Speaker, my government stands unashamedly for free enterprise. It is my fundamental belief that private investors, making their decisions on an assessment of market data, are more likely to make successful investment decisions than governments can. But the government, in conjunction with private enterprise, will seek actively to attract investments, identify possible growth industries and identify long-term markets. It will continue its endeavour to ensure that local industry receives every chance to participate in the growth of the Territory. All this points to a further period of growth, change and opportunity. It is hardly the time for strait-jackets and inflexibility; hardly the time for constraints on investments.

Mr Speaker, I would now like to turn attention directly to the bill ...

Mr B. Collins: At last.

Mr EVERINGHAM: ... the proposed amendments to the Territory Development Act and more particularly to the role and the priorities of the NTDC for the future. If you do not want to hear this sort of stuff, if you do not want me to report to the Assembly - that is the sort of reaction I get, Mr Speaker, when I am trying to tell ...

Mr B. Collins: Get on with it.

Mr EVERINGHAM: ... the Assembly exactly what is going on with the Northern Territory Development Corporation. Last year, all we got from them was that they were not told ...

Mr B. Collins: Are you going to do it?

Mr EVERINGHAM: ... that they were not being told enough.

Mr B. Collins: We are still waiting. We have been waiting for 20 minutes.

Mr EVERINGHAM: Well, Mr Speaker, we now know that the Leader of the Opposition is not really interested in hearing anything at all.

Mr B. Collins: Get on with it.

Mr EVERINGHAM: The corporation has often been thought of as primarily a financial institution. That view of the corporation is neither correct nor appropriate. Its role is as the government's vehicle for the promotion of industrial development within the Territory. The corporation offers numerous services to the private sector which have tended to be overshadowed by its finance role. With the exception of certain loans for relief purposes and pioneer industries, in the past the NTDC has generally provided finance as a concessional lender at an interest rate of 10% per annum. This concession has been a significant influence in obtaining for the Territory worthwhile development projects that would not have materialised otherwise. Loans by the NTDC in its first 4 years of operation until 30 June 1982 totalled \$24.4m. Over \$13m had been allocated in the field of tourism, \$7m to pastoral and agriculture-related industries and \$1.5m to the fishing industry. All are what banks would characterise as high-risk areas.

A major objective of the corporation, in future, would be to seek out those developments which are viable on more commercial terms and to encourage lender participation in such projects so they do not rely solely on government finance. It will not, however, operate in competition with commercial lending

outlets. In concert with this approach, the corporation has dropped the term 'lender of last resort' and has adopted the role of a supplementary financier. To complement this role, funding will also be made available as an incentive to attract worthwhile developments to the Territory, including pioneer-type projects. I should mention that financial institutions still regard large hotels in the Territory as pioneer-type projects. The real emphasis of NTDC funding will be to contribute to the mix of funding available. With the limited lending budget available to the corporation for industry assistance programs each year, and in an economic climate which is calling for development projects worth many millions of dollars, the need is obvious for supplementary and incentive packages as well as large, long-term loans for some major projects.

Mr Speaker, guarantees will be provided in appropriate circumstances. The NTDC will continue to provide concessional finance to those eligible businesses that need assistance in the establishment stages but which ultimately will be competitive and viable. After viable cash flows have been generated, the NTDC will review loans periodically to see if the client will be able to arrange commercial finance and so release NTDC funds for further establishment and development loans.

In relation to interest rates, it is clear that a flexible approach to industry assistance is appropriate. If the primary objective of loan finance assistance is to attract new industry and expand existing enterprises, then a strong argument can be mounted that interest rates should vary according to the degree of incentive necessary to attract additional investment. Industry priorities will be determined without losing sight of the need for a flexible approach to assist various industries as and when the need arises. The corporation will direct its assistance policies at the base industries of primary production, secondary industry, tourism, transport service industries, fishing and mining. Its lending policy will still be dictated by benefit to the Territory by way of employment, economic diversification, technology, infrastructure and economic growth. Other industry categories may be assisted where circumstances in keeping with economic development objectives exist.

It is unlikely that the corporation will have the capacity to support the wholesale and retail sectors. The familiar catchcry of the recent past, echoed by the opposition in this Assembly, has been the call for quantitative targets and a desire to impose this form of performance measure upon the corporation. Mr Speaker, I must emphasise that this approach would be unrealistic in the Territory's present economic climate, especially when dealing with a budget of about \$10m per annum. The corporation must be able to respond to initiatives and opportunities as they arise and not have success or failure prescribed by some predetermined formula which is out of touch with the economic realities. A measure of the corporation's past success has been its ability to respond to government objectives and private sector initiatives and to specific needs as they arise. Assistance to the tourist industry throughout Territory centres was afforded a high priority based on needs perceived by market research. In 1981-82, the NTDC advertised that funds for traveller-accommodation facilities would be made available in all centres. As a result, the Darwin region received \$1.7m, Katherine \$1.9m, Tennant Creek \$1.3m and Alice Springs \$2.1m. In all, 20 hotels and motels were assisted to provide much-needed traveller accommodation. But there was very little likelihood of projecting those amounts in advance.

The scope and nature of projects that the corporation is now fostering also introduces the requirement for a sophisticated approach to operational controls within the NTDC. The necessity for improved techniques has resulted in an officer of the Commonwealth Development Bank being seconded to the

corporation as a consultant to examine the current methods of operation, including applications for financial assistance and documentation. He will make recommendations to improve procedures and efficiency. I will be reporting to the Assembly further on this aspect at a later date, so honourable members can live in anticipation.

Methods of assessment for financial assistance are also being reviewed to improve techniques for presentation of applications to the NTDC board. The extent of investigation into each application obviously varies with the complexity of the proposal but standardised procedures are being implemented to ensure lending guidelines are evaluated with a consistent approach. Needless to say, a degree of flexibility must be maintained at board level, especially for the corporation to provide incentive assistance and funding for pioneer projects. The criteria on which applications will be assessed remain basically unchanged. Factors taken into account include equity, management ability, past performance, marketing arrangements, production prospects, employment and so on.

Emphasis is also being placed on the manner in which the corporation takes security for any loan or guarantee. A review of all documentation and procedures for security purposes is being coordinated by the consultant with a view to ensuring that security requirements for loans and guarantees are maximised. The appointment of a lawyer to the staff of the corporation will support the general oversight of all corporation security matters. Loan management systems are under revision and steps have already been taken to introduce stricter controls over loans in arrears. Notice will be served on the clients of the corporation that a hard line will be taken with those who deliberately flout their obligations and fail to cooperate with the corporation. The board is prepared to be understanding in cases of genuine hardship and where those experiencing severe difficulties in meeting their repayments have served notice of their difficulty. The borrower is obliged to keep the NTDC fully aware of his situation where problems are arising. Monthly reports on all arrears will be furnished to the board and hopefully, also to myself, as minister responsible for the NTDC, and this will ensure that the situation is carefully monitored.

A greater flow of information from the NTDC will be a feature of new accountability measures being introduced. I will be briefed monthly on all loan application matters considered by the board and will receive a summary of all new loan applications as they are received. Significantly, more information will be made available to this Assembly and the public about the corporation's activities in future.

Confidentiality about lending activities will be relaxed to facilitate a greater awareness of the corporation's assistance programs to industry without prejudice to the interests of the client. The government has concluded that the veil of confidentiality that a borrower might reasonably expect from a financial institution must be put aside. The corporation will publish in its annual report a full list of current and completed loans and guarantees. This information will contain the name of the client, the loan amount and the industry. Other details on individual loans may be disclosed in greater detail with the consent of the client through media releases, official publications and so on. The annual report will also contain details of arrears, defaulters and troublesome accounts. The Leader of the Opposition may personally have access to other information on a case-by-case approach to me where this is warranted.

Mr Speaker, we have taken these steps not because we believe that the borrowers will want us to take them but because we believe that it is in the

interests of the NTDC to have the cloud of scandal that the opposition has been promulgating against it for the past year or more lifted from it. In future, anyone going to the NTDC to borrow money will have to understand that those details are going to be published in the annual report.

In areas unrelated to financial assistance, the corporation will monitor the application of government policies and advise on their appropriateness to industry requirements. Regular consultations with all sectors of industry will be undertaken. In an effort to maximise investment in the Territory's resources, the corporation will continue to conduct feasibility studies into worthwhile developments, monitor statistics, calculate trends and provide a data bank for industry in conjunction with other departments and authorities. The corporation is also in a position to actively assist developers in their liaison with other areas of government. In line with the government's objectives of encouraging new technologies and products, the NTDC will continue with the Research, Development and Invention Assistance Scheme.

Numerous publications from the NTDC and departments will continue to be made available to convey specific and general data on investment opportunities. Where appropriate, advice will be given to help implement and coordinate development proposals. The corporation will continue with its strong involvement with events such as Expo and the Territory Enterprise Awards. Advice on trade marketing, trade promotions, overseas fares and related exhibitions will be ongoing.

A further service offered to Territory businessmen is the free and confidential advice offered by the Small Business Advisory Service. This service assists with the development of business expertise through workshops and training seminars and specialises in counselling and maintenance of an information service for small business. Thousands of Territorians have availed themselves of this service since its inception which is a fair indication of the interest that is being expressed in business potential in the Territory.

To cater for industry requirements and to continue improving the modus operandi of the NTDC, its staff structure has been reorganised and strengthened. The board of the NTDC will also play a wider role. As the board is comprised of people in industry, their knowledge and skills are to be increasingly applied. An interstate accountant and banker have recently been appointed to the board to provide it with a range of expertise considered necessary to deal with the type of complex projects that NTDC has involvement with. The NTDC will apply this expertise to many of the more complex financial arrangements to be used in a range of major development projects to commence shortly in the Territory.

The creation of 2 new executive positions, general manager finance and general manager development, will enable the corporation to enhance the stimulation of development and investment. Under the new structure, the financial assistance role, which is only 1 tool for fostering development, will be more effectively administered. In the restructuring, the general manager finance will be more personally involved in the more complex loan applications.

Mr SPEAKER: Order, the honourable member's time has expired.

Mr ROBERTSON: I move that the honourable member be granted an extension of time.

Motion agreed to.

Mr EVERINGHAM: He will assume the new responsibility of the Land Development Corporation and act as secretary to the board. The new position of general manager development will take responsibility for coordinating investment attraction and industrial development initiatives and will relate to and involve government departments on specific industry development as required. He will also be responsible for trade development as required. He will also be responsible for trade and export activities, overseas missions and delegations, and the Small Business Advisory Service. He will be a principal liaison point with industry. A manager of a secretariat will provide the government with briefs, reports and so on and have the carriage of various special projects.

The new structure, as I have already stated, will also include a general manager legal services who will be able to provide on-the-spot legal advice, take part in negotiations on more important projects, act as the contact with members of the legal profession who assist the corporation and ensure that loan commitments and security arrangements are correctly interpreted and documented.

The NTDC will maintain its practice of using consultant services of lawyers, accountants, economists and industry groups for special projects. Such services will complement the expertise available within the corporation.

Mr Speaker, in my view, the reasons for the proposed amendments to the act are not justified. The major strength of the development corporation is its ability to respond to industry needs as they arise. Let's face it, the rate of growth and complexion of industry change pretty rapidly in the Territory. I believe that the NTDC must have a considerable measure of flexibility to achieve the objectives of government and, therefore, I dismiss the quantitative targets argument proffered by the opposition as an operational strait-jacket. The fact that it was introduced by the late, unlamented Liberal government in Victoria does not convince me at all.

I sincerely hope that members of the opposition have noted the measures I have commenced on greater accountability, improved loan security and increased flexibility, which I believe is a most appropriate and correct course of action to adopt at this time for the efficient functioning of the development corporation.

Mr B. COLLINS (Opposition Leader): Mr Speaker, I wish the Chief Minister would make up his mind. It is rather difficult to work him out. He just finished his ministerial statement - I would imagine one would call it that - by saying that the measures that he has just announced - and I was only able to skim through them - are appropriate and proper measures for the greater accountability and the better operation of the NTDC. I think I am correct in saying that that was the conclusion to his speech.

Mr Everingham: I doubt it.

Mr B. COLLINS: I think a reference to Hansard will show that that is correct.

However, 10 minutes ago, the same honourable member said that the only reason that these measures had been introduced, quite unnecessarily in his view, was to alleviate the scandal that had been brought quite wrongly on the NTDC by the opposition. I would suggest to the Chief Minister that perhaps he should examine his speech tomorrow. Once again we have this strange paradox of the Chief Minister saying one thing when it suits him and another when it does not. When the Chief Minister introduces into the Legislative Assembly the

report of the special consultant who was brought in to overhaul the NTDC after the opposition raised these matters in the Legislative Assembly last year, perhaps he could explain whether these reforms were necessary because of scaremongering, as he put it, and scandal raised by the opposition or, as he said at the conclusion of his speech, to provide for better accountability and better operation of the organisation. I think events will disclose that it was for the latter reason.

Any scandal that was brought to bear on the Northern Territory Development Commission was brought to bear on it by this government. As I have said at public forums over the last 12 months when I have addressed organisations such as the Society of Accountants, one of the problems that the Northern Territory Development Corporation had - a problem that appears to have been resolved by the Chief Minister - was that it was very poorly represented politically in the Legislative Assembly. The record will show that that is the case. The number of legitimate questions that this opposition asked in the Legislative Assembly in respect of accountability that remained unanswered was legion. The government clearly acknowledged that by changing the minister. So far as this opposition bringing any scandal to bear, it was those unanswered questions and the subsequent behaviour of this government in this Assembly which caused such public disquiet, and rightly so.

I would say - and, no doubt, greater detail will be made available to this Assembly at a later stage - that the changes that have been brought to bear in the NTDC appear to be profound. That would be my initial reaction to the Chief Minister's statement. The appointment of lawyers, consultants, general manager finance and general manager legal matters are positions that the Northern Territory Development Corporation formerly did not possess. Nevertheless, the Chief Minister has the hide to talk about the veil of confidentiality being lifted purely because of the scandal that the opposition brought to bear on the Northern Territory Development Corporation. Have a look at the performance of this government in this place in respect of the concerns that were raised by the opposition about that organisation. One of the reforms brought to bear on the Northern Territory Development Corporation that the Chief Minister did not bother mentioning was the change of minister responsible for the organisation. However, the changes appear to be profound and the opposition certainly welcomes some of them such as reporting of loans and so on.

I will point out a few obvious problems with the Chief Minister's approach to what he called the 'unwelcome lifting of the veil of confidentiality' which he has only done because we have brought it on his head.

Mr Everingham: It could be unwelcome to the borrower.

Mr B. COLLINS: In response to that interjection, does he not think that there are people in the business community, in the motel business for example, who borrow money from banks at market rates? Such people might fear that someone will start a business down the road in competition with them only because of a loan at preferred rates from the Northern Territory Development Corporation. If the Chief Minister does not think that that is a concern of the Northern Territory business community, let him talk to a few business people. Does he not think it is a concern of people in the tourist transport industry, who have to borrow money at bank rates, that somebody down the road can buy a few new buses with money from a loan from the Northern Territory Development Corporation, and then have a competitive edge. That concern has been expressed by the business community of the Northern Territory.

Clearly, the sensible reform that the Chief Minister is bringing about in

the provision of public money at preferred rates will alleviate those concerns. The business community generally will be very pleased to hear that that is what the government is doing. I think this government has been culpable, in a public relations sense, in promoting the dealings of this organisation which we welcomed. We were perfectly prepared to see public money being used to generate impetus in the private sector of the Northern Territory. It is very much in line with the philosophy of the Labor Party. We welcomed the activities of the NTDC but we thought it was handled in a very amateurish way. The Chief Minister has just confirmed all that. The Chief Minister said that he wants to alleviate public doubt. So do we.

Any examination of the public record or of what I have said in public forums where this has been raised will show the responsible way in which the opposition has handled this. At a recent luncheon for Northern Territory businessmen, a question was asked of me: 'You have certain information about past dealings with the Northern Territory Development Corporation which reflects badly on the corporation. Are you going to put a broom through it afterwards?' That question was raised by a Northern Territory businessman. He asked whether I would go to town in the Legislative Assembly if the government brings in these reforms. The attitude was that these people should still be held accountable if they have done the wrong thing. The answer I gave - and I am sure the Chief Minister could obtain confirmation of this because there were plenty of CLP people there - was no. I said no because our concern is to regain essential public confidence in the organisation.

Everyone with half an eye saw that the NTDC was heading for a major disaster. I think we got off very lightly. With a new minister, a new chairman and lawyers, bankers, special managers for financial and legal affairs, public accounting of loans and the details of those loans - profound changes - that public confidence should be restored.

I will mention another little matter which has profound implications on public confidence in a public lending authority. Politicians occupy a special place in any community in respect of public trust. That is fact. I would like any member of this Legislative Assembly to say that he does not consider that politicians are fair game above and beyond any other members of this community because of the positions we hold, particularly members of the government. We are fair game and rightly so. When members of a government - and all members will know I am referring to the honourable member for Alice Springs - publicly say that they have been given Cabinet approval to be part of a consortium obtaining a loan from the Northern Territory Development Corporation, that creates public doubt. I am not scandal mongering; I am stating facts that should be obvious to everybody. If the government is in any doubt as to how often this has been raised with me, let it talk to the people at these public forums that I have addressed where the NTDC was a hot topic. It is very bad public relations for the government. I was astounded by some of the public statements. Perhaps the honourable member could inform the Assembly whether he was wrongly reported. He is reported as saying: 'I was part of a consortium that got a loan to build a motel. We did get windfall profits from our loan from the NTDC. The reason we got windfall profits was' - and I am quoting the honourable member as he was reported in the Centralian Advocate - 'because we did not really want to sell the motel. We put a ridiculously high price on it and, to our great surprise, the people that were interested bought it anyway'.

However, that is kindergarten stuff. Doubt has been created publicly over Mr Dalziel and Buntine Roadways and it does not do the credibility of the NTDC any good when its loans are clouded under a veil of secrecy. I admit to being provoked into saying this by the Chief Minister. I refer to

the statement that this veil of confidentiality has only been removed because of the scandal raised by the opposition. What nonsense! It is being removed so that everybody knows precisely who has received the money, at what rates and what business they are in. That is exactly why it has happened, not because of any scandal but because of the ham-fisted way this government has handled the matter. A member of his own government party in this Assembly was prepared to stand up publicly and say: 'We received a loan from the NTDC. I benefited from that loan. The Cabinet said I could go ahead and do it. We put the price up through the roof and they still bought it, and that is why we got the windfall profit'. If that does not erode public confidence in a public lending authority, tell me what does? That is what I say in response to the Chief Minister's nonsense about scandal being brought to bear on the NTDC by this opposition.

Mr Speaker, it appears, from the little attention the Chief Minister finally gave in his address to the matter, that the changes that have been brought about in that organisation are long overdue and profound. They are very welcome changes indeed. I am relieved to hear that special banking consultants are now being used by the Northern Territory Development Corporation. In fact, there will now be a general manager of finance, a lawyer will be employed and special consultants will be used in all of these areas and special departments set up to handle them. Monthly reports will be made to the Chief Minister on loans that are made. I am glad that the responsible minister will be told, at long last, what the organisation does so that he can answer questions raised legitimately in the Assembly by the opposition. I am pleased to hear that details of loans of public money at beneficial rates of interest will be made available in the Northern Territory Development Corporation's report to the Assembly. All of those things will result in the desired end: greater public confidence and, therefore, greater success for that operation in the Northern Territory. That is all this opposition wants and ever wanted.

We look forward to receiving details of the review of the operations of the corporation and of the actual changes that will be made to the organisation, which appear to be considerable. At this stage, I would say that, from what the Chief Minister said about these changes at the end of his speech, they are welcome.

Ms D'ROZARIO (Sanderson): Mr Speaker, there remains very little to be said in reply to the Chief Minister's speech. A number of matters were taken up by the Leader of the Opposition. Whilst I am disappointed that the government does not support the bill I introduced in the last sittings of the Assembly, I am very pleased indeed that it had some effects which we hope will greatly improve the operation, efficiency and accountability of the Northern Territory Development Corporation.

We heard from the honourable Chief Minister that, in his opinion, the financial role of the NTDC very much overshadowed its other functions. That is hardly surprising. After all, it is its financial role which a number of its clients, applicants for loans or recipients of securities and guarantees, are most interested in. It is the matter in which the opposition is most interested. We are dealing with an organisation which has appropriated to it each year in the annual budget a large amount of money and it is not surprising that this Assembly should have an interest in the manner in which funds are spent and in the mechanisms used to safeguard them. Although it has always been acknowledged by the members on this side of the Assembly anyway that a large number of other functions are performed by the Northern Territory Development Corporation - such as business advice and provision of information to local industry on opportunities and marketing - its financial

role was, indeed, the most important. I am extremely pleased that the Chief Minister, as the minister now in charge of the Northern Territory Development Corporation, has taken steps in order to afford more accountability of the corporation to himself and to the Assembly.

Mr Speaker, the Leader of the Opposition has disposed very adequately of the question of why these new measures are necessary. It would be sufficient for me to say that it is not just the private inclination of members of the opposition to bring forward matters that are of concern to the business community and to Territory electors but, indeed, it is our public duty so to do. For the Chief Minister to declare that it was as a result of scandal mongering on our part that these measures have now been taken shows very little regard to the concerns that Territory business people have in the workings of the Northern Territory Development Corporation. So, Mr Speaker, it is pleasing to see that opposition initiatives can sometimes result in positive benefits.

Mr Speaker, if I might return to the financial role of the NTDC, which was canvassed at some length by the Chief Minister, there are a few points that I would like to take up. I am interested to see that the Northern Territory Development Corporation is to drop the phrase 'lender of last resort' from its annual reports, which is mainly where we find this term, and that it is to act virtually like any other lending institution, although still having regard, in all its lending policies, to the benefit of the Territory. This has implications beyond just words. This was one of the main problems that many business people raised with the Leader of the Opposition and myself. Although the Northern Territory Development Corporation published in its annual report that it acted as a lender of last resort, when some of the applications and projects that had been financed by the NTDC were looked at, it was revealed that this was clearly not the case. In my view, it is much more open and not at all sinister for the NTDC to say that within its particular objectives, it will lend like any other lending organisation. I commend the honourable the Chief Minister for outlining the objectives in such comprehensive detail.

Mr Speaker, we had also the information from the Chief Minister that methods of investigation of loan applications would be streamlined and tightened. I am very pleased to welcome this particular measure. Again, it was one of the sources of complaint from business people in the Territory. Many instances were laid before the honourable Leader of the Opposition and myself in respect of this particular issue. In a way, the acquisition of new skills by the board of the NTDC will also assist in this regard. However, I put forward a suggestion for the consideration of the Chief Minister. Where an application for a loan is being considered, the applicant should be given the opportunity to attend the board meeting at which his loan application is to be considered. It has been put to me - of course, I cannot vouch for the veracity of the impression that was given - that, in some cases, people had put forward applications for loans and the precise details of that person's business were not well understood by members of the board considering the application.

Mr Everingham: The application must have been defective.

Ms D'ROZARIO: Whether or not the application was defective, the matter could have been overcome simply by the person or his agent being given the opportunity of explaining any difficulties that board members may have had in relation to a particular person's business. The Chief Minister said that the application may have been defective. In answer to that, I point out that there are many different types of businesses and the details of businesses cannot be easily summarised. If the board is dealing at any one

time with a large number of such applications, it is highly likely that some details will not be recollected. It seems a very small concession indeed to ask that the person or his agent be given the opportunity of being present in order to clear up any misunderstandings.

In support of this request, I would point out that there are many areas in which statutory authorities work in this way. I can cite, for example, the operations of the Liquor Commission when it is considering applications for liquor licences. At such time, an applicant is permitted to appear before the commission to explain his case. It also happens in applications for planning approvals. In this particular case, a person may be very fairly treated at the particular hearing but, if he is not present, may gain the impression that there were some aspects of his application that were not understood. I would request the Chief Minister to give consideration to this particular issue which was raised with me by a very large industry group. We heard that the requirements for security and the giving of guarantees were to be maximised. Again, this was a matter which was continually raised with the Leader of the Opposition and myself. It came to a head in the case of the security given in respect of Buntine Roadways but it was certainly a matter which many business people thought could be better handled. The requirements for a security or a guarantee are simply there in order to safeguard the funds that are appropriated each year to the NTDC. I welcome the moves to have more stringent requirements in that area.

Mr Speaker, the Chief Minister also said that the loan management system would be reviewed and that the arrears would be monitored. He said that more information would be available to the Assembly in future about the activities of the NTDC. It was extremely gratifying to hear that statement from the Chief Minister because this has been the theme that the opposition has been following for over a year now. It is the very object that the opposition has hoped to achieve. In fact, this bill has been put forward on a premise that there should be more accountability to the Assembly from the NTDC.

We heard also that a full list of loans and guarantees will now be published in the annual report. This provision is similar to one in the bill. Whilst I am disappointed that the government does not support the bill, and it could have supported the bill with amendments, I am very pleased to see that many of the matters that we raised are being taken up. I would like to refer to a couple of them in more detail.

The Chief Minister said that the list of recipients of loans and guarantees would be published. This was the intention of clause 17(b) in my bill that was presented in the last sittings. We really wanted to achieve exactly this objective: a register of the money and resources, including loans and guarantees which had been issued by the corporation for any particular year. Although the government has not indicated support for my bill, it could have done so if it had moved for the defeat of the clause relating to quantitative targets.

The Chief Minister also said that he would receive monthly reports on accumulative liabilities and arrears of borrowers. This is much better than I had hoped for. If members had read the bill, they would have seen that, in clause 5, I was proposing that the corporation submit reports to the Treasurer 3 times a year. I am very pleased indeed to see that the Chief Minister is to have these reports submitted to him every month because the objective that we were attempting to achieve at that stage was greater accountability to the minister in charge of the NTDC.

Mr Speaker, I accept in part what the Chief Minister said in respect to quantitative targets. In the industrial context, where there is a very high degree of change and a greater need for creative and sophisticated solutions, perhaps quantitative targets could have been unduly restrictive in view of the other measures which have now been taken. But it was open to the Chief Minister to support the bill and invite defeat of that particular clause.

Nevertheless, the introduction of this bill has resulted in 1 or 2 very positive moves. The first was the removal of the former minister in charge. I think that everybody agrees that that was the appropriate action for the Chief Minister to have taken. The second is the acquisition of appropriate skills to the board itself. Many of the complaints raised related to the type of expertise available to the board of the NTDC. Further, a number of the initiatives raised by the opposition in this bill have been acceded to by the Chief Minister. Like the Leader of the Opposition, I look forward to the tabling of the consultant's report in this Assembly. At that time, we will be able to see whether the actual mechanics and the details of what the Chief Minister has said will in fact satisfy our requirements for greater accountability of the NTDC to this Assembly.

Motion negatived.

MINING AMENDMENT BILL (Serial 296)

Bill presented and read a first time.

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

The Mining Act was passed by this Assembly some time ago, and brought into operation on 1 July last year. It is this government's policy to keep legislation under constant review to ensure that it is operating effectively and with a view to making appropriate changes, where necessary, after a reasonable operation. The Mining Act has been in operation for nearly 9 months and, during that time, certain shortcomings have been noted. This bill is designed to eliminate those shortcomings. I would add that, with a few exceptions, the amendments do not constitute matters of policy but are what I would describe as machinery-type amendments to ensure the policy relating to mining is accurately reflected in the Mining Act.

The bill consists of a series of amendments to various sections. Whilst I do not propose to go through each amendment clause by clause, I will highlight a few of the more important changes. Most amendments are self-explanatory. However, should honourable members have any difficulties, I will be pleased to offer greater explanation in my reply or during the committee stage. I would add that most of the amendments have been discussed with the mining industry and some of the changes have been incorporated at its recommendation.

I would firstly draw members' attention to clause 3 which provides for the amendments to be effective from the commencement of the principal act. As a general policy, this government does not enact retrospective legislation but, in this case, certain of the amendments in this bill, particularly those relating to the transitional section 191, are considered vital. This is to ensure validity of actions already taken. However, I can assure honourable members that the retrospective effect of these amendments will not adversely affect people's rights. Indeed, they are designed to protect them.

The amendments to section 191 are potentially the most important in the bill. That section is concerned with the transitional matters relating to titles issued under the old Mining Act which are continued in force under the new act. These amendments are contained in clause 32 of the bill and the amendments proposed are primarily matters of legal interpretation. The problem particularly exists in relation to approved gold mining or mineral leases under the old act. Under the old act, most leases were granted subject to a survey being carried out and, in most cases, were never actually granted as a survey of the lease was not done. However, by definition, such approvals were deemed to be leases and were regulated by the act as such. Whilst this situation was to continue under the new act, the more likely interpretation is that such approved leases cannot be deemed to be leases and, therefore, are not subject to the provisions of the new act at all. This was never the intention and amendments are proposed to clarify this position.

Another important amendment is that contained in clause 9 which amends section 22. The act provides for the Territory to be divided into a series of blocks over which exploration licences may be applied for and granted. As the act stands, any grant made is in respect of whole blocks. This has caused difficulties where other boundaries, such as those of national parks, Commonwealth land and Aboriginal land, over which a power to grant an exploration licence may not exist, do not coincide with the actual boundaries of the block. The amendment will enable the minister to grant an exploration licence in respect of part of a block, thereby enabling the granting of licences up to those boundaries.

Sections 60 and 86, which relate to the granting of mineral leases and mineral claims, are to be amended to give the minister the power to determine the lengths of those titles. These amendments are contained in clauses 14 and 18. As these sections stand, the minister has the power to grant a title but, once he exercises his discretion, the term is fixed. In certain circumstances, some flexibility as to the term of a title may be necessary. However, I add by way of assurance to the industry that, in the normal course, titles will be issued for the maximum period.

Another change which should be welcomed by the industry is that contained in clause 22 which will amend section 107 to allow the granting of an extractive mineral permit over private land. As the act now reads, such permits may be issued only in respect of Crown land and this restriction has been found to cause inconvenience to the extractive industry, particularly where a small extractive operation is proposed on private land. The need, as is now the case, to obtain an extractive mineral lease in such circumstances is cumbersome and expensive. Of course, before such a permit will be issued over private land, the owner's consent will be required and the amendments contained in clauses 23 and 24 make provision for this.

Another important amendment is that contained in clause 30 which has important consequences and corrects an obvious oversight of the act. This clause repeals and replaces section 184 which is concerned with compensation payable to property owners for damage caused by mining. Whilst it was always intended that compensation be payable to an owner of private land, inadvertently the act makes provision only for compensation to be paid to a private landowner where a mineral lease is to issue in respect of his land. The amendment will rectify this omission and provide for compensation to be paid to an owner of private land in respect of all mining operations.

Finally, I refer to the amendment proposed in clause 31 which provides for the inclusion of a new section. This section will provide that, where an

owner of land cannot be located, his consent will be deemed to have been obtained provided the requirements of that section are complied with. The act requires an owner's consent before titles may be granted over his land. Where an owner cannot be located, for example in the case of some absentee landlord - and this problem exists particularly in relation to freehold titles granted during the latter part of the last century - then mining is effectively barred from taking place. I think honourable members will agree that, provided adequate steps are taken to ascertain the consent of an owner, mining should be able to proceed. I might add that the bill also provides for compensation to be made available to such an absentee owner of land in the event that he is found.

Mr Speaker, the amendments which I have mentioned are the most important in the bill. The others are mainly consequential or of a drafting nature. However, I will give further explanation of any of the amendments, if required, in my reply in the second-reading debate or during the committee stage. I commend the bill.

Debate adjourned.

DANGEROUS GOODS AMENDMENT BILL (Serial 276)

Continued from 24 November 1982.

Ms D'ROZARIO (Sanderson): Mr Speaker, the opposition supports this bill and the amendment schedule which was circulated a few days ago. The amendment deals with the disposal, destruction and rendering safe of goods designated by gazettal as being dangerous. As the then sponsor of the bill noted, the act was assented to in 1981 but has not been brought into operation because of the difficulty of drafting regulations without which it is quite ineffective. During the regulation-drafting stage, certain deficiencies in the principal act came to light and this amending bill seeks to rectify those deficiencies.

The bill is supported by the opposition because it adopts a more flexible approach to the important question of the disposal of hazardous goods and allows new technical solutions to be applied without reference to further amending legislation. The main provision of the bill is the substitution of division 3 of part III of the act which provided for the designation of disposal sites. This is now found in clause 7 of the amending bill. Under the original act, dangerous goods could only be disposed of or destroyed at designated disposal sites. The amending bill extends this provision by allowing the Chief Inspector to approve the disposal of dangerous goods at sites other than those designated as disposal sites. This provision allows for the disposal of dangerous goods on the site of production, provided the disposal, destruction or rendering safe occurs in accordance with the directions issued by the Chief Inspector. I support this provision and I think that it is as well to look at the circumstances under which such destruction could occur.

Anyone who has had any experience in the manufacturing and industrial sectors, even if it is very limited, will realise that the range of industrial wastes is very wide and their physical form is very large indeed. A single waste disposal site, a number of disposal sites in particular areas of the Territory or a particular method of disposal is unlikely to be sufficient for all the industries which will have a requirement to dispose of dangerous goods. In practical terms, a range of facilities is required and the type of facility will often be specific to the type of waste produced. Moreover, waste disposal siting and design considerations will often be critical to an

industry's ability to operate. If industries have specific arrangements for the disposal of waste from their operations, then it seems inappropriate to prevent them from disposing of waste by means of that particular facility that they have designed and constructed and insist that they use a gazetted disposal site. Again, disposal sites would have been expected to cope with a whole range of diverse waste products and disposal methods.

I believe that the transport of hazardous wastes from the site of their production to the site of their eventual disposal introduces another risk element. By permitting hazardous wastes to be disposed of on the site of their production, we can eliminate the risk from this particular component of industrial operation - that is, the transport of goods to be destroyed. Of course, this is effected quite well if supervised on-site disposal is allowed, which is the intention of this particular amending clause.

I think it is true to say that, in the minds of the public, the hazardous incidents which have been associated most often with fire, explosion and toxic emissions are the ones which give most concern and, by minimising the transportation requirements, these incidents could be reduced significantly as could the problems associated with the management of transport of these particular items.

Mr Speaker, the rendering safe of many types of industrial waste depends upon pre-treatment methods to a large degree. These methods often involve concentrating hazardous components either by physical separation or by a chemical reaction. Members would realise that this is often done in order to reduce hazardous waste to a more manageable form. The pre-treatment methods which are generally in use in industrialised places require very highly specialised and expensive equipment. I imagine that it would not be possible to provide this sort of equipment for all types of pre-treatments that were approved at one or a few disposal sites. I also think it would be desirable that these pre-treatment facilities be provided by the producers of waste rather than by the public. By permitting an approved site, as it is called in this bill, for the treatment of these dangerous goods, the liability on the public purse is reduced as well as putting the responsibility for hazardous waste disposal into the lap of those producing it.

Mr Speaker, this bill also addresses the question of bringing into effect codes of practice as they are developed. This is to be found in the section dealing with regulations. In the regulations, there is now provision that, where a set of standards, rules, codes or specifications is specified in the regulations that have been recommended, this could be brought into effect without further amending legislation. I believe that this is an essential provision in a dangerous goods act. It is essential to develop technically superior solutions to the problems of hazardous waste disposal and destruction. By allowing the Chief Inspector to have recourse to new sets of standards and codes of practice as they become available, the ability of the community adequately to dispose of dangerous goods will be much enhanced.

An important section, certainly as far as the public is concerned, is the new provision inserted by proposed section 45A which relates to the restoration of damage from spillage or leakage of dangerous goods. The act, as it presently stands, allows the Chief Inspector or the minister to put into effect what we might call emergency mechanisms for restoring damage but not necessarily for the long-term restoration of the damage done. I think that, again, public concern relates to the effect that these dangerous goods have on the environment and it is appropriate that there should be provisions which clearly specify who has responsibility for bearing the costs of this sort of accidental spillage. As far as new section 45A is concerned, the responsibility is again

clearly in the lap of the person who is disposing of the waste. This is effected by giving the Chief Inspector power to recover the cost of ameliorating damage caused by the leakage of dangerous goods from the person responsible for the leakage.

Mr Speaker, I think that there is no doubt that dangerous goods will be present in any industrial economy, but the test of community ingenuity is whether it can cope with the resulting hazards. I think, Mr Speaker, that these particular amendments are essential to enhance our ability to do so.

Mr D.W. COLLINS (Alice Springs): Mr Speaker, we are surrounded in the community by many changes many of which, I am pleased to say, the general public is not totally aware because we could be very frightened indeed. Some 10 or 11 years ago, when the Alice Springs High School was in its old location by the Todd River, a gentleman from water resources gave the school a lecture. It was at the time when 'pollution' was the in-word. He showed us a tiny bottle containing a few drops of a solution, and said that a few weeks earlier a petrol tanker had nearly come to grief at the 'big dipper' which was a treacherous bend in the old road north of Alice on the Stuart Highway going to Darwin. It was the scene of many accidents but has now been fixed. He said there was a quantity of poison in that huge petrol tanker equivalent to the volume in his tiny bottle. He said that, if it had got into the river system where the Charles River ran under the 'big dipper', it would have passed through the Todd River to the town basin. There would have been enough poison in that petrol to render the water supply of Alice Springs unusable. At that stage, we had just moved to the Mereenie field. That was the sort of danger that could have arisen. The general public was not aware that such a thing could happen. One could also bring in the idea of botulism, the anaerobic process by which certain bacteria can produce a poison so powerful that, it is said, one cupful of the concentrated solution could poison a whole city if it were introduced into the water supply. Certainly, such things are very frightening. As far as I am concerned, they are as frightening as problems stemming from nuclear warfare.

It is noted that the act has not yet been brought into operation because of the massive number of regulations needed under it. Improvements are contemplated in this amending legislation which will streamline and give greater efficiency to the working of the act. I am pleased to note also that there is nothing to detract from the spirit of the act, which is directed to protecting the safety of the community.

I note the wisdom of clause 7 which will allow for the disposal of dangerous waste materials on the site where they are produced. It is the commonsense thing to do wherever it is practical. Obviously, grave danger can result from an accident during the transportation of dangerous goods to an approved site. If the material can be rendered harmless on the spot, that makes a great deal of sense to me. I am also pleased to note that the Chief Inspector has the power, without any need of amendment to the act, to use new technologies, as they are developed, to more quickly and safely render dangerous goods safe.

The act will be further improved by throwing the onus for spillage and dumping on the person actually responsible for it. At present, the act simply says the area must be rendered safe where that has occurred. This will require rehabilitation of the area to the minister's satisfaction. That receives my full support.

I note in proposed section 20 that the Chief Inspector has control over imports and exports. In fact, the amendment says that prior approval must

be obtained from the Chief Inspector to import or export. I could not see the reason for restrictions on export but exporting requires transporting material within the Territory and it must be transported in a safe manner.

I am also pleased to note the flexibility which allows the Chief Inspector to vary licence conditions. He can lay down conditions at present but did not have the power to vary them as new situations arose. Passage of this legislation will allow for that.

It is a good thing that any appeals against the Chief Inspector can be handled by a magistrate. It seems to be the fairest and best way of doing it. Mr Speaker, I believe the amendments before us will improve the act and the bill has my full support.

Motion agreed to; bill read a second time.

In committee:

Clauses 1 and 2 agreed to.

Clause 3:

Mr ROBERTSON: I move amendment 147.1.

It will be obvious to the committee that this is to clarify the definition of the word 'premises'.

Amendment agreed to.

Clause 3, as amended, agreed to.

Clause 4:

Mr ROBERTSON: I move amendment 147.2.

The amendment clearly restates the provisions which are contained in the bill and provides for coverage not only of dangerous goods but of things associated with those dangerous goods as well.

Amendment agreed to.

Clause 4, as amended, agreed to.

New clause 4A:

Mr ROBERTSON: I move amendment 147.3.

The intention is to expand the minister's power to approve not only the declaration of goods to be dangerous but to approve the handling methods of those dangerous goods as well. It also allows for reference to codification or codes, as was mentioned in the second-reading debate by the honourable member for Sanderson. They are codes which are very familiar to the industry.

New clause 4A agreed to.

Clause 5 negatived.

New clause 5:

Mr ROBERTSON: I move amendment 147.4.

This substitutes 'approved notice' for the words 'prescribed notice' because such forms are normally of an administrative nature issued by the Chief Inspector rather than matters that would be done by regulation. It will also make references to 'dangerous goods' and 'prescribed dangerous goods' consistent throughout the clause.

New clause 5 agreed to.

Clause 6 negatived.

New clause 6:

Mr ROBERTSON: I move amendment 147.5.

Paragraph (i) is designed to correct the drafting. It is standard procedure to use the words 'notwithstanding anything contained in the act' rather than simply 'the Chief Inspector may'. Paragraph (ii) is also a drafting amendment to substitute 'the handling' for 'the use' because the act itself uses the term 'handling' rather than 'use'.

The amendment in subclause (b) provides for the repeal of subsection (2). The subsection required the Chief Inspector, before exercising his powers under the section, to specify the composition or character of the explosive in the document. The regulations will require the applicant for the authorisation to supply this information. The Chief Inspector will no doubt satisfy himself as to the relative safety of the explosive and there does not seem to be any value in requiring him to take this legislative step of specifying the composition in a formal written instrument.

Referring to subclause (c), there is no provision for the use of these materials other than in experimentation and research. Clearly, the intention was that it should apply to all users of the substances. Subclause (d) is consequential upon the amendment which will occur in (e). In other words, we are using the correct term 'handle' instead of 'use' and the penalty is again picked up in subclause (e). It extends to matters which are not authorised as well as to those which are authorised. Quite obviously, we would want to have control over dangerous substances or substances other than those which are authorised.

New clause 6 agreed to.

Clause 7 agreed to.

Heading:

Mr ROBERTSON: I move amendment 147.6.

The heading to division 4 of part III is obviously worded in that way to take account of future amendments.

Amendment agreed to.

Heading, as amended, agreed to.

New clause 7A:

Mr ROBERTSON: I move amendment 147.7.

The purpose of this is to extend provisions to cover all licensed premises mentioned under the act not just those used for the storage and manufacture of explosives and dangerous substances.

New clause 7A agreed to.

Clause 8 negatived.

New clause 8:

Mr ROBERTSON: I move amendment 147.8.

This matter was alluded to by the member for Sanderson. It covers matters relating to the spillage of goods in addition to other matters to be observed.

New clause 8 agreed to.

Clause 9 agreed to.

Clause 10:

Mr ROBERTSON: I move amendment 147.9.

Amendment agreed to.

Clause 10, as amended, agreed to.

Clauses 11 to 15 agreed to.

New clause 15A:

Mr ROBERTSON: I move amendment 147.10.

This is to allow the Chief Inspector to modify compliance conditions in the same manner as ministers do under various enactments in the Northern Territory. It is a fairly common provision in legislation.

New clause 15A agreed to.

Clause 16:

Mr ROBERTSON: I move amendment 147.11.

This relates to the adoption of codes by references to the purposes of the regulations. It is a little different from the earlier matters raised by the member for Sanderson when she referred to the use of codes in the regulations. This is for a reference to a code to be sufficient for the purposes of the regulations.

Amendment agreed to.

Clause 16, as amended, agreed to.

Clause 17:

Mr ROBERTSON: I move amendment 147.12.

Aircraft have been omitted and we need them included.

Amendment agreed to.

Clause 17, as amended, agreed to.

Remainder of the bill taken as a whole and agreed to.

Bill passed remaining stages without debate.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT AMENDMENT BILL
(Serial 280)

Continued from 24 November 1982.

Mr SMITH (Millner): Mr Speaker, this is a simple bill designed to bring the Alice Springs Town Council into line with other councils regarding the holding of elections. The purpose is to hold the local government elections on the last Saturday in May every 4 years.

Understandably, the opposition supports this bill. I would expect that the Alice Springs Town Council might appreciate the flexibility at this stage of running completely new elections because my understanding is that all members of the present council plus the Mayor have resigned, and it might be better for Alice Springs to make a fresh start. Under the legislation, that is not possible and by-elections will be held early in April.

Mr Speaker, all state and territory governments have made it compulsory that there be fixed-year terms for local government but they have not forced that imposition upon themselves. Whilst all local governments have fixed terms, no state, territory or federal governments have imposed fixed-term parliaments upon themselves. Perhaps it is time that consideration be given to the introduction of fixed-term legislation for this Assembly.

I understand that, in the reconvened constitutional convention to be held in Adelaide in April, this is one of the proposals being put forward by the new federal government. I would certainly appreciate hearing what the government's view in Adelaide will be - whether it will support fixed-term parliaments or oppose the initiatives that will be put forward by the federal Labor government.

From my point of view, I think fixed-term parliaments have a number of advantages. The most significant one is that they will stop the continual speculation in the second half of any government's term that the government might go early. We are all aware of the speculation that took place before the federal government finally went. We are all aware of the speculation that has been taking place and will continue to take place in the Territory about the prospect of an early election. Without wanting to comment on the validity of that speculation, I believe that it is damaging both to the government and the opposition that the speculation does take place because it must distract some of the attention of both the government and the opposition from the jobs that they are supposed to be doing.

I would invite comment from the government in reply in this debate on its attitude to fixed-term parliaments. Having said that, I indicate the opposition's support for the bill.

Mr TUXWORTH (Community Development): Mr Speaker, I thank the honourable member for his support of the bill and I am sure that the local councils will be pleased to know that he supports the 4-year fixed term for them. So far as our own Assembly is concerned, it is a matter that I would prefer to

address when we are debating an electoral amendment pertaining to this Assembly. I do thank the honourable member for his support.

Motion agreed to; bill read a second time.

Mr TUXWORTH (Community Development)(by leave): Mr Speaker, I move that the bill be now read a third time.

Motion agreed to; bill read a third time.

JUSTICES AMENDMENT BILL
(Serial 278)

Continued from 24 November 1982.

Mr B. COLLINS (Opposition Leader): Mr Speaker, the opposition largely supports this piece of legislation. However, there is one aspect of it on which I would like some comment from the minister who has charge of the bill. The bill is to a large extent concerned with machinery amendments that will facilitate various matters associated with the administration of justice in the Northern Territory. Reciprocal enforcement provisions regarding compliance in certain situations, setting of fees by regulation and provision regarding ex parte hearings are instances of this. Further provisions in the bill deal with the time limits for remand and extension of time limits where summonses can be served by post. These matters are non-contentious and have the support of the opposition.

But there will be one very important change to the Justices Act brought about by this legislation. Whilst not actually moving to amend the legislation, we are greatly concerned at the lack of evidence given in the second-reading speech to support this change which is quite serious. This change is the alteration to the law where an appeal is made from the decision of a magistrate to the Supreme Court.

Mr Speaker, following a decision of the Supreme Court in the case of Messel v Davern, it was established that an appeal under section 163 of the Justices Act would be heard by the Supreme Court as an appeal de novo. This means the Supreme Court hears the whole case as if it were an actual hearing, including an examination of the evidence. The amendment proposed will result in such appeals being limited in the sense that they will be appeals stricto sensu. This means that the appeal will be limited to an appeal on the basis of an error of fact, on the basis of an error of law or on the basis of an error of fact and an error of law. Appeals against sentence are retained.

The practical effect of this change is simply that it is harder to appeal. It is a fact of life that magistrates' courts are busy. In fact, if any part of the judicial system is overloaded, it is the magistrates' courts. This is understandable and, in the majority of cases, no doubt, justice is done. However, there are some cases where, demonstrably, this is not so.

Mr Speaker, since in the Northern Territory there is no intermediate jurisdiction, as there is in other states where the task of review falls to the Supreme Court, it is suggested that the fact that the case will be reviewed as a new hearing will in itself provide a strong incentive for the magistrate to ensure that proper consideration is given in the first instance. Under the suggested system, it is easier for a magistrate to design his judgment in such a way as to defeat any appeal from it. In view of the fact that there is no intermediate review, the balance should weigh heavier on the side of the person, and the existing style of review, in our opinion,

should be retained.

I have raised this criticism before in respect of changes such as this: little evidence is given in the minister's second-reading speech to support this change. It is interesting in that context to search out the reasons for the change given in his second-reading speech, which of course is what we have to go on here. In my view, in the minister's second-reading speech, no evidence exists for the need for the change. All that is found in the speech is a series of speculations and the comfort that, in the Northern Territory, all magistrates are lawyers. I quote: 'If a defendant has 2 complete hearings, problems may occur. If the legal system allows the hearings de novo, the court system may become cluttered with defendant appellants who wish to have 2 hearings instead of 1 and court costs may increase because the case would have to be presented twice'. I would put to the honourable minister that that is hardly compelling evidence for requiring such a distinct change in the law to the disadvantage of the person who is on trial. It is pure speculation. I would like to hear from the minister evidence as to cases in the Northern Territory where this has occurred. I would like to hear evidence as to where frivolous appeals have been made or appeals have been made that have tied up the Supreme Court in unnecessary work. No such evidence has been provided in support of this change in his second-reading speech. There is just 1 paragraph of speculation as to what may happen in the future - I add we have been working under this for some time - if this clause is left unchanged.

I am concerned. Perhaps either the minister or the Chief Minister can provide some detail and facts, rather than speculation in the debate on this bill, that would indicate that change is necessary now rather than speculating that it may be some time in the future.

Mr HARRIS (Port Darwin): Mr Speaker, I rise to speak in support of this bill. I would like to ask the Attorney-General if he has received any comment from the Law Society about these particular amendments. I also had a problem with clause 23 and I wonder if he has received any comment on that clause. I believe that it is a very important provision to have. To have a person convicted through our court system and then be acquitted on appeal because of a technicality is not what justice is all about. However, it could be argued that technical detail plays a big part in the law. Whether or not it is right that we remove that provision from the statute books, I cannot say. Personally, I believe that our society demands that people be given a fair trial and, where further evidence is required to be presented, the opportunity should be there for that to happen. I support that but I would like to hear what someone in the profession thinks about clause 23 because it could be argued that that is what the law is all about. As far as I am concerned, it is definitely not what justice is about.

Mr Speaker, I would like to comment on the bill itself. Clause 7 is very interesting because section 27A has been before this Assembly on a number of occasions. It would appear that, at long last, we have come to grips with the 'nomadic not' as the Chief Minister referred to it in a previous debate. It appears that the 'not' is not where it was supposed to be in the first place. However, I trust that the problem of time restraints on the issue of summonses has been put to rest once and for all. In relation to clause 9, I have spoken to the minister about a proposal that I have put forward. I see an amendment schedule circulating which would cover that proposal. My understanding was that we were looking at a situation whereby any justice, not just the justice before whom an offender appeared in the first instance, would be able, if necessary, to defer or adjourn a defendant's hearing and remand that defendant. If we look at proposed new section 61, we find that that is not the case. It is quite clear, in that section,

that the justice before whom the defendant appeared in the first instance is the one who will have to remand the defendant. What happens if that particular justice becomes ill or, for some other reason, is unable to be there? I am pleased to see that this will be rectified.

Clause 12 is aimed at improving court procedures. When we are seeking to improve court procedures, it is important to ensure that we do not in any way place our judicial system at risk. Clause 13 can be seen as a means of ensuring that that will not happen. However, there does appear to be an inconsistency in the clause. We see in proposed new section 63A(2) that the court sets the time and the place for a hearing of an application and the court is responsible for giving written notice. However, in clause 63A(7), we see that the court is in fact directing the applicant to give notification to the other parties. I believe that the court should be responsible. I have spoken to the Attorney-General about this and it is now covered in the amendment schedule. With those comments, I support the bill.

Mr EVERINCHAM (Chief Minister): Mr Speaker, I did not expect to speak on this bill because I understood it was non-contentious. Since hearing the comments of the Leader of the Opposition, I have had a look at it again and have had the benefit of a couple of words with the draftsman.

I do not think the bill contains any sinister purpose as possibly imputed by the Leader of the Opposition. He said he opposed portions of it because it apparently precluded the hearing de novo of a case - which had already been heard before a magistrate - by the Supreme Court on the hearing of the appeal. That is as I understood the Leader of the Opposition. If I am incorrect, I am quite happy to hear an interjection from him.

He also said, as though there were some magic to it, that the Northern Territory has no intermediate jurisdiction and matters go straight from magistrates to the Supreme Court. Long may that be so, Mr Speaker. In Victoria, for instance, some magistrates are not lawyers. All magistrates, whether they be lawyers or otherwise, write out what is going on in court in a bench book. There is no other record or deposition. Much the same situation prevails in New South Wales and Queensland. New South Wales may be moving slowly towards a magisterial service which is comprised entirely of lawyers, but I am almost certain that such is not yet the case.

In the Northern Territory the magistrate's court is comprised of qualified lawyers, and in every court, even in remote localities where the court sits on circuit, the proceedings are recorded on tape. We have an excellent system whereby the magistrate has a facility at his disposal for ensuring an accurate recollection of the proceedings. Unless he makes his decision and gives his reasons extempore, he can do it when the tape is transcribed for him. A secret hope of mine was that judges would start doing that more often. They used to do it a bit in the old days but I suppose it took 6 months in the old days too.

I cannot see any possible benefit of having an intermediate jurisdiction, such as a district court. In their civil jurisdiction, they can preside over cases involving amounts up to \$20 000. From memory that is the limit of the district court jurisdiction in Queensland. We have what amounts to a summary and intermediate jurisdiction rolled into one with better facilities than those that exist in any intermediate court almost anywhere in Australia. In fact, criminal trials in places like New South Wales take years to come before the district court. Indeed, that applies to the Supreme Court. I cannot see what harm there is in appeals from our Court of Summary Jurisdiction to the Supreme Court. Of course, above the Supreme Court, there are 2 further tiers

of appeal: the Federal Court and the High Court. Indeed, as the Territory grows, probably there will be another tier of appeal below the Federal Court: the Territory's own Full Supreme Court. I am not anxious to see an intermediate tier introduced here in the Territory. I think that it is better to strengthen our lower courts and our Supreme Court where necessary.

Mr Speaker, I hope I have satisfied the Leader of the Opposition that intermediate courts are not necessarily the best things to have. In the states they exist as a desperate measure to alleviate the pressure of business on the Supreme Court but now they have too much pressure of business themselves so everyone is in a mess.

Let us consider the hearing de novo. Clause 16 reads: 'A party to proceedings before the court may appeal to the Supreme Court from a conviction, order or adjudication of the court' - that is almost anything - 'on a ground which involves (a) sentence; or (b) an error or mistake, on the part of the Justice whose decision is appealed against, on a matter or question of fact alone, or a matter or question of law alone, or a matter or question of both fact and law'. No fairer or broader provisions could be found in respect of appeal. Appeals are allowed only on questions of fact or law, one or the other or both. What other appeals are there?

Let us examine clause 23 dealing with procedure and power of the Supreme Court on appeal, which interests the honourable Leader of the Opposition more, although he is also interested in clause 22 relating to evidence to the Supreme Court. It empowers the Supreme Court, in certain circumstances, to receive new evidence. In my view, an appellant court should not have a totally unfettered discretion to receive new evidence. After all, a case must be tried at some stage. The party should be ready for the trial and not leave it all to the appeal. Otherwise, litigation will go on forever.

Clause 23 states: 'substituting the following: "(d) remit the case for hearing or for further hearing before the Court of Summary Jurisdiction ..."'. The Supreme Court, whilst not being empowered to retry the matter itself - which I think is proper because I do not think lower court matters should be retried in the Supreme Court; it is not really heard of elsewhere - may remit the case, if it believes it is being mishandled, for further hearing in the Court of Summary Jurisdiction which is the proper place for it to be reheard. That is not uncommon elsewhere.

Proposed new section 177(2)(f) says: 'notwithstanding that it is of the opinion that the point raised in the appeal might be decided in favour of the appellant, dismiss the appeal if it considers that no substantial miscarriage of justice has actually occurred'. That is to get rid of the nit-picking appeal. Courts and laws are fallible. The practice of medicine is fallible. Magistrates make mistakes. Judges have throw-away lines too. We pick them up from time to time in transcripts even in this part of the world. On reflection, not all of them might have said every word attributed to them. But where no miscarriage of justice has occurred, what is the point of allowing an appeal?

Mr Speaker, that is all I have to say. I really do not think there is anything sinister about this legislation at all. I am sorry if I impute that to the Leader of the Opposition. I really do not think it takes away any rights. It just provides a more formalised, sensible and practical procedure which, in my opinion, is more in line with what goes on in the rest of Australia.

Motion agreed to; bill read a second time.

In committee:

Clauses 1 to 8 agreed to.

Clause 9:

Mr ROBERTSON: I move amendment 149.1.

Mr Chairman, you, Sir, were the catalyst for both these amendments. Obviously, it is a provision to provide for a justice other than the justice who heard the matter to state the need for further remand.

Amendment agreed to.

Clause 9, as amended, agreed to.

Clauses 10 to 12 agreed to.

Clause 13:

Mr ROBERTSON: I move amendment 149.2.

This is a matter which you raised, Sir. The government accepts your proposition that it ought to be the responsibility of the Clerk of Courts to inform the parties of adjournments and so on rather than the parties to the action themselves having to do it.

Amendment agreed to.

Clause 13, as amended, agreed to.

Clauses 14 and 15 agreed to.

Clause 16:

Mr B. COLLINS: Mr Chairman, just briefly, I will once again correct the record. The Chief Minister certainly does become rather tiresome by ascribing statements to me that I have never made and then answering them. I am not opposing the clause, as the Chief Minister suggested. If I were opposing the clause, there would be an amendment schedule in front of the committee saying that I am opposing the clause. I have not suggested any sinister motive to this legislation, as again has been attributed to me by the Chief Minister. I am not suggesting that there should be an intermediate tier of courts. Reference to Hansard will show that I suggested nothing of the sort. That is 3 strikes out of 3. I am not suggesting that there is any black magic involved in this particular clause as was suggested by the Chief Minister.

I simply raised, as I have done before in matters affecting the Attorney-General's legislation, a complaint that I have made in respect of the Chief Minister previously. That is that he did not provide, and has not done so on this occasion, sufficient material in his second-reading speech to justify the changes he is seeking to make in the legislation. If the Chief Minister had listened to what I said - what I thought was a fairly mild statement - he would have found that that in fact was the cause of the complaint. I am not opposing the clause or suggesting that the legislation is sinister.

I thank him for the explanation he has just given. Perhaps he could have avoided this by giving it at the time that he introduced the bill to the Legislative Assembly. I have an interest in the law. I am certainly not

qualified to debate with the Chief Minister. He is a lawyer and I am not. He certainly knows more about the law than I do. I simply point out to him that there has been a case which interested me. It received a considerable degree of public interest: Messel's case. It was established that an appeal under section 163 of the Justices Act would be heard as an appeal de novo. There is a difference between an appeal de novo and the appeal that I subsequently referred to in that the Supreme Court does have the ability in the former case to re-examine the evidence. If the Chief Minister as a lawyer is prepared to tell me that I am wrong about the law on that point, I will sit down covered with shame and embarrassment. Perhaps he can tell me if I am wrong about the difference between the 2 forms of appeal. I reiterate that I am not opposing the clause. I simply asked for more information.

Mr Chairman, the additional information that I required from the Chief Minister in the rather mild comments I made to the minister who now has charge of the bill has been supplied by the Chief Minister. Therefore, I am satisfied.

Clause 16 agreed to.

Remainder of the bill taken as a whole and agreed to.

Bill passed remaining stages without debate.

POLICE ADMINISTRATION AMENDMENT BILL
(Serial 281)

Continued from 24 November 1982.

Mr B. COLLINS (Opposition Leader): Mr Speaker, I have an objection to this piece of legislation. Many citizens of the Northern Territory have raised with me their concern about the direction in which the government is going. It was mentioned to me at the last Darwin Show. People have talked about the Northern Territory becoming a grossly over-legislated place in which to live. People have called it a police state. I think that comment is excessive, Mr Speaker, but this proposed change to the legislation certainly smacks of it.

The substantial amendment proposed by this bill is the deletion of the existing provisions in relation to circumstances in which a person may be apprehended under the Police Administration Act where that person is being apprehended because of his intoxication through alcohol or a drug. The purpose of the amendment is to remove the criteria that are in place in the act as a guide for the judgment of members of the Police Force and also as an indicator of the circumstances in which a citizen should be liable to apprehension. They are to be removed and replaced with a general clause of quite startling breadth that would give increased power to the police to deal with persons who are, in the view of the police officers, simply intoxicated.

Perhaps we will have more elucidation from the Chief Minister in the debate than was contained in his second-reading speech. It is difficult to see from reading that speech any justification for this amendment. The Chief Minister says - and I look forward to his expanding on this - that the existing grounds for apprehension under section 128 are restrictive and have presented difficulties in practical application. He said the legislation was restrictive. However, this statement does not accord with his own advice to me, in December last year in reply to a question on notice, regarding the administration of the Police Administration Act. Without going into that question, which was quite detailed, the Chief Minister advised me that, in

the period 1 August 1979 to 31 July 1980, 14 149 persons were apprehended under the current provisions of the act. In the period from 1 January 1981 to 31 December 1981, 13 980 people were apprehended. In the period from 1 January 1982 to 30 September 1982 - not a whole calendar year - 12 679 persons were apprehended. The record would tend to show quite the opposite to what the Chief Minister suggested. With those thousands of apprehensions, the current provisions of the law seem to be working with remarkable efficiency.

Mr Speaker, the Chief Minister says that the current provisions are restrictive and have presented difficulties in the practical application of the act. From those figures which were supplied to me by the Chief Minister, and bearing in mind the overall population of the Northern Territory, it seems quite nonsensical to assert that there have been problems with the practical application of the law. With 14 000 apprehensions in 12 months, it seems to be rather a dubious proposition. To the contrary, it seems to me that there are no problems at all. Indeed, on face value, the figures arouse some concern in relation to the per capita application of this law.

The amendment before the Assembly allows a police officer, who has reasonable grounds for believing that a person is intoxicated by alcohol or a drug, and that person is in a public place or trespassing on private property, to apprehend him. Since 'intoxicated' is not defined in this act, and again I am prepared to be told I am wrong on that, this again would be a matter of interpretation by the police officer. In contrast to this situation, there is a definition of 'intoxication' under the private member's bill that I introduced earlier today which states that 'intoxicated' means 'seriously affected, apparently by a liquor'. This requires a degree of evidence as far as the court is concerned. But there is no definition of 'intoxicated' under this act.

The point here is that, in my view, simple intoxication should not be a matter which should give rise to a person being apprehended by the police. One can imagine, without too much difficulty, the potential for abuse of the provision. The amendment says that any person who is intoxicated, as opposed to being a public drunk and a nuisance, would be liable to apprehension by the police and would have very little recourse under these provisions. I think honourable members should direct their minds to the fact that it is not intoxication itself that is the social problem but public drunkenness. There is a difficulty in isolating those factors. It is the behaviour of a person that should be looked at and no doubt that is the reason for the existing provisions in the Police Administration Act.

Honourable members will also recall that, under the bill debated earlier today, there was a provision in clause 4 that dealt with the circumstances in which a person could be apprehended by the police. I believe that those are the only circumstances in which a person should be apprehended by police. I believe the expanded, all-embracing provision here - which says that, if, in the opinion of a policeman, a person is intoxicated, he can be taken to the police station - is unacceptable.

Mr Speaker, let me make it quite clear that I am not saying that persons who behave in a reckless or anti-social way should not be dealt with by the police. I am not saying that. There are sufficient safeguards in existing law for this to occur. If people behave in such an unlawful way, they should be dealt with according to law whether or not they are drunk. To simply have the power to haul someone off to the police station because, in the opinion of the police officer, that person is intoxicated, without any behavioural provisions being laid on the police at all, is absolutely ridiculous

and outrageous.

Mr Speaker, I cannot support the proposed amendment to section 128(1) of the Police Administration Act. I refute the assertion of the Chief Minister that, with a recorded 14 000 apprehensions a year under the existing provisions of the act, those provisions are restrictive and difficult to enforce. Just how many thousand people does the Chief Minister want the police to lock up?

Mr Robertson: That's an odd statement.

Mr B. COLLINS: Perhaps the Attorney-General can advise the Assembly just how many thousand Territorians the Chief Minister wants the police to lock up without any requirement on behaviour, as is currently required in the act, being imposed on the Police Force? The Chief Minister has said in this Assembly many times that the police are required to exercise their judgment and some guidance needs to be given to them by legislation. If I were a police officer considering the requirements in current legislation, my interpretation of this amendment would be that the legislation is removing from me any requirement to consider the behaviour of a person in respect of a decision I have to make as to whether or not to take him into custody. It is that requirement that is being taken out. The only requirement placed on me as a police officer under this amendment is that, if a person is intoxicated, that is sufficient justification for me to apprehend that person and take him to the police station.

Currently under the act, there are some guidelines given to police. To refer to my amendment which is similar to the existing provision, the person, as well as being intoxicated, must be behaving in a manner which is likely to cause injury to himself or be in need of physical protection etc. We all know that provisions exist for straight out street offences whether the persons are drunk or not. To remove all those strictures on the police is insupportable. We know that the courts and the police are guided by what this Legislative Assembly does. This amendment clearly indicates that the only thing the police need to take into consideration is intoxication. We have seen previous legislation that could be subject to abuse but this one is a beauty.

I would like from the Attorney-General or the Chief Minister some advice on the matter that I raised earlier. If there are 14 000 apprehensions a year under the existing legislation, how can it be regarded as restrictive? I would also like to know what sort of guidelines will be laid down for the police in the administration of this legislation - whether they will be trained in its use and the apprehension of people under it.

Mr HARRIS (Port Darwin): Mr Speaker, I would like to speak in support of the bill. At one stage or another, every member of this Assembly has commented on the serious problem that we have with alcohol and drug abuse. I think that all members are very serious in their comments and in trying to solve the problem. However, we appear to have different ideas on what the best method would be. In 1974, the decision to remove drunkenness as an offence was taken because drunks were seen to be getting a raw deal. The reason it was removed was so it would not be seen as a criminal offence. I support that. However, there is no doubt that the majority of people still regard drunkenness as an offence against society.

When the amendment was passed in 1974 to decriminalise drunkenness, it was disappointing that the members' comments relating to detoxification centres and other halfway houses were not taken up. If that had happened at

the time, perhaps we would not have some of the problems that we have today. However, that is history and we must come to grips with the present very serious problem.

I do not agree with the Leader of the Opposition in regard to the protective custody laws. They just do not work at the moment. This particular provision has been before the Assembly on a number of occasions. I can remember at least 2 occasions when amendments have been made to that provision because it had not been able to work. The changes that are being suggested here are an attempt to correct that situation.

I have had numerous arguments with the Leader of the Opposition and media members about this particular provision. Many people cannot see the difficulty. Unless one knows a person and how he will react when he has drunk excessive amounts of liquor, there is no way that one can determine what he will do. That is where the problem lies.

It is very difficult to resolve this issue because it is an extremely emotional one. I have become emotional on occasions. When the Leader of the Opposition introduced the bill that we debated this morning, I interjected throughout his speech. I did so because I felt that he was putting across something that was not correct. Prior to June 1982, it was always against the law to drink in public places. However, that is another issue. It is an extremely emotional issue and that makes it difficult to discuss the problem and arrive at a consensus.

The other problem which makes it difficult is the fact that alcohol and drugs affect people to different degrees. All of us have seen the situation where a person at a party is sitting in a corner having a few drinks throughout the evening. Next minute, he is the life of the party. We all welcome that person and, in that situation, we would thank him for having consumed so much liquor and brightening up the party. Other people tend to become aggressive, offensive or, in some cases, downright dangerous. They are the ones whom we are trying to remove from the system for a period of time. The other type of drunk is the fellow who crashes down in the corner. Whilst such persons may display their wares to all the world, they do not really cause any great problems to anyone. Thus, it is difficult to assess what a person will do under the influence of excessive alcohol.

It is very interesting that, when we discussed the random breath-testing issue in this Assembly, we arrived at a consensus very quickly, yet the same problems that I have just mentioned existed at that time. First of all, it was a far more emotional issue than the one we are discussing today - and there are still grumblings around the traps about that. There was also the problem that some could hold liquor better than others. There is no doubt that the blood-alcohol content issue is still a very real concern within the community. There was a third problem in the random breath-testing issue because there was money involved. Many of the pubs and clubs feared they would lose some of their regular customers who would be frightened of being caught driving under the influence.

There was no discretion given to the police and we debated that in the Assembly. The Leader of the Opposition could have said that, if the person has a reading of 0.08, he should be made to walk a line or the police could judge that he was still able to drive a car safely. I raise that issue because some people who are well and truly over 0.08 are still quite capable of driving a car in a safe manner whilst there are people who should not be driving a car when they have a blood-alcohol level of only 0.04. As far as discretion is concerned, that is the problem we have now. In that case, we

did not give the police any discretion. If a person had a reading of 0.08 or more, he had committed an offence. I believe that that is something that we should have considered during the debate. I could see the difficulty; I know a line had to be drawn somewhere. We accepted that 0.08 was the blood-alcohol level where a person should not be permitted to drive a vehicle.

I raise the random breath-testing issue today to point out that we have come to grips with the problem relating to alcohol. It was an emotional issue in that some people hold liquor better than others. We were able to come to grips with that particular problem and, despite the rumblings in the community at present, the law is able to work. There was no discretion. The only reason that it has been able to work is that there was a definite direction that 0.08 was the limit. We did not have to look into crystal balls or anything else. It was fact.

Mr Speaker, the same principle applies when we are removing drunken persons from the streets. Unless the law gives some direction, it cannot work. That is what is difficult for the opposition to understand. I accept that there are problems with it but, unless some direction is given, it will not work. The only way it could work is if one knows the person who has been drinking. If one knows the effect that liquor has on that person, one can determine how he will react.

Another point that needs to be emphasised is that the situation is not the same as it was years ago. There is an alternative to jail. There are halfway houses. The government is looking at the problem at present. It will not be a case of people being locked up. They will be taken to these places if they fit into one of these categories. Having that option is very important; not all drunks will be placed behind bars. The other thing to remember is that the rights of a person, once he is taken into protective custody, are preserved.

I would be the first to say that we have a long way to go in solving the problems of alcohol and drug abuse but I feel that we are moving in the right direction. The amendment before us should solve, once and for all, the problems that we have had in policing the protective custody provisions. We now have an alternative to jail and the rights of the people will be protected. Under these circumstances, I believe that the proposal is quite reasonable.

I am not being bloody-minded about this; I am trying to be sensible about it. I do not believe that we can legislate on any assessment of how a person will react to excessive consumption of alcohol. We cannot place someone in a position where he must make a decision as to what will happen to a person when he wakes up. I do not believe that can work at all - the courts would not accept that as evidence. The same arguments are raised time and again yet the protective custody provisions continually crop up in the Assembly. That, in itself, is good reason to believe that the law is not working as it is supposed to work. What the opposition is really saying - and this disappoints me a little - is that it still believes that drunks should be allowed to remain in the streets. I do not accept that.

Mr B. Collins: Neither do I.

Mr HARRIS: I know the Leader of the Opposition does not accept that. The only way to ensure that that does not happen is to support the amendments that we have before us.

Mrs LAWRIE (Nightcliff): Mr Speaker, I do not remember anyone ever accusing the honourable member for Port Darwin of bloody-mindedness. It is

an adjective that has been thrown around amongst ourselves but so far he has been exempt.

I do not support this legislation. If a person is simply intoxicated in a public place, is doing no harm to himself, showing no signs of doing harm to someone else, showing no intention of getting behind the wheel of a motor vehicle and is not being objectionable to any other person in any way, why should he need to be taken into protective custody, the marvellous catch-all that the member for Port Darwin seems to think is so important? If a person needs protection either from himself or another or demonstrates a propensity towards being a public nuisance, that is already adequately covered under the relevant section of the Police Administration Act and no further amendment is necessary. The Leader of the Opposition was quite right in drawing to the attention of members that those provisions exist at the moment. They have been working because thousands of people have been treated to short stints of protective custody under those provisions.

The sponsor of the bill did not give any clear indication to the Assembly why we should now pass an amendment which means that simply being intoxicated in a public place renders one liable to incarceration. Honourable members must be aware of the distinction. It is not behaviour because that is already covered. It is simple intoxication that will now render one liable to a few hours in the cell or halfway house. That will be an interesting exercise on New Year's eve when certain public roads are blocked off and a couple of thousand citizens of Darwin are in various stages of intoxication. They will be happy and causing no harm. We will need to build a mighty big holding cell that night because that is the import of this proposed amendment. The problem with the Chief Minister is that, once he has made his mind up, he will never listen to anybody who opposes him.

It has to be said again. Simple intoxication will now mean that one is liable to be taken without warrant by a member of the Police Force and be deprived of one's liberty. That is notwithstanding the absence of anti-social behaviour, other than that sinful intoxication.

Mr Speaker, the analogy which the honourable member for Port Darwin attempted to draw with the debate on the breathalyser is non-existent. The breathalyser legislation has nothing to do with whether one is drunk or not in charge of a motor vehicle. The Chief Minister stated that at the time. It is simply whether one's blood-alcohol level has reached the limit of 0.08 or not. It has nothing to do with drunkenness.

If we remove the other guidelines given to our police to determine intoxication, then it becomes extremely difficult for them to judge whether or not to take a person into protective custody. Under the Police Administration Act as it stands, if a member of the Police Force has reasonable grounds to believe that a person is intoxicated and may come to harm or perpetrate a mischief upon some other person, then he is empowered to take that person into protective custody and thus stop him from offending the general public. When we remove those guidelines, we do not make it easier for members of the Police Force: we make it a hell of a lot harder because the only guideline they will have is whether a person is intoxicated or not. Intoxication is not defined by blood-alcohol level. That does not come into it. It is a subjective judgment which will vary from policeman to policeman and from subject to subject and it will make their duties a lot more onerous.

The honourable member for Port Darwin spoke of the various reactions of people after consuming alcohol. Some become the life of the party and some become morose, decide the whole world is against them and sip their beer in the corner. Other people, given external stimulus, can also become the life

of the party and speak with wit and expertise on any subject. They simply respond to the external stimulus around them, to other people's conversation. The honourable member for Port Darwin will be well aware that one can be placed in the company of drones and find it very difficult to carry on an intelligent conversation. When one is placed in the company of delightful, intelligent, witty, articulate people, one responds in kind. That is a very human reaction.

Mr Speaker, we will now be faced with people walking down the mall feeling very happy and without having had one drink of alcohol or one little puff of pot. For them it is a plus-10 day. They got out of bed feeling tremendous. They are Scorpio and it is Scorpio's day. Now I have seen people give a little jig in the mall. I have even been known to do it without a trace of alcohol. It could not be said I was posing any threat to myself or those around me. If I had had one drink, the smell of alcohol on my breath might lead some zealous person to conclude I was intoxicated. There is nothing in this legislation about 0.08. No one can prove whether I am or not. A subjective judgment, withdrawing the other guidelines, will make it so much more difficult for the Police Force.

The only good point in this whole sorry affair is that I do not think the police will take the slightest bit of notice of this amendment. They cannot, otherwise they will be locking up 80% of the population of Darwin on New Year's eve and 85% of Darwin's population on the celebration of self-government. If they see a crowd of happy people who have had the odd drink, how will they judge whether they are intoxicated or not? They need the other guidelines that a person is posing a threat either to himself or to the wider community. I think the police will act with their normal sensitivity and decline to take into protective custody people who are only thought to be intoxicated with no other signs of aberrant behaviour.

Mr D.W. COLLINS (Alice Springs): Mr Speaker, I think that in any judgment whatsoever about drunks and the way we treat them in the Northern Territory, we are very kind indeed. One could look at a couple of so-called enlightened countries in this world of ours, such as the Soviet Union and, far worse, Iran, to see how they treat their drunks. Then one would see what we are driving at.

Members may be aware of what happened to some Europeans who were involved in a drinking party in Iran and were caught out when somebody was killed. We are particularly kind to drunks. We do not arrest them. We simply take them into protective custody. Those words sum up the real attitude. We look after them but we also look after the general public.

In fact, as the law exists, there are many provisions favouring the drunk: he can be handed over to a responsible person and he cannot be held longer than 6 hours without going before a magistrate, unless the midnight to 7.30 am provision is enforced. Generally, a person will have a bed to sleep on, be provided with food and have the opportunity to clean up. We are very kind to drunks. We do not charge the drunken person. But drunkenness is regarded by the public as offensive, particularly in situations where fighting, abusive language and violence are involved.

Mrs Lawrie: But that is covered.

Mr D.W. COLLINS: True, it is covered, but listen further. I do not believe that it is any crime, as is sometimes hinted, for people to want to live in a peaceful town which they are proud to belong to. But some would denigrate those who object to drunkenness. There is a weakness in the protective custody

law that we have before us: the police must look into a crystal ball. The so-called guidelines which have been mentioned are not very good guidelines. Anybody actually behaving in an offensive manner should go automatically into protective custody. But as the law stands, an officer is required to satisfy himself that a person is likely to act offensively. That makes it very difficult for the police officer. He has to guess whether this person, who may be acting in a fairly quiet manner, will do something which would put him in danger. It may be nothing more than a sudden lurch between a couple of motor cars. He is supposed to judge what this person is likely to do.

An intoxicated person is someone who is suffering from self-induced insanity. An insane person is hardly capable of knowing what he will do from one moment to the next. We will put the police in the position of guessing what the behaviour might be. If police have to shadow drunks, it will be very time-consuming and costly. I believe we should make their job a lot clearer and a lot easier. If people are acting in a manner which will bring harm to themselves or property and are a nuisance to people, it is clear cut and covered. But we are creating a situation where the police must decide whether a person is likely to do those things. That is a very difficult job.

We are not quite clear what simple intoxication means. It has been mentioned by 2 of the speakers opposite. You are either intoxicated or you are not. The police must decide. It was hinted by the Leader of the Opposition that police do not have any wisdom; that they love nothing better than ...

Mr B. Collins: I said the opposite, twit.

Mr SPEAKER: That is not a parliamentary term.

Mr B. Collins: No, but it is a fair description.

Mr SPEAKER: I request the honourable member to withdraw the remark.

Mr B. Collins: I do so unreservedly, Mr Speaker.

Mr D.W. COLLINS: The police will not be rushing off to put people into protective custody if they do not believe that they are likely to be in some danger. They will make that judgment. I believe they have been doing it to a degree already. It was imputed that, to be dragged off to the police station, will cause concern. Well, if people do not want to be dragged off to the police station for being drunk, then they ought to do their drinking on private premises and not in public. That is the solution.

As far as I am concerned, it is a matter of balance between the drunks and the general public. I believe that the legislation is very much in favour of the drunken person. He receives considerable sympathy. I believe the general public needs to be considered. The general public widely supports this legislation and wants the police to have the power to take these people into protective custody, particularly as it is well aware that there are so many crimes related to drunkenness. This was canvassed amply by the Chief Minister this morning. I believe the quality of life of people in the Territory needs to be protected and, contrary to certain members opposite, I believe that the police will welcome the removal of that provision. I support the legislation.

Mr EVERINGHAM (Chief Minister): I agree unreservedly with the honourable member for Nightcliff. Police should continue to administer the provisions in relation to protective custody with the discretion they have always used.

However, what will be removed from the police is the burden of guessing. Unfortunately, because all the prognostications the police are required to make at present are embodied in legislation, the position is that, whenever a protective custody has been challenged in court, the police have found that the court has not upheld their judgment of the various matters upon which they have had to be satisfied. A police officer, under the present legislation, is required to satisfy himself that the intoxicated person is likely to commit an offence. You might think that is easy enough but the courts seem to throw the opinions of police officers out every time. A police officer must estimate that a person may cause harm to himself or to another person, damage property, disrupt the privacy of others, cause them alarm or substantial annoyance, or be unable to adequately care for himself. All these are fairly subjective judgments to have to make. That is the problem and it is sufficient to cause the Police Commissioner and the whole Police Force to want this amendment.

Even though I am used to the aggressive and fairly obnoxious debating style of the Leader of the Opposition, I wondered whether he or the member for Nightcliff had bothered to read the bill. I should say at this stage that I intend to support 2 of the amendments by the honourable Leader of the Opposition, namely, 145.1 and 145.3. Section 128(1) reads: 'Where a member has reasonable grounds'. 'Reasonable grounds' is for a court to interpret if the matter comes before it. What would draw the attention of a policeman to a person? Anti-social behaviour, usually. The police do not go around looking for people who are behaving normally unless they are looking for escaped bank robbers who may be hiding in a big crowd. The police look for those persons engaged in anti-social behaviour. It is unusual behaviour that will draw the attention of the police to people who may or may not be intoxicated. If the behaviour is particularly anti-social, I imagine that the police will bear in mind the administrative guidelines issued to them by the commissioner in respect of almost every situation in which policemen may find themselves. Those guidelines exist in this act and perhaps a few others. I guess he will try to smell a person's breath for a start. He might observe whether the speech is slurred and he might even see whether the eyes are bloodshot. Those are the types of things that a policeman must do if he is to have reasonable grounds for believing that a person is intoxicated with alcohol or a drug whilst in a public place or trespassing on private property.

The Leader of the Opposition said there are 14 000 protective custody apprehensions annually. I very much regret this too. I wish there were none because we could save the taxpayer a lot of money and save the police a lot of trouble. I might say, Mr Speaker, that the police hate to be involved in this area. They do not want a bar of it. But who else is there to do it?

Mrs Lawrie: Authorised persons.

Mr EVERINGHAM: There are not many people leaping to become authorised persons but, no doubt, we will give that a go in a while when we see how these centres operate. It will always be the police that the community falls back on whether there are authorised persons or not. It will be the police who get the phone calls. It is the police switchboard that is heavily engaged all the time, not the Salvation Army switchboard, in this sense, or any other switchboard around town. I believe that the police must be given support. They do not believe that they get that at the moment. The courts do not uphold their actions in this regard. I can understand why. The courts are places where points of law are argued in relation to these matters. In many cases, the policeman is acting in an emergency situation.

Mr Speaker, I am afraid that I must pursue the passage of this bill. As I said, I will accede to 2 of the amendments of the Leader of the Opposition.

Motion agreed to; bill read a second time.

In committee:

Clause 1 agreed to.

New clause 1A:

Mr B. COLLINS: I move amendment 145.1.

This is self-explanatory.

Mrs LAWRIE: There is an error in the amendment. It is a rather amusing error actually. I point out to the Leader of the Opposition, with some malicious delight, the word 'effected' should be 'affected'.

New clause 1A agreed to.

Clause 2:

Mr B. COLLINS: I move amendment 145.2.

In respect of another one of his priceless interjections, I would like a couple of answers from the Chief Minister. I asked how many times these cases have come before the courts and been rejected. I think all members of the committee will concede that that is a fairly reasonable question to ask under the circumstances. The reply that I received was: 'enough times for the police to want it'. That does not satisfy me. I would like the Chief Minister to answer the question. He is the minister responsible for police. Is he simply indicating that that is a sufficient basis to bring legislation before the Assembly? I would like to know. I do not want accurate figures off the top of his head, just a rough idea of how many times a year - to the nearest 20 if you like - these cases come before the courts and are contested. How many times do the courts throw them out?

Secondly, some members have discussed the application of judgment required by police officers to implement the legislation as it currently stands. My own broad interpretation of the basic difference, in practical terms, between the existing legislation - which simply says that, if you are intoxicated, that is enough and off you go - and this amendment is the very thing that the Chief Minister referred to before. Under the definitions I am proposing, a person would be very drunk as opposed to marginally drunk. Nobody could define it more clearly than that. I would like to know from the Chief Minister how this new legislation will work in court. Will it be necessary for the police officer concerned simply to aver the fact that the person was intoxicated? The Chief Minister assures me these cases are contested in court on the ground that the conditions required in the present legislation have not been complied with. What happens if police evidence is rejected now because people contest that they were intoxicated?

Mr EVERINGHAM: Mr Chairman, to answer the last question first, I have already indicated to the Leader of the Opposition that the court will, in due course, possibly even after a process of litigation, define what are reasonable grounds and the police will be able to operate along those guidelines. In the meantime, the police will operate on their own guidelines which will certainly require an officer to satisfy himself reasonably that a person is

intoxicated. In fact, the legislation proposed by the Leader of the Opposition really does not provide safeguards for the public. It provides dangers for the public. I quote: 'A person who is found intoxicated in a public place and is behaving in a manner likely to cause injury to himself or to another person or to damage property ...'. A policeman has to prognosticate all that. What do we expect of the police? I really wonder. The police must be able to go to court and make an averment: 'Yes, Your Worship, I formed an opinion that this man was behaving in a manner likely to cause injury to himself or another person or damage to property'. 'How, constable, did you form that opinion?' That is when counsel will start cross-examining him and tearing his evidence to bits. Be reasonable.

I quote again: 'In need of physical protection because of his incapacity due to his being intoxicated'. Well, I am not quite sure what that means. No doubt the courts would have fun with it for a long time. I am trying to place reasonable legislation in the hands of the police, which can be sensibly administered by the courts and which will not become a toy of the lawyers.

As to the number of cases that have been brought before the courts, I cannot tell the Leader of the Opposition specifically. However, the Police Commissioner had been on to me about the disquiet in his force for 2 years before I acceded to introducing this amendment to the legislation. He has referred me to at least 3 cases. His men are simply not satisfied to continue administering the act as it presently stands.

Amendment negatived.

Clause 2 agreed to.

Clause 3:

Mr B. COLLINS: I move amendment 145.3.

This simply follows a previous amendment that was accepted by the committee. I might point out in passing that, if the information that the Chief Minister has just given me is correct, I certainly will investigate it. If in fact statistics show that this matter has only been before the courts 3 times in the last 2 years, then I will be raising the matter in the Assembly again.

Amendment agreed to.

Mr EVERINGHAM: I move amendment 141.1.

The Leader of the Opposition can mention this matter in this Assembly as many times as he likes. All I am trying to do is give the Police Force reasonable laws to administer, not fanciful imaginings of people who have no experience of the practical difficulties of law enforcement.

Amendment agreed to.

Clause 3, as amended, agreed to.

Title agreed to.

Bill passed remaining stages without debate.

ADJOURNMENT

Mr ROBERTSON (Attorney-General): Mr Speaker, I move that the Assembly do now adjourn.

Mr SMITH (Millner): Mr Speaker, I have spoken in this Assembly before about the lack of facilities at the Rapid Creek water gardens, which is deterring people from using the water gardens in any effective manner. It has been brought to my attention just recently that the Rapid Creek water gardens lack the most basic facility of all - toilets. I must admit that it had not occurred to me that there are no toilets.

This inadequacy emphasises my point that the Rapid Creek water gardens are almost a white elephant. Unfortunately, the government has lost courage and is not prepared to complete the task. There were many reservations when the government commenced the project as to whether it would be worth while. However, the government is halfway and has an obligation to provide meaningful facilities within the park so that it can be used effectively. Those facilities should include toilets. I have had several representations from people who have been interested in going to the water gardens for a barbecue but who were put off by the fact that this basic facility did not exist.

I also feel that the water gardens need an informal facility such as an adventure playground. There is very little there for kids to do apart from riding their bikes around the bicycle park and having a wade in the wading pool. Those activities do not interest children for a great length of time. It would be a very useful asset to the park, and not a terribly expensive one, for some adventure playground equipment to be placed there.

Mr Speaker, I now want to talk about something that is very important. It results from a representation made to me about the attitude of an employer in Darwin towards his employees. I do not propose to name the employer but I do want to point out that these things are happening. This particular employer is treating his employees badly. The employees only get 15 minutes for lunch. They do not get a shift allowance when they work on Saturdays. Some were asked to work on public holidays for no extra money. This is in direct contravention of legislation passed in this Assembly. They are expected to work a 40-hour week but, if work is slack, the employer reserves the right to send them home. This takes place quite often. He then debits them for the hours they have not worked and, at the time of resignation, deducts payments for hours not worked. One employee who had been there quite some time gave 2 weeks notice. He had a debit of 21 hours and received a final payout of \$45.

The attitude of this employer to his employees is extremely worrying to me. Obviously, it is exploitation of employees in the worst possible way. I checked whether these people were covered by an award. Obviously, they are not covered by an award. I checked whether they are covered by legislation. The only legislation they are covered by is annual leave, long service leave and workman's compensation leave legislation.

I was told, when I checked with the industrial relations people, both NT and federal, that they had the option of entering into a contract with the employer. We need to be realistic in this day and age of high unemployment. In occupations which are reasonably unskilled, it is most unrealistic to expect an employee on an individual basis to commence negotiations with an employer for a contract. It just does not happen. In 99 cases out of 100 the employer would say: 'Sorry, I do not have a job for you'. Obviously, I do not think that the contract system is terribly practical in this area.

I have also been informed that there are 120 to 140 occupations in the Northern Territory that are not covered by awards. In most cases, they are not large employee groups; they are just small groups. That is one of the reasons why they are not covered by awards. The unions do not believe that they have the resources to put up award cases for these small groups. About 120 to 140 different groups amount to quite a large number of people who are not covered by basic awards.

I realise it is a difficult problem and that there could be jurisdictional problems involved with the Self-government Act, but I am deeply concerned about it. I want to advise the Chief Minister that I intend to write to him about this problem. I intend to write to the employer and employee groups represented on his Industrial Relations Council. I would hope that the matter could be discussed at a future meeting of the Industrial Relations Council and that something could come out of that because the need is great. A lot of people are being exploited at present.

Mr Speaker, I wish to bring the Assembly up to date with the continuing saga of the provision of airline services to Katherine, Tennant Creek and Alice Springs. Since November, there has been a number of developments in this saga. All of these developments have meant a further reduction in the airline services to Katherine and Tennant Creek. The main victims are the people who live in those communities.

The approach of the government in the last 4 months to the question of these airline services continues to be one of reaction. There is no strong and clearly enunciated aviation policy. The Territory government clearly failed to follow up the potential for the development of an efficient Territory aviation industry made possible by enacting the Northern Territory Aviation Act. Since that time, under the mismanagement of this government, the aviation industry has reeled from one crisis to another. Not only is the government failing in its role as manager in this area but it has also attempted to deceive the communities which are most severely affected.

Mr Speaker, last May, I expressed concern that the government's acceptance of cuts in milk-run services from a 7-day-a-week service to a 5-day-a-week service was only the thin edge of the wedge. As had become his style when attempting to cope with this issue, the then Minister for Transport and Works attacked me for what he described as scaring down-the-track communities by spreading unfounded rumours about the air service changes. He told the Assembly:

I give the honourable members opposite, the Tennant Creek Town Council and the Katherine Town Council my personal assurance that, if the proposal for a 5-day-a-week service by jet is accepted by the Northern Territory government, we would not entertain any further reduction in that service.

So much for his personal assurances, Mr Speaker. Of course, that cutback in the service was duly made. Earlier this year, it again became apparent that further cuts were being considered by Airlines of Northern Australia in the milk-run service. Again I voiced my concern about the adverse impact of further reductions in air services on the down-the-track communities. The government again accused me of spreading unfounded rumours and using scare tactics in relation to air services.

At the same time, the then acting Minister for Transport and Works, the same previous minister, was strongly denying that there would be any such cutbacks. In a press release dated 12 January this year, he said: 'There will be no reduction in the present level of air services to Katherine and Tennant

Creek'. The press release continued: 'Mr Dondas made the announcement after a meeting with Airlines of Northern Australia during which he received a proposal from the airlines'. The very next day, the same minister put out yet another press release in which he said: 'The government's decision not to allow any downgrading in the level of the milk-run air services was endorsed today by the community representatives from Katherine and Tennant Creek'. The press release continued: 'At a meeting between the acting Chief Minister, Marshall Perron, the acting Minister for Transport and Works, Nick Dondas, and representatives from the Katherine and Tennant Creek Town Councils, full support was expressed for the government's decision'.

Mr Speaker, the government had met with the airline and, following that meeting, had released a statement to the media saying there would be no reduction in the air services down the track. The next day, the government put out a further release restating its position of no cut in services following a meeting with those communities directly involved. All parties concerned had been consulted and the decision appeared final. It appeared that the acting Minister for Transport and Works, Mr Dondas, was in fact sticking by the commitment he gave to this Assembly, Katherine and Tennant Creek that there would be no further reduction from a 5-day-a-week jet service.

However, the rumours that a further cutback would take place continued despite these assurances. On 15 February, Cabinet decided to endorse a cutback in services requested by ANA. That date was less than one month after the latest firm assurance from the minister.

Mr Speaker, the attention given by this government to air transport in the Territory is dismal. Responsibility for this area is continually shuffled between the honourable member for Casuarina and the honourable member for Ludmilla and it is extremely difficult to establish who has performed worse. It is clear who has suffered the most: your constituents, Mr Speaker, and the people of Tennant Creek.

Mr HARRIS (Port Darwin): Mr Speaker, last Friday, certain members and I were fortunate to be invited by the Naval Officer Commanding North Australia Area, Captain Chris Hole, to attend an operation called 'Shop Window'. The exercise was to inform us, first of all, of what was happening as far as the Navy was concerned in the Northern Territory. We were then taken on an inspection tour of the newly-completed \$25m patrol boat base at Larrakeyah. Two of us then went to sea in one of the new Fremantle class patrol boats.

I take this opportunity this evening to thank Captain Hole for a most interesting and informative morning. I think exercises like this enable the services to fit in well with the community. It is very important that people are informed what the services are all about and what is provided. I think it was a most worthwhile public relations exercise.

There was a stage during the construction of this patrol base when a number of problems were brought to the attention of the Department of Housing and Construction. Every time I reported a problem, there was immediate action from that department. There was cooperation right through the development stage. It is very pleasing to see this cooperation is continuing with the Navy which is providing us with information about what it is doing.

To correct the NT News of last Saturday, I also went to sea with the honourable member for Nightcliff. We were in the Fremantle class patrol boat, Ipswich, which has as its insignia a witch on a broomstick. We had a most enjoyable trip. I have also been up the creek with the member for Nightcliff on another occasion. All round it was a most informative morning and I thank

Captain Hole for the invitation.

Mr Speaker, the main reason for my speaking in this adjournment debate is in relation to a question that I asked of the Minister for Housing the other day about the hot water services provided to the Carinya flats. Carinya flats, as members would be aware, is a very old block of Housing Commission flats. With a building of this age, there are maintenance problems. Over the years there has been a number of complaints about leaking ceilings and puddles on the concrete, which have been dangerous. Windows are hard to open because they are the old hopper style windows set in steel frames which have on occasion rusted up. There have been a number of problems but, in most cases, the Housing Commission has attended to the queries that I have raised. I want to make it quite clear that the Housing Commission staff really has been tremendous in this regard. The inspectors and all others involved have responded very quickly to any request that I have made in relation to Housing Commission issues.

However, I received a representation this week from 13 of the residents of Carinya flats. I will read out the letter that was sent to me:

Dear Sir, We, the undersigned, are most disturbed about the antiquated hot water service which exists at the Housing Commission flats situated in Mitchell Street, Darwin. Firstly, there is no hot water service over the kitchen sinks and the shower heaters are antiquated and dangerous.

We wish you, on our behalf, to ask the Housing Commission to rectify this dangerous situation. Yours sincerely.

It was signed by 13 residents of Carinya flats.

Mr Speaker, I know that funding is often a problem but, wherever a dangerous situation has occurred or is likely to occur - and I have not checked the situation out - it needs to be rectified immediately. As far as the provision of hot water services is concerned, I do not consider that to be a luxury. It is something that every person should have in this day and age. Also, we must remember that many of the residents of Carinya flats are old people. It is ridiculous to have them placed in a position where they have to go and boil the billy if they wish to wash a cup. Mr Speaker, I think that the situation should be looked into. I am sure that the honourable Minister for Housing will look at it. I will follow it up with the Housing Commission. It has done a tremendous job in response to any problems that I have had. But I believe that it is important that the people in that area have an adequate hot water system and that there is no danger to the residents of Carinya flats.

Mr VALE (Stuart): Mr Speaker, there are a couple of points I would like to raise this afternoon. The first relates to disabled motorists in the Northern Territory. A couple of years ago, I was honoured to be selected by the then Minister for Community Development, Marshall Perron, to represent him at state and federal conferences for the disabled during the International Year of the Disabled. I would like to bring to the attention of the Assembly, particularly the Minister for Transport and Works, a problem pertaining to parking for disabled motorists.

Mr Speaker, you are aware that some councils have made attempts to assist disabled motorists in this regard but I believe the ability of councils to assist overall throughout the Territory is inhibited. Perhaps the Northern Territory government could provide disabled motorists with exemption labels to allow them to park in designated areas. A disabled person might

get a lift with someone else but he still needs to be able to park close to his destination. A suitable label could be framed by the Motor Vehicle Registry, which could be exchanged between vehicles driven by a disabled motorist or in which he is a passenger. I am sure that few, if any, disabled motorists or disabled passengers would abuse that privilege and I urge the Minister for Transport and Works to consider that suggestion in the near future.

Mr Speaker, for many years I have been concerned about the rip-offs that occur in Aboriginal communities, particularly in their stores. Just over 5-7 months ago, the largest Aboriginal community in my electorate reported that its store was in debt to the tune of \$0.25m. The then manager blamed shoplifters and other problems for this debt. He was not the first one to blame shoplifters and probably will not be the last. Where debts like this occur, the first people to be brought in to investigate should be the CIB. In communities of the size of Yuendumu, a restricted market with only one large store, someone would need to back a vehicle up to the rear of the store day-in day-out to steal something like \$0.25m worth of food in a 12-month period. There is no way that shoppers could steal that amount of food by taking it through the checkouts.

I believe that, before they are appointed to those positions, the managers should be vetted closely. Their operations should be checked on a monthly basis and they should not be given a free run on these communities - allowed to go helter-skelter - and then decide that someone has to bail them out.

In this particular case, the Yuendumu store traded out of the trouble by borrowing and extending its credit in Alice Springs. In that regard, I would like to pay particular credit to the managers who were brought in by the Aboriginal Development Commission: Glen Bagshaw and his wife. In the 12 short months since they took over the operation of the store, together with the girls he trained to work with them, they traded out of debt and back into credit. Glen Bagshaw left Yuendumu shortly after that and went to Willowra for a few months. I believe he is now holidaying around the world. If other honourable members know of Glen Bagshaw and his reputation as an honest trader, I am sure that they will take the same attitude as I have in wishing him and his wife well in their retirement.

Mr Speaker, my last point is again directed to the Minister for Transport and Works. The dividing line between the Stuart and the Gillen electorates is Larapinta Drive. Many children who live on the northern side of Larapinta Drive, in the Stuart electorate, attend school in the Gillen area. They have to cross that very busy street during the peak traffic period in the early hours of the morning. There is no type of pedestrian or school crossing there. Parents and pupils have petitioned the Alice Springs Town Council which attempted to pass the buck with this petition. I know that councils and governments have requirements for a certain volume of pedestrian traffic before a crossing will be created. I believe in excess of 100 pupils cross that road every morning and every afternoon. The expense of a few cans of paint and a paintbrush for a pedestrian or school crossing on Larapinta Drive, to enable those pupils to traverse that road safely in the morning and the evening, would be appreciated by myself, the pupils and their parents.

Mr LEO (Nhulunbuy): Mr Speaker, unfortunately, the honourable Treasurer is not here this evening to hear my remarks. I will inform him about them tomorrow.

No doubt honourable members will be aware that, on 18 February, the

Racing and Gaming Commission granted a licence for the operation of the Malak Betting Shop. Of the 9 applicants for the licence, 8 were Darwin based and several of them had operated as bookmakers for many years. They are well-known figures in their own right and widely respected in the community for their integrity and experience. It came as some surprise when the Racing and Gaming Commission granted the Malak Betting Shop licence to a comparative stranger who had only recently taken up residence in Darwin. People in the industry were so taken aback by the decision that at least 2 of the unsuccessful applicants lodged protests with the minister in an attempt to have the decision reconsidered. As it turned out, the appeals were subsequently unsuccessful and dismissed by the minister.

Mr Speaker, I raise this matter because I believe the complaints made by 2 of the local bookmakers raised a question that has not been satisfactorily answered by the minister. It has been alleged that the Racing and Gaming Commission did not make a thorough inquiry into the successful applicant's integrity, financial standing and business reputation which are all key considerations when betting licences are being considered. One of the bookmakers further alleged that the Racing and Gaming Commission made no effort to contact the Darwin Turf Club or the Darwin Greyhound Racing Association regarding the standing of any of the applicants. In other words, the Racing and Gaming Commission appears to have made its judgment without any detailed background knowledge of the applicants. I think you will agree, Mr Speaker, that this raises questions as to what criteria were used in deciding who would be granted the Malak licence. The questions ought to be answered publicly by the minister concerned.

Other areas of complaint about awarding the licence include the fact that the length of time that the various applicants had held licences and had worked with the betting public in the Northern Territory had not been taken into account. Nor was the length of time each applicant had held an on-course or off-course bookmaking licence in any state considered. As I said earlier, the local bookmakers, who were passed over by the Racing and Gaming Commission, have lived and operated in the NT for many years.

By comparison, the successful applicant has been in the Northern Territory for only 3 months and has operated as a bookmaker in Australia for less than 18 months since 1970. In 1968, he had a licence to operate at country trotting meetings in WA and later moved to Gloucester Park in Perth. In 1970, he left Perth and did not operate again until 1980 when he returned to Gloucester Park. In 1982, he surrendered his licence and, later that year, moved to Darwin where he was granted a licence to field at the Darwin Greyhound Association meetings at Winnellie Park.

I have taken the trouble to investigate the procedures adopted by the major turf clubs in Australia when considering applications for betting licences. It came as no surprise to learn how thorough the VRC, the AJC and other clubs are in these matters. The rigid controls they impose are designed to keep the sport free of persons whose integrity may be suspect. One thing the major clubs demand is a complete biographical history of each applicant, supported by character references, a record of employment and any past betting licences held, a knowledge of any criminal convictions and a financial statement.

By comparison, it would appear that the Northern Territory Racing and Gaming Commission has not given full and detailed consideration to the standing of all applicants. To date, the questions raised by locally-established bookmakers have not been satisfactorily answered by the minister. All he has said is that he supports the decision by the commission. In the

interests of resolving this matter and clearing any doubt cast on the procedures used by the commission, the minister should make a full and complete statement to this Assembly explaining clearly what criteria are used and how the commission arrived at its decision in this case.

Mr D.W. COLLINS (Alice Springs): Mr Deputy Speaker, members are well aware of the recent floods that occurred in Alice Springs. The Chief Minister has outlined the situation but I would like to add my commendation to many groups and individuals in the town who helped people in distress and put the town back into operation.

The NTEC staff members at the powerhouse worked very long hours indeed. Shifts of 20 hours were common. They had to battle against the unexpected influx of water into the power-station and close down the machinery, avoiding millions of dollars worth of damage, and danger to life from high-voltage electricity. They battled to pump the water out and then went through the arduous process of drying out the alternators and the wiring which were covered in water. They succeeded in restoring power but, 5 minutes later, the next downpour came and they had to turn it off again. Weary as they were, they battled again to restore power. Tremendous praise for their dedication is warranted.

There are many other groups as well. On Thursday, staff from the Department of Transport and Works tried to repair the breakdown at the end of the approach to the casino causeway. That was washed out again on Thursday night and Friday morning. They had that back in operation by Saturday morning. It was the same with the Gap causeway. The police, hospital staff, emergency services and St John Ambulance all did a great job. The staff members of the Hetty Perkins Home had to contend with very difficult circumstances for the old people there. The amount of washing created was considerable. The loss of power for so many hours created many problems. They ran out of dry sheets. I was pleased that NTEC cooperated to get them back on power as soon as the first motors were available after the second session.

The staff and people at Yirara College rendered considerable assistance to those evacuated from the Old Timers' Home, as did the staff from the Old Timers' Home itself. I know of people who spent 26 hours or more at a stretch looking after those old folk out at Yirara College. On Friday morning, I went to lend a hand at Giles House knowing that it would have been inundated a second time. The first flood left about a metre of water with a lot of mud. The second time it was not quite so high. By the time I arrived, the staff members were just finishing off, giving the floors and walls a scrub-up with hot, soapy water. I was very pleased to see how the trainees there hopped in and helped in the way for which Giles House is noted. I was told later by Mrs Daff which trainees were involved and I recalled the rather horrendous crimes some of them had been involved in. They worked along with everyone else and behaved in an excellent manner. That place deserves every credit.

No doubt, I have missed out many people, but the people of Alice Springs demonstrated what we have come to know of Territorians: when things are tough and the chips are down, they rise to the occasion. I am very proud to belong to that town.

The rock skirt is a device in the Gap in Alice Springs to help prevent erosion. I am very pleased to say it seems to have worked very well indeed. It was of some concern to me and to the people in Alice Springs that, with the narrowing of the Gap and with the widening of the road, undermining

would occur and the road could collapse. I am delighted to say that, in this flood - which is generally considered to be a 30-year flood - the rock skirt stood up to the erosion very well indeed. A rock skirt is nothing more than a layer of rock, roughly 30 cm wide, which is held in place by very strong wire-netting. It dips down into the river. If there is erosion then, due to the weight of the rocks, the skirt simply pulls in against the bank. It seems to be very effective.

The heavy flows removed a lot of the couch grass and helped scour out the Todd. This has been a bone of contention for me. I believe the couch helps to build up the level of the riverbed and make flooding worse. A lot of grass has been washed away. I will continue to press for the spraying of couch so that we can eliminate it and stop it from holding the bed level up so high. This should help to reduce water levels in future floods and protect houses from inundation. A tremendous amount of sand was carried by the flow of water and will, no doubt, replenish the sand supplies further down the river.

I am very pleased to have the Chief Minister's assurance that the small section of road between Sadadeen and the back of the powerhouse will be built. This is most welcome. Progress has been held up over sacred sites. These difficulties have been overcome over the last 3 or 4 weeks and work is proceeding, which will be welcomed by the powerhouse staff and make their life considerably easier. There will be the added benefit that, with the protection of the pipelines and other equipment in the powerhouse, the road should be able to be opened to allow people from the casino, Mt John golf course estate and the golf course areas to have access in times of flood emergency.

This morning I asked just how much the royal visit cost the NT government. I would say that the estimated \$50 000 mentioned by the Chief Minister is peanuts compared to the value we have obtained from the visit: free publicity from the media. It was annoying on occasions, particularly at the airport. Media members got in the way of people who had been there for hours with their children waiting for the plane to arrive. Everyone tried to get a good position so the children could see. In some ways, the manners of certain media members were despicable. However, on the silver-lining side, they gave tremendous coverage to Alice Springs and the centre of Australia. As the Chief Minister said, we could not afford the millions of dollars such a coverage would cost. The really great thing was the feeling of goodwill amongst the people in the town. There was a real feeling of camaraderie; a sense of belonging, acceptance and real unity which has to be experienced to be appreciated. The visit by Prince Charles and Princess Diana, and the brief visit of Prince William, certainly added up to a right royal occasion. It won the hearts of the people in the Centre.

Last week was the 100th anniversary of the death of a gentleman by the name of Karl Marx. I would like to talk about 2 Karls. One of our honourable members may well have made his pilgrimage to the death place of Marx whilst over in London.

What prompted this was an NT News article: 'The Tyranny of Marxism'. One point that I would disagree with is that Marxism is a pseudo-scientific certainty - the old saying that Marxism is inevitable. I would disagree with that claim, and that is where the second Karl comes in. This gentleman may not be known to honourable members. He is Professor Karl Popper. He is a philosopher who will be known more and more as time goes by.

I first came across his name in a reading list from Queensland University.

The book was simply called 'Popper'. I must confess it raised my eyebrows. But it is a most interesting book. The cover of that book stated, 'Nobel Prize winners pay Popper the greatest tributes'. One said: 'There is no more to science than its method and there is no more to its method than Popper's method'. I do not have time to go through all of Popper's method but his definition of something that is scientific is that it is testable. In scientific terms, there is no absolute proof by experimentation. You would have to do an infinite number of tests and that is totally impossible. What is true is that, although one cannot prove something absolutely by scientific experimentation, just one refutation will destroy the theory.

It is Popper's claim that Marxism is testable, and is scientific because it is testable. Just in case anybody thinks I am standing up for Marxism, let me say that Karl Popper has put Marxism to the test and his refutation of Marxism is considered by scholars to be of a very high standard. I would recommend that honourable members have a look at the works of Karl Popper.

Last week, the Leader of the Opposition saw fit to attack various anti-social governments around the place. He attacked Queensland on the subject of democracy. I hope that he will be consistent in that. I do not necessarily disagree with what he said regarding the Queensland Parliament. However, I hope that he will support one of the most important aspects of democracy: the secret ballot. That is particularly in regard to such things as the forced assistance for Aboriginal voters, which is very prevalent, and the union strike situation, where a secret ballot ought to be allowed if one believes that democracy is worth upholding.

Mr Deputy Speaker, the Victorian ALP government, and the Victorian ALP in particular, is trying to solve the state's money problems by adding a Halfpenny to its ranks. I suggest that the colour of the money might be somewhat pinkish-red. I wonder whether the money might happen to emanate from Russia, which was a concern of Prime Minister Hawke in his pre-election comments on one of the unions.

Lastly, I would turn to South Australia where I would say that the honeymoon for the South Australian Bannion government is over. It has been a very quiet period for the Bannion government. The people from South Australia whom I have talked to said that they have hardly heard a peep out of him. Already he is in deep trouble. He is trying to blame it on the deficit he inherited from the Tonkin government. However, state finances are not quite as rubbery as the situation we have in federal politics. I thank the honourable Treasurer for his explanation as to where this rubbery \$9600m, 15-months-hence prediction came from; not what is there at the moment but what was predicted. If certain parameters hold, state finances are predictable to within very narrow margins. The people in South Australia are not fooled regarding the rejection of the mining permit for Honeymoon and the other uranium mine which was rejected on a purely uranium basis. I see this as nothing but sheer hypocrisy. The South Australian government is prepared to go ahead with the larger mine down there on the pretext that it has a few other minerals. I just hope that Koongarra and our other prospective mines have a few other minerals besides uranium.

Ms D'ROZARIO (Sanderson): Mr Deputy Speaker, the honourable member for Alice Springs' perambulations through the political systems of other countries and other states never cease to amaze me. It is just too bad he cannot sometimes temper his statements with a bit of knowledge of these events rather than the ignorance he portrays here on so many occasions.

I rise today to speak about some matters which are of great interest to me

in education and particularly the development of school councils in schools in my electorate. Members will recall that the amendment to the Education Act to enable the formation of school councils was passed in this Assembly at the last sittings. At that time, most members supported the introduction of school councils.

Some people in the community were a bit hesitant about how these organisations would work but I am pleased to say that, of the 6 government schools in my electorate, 3 have made very positive moves towards the formation of school councils. The others presently have this matter under discussion. I am also pleased to say that the Leanyer school, which is 1 of 2 new schools in my electorate, was the first school to take action under the new Education Act and form a council. I was present at its meeting. It elected its council members and has its proposal before the minister at this moment.

Another school which has also elected its council is the Malak school, and the Wulagi school has a notice of motion before it for the discussion of the formation of a school council at its next meeting, which will be next month.

Mr Deputy Speaker, I think that the 2 schools that have gone somewhere towards the formation of a council, Leanyer and Malak, deserve some commendation. The Malak school has been in operation for a couple of years and, therefore, has had an organisation, the school association, which has performed a lot of functions which the school council will be performing. The Leanyer school, on the other hand, is a new school and, therefore, had no formal organisation other than an interim school association.

I am very pleased to commend those 2 schools for the action that they have taken and for the alacrity with which they have seized their opportunity under the Education Act to encourage community participation.

Mr Deputy Speaker, having attended recently a number of schools in my electorate, I can see that the formation of school councils involves the parties in a fair bit of work. I must say that I am very impressed by the number of hours that the members in the community gave for the formation of school councils; for example, for the drafting of constitutions. I am told that in excess of 100 man-hours were expended in the drafting of the Malak school council constitution. I hope that other schools will follow the example and take up the options that are available to them under the Education Act.

Mr Deputy Speaker, the other matter that I wanted to raise is to do with Sanderson high school. The matter was raised in question time yesterday by my colleague, the Leader of the Opposition. The Minister for Education may recall that I raised this matter on a number of occasions last year. I have not really been satisfied with the response.

One of the things that has struck me is the large number of primary schools. There are 6 government schools and there are 3 private schools. Another one is due to open later this year. They are all schools which provide primary education. It is quite obvious that the number of young people of school age in this electorate is very large indeed. So it is of some concern to me that, when I raised this matter in the Assembly last year, the then honourable Minister for Education wrote to me with the advice that construction of the Sanderson high school was not expected to commence within 10 years but that the site would be retained and the situation would be kept under review. One of the reasons he offered for the deferral of the construction of the Sanderson high school was that a high school facility would be provided at

Palmerston.

Mr Deputy Speaker, it did strike me then, and I have certainly raised it with him in the Assembly since, that the obvious need for a high school, if there is to be a high school in the Darwin region, would be in Sanderson. I am pleased that, as a result of the question asked by the honourable Leader of the Opposition, the present Minister for Education proposes to review this matter.

When I was told that a school would be provided at Palmerston ahead of Sanderson, it certainly did not make a lot of sense to me. When one looks at the demographic characteristics of the 2 areas, one can see that the main population growth is occurring in the electoral and, indeed, postal district of Sanderson. In Palmerston, we have but a handful of families whereas, in Sanderson, we have something like 14 000 households. So it strikes me as rather odd to be told that a high school would be provided in Palmerston before a high school is provided in Sanderson. I urge the Minister for Education to examine this matter because it not only concerns me but it concerns all those people who are involved in the education committees in my electorate and indeed many parents.

Perhaps the Minister for Education had similar representations to those I had at the beginning of the school year from parents trying to get their children into a high school and not having the choice of high schools because of changes in the department's policy, which largely resulted from having to rearrange the venues at which places would be provided. Whereas before we appear to have had a policy with respect to the admission of siblings in the Dripstone High School, that policy has now been changed because there are no places available in Dripstone High School and children from Sanderson have had to attend other high schools. If one looks at the demographic characteristics of Sanderson, it will be quite obvious that a high school is needed there. I am certainly not putting forward a view that a high school should not be provided in Palmerston but I think, in logic, one should be provided as soon as possible in Sanderson as well.

I raise those matters relating to education issues in my electorate because there are so many people who are clients of the education system and so many people involved in providing education services to the citizens in that particular district of Darwin. I put forward a view again that some planning ought to be done for a Sanderson high school. I am very pleased that the site for Sanderson high school has not yet been allocated for any other use. Indeed, we were all very excited a couple of weeks ago when we saw bulldozers on the site. When I made inquiries, I found that it was not the laying of footings for the Sanderson high school but merely a clean-up of the site by the Conservation Commission. A centrally-located site which was planned as a high school site to form a catchment for primary schools in the electorate is available. I urge the present minister to examine this question and advise me in due course as to when a high school will be provided in Sanderson.

Mr STEELE (Transport and Works): Mr Deputy Speaker, I rise only to defend the government in respect of the remarks of the honourable member for Millner. I was quite interested in his remarks because I know the history of the airline story in the Northern Territory and our involvement since self-government in trying to provide a good service for Territorians and visitors to the Northern Territory. We had an airline established in the Northern Territory which was withdrawn as a result of under-capitalisation and lack of management, and we then had to re-establish an airline to provide services. Governments are fallible to the extent that they accept proposals put to them, and sometimes

those proposals do not work out.

The member for Millner complained that we had accused him of scaremongering. That accusation was made on the basis of his saying ANA would withdraw from the Northern Territory. He never supported that at any time. I never saw a subsequent statement indicating that he had a letter from Sir Peter Abeles or some authority to say that the airline would leave the Northern Territory. That was the basis of our remarks and there has been no refutation since.

About the same time, he called for expressions of interest relating to another airline for the Northern Territory. The government, the minister - whether acting in that capacity or not - and officials were well aware of the capacity of the airline industry to provide services to the Northern Territory during that difficult period. We had representations from local operators who would have provided services if the government had asked them. We knew the exact position of the national carriers. In fact, we were advised that some people were not interested in providing services to the Northern Territory.

Mr Deputy Speaker, the facts of the matter are that, nationally, there has been a 10% drop in passenger movements throughout Australia. Both airlines were experiencing extreme difficulties and had to rationalise services in other parts of Australia. In the case of ANA, there was a 15% reduction in passenger movement up and down the centre run. The losses would have approached \$1.5m.

The services being provided are not deluxe. They are there to be utilised by the people in the towns that they serve. The option is available for the new government to provide subsidies if it wants to provide an airline that flies up and down the centre run but does not carry people. No government in its right mind would do that. As I have indicated, no other airline will provide a greater level of service than exists at the moment.

In response to our agreeing to the rationalisation of the service, ANA said that, in line with the wage restraint policy around Australia, it would not apply for fare increases. It would also reduce the Apex fare restriction to 7 days advance booking, introduce a jet service to Ayers Rock for the very first time and employ up to 15 local people as flight attendants. Consultation took place with the councils up and down the track in respect of changes to services and they reluctantly agreed to those changes.

Airlines are going broke all around the world. The opposition should be a little more positive and try to give this government an idea of where we should be heading if it really believes it has solutions.

Mrs LAWRIE (Nightcliff): Mr Deputy Speaker, I asked a question of the Minister for Community Development last week regarding the proposal to establish transient camps for Aboriginal people at Kulaluk. In his reply, he stated that he had an open mind on the issue and certainly would not push for such an establishment. As fate would have it, on the following day, the headlines in the paper stated that the Gwalwa Daraniki people were happy to have such transient camps established in that area.

One of the people closely concerned with the preservation of Kulaluk is Mr Bill Day. He was concerned with the original granting of the lease to those people. He has worked for years amongst them. He has expressed to the Minister for Community Development, to his local member, the member for Ludmilla, and to myself, as member for Nightcliff, his severe reservations about the proposal to establish the transient camps. He has asked me to explain to the Assembly the reasons for his reservations which I now do. He

states in a letter:

The proposals for transient camps at Kulaluk should be dropped for the following reasons:

- 1. There is a growing pride amongst Darwin's coloured population in their Aboriginal ancestry. This is reflected in the make-up of the Kulaluk executive. While many of this large segment of our city's population have family or historic ties to tribal areas, almost all are committed to urban life. Transients would seriously hinder the traditional, family, community-oriented use of Kulaluk by urban people (they are mostly single, drinking men).*
- 2. In a cosmopolitan city, of which we are justly proud, the proposal is not appropriate. It draws comparison with South Africa's Bantustans and black townships. The transient camps could become an odious, implanted institution more reminiscent of the old compound (Bagot Reserve has been a dismal failure in gradualism).*
- 3. Transients behave much like anyone away from restraining influences; for example, Aussies in Bali or Munich. They behave badly and offend the locals. To put them in one place could create even less desirable or dangerous behaviour problems.*
- 4. Control of the camps could be beyond the resources of the Gwalwa Daraniki Association and not practicable for cultural reasons.*
- 5. The unique inner city wilderness in the Kulaluk lease may not be able to stand up to the pressure of permanent occupation. For example, already transients are hunting goanna, wallabies, bandicoots, yam, crab, shellfish and gathering firewood, bark and softwood for carving. This is to the detriment of the city dwellers' occasional use of these resources.*
- 6. Illegal camps around town average about 10 members and these are made up of compatible people. Planned camps for Kulaluk envisage 30-40 in each. They would not hold together for a week. Campers will then establish dozens of small unserviced groups throughout the bush, particularly for drinking sessions. Some will be near residential areas or roads. Lack of access means litter problems. This would only be shifting the existing problem into the Ludmilla area.*
- 7. Centralised camps, no matter what facilities are provided, will be a health risk.*
- 8. Darwin is growing into a sophisticated city in which the planned transient camps will be increasingly unacceptable to black and white.*
- 9. Once neighbouring landowners become more aware of the proposal, they will object. Plans should be displayed.*
- 10. Kulaluk is an area of great value to Aborigines and potentially to Darwin as a whole, but generally not suited to residential use. For this reason, it remains unbuilt upon today. Considerations are: (a) low-lying swampy ground; (b) flight path of increasingly busy airport; (c) unique untouched monsoon rain forest; and (d) traffic engineering re-entry into Dick Ward Drive.*
- 11. Any policy appearing to be one of 'out of sight out of mind' or*

'dust under the rug' will be strongly opposed by Aboriginal groups. Kulaluk has only received one request from a small group of transients for camping facilities.

12. The camps could be seen to encourage drunkenness or evolve into a home base for the hard core of Aboriginal drunks who are not true transients and whose needs can be better served elsewhere.

I regret accentuating the negative but my positive ideas on the solution to the transient Aboriginal problem would require a much longer essay. I hope my ideas will help you avoid embarrassment over the ill-conceived plans of your department.

Yours sincerely,

Bill Day

Mr Deputy Speaker, it has been fashionable at certain times to deride this man and to suggest that he is some kind of evil influence. I think that the submission he made to the minister indicates his very even-handed approach and concern for all sections of our community.

Mr EVERINGHAM (Chief Minister): Mr Deputy Speaker, I listened with interest to the remarks of the honourable member for Sanderson regarding a proposed high school in her area. I must admit that keeping an eye on the trends developing at Casuarina and Dripstone High Schools has convinced me that the government's decision in respect of the timing of construction of a high school at Sanderson - and certainly that is what it amounts to - should be reviewed. I know that the Minister for Education has that matter in hand. Reviews of this nature are fairly complex. They are approached on a scientific basis and may take some months to carry out thoroughly. Of course we are talking about the expenditure of something like \$7m to \$10m, which is the same amount as the annual budget of the Northern Territory Development Corporation. One does not like to spend that amount of taxpayers' money without good and justifiable reasons. Nonetheless, the review will proceed at the fastest possible pace.

The honourable Minister for Housing tells me that the Catholic Church is building a high school in the northern suburbs also. All I can say to that is that it is not before time. The facilities at St Johns, regrettably, are very severely strained. The school is still performing pretty well and is a credit academically. It takes a good number of the matriculation awards that are achieved in the Northern Territory.

Mr Deputy Speaker, the matter of school councils interested me also. At the moment, I should be explaining to the parents and friends of the Wagaman Primary School why they should or should not go along with the school council proposal. However, I will have to try to get to their next meeting.

The honourable member for Nightcliff sought to define a term that I used in the Assembly this morning and which I subsequently withdrew. I will not pursue the rather esoteric definition of the term that the member for Nightcliff used, but I will give the Concise Oxford Dictionary definition of that term: 'noun from Greek and Roman mythology; rapacious monster with woman's face and body and bird's wings and claws; rapacious person'. That definition is quite satisfactory as far as I am concerned and, of course, it is the commonly accepted one.

I have one final matter to talk about. After I had mentioned my view that politicians should enunciate policy, the honourable Leader of the Opposition said that I was, in fact, two-faced and that I said this today but I took a different attitude some time ago. The Leader of the Opposition was misleading again. I am sorry that he is not here to hear this, but I think I should say it tonight to get it on today's record. I did not say what I said earlier about politicians enunciating policy to suit myself at this juncture. In fact, the Leader of the Opposition commented that a public servant made a statement last year and that I had supported him in making a policy attack on the Leader of the Opposition. The Leader of the Opposition holds himself out as a man of unimpeachable virtue. He is not as other men; he hasn't feet of clay. He is always harping in his criticism about inaccuracies.

Mr Deputy Speaker, I would just like to refer to the record for a change and point out a couple of inaccuracies by the honourable Leader of the Opposition. Indeed, I will deal with the particular episode he referred to in his comments this morning. However, before I do that, I will mention some matters relating to the Criminal Code. In a newsletter which the Leader of the Opposition's political party distributed around Christmas, this statement appeared immediately under the heading 'Criminal Code': 'This is a very major piece of legislation which the Chief Minister has now agreed' - and I emphasise those words - 'to present only after wide consultation'. I understand that this was the Leader of the Opposition's report. That was circulated within the last couple of months.

I would just refer members to the Hansard of Wednesday 4 March 1981 when I presented the first draft Criminal Code. I used these words:

Nevertheless, those areas of the code which have been covered in the draft before you are more than enough to occupy those who wish to consider and comment on them ... For this reason, I encourage - in fact, I go further - I seek comments, criticisms and advice from honourable members, all professional bodies and their individual members, the legal profession more particularly, community and interested bodies and individual members of the public whether in the Territory or elsewhere in Australia and indeed overseas.

On 10 June 1981, I made another statement:

Before outlining what it contains, I would like to make some comment on the public's response so far. I have to say that I am a little disappointed. The public appears to be obsessed with one subject almost to the exclusion of all else. I hasten to add that some of the comment on the sexual offences provisions has been of high quality and well-reasoned but I remind members of the public that there are many other matters dealt with in the draft code.

Again, on 18 August, I stated:

As before, I encourage comment from all sectors of the community on where appropriate changes will be made.

Mr Deputy Speaker, only the Leader of the Opposition could put down on paper what amounts to nothing more than the most misleading statement that I have ever heard from any politician: 'The Chief Minister has now agreed' - has now agreed - 'to present only after wide consultation'.

Let us turn to the correspondence that we heard about this morning. I

will read the correspondence which I invited the honourable Leader of the Opposition to read at the time. He did not read it for good reason. Let me read, firstly, a letter which I called for at the time that I received the Leader of the Opposition's letter on 9 August 1982. This is a letter from the Chairman of the Agricultural Development and Marketing Authority to the Leader of the Opposition himself. It is dated 30 July 1982:

Dear Bob,

You may have heard on the ABC news this morning a report that I reputedly 'scoffed' at a statement from yourself that ADMA should now move to establish a commercial rice industry. It is not my habit to scoff at statements of this nature and I am therefore annoyed that the ABC saw fit to use that term. A more appropriate description of my reaction would be that I disagreed that the time is now ripe to move for the establishment of a commercial rice industry. I realise that this issue has been raised by yourself on a number of occasions and, in order to give you a full understanding of the attitude of the authority towards establishing a commercial rice industry, I would welcome an opportunity to discuss this matter with you personally at a time suitable to yourself.

Remember of course that the chairman of that statutory authority had not been long in the public service and had in fact been the national spokesman for industry groups. He was not then as fully familiar with the public service rules and traditions as he is now.

On 9 August 1982, I received this letter from the Leader of the Opposition:

Dear Mr Everingham,

On 29 July, I distributed a media release promoting the development of a pilot rice project. In that release, I complimented the ADMA on what I described as a successful year's cropping. I said that, on the basis of that success, the Minister for Primary Production might look to the establishment of a rice industry using the commercial guidelines followed by ADMA and the direct government input that was offered to those growers currently involved in ADMA projects.

The only response to what I considered a constructive suggestion was a strong rebuttal from the Chairman of the Agricultural Development and Marketing Authority who is in fact a senior public servant. Since the Chairman of the ADMA has now also written to me seeking an opportunity to give me a full understanding of the attitude of the authority towards establishing a commercial rice industry, in conformity with the procedures pertaining to the briefing of parliamentarians, I should be pleased to learn whether this invitation has or requires your approval before I accept it.

Secondly, I seek your guidance as to whether or not it is now the policy of your government to allow public servants to enter into public debates with parliamentarians. If this is not the case, I would request that you direct your public servants to make their opinions about policy known to their minister so that he might respond as the responsible person.

If, on the other hand, you are happy to allow public servants to publicly respond on their own behalf, then I will inform my colleagues that this procedure has your full support. For my part, I consider it inappropriate that a senior public servant should publicly respond to the statements

which I have made. In my view, the proper course would have been for the responsible minister to comment.

Personally, I am loath to comment publicly on individual public servants. Nevertheless, the present incident has placed those of us who uphold the principles of ministerial responsibility in the intolerable position of having no public redress.

Yours sincerely,

Leader of the Opposition

I responded on 16 August:

Dear Mr Collins,

I refer to your letter of 9 August. I don't recall the incident that you complain of. I would point out though that the honourable the Minister for Primary Production will be making a comprehensive statement in relation to agriculture in the Territory at a seminar in Katherine in the very near future. If you are interested in hearing the facts about the viability of rice production rather than being deluded by wishful thinking, I would urge you to read a copy of the minister's statement.

My government is not going to be stampeded by political considerations in relation to the development of agriculture in the Territory. There have been far too many setbacks in the past for us to approach agricultural development with anything but the hardest-headed and most realistic possible attitude. This does not mean that the government won't support further agricultural development; we are doing just that, particularly around Katherine and on the Daly. Indeed, agriculture will not go forward in the Territory without considerable government support until it reaches a stage where economies of scale begin to operate.

In most circumstances, I would sympathise with you over the incidents that you complain of relating to the Chairman of ADMA. However, this gentleman, whose services for the Northern Territory I prize rather highly, is operating in an atmosphere of considerable frustration where he is attempting to bring a realistic and rational approach while many around him, with great respect, not least at times yourself, are scooping out great hunks of pie in the sky and throwing them around with gay abandon.

I'm certainly pleased to approve his efforts to inculcate some knowledge of the establishment of a commercial rice growing industry in you. It is a very desirable end and one that is to be devoutly sought after.

It is not the policy of my government to allow public servants to enter into public debate with parliamentarians, even though it appears to be encouraged in other quarters. What difference Wesley-Smith having a shot at me?

In this case, I do not propose to take any action other than to bring your letter to the notice of the gentleman concerned. If you would like to make any further statements regarding the establishment of a commercial rice industry, after your briefing by the Chairman of ADMA, I hope that the Minister for Primary Production and myself will be able to support them. It would be best if you could be briefed on a factual basis regularly by someone like Mr Cameron rather than deriving clandestine

information from persons who are often very subjective about the subject on which they speak.

Mr Deputy Speaker, it is no wonder that he did not want to read out the correspondence. It clearly shows that my government does not support the making of policy statements by public servants. Quite clearly, on the evidence of those letters, this morning the Leader of the Opposition misquoted me and misled this Assembly.

Motion agreed to; the Assembly adjourned.

Mr Speaker MacFarlane took the Chair at 10 am.

PETITIONS
Recreation Lake for Alice Springs

Mr ROBERTSON (Gillen): Mr Speaker, I present a petition from 4200 residents of Alice Springs relating to the construction of a recreation lake. 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; petition received and read:

To the honourable the Speaker and members of the Legislative Assembly of the Northern Territory, the humble petition of certain residents of Alice Springs in the Northern Territory respectfully shows: (1) that the construction of a recreation lake in the vicinity of the old Telegraph Station in Alice Springs is a project having wide local support; (2) that the construction of the lake as aforesaid is necessary both as prevention against the possible effects of 100-years' frequent flooding and as a recreational facility. Your petitioners therefore humbly pray that the construction of a recreation lake at Alice Springs should proceed with the greatest possible speed, and your petitioners, as in duty bound, will ever pray.

Rural Advisory Council for Local Government

Mr HARRIS (Port Darwin): Mr Speaker, I present a petition on behalf of the member for Tiwi from 360 residents of the outer Darwin rural area relating to the Rural Advisory Council. 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 residents of the outer Darwin rural area respectfully shows that persons, both of residential and business status in the outer Darwin area, feel that they will not be sufficiently represented by persons presently appointed to the Rural Advisory Council on local government in the outer Darwin area due to their employment, current commitments and geographical location during business hours. Your petitioners humbly pray that the Legislative Assembly should take note of their extreme concern and increase the number of members to include persons involved in rural-based businesses and those in rural locations frequented by rural residents. Further, your petitioners humbly pray that the Legislative Assembly take whatever steps possible to bring about proper and accurate representations of the outer Darwin area, and your petitioners, as in duty bound, will ever pray.

Admiralty House

Mrs LAWRIE (Nightcliff): Mr Speaker, I present a petition from 414 citizens of the Northern Territory relating to Admiralty House. The petition bears the Clerk's certificate that it conforms with the requirements of Standing Orders. I move that the petition be received and read.

Motion agreed to; petition received and read:

To the honourable the Speaker and members of the Legislative Assembly of the Northern Territory, the humble petition of the undersigned citizens of the Northern Territory respectfully shows their concern at the future of Admiralty House, which has been a stately part of Darwin's history since 1939, and its gardens which have been established for nearly 100 years. It is jeopardised by the proposed construction of a multi-storey hotel complex by Suttons Motors. Your petitioners therefore humbly pray that the Northern Territory government support the listing of Admiralty House as a national heritage and opposes the destruction of the house and gardens for the purposes of constructing a multi-storey hotel complex, and your petitioners, as in duty bound, will ever pray.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT Chronically Mentally-Ill Persons

Mr DONDAS (Health) (by leave): Mr Speaker, in recent weeks, various allegations have been made about the care of chronically mentally-ill persons in the Northern Territory. I would like to take this opportunity to advise the Assembly of the facts of this complex issue. Press comment on the problems of the chronically mentally-ill has focused on the problems of very small groups who, by reason of mental illness, are found to be unfit to plead in terms of section 382A of the Criminal Law Consolidation Act. In such circumstances, the court may make an order that the person be detained in custody at such a place and for such a period as the court thinks fit. Such a person is not a sentenced prisoner and, where necessary, is housed separately from sentenced prisoners. Because of his special status, the person so held may be separated from prisoners in the remand area but this leads also to a separation from the better aspects of prison life, such as work and recreation facilities.

Another difficulty in such a system is that the non-sentenced person often spends a longer period in custody than he would have spent had he been sentenced for the crime for which he was charged. This is because such a person does not usually recover from his mental illness, unlike the prisoner who is there to pay his debt to society and, hopefully, learn his lesson not to do such things again.

As honourable members are aware, society has endeavoured to ensure that Australian prisons and mental hospitals are modern and humane institutions. Although some may hold the view that jails are some form of the 19th century horror institution, honourable members who are aware of the excellent facilities at Berrimah, for example, know that this is not the case in Darwin.

As an alternative to keeping in prison those unfit to plead, there is power vested in the court to order that they be held in custody elsewhere or released on conditions. However, society generally demands that it should be protected from persons who are alleged to have committed a crime regardless of their mental capacity. This is particularly so where the alleged criminal act involves violence committed by a person prone to violent acts.

The states deal with this problem in different ways. In Queensland, such a person is confined in the high security wing of a mental hospital. His release is not dependent on the sentence he might have received for a crime that he may have committed but upon his mental condition. He may eventually be

released back into the community. Similar arrangements exist in New South Wales, Victoria and Western Australia. In Tasmania, there is a prison hospital where persons detained at Her Majesty's pleasure are held along with prisoners who are ill. The future of this hospital is in doubt because of the escalating costs.

In South Australia, there is a special psychiatric hospital - Northfield Security Hospital, attached to Yatala Prison. This hospital provides accommodation for persons requiring pre-trial psychiatric assessment. It serves prisoners from all southern South Australian prisons who require psychiatric care and a small group, approximately 6, of those who are unfit to plead by reason of mental illness or intellectual handicap. The ACT does not have any facilities but has an arrangement to use New South Wales facilities.

Currently, there are 2 persons in the Northern Territory who fit into the category that I have been describing. They need secure placement with some medical oversight to ensure their physical and mental well-being. They are given an opportunity to take part in activities and rehabilitation programs appropriate to their condition. One of these 2 unfortunate men was charged with a rather brutal murder. Mr Justice Gallop, who found him unfit to plead, ordered that he be detained in custody at the Darwin Prison for an indefinite period, subject to the condition that he continue to receive regular medical examinations directed to keeping his mental health under review. He has remained in Darwin Prison receiving regular medical examinations and psychiatric care since May 1981. During the period that he has been in prison, he has been non-violent. He was originally treated with behaviour-modifying drugs, but this treatment has been discontinued. His physical health has improved during his time in Darwin Prison. Prior to a recent bail application on his behalf, the secretary of my department ordered that further examinations be carried out by the senior specialist physician, by the specialist in charge of extended care services and by a psychiatrist to provide a complete assessment of the medical condition of this prisoner. The physician found that he was in no need of urgent physical medical attention and the psychiatrist said that there was no treatment which could improve his clinical condition. The specialist in charge of extended care services found that he could function quite effectively in any supervised living situation such as a hostel. He has clearly not suffered physically from his long stint in prison. It would be difficult to prove that he has suffered in any other way.

The other person in this category, the subject of a recent press report, is an habitual offender who has a long record of violence and escaping from custody. These 2 men present special legal as well as health problems. They are in the criminal justice system and are not subject to orders under the Mental Health Act. If they were, they might be able to be transferred to South Australia under that act. In respect of one of them, the South Australian authority has advised that he could not be physically held in their normal psychiatric institution because of his record of violence and escaping from custody. A Commonwealth act relating to the transfer of prisoners and others in custody may have assisted had it not expressly excluded Aborigines from the provisions.

Neither man is technically a prisoner for the purposes of the Northern Territory legislation enabling transfer. In any event, I am informed that South Australia does not have appropriate legislation enabling it to receive and effectively control in a prison system prisoners who are mentally ill. The Attorney-General has written to his South Australian counterpart inviting him to consider the issue from that state's point of view.

New reciprocal legislation that will be brought into effect by the Territory and the states does not address this particular situation. The problem of

suitable care for these 2 men has been under consideration by officers of the Departments of Community Development, Law and Health for a considerable time. Efforts to place them in interstate institutions have been frustrated. In November 1982, 3 officers of the Department of Health visited South Australia to review the operations of the current transfer arrangements and to discuss the special problems of these persons. Following that visit and negotiations with other states on this problem, the Department of Health, in conjunction with other appropriate departments, has been preparing a major submission to the government on this matter. I am unable to foreshadow what will be the recommendations of that submission but I can assure members that it will be given the deepest consideration by this government. I am advised that the submission will be available to the government within 2 months. I must assure honourable members that the plight of these unfortunate persons is not being overlooked by this government. We are seeking the most effective solution to what is an extremely complex problem.

The problems of these 2 unfortunate men should not be allowed to cloud the total issue. The criminally insane are an important but tiny fraction of the chronically mentally-ill and mentally-handicapped. The numbers of chronically-ill or mentally-handicapped in this community are few. The total number in the Northern Territory calculated on recent South Australian research would not be more than 0.29% of the total population; that is, about 400 persons. Of these, it is calculated that about 62 would require institutional-type care whereas 34 may require limited supervision in hostel-type accommodation. The vast majority can be best accommodated in the normal community. Current trends in the care of these patients lead away from institutional care. For many years, the Northern Territory has sent chronically mentally-ill or mentally-handicapped persons who require long-term institutional care to South Australia where their care has been financed by the Northern Territory. The agreement has apparently been renegotiated at ministerial level to ensure that it meets the requirements of both the South Australian authorities and the Mental Health Act of the Northern Territory.

There are currently 34 patients in South Australia. These have been classified thus: mentally-ill - 3; mentally-retarded, violent - 6; mentally-retarded, non-violent - 19; and grossly mentally and physically retarded so as to require total care in all aspects of daily life - 6. This is a fairly complex grouping but it may give members some idea of the variation in this small group. These 34 come from all areas of the Northern Territory. If similar facilities were built in Darwin, most of these would be just as removed from their homes as they are in Adelaide. All these 34 persons require institutional care. Those patients who are transferred to South Australia and who respond to treatment or who can be rehabilitated so that they can live in the community are either returned to their own communities in the Northern Territory or are given specialised assistance in the psychiatric hostels funded by the South Australian government. These psychiatric hostels provide supervised care to the small groups who reside therein. They depend on the dedicated care of families who run them as small businesses. The residents of these hostels have access to psychiatric day-care facilities as well as sheltered workshops for those who can be employed. It should be noted that almost all these hostels are located in the metropolitan area where there is adequate psychiatric and ancillary staff.

The Northern Territory is thus supported by the resources of the South Australian Health Commission, with 2 major hospitals catering for the chronically mentally-ill, a major complex for the intellectually-handicapped, 2 small institutions for special problems, day-care centres, psychiatric hospitals and a staff of psychiatrists, psychiatric nurses and ancillary staff in excess of 450. Facilities are provided for the chronically mentally-ill or mentally-handicapped.

In addition, there are widespread facilities for the acutely mentally-ill. At present, in the Northern Territory, this government cares for the acutely mentally-ill at Darwin and Alice Springs Hospitals. As well, it funds, in whole or in part, voluntary agencies which provide special facilities or services to those persons who have some problems but who cannot be maintained in the community. Alice Springs members will be familiar with the Bindi Centre while all Darwin residents know of the work of Kokoda Industries. These are only 2 of the approximately 20 agencies which service the intellectually-handicapped and mentally-ill in some way. As well, the government pays for care of the 6 extremely handicapped children who receive nursing home care at Chan Park. It has been alleged that this government is not concerned with the problems of the chronically mentally-ill. This is not true. This government is concerned to provide the best care available for the people of the Northern Territory within the financial constraints we must all face.

Earlier, I mentioned a group of 19 mentally-retarded persons housed in South Australia who are non-violent. These 19 have, in fact, 18 different problems. The Northern Territory cannot afford to match the personalised care they now receive in South Australia with the facilities in the Northern Territory which would require an influx of specially skilled staff. However, the Northern Territory is growing rapidly and this government accepts that the problem of the mentally-handicapped and mentally-ill will increase even though the rate of increase will be slow. Consequently, the government has asked the Department of Health and other departments to develop a plan for localised care for the chronically mentally-ill and mentally-handicapped.

There are some areas of care for which we cannot rely on South Australia. As well, changing medical opinion relating to these unfortunate people indicate that normalisation in the community should be our goal. It is claimed that the best help most of these people can receive is to be assisted to live as normal a life as possible.

Mr Speaker, I move that the Assembly take note of the statement.

Debate adjourned.

SPECIAL ADJOURNMENT

Mr ROBERTSON (Attorney-General): Mr Speaker, I move that the Assembly, at its rising, adjourn until 10 am Tuesday 24 May 1983 or such other time and date as might be set by Mr Speaker under sessional order.

Motion agreed to.

BUILDING BILL (Serial 299)

Bill presented and read a first time.

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

Perhaps it takes a cyclone like Max or Eleanor when people confidently seek refuge in their homes or a specified community shelter to revive memories of not so long ago when other people who took the same protective action in Darwin on Christmas 1974 were quickly and cruelly exposed to the elements by the often rapid disintegration and disappearance of the very building which they had confidently expected to protect them. It was the hard-earned wisdom which comes

from experiences such as these that formed the backbone of Darwin reconstruction. Research knowledge from other areas that had experienced similar damage from high velocity winds helped to frame a new Building Manual for the Northern Territory which will reduce, as far as possible, the devastation that occurred that night 8 years ago. Residents can now for the first time really look at the structural integrity of their homes with confidence. The importance of good building laws cannot be overstressed.

The present building act and its associated regulations have, with minimal amendments, stood the test of time well until quite recent years. The exception is the Building Manual which now incorporates the before-mentioned building standards known as the Cyclone Code. However, the time has arrived when the escalation of development in the Territory calls for a fresh and practical approach to the legislation that governs the building industry.

It is felt that the continuation of patchwork amendments to the building legislation is no longer justified or in the best interests of the Territory. It is proposed that the existing legislation be repealed and replaced with new building laws that are equal to if not better than any operating in Australia today. This should be the case for any statutes that we find are unable to adequately perform the tasks for which they were designed.

Mr Speaker, honourable members should note that the amendments to the building laws are not merely confined to the bill that I am introducing here today. The bill, besides containing substantive provisions, provides substantial powers to enable the making of necessary subordinate legislation. As an example of these powers, I would like to draw honourable members' attention to the wide regulation-making provisions of clause 50 and also to other clauses such as 8, 28 and 30 which will be developed into what is known as the Building Code Regulations. The Department of Lands draft containing the technical provisions of the code is currently being circulated for comment from the industry.

Essentially, there are 3 broad major changes: significant amendments to the day-to-day administration of the legislation, provision for a continuing review of the quality of the legislation and the introduction of a board of appeal to be known as the Building Referees Board.

It has been found that the present administration of the Building Act by the Building Board has too many inherent time-delaying procedures to suit the present and future needs of the Territory building industry. Therefore, this bill will place the control of the legislation within the Building Authority Branch itself to a newly-created position to be known as the Building Controller. It is expected that much of the frustration presently experienced with building approval delays will then be dissipated by the ability of the branch to make on-the-spot decisions over matters that normally had to wait at least 2 weeks and usually 3 weeks before being considered by the board.

To facilitate this even further, when the situation requires it, there is an extensive power of exemption from compliance with specified procedures. For example, honourable members will notice that fences above 1 m in height may require building approval. However, I understand the new requirement to be introduced by the Darwin City Council in relation to swimming pool fences requires a minimum height of 1.2 m. Without committing the Building Controller in any way, this may well be an area in which strict compliance to seek building approval could be dispensed with provided adequate structural requirements are met.

The Building Board itself will be abolished. Instead, a new board will be

created to be known as the Building Referees Board. This board will review certain actions taken by the Building Controller in the course of his administration of the building laws when applications are made to the board to undertake such reviews. This is an important provision for it provides a right of appeal, other than to the Supreme Court, which does not currently exist. The new procedures should find ready acceptance within the building industry for the process of review will be speedy and relatively inexpensive.

The bill will also establish a Building Standards Committee which will, when necessary, regularly review the operation of the building legislation as well as monitor building standards and assess innovative building techniques and materials. The committee shall also regularly consider the Australian Model Uniform Building Code which has been adopted by the Northern Territory and the mainland states. This code is published by the Australian Uniform Building Regulations Coordinating Council of which the Northern Territory is a member.

Might I add that the Territory Cyclone Code is perhaps even more stringent than the Australian Standard Code for cyclone areas and Professor George Walker, head of the School of Engineering at the James Cook University of North Queensland, recently congratulated this government on its approach.

The new building laws will rationalise concepts currently shared or duplicated by the building and planning legislation. The Planning Act is undergoing a major review and this is an ideal opportunity to make both statutes fully complementary. Potential conflict can be removed and neither act will infringe upon the other. Examples are the usage of the words 'use and occupation of buildings' and the administration of set-back, lot sizes, plot ratios and so on. Building areas will be declared as areas where a planning instrument applies under the Planning Act. Except where the minister declares a special building area or has exempted an area from a planning area, this concept will make building and planning areas synonymous.

The legislation will establish the powers of building inspectors. For example, their right of entry and inspection will be beyond dispute. The government is mindful of the gravity of the building inspectors' responsibilities and the actions that they may be required to take when policing compliance with the code. Building inspectors will be required to hold prescribed qualifications and will be appointed by the Building Controller.

The new laws will bind the Crown. The 'Crown' is defined to include the Commonwealth as far as is possible as well as the Crown in right of the Territory. This is to ensure that no government buildings are constructed to a standard inferior to the Building Code.

Already, due to procedural changes within the Building Authority Branch, the time taken to process most house building applications has been nearly halved. Health and fire approvals can now be obtained directly from the Building Authority Branch. It is anticipated, however, that consultations will continue for a limited period with health and fire authority officers to ensure a smooth transition.

The government is confident that the public and the building industry will welcome the new legislation. The new laws will not discriminate against innovative building methods or materials. If these are not specifically provided for in the code, the Standards Committee will examine all aspects of the building application and advise the Building Controller if the unorthodox matters are acceptable.

The public will also appreciate the greater effectiveness of the new legislation in detecting and rectifying unauthorised, ruinous, unsafe and unhealthy buildings. Much public concern has been voiced in recent years about buildings in all these categories from nearly every Territory centre and the time has now arrived when positive action can be taken to either make these buildings comply with the Building Code or cause their removal or demolition. Substantial penalties will apply for offences against these provisions in the new code.

Mr Deputy Speaker, just before concluding, I would like to extend the thanks of the government to the members of the Building Board who have operated under the old act for some considerable time and have certainly done their very best to make sure that the building process in the Northern Territory has been conducted as expeditiously as possible.

Mr Deputy Speaker, it is considered that this Building Bill, together with the intended Building Code, will be stronger and more resourceful legislation than the present act which it will replace. I commend the bill to honourable members.

Debate adjourned.

ABSCONDING DEBTORS AMENDMENT BILL (Serial 301)

Bill presented and read a first time.

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

Mr Deputy Speaker, one of the things the Absconding Debtors Act does is to enable a debtor trying to flee the Territory to escape his obligations following the issue of a warrant to be arrested and brought before a judge or magistrate. The first amendment is aimed at allowing a debtor to be arrested by a police officer without the warrant or a copy of the warrant being immediately available. This is to take into account the situation where, say, the warrant has been issued in Darwin but the debtor has already left for Alice Springs. Alice Springs police would be able to apprehend the debtor even though no copy of the warrant is available for immediate service on the debtor. The amending bill does, however, provide that a warrant or a copy of the warrant must be served on the debtor as soon as possible thereafter.

Mr Deputy Speaker, this amendment also seeks to protect the police officer who arrested a debtor, believing on reasonable grounds that a warrant was issued, from being liable for wrongful arrest if it is established that a warrant had not in fact been issued. Basically, this is a precautionary amendment. In very few, if any, instances would such a situation be contemplated as steps would always be taken to ensure that, before arresting the debtor, a police officer will check up so far as he is able with the appropriate authorities to clarify that a warrant has in fact been issued.

The Absconding Debtors Act further provides that orders can be made preventing the transfer of property either out of the Territory or to another person or company. The amending bill provides that, if the property has an estimated value of \$10 000 or less, the application for a non-transfer order should be made to a magistrate. If it is worth more than \$10 000, the application should be made to a judge of the Supreme Court. This is in line with the normal jurisdictional limits of these courts.

Mr Deputy Speaker, these amendments essentially clarify the law in this area. They are not major ones but merely seek to ensure that the act functions more efficiently. The amendments themselves arise out of problems previously experienced in the administration of the act. I commend the bill to honourable members.

Debate adjourned.

FIRE SERVICE BILL (Serial 297)

Bill presented and read a first time.

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

The unit formerly known as the Northern Territory Fire Brigade under the control of the Department of Transport and Works has been transferred to the control of the Commissioner of Police and is now known as the Fire Service. This bill repeals the Fire Brigades Act and officially creates the Fire Service.

A prime function of the Fire Service is the protection of life and property, especially in regard to fire. The bill recognises that the Fire Service is a disciplined body of persons and, accordingly, must include provisions to establish an appropriate code of behaviour and the means to enforce discipline. None of these are provided for in the present act, and this bill seeks to remedy that situation.

Currently, for promotional issues, discipline and appeals, recourse is had to the Public Service Act. This is not appropriate and special procedures are provided in the bill. Where there is conflict, the Fire Service Act will prevail over the Public Service Act. A Director of Fire Service has been appointed but there is no statutory recognition of his appointment nor are there any legal commitments binding him to his office or defining his functions and responsibilities. This bill provides for this.

The Fire Service Bill has administrative and disciplinary features similar to the Police Administration Act and reflects a number of the recommendations contained in the Williamson Report. The 3 top level positions of Director, Chief Fire Officer and Deputy Chief Fire Officer are to be appointed by the minister. Whilst the director is charged and vested with the general control and management of the Fire Service, he is responsible to and subject to the directions of the Commissioner of Police. Amongst other issues, the director is bound to make provision for the prevention of fire, the suppression and extinction of fires and the safety of persons and property endangered by fire and he is to ensure that the Fire Service is maintained in a state of operational efficiency.

The director will have the authority to appoint and promote members up to but not including the rank of Deputy Chief Fire Officer. He will be able to institute disciplinary proceedings and, in cases of a minor nature, will be able to determine such issues. He will, however, be restricted in the imposition of punishment. Matters of a more serious nature are to be referred to a board.

The bill provides for appeals in matters of promotion and disciplinary determinations by the director. The Promotions Board and the Appeals Board are constituted by a magistrate acting as a chairman, a person nominated by the director and a member nominated by the Fire Service Association whose member is

affected. The bill provides that appointments by the director are subject to probation for a period of 12 months.

A member of the service may resign after having given 1 month's notice of his intention to do so. Early retirement at the age of 55 years is provided for but a member may not continue in the service after reaching the age of 65 years. A member may resign for the purpose of becoming a candidate for election to parliament. If such a member is unsuccessful, he shall be reappointed without loss of position or salary.

The procedures before the boards are provided for in the bill and include that any question of law is to be determined by the chairman of the board who in each case is a magistrate. A person appearing before a board is bound either to take an oath or make an affirmation to answer any relevant questions. The person may advise a board that the answering of questions would tend to incriminate him. However, he is not excused from answering but his answers cannot be used against him in any civil or criminal proceedings other than for offences set out in this bill. This is a necessary provision in a disciplined service and it is to be observed that a party to a hearing may be legally represented.

The minister, by notice in the Gazette, determines an area to be a fire district and the bill provides that a fire brigade shall attend a fire within a fire district. Authority is given for the senior member present at a fire to effect precautionary measures for the purpose of protecting life or property or controlling or extinguishing fires. Such measures include power of entry into premises then on fire or menaced by fire, to take possession of premises, to take fire-fighting equipment over premises not on fire to gain access to a fire, to close roads to traffic during a fire, to order persons to vacate premises on fire, to remove any person or thing creating a danger or to use any water supply.

The bill authorises the director to examine certain premises and, if he is of the opinion that danger to life or property may arise, to serve notice on the owner in relation to the building and on the occupier in relation to the contents of the building to take action to eliminate or reduce the danger of fire. It is an offence to contravene or fail to comply with the requirements of a notice. The bill allows that a person served with such a notice may appeal to the minister for a review of the notice. I think I will strike that out.

The Fire Service is to consist of permanent, auxilliary and volunteer fire brigades. The bill provides that an auxilliary or volunteer member, whilst absent from his normal employment in connection with a fire, shall not be liable to dismissal or loss of other employment benefits to which he may be entitled.

The Territory is to be liable in respect of the loss of life or injury to an auxilliary or volunteer member engaged in fire-fighting activities or training. The Crown is to be liable in respect of a tort committed by a member in the performance or purported performance of his duties. However, no action or proceedings may be instituted to recover damage to property occasioned in the performance in good faith of a function or duty or the exercise of a power under this legislation.

The bill provides power to make regulations for specified purposes and preserves the existing fire brigades, present ranks, seniority and all appointments made under the Fire Brigades Act. Mr Deputy Speaker, I commend the bill to honourable members.

Debate adjourned.

CRIMINAL CODE BILL
(Serial 294)

Bill presented and read a first time.

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

You will be aware that this bill seeks to codify the criminal law so far as serious offences are concerned. To enable the enactment of the Criminal Code, it has been considered necessary that the code should be introduced as a schedule to an act. Members will note that the Criminal Code Bill before them provides for a code of criminal law by virtue of the provisions of clause 4. This approach is considered suitable as it allows the code itself to sit as a document in its own right, relating only to criminal law and without reference to transitional, repeal or savings provisions which, I would expect, normally only serve to confuse anyone reading such provisions for the first time. In speaking to the bill, I propose to comment in detail on the Criminal Code itself as distinct from the Criminal Code Bill but, where necessary, I shall explain the effect of the Criminal Code Bill.

This code is based on the Draft Criminal Code which was tabled in the Legislative Assembly by the former Attorney-General, Mr Everingham, in June 1982. A good deal of valuable comment has been received from various members of the public, interested groups and organisations. I thank them for their assistance. The tabled draft and the comment upon it have been the subject of a great deal of consideration and, consequently, there have been a number of changes to the June draft. I consider that these changes have resulted in the code being a more advanced and suitable document. I would also like to thank the former Attorney-General for the considerable input he has made regarding the further development of this code.

I would still welcome and encourage constructive comment on the code from the community, especially from the legal profession. I anticipate that, when this bill passes through the committee stage, there may be some further amendment, mainly of a technical nature, to ensure that the code, when commenced, is complete in every way. Obviously, there will also be amendments to other existing acts such as the Summary Offences Act, the Evidence Act and the Criminal Law and Procedure Act to name but a few. The Criminal Law Consolidation Act will be repealed although some existing offences in that legislation will reappear in the amendments to the Summary Offences Act. These changes will be introduced in later sittings of this Assembly. At this stage, it is proposed that the code will not come into operation before 1 January 1984. This should enable the public, the police and the legal profession ample time to become familiar with all aspects of the code so that any problems resulting from the changeover will be minimised.

In tabling the draft code on which this code is based, the former Attorney-General discussed in detail the contents of the code. The tabled draft was the subject of considerable constructive debate during the August 1982 sittings and I would like to add my appreciation to all members, and in particular to the Leader of the Opposition, for their comprehensive comment which has been of valuable assistance. The former Attorney-General replied to this comment in the November sittings. Given the extensive debate, I do not propose to cover in detail all of the provisions of the code. However, I will deal with the changes to the code which have occurred since the draft was tabled in June and those provisions which have attracted most interest.

Firstly, I should like to deal with part 1 of the code which is of general application. Honourable members will note that many more definitions have been included in clause 1. This is considered to be much more suitable from a drafting point of view. Throughout the code, however, there are a number of other definitions. These generally occur where it is intended that the definition's application will be limited to a particular part of the code.

Clause 3 relates to offences. The technical distinction between crimes and misdemeanours has been done away with by the removal of the term 'misdemeanour'. Another important aspect of this provision, as was mentioned by the former Attorney-General, is the inclusion of a new category of offences; that is, regulatory offences. Such offences are those where it is possible for an offence to be committed without guilty intent, known as mens rea. An example would be a speeding offence. This provision will result in a number of consequential amendments to various acts so that certain offences may be categorised as being regulatory offences. It will also mean that, where an offence has been created in new legislation, there will have to be a positive decision by the legislature to categorise that offence as being a regulatory offence or otherwise. This is somewhat of a novel approach, but it places the responsibility for categorisation where it most properly belongs - in this Assembly.

All the presumptions that will apply under the code have now been included in division 2 of part 1 of the bill. These presumptions include the fundamental concept that a person is presumed innocent until the contrary is proved and that a person is presumed to be of normal mind until the contrary is established.

Also included in this division at clause 7 is the new provision relating to intoxication. My predecessor indicated, in the November reply to the debate on the draft tabled in June, that this government was reconsidering those aspects of the tabled draft relating to intoxication. It was felt that the tabled draft perhaps went too far in this regard. In keeping with this government's own often-stated concern at the relationship between the excessive consumption of alcohol and other intoxicating substances and violent crime, a new clause has been inserted that provides that, in all cases where intoxication may be regarded in determining whether a person is guilty or not of an offence, it shall be presumed that the accused person foresaw the natural and probable consequences of his act and intended them.

Further, by virtue of the provisions of clauses 155 and 324, a person on a charge of murder, manslaughter or any offence against the person may be convicted of committing dangerous acts or omissions and that intoxication in relation to this offence is an aggravating rather than a mitigating factor. These provisions come into operation if the person charged with murder, manslaughter or any other crime against the person is found not guilty of that charge or of any other charge available.

These provisions allow for another alternative. Where intoxication is involved and a person is convicted of an offence against clause 155, the person is liable to a further term of 4 years' imprisonment. Further, clause 390 allows the court to make, in certain circumstances, an order for costs against the person found not guilty of a charge or indictment by reason of intoxication of such a nature that the provisions of clause 35 apply; that is, intoxication has produced a state of insanity. Such costs may cover the cost of bringing the charge, including the cost of reasonable investigation and the cost of committal proceedings. This is in addition to any other order for compensation and restitution.

These provisions are designed to attack this problem which is recognised by

this government as one of the most tragic and troublesome matters afflicting this community. In effect, persons may raise the issue of voluntary intoxication as a factor in determining whether they are guilty or not guilty but, having done so, they must be aware of: (a) the presumption against them; (b) the possibility of a conviction for committing a dangerous act; and (c) the possibility of an award for costs going against them in the event of an acquittal.

Also in this division of the code dealing with presumptions, a new provision, clause 10, has been included. This provision overcomes the problem which arises from the prosecution of 2 or more persons who are involved in a violent attack on another, resulting in death or grievous bodily harm to that other person. Where the death or grievous bodily harm may result from the violent attack, but the evidence is insufficient to establish which person caused the death or grievous bodily harm, each of them is presumed to have caused or aided the other to cause the death or grievous bodily harm until the contrary is proved. This provision will overcome what is considered to be a shortcoming in the Queensland Criminal Code upon which this bill has been based.

Division 3 of part I of the code relates to parties to offences. There have been changes to the provisions which were contained in the tabled draft. The basic philosophy remains the same. Indeed, honourable members may note that many of the changes in relation to the earlier part of the code are to the format of the legislation such that the document, when read as a whole, as it always should be, will be easier to follow and understand.

Division 4 of part I of the code deals with the application of the code - that is, to whom the code applies. It is to be noted that, under clause 15, a person may be guilty of an offence in the Territory even if the conduct of that offence, or some part of it, did not occur in the Territory if that conduct affected, or was intended to affect, the peace, order or good government of the Territory. On the other hand, by virtue of clause 16, where a person who counsels or procures an offence in the Territory to be committed out of the Territory, that person will also be guilty of an offence in the Territory.

Part II of the code deals with criminal responsibility. Criminal responsibility is generally divided into authorisation, justification or excuse. Given the nature of regulatory offences, there is provision, for example, in cases of honest claim of right or immature age. However, obviously there should be no excuse, justification or authorisation in the law for such regulatory offences as speeding. Clause 22 contains a relevant provision.

Division 2 of part II of the code, relating to authorisation, is largely the same as the tabled draft, with additions to cover categories such as right granted by law which was in doubt under the tabled draft.

Division 3 of part II of the code deals with justification. This division does not appear in the tabled draft. However, it is a compilation of situations where some use of force may be used with justification. These provisions have been taken largely from the provisions which existed in various parts of the tabled draft; that is, the assault provisions.

Division 4 of part II deals with excuse and the provisions remain the same as in the tabled draft except, as has been indicated earlier, in relation to intoxication. I do not propose to go over the subject of intoxication again apart from pointing out that, by virtue of clause 36, the insanity provisions apply to cases of involuntary intoxication where the degree of intoxication is such that a person is deprived of his capacity to understand or control his actions or capacity to know what he was doing.

Clause 39, which relates to compulsion, has been amended to remove the reference to actions to protect other persons. It is considered that, on occasions where a person is compelled to protect another, there is sufficient protection afforded to that person by virtue of clauses 27(G) and 33.

Part III of the code relates to offences against public order and deals with the areas of sedition, terrorism, offences against the executive and legislative power, unlawful assemblies, breaches of the peace, offences against political liberty and piracy. This part of the code was the subject of considerable debate. The former Attorney-General, in his reply in the debate in the November sittings, indicated some changes would take place. Accordingly, there is no longer the provision which would have made it an offence to fail to disclose information about acts of terrorism. Other deletions include provisions in the tabled draft relating to forcible entry, forcible detainment, affray and threatening violence. As was pointed out by the Leader of the Opposition, these are more in the nature of summary offences.

Perhaps the most significant change to this part of the code has been the deletion of a mandatory life sentence for terrorism. This matter was discussed and debated at length. After a great deal of consideration, it has been considered that a mandatory life sentence may preclude the option of successful negotiations with terrorists as to the release of hostages. The imposition of a life sentence is now discretionary.

Part IV of the code deals with offences against the administration of law and justice, and against the public authority. Many of the electoral offences have been deleted from this part of the code and will be dealt with or are already covered in the Electoral Act. Some offences have, however, been retained as it is considered that these are serious criminal offences which should be included in the code of criminal law relating to serious offences.

As regards disclosure of official secrets, clause 75, it is to be noted that the provisions have been extended to include all persons engaged to do work for, or render service to, the Northern Territory. Further, it is to be noted that, if the disclosure is for gain, the penalty has been increased to a maximum of 5 years. Otherwise, these provisions remain largely the same. However, provisions relating to the advertising of a reward for stolen property, justices of the peace acting oppressively and disobedience to law and order by statutory authority have been deleted and will be considered in summary offences legislation.

Clause 112 covers the failure of persons sentenced to periodic imprisonment to report. These provisions obviously take into account the relatively new concept of periodic imprisonment.

Part V of the code relates to acts injurious to the public in general. It includes provisions relating to offences against morality. It is to be noted that, by virtue of this code, homosexual acts in private between consenting male adults will not be an offence. To clarify matters of interpretation, definitions of 'in private' and 'in public' have been included at clause 127.

This part of the code also deals with drug offences. There have been a number of changes to the tabled draft, particularly clause 142 which has been designed to deal with trafficking in dangerous drugs. This provision is quite novel in that it places an onus upon the drug traffickers convicted of living off drug proceeds to prove that they were involved in trafficking in less harmful drugs or otherwise face the maximum penalty which can be imposed under this clause, which is life imprisonment. In other words, a convicted person may

reduce his liability for imprisonment for life to a maximum of 14 years if he can prove he was involved only in schedule 2 drugs; that is, amphetamines. If he can prove he was involved in schedule 3 drugs - that is, cannabis - his liability for imprisonment may be reduced to a maximum of 10 years. It is to be noted that the processes of reducing liability for sentence only comes into operation after conviction.

The drug schedules 1, 2 and 3 have now been completed and are considered sufficient to cover the range of drugs now available in the community. This stance, which has been taken in relation to serious drug offences, may be seen by some to be draconian. The honourable member for Nightcliff has probably fallen out of her chair by now. It is considered, however, that the offences themselves are of a particularly abhorrent nature and that they warrant the most rigorous of punishment.

Part VI of the code relates to offences against the person and related matters. Initially, it must be brought to members' attention that the part of the June tabled draft which dealt with circumstances where force may be used has been deleted from this part of the code. Those provisions, as I have already mentioned, now appear under the heading of 'justification' in part I of the code.

As was advised in the November sittings, the provisions dealing with the acceleration of death have been deleted. This part of the code also deals with homicide. There has been a change in the provisions relating to the definition of 'murder', now clause 163. Clause 163(1)(b) has been amended and a new sub-clause (2) included. These provisions set out that killing a person when committing or attempting to commit certain crimes, as covered by subclause (2), may amount to murder. The previous provisions left the matter in doubt as to interpretation of 'unlawful purpose'.

One important aspect of these homicide provisions is the introduction in clause 166 of the concept of diminished responsibility. Diminished responsibility is relevant only to murder and serves to reduce what would otherwise be murder to manslaughter. These provisions acknowledge the existence of a degree of abnormality of mind which is less than insanity and its effect upon a person's ability to control his actions or that person's want of understanding. It would be appropriate for what might otherwise be termed 'infanticide' to be raised as diminished responsibility.

The punishment for murder remains life which cannot be mitigated or varied. As was stated by the former Attorney-General, the seriousness of this offence is such that it should be accompanied by the strongest possible sentence available under the law.

Clause 177 of the code deals with medical termination of pregnancy. It has been indicated on a number of occasions that provisions relating to medical termination of pregnancy remain the same as in the current law, save for some changes in drafting style to suit the code. These changes do not alter the law in any way.

Division 5 of this part deals with assaults. Assaults can basically be categorised in 3 areas under the code: common assault, aggravated assault and sexual assault. Assault has now been defined in clause 190. As has been pointed out, the term 'rape' no longer exists in the code. That type of offence is now encompassed in clause 195 dealing with sexual assault. The other side says we are not concerned about women's affairs. Good grief! As has been indicated on earlier occasions, there will be amendments to the Evidence Act to come into operation at the same time as the commencement of this code to provide

procedural protection for victims of sexual offences.

I would also like to assure those concerned about sexual assault in marriage. By virtue of clauses 5 and 6 of the Criminal Code Bill, to which this code is a schedule, the common law shall not apply.

Clause 2 establishes the code and provides that it shall be the law of the Northern Territory as regards matters dealt with in the code. Clause 5 sets out that the liability for trial or punishment in the Territory arises only in respect of a matter dealt with within the code or under another law of the Territory. It is intended that the code be construed without any assumptions that the common law applies. Consequently, provisions in the code relating to sexual offences apply to all men including husbands.

In part VI, the provision relating to abduction of females has been deleted. It is considered to be adequately covered by the kidnapping and assault provisions in the code.

Clause 207, relating to criminal defamation, remains despite requests to the contrary. It is considered to afford an essential protection of persons against scurrilous defamatory attacks of an unlawful nature for which civil action provides no effective remedy. For example, a police officer conducting an investigation of a crime may be the victim of a defamatory attack of such a nature as to prevent him from pursuing those investigations which may result in the apprehension of a criminal. In this type of case, a civil remedy affords no protection either to the police officer or to the public. As another example, a candidate for election, including election to a union or company board, may be the subject of a wrongful defamatory attack just before the election date such that his likelihood of election is destroyed. Civil remedy is useless.

Part VII of the code deals with property offences and related matters. Division 1 of this part covers stealing, robbery, unlawful entry and the like. The theft provisions are based upon the Queensland, Victorian and English theft provisions and remain largely the same as they were in the tabled draft. Many of the theft definitions included in the tabled draft now appear in clause 1, the definition section. It is considered that they have universal meaning throughout the code and should be placed in clause 1.

Clause 216 of the code relates to unlawful entry of buildings which is one of the most prevalent of offences. It is to be noted that the clause provides for an increase in penalty if the building entered is a dwelling house. If the offence is committed at night, the offender is liable to twice the penalty which might otherwise be imposed. It is also to be noted that, if the offender enters a dwelling house with a firearm or with any other dangerous or offensive weapon, the offender is liable to life imprisonment.

Clause 218 of this code now deals with persons found armed with intent to enter a building unlawfully. There have been some deletions from the tabled draft regarding persons otherwise equipped - for example, masked or with an instrument for housebreaking - with intent to enter a building. These offences will now appear in the summary offences legislation. Although these offences are considered serious, they are not considered to be offences of such a nature as to warrant inclusion in the code.

The provisions of the tabled draft relating to unlawfully obtaining confidential information and unlawfully disclosing trade secrets have been retained in clauses 225 and 226. For an offence to be committed, the disclosure must be with the intention to cause loss or gain some benefit.

Clause 232 relates to blackmail. A new subclause (2) has been included. This subclause properly states the common law position and clarifies any doubt as to interpretation that may have arisen.

There have been some minor changes to division 6 of part VII dealing with criminal damage to property. The excuse provision has now been included at clause 30 which deals with excuse generally. 'Unlawfully' has been specifically defined at clause 242. The provisions of this part relating to forgery remain largely the same as in the tabled draft.

Clause 280 relates to interference with data processing material. 'Data processing material' and 'data processing response' have been defined in clause 1. It is considered that the provision is now adequate to cover the extent of computer-based material now available throughout the community.

Part VIII of the code deals with attempts and conspiracy. The attempt provisions are straightforward and I do not propose to deal with them in detail.

Division 2 of this part deals with conspiracy. This aspect of the code has been given a great deal of consideration. I am fully aware of the cost, length and complexity of some conspiracy cases. I am aware that there are sometimes great difficulties encountered in the defence and prosecution of such cases. I consider, however, that it is of paramount importance that the discretion to bring a charge of conspiracy must remain with the Attorney-General. It is my intention that the fullest consideration be given as to whether or not a charge of conspiracy is to be brought.

If the criminality of the offence can be properly reflected by substantive offences, then substantive offences shall be brought. I would be concerned if it were left to the court to decide whether a charge of conspiracy can be brought. I consider such a provision could lead to criticism of the court. If there is to be criticism of a conspiracy charge, let it be on the Attorney-General's shoulders. The Attorney-General is appointed to make these types of decisions. I have indicated the criteria upon which I will consider these types of matters.

Part IX of the code deals with procedural matters concerned with jurisdiction, indictment, alibi and matters pertaining to trial. There have been some deletions from the tabled draft regarding jurisdiction, such as those relating to place of trial, as these provisions are not relevant in the Northern Territory.

The indictment provisions in clause 2 of part IX have been amended to delete those matters which are considered unnecessary. For example, there seems to be no use in the provision which merely provides that, where it is necessary to mention money, such money may be described simply as money, without specifying any particular form of money. Common sense will prevail.

Division 3 of this part deals with alternative verdicts. For example, clause 322 provides that, where a person is charged with murder, he may be convicted of murder or the lesser offence of manslaughter. An important new provision is clause 324 which deals with the effect of a defence of intoxication in relation to charges of murder, manslaughter or any other serious offence against the person. This clause provides that the person charged may alternatively be convicted under clause 155 which deals with dangerous acts. As I mentioned on many occasions, this government intends to attack the very serious problem of alcohol and violent crime. The provisions in this code relating to intoxication are evidence of that approach.

Division 4 of part IX deals with alibis. These provisions are designed to ensure that the course of justice runs smoothly and is fair. These provisions are designed to prevent 'trial by ambush' or 'surprise'.

Clause 338 is an important provision which gives the right to a person committed for trial to make application to be brought to trial. It is hoped that there will be minimal delays in the judicial system but this provision is an important safeguard for an accused person.

An important procedural change for lawyers to note is in clause 362 which deals with the time to challenge jurors. It is to be noted that, under the code, the time to challenge jurors is any time before the officer has begun to recite the words of the oath to the juror. This will also mean that jurors individually will recite the oath. This change allows for clarification as to when a juror may be challenged. However, I am prepared to consider any further comment that the legal profession may wish to make on this provision. I would invite further comment.

Clause 367 spells out that an accused person shall no longer be entitled to make a statement from the dock. This right was an anachronism from the days gone by when the accused was not entitled to put his defence. As you will all be aware, statements from the dock are sometimes used for the purposes of making scurrilous, unwarranted and unjustified attacks on police, prosecution witnesses, other defendants and the judicial system. It is about time that the right to make these statements was abolished.

An important and innovative addition to the code is the introduction of clause 387. This provides that, where at trial an accused refuses to admit certain facts - when requested in writing by the Crown - of such a nature that the making of the admission would not have prejudiced his defence, the court may take such refusal into account when passing sentence. This provision is designed to prevent waste of courts' and witnesses' time by encouraging admission of non-contentious matters. Before honourable members become upset about that, I ask them to think it through. We are talking about very obvious things. For example, where it is necessary that obvious medical evidence be introduced, it seems appropriate that, if the medical evidence is not disputed, then the evidence should be admitted without need to call the doctor to give the evidence, if the prosecution so requests. The court's and the doctor's time would be saved in such a case and the defence would not be prejudiced. It is not intended that this provision should apply in any way to matters disputed by an accused person.

Division 6 of part IX relates to verdicts. I draw members' attention to clause 390 which is another of the intoxication provisions. It specifically requires that, where a person alleges that he is not guilty by reason of intoxication, other than involuntary intoxication such that clause 35 applies, the jury is required to find specially, if they find he is not guilty, whether he is not guilty by reason of intoxication and whether such intoxication was voluntary. This clause allows for the awarding of costs against defendants who raise this defence and are acquitted by reason of that defence.

Part X deals with punishment, appeals and miscellaneous matters. The provisions relating to punishment remain largely the same as the tabled draft. Honourable members will note that division 2 of part X relates to appeals. These provisions will not come into force with the other parts of the code. Clause 2(2) of the Criminal Code Bill provides for this. Criminal appeals in the Northern Territory are presently to the Federal Court. It is considered advisable however, to include these provisions at this stage so that, if at some later date it is considered advisable to set up a Territory criminal court of appeal, then

legislation will be in place. There will be some consequential amendments to the appeal provisions of the Supreme Court Act to take account of the fact that criminal appeals are dealt with by the code.

Mr Speaker, I will briefly deal with the Criminal Code Bill itself as distinct from the code. As has just been indicated, clause 2 of the bill provides for commencement, and for the commencement of the appeal provisions at some later date.

Clause 3 allows for the repeal of various acts currently in force. It is expected this list will be added to when the consequential amendments are dealt with.

Clause 4 allows for the code to be interpreted as if it were an act.

Clause 5, as I have indicated earlier, establishes the code as the law of the Northern Territory relating to the matters dealt with in the code.

Clause 6 provides the liability for trial and punishment under the code. By virtue of clauses 5 and 6, a person will no longer be punishable for an offence against the common law in the Northern Territory.

Clause 7 saves any legal remedies and rights of action which a person may have had before the introduction of the code.

Clause 8 allows the court to deal with contempt matters summarily; that is, the court may deal with the matter at the time. This provision retains the current position relating to contempt.

Mr Speaker, as I have indicated earlier, there will be quite a number of consequential amendments to other legislation to complement this code. These amendments will be introduced at sittings later in the year. I expect that, during the committee stage of the Criminal Code Bill, there may be some further amendments to ensure that the legislation is as watertight as possible.

Mr Speaker, as indicated earlier, the legislation will not come into operation before the beginning of 1984. This will allow time for the police, the legal profession and the public to become familiar with the bill.

I would again like to express my appreciation to those members of the public, the legal profession and honourable members who have contributed much to the development of the code. While I will be recognising the efforts of officers later, it is also appropriate not to forget, at this stage, the officers who have worked directly on this code. In particular, I express my appreciation to Des Sturgess who has given so much of his time and effort to produce what I consider to be a well-balanced and an effective piece of legislation. I consider the code will be of considerable benefit to the community and truly reflects its wishes. I commend the bill to members.

Debate adjourned.

FIRE BRIGADES ARBITRAL TRIBUNAL AMENDMENT BILL (Serial 298)

Bill presented and read a first time.

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

Mr Speaker, also before the Assembly now is the Fire Service Bill which seeks to replace the Fire Brigades Act. The passage of that bill will necessitate several consequential amendments to the Fire Brigades Arbitral Tribunal Act. The present Fire Brigades Arbitral Tribunal Act will need to be identified as a Fire Service Arbitral Tribunal Act.

The Fire Service Bill provides for a director to head the Fire Service but the Fire Brigades Arbitral Tribunal Act refers to the Chief Fire Officer. Section 31D refers to Chief Fire Officer and requires amending so as to read 'director'.

Throughout the act, references made to fire brigades and to identify with the Fire Services Bill requires amending so as to refer to the Fire Service. Section 2A of the act defines 'fire fighter' and 'fire officer'. Both these definitions require amending so as to be in accord with the Fire Service Bill. 'Fire fighter' refers to a member of a lower classification than sub-station officer. The Fire Service Bill does not recognise the rank of sub-station officer and the definition is to refer to a member who is below the rank of station officer. 'Fire officer' refers to a member of sub-station officer rank or higher and should refer to a member who is of or above the rank of station officer.

The amendments to the definitions do not affect the application of any arbitral tribunal determinations currently in force. The definition of 'member of the fire brigade' in section 2A is to be amended. The Fire Service Bill creates the Fire Service and defines 'member'. Reference is now made to the definition in the Fire Service Bill.

Section 10 of the current act relates to savings provisions such as salaries, terms and conditions that existed pre-1965 before the act was passed and when such had been established under the provisions of the then Public Service Ordinance. This section now has no application and is to be repealed.

Section 10 of the current act is to be omitted. That section provides for the making of an affirmation in lieu of taking an oath. This is provided for in a provision of the Oaths Act and its retention in this act is unnecessary.

A number of consequential amendments are necessary not only to complement the Fire Service Bill but also to update the act in other areas. Such amendments include the altering of the 'Administrator in Council' to read the 'Administrator', the conversion of '1 month' to read '28 days', the removal of the phrase 'a member of the fire brigade' and its replacement by a 'member' and the identification of paragraphs in line with current procedures.

Mr Speaker, I commend the bill to honourable members.

Debate adjourned.

TABLED PAPERS

Draft Community Welfare Bill and Draft Juvenile Justice Bill

Mr TUXWORTH (Community Development) (by leave): Mr Speaker, I table a draft Community Welfare Bill and a draft Juvenile Justice Bill.

I would like to make a few remarks in tabling these draft bills. The bills are intended to replace the Child Welfare Act and the Social Welfare Act both of which have been recognised by the government as outdated in their provisions.

The process of review of the Territory's welfare legislation was initiated by the Board of Inquiry into the Welfare Needs of the Northern Territory, which was commissioned shortly after self-government.

The board of inquiry received 128 submissions from a wide range of individuals and groups throughout the Territory. Following the report of the board, the Department of Community Development has consulted widely both within and outside of the Territory in an endeavour to develop new legislation which will best serve the needs of the Territory in this important and complex area.

However, because of the Territory's changing population, there will be a number of people who were not included in these earlier consultations and who will have valuable opinions on this subject. For this reason, the bills are tabled in draft form at this stage for the purpose of obtaining comments from interested persons in the community prior to redrafting in their final form. These draft bills reflect the government's strong commitment towards forward thinking on social legislation which is directed towards enhancing the well-being of children and families in the Northern Territory. It is appropriate that this legislation focuses mainly on the young as the Territory has a young population and, by investing in that population now, the government is ensuring a stable future for the Territory.

I shall now outline some of the major changes included in the draft bills. The Community Welfare Bill replaces the Social Welfare Act and parts of the Child Welfare Act. The aims of this bill are to promote community development and self-help, to focus on support for the family as the most appropriate means of providing for the welfare of children and to provide a sound legislative framework for the protection and care of children.

In the area of child protection, the government has recently amended the Child Welfare Act to provide for compulsory reporting of child abuse. In keeping with the high priority given to the protection of children, the new bill further develops provisions in this area to ensure that reports of maltreatment are dealt with quickly and effectively by the relevant government departments. These include appropriate powers for community development and police officers to investigate and to act decisively in relation to such reports. However, as a safeguard against abuse of these powers, the bill provides that a holding order must be obtained from a justice within 48 hours of taking a child into custody. The current law allows for a child to be held for 14 days without any further order.

The most important new development in the area of child protection is the provision for the establishment of an interdepartmental child protection team whose function will be to monitor the investigation of all reports of maltreatment of children and to coordinate the responses of the various departments.

The bill will provide for the establishment of a Family Matters Court to hear all applications relating to children in need of care. However, it stresses the desirability of assisting the child's own family to ensure adequate care of the child, with court action to be taken only when the welfare of the child could not be provided adequately by some other means.

The orders which a court may make for a child in need of care include a number of innovations. They range from a supervised order for the parents to exercise proper care to a joint guardianship arrangement between the parents and minister with complete removal of guardianship from the parents as a last resort. The intention of these provisions is that the parents of the child should retain responsibility to the greatest extent possible without jeopardising the welfare

of the child. This is in keeping with the general aim of preservation of the family unit.

A common problem relating to children in the care of state welfare departments is that they drift along in care without adequate on-going planning for their future. As a safeguard against this, the bill provides for a review of the circumstances of all children under the minister's guardianship every 3 months and a review by the Family Matters Court of all orders for guardianship at least every 2 years. Provisions are also included which will allow guardianship to be transferred to persons other than the minister to enable secure arrangements to be made for children who are permanently separated from their own families.

Special provisions are included relating to Aboriginal child welfare. These provisions are designed to provide the important links between Aboriginal children and their own culture by ensuring that appropriate care is arranged, preferably within the extended family network. The bill provides for assistance to Aboriginal organisations and allows Aboriginal communities to undertake functions relating to child welfare. These provisions are modelled on the American Indian Child Welfare Act and will be new in Australia.

The bill includes standard provisions for the registration of foster parents and the licensing of children's homes and child care centres, based on similar provisions in other states. It also includes provisions relating to the employment of children in dangerous occupations. In summary, it is intended that the new Community Welfare Bill will provide the Northern Territory with legislation which updates existing provisions and, in some respects, provides leadership to the rest of Australia in this area of law.

The draft Juvenile Justice Bill heralds a significant departure from existing law relating to the treatment of juvenile offenders. The current law contains these provisions within the child welfare legislation. The mixing of justice and welfare issues in legislation has been widely criticised as being both open to severe abuse and being ineffective in terms of providing an adequate response to juvenile crime. This has not been the case in the Territory as the courts have been making the best of an inadequate set of laws to provide a reasonably consistent system of justice to juvenile offenders.

The bill provides for a system which holds juvenile offenders justly accountable before the law but takes into account their age and lack of maturity in the way that they are dealt with and provides them with all the protections of the due process of the law that are available to adults, something not always taken for granted in juvenile jurisdictions elsewhere.

The Juvenile Justice Review Committee will be established consisting of representatives of appropriate government departments and community organisations and chaired by the Chief Magistrate. The function of this committee will be to oversee the workings of the juvenile justice system and make recommendations to the government for its improvement.

The Juvenile Court will be created to hear charges against juveniles. At present, juvenile courts are held in secret with the result that there is a great deal of misinformation circulating in the community about what happens to juvenile offenders. The government has decided that this needs to be corrected and that the public has a right to accurate information in this regard. For this reason, the restrictions on publication of cases in the juvenile courts have been dropped. Juvenile courts will become completely open unless the magistrate orders otherwise. This means that young people who engage in criminal behaviour

can no longer do so on the basis that they will be exempt from public exposure for their activities. For parents who do not exercise proper control over their children, the message is clear: if their children break the law, they must expect to share the consequences which will include possible publicity. However, in the case of a young person who has just committed one foolish act, the courts will still be able to restrict publication so that his reputation is not damaged by one minor mistake.

The bill will reinforce in legislation the common law practice for a parent or other independent adult to be present when a juvenile is being questioned in relation to a serious offence. The Juvenile Court will have powers ranging from discharge through fines, community service orders, bonds and probation to periods of detention or imprisonment. The Community Welfare Division has already instituted pilot programs involving part-time work to pay off fines and community service. These have proved to be highly successful to date and will be expanded.

There will be some limitations upon the severity of sentences which may be handed out in the Juvenile Court, taking into account the age of those involved. However, in the case of serious or persistent offenders, there will be the power to refer them to the Supreme Court which will have available to it the full range of penalties applying to adults in a similar circumstance. The court will be empowered to review sentences of detention after a certain period so that, where appropriate, early release may be earned by good behaviour.

Often the victims of juvenile crime have very little recourse to compensation. The bill provides for both monetary restitution or restitution by performance of service. It also provides for the names of offenders to be provided to victims where civil proceedings for loss or damage are intended.

The bill provides for the establishment of juvenile detention centres with provisions concerning the running of those centres. It provides for an emphasis upon programs designed to enhance positive social development as opposed to punitive custodial regimes. It ensures also that there are adequate protections against infringement of rights and liberties of detainees.

Taken as a whole, this bill provides for a system of justice which, while ensuring that there are proper protections for young people who come into conflict with the law, provides quite clearly that juvenile offenders should be called to account for their actions. In conclusion, I believe that these bills will provide the Territory with a sound legislative framework in the areas of community welfare and community justice in the years ahead. However, nothing in either bill is set in concrete. For this reason, I welcome any criticisms or suggestions for improvement. It is for this reason that the bills are tabled as draft documents with a view to introducing both bills in their final form in the May sittings of the Assembly. Printed copies of the bills will be available for the benefit of interested members of the public in the very near future.

TABLED PAPER Draft Grain Marketing Bill

Mr TUXWORTH (Primary Production) (by leave): Mr Speaker, I table a draft Grain Marketing Bill.

In doing so, it is my intention that the bill lie on the table of the Assembly until the May sittings to allow sufficient time for public comment on the proposed legislation.

Mr Speaker, I believe it appropriate to give some background on the proposal

to establish a grain marketing board. The compulsory acquisition of grain by statutory authorities is not new in Australia. In fact, Commonwealth and state governments have established a number of authorities for the acquisition and orderly marketing of specified agricultural commodities. The prospect of introducing legislation for the compulsory acquisition of grain crops grown in the Northern Territory was raised by the Agricultural Development and Marketing Authority as far back as 1981 in the authority's newsletter. Subsequent issues of the newsletter have raised the issue from time to time. The chairman and key staff of the authority have discussed the prospect of acquisition with individual farmers and industry organisations on several occasions since July 1981.

The government's intention to establish a grain marketing board was clearly spelt out in the White Paper entitled 'The future of agricultural development in the Northern Territory' when presented to growers, industry organisations and other interested parties in Katherine on 14 August 1982. Despite the many opportunities that have been available to growers, industry organisations and other interested parties to comment on the issue of compulsory acquisition, it is only very recently that any comment has been expressed about the proposal for compulsory acquisition of grain crops. To allay any concern about this, Mr Speaker, I am inviting public comment on the bill before proceeding with its introduction in May.

When examining the draft bill, it should be remembered that the principal objective in establishing a grain marketing board, with powers of compulsory acquisition, is to achieve the best possible benefits for the industry. To achieve this objective, the proposed board will be comprised of grower and specialist government representatives. Grower representatives will be elected by eligible growers in a ballot conducted by the Electoral Office. The government representatives will be members of the Agricultural Development and Marketing Authority. Generally speaking, the functions of the board will be: acquisition of declared grains produced in the Territory; determination of pricing policy for acquired grains; determination of marketing strategies; determination of policies for financing stocks; retention of reserves and disposal of pool balances; and negotiations of grain handling and storage charges with ADMA.

The establishment of a central body to acquire and market grain crops produces fundamental long-term benefits for both growers and end users. Some of those benefits are: growers have substantial input into the determination of marketing and pricing policies; orderly marketing of grain crops can be undertaken in domestic, interstate and overseas markets, as supplies of grain stocks are assured; and grain stocks can be used as security to borrow funds for advance payments to growers. The system of advance payments assists growers in obtaining finance for cropping and development costs. A degree of price stability can be achieved by guaranteeing growers a market for their produce at reasonable prices and by assuring end users of regular supplies at known prices. It also enables the orderly planning, development and utilisation of central grain receival and storage depots, with resulting cost savings to growers and end users. It reduces the need for growers and end users to invest in expensive storage facilities and ensures that consistent quality-standards can be implemented and maintained. It removes the prospect of a large producer cornering the domestic market to the detriment of smaller growers and the prospect of a few end users subjecting growers to unreasonable price competition.

I do not intend to give a detailed description of the draft bill. However, there are several points I wish to highlight. The first is that great care has been taken in framing the bill to ensure that acquisition of specified grain crops complies with the just-terms provisions of section 50 of the Self-Government

Act. Secondly, I would point out that provision exists within the bill for a crop to be revested in the growers or for all or part of a crop to be exempted from the acquisition process. Finally, I must reiterate that the government is concerned with the welfare of the industry and, to achieve the goals of agricultural development through orderly marketing, grain supplies must be assured.

I believe the goals for the industry can be best achieved by the establishment of a grain marketing board. I would appreciate comments from all interested persons on the content of the bill.

TABLED PAPER

Local Government Act Review

Mr TUXWORTH (Community Development) (by leave): Mr Speaker, I table a paper on the Local Government Act review.

Mr Speaker, His Honour the Administrator, in his address at the opening of this session of the Assembly, said that the government planned to introduce a bill for a new Local Government Act within 12 months. The government's decision to proceed with the rewriting of the Local Government Act was taken because of its concern that the present act is inadequate to meet the needs of developing local government in the Northern Territory. The rewriting is being undertaken by a working party comprised of the Solicitor-General and the Director of Local Government Division who, for the purpose of the rewriting, have divided the act into 4 parts: constitutional and electoral matters; functions and responsibilities; financial administration; and regulatory powers. Discussion papers will be issued which will outline the proposals for each part of the act. I am pleased today to table the first of those discussion papers, outlining the philosophical approach and the major proposals for the first part. I expect to present the remaining parts at the next sittings. I commend the paper to honourable members. I would appreciate any comments that honourable members might have on this particular local government issue.

ADDRESS IN REPLY

Continued from 22 March 1983.

Mr VALE (Stuart): Mr Speaker, I rise to speak to the address in reply and support the motion of the Chief Minister.

I believe the most important factor in the continuing development of central Australia is the need for an all-weather road and rail system. Far too often in the past, Alice Springs and surrounding districts were cut off from the outside world by heavy rain and were then dependent on air supplies for essential food and medical requirements.

Mr Speaker, as you and other members will know, the recent floods in central Australia for the first time ever did not seriously disrupt the town's supply lines. Credit for the all-weather rail link is due to the federal government but the continual upgrading and sealing of our many bush roads - the Plenty, Tanami, Petermann, Ross and Hermannsburg roads - has occurred since self-government 5 short years ago. These are vital links in a much improved transport system in central Australia.

Mr Speaker, at long last, a road in central Australia has been named after my favourite drink. The Bunday Highway presently under construction will ultimately link the bitumen seal on the Plenty Highway with the Sandover Highway

in the north. It is now being reformed, gravelled and compacted. The Bunday Highway gets its name from the river of the same name in the area.

Much has been achieved in central Australia road programs but, of course, many hundreds of miles remain to be sealed before we are completely free from flood disruptions - disruptions which in the past could be so costly to our 2 major industries: pastoralism and tourism. Completion of the seal of the Petermann or Ayers Rock road later this year will mean that our major tourist attraction in central Australia will be serviced by a bitumen road between Alice Springs and the Rock. The upgrading of our internal road system is vital to allow the tourist industry the ability to properly service the many additional tourists expected to visit the Centre when the South Australian section of the Stuart Highway is completed in December 1986 in time for the South Australian sesquicentennial celebrations.

Mr Speaker, I would like to pay particular tribute to the former Premier of South Australia, Dr David Tonkin, for honouring his pre-election promise several years back to start commencement of that work. While he is no longer the premier, I think that the fact that the work is well under way is due in no small measure to Dr Tonkin and his former state government.

The other road in central Australia which I believe will become a major tourist highway is the Plenty. It must ultimately be sealed to the Queensland border for it will allow tourists to travel up from South Australia and then across the Plenty Highway through Queensland and back down the east coast to their home towns. The Plenty already services many cattle stations in the Stuart electorate plus some mining operations. The honourable Minister for Transport and Works and other ministers have travelled that road and, I am sure, would agree with me that the scenery along that road as it runs east on the northern side of the mountains is extremely picturesque.

Mr Speaker, last year, the Centralian cattle industry had, by comparison to other states, a relatively good season, aided I might say by the successful Centralian Beef is Better campaign. Recent rains augur well for a bright season.

Cattlemen in the Centre are pleased to date with the BTB eradication program but it is vital for the ultimate success of this campaign that both Territory and federal funding be maintained. It is hoped that the new federal government will continue the momentum established by its predecessors to ensure that both of these diseases are eradicated from the Territory herds by the national deadline.

Mr Speaker, in 1972, while working for Magellan Petroleum, I prepared a market study for the petroleum products from the proposed Alice Springs refinery. In 1972, because of freight costs, world oil prices and a number of other factors, the then economic or viable market area was between the Alice Springs and Tennant Creek townships. I believe that this study must now be updated to take into account the current world crude oil price and the Alice Springs to Darwin rail line. I believe that the original market area, because of the rail line, could now be extended to include Katherine and possibly Mount Isa.

Mr Speaker, despite the fact that the Northern Territory government is doing everything possible to provide adequate housing, this still continues to be a problem in Alice Springs. And this problem is not eased by the many families arriving from interstate looking for work. The Northern Territory still has a waiting list for commission homes which is considerably shorter than in any of the other states, and the \$5000 deposit requirement and interest rates starting at 4% make it the most attractive home purchasing scheme in Australia.

The member for Millner mentioned the occupancy rate of permanent residents in caravan parks in the Northern Territory of around 24% which he said was considerably higher than in any of the states. I accept that figure, while recognising a percentage of those people are waiting for housing. I would also point out that a number of caravan park residents in my electorate are 'permanent' purely and simply because they like living in caravans, and I expect that the climate, excluding last week's floods, is at least part of the reason for this.

Mr Speaker, in February this year, Alice Springs hosted the national under-18 baseball competition and I would like to take this opportunity to pay tribute to all the officials and organisers who made this competition so successful. I would pay tribute also to the Northern Territory government for the funding provided to upgrade the facility at Traeger Park. It is my understanding that further funding will be necessary to allow for further work on this complex prior to Alice Springs' hosting of the national Claxton Shield competition in several years' time.

Mr Speaker, the 1983 Central Australian Football League season starts in Alice Springs on 17 August and work has started on the upgrading of the Australian Rules section of Traeger Park. I hope it will not be too long before this oval also has the same type of lighting as the baseball complex. For your information, Traeger Park oval is where the Mighty Eagles will be taking Westies apart in September of this year.

The many uses to which the Blatherskite Park complex south of town is now being put have exceeded all our estimates. I am delighted to hear that sewerage water will now be used to water the ovals in this complex and the recent announcement by the Minister for Transport and Works that the service road to the Blatherskite Park complex area will be sealed will be welcomed by all residents of central Australia.

Also on recreation, it is interesting to note the amount of support that is coming out of Alice Springs to the proposed recreation lake north of town. In 11 short days, over two-thirds of the boating population in Alice Springs signed a petition in support of the proposed recreation lake. During those 11 days, of course, much of their normal lifestyle was disrupted by the recent heavy flooding. I think the fact that 4200 signatures were presented in a petition this morning is indicative of the type of support in Alice Springs for this proposal.

Mr Speaker, I return briefly to the petroleum industry. The present laying of the Palm Valley to Alice Springs natural gas pipeline will, when completed, create history because this will mean that the first discovery of onshore natural gas in the Northern Territory will at last come on-stream and be utilised by Territorians. Honourable members may be interested to know that the Palm Valley No 2 well in this field is still the highest recorded gas flow in Australia with a flow rate of 69.7 million cubic feet.

Mr Speaker, in conclusion and, unfortunately, on a sadder note, one matter of deep concern in the Stuart electorate is petrol sniffing. This tragedy has only just commenced in a large Aboriginal community in the Stuart electorate. I know that the council and the parents are extremely worried by this and, in conjunction with officers of the Department of Community Development and Health, are attempting to come up with the right answers to this most complex problem.

Mr LEO (Nhulunbuy): Mr Speaker, this is the second chance I have had to make a speech in reply to the Administrator's speech. I assumed that I would not be making another one until 1984 and I am beginning to wonder if I will have to

make 2 in 1983. The proroguing of the Assembly certainly does give members the opportunity to express their views on where they think the Territory is going and perhaps where it should be going.

Like the member for Stuart, I would like to confine my comments to fairly parochial matters within my electorate of Nhulunbuy. Indeed, the speech I made in 1980 was almost entirely taken up with matters concerning Nhulunbuy. I think that it is worth while that I recap some of the disappointments and some of the more positive things that have happened in Nhulunbuy electorate in the last 3 years.

In 1980, when I spoke on the address in reply - and it was my maiden speech - I spent some time commenting on the closure of Dhupuma College. I have since received representations from many people in my electorate and a neighbouring electorate relating to the value of the college and whether my political party would be committed to reopening it. I have assured those people of the value that I placed on that establishment. They expressed their appreciation of the need for such an establishment. It is my understanding that, of the children who attended Dhupuma College from those communities, few are attending the Darwin college. It was a very worthwhile establishment. I appreciate that it was extremely expensive to run and maintain. However, its value in terms of Aboriginal education cannot be overstated.

I hope that this government will see fit to establish a college of a similar nature in the east Arnhem area - within or outside of my electorate but certainly in that region - and to give a total commitment to Aboriginal education. At the moment, most children of primary school age obtain their education in outstations. By and large, it is undertaken by Aboriginal teacher aides who work under very trying conditions. The schools are built by their own communities and facilities are provided very much by themselves. I am led to believe that the teacher aides are paid either by the Department of Aboriginal Affairs or by the communities themselves. Certainly, I do not detract from the Territory government's efforts in Aboriginal education, but I do not think its commitment has been anywhere near what is necessary.

On the more positive side, Mr Speaker, I spent some time in my 1980 speech on the problems of housing in Nhulunbuy. Taking into account the land tenure problem and other problems faced by the Housing Commission in Nhulunbuy, it has made its presence felt more and more there, to the relief of very many of my constituents. However, many problems remain. The public housing stock there is not large. Mostly the housing stock is private. Unless people are employed by the leaseholder, Nabalco, they still have great difficulty in obtaining housing. However, the situation has certainly improved. When the government and the leaseholder reach some accord on the leasehold situation and enable tenants to purchase their homes, I am quite sure that the community at Nhulunbuy will become much more stable. The availability and nature of the housing provided contributes very much to the social climate of Nhulunbuy.

I appreciate that teacher turnover is very high throughout the Territory but, in Nhulunbuy, it is extreme in every sense of the word. For some unknown reason, teachers at Nhulunbuy are not classified as living in an isolated community. Therefore, unless they are accommodated in Department of Education housing, they are required to pay the full Housing Commission rental. My own child is 8 years of age and experienced 4 different teachers last year. That is not unusual. However, I am told by the experts that is unsatisfactory in terms of the development of a child's education. It is not beneficial for such a young child to be taught by so many teachers in 1 year. I have to rely on expert opinion for that but, from what I have been told, that is totally unsatisfactory.

Perhaps the biggest single problem confronting this government in relation to Nhulunbuy is its inability to confer local government on that community. This was highlighted by the Chief Minister yesterday in answer to a question put to him. He said that nobody in Nhulunbuy had applied for a grant of money to facilitate the job-creation scheme associated with the wages freeze. Indeed, Mr Speaker, that grant can only be given to local government.

Mr Everingham: It can be given to voluntary organisations and mostly it has been.

Mr LEO: Despite what the Chief Minister said then, I was led to believe that the funds were to be made available to local governments. I accept the Chief Minister's information but the Nhulunbuy corporation is not a local government organisation. It has an administrator who has to refer to a board of the leaseholders to obtain permission to proceed with any matter within the community. Recently, he received permission to proceed with a job-creation scheme. I thank the Chief Minister for holding that money aside for Nhulunbuy. I have been assured that the Nhulunbuy corporation will seek an amount of money in order to create jobs for some young people.

The need for local government in Nhulunbuy cannot be over-emphasised, Mr Speaker. During the last 10 years, and probably in the next 30 years, western culture will be implanted so strongly in that community that it will create a climate entirely different to that which existed before the arrival of the mining company. The expectations of the local Aboriginal people have changed already and will change further. Their needs have changed and will change further, and the same goes for their skills. They are no longer the untouched, indigenous people they were when I first arrived there. I believe that, over the next 30 years, their skills, needs and expectations will change substantially.

Mr Speaker, if that town is allowed to fold, then I am afraid the European contribution to that corner of Australia will have been, at best, insignificant and, at worst, absolutely disastrous. There is a need for that town to be recognised in the long term so that people can participate in the future development of that area of Australia. Some organisation not tied to mining there, a local government or a statutory organisation, managing the immediate town perimeters, would enable the community to become a lot more stable. Certainly, it would allow for a broader economic base and undoubtedly would increase job opportunities.

The Chief Minister made a speech on this very matter in my electorate. I concur with him in every way. I have said in this Assembly before and to the previous Minister for Community Development that, if there is anything that I can do to facilitate local government in that community, I will assist in any way. It is pointless to sit around now in the belief that there are 30 years in which to do something. That time will dwindle, Mr Speaker.

There is an obligation for the area that Europeans must accept. This Assembly should accept it. We have created something there. We have built a western-style community in that area and we must accept the obligations along with the benefits. I cannot stress that enough, Mr Speaker. I hope that the Assembly takes notice of what I have said.

Mr EVERINGHAM (Chief Minister): Mr Speaker, I will respond to the honourable member for Nhulunbuy's invitation to tell him what he can do to help for the future of Nhulunbuy. It is what I have suggested to him quite a few times since he has been the member for that electorate. Furthermore, the member for Nhulunbuy, being now a political associate of the party that is in power

federally, can perhaps do a great deal more to realise his ambitions and, I am sure, the ambitions of this Assembly for Nhulunbuy than I can because my party is no longer in power federally. That is the very nub of the question at Nhulunbuy. There is a federal act which defines relations between the landowners, namely the Aboriginals of the area, and the mining company. Because of that, the Northern Territory government effectively is shut out from Nhulunbuy and anything it does there has to be with the acquiescence of the mining company. This government has spent a great deal of time trying to alter the relationships. I am inviting the member for Nhulunbuy to take up the cudgels now that his colleagues are in power federally and to help us do what we have been proclaiming for Nhulunbuy for quite a long time.

The honourable member for Nhulunbuy acknowledges that I have made speeches in his electorate. I have carried the war into the camp of the mining company. I have spoken about local government in Nhulunbuy at the most auspicious occasion I could find to make such a speech in that centre. I gave the commitment of the Northern Territory government to support local government in Nhulunbuy. My offer sank without a trace.

Housing in Nhulunbuy is something the Northern Territory government has been campaigning about for years. Because the mining company holds the lease from the Aboriginal owners, we have not been able to offer people in Nhulunbuy the opportunity to purchase their houses.

That is also part of the problem that the honourable member has with the school. There is not a permanent population and there is no security of tenure of land. It is not that we do not have a problem of transient teachers throughout the rest of the Northern Territory. I can assure the member for Nhulunbuy that one of my kids at a school in Darwin had 4 teachers in one year. It is one of the problems of being able to recruit apparently only a young and mobile teacher population in the primary area. Every effort is made to recruit more mature teachers. From my experience as a lawyer in this town, I know that I could not hire unemployed lawyers to come to Darwin at twice what they could make in Sydney. They would rather stay within a mile of their pub in Sydney.

The same problem exists to an extent within the teaching profession. They do not want to come away from home. If they do, the Territory is the first place they have scored a job. As soon as they get another one, they leave and, in many instances, do not even give notice to the department. I am not criticising the general body of the teaching profession but many of the younger teachers do not honour their obligations when they accept postings to the Northern Territory. It is as simple as that. Indeed, I know of a teacher of 13 years' standing in Alice Springs who left the high school almost without warning at the commencement of the school year. How can any government cope with that situation?

I sympathise with Nhulunbuy. I have been to the schools there plenty of times. I would do anything within reason but we cannot alter that situation which is presently established by a federal act. Virtually, we have no locus standi at all in Nhulunbuy; we are there as a mere provider of services at the behest of the mining company on behalf of the community.

I have spoken about local government in Nhulunbuy. I have committed the Territory government to try to put a road through to Nhulunbuy to assist the condition of the people there and to give the people a feeling that they are not quite so isolated. I spoke to the Institute of Engineers in Nhulunbuy only recently and told them what I thought about the future of the town, and that is on public record. Until the current situation is changed, I do not see any future for the town other than as a mining town with a few titbits of tourism.

In pursuance of the government's campaign to assist Nhulunbuy, we will be holding a seminar under the auspices of the NTDC within a couple of months, to which the whole community of Nhulunbuy - the mining company, the Aborigines and anyone else - is welcome. The purpose is to discuss and formulate a plan for the future of the town. I am sorry that I cannot report more progress in Nhulunbuy. I do not honestly think that the honourable member should try to make politics out of it because, if any government has tried, it has been this one. The honourable member talks about interstate airline schedules and calls on our Minister for Transport and Works to do this and that about interstate air travel. Our minister has no power over that. If that is not playing politics, what is?

Mr Speaker, we have heard comment, implied or absolute, about the proroguing of the Assembly to enable the commencement of this second session. I point out to honourable members that this is the first 4-year term of the Northern Territory Legislative Assembly. Other Australian parliaments, except in the case of Tasmania, are elected for 3-year terms. The English practice is to prorogue parliament annually and the Queen opens parliament each year.

Mr Speaker, the significance which I referred to in my discussions with the media was the celebration of the 5th anniversary of self-government for the Northern Territory. The proroguing of parliament and a new session were all overtaken by events and overshadowed by the federal election and the emergence of a new government. In fact, had the previous federal government run its term, I believe that the proroguing of the Assembly and the commencement of the new session by His Honour the Administrator announcing the government's policy and program for the next 15 to 18 months would have assumed considerably more importance in the minds of Territorians. They were preoccupied with adjusting themselves to considerably changed circumstances.

Mr Speaker, I believe that it was the appropriate thing to highlight the 5th anniversary of self-government by proroguing the Assembly and announcing the government's program for the rest of its term in that formal way. I really suggest that the criticism of the event has been carping and thoughtless.

It is just as well, Sir, that the procedures of this Assembly permit wide-ranging discussion not necessarily related to the subject of His Honour's speech in circumstances such as this address in reply. I say that because honourable members opposite, by and large, ignored the matters raised by His Honour the Administrator in his speech to this Assembly and have rather proceeded to unburden themselves of statements largely relating to federal politics.

The tone was set by the Leader of the Opposition who ignored the various proposals and programs contained in His Honour's speech so that he could explain to us that the federal government was not going to be able to honour its election promises. I was not particularly surprised that he should use his time that way, but what he said was very interesting and very significant. I am sure that the significance has not been lost on Territorians. However, it did not have much to do with the program laid out by His Honour for the next year or so, nor did he show a great understanding of the issues which concern the people of the Territory at this time.

It is extraordinary that the Leader of the Opposition should move so quickly to set aside the positive notions of economic recovery which have featured in the federal government's rhetoric. If it really was necessary to talk about the federal deficit, it is a pity he did not identify economic growth as the way of resolving the situation by expanding the government's revenue base. Perhaps the Leader of the Opposition is a bit out of his depth in looking positively at national economic prospects.

It is regrettable that the Leader of the Opposition and his colleagues opposite were not able to focus on the Territory and the matters which are the province of this Assembly. It is regrettable because an opportunity for useful debate has been lost. I can only assume that the failure of the Leader of the Opposition to take up the issues raised by the Administrator is an indication of his general acceptance of the proposals which were outlined by His Honour and that we can therefore expect support from him as these proposals are put into place.

Perhaps the only issue, Sir, which seems to have been picked up in any way by honourable members opposite is the matter of the inquiry into freight costs which His Honour announced. I can inform the Assembly that terms of reference are being prepared now and that the inquiry will be commenced as soon as is reasonably possible. The honourable member for Millner can be assured that we will offer every cooperation to the federal government if it proceeds with its inquiry, although I note from his outline of the terms of reference of the national inquiry that it is likely to be a rather different exercise to the one we envisage in the Territory. As seems to be the way with national inquiries, it will doubtless be years in the making.

The general statements in support of the government's overall objectives are very pleasing. It is clear that such major initiatives as the railway, the development of the land bridge concept, the continued emphasis on housing and the ongoing programs to boost the Territory economy across a wide range of economic activities are generally supported by the Assembly. Where there has been criticism by His Honour, these reflect differences of emphasis or, in some cases, misunderstanding rather than a fundamental disagreement over objectives.

The honourable member for Fannie Bay raised a number of matters relating to health. These have been quite comprehensively dealt with by my colleague, the Minister for Health, and I do not intend to go over that ground again. I will only say that it is regrettable that efforts to improve the efficiency and the effectiveness of the delivery of health services to the people of the Territory should be misconstrued. As the Minister for Health has indicated, there has not been any downgrading of the significance of health nor any reduction in the allocation of resources to health necessary to maintain and enhance health services and health standards.

The honourable member does not seem to have a clear appreciation of the fact that it is output that matters not input. The issue is not how many of this and how much of that but rather how effectively we are promoting a healthy community. As my colleague, the Minister for Health, has clearly demonstrated, it is simply not true to suggest that the government is not committed to continuing the steady improvement in health services which the Territory has benefited from in recent years. The honourable member goes for bulk not quality.

Mr Speaker, I am encouraged by the support for other initiatives outlined by His Honour. Clearly, the initiative of making housing more readily available to women has the support of members. Similarly, the proposals outlined to advance Aboriginal welfare, particularly in the field of education, have been clearly endorsed. In respect of His Honour's remarks about greater Aboriginal involvement in tourism, I regret that the honourable member for Victoria River has quite misunderstood the objectives. He seemed to be of the view that tourism was to be rammed down the throat of Aboriginal communities. That of course is not what the Administrator suggested at all. I thought His Honour was very clear that the government will endeavour to promote opportunities for Aboriginal communities to expand the scope for economic initiative. It is all about

opportunity not coercion. If we cannot have the full support of this Assembly for programs of that kind, then I have to say that I despair of our ever getting agreement about worthwhile initiatives to assist Aboriginal people.

A number of members opposite are clearly not able to indicate where they stand on important issues to the Territory nor what they want for the Territory. They have endeavoured to conceal their lack of preparedness by complaining about the prorogation of the Assembly and producing all kinds of flim-flam to suggest that it serves no purpose. Any reasonable person who was concerned to achieve the best for the Territory would welcome any opportunity to canvass the issues and would grasp the chance to lay down a platform. That honourable members opposite have not done just that is a reflection of the total dearth of ideas from that side of the Assembly.

Mr Speaker, so be it. There are plenty of ideas on this side and His Honour's speech, contrary to the suggestions made, gives us a very full and worthwhile agenda. We have a railway to translate into reality. There are new housing programs to be set in place. There is a university to establish. Legislation has been developed in the areas of land, building and local government. There are new initiatives for Aboriginal advancement. There are comprehensive policies in the education field to discuss with the community. There are initiatives in health, sport and recreation, and a continuation of programs to modernise the Police Force and the fire services and in such important areas as urban beautification. There is an inquiry into freight costs to be conducted. Most importantly, Sir, there are programs to strengthen the Territory's economic base in primary production, transport, tourism, mining and in the general diversification of the economy.

Mr Speaker, His Honour the Administrator has laid out a program which will continue the Territory's progress. It reflects a commitment to a growing Territory economy and the enhancement of social and community benefits for all Territorians. It is a worthy program and one which the government will undertake with vigour and enthusiasm.

Motion agreed to.

SPEAKER'S STATEMENT

Presentation of Address in Reply to His Honour the Administrator

Mr SPEAKER: Honourable members, it is my intention to attend on His Honour the Administrator at Government House at 3.30 pm to present to His Honour the address in reply to His Honour's speech. Honourable members are invited to accompany me.

TABLED PAPER

Eighth Report of the Subordinate Legislation and Tabled
Papers Committee

Mr HARRIS (Port Darwin) (by leave): Mr Speaker, I table the Eighth Report of the Subordinate Legislation and Tabled Papers Committee. I move that the Assembly take note of the paper.

Mrs O'NEIL (Fannie Bay): Mr Speaker, in speaking in support of the motion of the honourable member for Port Darwin, who is chairman of that committee, I feel it is necessary to point out to honourable members that some members of the committee and I are concerned at the number of times we are being asked to revoke reserves or parts of reserves which have been established in the past for the purposes of public recreation. There are 2 examples of *fait accomplis* in a report before us. Areas of land reserved in the past for public recreation are

repeatedly being used for other purposes. Usually, as in the examples before us, they are very worthwhile purposes such as the extension to the Northern Territory Pensioners' Association headquarters and the establishment of the Road Safety Council buildings in Parap.

Nevertheless, these were done contrary to the purpose of the reserve. In other words, they were really contrary to the law. We are asked quite regularly in the committee and, therefore, in this Assembly to pass what is in effect retrospective validating legislation to overcome these problems. I think the Assembly should be aware of it and I am sure members will be concerned. I urge the authorities in the future to try to ensure that we are being asked continually to do this.

Mrs LAWRIE (Nightcliff): Mr Speaker, in speaking to the report, I wish to say 2 things. Firstly, I was pleased when we resumed our parliamentary life to continue on this committee and to have as our chairman the honourable member for Port Darwin. However, I have a particular concern with the way in which the committee is proceeding. When legislation is introduced into the Assembly, there is an increasing tendency to leave a large amount of the machinery of the legislation in regulations rather than having it embodied in the acts. This is done for administrative convenience and to keep the laws governing the people of the Northern Territory relevant from day to day without having to go through the fairly cumbersome procedure of amending acts by way of the introduction of bills. It is far simpler to amend the laws affecting the people of the Territory if it is done by way of regulation.

I have no particular quarrel with that if that is the reason for the shifting emphasis from acts to regulation-making powers. However, I think there should also be an alteration in the terms of reference of the Subordinate Legislation and Tabled Papers Committee. At the moment, our main powers are there to ensure that the regulations are not ultra vires, that they may be enacted under the principal legislation. Above and beyond that, we can only comment but we cannot move to have a regulation disallowed simply because we do not like it.

Mr Speaker, that could be a very undemocratic procedure. When addressing bills brought before the Assembly, the sponsor must indicate clearly why he wants a certain thing to be enacted, amended or withdrawn. In the second-reading debate, all members have the opportunity to speak. More particularly, in the committee stage, all honourable members have the chance to propose amendments to bills and to seek the collective wisdom of the Assembly. If matters of importance are brought into force by way of regulation, that very necessary community safeguard ceases to exist. The regulations go through Executive Council, are gazetted and then the only role of the subordinate legislation committee is to ensure that they are empowered by the principal act. We cannot really debate whether they are in the community interest. If we are to continue to see matters of importance dealt with by regulation rather than by amending bills, I would think that the terms of reference of the committee should be widened to enable members legitimately to put before the Assembly matters of concern regarding the import of regulations which may be legal under the terms of the act but which may cause distress in the community and to enable the Assembly to debate regulations fully.

MOTION

Darwin-Alice Springs Rail Link

Mr VALE (Stuart): Mr Speaker, I would like to speak in support of the statement made by the Chief Minister concerning the Alice Springs-Darwin rail

link. While some members of the opposition have already spoken and referred to the proposed rail line, it should be noted for historical purposes, if for no other reason, that work on this line has in fact commenced with the clearing of hundreds of kilometres of line through the first stage, which is in the Stuart electorate.

Some years ago, a journalist with the Bulletin, in an article on the Tarcoola to Alice Springs line, criticised the construction of that line with the headline 'Dollars Lost in the Desert'. This article and others since then have ignored the fact that, until the mid-1960s, the central Australian line, as it was known by railway officials, was the only line in the Commonwealth operating at a profit. Continual flooding since 1966 saw this vital freight line being disrupted and suppliers were forced to look for alternative supply points and supply lines.

The commencement of services on the Tarcoola to Alice line has meant that these companies have been able to re-establish contacts in the South Australian marketplace. As a result, Alice Springs is once again becoming a major railhead for the supply of goods and services to all Northern Territory towns and communities. Given the vast distance to cover - over 2000 miles in round figures and not 2500 miles as continually stated by the Leader of the Opposition - it is quite probable that sooner rather than later this entire section of the line will ultimately operate at a profit. Unfortunately for all Territorians, the Leader of the Opposition, rather than take a positive and supportive stance on this line, picked on one point of the Chief Minister's speech and attempted to downgrade the whole project. I suggest that the shadow spokesman for transport should take his leader aside and brief him on what is commonly referred to in the transport industry as backloading rates.

This rail project will provide a tremendous boost in employment for Territorians during the construction phase and I would like to pay tribute to those many people who worked so hard to bring the Tarcoola to Alice line in ahead of time and under budget. In particular, the Chief Civil Engineer, Des Smith, deserves particular credit. In my view, he must lead the future construction team.

The completion of the Darwin to Alice line will change the transport industry in the Northern Territory and, ultimately, we may see the popular road trains move from the Stuart Highway to work on the arterial roads delivering and supplying from the rail line. Mr Speaker, one day, subject to disease status, Moroak cattle may ultimately appear in the Gepps Cross market in South Australia.

History will record that the construction of this line must be credited to the Chief Minister for initiating the project, the former Prime Minister, Mr Fraser, and many media representatives who enthusiastically embraced and publicised this project, and last, but certainly not least, all of the state premiers for their support.

I think it is interesting to note that a former Premier of South Australia, the late Sir Thomas Playford, a farmer, took legal action against the Commonwealth many years ago in an attempt to have it build the line but the court action failed. Our Chief Minister, a lawyer, ignored the possibility of legal action and took a publicity course and succeeded.

I hope that the Leader of the Opposition will also ultimately give his unqualified support to the rail line and not hedge his bets, or as the Minister for Primary Production said, 'soften us up'. This project must not be delayed, deferred or cancelled. It must be completed by 1988 because the Territory has

waited patiently for 74 years to see it completed.

Debate adjourned.

ADJOURNMENT

Mr EVERINGHAM (Chief Minister): Mr Speaker, I move that the Assembly do now adjourn.

Mr B. COLLINS (Opposition Leader): Mr Speaker, I invite this afternoon some comment from the Minister for Community Development on something that has been brought to my attention today. It may be incorrect but I have been told that a new practice has occurred in the Department of Community Development in that all appointments to positions in that department above the A levels - that is, all appointments in the E levels of the department - are now the personal prerogative of the minister. I would like to know if in fact that information is correct and if it applies in other departments.

Mr Speaker, the Chief Minister mentioned the problems the Northern Territory Police Force is having with section 128 of the Police Administration Act. That is the section of the act involving what is known as protective custody. I think the Chief Minister said these difficulties related to the argument of points of law in the courts which can result in people being acquitted on occasions, to his disgust. I understand the Chief Minister referred also to some 3 cases that he could remember in the last 2 years where this heinous practice had occurred. The Chief Minister indicated that this created a need to amend the legislation.

I pursued the matter today, in the time available to me. I sought to determine how often this has occurred and I have come up with some fairly interesting but not surprising results. I invite comment on it at some stage. I contacted those practitioners, both here and in other parts of the Northern Territory, who might be expected to take action against section 128 were that contemplated. I spoke to a number of practitioners today who normally represent clients who, in the very large part, are affected by this piece of legislation. They expressed some considerable surprise. Without exception, every practitioner I spoke with today had no personal knowledge of having challenged this particular section of the Northern Territory's law in a court. I have known many legal practitioners who practise in this area and who have been with the service for years but I admit that there is some turnover of staff in those fields. I stress that I am not making an authoritative statement; I am seeking information from the Chief Minister. However, none of the practitioners I spoke with had any personal knowledge of when this action had been taken. We commenced a search today through the appeal judgments that have been handed down over the last 2 years. Again, I am prepared to be enlightened by the Chief Minister because the search was started today and was by no means exhaustive. However, the light that it sheds on the question of the effectiveness or otherwise of section 128 is interesting indeed.

We have been able to find today only 2 judgments where section 128 has been relied on in a court of appeal. I have the judgments before me and, in the courts of appeal, section 128 was applied to an ancillary matter in relation to other more serious charges. The comments of the judge in respect of this section are interesting when taken in the context of any difficulty police might have in enforcing it. I quote from a judgment of Mr Justice Toohey:

Constable Sullivan described the appellant's condition in terms that leave no doubt that he had reasonable grounds for believing the appellant to be intoxicated. After a brief and, on the appellant's

side, peremptory conversation, the police officer said to the appellant: 'You had better come with me and have a sleep for a while. You are under arrest. You are drunk'. He then took the appellant by the left arm and started to walk towards the police vehicle.

Although Constable Sullivan used the term 'arrest', it is clear enough that he purported to exercise his powers under section 128 of the Police Administration Act.

I stress these next words:

He did not depose to any conduct on the part of the appellant warranting his arrest for the commission of an offence, except perhaps abusive language. While I think it is desirable that, in justifying the apprehension of a person under section 128, a police officer refer to the type of conduct which led to the apprehension, it is not essential that he do so. It may be apparent from the circumstances that the officer had reasonable grounds for believing the conduct of the sort described in paragraph (b) of section 128 (1) was likely to take place.

Mr Speaker, that is 1 of the only 2 judgments that I have been able to find. Not only does it not support the Chief Minister's assertion that problems have been experienced in this regard but, in fact, produces evidence quite to the contrary. What the judge is saying in this particular judgment is that all the boxes should have crosses in them: when police officers apprehend people under section 128, they should do so knowing what the law requires. As the judge made clear from this transcript, the constable in this particular case did not offer any evidence at all to the court as to why the person was apprehended. The judge made the inference that some deposition to this effect would be advantageous to the case and went on to say that it was not essential that the police should do that because the circumstances of the case might indicate that that was not required.

I quote from the second of the only 2 cases I have been able to find which is Jabaltjari and McKinlay No A530 of 1982 and again the Appeal Judge was Mr Justice Toohey:

The learned magistrate who heard the witnesses for the prosecution and the appellant found that the appellant was drunk at the time of his apprehension. That was a finding of fact for which there was evidence and it is not open to this court to set aside that finding. In any event, all that section 128 requires is that Constable Cantwell had reasonable grounds for believing that the appellant was intoxicated. There was sufficient evidence that he did so, but it is also necessary, to justify apprehension under section 128, that Constable Cantwell had reasonable grounds for believing that, because of his intoxicated condition, the appellant was likely to do one of the types of things mentioned in paragraph (b) of subsection (1) of section 128. In broad terms, those categories of conduct relate to the likelihood of injury to another or to the person himself. Category (viii) in paragraph (b) is in these words: 'Be unable to adequately care for himself and is not likely to be adequately cared for by any other person'. In my opinion, although it is desirable that a police officer speak in evidence of the type of conduct he thought likely to take place, it is not vital if the circumstances themselves point to the likelihood of the situation envisaged in paragraph (b).

I would simply point out to the Chief Minister that, in both the cases that I have been able to find - the only ones that I have been able to find in the transcripts of appeals today - where section 128 has come before the courts, the following facts emerged: firstly, the only reason that section 128 even came before the courts was in relation to other more serious charges and, secondly, the judge was simply saying that police officers giving evidence of apprehension under this section would be more helpful to the court if their evidence complied with the circumstances as laid down in the legislation. In the case mentioned, the officers giving evidence before the court did not comply. Having said that, the judge went on to say in both the appeals that, despite the fact that it would have been more helpful if the officers had complied, it was not essential that they do so because the judge could infer from other evidence given in the case that they had reasonable grounds for believing such things might happen even without exhaustive quoting from transcripts. That is made clear in both cases.

I have been able to find 2 of the 3 judgments that the Chief Minister said occurred over the last 2 years. The judge's opinion in both cases hardly bears out any need for change. Perhaps what they do bear out is that, in the section of the law which is not often but sometimes used by the Police Force of the Northern Territory, some clearer instruction needs to be given to the police officers who apprehend people under this act so that, on the rare occasions that they must give evidence in court, they at least depose to some extent, in compliance with the legislation, on the circumstances that caused them to make the apprehension. I do not think that that is unreasonable.

If the Chief Minister is relying on those sorts of cases for advancing these changes to the legislation, he is skating on very thin ice indeed because they hardly bear him out.

I will shut up for the 10 minutes before we go across to Government House so that the Minister for Community Development and the Chief Minister can comment on those things that I have raised.

Mr SPEAKER: Honourable members, there is no reason why the Chair should not be resumed at 4 pm. I suggest that we rise shortly before 3.30 pm and the Chair will be resumed at 4 pm.

Mr PERRON (Treasurer): Mr Speaker, I rise in the adjournment today to touch on 2 matters raised during the course of these sittings. The member for Sanderson asked 2 questions in regard to the letting of a government contract for aerial photography. I can clarify this with a few short words.

I refer the honourable member to my answer on this very subject on Wednesday 2 June 1982 when I made it quite clear that the successful tenderer in this case was successful despite any application by local parties for the 5% local preference. In the honourable member's question to me on this matter, she again referred to the application of the local preference clause. I can only reiterate that, despite the application of that clause, the successful tenderer was the lowest tenderer. That should remove any further doubt.

She asked further about a company in the process of registering in the Northern Territory being able to submit tenders and, indeed, being awarded tenders by the government tender board. I have examined lengthy legal opinion on this matter. I am quite satisfied that there has been absolutely no impropriety. The government tender board has acted fairly, justly and certainly totally within the law. I do not see any further need to go into that matter.

Mr Speaker, last night, the honourable member for Nhulunbuy raised the question of the Racing and Gaming Commission issuing bookmakers' licences. I offer some advice to the member. If ever one wants to find someone to say something nasty about a bookmaker, find another bookmaker. The member for Nhulunbuy said that, in one case, it appears that the Racing and Gaming Commission made its decision without any background knowledge of all the applicants. That was an unusual thing to say because at one stage in his speech, he said: 'They are well-known figures in their own right and widely respected in the community for their integrity and experience'. If people are so well known throughout the industry and are upstanding citizens, then it seems unusual that a commission could award an application to someone without having regard to those very things.

He also said that the length of time that applicants had held licences had not been taken into consideration when deciding upon a successful applicant for this bookmaker's licence. He would not know whether the length of time applicants had held licences in the Northern Territory had or had not been taken into consideration. Only those persons who assessed the applicants and made the decision would know that.

However, as I have said before, the length of time that a person has held a bookmaker's licence in the Northern Territory should not be a criterion in any decision to issue a new bookmaker's licence. The criterion must be the most suitably qualified applicant. Whether an unsuccessful bookmaker has operated for 5 years or 25 years would seem to be somewhat beside the point, provided that the successful applicant was assessed as having sufficient experience to make him a proper bookmaker.

In relation to the licence in question, an advertisement was placed by the Racing and Gaming Commission. There were 9 applications, 8 received from people living in the Territory and 1 from South Australia. The commission itself investigated all applicants; 5 of them were interviewed by the commission staff and 2 of those applicants, including the successful applicant, were re-interviewed by the full commission. Certain financial information was sought from those persons and provided. After exhaustive interviews and examination of information supplied by the applicants, a decision was made.

Mr Speaker, 2 unsuccessful applicants were unhappy with this decision and came to see me. In a sense, it was an unofficial appeal because there is provision for an appeal under the act. We discussed the matter at some length whereupon, in the absence of any particular reason being presented why I should do otherwise, I reiterated my support for the commission's decision. Since that time, there has been some mumbling in the background and in the press by at least one well-known racing writer. Obviously, the unsuccessful applicants have enlisted the aid of the member for Nhulunbuy. I urge him to be wary of bookmakers who criticise other bookmakers.

Mr Speaker, well after the official time for formal objection to the letting of a bookmaker's licence, I received a letter from a solicitor of one of the 2 unhappy applicants. This claimed certain things and said that supportive information would be provided. That was some weeks ago and I have received no further information. I think that it is unfortunate that people make certain accusations and then are unable to follow it up with specific details.

I conclude by again stating that, on the evidence available to me through the commission, I am quite satisfied that the granting of this bookmaker's licence was done properly by the commission which takes its work very seriously. Certainly, the fact that some applicants have been operating as bookmakers in the

Territory for a very long time on and off did not bear heavily on the final decision. I support that view as well. If anyone has specific information about a licensed bookmaker, be it the particular bookmaker in this case or any other licensed bookmaker, which he believes would be in the interests of the Racing and Gaming Commission to be aware of, both the Racing and Gaming Commission and I would be delighted to receive it. Innuendo in this field can only do everybody, including the industry, harm unless it is backed by facts.

Sitting suspended at 3.30 pm.

Mr Speaker MacFarlane resumed the Chair at 4.05 pm.

Mrs O'NEIL (Fannie Bay): Mr Speaker, on many occasions in this Assembly, I have asked questions and spoken in adjournment debates about East Point Reserve which is a significant area of land within my electorate. Yesterday, I asked the Minister for Lands a further question about the future management of East Point Reserve. The Chief Minister, who is also the Minister for Lands, discussed at some length his disagreement with the city council in negotiations about the future management of this area. I am happy to say that, at the end, he indicated that management would probably pass to the control of the Conservation Commission of the Northern Territory as a result of his inability to reach agreement with the Darwin City Council on future management arrangements.

Mr Speaker, I very much support the handing of this area of land to the Conservation Commission. It is something which my colleague, the Labor Party spokesperson for land, the member for Millner, called for some 12 months ago. Therefore, I was very happy indeed to hear it. However, there were some aspects of the Chief Minister's reply to my question with which I did not agree. If that was the attitude that he adopted in his discussions with the city council, I am not surprised that it was reluctant to take on the management of this area.

A number of things came to my attention. As always, the first was the question of money. As I recall it, the Chief Minister said that perhaps the government would be prepared to offer the Darwin City Council the same amount of money as the existing trust received to manage the area. My recollection over many years is that the trust constantly complained - and has done so directly to me - that it did not have enough money to look after the existing area adequately. The Chief Minister made reference to some hundreds of thousands of dollars. It might well be that is the amount of money being offered currently. I could not argue against that. But it is certainly significantly more than the reserve trust was offered in previous years. I recall that figures of less than \$100 000 certainly were the norm only a few years ago. It is a very large area of land and that sort of money does not go very far where there is need not only to maintain existing improvements but also to provide further improvements.

I would point out also that, as I understand it, the proposition is that the area will be expanded significantly beyond the boundaries of the existing reserve by the inclusion of areas of the old Fannie Bay golf course. Some 9 holes or so of that golf course are vacant at the moment and have not been in the care of the East Point Reserve Trust. The area has been left unattended. If that area of land is to be enjoyed for recreational purposes by the people of Darwin and by visitors, it will need to have money spent on it. Therefore, I point out to the Chief Minister and others involved that some consideration would need to be given to the provision of extra money to attend to that additional area of land.

The Chief Minister made a point yesterday that it is the responsibility of municipalities to look after areas of interest within their boundaries. Only in

relation to areas of interest and significance right throughout the Territory, and perhaps even nationally, should the Northern Territory government feel compelled to involve itself. There is no doubt that the East Point area is of Territory and national significance, particularly because of the significant role it played in the defence of Australia, Darwin and the Northern Territory in the period preceding and during the war. Relics of the military presence remain in that area. A war museum there is visited by many thousands of tourists each year. Certainly, it is not fair to say that the area is of significance to the people of Darwin only and not to the wider community within Australia. For that reason alone, it deserves the attention and financial support of the Northern Territory government and not just of the ratepayers of Darwin.

Mr Speaker, I draw the Chief Minister's attention also to what I believe is an inconsistency in the government's attitude to this area. While fearing the wrath of my colleague, the member for Millner, I must persist in comparing the attitude of the government to East Point with that it demonstrates with regard to Rapid Creek. The Rapid Creek water gardens was a development which I supported as did most other honourable members. I cannot put a figure on the amount of money so far expended by the government on it but it would be in the order of \$1m. I am told it is more than that. No doubt that is worth while and, if the facilities which the member for Millner talked about yesterday are provided, it will be enjoyed. But I do not think even the Chief Minister would suggest that that area has greater potential or is of greater significance than East Point. I believe that he must confess that he is being inconsistent in that matter. Of course, the decision to develop the Rapid Creek area was made some years ago and it might be that money has become a bit tighter since then and now there is not sufficient money for East Point.

However, as the member for Fannie Bay, I am pleased and the opposition is pleased that it appears that this area will become the responsibility of the Northern Territory Conservation Commission. We believe that it is the appropriate and best-qualified body to attend to the needs of this area. I am also pleased to hear the Chief Minister's view that the many organisations currently using facilities at East Point Reserve should continue to use that area. They have felt extremely insecure and, to be frank, had disputes amongst themselves from time to time as to their right to occupy and use those areas. If a decision can be made which will resolve that matter once and for all, I believe it will be welcomed by the whole community.

Mr LEO (Nhulunbuy): Mr Speaker, I am forced to rise to reply to some of the comments made by the Treasurer even though they were made in good faith. I certainly did not restrict my inquiries to the local bookmakers. I made inquiries about the letting of licences throughout Australia by bodies such as the AJC and the Victoria Racing Club. It is not enough for the minister simply to say that the best possible applicant got the job. I am prepared to accept that. However, under what criteria did the best applicant get the job?

Mr Everingham: He told you.

Mr LEO: I am afraid that he did not tell me, Mr Speaker, as the Chief Minister insists that he did. The Treasurer assured me that the best applicant got the job. I am prepared to accept that. But, under what criteria?

I would like to know the criteria by which applicants are judged and assessed for the granting of licences by the Northern Territory Racing and Gaming Commission. That has certainly never been described by the minister. If I was a cynic, I could go through the successful applicant's history and relate it to the Assembly. I have not done that. All I have asked for from the minister

responsible for racing and gaming is the criteria by which applicants are assessed and I have been given no answer at all. I am quite sure that the people involved in the racing industry want to know. I can assure the minister that it is not a couple of disgruntled applicants. The Racing and Gaming Commission must have some criteria by which it assesses applicants for licences. To the best of my knowledge, and I will certainly go through Hansard, that criteria has not been outlined in this Assembly by the minister.

Mr Speaker, the Chief Minister accused me of playing politics with the problems in Nhulunbuy. I certainly have no wish to refer to earlier speeches. Nhulunbuy's problems are very much a problem of politics and, I would suggest, the politics of the present government. Certainly, our transport problems have been influenced by this government with its introduction of an internal airline system. I have spoken before in this Assembly to the previous Minister for Transport and Works and I have certainly said it to the present Minister for Transport and Works: the community expressed grave reservations, and that is putting it as conservatively as I possibly can, on the introduction of any airline system into an extremely remote community which would impinge upon the operations of other carriers. The entire community expressed that opinion, not necessarily my political colleagues. I would not count amongst my political assets the manager of Nabalco Pty Ltd. He expressed that opinion. Certainly, this government has played politics with transport into and out of Nhulunbuy. It has certainly played politics with the airline services into and out of that community. I did not bring the matter of politics into Nhulunbuy. The Chief Minister introduced the subject. If he wishes to continue to debate in a political framework the various assets or liabilities of Nhulunbuy, I am prepared to carry that on. But I suggest to the Chief Minister that he examine history a little and look at what his government's policies have meant for Nhulunbuy.

Ms D'ROZARIO (Sanderson): Mr Speaker, yesterday the honourable member for Port Darwin raised a matter that was of concern to some of his constituents, namely the provision of a hot water service to residents in Carinya flats. I must say that I have some sympathy with the member for Port Darwin because certain of my constituents who are also tenants of the Housing Commission have in recent times had similar if not identical problems. I have been informed by my constituents who have been affected that the Housing Commission has been very good indeed. Like the honourable member for Port Darwin, I would like to commend the Housing Commission for taking the prompt action that it has taken.

There is a point to the story which I commend to the Honourable Minister for Housing. I am certainly not critical of the decision of the Housing Commission to use solar hot water systems in its houses. In fact, when I was opposition spokesman for housing, I pressed for ...

Mr Everingham: You thought of it first.

Ms D'ROZARIO: Mr Speaker, the honourable the Chief Minister is extremely vocal after his visit to Government House. He has the option to reply to all these points when he closes this debate.

Mr Everingham: I was just waiting for you to say you thought of it first.

Mr SPEAKER: Order, order!

Ms D'ROZARIO: Mr Speaker, perhaps the Chief Minister can repair to the bar and take up where he left off a few minutes ago.

Mr Speaker, we had a decision taken some years ago by the Housing Commission

to install solar hot water heaters in a number of houses that it was constructing in my electorate. Indeed, this was an extremely progressive move by the Housing Commission. As the local member at the time, I supported and encouraged it. Although we do not suffer in the electorate of Sanderson from ageing buildings of the sort the honourable member for Port Darwin outlined in his contribution to this particular problem, we have a slightly different problem: the solar hot water heaters that had been installed in houses did not have boosters attached to them. This became very obvious a week or so ago when we had continuous rain for several days. The sun did not show itself and the result was that those households did not have a hot water supply.

As a result of complaints, I brought to the attention of the Housing Commission the deficiency of these particular hot water services. I am pleased to say that the Housing Commission has decided to install a booster facility to each of the deficient hot water systems. Where that cannot be done, it will consider the replacement of the unit. I am very pleased that the Housing Commission has acted with such alacrity on a problem that we brought to its attention only a few days ago.

The next matter that I wish to raise is one that I can take credit for raising for the first time because I raised it some years ago and nothing has been done. I will raise it again because certain of my constituents who know of my history of interest in this matter have raised it with me: the use of footpaths which are in excess of the needs of residents for the purpose of bicycle tracks.

Mr Speaker, when I raised this for the first time, I think I was told by the then Minister for Transport and Works, the honourable member for Casuarina, that this could not be done because it was against the Traffic Act. It is against the Traffic Act for a person to ride a bicycle on the footpaths.

Mr Dondas: I didn't say it was against the Traffic Act. I said there was some confusion.

Ms D'ROZARIO: Well, there was some confusion. To use the vernacular, I thought that was a cop out because there are numerous statutory provisions which are quite irrelevant to modern day living which still exist in legislation. I would have thought that this suggestion - which was put in all seriousness and should have been considered as it has been in the ACT - should have been implemented. If it required an amendment to the Traffic Act, then that could have been done.

The situation is that the footpaths in my electorate are in excellent condition. They tend to be provided on both sides of the street. It has been suggested that, if we allowed people to ride bicycles on the footpath, there might be some conflict with pedestrians. What I am suggesting, as I suggested some years ago, is that one footpath on one side of the street be set aside for the use of cyclists - mainly primary schoolchildren - and that the footpath on the other side of the street be reserved for use by pedestrians.

Mr Speaker, this is a cheap solution to the problem of the physical separation of cyclists and vehicular traffic. I would have thought that such a simple and inexpensive proposal would have been followed through notwithstanding the small constraint in the Traffic Act. I put to the present Minister for Transport and Works that this matter ought to be followed through because, although in the electorate of Sanderson we are very fortunate indeed to have a number of well-maintained strip parks which are provided with bicycle tracks - these tracks are very welcome - they do not cover all the areas where children

would want to travel.

Mr Speaker, it seems to me that the pedestrian footpaths which are provided are under-used. All that would be required are minor improvements to the surface of these footpaths and the erection of signs to indicate which tracks were for use by pedestrians and which tracks were for use by cyclists. That would provide an extensive and comprehensive network of cycle tracks in residential areas.

I commend this view again to the honourable Minister for Transport and Works. If he feels that the constraint of the Traffic Act is too much, perhaps he could let me know. In other places, namely the ACT, where there is still provision in the Traffic Act which makes it an offence to ride a bicycle on the footpath, by agreement with the respective authorities in the ACT, a policy decision was made not to prosecute people who use tracks which are specifically set aside for pedestrians. Mr Speaker, I commend that sensible suggestion to the honourable Minister for Transport and Works and look forward to his acceptance of it.

Mr SMITH (Millner): Mr Speaker, I want to start by congratulating the Minister for Youth, Sport and Recreation on an initiative that he and the honourable Treasurer have taken, together with the Northern Territory Football League, to work on a development for the Marrara Sporting Complex. It makes a lot of sense that the government has decided to deal with the football league rather than with individual clubs. My only reservation is that it would have been beneficial to everybody if the government had commenced that practice 3 or 4 years ago and not spent those last 3 or 4 years attempting to negotiate with 1 or 2 clubs. I think the secret to Marrara is to negotiate with parent organisations. I am glad that the government has come to its senses and realised that. I am sure now that Marrara will take off in the next few years.

Mr Dondas: You must have thought of it first.

Mr SMITH: Well it does not take a genius to think of that. I would have thought that he would have thought of it before me, seeing that he has been dealing with it longer.

Mr Speaker, I suggest that the approach the government has adopted on this issue might well be duplicated in a similar approach to shooting organisations in the Northern Territory. I am advised that there are 16 000 licensed shooters in the Northern Territory, which is a staggering figure. Obviously, it is essential that adequate provision be made for sporting shooters. We are aware, and certainly the member for Tiwi would agree, of the problems in the rural area with shooters who enter properties and shoot indiscriminately. I am advised by shooting organisations that they see as one of their major objectives the proper education of shooters so that they shoot responsibly.

However, shooting organisations are somewhat concerned about the space that they will have available for the practice of their sport.

Mr Dondas: You ought to be able to help me now, Terry.

Ms D'Rozario: You will need all the help you can get.

Mr SMITH: I am advised that there is some concern that, with the routing of the railway line through the back of Winnellie, the present shooting ranges at the back of the showgrounds might come under threat. I am also advised that, because of the extensions and alterations to the airport, the RAAF pistol club will probably have to move. My advice is that those 2 factors will result in 4 shooting clubs in the Darwin area having to find new premises within the next few years.

Obviously, there are much greater problems involved in finding suitable areas of land for shooting organisations than for other sporting or recreational groups. I think the minister's dealings with the Top End Gun Club demonstrates that. I understand that it was given a site behind the Coolalinga Caravan Park some time ago. However, after a trial shoot one weekend, it was decided by all concerned that perhaps it was not a desirable location for that activity. The second location the club wanted was at the end of Girraween Road. The government has ruled that out because there is no access road to the area.

I am not condemning or criticising the government. However, I think those facts reveal that it is difficult to provide suitable land for shooting organisations. I think, if shooting organisations are to have a future in the Territory, we need to start to plan for them now. If we do not, all the land within a radius of 30 or 40 miles of Darwin will be taken up and the distance club members would have to travel to any sites further out would make continued operation of the organisations impossible.

Mr Speaker, I think the shooting organisations need to be taught to help themselves. Shooters are more individualistic people than most. I believe the clubs need to be encouraged to get together and form an umbrella organisation which could develop overall shooting policies for the various aspects of the sport. It could then present those policies and conduct negotiations with the government. Although I agree broadly with the government's self-help policy on sporting and recreation organisations, I think that, on some occasions, governments need to point out to specific organisations the broad parameters within which help will be given under that policy. They should be encouraged to organise themselves in such a way that the self-help principle can apply and government help follow.

I would urge the government, and the minister in particular, by use either of the carrot or the stick or perhaps a combination of both, to encourage the shooting organisations to get together to form a governing shooting body for the Northern Territory so that the long-term future of this sport can be discussed between that body and the government. If that happens, the long-term interests of the sport will be protected. I would repeat the point that it needs to happen fairly quickly otherwise the rate at which land, particularly in the rural area, is being taken off the market will make it very difficult for those shooting organisations to find a decent home in the near future.

Mr Speaker, the second thing I want to speak about is an opportunity I had to attend a seminar organised by the Northern Territory Land Board 3 or 4 weeks ago. The member for Tiwi made brief reference to it in an adjournment debate last week. I would like to add my comments.

First, I would like to thank the Chief Minister for extending to me the invitation to attend. It was very much appreciated. I would also like to offer my congratulations to the Land Board chairman, Mr Vic Wasilewsky, and the secretary, Mr Arthur McKenna, for organising what was perhaps one of the most informative seminars that I have attended so far in my parliamentary career. Those who attended the seminar included the Land Board members and private industry representatives from the Northern Territory Cattle Council as well as representatives from the Departments of Land and Primary Production and the Conservation Commission. The seminar was successful in exposing the amended Crown Lands Act to a thorough debate in which all aspects were considered. I would like to think that this Land Board initiative could be seen as a forerunner to further such forums to open up all new legislation to a wider consideration by those parties that will be affected directly by it.

I have a few observations to make about 2 points that were raised at the seminar. My first concern is that the role of the Land Board appears to be undermined to some extent by the Department of Lands. The secretary of the department stated at the seminar that it had been the practice for board reports to go through the secretary who would comment on the contents to the minister. The Minister for Lands told the seminar that, while reports from the board go to the minister unchanged, the secretary of the department may submit a statement recommending a variation of the recommendations. The 1981-82 annual report of the Department of Lands states that the Land Board is a statutory body. The fact that, at the stage of the recommendations going to the minister, the secretary can submit a recommendation to vary those recommendations, I believe, undermines the statutory nature of the Land Board. It is my belief that, as a statutory body, the Land Board should report directly to the minister. If the secretary of the department wanted to make a comment, and if the minister wanted the advice of the secretary of the department, it would be more satisfactory for the minister to send the report to the secretary for an opinion on a particular aspect at that stage. I believe that is much more in keeping with the statutory role that the Land Board has.

Secondly, the matter was raised of a lessee faced with a negative finding following an inspection of his station by the Land Board. Mr Speaker, you would be aware, being a pastoral property lessee yourself, that it is of major concern to lessees that, in a case where the Land Board makes a negative recommendation, there really is no right of reply or appeal. I am of the opinion that, if a negative report is brought down by the Land Board, the lessee should have the right of reply. Therefore, I urge the adoption of a practice whereby the principal report and all recommendations from the Land Board are made available to the lessee in those instances where a negative report is made by the lessor.

Mr Speaker, I see also a need for any written reports on a particular property, prepared by the Northern Territory Conservation Commission under new section 48A of the act, to be made available to the lessee as soon as possible and that he should have adequate time to reply. At present, there is no provision for the pastoral property lessee to comment on a report of the Conservation Commission made under section 48A of the act. As you will be aware also, Mr Speaker, section 48A of the act will apply basically when applications are made to turn term leases into perpetual leases. To sum up that general point, in terms of the operation of the board, I feel there is a need for its findings to be more accessible to the industry.

Another fact that became obvious as the seminar progressed was the apparent lack of clear understanding by many of those people there as to the actual meaning of the amendments to the Crown Lands Act. I feel there is a case for the production of an information brochure to explain, in clear and simple language, the main provisions of the Crown Lands Act as it relates to perpetual leases as well as to any other areas of interest. I am sure that, if a simple information brochure is produced, many of the reservations and concerns that pastoralists have at present - particularly about entering into perpetual pastoral leases - will be resolved. I would urge the government to undertake that step as a matter of some urgency.

Mr Deputy Speaker, there was another point that I saw as being significant at that seminar. It related to the current provisions to allow for the rationalisation of boundaries of pastoral leases. As I understand the current position, there is provision for a 5% variation in adjoining properties where there is a consent for such action from both parties. However, if one or other of the parties does not agree to the variation, there is no method available to the board to enforce such a boundary adjustment. I believe the ability to make

minor variations in boundaries of pastoral leases will be a very important factor in the brucellosis and tuberculosis eradication program in coming years. It will be important to be able to locate fences along precise lines in order to maximise effective animal management. Such fencing lines will not necessarily be consistent with the current lease boundaries and hence there will be a need for some firmer position to be made available to the landlord or the government to accommodate circumstances where mutual consent is not achievable. Therefore, I would ask the government to consider the establishment of a system of arbitration where lack of consent presents a problem but where a variation in a boundary fence will have a significant impact on improving the effectiveness of disease control.

Mr Deputy Speaker, my final point relates to control over the total area in which any individual can hold a beneficial interest. In response to a question from one of the board members, the Chief Minister told the seminar that, if the law in respect of this particular provision was not working properly or allowed for methods of overcoming it, there was a need either to make it work or drop it from the legislation. Judging from the comments of pastoralists at that seminar, it is quite obvious that they have genuine concern about whether this particular part of the act is working properly.

I believe that there are problems with the effectiveness of this particular provision and the most obvious method of circumventing it is through a transfer of shares between persons such that the company holding a particular pastoral lease remains the same. There is no control whatsoever in the Territory over such a practice. I would refer the Chief Minister to the practice in Western Australia where a change in ownership of a pastoral lease by way of share transfer requires the approval of the Western Australian government. I would urge the government to consider this matter in response to the reservations about the existing law expressed at the seminar.

I was extremely pleased to see the confidence that the industry has in the Land Board. It is obvious from their comments that the Land Board is working extremely effectively. I believe that that stems, to a considerable extent, from the Chairman of the Land Board who obviously has the confidence of all members of the board and all members of the pastoral industry.

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

Mr DONDAS (Health): Mr Deputy Speaker, in rising in the adjournment debate this afternoon, I would like to touch on several matters. Firstly, the member for Fannie Bay asked a question regarding over-servicing and medical fraud and I advised her that I would provide her with the information that she required. This particular topic was discussed at the Australian Health Ministers' Conference in Adelaide in March 1982.

The Northern Territory supported measures to control over-servicing and fraud and it was resolved to have regular discussions for mutual assistance. This has been done at the Australian Conference of Chairmen of Medical Boards. There is no uniform medical registration legislation throughout Australia although the requirements for basic registration are similar in all states. The disciplinary provisions are similar as well. Section 21(1)(a) of the Northern Territory Medical Practitioners Registration Act provides that, where a person has been deregistered or suspended in another state, the Northern Territory board may automatically take the same action. Regular communications between the boards on these matters ensure that all boards are aware of convictions for over-servicing or fraud. Consequently, members may be assured that the government is implementing the recommendation as far as possible.

The honourable Member for Millner asked a question regarding Marrara and the government's initiative in relation to the Northern Territory Football League. The Darwin City Council is the body responsible for allocating land in Marrara. It was only recently brought to the attention of the Treasurer, who was the Minister for Lands, and myself that there were 2 organisations, St Marys and Wanderers, who were looking for land in the northern suburbs to establish club facilities. The government's policy is to try to have all the organisations in the same area if possible.

We have put a proposal to the council and the Northern Territory Football League for their consideration. It proposes the possible establishment of a headquarters at Marrara for the Northern Territory Football League. Until such time as the council and the Northern Territory Football League have been able to appraise the suggestion, the government is unable to do anything further. I understand that these bodies will report back to both the Treasurer and myself within the next month.

The honourable member also raised the question of shooters. In an interjection, I said: 'Terry, you could help me'. The member for Sanderson thought I was being facetious. I was not being facetious; I was quite genuine. Prior to the federal election, we had almost reached an agreement with the former Minister for Defence, Mr Sinclair, regarding a portion of land at Leanyer which could be used for the amalgamation of shooting groups in the north Darwin area. The Darwin Rifle Club is situated off Coonawarra Road and is right in the path of the rail corridor. Knowing that it was in that corridor, I initiated discussions by correspondence and verbally with the former minister to take a portion of land available at Leanyer to provide facilities for the Darwin Rifle Club, the Clay Target Club and the Pistol Club which is in the immediate area.

Our philosophy is to try to amalgamate organisations on one portion of land and therefore avoid the duplication of facilities. Time will tell that the amalgamation of motor sports at Hidden Valley - at considerable expense and hard work by the organisations involved - as the Hidden Valley Motor Sports Complex will be a credit not only to the Northern Territory but to Australia.

We hold the same view regarding the shooters. There are many types of shooting clubs in the Top End. The Top End Gun Club was a bit unfortunate. Its application for land was successful and I had allocated 2 demountables to assist them. However, because of community reaction and difficulty of access during the wet season, that idea was knocked on the head. An offer of land at Berry Springs was made to it. At that time, the club thought that Berry Springs was a bit too far out of the way and declined. Consequently, nothing further has been done.

Taking all these factors into consideration, we thought that we would approach the Department of Defence, through its minister, to obtain a certain amount of land in that area which could be used by most of the shooting organisations. We would all be aware of the events of 5 March. Consequently, we do not have dialogue with the federal minister as yet. I certainly hope that the honourable member for Millner impresses upon his federal Labor colleague the need to provide land for those shooting organisations. In fact, we had an agreement in principle with the former federal minister, Mr Ian Sinclair, and I will hold the honourable member for Millner partly responsible if he cannot get the same agreement from his federal Labor colleague.

Mr Deputy Speaker, the honourable member for Nhulunbuy laboured over the question of the criteria used to decide the allocation of a bookmaker's licence in Malak. As I understand it, there are only 2 criteria for the issuing of a

bookmaker's licence. One is that an applicant must be of sound reputation. By that, I mean that an applicant must not have had any criminal convictions, has not robbed anyone etc. The second criterion is that an applicant must be in a good financial position. He must have some financial resources behind him to go into that business. After all, how can a person run a betting shop if he only has 2 bob in his pocket? On some races, a bookmaker might hold as much as \$5000 or \$10 000. His payout in one race could be as high as \$5000 or \$10 000, depending upon his luck that day.

Mr Deputy Speaker, let us say, for example, that 3 applicants have the same clean record, have the same amount of money in the bank and are all reasonably good at business. The Racing and Gaming Commissioner will then have to decide who provides the service to the community. After all, a betting shop is a service to the community.

I cannot quite understand what the honourable member for Nhulunbuy was driving at today. I am aware of the particular situation. In fact, I was approached about a week before the decision was made to allocate that particular licence at Malak. I assessed the information that was given to me. I approached the Treasurer and said: 'I understand that there seems to be some conflicts of interest amongst some of the bookmakers in relation to this particular licence'. The information given to me by the Treasurer at the particular time was that the issuing of the licence had not been decided upon and that, once it had been decided upon, he would be advised and he would be able to make a reasonable assessment of the situation should there be a dead heat.

However, I am able to advise, from the information that I have, that the selection by the Racing and Gaming Commissioner in the issuing of this licence at Malak was a fair and good one. I know many bookmakers in the area, having been one myself in 1973. Most of them are still around and I am on a good footing with them. I can talk to them about personal observations. The observations of the Darwin bookmaking fraternity is that the decision made by the Racing and Gaming Commission was a good one.

Mr Deputy Speaker, the member for Nhulunbuy again raised the question of air services. Of course, because Nhulunbuy is a very isolated community, most of his fears have been well founded. There has been a reduction of the air services there. It is not the government's fault if not enough traffic moves in and out of the area. No company will service a route that lacks any potential for reward.

I would remind the honourable member for Nhulunbuy that the federal government, at the request of our former federal member, undertook to spend a lot of money to upgrade Gove airport, so at least there would be an alternative service by TAA, with larger aircraft in the offing. The only advice I can give to the honourable member for Nhulunbuy is that, if he is so concerned by the isolation and the lack of air services, he should start making a lot of noise to get that road built. We have not heard one word from the honourable member in the last 6 months since we announced that we are proceeding with the road. It is the intention of this government to build a road from Mataranka through to Gove. We call it the Numbulwar-Roper River corridor. If that road were built, at a cost of some \$65m to \$70m, I am quite sure the residents of Gove would feel less isolated.

The honourable member for Millner raised a question in the adjournment debate yesterday regarding Rapid Creek. He made a very good point when he said that he thought there should be some adventure playground equipment at the water gardens. I agree with him. I think that that is probably in the next stage. I

made a statement when I was Minister for Transport and Works to the effect that, at that particular time, any further work on the Rapid Creek water gardens would be suspended until an evaluation of the further needs of the area had been made. Most members with electorates in the northern suburbs and residents there have appreciated the work that has been done on that area. After the little bit of rain, it is starting to look really beautiful. The Conservation Commission has planted something like 3000 to 4000 trees there. In a couple of years, the water gardens will be something that we can all be proud of.

The member for Millner raised the question of toilets yesterday. The amusing part about it is that it is his constituents who do not want a toilet block there. That is the problem. I can understand why and maybe the penny will drop for the member for Millner.

I note the point that the area does need some adventure playground equipment. Hopefully, I will be able to convince the Minister for Transport and Works to have the Water Division and the Conservation Commission provide the additional facilities.

The honourable member for Sanderson raised the matter of cycle tracks. I suppose I am a pretty confused person, and I am the first to admit it. I meant to say 'conflict'; I did not mean to say 'confused'. The point was that there is an area of conflict within the legislation in relation to people using the footpath as pedestrians and people using the footpath as cyclists. Members opposite would be aware that the Northern Territory government has instituted what we call our cycle paths and cycle plans. Throughout most of the northern suburbs, we have very good cycle path tracks which allow people to move around in those attractive areas without fear of being run over by a car or a bus.

I think that, in the long term, the Minister for Transport and Works will have to sort out the conflict in the Traffic Act in relation to pedestrians and cyclists. The member for Sanderson said that, in Canberra, the 2 groups are able to live together. In Canberra, the cyclists have a section of the roadway. Perhaps the member for Sanderson might propose it here and gain recognition as being the saviour of cyclists. In some states, they have a white line about 1 m off the side of the kerb that is only used by cyclists.

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

Motion agreed to; the Assembly adjourned.

ADDRESS IN REPLY 6, 17, 91, 139, 279, 287

ADJOURNMENT

Aboriginal communities, stores 241
ADMA 66, 71, 75, 112, 115, 252
Administrator's speech 79
Aerial photography, government contract 292
Agriculture 66, 71, 75, 112, 115
Airline services -
 centre run 238, 247
 Nhulunbuy 296, 303
Alice Springs -
 floods 243
 Larapinta Drive 241
 Royal visit 244
 to Darwin rail link 76
Bagshaw, Glen 241
Berrimah -
 rates 80
 roads 72, 80, 112
Bicycle tracks 297, 304
Bookmakers' licences 242, 293, 295, 302
Business permits 116
Carinya flats 240, 296
Chan Park Nursing Home 118
Community health centres, staff levels 117
Darwin City Council 79, 294, 302
Department of Community Development, executive level appointments 290
Deficit, national 76
Disabled motorists 240
Douglas-Daly research station 66, 72, 114, 115
East Point Reserve, management 294
Employees' conditions 237
Flynn, Nellie Crawford, death of 78
Freight inquiry 121
Hayden, W.G. 76
Housing Commission 120, 240, 296
Industrial Relations Council 238
Insurance, flood damage 123
Jabanardi, Tim Langdon, death of 78
Jackson, Robert Bedford, death of 77
Kafcaloudes, George, death of 77
Kulaluk, transient camps 248
Land Board, seminar 116, 299
Larapinta Drive, school crossing 241
Leader of the Opposition, inaccuracies 251
McRoberts, Mr 115
Malak Betting Shop 242, 293, 302
Marrara Sporting Complex 298, 302
Marx, Karl 244
Medical fraud and over-servicing 301
National Economic Summit Conference 76
Naval exercise 239
Nhulunbuy -
 airline service 296, 303
 housing 120
 teacher accommodation 120
Police Administration Act, section 128 290
Popper, Professor Karl 244

INDEX TO DEBATES
15 March - 24 March 1983

Pularumpi, education facilities 115
Queensland -
 health department 111
 Parliament 111, 245
 Premier 66, 111
Racing and Gaming Commission 242, 293, 295, 303
Rapid Creek water gardens 237, 295, 303
Rates seminar 79
Royal visit 244
Rural area -
 business permits 116
 local government 73, 80
Sanderson -
 electorate, solar hot water systems 296
 high school 246, 250
School councils 246, 250
Secretary of Department of Primary Production 71, 252
Shooting organisations 298, 302
South Australian government 245
TAFE program 115
TIO, flood damage insurance 123
Toxic chemicals 112
UN Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against
 Women 68, 73, 75
Victorian government 245
Walilipa, Willy MBE, death of 78
Women's Adviser 68, 73
Women's Electoral Lobby 69
Yuendumu store 241

ADMINISTRATOR'S SPEECH 1

APPOINTMENT OF CLERK 10

BILLS

Absconding Debtors Amendment (Serial 301) 262
Administration and Probate Amendment (Serial 285) 88
Building (Serial 299) 259
Consumer Protection Amendment (Serial 284) 85
Control of Roads Amendment (Serial 287) 89
Criminal Code (Serial 294) 265
Dangerous Goods Amendment (Serial 276) 6, 214
Dentists Registration Amendment (Serial 289) 129
Fire Brigades Arbitral Tribunal Amendment (Serial 298) 273
Fire Service (Serial 297) 263
Intoxicated Persons (Serial 268) 6, 188
Justices Amendment (Serial 278) 6, 221
Local Government Amendment (Serial 280) 6, 220
Medical Practitioners Registration Amendment (Serial 290) 129
Mining Amendment (Serial 296) 212
Museums and Art Galleries Amendment (Serial 229) 87
Northern Territory Development Land Corporation (Vesting of Land)
 (Serial 282) 6
Optometrists Amendment (Serial 291) 129
Pharmacy Amendment (Serial 292) 129
Plumbers and Drainers Licensing (Serial 258) 6, 52
Poisons and Dangerous Drugs (Serial 216) 6, 38
Police Administration Amendment (Serial 269) 6, 188
Police Administration Amendment (Serial 281) 6, 226
Police Administration Amendment (Serial 286) 86
Pounds Amendment (Serial 272) 6, 130

INDEX TO DEBATES
15 March - 24 March 1983

Prisoners (Interstate Transfer) (Serial 277) 6, 131
Prisons (Arbitral Tribunal) Amendment (Serial 288) 5, 65
Public Holidays Amendment (Serial 295) 84
Radiographers Amendment (Serial 293) 129
Real Property Amendment (Serial 267) 6, 64
Soccer Football Pools Amendment (Serial 266) 6, 64
Summary Offences Amendment (Serial 270) 6, 188
Superannuation (Serial 246) 6
Tenancy Amendment (Serial 300) 160
Territory Development Amendment (Serial 274) 6, 197
Territory Parks and Wildlife Conservation Amendment (Serial 279) 6, 135
Traffic Amendment (Serial 275) 85
Water Supply & Sewerage (Serial 257) 6, 52

COMMONWEALTH DAY MESSAGE 9

DISTINGUISHED VISITORS

Senator B.F. Kilgariff 83
Mr Don McKinnon MP 125

LEAVE OF ABSENCE

Mr Bell 17
Mrs Padgham-Purich 197

MOTIONS

Adjournment of the Assembly 90
Alice Springs to Darwin railway 14, 288
Attitude of government towards issues of importance to women 161
Broadcasting of proceedings to office of NTDC 84
Chronically mentally-ill persons 259
Leave of absence for members 90
New Parliament House Committee 90
Northern Territory Schools - Directions for the Eighties 160
Public broadcasting of proceedings 83
Restoration of bills to Notice Paper 6
Sessional Committee on the Environment 91
Superannuation arrangements for government employees 128

PETITIONS

Admiralty House 255
Air services to Nhulunbuy 83
Recreation lake, Alice Springs 255
Rezoning of lot 1937 9
Rural Advisory Council 255

STATEMENTS

Alice Springs to Darwin railway 10
Australian time zones 126
Chronically mentally-ill persons 256
Meat Industry Bill 86
Superannuation arrangements for government employees 127

TABLED PAPERS

Draft Community Welfare Bill 274
Draft Grain Marketing Bill 277
Draft Juvenile Justice Bill 274
Eighth Report of Subordinate Legislation and Tabled Papers Committee 287
Local Government Act Review 279
Northern Territory Schools - Directions for the Eighties 159
Palmerston Development Authority Annual Report 1981-82 125

INDEX TO MEMBERS' SPEECHES
15 March - 24 March 1983

COLLINS B.

ADDRESS IN REPLY 21

ADJOURNMENT

ADMA 66, 112
Agriculture 66, 112
Berrimah, roads 112
Department of Community Development, executive level appointments 290
Douglas-Daly research station 66, 114
Police Administration Act, section 128 290
Queensland -
 health department 111
 Parliament 111
 Premier 66, 111
Toxic chemicals 112

BILLS

Intoxicated Persons (Serial 268) 194
Justices Amendment (Serial 278) 221, 225
Poisons and Dangerous Drugs (Serial 216) 51
Police Administration Amendment (Serial 269) 194
Police Administration Amendment (Serial 281) 226, 235
Prisoners (Interstate Transfer) (Serial 277) 131
Real Property Amendment (Serial 267) 64
Summary Offences Amendment (Serial 270) 194
Territory Development Amendment (Serial 274) 206
Territory Parks and Wildlife Conservation Amendment (Serial 279) 135

MOTIONS

Alice Springs to Darwin railway 14
Attitude of government towards issues of importance to women 181

COLLINS D.W.

ADDRESS IN REPLY 98

ADJOURNMENT

Alice Springs -
 floods 243
 Royal visit 244
Marx, Karl 244
Popper, Professor Karl 244
Queensland Parliament 245
Royal visit 244
South Australian government 245
Victorian government 245

BILLS

Dangerous Goods Amendment (Serial 276) 216
Plumbers and Drainers Licensing (Serial 258) 55
Police Administration Amendment (Serial 281) 232
Water Supply & Sewerage (Serial 257) 55

DONDAS N.

ADDRESS IN REPLY 145

INDEX TO MEMBERS' SPEECHES
15 March - 24 March 1983

ADJOURNMENT

Airline services, Nhulunbuy 303
Bicycle tracks 304
Bookmakers' licences 302
Malak Betting Shop 302
Marrara Sporting Complex 302
Medical fraud and over-servicing 301
Nhulunbuy, airline service 303
Racing and Gaming Commission 303
Rapid Creek water gardens 303
Shooting organisations 302

BILLS

Dentists Registration Amendment (Serial 289) 129
Intoxicated Persons (Serial 268) 188
Medical Practitioners Registration Amendment (Serial 290) 129
Optometrists Amendment (Serial 291) 129
Pharmacy Amendment (Serial 292) 129
Poisons and Dangerous Drugs (Serial 216) 46, 50
Police Administration Amendment (Serial 269) 188
Radiographers Amendment (Serial 293) 129
Summary Offences Amendment (Serial 270) 188

MOTION

Chronically mentally-ill persons 259

STATEMENT

Chronically mentally-ill persons 256

DOOLAN J.K.

ADDRESS IN REPLY 108

D'ROZARIO J.

ADDRESS IN REPLY 34

ADJOURNMENT

Bicycle tracks 297
Carinya flats 296
Housing Commission 296
Sanderson -
 electorate, solar hot water systems 296
 high school 246
School councils 246
UN Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against
 Women 73
Women's Adviser 73

BILLS

Dangerous Goods Amendment (Serial 276) 214
Territory Development Amendment (Serial 274) 209

MOTION

Attitude of government towards issues of importance to women 168

EVERINGHAM P.A.E.

ADDRESS IN REPLY 6, 17, 283

INDEX TO MEMBERS' SPEECHES
15 March - 24 March 1983

ADJOURNMENT

ADMA 75, 252
Agriculture 75
Alice Springs to Darwin rail link 76
Deficit, national 76
Flynn, Nellie Crawford, death of 78
Hayden, W.G. 76
Jabanardi, Tim Langdon, death of 78
Jackson, Robert Bedford, death of 77
Kafcaloudes, George, death of 77
Leader of the Opposition, inaccuracies 251
National Economic Summit Conference 76
Sanderson high school 250
School councils 250
Secretary of Department of Primary Production 252
UN Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women 75
Walilipa, Willy MBE, death of 78
Women's Adviser 75

BILLS

Building (Serial 299) 259
Control of Roads Amendment (Serial 287) 89
Fire Brigades Arbitral Tribunal Amendment (Serial 298) 273
Fire Service (Serial 297) 263
Justices Amendment (Serial 278) 223
Police Administration Amendment (Serial 281) 233, 235
Police Administration Amendment (Serial 286) 86
Prisons (Arbitral Tribunal) Amendment (Serial 288) 5, 65
Public Holidays Amendment (Serial 295) 84
Territory Development Amendment (Serial 274) 197

MOTIONS

Alice Springs to Darwin railway 14
Attitude of government towards issues of importance to women 167
Broadcasting of proceedings to office of NTDC 84
Superannuation arrangements for government employees 128

STATEMENTS

Alice Springs to Darwin railway 10
Australian time zones 126
Superannuation arrangements for government employees 127

TABLED PAPER

Palmerston Development Authority Annual Report 1981-82 125

HARRIS T.

ADDRESS IN REPLY 154

ADJOURNMENT

Carinya flats 240
Housing Commission 240
Naval exercise 239

BILLS

Justices Amendment (Serial 278) 222
Plumbers and Drainers Licensing (Serial 258) 53
Poisons and Dangerous Drugs (Serial 216) 40

INDEX TO MEMBERS' SPEECHES
15 March - 24 March 1983

Police Administration Amendment (Serial 281) 228
Water Supply & Sewerage (Serial 257) 53

PETITION

Rural Advisory Council 255

TABLED PAPER

Eighth Report of Subordinate Legislation and Tabled Papers Committee 287

LAWRIE A.D.

ADDRESS IN REPLY 95

ADJOURNMENT

Kulaluk, transient camps 248
UN Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against
Women 68
Women's Adviser 68
Women's Electoral Lobby 69

BILLS

Plumbers and Drainers Licensing (Serial 258) 54
Poisons and Dangerous Drugs (Serial 216) 42, 50
Police Administration Amendment (Serial 281) 230
Prisoners (Interstate Transfer) (Serial 277) 133
Territory Parks and Wildlife Conservation Amendment (Serial 279) 137
Water Supply & Sewerage (Serial 257) 54

MOTION

Attitude of government towards issues of importance to women 178

PETITION

Admiralty House 255

TABLED PAPER

Eighth Report of Subordinate Legislation and Tabled Papers Committee 287

LEO D.M.

ADDRESS IN REPLY 283

ADJOURNMENT

Airline services, Nhulunbuy 296
Bookmakers' licences 242, 295
Housing Commission 120
Malak Betting Shop 242
Nhulunbuy -
 airline service 296
 housing 120
 teacher accommodation 120
Racing and Gaming Commission 242, 295

BILLS

Plumbers and Drainers Licensing (Serial 258) 52, 63
Soccer Football Pools Amendment (Serial 266) 64
Water Supply & Sewerage (Serial 257) 52, 63

PETITION

Air services to Nhulunbuy 83

INDEX TO MEMBERS' SPEECHES
15 March - 24 March 1983

MacFARLANE J.L.S.

ADDRESS IN REPLY 287

COMMONWEALTH DAY MESSAGE 9

O'NEIL P.F.

ADDRESS IN REPLY 93

ADJOURNMENT

Chan Park Nursing Home 118
Community health centres, staff levels 117
Darwin City Council 294
East Point Reserve, management 294
Rapid Creek water gardens 295

BILLS

Intoxicated Persons (Serial 268) 191
Poisons and Dangerous Drugs (Serial 216) 38
Police Administration Amendment (Serial 269) 191
Summary Offences Amendment (Serial 270) 191
Tenancy Amendment (Serial 300) 160
Territory Parks and Wildlife Conservation Amendment (Serial 279) 135

MOTION

Attitude of government towards issues of importance to women 161

TABLED PAPER

Eighth Report of Subordinate Legislation and Tabled Papers Committee 287

PADGHAM-PURICH C.N.

ADDRESS IN REPLY 104

ADJOURNMENT

ADMA 71, 115
Agriculture 71, 115
Berrimah, roads 72
Business permits 116
Douglas-Daly research station 72, 115
Land Board, seminar 116
McRoberts, Mr 115
Pularumpi, education facilities 115
Rural area -
 business permits 116
 local government 73
Secretary of Department of Primary Production 71
TAFE program 115

BILLS

Plumbers and Drainers Licensing (Serial 258) 58
Poisons and Dangerous Drugs (Serial 216) 44
Prisoners (Interstate Transfer) (Serial 277) 132
Water Supply & Sewerage (Serial 257) 58

PERRON M.B.

ADDRESS IN REPLY 139

INDEX TO MEMBERS' SPEECHES
15 March - 24 March 1983

ADJOURNMENT

Aerial photography, government contract 292
Bookmakers' licences 293
Insurance, flood damage 123
Malak Betting Shop 293
Racing and Gaming Commission 293
TIO, flood damage insurance 123

BILL

Territory Parks and Wildlife Conservation Amendment (Serial 279) 135

MOTION

Northern Territory Schools - Directions for the Eighties 160

PETITION

Rezoning of lot 1937 9

TABLED PAPER

Northern Territory Schools - Directions for the Eighties 159

ROBERTSON J.M.

BILLS

Absconding Debtors Amendment (Serial 301) 262
Administration and Probate Amendment (Serial 285) 88
Criminal Code (Serial 294) 265
Dangerous Goods Amendment (Serial 276) 217
Justices Amendment (Serial 278) 225
Mining Amendment (Serial 296) 212
Poisons and Dangerous Drugs (Serial 216) 52
Real Property Amendment (Serial 267) 64
Territory Parks and Wildlife Conservation Amendment (Serial 279) 138

MOTIONS

Adjournment of the Assembly 90
Alice Springs to Darwin railway 16
Attitude of government towards issues of importance to women 185
Leave of absence for members 90
New Parliament House Committee 90
Public broadcasting of proceedings 83
Sessional Committee on the Environment 91

PETITION

Recreation lake, Alice Springs 255

SMITH T.E.

ADDRESS IN REPLY 101

ADJOURNMENT

Administrator's speech 79
Airline services, centre run 238
Berrimah -
 rates 80
 roads 80
Darwin City Council 79
Employees' conditions 237
Freight inquiry 121
Industrial Relations Council 238

INDEX TO MEMBERS' SPEECHES
15 March - 24 March 1983

Land Board, seminar 299
Marrara Sporting Complex 298
Rapid Creek water gardens 237
Rates seminar 79
Rural area, local government 80
Shooting organisations 298

BILLS

Local Government Amendment (Serial 280) 220
Plumbers and Drainers Licensing (Serial 258) 57
Pounds Amendment (Serial 272) 130
Water Supply & Sewerage (Serial 257) 57

MOTION

Alice Springs to Darwin railway 16

STEELE R.M.

ADDRESS IN REPLY 91

ADJOURNMENT

Airline services, centre run 247

BILLS

Plumbers and Drainers Licensing (Serial 258) 62
Traffic Amendment (Serial 275) 85
Water Supply & Sewerage (Serial 257) 62

MOTION

New Parliament House Committee 90

TUXWORTH I.L.

ADDRESS IN REPLY 29

BILLS

Consumer Protection Amendment (Serial 284) 85
Local Government Amendment (Serial 280) 220
Museums and Art Galleries Amendment (Serial 229) 87

MOTION

Attitude of government towards issues of importance to women 173

STATEMENT

Meat Industry Bill 86

TABLED PAPERS

Draft Community Welfare Bill 274
Draft Grain Marketing Bill 277
Draft Juvenile Justice Bill 274
Local Government Act Review 279

VALE R.W.S.

ADDRESS IN REPLY 279

ADJOURNMENT

Aboriginal communities, stores 241
Bagshaw, Glen 241

INDEX TO MEMBERS' SPEECHES
15 March - 24 March 1983

Disabled motorists 240
Larapinta Drive, school crossing 241
Yuendumu store 241

MOTION

Alice Springs to Darwin railway 288