

NORTHERN TERRITORY OF AUSTRALIA

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

Fifth Assembly
First Session

PARLIAMENTARY RECORD

Tuesday 28 April 1987
Wednesday 29 April 1987
Thursday 30 April 1987

Tuesday 5 May 1987
Wednesday 6 May 1987
Thursday 7 May 1987

Part I - Debates
Part II - Questions
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NORTHERN TERRITORY LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

Fifth Assembly
First Session

Speaker	Roger William Stanley Vale
Chief Minister	Stephen Paul Hatton
Opposition Leader	Terence Edward Smith
Deputy Chief Minister Minister for Lands and Housing Minister for Conservation Minister for Tourism	Raymond Allan Hanrahan
Treasurer and Minister for Local Government Minister for Mines and Energy	Barry Francis Coulter
Minister for Industries and Development	Marshall Bruce Perron
Attorney-General Minister for Education	Daryl William Manzie
Minister for Health and Community Services	Donald Francis Dale
Minister for Labour and Administrative Services	Tom Harris *
Minister for Transport and Works	Frederick Arthur Finch

* Resigned 30 April 1987

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MEMBERS OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

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

Chairman of Committees - Mr T.R. McCarthy *
Deputy Chairmen of Committees - Mr W.W. Lanhupuy
Mr E.H. Poole
Mr M.A. Reed
Mr R.A. Setter

* Replaced by Mr N.M. Dondas on 7 May 1987

House Committee

Mr Speaker
Mr N.M. Dondas
Mr W.W. Lanhupuy
Mr D.M. Leo
Mr M.A. Reed

Standing Orders Committee

Mr Speaker
Mr N.R. Bell
Mr R.A. Hanrahan
Mr W.W. Lanhupuy
Mr E.R. Poole

Publications Committee

Mr N.R. Bell
Mr E.H. Poole
Mr M.A. Reed
Mr R.A. Setter
Mr S.G. Tipiloura

Privileges Committee

Mr N.R. Bell
Mr N.N. Dondas
Mr C.C. Firmin
Mr M.B. Perron
Mr T.E. Smith

Subordinate Legislation and Tabled Papers Committee

Mr T.R. McCarthy *
Mr M.A. Reed
Mr R.A. Setter
Mr T.E. Smith
Mr S.G. Tipiloura

* Replaced by Mr E.H. Poole on 7 May 1987

Public Accounts Committee

Mr B.R. Ede
Mr D.M. Leo
Mr T.R. McCarthy *
Mr M.J. Palmer
Mr E.H. Poole

* Replaced by Mr T. Harris on 7 May 1987

Sessional Committee - Environment

Mr N.R. Bell
Mr T.R. McCarthy *
Mr E.H. Poole
Mr M.A. Reed
Mr S.G. Tipiloura

* Replaced by Mr N.M. Dondas on 7 May 1987

Sessional Committee - New Parliament House

Mr Speaker
Mr C.C. Firmin
Mr W.W. Lanhupuy
Mr D.M. Leo
Mr R.A. Setter

Select Committee - Constitutional Development

Mr B.R. Ede
Mr S.P. Hatton
Mr W.W. Lanhupuy
Mr M.J. Palmer
Mr R.A. Setter
Mr T.M. Smith

PART I

DEBATES

DEBATES

Tuesday 28 April 1987

ASSEMBLY CONVENED

The Fifth Assembly convened on Tuesday 28 April 1987 pursuant to notice by His Honour the Administrator.

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

COMMISSION TO ADMINISTER OATHS

The Serjeant-at-Arms conducted the Deputy of the Administrator, the Honourable Justice O'Leary, and his Associate into the Chamber.

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

The Clerk read the commission.

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

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

The Clerk read the authorisation.

RETURNS TO WRITS

The Clerk laid on the Table the returns to writs for the election of members of the Legislative Assembly held on 7 March 1987.

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

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

ELECTION OF SPEAKER

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

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

Mr HANRAHAN (Lands and Housing): I second the motion.

Mr VALE (Braitling): I accept the nomination.

The CLERK: Is there any further proposal?

Mr SMITH (Opposition Leader): Mr Clerk, I propose to the Assembly for its Speaker the honourable member for Nhulunbuy, Mr Leo, and move that the honourable member for Nhulunbuy do take the Chair as Speaker.

Mr EDE (Stuart): I second the motion.

Mr LEO (Nhulunbuy): I accept the nomination.

The CLERK: Is there any further proposal? There being no further proposal, the time for proposals has expired. Does any honourable member wish to speak to the motions? There being no honourable member who wishes to speak to the motions and there being 2 nominations, in accordance with standing orders a ballot will be taken.

Ballot taken.

The CLERK: Honourable members, the result of the ballot is Mr Vale, member for Braitling, 17 votes and Mr Leo, member for Nhulunbuy, 7 votes, and 1 informal vote. I declare the member for Braitling elected as Speaker of the Assembly.

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

Mr HATTON (Chief Minister): Mr Speaker, may I offer my congratulations to you on your appointment as Speaker. During the last Assembly, in 1986, you served this Assembly with distinction in the position of Speaker. My colleagues also are certain that you will dispatch your duties as Speaker with equal fairness and justice and ensure the proper conduct of business in the Assembly. Mr Speaker, it is particularly welcome for yourself, as a member of this Assembly since 1974, to bring the experience of those many years to the high office of Speaker of this Chamber and, as a member of our party from central Australia, we look forward to a long and successful role for you as Speaker of this Assembly.

Mr SMITH (Opposition Leader): Mr Speaker, on behalf of the members of the opposition, I would like to extend my congratulations to you on your election. Mr Speaker, by your election you have become the most important person in this parliament. In years past, Speakers of the House of Commons have died ensuring that the House of Commons has remained in the paramount position that it is entitled to. Mr Speaker, I am not suggesting in any way, of course, that it will be necessary for you to make that sacrifice during the course of your term, but you are following a tradition that has been established over hundreds of years, and you will play a very important role in the proper running and conduct of this Legislative Assembly.

Mr Speaker, in the last Assembly, you served your apprenticeship. We had some disagreements with you from time to time, but I am sure that, now you have been re-elected, we can all work together to ensure that this parliament works in the manner that it should.

Mr LEO (Nhulunbuy): Mr Speaker, I will not take up the time of these proceedings. I offer a few words of congratulation to yourself. Indeed, you served this Assembly well in the last session and certainly I look forward to your deliberations on our behaviour over the next 4 years. There is a line that comes from a popular television series, 'in defeat malice and in victory revenge'. I share none of those sentiments, Mr Speaker, and I look forward to serving under you for the next 4 years.

Mr HANRAHAN (Lands and Housing): Mr Speaker, it gives me great pleasure to rise very briefly to offer the congratulations of government members and other people. However, I extend particular congratulations to you from the people of Alice Springs because, to pick up a comment made by the honourable Leader of the Opposition, you have certainly served a very good apprenticeship in this Assembly. Looking around the Chamber this morning, you are one of the members of the original group known as the Class of '74. From 1974-83 as the member for Stuart and since as the member for Braitling, you have indeed served the community of Alice Springs well. You are a member and a founding member of many organisations in Alice Springs and are particularly famous for your involvement with the Alice Springs Ghan Preservation Society. I am sure that all honourable members recognise that that society would not be what it is today without your continuing efforts and we look forward to the day when the restored Ghan slides out of the siding on its way to Ewaninga.

You served in the position of Speaker with distinction and fairness during last year's sittings of this Assembly. After all, Mr Speaker, who could be patron of both the kennel club and the cat club without being a fair man?

Mr SPEAKER: I thank all members for their kind words and I hope that my second term in the Chair will be considerably longer than my first. I trust that I will not go out of office with a state funeral, as the Leader of the Opposition has suggested. I also hope that, at the end of this 4-year term, honourable members will have as many kind things to say about me as they have at the start. Finally, I advise honourable members that, at all times, I will attempt to be fair but firm.

PRESENTATION OF SPEAKER TO ADMINISTRATOR

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

Sitting suspended.

Mr Speaker Vale resumed the Chair.

AUTHORITY TO ADMINISTER OATHS

Mr SPEAKER: Honourable members, I have to report that, accompanied by honourable members, I presented myself to His Honour the Administrator as the choice of the Assembly for its Speaker and His Honour was pleased to congratulate me.

I inform honourable members that I have received from His Honour the Administrator an authorisation to administer to honourable members the oaths or affirmations of allegiance and of office. I table the authorisation.

The Clerk read the authorisation.

ATTENDANCE OF ADMINISTRATOR

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

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

His Honour the Administrator took the Chair.

His Honour the ADMINISTRATOR: Mr Speaker, honourable members, I have called you together at this time for the dispatch of business and to outline my government's legislative program for the ensuing period.

The nature of the Northern Territory is such that its continued development must rely upon a strong partnership of interest between the community and its government. My government comes to office at a time when that partnership between Territorians and their elected representatives in this legislature will be particularly crucial. Such a partnership requires

greater participation in government than that offered by the electoral process alone, and it is fortunate that the relatively small population of the Territory lends itself to greater participation by the community in the processes of government. The familiarity and informality that already exists between elected members and the electorate is positive and beneficial and my government will seek to develop that relationship further.

The ensuing period of government will require a particular commitment from the Territory's people. It will be a period during which the Territory will need to rely, ever more, both on its own resources and the resourcefulness of its people. It will be a period during which both the ideal and reality of statehood will be vigorously pursued.

In order to achieve these objectives, the economic momentum which was a particular feature of the early period of self-government in the Territory must be revitalised. My government has drawn up an economic agenda for its period of administration, with an emphasis on both further diversification of the Territory's private economy and continued support for established and fast-growing industries.

The period since self-government has laid the foundations for a second cycle of growth in the Territory in the next decade. Many of the inherited problems of the Territory have been, or are being, overcome. With the construction of the Amadeus Basin to Darwin gas pipeline, for the first time the Territory is free of the prohibitive power costs that have discouraged new industry in the past. The Territory is no longer an isolated outpost of Australia, and is now ready to take on its rightful role in the region. Regular trade with countries to our north is in its infancy, but the new port facilities, the initiatives taken by Nortrade and the investment incentives of the Trade Development Zone will each play their part in expanding that trade in the future.

The aggressive and innovative promotion of the Northern Territory as a tourist destination, plus support for vital tourism accommodation, has seen the number of domestic visitors rise by 20% this year, whilst international numbers have risen by 80%. My government will build on the opportunities created in these and other areas over the years since self-government.

In addition, a number of exciting projects in agriculture, resource development and industry have been identified as promising prospects by my government. Among these are the production and milling of kenaf, the sale of gas interstate and the construction of a gas stripping plant, and the creation of an onshore fisheries processing industry. My government will support the private sector in the development of these and other projects towards economic diversification.

By example, in order both to conserve our fisheries resource and assist the development of the industry, my government has begun a major review of fish and fisheries legislation. My government believes that the construction of a railway from Alice Springs to Darwin, linking southern Australia with the natural trade route to points north is a vital project to ensure the Territory's future prosperity. The commitment to see this project completed only increases with the passage of time.

The traditional mainstays of the Territory's economy are the pastoral industry and mining. My government has also commenced a thorough review of the regulations which currently apply in these industries, and will be bringing before the House new legislation designed to ensure that appropriate laws are in place to take them through to the next century.

Legislation to enable pastoral leases to be converted to freehold will be brought before the House. I have spoken of the need for partnership between my government and the community, and in all areas of endeavour the government will seek to consult with and involve the Territory's people through the continuation of advisory councils in almost all areas of its responsibility. Advisory councils on industry and business will continue to provide the expertise of first-hand experience to government - and that experience will be reflected in legislation.

Health, educational and community welfare advisory councils will be asked to be innovative in their advice to the government executive, particularly as the government seeks to place greater responsibility in the hands of community organisations for welfare assistance.

My government is aware that the nature of development of the Territory to date has unavoidably focused on those areas with either an established population base or which lie on the Territory's main transport routes. During the period of this Assembly, my government desires to identify and establish new opportunity for the many thousands of Territorians who live by choice or necessity in the less populated and developed regions of the Territory. In order to overcome the disadvantages experienced by those who live 'off the beaten track', my government will also encourage the formation of regional advisory councils which will take on the responsibility for identifying and initiating new enterprise in their own region. The emphasis will be on the creation of improved services and amenities to local communities through a broadening of private sector activity where opportunity presents itself.

At the same time, my government willingly accepts its responsibility to provide government support for the isolated and disadvantaged, particularly in respect of housing. The rapid social and economic growth of the Territory since self-government has benefited many, but my government's continuing duty is to the service and prosperity of all Territorians, particularly those who have not, as yet, been able to take advantage of that growth. My government will discharge that duty with efficiency and integrity.

In legislative terms, my government's priority will be for greater clarity, a uniformity with the states wherever possible and a minimum of administration by regulation. My government is committed to ensuring that this responsibility is properly exercised by this legislature and by the public sector. Accordingly, it will be the work of this legislature to reduce both the overall volume of regulation in the Northern Territory and to clarify and improve legislation which has become unwieldy through amendment and partial reform.

It is my government's belief that, while regulation should demand of individuals that they maintain practices and standards that ensure the broader public interest, it should not seek to tell people the way to run their own affairs. The public sector will ensure that its activities are efficient and that its administration of regulatory and legislative functions is of assistance rather than a hindrance to the private sector. My government is also conscious of the hidden cost of government - the cost of compliance by the private sector to outdated or inefficient regulation.

New administrative arrangements involving the transfer and regrouping of responsibilities have been announced, and these will require the passage of some enabling legislation in the early life of this Assembly. Legislation to establish a Utilities Authority, combining Northern Territory Electricity Commission and Water Authority responsibilities will be introduced. The new

administrative arrangements will set the style both for a reduction in the cost and an increase in the efficiency of government over a period.

While my government will spare no effort in pressing the Territory's case for further Commonwealth assistance to overcome both the inherited and innate disadvantages of the Territory's unique social and geographic environment, all Australia will be expected to carry a share of the burden of economic restraint. My government accepts that responsibility but, recognising the need for national economic moderation and fiscal responsibility, will press the Territory's case with force and determination.

In former years, the Territory has been a place of unsettled population. There was no real security of tenure for Aboriginal Territorians, and the great majority of others made our part of Australia their home only for a few years. Today, government services, education, health, training and housing have made it possible for families to settle and call the Territory their home, while land rights have meant that most Aboriginal Territorians have gained real security of ownership over land in the past decade.

In both major and remote population centres, there are young people whose commitment to their home, whether that home is an isolated outstation or a northern suburb, is that much greater than that of their parents. These are the people for whom the Territory's progress to date and in the future is advanced by government. Accordingly, there will be a continued emphasis on training and education at all levels within the Territory. The key to population stability is to ensure that people have access to further education and training for the work force within reach of their home. The expansion of courses at the new University College, in teacher, nurse, police, hospitality and other training, will help to bring that about. My government remains committed to the establishment of the Territory's own university.

Broadly speaking, in the Territory today, 2 radically different cultures are settling down side by side - one 'go ahead' and the other more hesitant. How these cultures manage their affairs and how they deal with the dilemmas that such a situation must produce, will be the greatest test of the Territory's people. My government will do all in its power to encourage harmony and understanding within the multicultural society in which we live. And it will extend the same philosophy to its dealings with our near neighbours.

The Territory faces a fast growing and dynamic region of diversity and energy, and there is little doubt that northern Australia's success will be linked to the growth of that region. My government will pursue the Territory's rightful role as the link between Australia and our regional neighbours to our north, fostering economic, trading, cultural and educational links with neighbouring countries in South-east Asia and the Pacific. Where programs of cooperative assistance in areas such as health, education, research and training are mutually beneficial, my government will promote such cooperation.

There are a number of areas of legislation concerning the health and social welfare of the Territory's people which will require a major review in the life of this Assembly. Legislation for the provision of care and guardianship for mentally-incapacitated persons will be a priority.

The Territory is a great part of all Australia - both in size and in lifestyle. But it is not utopia. It has its share of social problems. The Territory's weather, from arid heartland to tropical seafront, can promote

excess, both in drinking and temperament. When that impinges on the rights of others, where it leaves children neglected, causes road deaths and injury, or destroys family life, my government will use its powers effectively and firmly. It is the duty of this House to find the right balance between the regulation of liquor sales and the effects on the community of excess.

Laws concerning public health and safety will undergo major review. My government is intent on the continued development of a community police force, but one with both the numbers and powers to do its job effectively. Recent events concerning the apprehension of lawbreakers have shown the need for amendments to the Criminal Code, police administration and bail provisions, while the work of the National Crime Authority has resulted in the requirement for new laws relating to unlawful betting, listening devices and major criminal investigations. In addition, the Traffic Act is to be reviewed.

My government will use its term of office to advance the Territory economically, socially and constitutionally, using all opportunities to encourage new population and new investment, and maintaining the view that real sustainable opportunity is created only through the growth of the private sector. By giving Territorians greater control over their future, continued constitutional development not only will enhance the Territory's economic and social progress but also protect the advances accomplished. Thus, my government reaffirms its commitment to the early attainment of statehood for the Northern Territory and will move purposefully and resolutely to achieve that crucial objective. When constitutional quality is enshrined, the full potential of the Territory can be released.

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

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

Mr Speaker Vale resumed the Chair.

GOVERNMENT ADMINISTRATIVE ARRANGEMENTS

Mr HATTON (Chief Minister)(by leave): Mr Speaker, on 19 March 1987, His Honour the Administrator made the following appointments of ministers of the Northern Territory: Stephen Paul Hatton, Chief Minister; Raymond Allan Hanrahan, Minister for Lands and Housing, Minister for Conservation and Minister for Tourism; Barry Francis Coulter, Treasurer and Minister for Local Government and Minister for Mines and Energy; Marshall Bruce Perron, Minister for Industries and Development; Daryl William Manzie, Attorney-General and Minister for Education; Donald Francis Dale, Minister for Health and Community Services; Tom Harris, Minister for Labour and Administrative Services; and Frederick Arthur Finch, Minister for Transport and Works. On the same day, His Honour made an administrative arrangements order allotting to those ministers the administration of departments and the provisions of acts and the responsibility for areas of government specified in that order.

The honourable member for Flynn is Deputy Chief Minister and Leader of Government Business in the Assembly and the honourable member for Ludmilla is the Government Whip. I table a copy of the administrative arrangements orders made by the Administrator on 19 March 1987.

OPPOSITION OFFICE HOLDERS

Mr SMITH (Opposition Leader)(by leave): Mr Speaker, the following members of the opposition hold office as follows: Terence Edward Smith, Leader of the Opposition; Brian Richard Ede, Deputy Leader of the Opposition; and the honourable member for Arnhem is Opposition Whip.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY (REGISTER OF MEMBERS' INTERESTS)
AMENDMENT BILL
(Serial 1)

Bill presented by leave and read a first time.

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

Motion agreed to.

ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN OF COMMITTEES

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

Mr HATTON (Chief Minister): Mr Speaker, I propose to the Assembly for its Chairman of Committees the honourable member for Victoria River, Mr McCarthy, and move that the honourable member for Victoria River be appointed Chairman of Committees of this Assembly.

Mr HANRAHAN (Lands and Housing): Mr Speaker, I second the motion.

Mr SMITH (Opposition Leader): Mr Speaker, I propose to the Assembly for its Chairman of Committees the member for MacDonnell, Mr Bell, and move that the honourable member for MacDonnell be appointed Chairman of Committees of this Assembly.

Mr EDE (Stuart): Mr Speaker, I second the motion.

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

Does any honourable member wish to speak to the motions?

Ballot taken.

Mr SPEAKER: Honourable members, the result of the ballot is Mr McCarthy, member for Victoria River, 18 votes, and Mr Bell, member for MacDonnell, 7 votes. I declare the honourable member for Victoria River, Mr McCarthy, appointed as Chairman of Committees in accordance with standing orders and offer him my congratulations.

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

Mr HATTON (Chief Minister): Mr Speaker, I would like to congratulate the member for Victoria River on the attainment of this high office. The Chairman of Committees carries a heavy responsibility in this Assembly as all honourable members will know. Many of the more interesting and fiery debates

occur when the Assembly resolves itself into the committee of the whole. This is when the specific details of legislation are dealt with and, with due deference to you, Mr Speaker, I am sure you will agree that quite often those debates can be lengthy and confusing and the role of Chairman of Committees is vital in ensuring the expeditious conduct of the business of this Assembly. Mr Speaker, the member for Victoria River has the strength and integrity to carry out that important task and I offer him my sincerest congratulations.

Mr BELL (MacDonnell): Mr Speaker, I wish to take this opportunity to briefly pass on my congratulations to the member for Victoria River on his election as Chairman of Committees. I am quite confident that he will perform that task with the efficiency, courtesy and good humour which the often torrid sessions in committee will demand of him.

Mr McCARTHY (Victoria River): Mr Speaker, I wish to thank the Chief Minister and the honourable member for the comments that have been made. I am honoured to have been elected to this position and I look forward to sharing the burdens of your office, Mr Speaker, in the role of Deputy Speaker and Chairman of Committees.

ADDRESS-IN-REPLY

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

Mr HATTON (Chief Minister): Mr Speaker, I move that the following Address-in-Reply be agreed to:

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

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

Leave granted.

SESSIONAL ORDER

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

Motion agreed to.

APPOINTMENTS TO STANDING COMMITTEES

Mr HANRAHAN (Lands and Housing)(by leave): Mr Speaker, I move that, unless otherwise ordered and pursuant to standing order 7, Mr Speaker, Mr Hanrahan, Mr Lanhupuy, Mr Bell and Mr Poole be appointed as members of the Standing Orders Committee.

Motion agreed to.

Mr HANRAHAN (Lands and Housing)(by leave): Mr Speaker, I move that, unless otherwise ordered and pursuant to standing order 18, Mr Bell,

Mr Dondas, Mr Firmin, Mr Perron and Mr Smith be appointed as members of the Committee of Privileges.

Motion agreed to.

MOTION

Reference to Committee of Privileges

Mr HANRAHAN (Lands and Housing)(by leave): Mr Speaker, I move that:

1. the Legislative Assembly (Powers and Privileges) Act be referred to the Committee of Privileges for inquiry and report on any amendments the committee may consider necessary to recommend to the Assembly;
2. for the purpose of the inquiry, the committee have power to send for persons, papers and records and to move from place to place;
3. the committee shall have leave to make interim reports to the Assembly on any matter which it deems to be of an urgent nature; and
4. unless otherwise ordered, the committee report to the Assembly no later than the first sitting day in 1988.

Motion agreed to.

APPOINTMENTS TO STANDING COMMITTEES

Mr HANRAHAN (Lands and Housing)(by leave): Mr Speaker, I move that, unless otherwise ordered and pursuant to standing order 19, Mr Speaker, Mr Dondas, Mr Lanhupuy, Mr Leo and Mr Reed be appointed as members of the House Committee.

Motion agreed to.

Mr HANRAHAN (Lands and Housing)(by leave): Mr Speaker, I move that, unless otherwise ordered and pursuant to standing order 20, Mr Bell, Mr Poole, Mr Reed, Mr Setter and Mr Tipiloura be appointed as members of the Publications Committee.

Motion agreed to.

Mr HANRAHAN (Lands and Housing)(by leave): Mr Speaker, I move that, unless otherwise ordered and pursuant to standing order 21, Mr McCarthy, Mr Reed, Mr Setter, Mr Smith and Mr Tipiloura be appointed as members of the Subordinate Legislation and Tabled Papers Committee.

Motion agreed to.

APPOINTMENT OF SESSIONAL COMMITTEES

Mr HANRAHAN (Lands and Housing)(by leave): Mr Speaker, I move that, during the present session of the Assembly:

1. a committee to be known as the Sessional Committee on the Environment be appointed comprising, unless otherwise ordered, Mr Bell, Mr McCarthy, Mr Poole, Mr Reed and Mr Tipiloura;

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

Motion agreed to.

Mr HANRAHAN (Lands and Housing)(by leave): Mr Speaker, I move that, during the present session of the Assembly:

1. a committee to be known as the New Parliament House Committee be appointed comprising, unless otherwise ordered, Mr Speaker, Mr Firmin, Mr Lanhupuy, Mr Leo and Mr Setter;
2. the committee act for and represent the Legislative Assembly in all matters concerned with the planning, design and construction of any interim accommodation proposed for the Legislative Assembly, its committees, members and officers and all matters incidental thereto;
3. the committee act for and represent the Legislative Assembly, as the client for the new parliament house, in all matters concerned with the planning, design and construction of the new parliament house and all matters incidental thereto;
4. the committee reconsider and, as necessary, amend the Parliament House Competition brief which, when revised, shall be used as the basis for the design and construction of the new parliament house, unless otherwise ordered by the Assembly or unless the committee resolves to reconsider any section of the revised brief;
5. the committee also consider and report on any matter relating to the planning, design and construction of the new parliament house and matters incidental thereto or on any matter relating to the planning, design and construction of interim

accommodation proposed for the Legislative Assembly, its committees, members and officers as may be referred to it by:

- A. the relevant minister; or
 - B. resolution of the Legislative Assembly;
6. the committee be empowered, with the approval of the Speaker, to employ necessary staff and be provided with such facilities and resources as it may from time to time require;
 7. the committee report and make recommendations to the Assembly on these matters from time to time;
 8. the committee have power to send for persons, papers and records, to sit in public or in private session, notwithstanding any adjournment of the Assembly, to adjourn from place to place, and have leave to report from time to time its proceedings and the evidence taken and such interim recommendations as it may deem fit;
 9. the committee be empowered to print from day to day such papers and evidence as may be ordered by it and, unless otherwise ordered by the committee, a daily Hansard be published of such proceedings as take place in public;
 10. the committee be empowered to consider the minutes of proceedings, evidence taken and records of similar committees established in previous Assemblies; and
 11. the foregoing provisions of this resolution, in so far as they are inconsistent with standing orders, have effect notwithstanding anything contained in the standing orders.

Motion agreed to.

SELECT COMMITTEE ON CONSTITUTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Mr HANRAHAN (Lands and Housing)(by leave): Mr Speaker, I move that:

whereas this Assembly is of the opinion that when the Northern Territory of Australia becomes a new state it should do so as a member of the federation on terms resulting in equality with the other states with its people having the same constitutional rights, privileges, entitlements and responsibilities as the people of the existing states;

and whereas in so far as it is constitutionally possible the equality should apply as on the date of the grant of statehood to the new state, and whereas it is necessary to draft a new state constitution;

- (1) a select committee be established to inquire into, report and make recommendations to the Legislative Assembly on:
 - (A) a constitution for the new state and the principles upon which it should be drawn, including:

- (i) legislative powers;
 - (ii) executive powers; and
 - (iii) judicial powers; and
 - (iv) the method to be adopted to have a draft new state constitution approved by or on behalf of the people of the Northern Territory; and
- (B) the issues, conditions and procedures pertinent to the entry of the Northern Territory into the federation as a new state;
- (2) the committee undertake a role in promoting the awareness of statehood issues to the Northern Territory and Australian populations;
 - (3) unless otherwise ordered, the committee consist of the Chief Minister, the Leader of the Opposition, Mr Ede, Mr Lanhupuy, Mr Palmer and Mr Setter;
 - (4) in the unavoidable absence of the Chief Minister, a member of the government nominated by the Chief Minister may attend any meeting of the committee and participate in its proceedings as a member of the committee;
 - (5) in the unavoidable absence of the Leader of the Opposition, a member of the opposition nominated by the Leader of the Opposition may attend any meeting of the committee and participate in its proceedings as a member of the committee;
 - (6) the chairman of the committee may, from time to time, appoint a member of the committee to be the deputy chairman of the committee and that the member so appointed shall act as chairman of the committee at any time when there is no chairman or when the chairman is not present at a meeting of the committee;
 - (7) in the event of an equality of voting, the chairman, or the deputy chairman when acting as chairman, shall have a casting vote;
 - (8) the committee have power to appoint subcommittees and to refer to any such subcommittee any matter which the committee is empowered to examine;
 - (9) four members of the committee constitute a quorum of the committee and two members of a subcommittee constitute a quorum of the subcommittee;
 - (10) the committee or any subcommittee have power to send for persons, papers and records, to adjourn from place to place, to meet and transact business in public or private session and to sit during any adjournment of the Assembly;

- (11) the committee shall be empowered to print from day to day such papers and evidence as may be ordered by it and, unless otherwise ordered by the committee, a daily Hansard shall be published of such proceedings of the committee as take place in public;
- (12) the committee have leave to report from time to time and that any member of the committee have power to add a protest or dissent to any report;
- (13) the committee report to the Assembly 12 months from the date of this resolution;
- (14) unless otherwise ordered by the committee, all documents received by the committee during its inquiry shall remain in the custody of the Assembly provided that, on the application of a department or person, any document, if not likely to be further required, may, in the Speaker's discretion, be returned to the department or person from whom it was obtained;
- (15) members of the public and representatives of the news media may attend and report any public session of the committee, unless otherwise ordered by the committee;
- (16) the committee may authorise the televising of public hearings of the committee under such rules as the Speaker considers appropriate;
- (17) the committee shall be provided with all necessary staff, facilities and resources and shall be empowered, with the approval of the Speaker, to appoint persons with specialist knowledge for the purposes of the committee;
- (18) nothing in these terms of reference or in the standing orders shall be taken to limit or control the duties, powers or functions of any minister of the Territory who is also a member of the select committee;
- (19) the committee be empowered to consider the minutes of proceedings, evidence taken and records of similar committees established in the previous Assembly; and
- (20) the foregoing provisions of this resolution, so far as they are inconsistent with the standing orders, have effect notwithstanding anything contained in the standing orders.

Mr EDE (Stuart): Mr Speaker, I have accepted our Leader's request that I take on special responsibility for constitutional development as one of my shadow portfolios. It is with pleasure that I accept this Assembly's nomination to continue on the Select Committee on Constitutional Development. This side of the Assembly supports the motion re-establishing the Select Committee on Constitutional Development. In saying that, I would like to delve briefly into the committee's terms of reference and hope that it will clarify our position for some of those people who tend to panic at the very mention of statehood.

It is quite significant that the opening preamble to our terms of reference states 'when' the Northern Territory of Australia becomes a new

state, not 'if' it becomes a state. That is a point which I think we have passed. I think that it is now generally agreed that statehood is the constitutional direction that we are taking and that is the exercise that we are involved in.

I would stress, however, that this is a constitutional development committee and not a statehood committee. Because it is a constitutional development committee, it is our job to look at the constitution. There are a few other words in the preamble that are also quite significant. We talk about achieving statehood on terms of equality and 'equality' is a very important word there. The preamble speaks of the people of the Northern Territory having the same constitutional rights as people in other states. The words 'equality' and the 'same' do not mean that we will limit ourselves to having only those rights, privileges, entitlements and responsibilities that other states have. What we are saying is that that is the bottom line - that is what we believe is our right to achieve. However, if we can go further than that in our own constitution, so much the better.

To clarify that, I should remind honourable members that there are old constitutions which were in vogue in the 17th, 18th and early parts of the 19th century where the tendency was to use constitutions simply as documents for the establishment of the legitimacy of a state and to indicate the forms that the government would take. It was not until the late 19th century and then into the 20th century that constitutions began to go further than just the rights of citizens, and such constitutions related to the relationship between the citizen and the state and the rights of citizens in relation to legislative powers. These are generally known as 'new constitutions' and they were adopted after the constitutions of the states of Australia. I do not think that we should simply look at the constitutions of the states and conclude that we in the Northern Territory will not consider anything to do with the rights of the individual, both rights which individuals currently have and those which the state could guarantee. I think that we can consider this issue within the context of the preamble.

It is also important to look at powers in relation to constitutions, particularly in terms of the supremacy of the parliament or the people. In the older constitutions, supremacy generally lay with the parliament. This is very much the case with the British parliament which has complete supremacy and can, by a simple majority vote, change any law no matter how long it has been in force. Many other constitutions can be changed by the state without notice. This is generally the situation in the Australian states although lately there has been a tendency to limit the powers of state parliaments to amend constitutions.

At the other end of the spectrum is the situation where the people have full rights to amend the constitution by means of referenda. Such referenda may require more than a simple majority of all eligible voters. In Australia, for example, a change to the constitution requires a majority of all the people plus a majority of people in a majority of the states.

Mr Speaker, obviously, we will consider these matters as we come to formulate a constitution. The first point that we must address is to ensure that rights currently held by Territorians are maintained. I think everybody would agree with that. I think everybody would agree that statehood is not a means of taking away the rights of Territorians or of any section of our society. Statehood is not a device to get rid of land rights. It certainly must not be a device by which people lose any rights whether those relate to land or freedoms currently enjoyed as Australian citizens. These must not be reduced or diminished in any way.

It is very easy to say that, but how do we ensure that objective when we are drafting the constitution?. For example, we could have a constitution which required the assent of 95% of the population to amend it. We could have every detail of every right laid down in the constitution and tie ourselves into a knot forever. If we did that, we would put in place a system which would disadvantage all Territorians.

Another approach is to indicate in the constitution the principles of the rights that we are trying to establish and ensure that the constitution can be amended by a referendum of all the people. Beneath the constitution itself, we would have a series of constitutional laws which some countries call organic laws which require more than a simple majority of the parliament at one sitting to change. For example, it may require the support of an absolute majority in the parliament and be required to lie on the Table for 6 months. In that way, an organic law can be identified as having a status above other laws in the same way that the constitution is the supreme law.

Mr Speaker, I would like to return to the point that it is a constitutional development committee and not a statehood committee. I would note that the only change in the terms of reference relates to the second term of reference. The second term of reference states that the committee shall 'undertake a role in promoting the awareness of statehood issues to the Northern Territory and the Australian populations'. The wording there is very important. The role of promoting the awareness of statehood is necessarily a function of this committee because statehood encompasses constitutional development and the constitution itself. We could not take on, however, the promotion of statehood itself. We are not a promotional unit; we are not in the PR game. That is something which the government itself may decide that it wishes to do. It is something that we as an opposition may wish to do, but it is not something which is properly the role of the Committee on Constitutional Development. We have recognised that, whether statehood comes in 15 years or 50 years, what is important is that we get the constitution right. The timing is not as important as getting it right.

There are other considerations involved in getting it right such as discussions on financial matters with the federal government and other states and a whole gamut of non-constitutional matters. However, the constitution is the framework, the basic foundation and the building block upon which all of the rest of the development depends. That is why the members of this committee and the members of the Assembly need to ensure that we get it right. It is vital that we arrive at a constitution which fits the particular needs in the Territory and ensures that we guarantee the rights of Territorians and give them the degree of comfort that they need to enter statehood looking forward to the future as a united Northern Territory.

Mr HATTON (Chief Minister): Mr Speaker, I am pleased to rise in support of this motion. In doing so, I am pleased to hear that the Deputy Leader of the Opposition supports the re-establishment of this committee. As honourable members will be aware, a Constitutional Development Committee was formed in a previous Assembly. It started its work and, in fact, performed a valuable role in the early development of the process of constitutional development for the Northern Territory.

The terms of reference of this committee take the evolution of this process one step forward. As the member for Stuart quite correctly pointed out, the preamble to this resolution recognises not 'if' the Northern Territory should become a state, but 'when' the Northern Territory becomes a state. There is an inevitability to the Northern Territory achieving its

ultimate constitutional objective of becoming an equal part of Australia and joining the federation of states of Australia, whereby each of our citizens can enjoy the same constitutional and democratic rights as other Australians. There can be no stronger objective of this Assembly, and of every member of this Assembly, than to promote this cause. Without doubt, it is a complex, at times controversial and quite difficult process to move forward towards that objective. Nonetheless, the difficulties themselves should not deter us, as the representatives of the people of the Northern Territory, from the objective of obtaining for them the rights that other Australians take as a matter of course.

The honourable member for Stuart made a number of interesting comments about the constitutional issues and the very fact of the Northern Territory developing its own constitution, a process which I and members on this side of the Assembly fully support. The honourable member would be aware that many of the issues that he spoke about have been addressed on numerous occasions within the previous Committee on Constitutional Development, and can and should be developed further through that process. But, in the end, the constitution of the Northern Territory must be that constitution chosen and decided upon by the people of the Northern Territory, not purely by this Assembly, so that it will genuinely be the people's constitution and reflect the desires and aspirations of all the people of the Northern Territory, irrespective of their religion, culture or race. Only through that mechanism can we genuinely develop a Northern Territory for all the citizens of the Northern Territory.

Mr Speaker, at the moment, I have no intention of dealing with the pros and cons of different forms of constitutional clauses or conventions or the concept of entrenched rights or organic laws. I know they are matters of some particular interest to the member for Stuart, and I have no doubt that we will have some interesting debates on the subject during the course of the committee's consideration of a multitude of issues. There are many good points in those that have been made by the member for Stuart. But I do make the point that, whilst this committee is a constitutional development committee, and whilst it does not say that this is a statehood committee, members should be under no illusion: the ultimate constitutional objective of the Northern Territory is statehood, and the role of this committee will not be complete until the day the Northern Territory is a constitutional state of Australia.

Mr Speaker, in that respect, I must take a couple of moments to deal with an issue that has been the subject of some controversy and confusion in the Northern Territory. It has been the subject, in some respects, of some misinformation in the community and I do not say that this has been deliberate, but rather that it is just a fact of life. There is no doubt that the Northern Territory community is very concerned about what the financial implications of statehood are. In the absence of any clear understanding, what people ask is what statehood will cost, what it will mean in terms of taxes and charges, and the availability and provision of services from government. Can the Northern Territory afford statehood? These are questions that are at the forefront of the minds of the community in the Northern Territory.

Any clear analysis of the issue of statehood makes it abundantly obvious that the issue of statehood is irrelevant when it comes to the financial capacity of the Northern Territory. I say, and have said in this Assembly before, that there are no financial implications of statehood except that, through the process of properly developed statehood with the rights of the

Northern Territory being on an equivalent basis to those of the states of Australia, we would have greater protection over the funds available to the Northern Territory. In the absence of statehood, the financial circumstances of the Northern Territory are at greater risk. The only implication of statehood is that, without it, we have less financial security because, as a territory, we are not party to the Commonwealth states financial agreements. We are not members of the Loans Council. We do not have the protection of the Australian Constitution. We do not have the same rights as the states in terms of raising revenue. As a territory, we do not have the right to income taxes and other taxes collected within the borders of the Northern Territory, as a matter of right. It is not a circumstance in the Northern Territory where the Commonwealth is collecting taxes on our behalf, as it is with the states, as a consequence of agreements reached in the 1940s.

As a territory, we are vulnerable in this particular climate of threats from the federal government of cuts in funding. Over the last 2 years, we have seen the discriminatory financial treatment of the Northern Territory when the federal government reduced moneys retrospectively from our budget in the 1984-85 financial year. Last year, it breached agreements with respect to arrangements on funding of electricity, to the detriment of the people of the Northern Territory. We had no right to challenge those actions, and we have no right to raise funding separately by semi-government funds or loans, because we are not members of the Loans Council. As a territory of the Commonwealth, we are vulnerable financially and, when it comes to the final analysis, we are at the mercy of the whim of the federal government in respect of our financial and other relationships. That is unacceptable to the people of Australia in this day and age.

I am unashamed when I say that I will fight for statehood and the full equality of rights of Territorians as soon as possible, because it is unacceptable that our government and our citizens should be placed under that sort of threat, whether it be real or imagined, and that we lack any constitutional right to protect ourselves against actions of a federal government, actions which we know it has been and will be prepared to take.

Mr Speaker, I support this motion. My commitment and, I believe, the commitment of my government and my colleagues, is 100% to fight for the full equality of Territorians of all persuasions, all races, all cultures and all religions to create a good, united society in the Northern Territory, but one where we can govern and control our own lives and not be mendicants of southern politicians.

Motion agreed to

PUBLIC ACCOUNTS COMMITTEE

Mr HANRAHAN (Lands and Housing)(by leave): Mr Speaker, I move:

1. that the following provisional standing order, to operate on a trial basis as a sessional order, be agreed to:

21A Public Accounts Committee

- (1) A Standing Committee of Public Accounts to consist of 5 members shall be appointed at the commencement of each Assembly.
- (2) The duties of the committee shall be -

- (a) to examine the accounts of the receipts and expenditure of the Northern Territory and each statement and report transmitted to the Legislative Assembly by the Auditor-General, pursuant to the Financial Administration and Audit Act;
 - (b) to report to the Legislative Assembly with such comments as it thinks fit, any items or matters in or arising in connection with those accounts, statements or reports, or in connection with the receipt or disbursement of the moneys to which they relate, to which the committee is of the opinion that the attention of parliament should be drawn;
 - (c) to report to the Legislative Assembly any alteration which the committee thinks desirable in the form of the public accounts or in the method of keeping them or in the method of receipt, control, issue or payment of public moneys;
 - (d) to inquire into and report to the Legislative Assembly on any question in connection with the public accounts of the Territory -
 - (i) which is referred to it by a resolution of the Assembly; or
 - (ii) which is referred to it by the Administrator or a minister; and
 - (e) to examine the reports of the Auditor-General laid before the Legislative Assembly with the accounts of a public authority of the Northern Territory (including any documents annexed or appended to those reports).
- (3) The committee shall examine only those accounts of receipts and expenditure of the Northern Territory and reports of the Auditor-General for financial years commencing after 30 June 1986, provided that this shall not prevent the consideration by the committee of matters included in reports of the Auditor-General for the year ending 30 June 1986 which have or may have a continuing effect on the form of the public accounts, the method of keeping them, or the method of receipt, control, issue or payment of public moneys.
- (4) Prior to determining whether to undertake an inquiry into any matter which may have arisen in connection with the public accounts of the Territory, pursuant to paragraphs (2)(a) and (e), with the concurrence of the committee, the chairman is empowered to write to the Chief Executive Officer of the relevant department or public authority for a report on the matter.
- (5) The committee shall take care not to inquire into any matters which are being examined by a select committee of the Assembly especially appointed to inquire into such matters and any question arising in connection therewith may be referred to the Assembly for determination.
- (6) The committee shall elect a government member as chairman.

- (7) The chairman of the committee may, from time to time, appoint a member of the committee to be the deputy chairman of the committee and the member so appointed shall act as chairman of the committee at any time when there is no chairman or when the chairman is not present at a meeting of the committee.
 - (8) In the event of an equality of voting, the chairman, or the deputy chairman when acting as chairman, shall have a casting vote.
 - (9) The committee shall have power to appoint subcommittees and to refer to any such subcommittee any matter which the committee is empowered to examine.
 - (10) Three members of the committee shall constitute a quorum of the committee and 2 members of a subcommittee shall constitute a quorum of the subcommittee.
 - (11) The committee or any subcommittee shall have power to send for persons, papers and records, to adjourn from place to place, to meet and transact business in public or private session and to sit during any adjournment of the Assembly.
 - (12) The committee shall be empowered to print from day to day such papers and evidence as may be ordered by it and, unless otherwise ordered by the committee, a daily Hansard shall be published of such proceedings of the committee as take place in public.
 - (13) The committee may proceed to the dispatch of business notwithstanding that all members have not been appointed and notwithstanding any vacancy.
 - (14) The committee shall report annually and shall have leave to report from time to time and to report its proceedings and evidence taken, and any member of the committee shall have power to add a protest or dissent to any report.
 - (15) Unless otherwise ordered by the committee, all documents received by the committee during its inquiry shall remain in the custody of the Assembly, provided that, on the application of a department or person, any document, if not likely to be further required, may, in the Speaker's discretion, be returned to the department or person from whom it was obtained.
 - (16) The committee shall be provided with all necessary staff, facilities and resources and shall be empowered, with the approval of the Speaker, to appoint persons with specialist knowledge for the purposes of the committee.
 - (17) The foregoing provisions of this resolution, so far as they are inconsistent with the standing orders, have effect notwithstanding anything contained in the standing orders; and
2. that unless otherwise ordered, Mr Ede, Mr McCarthy, Mr Leo, Mr Palmer and Mr Poole be appointed as members of the committee.

Motion agreed to.

Mr SMITH (Opposition Leader): Mr Speaker, I do not think that there is any doubt that so far the public has been disappointed in the operations of the Public Accounts Committee. The public's general perception is that the Public Accounts Committee is, to use a colloquial expression, 'a damp squib'. This perception is primarily a result of the Public Accounts Committee not having met in public to date, and I am not critical of that. The members of the committee have been following a rapid learning curve. They have received both extensive and intensive briefings from relevant government officials on the operations of the government accounts. However, I want to tell members of the government that the opposition's view is that the learning curve has now levelled out and it is the intention of members of the opposition who are members of the Public Accounts Committee to ensure that the committee meets in public as often as possible, as was intended when it was first established.

The holding of public meetings is the normally accepted practice of public accounts committees both at Commonwealth and state levels. The Commonwealth level is probably the one that I know most about. We all know that the Commonwealth Public Accounts Committee meets very publicly and very regularly and produces much useful information which leads to better government at the federal level. It is only by making the Public Accounts Committee and its operations open that we will get to the bottom of some of the problems which confront us in the Northern Territory. Conversely, if the Public Accounts Committee does not meet openly, there is the danger of having different figures supplied for use in different contexts. I will give an example relating to our own Public Accounts Committee.

The question of contingent liabilities was referred to the Public Accounts Committee by a motion of the Assembly last year. The Public Accounts Committee has had some meetings on this issue and I understand has been supplied with some figures. However, because the committee met in private and was given the figures in the form of a detailed background briefing, there has been no public opportunity to look at the figures. Some of these figures concern the Darwin Sheraton and the government's funding thereof, which were part of the reference of the contingent liabilities issue to the Public Accounts Committee.

In the last few weeks, 2 completely different sets of figures have been given to us concerning the government's funding arrangements with the Darwin Sheraton. One set of figures was supplied to us by the Chief Minister who, obviously, should know what is going on. The other set of figures was supplied to us by the ex-Chief Minister who, we should remember, occupied that position until very recently. He was the Chief Minister at this time last year and, after he stepped down from that position, he was a member of the Public Accounts Committee. When one looks at the 2 sets of figures that have been supplied by those 2 esteemed people who, hopefully, should know what they are talking about, one would think that they are talking about 2 completely different projects. We are not talking about differences in emphasis; we are talking about differences in millions of dollars in terms of the government's commitment as expressed by the Chief Minister and the previous Chief Minister.

To prove my point, on Territory Extra on 10 April 1987, the Chief Minister said that the government's commitment to the Darwin Sheraton project would be \$6m in the first year, it would reduce in the second and third years and, by year 4, the Manolas company would start to repay the loan made to it by the Northern Territory government. He went on to say that the total government commitment to the project might amount to \$10m.

Let's hear what the member for Barkly, the former Chief Minister, had to say. In answer to the question concerning the total amount the government could be up for with the Sheraton deals, he said that the 'figure does not have an end to it'. He then proceeded to put an end to it - a slight contradiction. He said that, by 1997, the government will have invested up to \$58m. Mr Speaker, I ask you to compare the 2 sums: the \$10m commitment of the Chief Minister and \$58m commitment of the former Chief Minister.

The former Chief Minister went on to say - something not mentioned by the Chief Minister - that, if we are to get our money back when the hotel is sold in 1997, and that is one of the options, Manolas would need to sell the hotel for \$11m. According to the former Chief Minister, in 10 years time we are expecting to sell that block of land with that hotel on it for \$11m. If we do not, it is clear that the Northern Territory government will not recoup its capital investment plus its accrued interest from the sale of that hotel. Mr Speaker, I would put it to you that, if the honourable member for Barkly is correct in his figures, we will not recoup our investment on that hotel, no matter what the Chief Minister says.

The point is that I am not in a position to take sides on this particular matter. I do not know who is right: the present Chief Minister or the previous Chief Minister. I do not know, officially, what information was presented to the Public Accounts Committee in October or November last year. Particularly, I do not know whether the information presented to the Public Accounts Committee in October or November last year by government officials was the same information that was presented to the Chief Minister in April this year. I would like to know that, Mr Speaker. If it is not the same information, I would like to know why it is not the same information and what has changed.

The Public Accounts Committee is supposed to solve mysteries. It is supposed to confront, in an open and public manner, matters referred to it by this parliament, by individual ministers or by the Administrator. In this case, it has done the reverse. It has deepened the mystery of contingent liabilities. It has managed to confuse the picture of the extent of government commitment to the Darwin Sheraton. The only way that that confusion can be removed and the only way that we can determine who is right, the present Chief Minister or the former Chief Minister, is for the matter to be referred again to the Public Accounts Committee and for the Public Accounts Committee, in open hearings, hearings that are accessible to the press or any interested member of the public, to investigate the precise nature of that commitment.

I raise this matter as an example of how the Public Accounts Committee has to operate in future if it is to work and if it is to gain the confidence of people in the Northern Territory. I accept that members of the committee have been on a rapid learning curve. In our view, that is finished. It is now time that the Public Accounts Committee got down to work, in full and open session and as often as possible, to get to the bottom of the matters that have been referred to it. I hope those same matters will be referred to it again. I understand that is the requirement because we have been prorogued.

It is not putting it too strongly to say that the next 12 months to 24 months will be vital in establishing the credibility of the Public Accounts Committee in the public eye. It is in the interest of all of us as parliamentarians, no matter what our political allegiance, to make the committee work properly. The only way we can do that is to take it seriously and to ensure that it holds as many of its meetings as possible in public.

Mr PERRON (Industries and Development): Mr Speaker, I would like to say a few words in response to the Leader of the Opposition's outburst about the Public Accounts Committee because, although we have debated this matter in the Assembly many times over the years, I think that he is still missing the fundamental point. Unfortunately, the media seemed to miss this point for the most of the latter half of last year: it is that the Public Accounts Committee is not a public committee into the accounts. It is a committee that looks into the public accounts. While some may fail to see the difference, it is a very distinct one. However, the Leader of the Opposition has told us today that the committee's performance during its short life of 7 or 8 months has been very disappointing because it did not meet in public. This was his criterion for determining whether or not the Public Accounts Committee has been successful, not whether or not it was beaver away behind closed doors really getting to the nub of the problem for its eventual report to parliament, or whether it had been lining up reams and reams of significant witnesses to question and examine prior to holding public sessions. The Leader of the Opposition did not look at any of those things. He wants to make a judgment on whether the committee was successful or not solely on the basis of how many of its meetings it held in public. Of course, that demonstrates that he has really missed the prime point.

The Public Accounts Committee is a committee of the parliament which reports to parliament. Its effectiveness is judged by parliament on the basis of its report, whether the report is unanimous or contains dissenting reports and whether any such dissenting reports diverge on party lines or not. The report details the committee's news on the references put to it and is judged by the parliament. That is how the success or otherwise of a Public Accounts Committee is judged. It may hold many of its meetings in closed session for good reason, yet come down with severely critical reports of aspects of government administration and strong recommendations for substantial change. Those recommendations for change may well be taken up by government resulting in improvements to the entire system to the benefit of the whole community.

A Public Accounts Committee could be completely successful without holding many of its meetings in public at all. Obviously, the Leader of the Opposition cannot accept this. He thinks that the operation of the Territory's Public Accounts Committee should resemble that of the Commonwealth's. I appreciate his point. The Commonwealth committees concerned with public accounts and public expenditures carry out much of their work in public. However, it is drawing a long bow to make a comparison between the Commonwealth and the Northern Territory in this respect. The Commonwealth has an \$80 000m budget, hundreds of thousands of public servants and a myriad of public authorities. The Leader of the Opposition argued that, because the Commonwealth committees meet in public, we should do the same in the Territory. I would rather he made comparisons with one of the states. The Territory Public Accounts Committee was conducting its affairs in exactly the same fashion as Public Accounts Committees in every state in Australia. I believe this was with the concurrence of its members and I imagine we will hear whether this is so or not in due course.

The Leader of the Opposition raised the question of contingent liabilities as an example of how the committee has failed to work. Of course, the committee did not complete its work on the references that it had prior to the last election so it is a bit hard to make a judgment that it failed to handle the job competently.

The Leader of the Opposition used, by way of example, the fact that the current Chief Minister had made a figure available publicly relating to

contingent liability which contrasted very strongly with figures released by a former Chief Minister of the Northern Territory. It saddens me somewhat to have read some of the articles in the newspaper which I think may have emanated from the former Chief Minister mentioned, who was a member of the Public Accounts Committee and had access to certain documents which were supposed to be kept confidential.

The Leader of the Opposition gave 2 sets of figures, indicated that he did not know which was correct and therefore concluded that the Public Accounts Committee had failed because there was still confusion in respect of contingent liabilities. He made no reference at all to the fact that he can obtain some details of the government's contingent liabilities by reference to statement 9 in the Treasurer's statements that are tabled every year. There is quite a comprehensive list there of current contingent liabilities of the Northern Territory government. He also overlooked the fact that the Public Accounts Committee did not have the opportunity to complete its work in relation to the longer-term projections of those contingent liabilities and that perhaps the new committee will have an opportunity to complete that work.

The figures that the Leader of the Opposition is clutching for - the likely long-term costs to the Northern Territory taxpayer of contingent liabilities such as that of the Sheraton Hotel in Darwin - are indeed extremely complex matters. Perhaps most honourable members do not appreciate just how complex those financial relationships are. The former committee had the opportunity of being taken through extensive briefings on the subject so that it could understand those financial relationships and report to this parliament in due course, and in a bipartisan way hopefully, whether parliament had reason to be concerned about the arrangements which had been entered into. Obviously, this matter will be debated further in this parliament in due course, presumably when the Public Accounts Committee eventually reports on this matter. I will certainly be happy to join in debate on the subject. Honourable members will find that the figures that have been bandied around today are certainly quite far from the mark in so far as my assessment of those financial arrangements are concerned.

I guess the part that disappointed me most about the Leader of the Opposition's speech today was that he felt the PAC had been a failure because it had not met in public. Indeed, it was gearing up to do exactly that; it wanted to meet in public when it was quite sure of its footing and where it intended to go. I would appreciate it if any other former members of the Public Accounts Committee on benches opposite would indicate his views on this so that we may see whether they accord with the views of the the Leader of the Opposition.

Mr LEO (Nhulunbuy): Mr Speaker, I will spend little time on this motion. I have spent considerable time debating the virtues of a Public Accounts Committee in this Assembly over many years and I am pleased to see that the government is reinstating it. I have been working on the committee since its inception in June last year. Certainly, it was a very radical learning curve for me. I had much to learn in a very short period.

I would ask the former chairman of that committee, the member for Fannie Bay, to examine the Leader of the Opposition's words when they are published tomorrow in Hansard. In fact, I am also aware of some public inquiry and criticism of the committee's work, and the criticism is not coming only from a couple of over-zealous journalists looking for a front page story or something like that. There are people who have a genuine interest in the workings of the Public Accounts Committee in the Northern Territory. I look forward, over

the coming years, to holding inquiries of a more public nature into the financial affairs of the Northern Territory as they arise. I look forward to the eventual report that we will publish so that, perhaps, the finances of the Northern Territory can be explained in terms that lay persons, such as myself, are rather more familiar with.

I think the Public Accounts Committee got off to an excellent start last year and I am quite sure that it will continue its work over the coming years. However, I would ask the former chairman to examine Hansard tomorrow. I am quite sure that he will find that, in fact, the Leader of the Opposition was not in any way criticising the workings of the Public Accounts Committee to date. I am quite sure the member will find that there was no criticism of the Public Accounts Committee but that, indeed, there is some concern within the community about the workings of the committee and whether or not it will do its job. I do not believe the committee is there to provide front page stories for the NT News or any other piece of pulp that is peddled around the suburbs of the Northern Territory, but I do believe that it has a public function and I look forward to the exercise of that public function this year.

Mr BELL (MacDonnell): Mr Speaker, I want to make a few brief comments in relation to this motion that deal with the constitution of the Public Accounts Committee. I have not been a member of the committee myself but I have taken a keen interest in the parliamentary deliberations that have led up to its formation and I have taken an interest in the aspects of the committee's deliberations that have been made public and the subject of conversation and debate elsewhere.

The particular point I wish to make is one that needs to be made again and again, particularly for the benefit of the denizens of the fourth estate in the Northern Territory. I notice that 2 denizens of the fourth estate are listening to the debate today; 1 particular denizen from the Northern Territory News and 1 from the Australian Broadcasting Corporation. I trust that they will take to heart the efforts of Her Majesty's loyal opposition in this regard. Not having had anything whatsoever to do with the opposition's representations in this regard, I say that without any suggestion of patting myself on the back, which I am certainly not doing.

I firmly believe that the earnest efforts of my colleagues, the member for Nhulunbuy, the Leader of the Opposition and the Deputy Leader of the Opposition, and perhaps others in the opposition who have put in considerable time and effort over the - I think it goes back at least 3 years, possibly 4 or 5 ...

Mr Leo: 7 years.

Mr BELL: The honourable member informs me that it is 7 years. I trust that the efforts of the opposition will be accorded due thanks, and the efforts that have been put in by the people that I have mentioned will be duly recorded. I notice that the fourth estate in the Northern Territory takes a malicious pleasure in pretending that the opposition, of which I have been a member for 6 years, has nothing to do with the government or the good government of the Northern Territory. I would suggest that there is no clearer example of the efforts that are put in by the opposition, and the fruits that they bear, than the formation of this committee.

Mr HATTON (Chief Minister): Mr Speaker, I note the comments made by the member for MacDonnell. I think he inadvertently failed to recognise the efforts of this particular administration of the Northern Territory government

which, in its first week, announced a decision to form such a Public Accounts Committee. I would have thought that, as a matter of graciousness, the member for MacDonnell would have recognised equally that, within a week or so of becoming Chief Minister, I announced the decision to form a Public Accounts Committee as a clear indication of a decisive move to ensure that the public had an opportunity to have the public accounts of the Northern Territory examined properly by a committee of their elected representatives for report to this Assembly.

Mr Speaker, the fundamental point that the Minister for Industries and Development was making was that the role of this committee is not that of a Star Chamber, a public hanging exhibition or public dirt-throwing exhibition. Its role is the responsible examination of the public accounts of the Northern Territory. That does not necessarily - and I stress the term 'necessarily' - imply that those investigations can or even should be held in public. Like the honourable members opposite, I am aware of certain comments to the effect that, for some reason, these meetings should be held in public and there are or may be occasions when the committee may deem that to be appropriate. But, as a matter of course, it is not appropriate or necessary that the deliberations of a committee of this Assembly should be held in public. The purpose of that committee is to carry out a review of the accounts, on behalf of this Assembly, for the purpose of reporting and providing recommendations to this Assembly. After all, this Assembly is the public forum for debate of public matters of interest to the community of the Northern Territory, not the journals of the media, although undoubtedly there will be times when matters of a financial nature will arise and be debated within the media.

What is incumbent on all members of this committee, however, is that they honour the responsibility and trust that is placed in them by this Assembly as members of that committee to abide by the rules and strictures that apply to them. There appears to be evidence that, in the last several months in the previous Assembly when the Public Accounts Committee met, that was not necessarily the case. That does not cause embarrassment to me or my colleagues but it does cause a degree of sadness because it reflects on the trust and honour of the members of this Assembly when such actions take place.

Mr Speaker, there have been allusions today to certain matters the subject of debate by the Public Accounts Committee, in particular concerning contingent liabilities and some public comments that have been made. May I make this particular point clear for the benefit of the Leader of the Opposition. With respect to the potential total liabilities of the Darwin Sheraton, when I was asked what I believed those total figures would be, I said I was not in a position to give accurate advice. However, if I was asked to guess at the figures in the light of the better-than-anticipated performance of the Darwin Sheraton, I believed they would be in the order of \$9m to \$10m. At no time, did I indicate that was a definitive position of mine, nor should it be treated as such. That was quite obvious in my comments broadcast by the electronic media.

For the benefit of honourable members and for no other purpose than to clarify my position, my advice now is that projections carried out at the commencement of this project anticipated that there would be a total liability of \$21.5m at the end of the 10-year period. I am not going to deal with stories about \$11m and so forth. I simply set out the facts as I have been advised of them.

I hope that the Public Accounts Committee can complete its review of the issue of contingent liabilities and I trust that, in doing so, in order to

report fairly and rationally to this Assembly, it will take the opportunity to investigate the level of contingent and actual liability of every state government in this country and consider that as a proportion of their total budgets. It is not just the level of contingent liability which is important. We should also consider whether it is affordable, whether the risks are secured and what are the worst and most likely cases.

Quite frankly, there has been a lot of hot air and nonsense spewed forth in public on this issue. I will say here and now that the liabilities the Northern Territory government has entered into in respect of Yulara, the Alice Springs Sheraton and the Darwin Sheraton are nothing to be ashamed of. We do not apologise for them and we would promote those developments again in the interests of promoting the development of the Northern Territory.

Mr COULTER (Treasurer): Mr Speaker, I would just like to make some comments concerning the Public Accounts Committee. I have been on record many times speaking about the expression 'contingent liability' which was first used by the then Opposition Leader, Bob Collins. He suggested that a contingent liability crisis would bring down the government, that Yulara was a white elephant and the Sheraton in Alice Springs would not succeed. The opposition related a story of doom and gloom. It said that this government was in real trouble with the money it had invested in tourism infrastructure and that this would lead to financial peril.

Mr Speaker, the truth is that full credit must go to Hon Paul Everingham, the Territory member in the House of Representatives, who was amongst us today, and who had the guts and initiative to seek a proposal to develop such a magnificent tourist infrastructure at Ayers Rock. This has allowed us to capitalise on the tourist boom that exists today. However, because of further nonsense from the opposition, we have now slipped backwards by not producing and developing further tourism infrastructure. Recently, I read an article which reminded me so much of the opposition's philosophy. It was called 'Crisis Week: The Sky Is Falling'. We all know about the Deputy Leader of the Opposition and his Chicken Licken. Whatever he was, he was chicken anyway.

Mr SMITH: A point of order, Mr Speaker! We are debating a motion for the establishment of the Public Accounts Committee and, although the debate has been broad and wide-ranging, and I started it, the debate has been connected with issues surrounding the establishment of the Public Accounts Committee and the issues that such a committee would determine. The comments from the former Deputy Chief Minister bear no relation to the motion before us.

Mr HANRAHAN: Mr Speaker, that is one of the most ridiculous points of order that I have ever heard raised. By his own admission, the Leader of the Opposition has said 2 things: firstly, that he started this debate and, secondly, that it has been wide and far-ranging. In that context, I would ask you to indulge honourable members present so that the debate may continue to be wide and far-ranging.

Mr SPEAKER: There is no point of order, but I would ask the minister to link his remarks closely to the motion.

Mr COULTER: Mr Speaker, in outlining this article I am simply trying to describe the difference in atmosphere and philosophy between the Australian Labor Party in the Northern Territory and the Country Liberal Party that is in government in this Territory and will be in government for a very long time. In fact, that difference is equivalent to the philosophy that the Australian Labor Party has and that is why its members are sitting opposite.

I have referred to the member for Stuart on many occasions as being a person who would not have the courage of his own conviction to cross the road if there was no traffic moving in either direction for a 100 miles. This article, 'The Sky Is Falling', is a typical example of how members of the opposition set up an atmosphere of doom and gloom and forecast problems. I suggest the honourable member read this article. It comes from this month's Playboy. It is a magazine that the honourable member for Fannie Bay has recommended to me from time to time.

Mr Speaker, getting back to the Public Accounts Committee, I am informed by a reliable source that, traditionally, the Public Accounts Committee was set up to keep control of the King. The King was given an amount of money for his armies, in particular, and occasionally he bought a few more horses and did not necessarily put soldiers on them. He developed forces into sporting organisations and so on. He did not actually spend all his money on the purposes for which it had been appropriated. As a consequence, a Public Accounts Committee was formed.

A little later on in parliamentary history, I am told, an office was established to check and audit the government books. That office is known as the office of the Auditor-General. But, as tends to happen in parliamentary procedure sometimes, we continue to introduce even more and newer legislation but we forget to do away with the old legislation, and this is what has happened in this case. The Public Accounts Committee, which was established to examine the books, was left in place after the position of Auditor-General came into being as part of the government's administration.

I have some reservations about the Public Accounts Committee and I have made that known both in the media and to my colleagues from time to time. However, it is a fact of life in the Northern Territory now that, within weeks of coming to office, the Chief Minister established the Public Accounts Committee. It is interesting to note that the only state in Australia that does not have a Public Accounts Committee is Queensland. It does not have this problem down there, and the Premier of Queensland often tells us not to worry about that: 'Don't worry about a thing; I will fix it'. That is the way that he does business in Queensland, and it is a very successful state despite the adverse media reports from time to time ridiculing the direction that the state is heading in.

Mr Leo: What is the point he is making?

Mr COULTER: I am having 2 bob each way at the moment. The point that I am making is that these contingent liabilities have been incorrectly named. They are, in fact, contingent assets and we must develop that mentality in this Assembly so that people recognise the magnificent developments that have occurred at Ayers rock and in Alice Springs. We put \$10m into the Sheraton in Alice Springs last year and, as a hotel development, it would have to be a model for the rest of Australia. I am sure many members would have had the opportunity to stay at that hotel. It is one of the best appointed hotels in Australia today. We invested money in the project for a period over which we could get our money back and have that infrastructure developed for Alice Springs. It should be remembered that we could not attract major international operators to Alice Springs unless we had such a facility. The decision was taken to have that type of facility established. It is a credit to us now and, because of the success of that operation, we will probably get our money back considerably sooner than predicted.

Mr Speaker, I make the point that the contingent liability phenomenon, that was given birth to by the previous Leader of the Opposition and has been carried on by this Opposition Leader, is the mark of the difference between the Labor Party and the CLP in the Territory, and the ALP will remain in opposition forever unless it can change that mentality and become unashamedly pro-development.

Mr EDE (Stuart): Mr Speaker, let me start by saying how gratified I am. The Treasurer generally bases his little homilies on nursery rhymes, like the one about Chicken Licken, that erstwhile colleague of his who has now joined the National Party, I believe. But I am gratified to hear that he has moved from nursery rhymes up to Playboy as the source of his economic advice. I do hope that this will bring us a bit further into the 20th century and that he might get matters a bit clearer now. Maybe, when he moves on a bit further in a few more years, we might start to sort some problems out because I hope he may move beyond his references to Queensland, that great state that he says has no parliamentary Public Accounts Committee and is doing excellently as a result. I would like to point out to him that that state has the highest state taxes and the highest regulatory charges on business of any state in Australia. Regularly, it has the highest rate of inflation and shows the lowest growth rate of any state in Australia. It has shown the highest rate of public service growth of any state in Australia since the Whitlam days. It has more bureaucratic red tape than any other Australian state. I was surprised to hear the Treasurer carry on at such length about it.

Mr Speaker, that is not why I rose to my feet. I wish simply to ask 1 question of the Chief Minister. I would like to ask why it is that he said outside of the Assembly that \$10m was the amount involved in the Sheraton whereas today he has used the figure of \$21m. I would like to know which is correct. In addition, I would like to ask about the interest charges. What are they? Are they included in the \$21m or are they in addition to it? I am working this out very roughly because I cannot project the total range of interest charges which, presumably, would be accumulating on a quarter-to-quarter basis. However, if the interest charges are in addition to the \$21m, we could be looking at around \$30m. I would like to know what interest charges we are expected to pay in addition to the \$21m or \$10m or whatever the figure is, and how those will affect the original projections. When the Chief Minister answers that question or passes it on to the colleague next to him to answer, this debate will have achieved its purpose.

Mr PALMER (Karama): Mr Speaker, I did not intend to speak in this debate and it saddens me that I have to. The opposition's contribution to this debate is noteworthy for 3 things: the naivete of the Leader of the Opposition, the irrelevance of the Deputy Leader of the Opposition and the member for MacDonnell's verbosity.

Mr Smith: You are not noteworthy for anything so at least we are one up on you.

Mr PALMER: It is apparent from the Leader of the Opposition's opening words that he intends now to use the Public Accounts Committee, a committee that can be a good and useful tool of this Assembly and the government, as a political grandstand. If he was good at grandstanding, he would be in government. The Leader of the Opposition made it abundantly clear, as did his deputy, that they would use this committee as nothing more than a political football. As a government member of this committee I can assure them that they will not be allowed to do that. Government members of the committee will ensure that it serves its proper and useful function which is to examine and

report on the public accounts of the Northern Territory. If the opposition wants to keep using the Public Accounts Committee as a political football, I will join with the Treasurer in recommending that we close the committee down.

At least the contribution of the member for Nhulunbuy was in the spirit of cooperation in which the committee operated. The previous chairman did a great job in putting the committee together and we were - and still are - on a big learning curve. The Leader of the Opposition has some cloud-pink vision of the way the Public Accounts Committee operates in Canberra. Let me tell you, Mr Speaker, that the division of the Department of the House of Representatives which looks after the Public Accounts Committee, the Public Accounts Division, is the biggest division of that department. The committee does nothing more than meet and rubber stamp reports provided to it by public servants, servants of the House of Representatives. It does not investigate matters which have been referred to it. It is a rubber stamp. If that is how the Commonwealth wants it, so be it. However, I can assure you, Mr Speaker, that government members on the Northern Territory Public Accounts Committee will work hard and diligently towards ensuring that it works, notwithstanding the opposition's attempts to undermine it.

Mr TUXWORTH (Barkly): Mr Speaker, a public accounts committee can mean all things to all people. On the one hand is the view that it is a committee which investigates the activities of government spending in private and reports back to the parliament. On the other hand is the view that it is a committee which should publicly investigate the expenditure of government funds and, in the course of time, report its findings to the parliament. I think there is probably a good argument for the committee to do both. The Treasurer has said there is a good argument not to have a Public Accounts Committee at all and, for many years, I was one of the people that held that view. Nevertheless, now that we have a Public Accounts Committee, I would like to put forward the view that its role is to review ongoing government expenditure as well as previous government expenditure. It is a perfectly reasonable function of the committee to look at contingent liabilities which will be ongoing expenditures for 10 years or more.

Should such hearings be held in camera and what is the disadvantage of holding them in open session? There are some good reasons for not holding them in open session because, as one of the previous speakers said, people pick selective information, run out of the room and make headlines with it. On the other hand, there is good value in holding some hearings in open session because it enables people, who are not involved in the process but who are concerned about the future of the Territory and some of the industries that they represent, to have access to the same information that we have access to. When I say 'we', I mean members of the Assembly as well as members of the committee. Of course, it is possible for any member of the committee or any member of the public service, the government, the opposition or other members of this Assembly to collect figures selectively and make political mileage out of them. That will never stop, whether you have a public accounts committee or not.

One thing is important in terms of the deliberations of this committee. If information is given to the committee and it is provided by the government as information relating to a project or a set of circumstances surrounding expenditure, then it is reasonable that that be the same information that the government uses from day to day in its promotion of, or in explanations relating to, those projects. As the Leader of the Opposition has enunciated, the Chief Minister has made statements about contingent liabilities and proposed or expected government liabilities relating to some of the projects,

the Darwin Sheraton in particular. The reality is that the total figures in relation to that complex are pretty frightening, not just for the Northern Territory in general but also for the government which has to find the money. We should not be deluding ourselves or anybody else about it.

The Minister for Industries and Development raised the issue of the complexity of the committee's considerations. Some of them are complex indeed.

Mr Hatton: And confidential.

Mr TUXWORTH: And confidential. And so they should be in certain circumstances.

Mr Speaker, some of the considerations of the committee are so complex that leading Treasury officials and accountants in the government spent afternoons explaining the company arrangements surrounding them. When you look at them on a diagram, you wonder how anybody ever put them together. That is not an excuse for arguing that this information may not be available to the community for whatever reason. Indeed, it might be a good excuse to make it available to the community so it has a better understanding of the complexities surrounding projects and government expenditure.

I would conclude by saying that the financial problems that we have, particularly those surrounding liabilities, whether they are contingent or otherwise, will not go away, and the demand for these things to be solved and settled will only increase as financial times become harder. I would say to the government that there is much to be gained from considering opening sessions of the Public Accounts Committee to the public from time to time, without the shroud of secrecy. I think a great deal of good would come from that.

Mr HANRAHAN (Leader of Government Business): Thank you, Mr Speaker, I had overlooked the fact that I moved the motion. In retrospect, judging by the quality of the debate, I tend to agree with the Leader of the Opposition's point of order.

There is 1 point that concerns me considerably in listening to some of the debate. I am quite happy to stand corrected on listening to the comments of the member for Barkly, but if it is being suggested in any way, shape or form that it is correct, excusable or permissible under any circumstances for any member of this select committee to make public or publish or disclose any of the documents, evidence or information pertaining to the hearings of this select committee to anyone without the express approval of that committee or this Assembly, I would remind every honourable member who serves on this committee that to do so is, in fact, to be in contempt of this Assembly. That brings with it some rather serious charges. I might remind honourable members that it is also a matter of privilege that could be dealt with by a substantive motion before this Assembly. I will not accept that any member of that select committee has a right, under any circumstances, to approach the public or any individual, based purely on his own subjective judgment, that it is appropriate to do so in the interests of better informing the public. That was basically the argument presented by the member for Barkly.

Without specifically pointing the finger, might I add that I was very concerned to read some of the articles that were published recently and to digest some of the information contained in those articles because I am aware, as are a select group of people, of the specifics regarding the assets and

liabilities of this government. I will only reiterate the point to those members who are appointed to the select committee that, in fact, it is a contempt of this parliament to step outside the terms of reference. Matters before the committee are a matter of privilege.

I agree with the Treasurer that this government has taken some far-reaching steps to ensure that growth in the tourist industry in the Northern Territory succeeds and stands as one of the most significant growth areas in the tourist industry in Australia. In doing so, we have accepted a certain amount of liability but, without question, we have built up an incredible amount in terms of assets. Anybody who likes to tell me that Yulara and the Sheraton Hotels and every other asset that the Northern Territory has helped develop are not beneficial to the Territory economy and, specifically, to the creation of jobs, simply does not deserve a place in this Assembly.

On this side of the Assembly, we take a lot of credit from time to time and we certainly take a lot of abuse. In the last 4 years, the abuse has been ill-informed, ill-based and a matter of irresponsibility in so far as the people of the Northern Territory are concerned. There is no question that the Northern Territory economy will continue to grow despite very adverse conditions which are placed on the Territory every day of our lives by an obnoxious and paranoid federal government which is helped ably by the ineffectual and outrageous so-called opposition opposite which has done nothing to help the Northern Territory economy grow.

I conclude, Mr Speaker, because I am reminded all of a sudden that I have said all of this before. May I remind honourable members that it is a contempt of this parliament to breach the committee's rules and regulations and terms of reference which are very specific. I caution honourable members against advancing even a theory to the contrary because certainly I am prepared to go to great lengths to ensure that the wrath of this parliament is brought upon those who can be proved to be in breach of those rules and conditions.

Mr LEO: A point of order, Mr Speaker! I hesitated to raise this because I wanted the Leader of Government Business to finish his speech before I rose to my feet. During his speech, the Leader of Government Business accused former members of the Public Accounts Committee, some of them or one of them or all of them, of leaking confidential documents. I would ask him to name those persons because, at the moment, as former members, we are all under the cloud of this spectre that some of us or all of us may have breached some confidentiality. If he is not making that charge, then I would ask him to withdraw.

Mr HANRAHAN: Mr Speaker, I am quite happy for the member for Nhulunbuy to refer to Hansard of a later stage. If he feels that I was pointing the finger at him, please let me assure him that nothing was further from my mind. However, if he would care to read what I had to say, he will note that I raised some serious questions about some articles that were published recently. I made the point that certain people, and certain people only, were privy to that information. At no time, did I directly point the finger or make any such suggestion relating to former members of the Public Accounts Committee. I feel that the member for Nhulunbuy is probably a little oversensitive and I can only assure him that no such accusation was intended.

Mr SPEAKER: There is no point of order.

Motion agreed to.

DEPUTY CHAIRMEN OF COMMITTEES

Mr SPEAKER: Honourable members, pursuant to the provisions of standing order 12, I lay on the Table my warrant nominating members to be Deputy Chairman of Committees. The warrant reads: 'Pursuant to the provisions of standing order 12, I hereby nominate Mr Lanhupuy, Mr Poole, Mr Setter and Mr Reed to act as Deputy Chairman of Committees, given under my hand this 28 April 1987'.

COMMONWEALTH DAY MESSAGE

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Honourable members, I lay on the Table a copy of the Commonwealth Day Message received from Dr the Hon Bal Ram Jakhar, Chairman of the Executive Committee of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association. Copies have been distributed to all members. With the concurrence of honourable members, the message will be incorporated in Hansard.

The Commonwealth family is a unique organisation in terms of international cooperation and international living. Besides the United Nations and non-aligned movement, the Commonwealth is the largest and the most representative forum of nations. With its membership today spanning 6 continents and 7 oceans, embracing more than a third of the world's population, it serves as a bridge between races, cultures, countries and continents. This voluntary organisation of nations not only serves their interests, but also contributes towards the evolution of an international order promoting global peace, harmony and progress.

Over the years, the Commonwealth has built up a network of institutions for mutual cooperation and consultation at all levels and in all spheres. At the parliamentary level, the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association seeks to promote Commonwealth understanding and respect for parliamentary institutions. It provides a forum to the legislators from the Commonwealth countries to discuss and sort out the problems afflicting contemporary society.

Today, this Commonwealth Day gives us the opportunity of pledging ourselves to rid our world of poverty, ignorance and injustice and to do our best for the promotion of world peace and prosperity. We will continue to strengthen our fraternal organisation based on mutual understanding and respect in order to meet the challenges of today's society more effectively.

The Commonwealth is worthy of our deepest commitment and our strongest support.

Dr the Hon Bal Ram Jakhar, MP
Speaker of the Lok Sabha, India
and
Chairman of the Executive Committee
Commonwealth Parliamentary Association.

10 February 1987

Mr BELL (MacDonnell): Mr Deputy Speaker, I move that the Assembly take note of the Commonwealth Day Message.

In any parliament, much of the cut and thrust of debate deals with the relative demands of various sections of the population. I am thinking not only of the Territory population, nor only of the population of Australia. In the context of the Commonwealth Day Message, I think it is worth while thinking of the deliberations of this Assembly in a worldwide context once in a while.

Representing an electorate such as mine, frequently I have to stand up on my back legs, as everybody else in this Assembly does at various times, and refer to various issues of concern, many of them life and death matters. I have no doubt that, during these sittings, such issues will arise and there will be issues of life and death concern to my constituents and, undoubtedly, of concern to constituents of other honourable members, that will be vigorously debated.

I would draw the attention of honourable members to the content of the Commonwealth Day Message and I would like to endorse its objectives. I draw the attention of honourable members particularly to the second paragraph, the statement that the Commonwealth has built up a network of institutions for mutual cooperation and consultation at all levels and in all spheres. It goes on to say that, at the parliamentary level, the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association seeks to promote Commonwealth understanding and respect for parliamentary institutions.

I am an unashamed advocate of the value of the Commonwealth and I think that, over the many years that I have seen Commonwealth Day Messages tabled in this Assembly, they have usually been tabled without comment, and I make no apology for making an exception in this particular case. I look at the historical antecedents of the Commonwealth and I look at the British Empire as it was. There are not too many parliamentarians anywhere in Australia or perhaps anywhere in the western world who would dare to talk about the British Empire but I think that it is perhaps worth while looking at the way the British Empire has transmogrified into the Commonwealth. It is worth while considering the sorts of benefits and forms that come with the type of parliamentary institution that we enjoy here. Although, no doubt, I will be derided in some quarters for saying so, this has been one of the positive legacies of empire, and it is something of which I am proud to be a part.

Those honourable members of this Assembly who were members in 1983 may very well say that I have a vested interest. There is a photograph on the wall at my house of me shaking hands with the Prime Minister of the United Kingdom at No 10 Downing Street. I suppose I should say in passing that, amongst my socialist friends, it is not so much that I am shaking hands with the Prime Minister of the United Kingdom that they take exception as the fact that I am smiling at the same time. However, the vested interest I may be accused of having in this regard is that I was fortunate enough, as I know other honourable members have been - the Leader of the Opposition, the member for Sadadeen and the member for Leanyer - is he still the honourable member for Leanyer?

Mr Palmer: Karama.

Mr BELL: Karama. I do appreciate correction from the honourable member opposite. I will bear that in mind. Those members have enjoyed Commonwealth Parliamentary Association seminars. Some persons of my acquaintances have been so rude as to refer to it as a junket. Mr Speaker, certainly it was enjoyable and, if that is the sole criterion of a junket, so be it. However, in my own defence, I would say, and I am sure that other people who have

participated in those seminars would say also, that I learned a great deal about the operations of parliamentary democracy as well as about the operations of the Commonwealth. I am quite sure that those members will be quite happy to join with me in endorsing this particular Commonwealth Day message.

Mr HATTON (Chief Minister): Mr Speaker, I also endorse this message. I must assure the member for MacDonnell that, under no circumstances, would I regard his trip to the UK as a junket. Were I to admit that it was, his federal Treasury colleague might charge me fringe benefits tax on the trip.

Motion agreed to.

TABLED PAPERS
Fringe Benefits Tax
Kakadu National Park Stage 2

Mr SPEAKER: Honourable members, I lay on the table a letter dated 2 January 1987, and accompanying documents, from Hon Lionel Bowen, then Acting Prime Minister, concerning the resolution passed by the Legislative Assembly on 11 June 1986 relating to the fringe benefits tax.

I table also another letter dated 26 March 1987 from Hon Lionel Bowen concerning the resolution passed by the Legislative Assembly on 11 November 1986 relating to the proposed World Heritage listing of Kakadu National Park stage 2.

ADDRESS-IN-REPLY

Continued from page 11.

Mr HATTON (Chief Minister): Mr Speaker, I rise to add further remarks to the motion I moved this morning.

Mr Speaker, 'strong, stable and independent', those were the words put before the Northern Territory electorate prior to the election of a CLP government. Territorians elected a government which laid before them carefully worked out plans for the future. They elected a government which had the demonstrated ability to operate without the constraint of policies imposed from outside its borders and a government fully committed to the social and economic advancement of the Territory. The detailed set of plans put before the electorate formed part of our strategy to steer the Territory through the current economic climate toward the year 2000.

The economic problems of Australia, and the challenges now confronting the Northern Territory, are very different from those which existed when we achieved self-government in 1978. Across the nation, massive balance of payments deficits, increasing levels of public sector expenditure and huge government deficits, combined with high inflation and unemployment, have seen the collapse of the Australian dollar, frighteningly high interest rates and a reduction in domestic consumption. Obviously, Territorians and Territory businesses have not escaped the chill winds of this recession. At the EPAC meeting, which I attended last week, the federal Treasurer, Mr Keating, spoke of the challenge facing the nation. We must counteract our current account deficits and expenditure in Australia. The pressure on loan markets to finance those external and internal deficits is threatening the Australian dollar and forcing up interest rates, all of which is fuelling inflation and unemployment. The need to reduce interest rates is unarguable. To do this,

Australia needs to develop export or import-replacing industries. In particular, there is a need to boost Australia's trade in services - that is, tourism, transport, education and professional consultancies. The Northern Territory government fully supports those objectives.

Governments must adjust to operating with a reduced level of funding, given the clear and unequivocal signs of how incentive is being destroyed by the ever-increasing tax base. Already, over the last 2 financial years, the Territory government has been asked to make do with less. The Commonwealth has seen fit to reduce its financial commitment to the Territory, despite our special needs, despite previous agreements between the Commonwealth and Territory governments and despite the fact that we have never deficit budgeted; that is, we have not been fuelling the interest rate spiral.

Territorians work hard for Australia; in per capita terms our export-earning figure is 4 times greater than the Australian average. Many withstand isolation, separation from family or other disadvantages to live and work in the Territory. Those people comprise that less than 1% of all Australians who are prepared to undertake a task that 99% of our fellow Australians choose not to do - that is, to settle, develop and establish Australia's far north. Territorians are, therefore, doing their bit for Australia, and the Australian government should reciprocate less grudgingly. I will attend the Premiers Conference ready to contest any unreasonable or discriminatory treatment of the Territory.

There can be no doubt, however, that the Territory government and, indeed, governments around Australia must be prepared to operate with more efficiency and less resources at their disposal. The plans which we have developed establish the groundwork for more effective and efficient government, and for the regeneration of investment and growth for the private sector rather than through government spending. My government realises that we must depend on private enterprise to power the economy. It is investment, industrial expansion and resource development which create jobs and security, and which create prosperity.

The new administrative arrangements announced on 19 March have put in place the mechanisms needed to face these tough economic times. They answer the need for spending restraint by government yet are geared towards promoting the economic objectives confronting the Northern Territory. These new arrangements will mean a more cost-efficient and effective delivery of government services. They will not only reduce the cost and size of government, but will also allow a refocusing of direction. In the next few years, the key to success will be diversification in services, in industry and in opportunity. Four principles underline my government's philosophy and will guide this government in its period of office: commitment to small government; a private enterprise approach to growth; a commitment to decentralised decision-making; and a government working in partnership with the community. These principles will operate across the entire spectrum of government administration.

Where it can be demonstrated that private enterprise or non-government organisations can provide equal or better services at less or equal cost, then that is our preferred option. Particularly in the area of community health and services, the government will look increasingly to community and voluntary groups to undertake welfare functions where possible and, where necessary, with government assistance. Such bodies are often able to deliver services which are not only more responsive to the needs of the community but which are far more cost-efficient. It is our aim to recreate a sense of community

involvement in community care. We are determined to inject choice into health, educational and community services, diversifying the options available to Territorians.

This government recognises that it is private enterprise which generates the basic wealth in our community. We are adopting measures to strengthen the private enterprise base and to regenerate economic momentum. The first of these is to streamline the dealings of business with government. His Honour has mentioned the need for clear legislation and regulation which protect the public interest while avoiding unnecessary intrusion into the individual's affairs. This government is committed to minimum commercial regulation of Territory enterprise. I have directed all government departments to review all regulatory procedures and to remove unjustified red tape. Where regulation is required for reasons of safety, consumer protection or public interest, emphasis will be on self-regulation. Government support for industry will focus on those areas which can contribute to Territory growth without the need for ongoing assistance or subsidy from taxpayers. Every effort will be made to ensure that government spending strengthens the local economy and stimulates new investment and employment.

His Honour emphasised the need for a partnership between the Territory's government and its people. This partnership has been and will be a feature of this government's administration. In the industry area, the peak council is the Northern Territory Development Council of which I am the Chairman. The council includes people of wide experience in industry, commerce, mining, agriculture, the unions and the land councils. Advisory councils for individual areas of industry, business and commerce will continue to provide government with guidance and expertise. Similar advisory groups have been or will be formed in the non-industry activities of government.

The Territory is now moving into a second stage of development. This new cycle involves the diversification of our industrial base and the expansion of development east and west of the Stuart Highway. The next vital step for the Territory is to develop secondary industries which will enable downstream processing of our primary products. In this way, we will produce value-added exports and generate more jobs for Territorians.

New opportunities in agriculture, energy, fishing and other industries have been targeted by this government. A major project, which could be of great importance to the Territory's agricultural diversification, is the proposed production and milling of kenaf. Preliminary feasibility studies have already been completed and we will now progress with more detailed research and development towards the attainment of a viable agricultural and manufacturing project. Prospects also exist for the canning of fruit and vegetables and for the further processing of meat. The Norgaard Report has already identified the opportunities for shore-based processing of the Territory's seafood. The grouping together under the new ministry of Industries and Development of all primary industries with secondary and tertiary industry, business promotion and the Trade Development Zone will give a focused and coordinated approach to industrial diversification.

Similarly, the grouping of mining, oil, gas and electricity will enable us to maintain a comprehensive attack on our energy costs and to promote the continued expansion of our vital mining industries. By drawing together all water functions into a single unit, for the first time we can adopt a coordinated approach to this vital resource. Meanwhile, the gas pipeline is transforming the Territory into Australia's first gas-powered economy. Impending construction of Darwin's new \$15m gas plant, which will produce

liquid petroleum gas and liquified natural gas, is a key example of my government's intention to develop secondary industries which use and enhance our natural resources. Negotiations have started for the extraction of helium at this plant and this has the potential to supply the entire Australian market and to create an export base. The expanded utilisation of gas is crucial to the stabilisation of power costs. Keeping the lid on power costs is vital to Territory industry. Our target is for 90% of the Territory's power requirements to be met by gas in the next 4 years. Further exploration and exploitation of our mineral and energy resources are crucial to the Territory's economic future.

This year, mining production is expected to exceed \$1000m for the first time. Gold production alone is expected to be worth \$180m, almost twice last year's value.

I turn now to tourism. Our investment in tourism is paying handsome dividends. Tourism numbers will top 700 000 this year and those tourists will spend at least \$350m while they are here. Already tourism employs 5000 people in the Northern Territory. By 1991, the Territory will be attracting more than 1.1 million visitors per year. To cater for this boom, more than 60 private projects worth \$300m are in the pipeline. The recent drawing together of tourism, conservation, and lands and housing under 1 minister is facilitating the streamlined development of our tourism strategy.

While motels are being built in Kakadu, Darwin and Katherine, new destinations are also being planned. A \$12m wilderness lodge will be constructed at Kings Canyon, and Cobourg Peninsula will be opened up to tourism with the establishment of a wilderness lodge, safari camp sites, boat moorings, shopping and convention facilities, helipads and an airstrip. This is being done through the Gurig Park Board. In other moves that will push development east and west of the Stuart Highway, the government will begin work on a loop road to Litchfield Park and an access road to Gregory Park. Our marketing of tourism is being stepped up to capitalise on the Territory's international popularity and to target the domestic marketing opportunities offered by the sealing of the south road.

Transport infrastructure is of vital importance in the Territory. Responsibility for roads, shipping services, air transport and the railway has been brought together under 1 minister. This will enable a comprehensive development of transport policy and systems for the Territory.

I assure the Assembly that this government will continue to fight at the national level to overcome those obstacles to tourism which we have been saddled with, in particular the inadequacy of our airports. It is crucial that we increase the number of international flights into the Territory. The new Darwin air terminal must be built. Alice Springs airport must gain port-of-entry status for international visitors and be upgraded accordingly. We will press the federal government to give the go-ahead for the private enterprise development of these airports since the Commonwealth has clearly abrogated its responsibilities in this area. We will also press the federal government to liberalise Australia's aviation policy to facilitate more frequent services directly into the Territory from overseas.

The Darwin to Alice Springs railway is one venture on which the hopes of Territorians have long rested. During the last Assembly, I reported twice on developments towards a private enterprise line. Recent talks held in Japan indicate a high level of interest by Japanese industry leaders in this development. Growing interest and support is also coming from Australian

industry leaders. As a result, a Japan-Australia study group has been set up to foster the development of the railway and associated projects. The government will not rest until we see the Maluka arrive in Darwin from Alice Springs.

His Honour drew attention to the continuing need for the provision of government services in the area of health, education, housing and community development. During the course of these sittings, my colleagues will be announcing details of our plans for further projects in these areas. In this context, I will deal briefly with my ministerial responsibility for police.

His Honour spoke of this government's intention to continue the development of a community police force. The government's view is that, where people's behaviour impinges on the rights of others, they should suffer the full consequences of the law. Recent criminal proceedings have highlighted the need for some revision of police powers, particularly as they affect the ability of police to investigate a crime before bringing a suspect before a magistrate. This government will ensure that the police force has both the numbers and adequate and reasonable powers, in line with many of the recommendations of the Lucas Report. We are determined to enable police to investigate effectively and to prevent crime. The new moves will give police clear powers to set up roadblocks and to evacuate buildings and clear streets during emergencies. The move will also give police clear powers to conduct post-arrest investigations.

The link with the national fingerprint computer system has been introduced and moves are under way to employ an extra 53 police officers to strengthen the force on the ground. The school-based community policing program will be expanded to all secondary schools by 1988. Our emphasis will be on local recruitment for the NT Police Force and the development of higher entrance standards. As part of this drive, a further 36 Junior Police Rangers will be recruited in June this year.

His Honour has stated that the term of this government will be one in which the Territory will need to rely even more on both its own resources and on the resourcefulness of its people. It is equally true that Territorians must be given the freedom to develop their resources and to exercise their initiative. It is a sad fact that, in too many areas many of our plans are thwarted by the negative influence of the federal government. The railway, airports, mining ventures, tourism development, land rights and uranium all rely on the policies of the Commonwealth. Whilst we have the potential for growth, these issues have the capacity to stifle our development. We must campaign vigorously at the national level to remove the discriminatory treatment accorded to the Northern Territory.

However, if we are to gain real control of our own lives, we must achieve constitutional equality. I will continue to lobby and promote this cause at the national level on both sides of the political spectrum. I urge members of the opposition to assist us in this vital task, particularly on its side of politics, because in this task, at least, the opposition can make a significant contribution to the future well-being of the Northern Territory. Statehood is the linchpin needed at this stage in our history for the Territory to realise its full potential. Without statehood the gains we have made so far may be lost and our plans for the future may come to nought. Gaining constitutional equality with other Australians is not only a desirable end in itself but also a means by which our social and economic progress will be greatly stimulated and - even more significantly - protected.

All members of this Assembly have a vital role. So far the bipartisanship displayed on the constitutional issue has been excellent. I am sure that the same spirit will continue in future. The Select Committee on Constitutional Development, today reconstituted, will have a pivotal function. Building upon the foundations established in the last Assembly, the committee will proceed with the exacting responsibility of preparing a new state constitution. To enable it to meet its obligations, my government will provide it with all the necessary facilities and, as chairman of that committee, I undertake that it will deal with its task expeditiously and with proper dedication.

Mr Speaker, I have outlined the strategy which this government will pursue during its term in office. Our direction and focus are already established. We have not been sitting on our hands since the election but have moved resolutely and expeditiously to implement necessary adjustments to government to achieve our objectives. Already, the benefits of this new direction and focus are becoming evident with the resurgence of activity in the Territory. With less resources than ever before and with more complex problems confronting us, this government is working to achieve real economic growth. The government is committed to carry out the plans we have placed before Territorians. These plans will bring about diversification in services, in industry and in opportunity. Our strategy will regenerate momentum, build the tax base by increasing our population, and promote an improved quality of life through greater choice in health, educational and community services.

Mr SMITH (Opposition Leader): Mr Speaker, I second the motion and reserve my right to speak at a later hour.

Debate adjourned.

ADJOURNMENT

Mr HARRIS (Labour and Administrative Services): Mr Speaker, I move that the Assembly do now adjourn.

Mr Speaker, I would like to make a few comments in relation to Anzac Day, April 25, which is a very important date in our Australian calendar. It is a day when we remember those who defended our country in 2 world wars and those who were sent to fight in Vietnam. It is a day that reminds us not to be too complacent about the peace that this country enjoys. Throughout Australia, in the cities, towns, schools and many households, 25 April is a day of remembrance. It was fitting that the Vietnam War Veterans led the Sydney march this year as the focus of Australian attention is on that troubled zone of the South Pacific in which Vietnam, playing host to the Soviet Union, acts such a disturbing and threatening part.

The Darwin ceremony was moving and many people attended it. There were no protests to mar the significance of the occasion and it was very pleasing to see the large number of schoolchildren present at the cenotaph. The only disappointing aspect of the Darwin ceremony was to note that, once again, as happened last year, not 1 member of the Northern Territory parliamentary opposition was present. In fact, one Curly Nixon laid the wreath on behalf of the Northern Territory parliamentary opposition. I understand that members cannot be at everywhere at the one time, but I find it very difficult indeed to find that, out of 6 members, not 1 can be present in a major centre on a major occasion such as Anzac Day, an occasion which has such significance throughout Australia.

I know that the Leader of the Opposition was interstate and I know that the member for MacDonnell was at Yulara. I am not sure about the member for Nhulunbuy, but I presume he was taking part in activities in Nhulunbuy. I do not know about the member for Stuart - and I would like to know - or the members for Arnhem and Arafura. Whether they were at functions at Oenpelli or Gapuwiyak or wherever, I still make the point that it is very important to set priorities about where the opposition should be in attendance. I was most disappointed. I say once again that the same thing happened last year: no one from the opposition was in attendance in Darwin. I am not sure about Alice Springs and I would be interested to know what happened there.

Of late, we have heard the Leader of the Opposition shouting about the need for defence and talking about the significance of the location of the 2nd Cavalry Regiment in the Territory. They were fine words, but words that meant nothing, Mr Speaker. He cannot back them up with any serious statements of his own. He simply mimics Canberra. All he can say on the subject of defence is that business people should fraternise with our forces. However, when there is an opportunity to show his genuine concern for peace and defence, an opportunity to demonstrate his appreciation of the sacrifices made by current and past generations, he does not even bother to send one of his own politicians to represent him at major ceremonies. He scorns and ignores the most important event on the national calendar in terms of peace and defence.

I was most appalled by the lack of an opposition presence on that particular occasion in Darwin. I appreciate that you cannot be everywhere at the one time but I really do believe that you should look at your priorities, and I question the sincerity of the Leader of the Opposition in respect of a defence presence in the Top End.

Mr SMITH (Opposition Leader): Mr Speaker, I want to respond to that briefly. I must say that I am most disappointed in the comments of the Minister for Labour and Administrative Services. Perhaps if he ever operates in his political career in a party with small numbers such as we currently have, he will have more sympathy for our problems.

To set the record straight, I accepted a commitment some time ago to be in Mt Isa to attend an ALP function. I had arranged for the Deputy Leader of the Opposition to represent me at the Anzac Day ceremony in Darwin. Unfortunately, he missed a connecting plane from Melbourne and was stranded there and that resulted in him travelling to Darwin on the Saturday. Other members of the opposition were out of town. I know the member for MacDonnell organised and ran the Anzac Day ceremony at Yulara. The member for Nhulunbuy participated in the ceremony at Nhulunbuy. We just ran out of people, Mr Speaker; it was as simple as that.

At very late notice, we asked Mr Curly Nixon to represent the Labor Party at the ceremony. Although he is a somewhat controversial figure in many quarters and has certainly had a very colourful history in Darwin, Mr Nixon is a distinguished war veteran. He served with distinction in the Korean campaign and, if you talk to him, he has quite a number of stories from that campaign. I would like to take the opportunity to place on record my thanks to Curly Nixon for representing the Labor Party at that Anzac Day function at very short notice.

I want to assure people who might be concerned about the comments made by the Minister for Labour and Administrative Services that, on this side of the Assembly, we certainly take Anzac Day seriously, as we do the commemoration of

the bombing of Darwin. We always try to ensure that a politician is present, but it is sometimes simply not possible because of other arrangements and commitments. I regret that the minister has attempted to score some political capital out of this. If he had come to speak to me about it, I could have told him what had happened.

Mr Speaker, while I am on my feet, I would like to make a brief reference to the Trade Development Zone. Except for one small aspect, which we might pursue later in the sittings, it was not our intention to talk about the Trade Development Zone in these sittings because it is very difficult to talk about something where nothing is happening. However, I must say that the government's public relations exercise yesterday, when it attempted to persuade the media of the Northern Territory that something was happening at the Trade Development Zone, has obviously gone very wrong. It is not often that I would read an excerpt from the NT News into Hansard, but I thought today's page 2 story by the political correspondent was worth quoting for posterity. I will read out the relevant sections:

The Northern Territory Trade Development Zone Authority opened its doors to the media yesterday but refused to open its financial books for even the smallest peep. The authority chairman, Mr Ray McHenry, said he could not reveal how much government money had been spent attracting foreign and Australian companies to the zone. He said he could not divulge the size of the cheques being offered to aspiring zone member firms in the form of direct grants once they arrive in the Territory. Mr McHenry said it would be improper to indicate how much had been spent on the zone above the \$10.5m for buildings and ancillary services. He also declined to identify some of the 7 companies expected to be operating in the zone before the end of the year. All he would agree to was that 2 Australian companies had been signed, Railex Fidelli and Brisbane-based Hungerford Refrigeration ... Mr McHenry said he could not say how much bond money was being asked from the individual firms to ensure they honoured their official leases. He did not say how the government intended housing the 7 new zone members in the existing three 1000 m² general purpose factories and bond store.

We still have the same problems with the Trade Development Zone as we had in November last year. Going by the figures revealed in the budget papers, at least \$14m has been spent on the Trade Development Zone and associated capital works. Arrangements have been entered into with various firms providing them with a considerable range of incentives to go to the zone. Yet the government and now the Chairman of the Trade Development Zone Authority refuse to provide any financial information at all to the people of the Northern Territory. In that situation, how can one expect the media, the public of the Northern Territory, or the opposition to provide support for the Trade Development Zone? It appears to the public that the Trade Development Zone is a bottomless pit which money goes into but from which nothing comes out.

Mr Coulter: Is this just an excuse for you to read the paper in the Assembly?

Mr SMITH: I wanted to see if you had mentioned whether the power will be on tomorrow or not, but of course you don't know that because you cannot guarantee whether the power will be on from one minute to the next. That is another little issue which we might spend some time in discussing during these sittings.

I conclude by saying that, if the government wants the people of the Northern Territory to have some confidence in the operations of the Trade Development Zone, and particularly if it wants to quell the very strong unrest among industries which are not at this moment eligible for the government largesse that is available to those few selected companies which want to go into the Trade Development Zone, it needs to reassure the people of the Northern Territory and give them a little more detail of a cost-benefit analysis in terms of what is going in and what we can expect to get out of it. That involves more information than the provision of global sums of \$10m or \$14m. It requires that the government provide us with information on the types of incentives that are being offered to people to go into the zone, and the cost of those incentives.

Mr Hatton: Read the reports.

Mr SMITH: 'Read the reports', he says. I have read the original reports and I did not find any reference to the knitwear factory and the incentives that it is being offered to come to the Northern Territory. That is the sort of information that I think the people of the Northern Territory deserve. One of these days, we may well get that information. It is becoming a matter of great concern because we all know that we have a very tight budget situation. To many people, it appears that money is being spent on the Trade Development Zone that could well be spent elsewhere with greater benefit to the Territory.

Mr HATTON (Chief Minister): Mr Speaker, I have a couple of comments that I wish to make tonight. I had hoped that, with a new parliament, we might have seen some positive attitude towards the Northern Territory from members opposite, particularly from the Leader of the Opposition. Judging by his performance today, I guess we will see more of the same tired, whingeing, whining, complaining, knocking behaviour that we have come to expect from the member for Millner. All I can say is that he served his apprenticeship very well under his predecessor who adopted a similar attitude towards every positive initiative taken in the Northern Territory since self-government.

I have no doubt that, within 2 years, the Leader of the Opposition will be eating humble pie over the remarks he has made about the Trade Development Zone. That zone is performing better than was projected in the original reports that were tabled in this Assembly. If the Leader of the Opposition would take the time to read those reports, he would note the time anticipated to get enterprises into that zone. There is a cost up front, but it is an investment in the future of the Northern Territory - something the Leader of the Opposition would not even understand. He is the knock-knock joke of this Assembly.

If we have to put up with another 4 years of this, we may simply have to ignore what he does and get on with the business of the Assembly. We have work to do for the Northern Territory and that sort of nonsense, that sort of attack on the confidence of the business community of the Northern Territory, will not help. The range of incentives that are being offered are in the reports that have been tabled. They have been revealed in debates in this Assembly. Every time we offer something to members opposite, they simply use that as an excuse to change their demands in order to keep their nonsensical arguments going. In the end, results will prove the value of the Trade Development Zone. The job creation, the export earnings for Australia and the developing population and wealth base for the Northern Territory will be the consequence of this government's investment in that Trade Development Zone. I do not apologise now and I do not anticipate ever having to apologise for our investment in that trade zone.

Mr Speaker, what I originally intended to speak on was in relation to some comments in the media today concerning the extraordinary circumstances developing in Australia relating to one Mr Mansell who, I understand, is an Aboriginal Legal Aid lawyer from Tasmania, a man who lives off the public purse, who has recently made a trip overseas and is advocating the works of Col Gadaffi and support from his Libyan regime to Australia. In my view, any person who calls himself an Australian and who supports such an action to import terrorism into this nation ought to be drummed out of the country. It is totally unacceptable that anybody in this nation should promote the policies of that sort of man under any sort of a guise. You cannot truck with the devil. And trucking with Col Gadaffi is about as close as you can get to it in this world.

One would regard Mr Mansell as part of a lunatic fringe, a bit of a practical joke. However, this morning, the Director of the Central Land Council, Mr Pat Dodson, came out in support of Mr Mansell's stance. He also is putting his hand in the public purse. He holds a position of importance in the Aboriginal movement in Australia as Director of the Central Land Council and as coordinator of the Federation of Land Councils. That is a very different matter. I believe that Mr Dodson should tender his resignation immediately from both of those positions and any other representative positions in the Aboriginal community. He has forfeited his right to speak with responsibility on any matters associated with the Aboriginal people and, in fact, on any other matter. He should be a pariah in this country if he supports any action to import the sort of terrorism that is plaguing this world. The Gadaffis of this world deserve the worst condemnation that can be brought on them by the people of the world.

Mr Bell: No possible mitigating circumstances, Steve?

Mr HATTON: No, Mr Speaker, there are no possible mitigating circumstances for trucking with the devil, for trucking with Gadaffi, for bringing terrorism into Australia and subjecting our citizens to the problems of Europe and America and the Middle East. No, Mr Speaker! There is no middle ground, no mitigating circumstance whatsoever. There is no doubt that there are concerns among the Aboriginal people and there are things that they are trying to address. But, terrorism and seeking money from the promoters of terrorism is not the answer, and Mr Dodson deserves the worst condemnation this Assembly can bring.

Mr Setter: Does he express the view of the Central Land Council?

Mr Bell: You had better ask them.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! Honourable members will cease cross-Chamber interjection.

Mr HATTON: Mr Speaker, in this respect, I must commend the electorate secretary to the member for Arafura for his public comments in condemnation of Mr Dodson's outbursts and his preparedness to speak openly and forthrightly about that. I trust honourable members opposite will speak as forthrightly against the disgraceful outbursts by Mr Dodson.

In that respect, however, an employee of the Central Land Council who purports to be a candidate for the House of Representatives, I believe has committed political suicide by his refusal to comment on those statements by Mr Dodson or on the position adopted by Mr Mansell. I am referring, of course, to Warren Snowden. As far as I am concerned, if he is not prepared to

stand up and speak out against anyone who has truck with a person who is promoting terrorism in this world and who is not prepared to speak out against any suggestion of importing terrorist activities into Australia and violence into interracial relations in Australia, he does not deserve even to put his name up for nomination for election.

Mrs PADGHAM-PURICH (Koolpinyah): Mr Speaker, what I have to say today will not be all sweetness and light. I stand here as an independent person and I believe I stand as Banquo's ghost to the CLP government. If any of them know Shakespeare's Macbeth, they will know that an attempt was made to murder somebody and it succeeded. I believe my future in the CLP was murdered but, like Banquo's ghost, I have come back to haunt them. God willing, I will be here for the next 4 years as a reminder of certain bad decisions made by certain people.

Mr Speaker, I am standing here today, not only on my own merits, not only as a result of the work I have done, but also as an indication of the attitudes of many ordinary, small people in my electorate and, I would say, especially the middle-aged people in my electorate, in particular the middle-aged women in my electorate. I believe the CLP mouths off a great deal about equality and affirmative action but, when it comes down to the nitty gritty of giving equal opportunity to women, what it has to say is so much hot air. Women are not regarded as equal in the CLP, specifically not middle-aged women.

Mr Speaker, I would like to say - and the figures will bear me out - that the people in Koolpinyah electorate had one of the highest turnouts in the election and the lowest informal vote in the Northern Territory. In His Honour's speech this morning - and this was referred to by the Chief Minister previously - mention was made of a strong partnership of interest between the community and the government. Apparently, this is what the CLP government is going to work for in the future. I do not know how we are going to change its ways but the strong partnership of interest between the community and the government certainly was not evidenced in the Koolpinyah electorate before the last election. I do not know whether the CLP government has learned a lesson from that or not.

Mr Speaker, I believe that I stand on this side of the Assembly now because I was prepared to speak out at certain times and did not knuckle down and shut up because some bloke who happened to be the minister at the time told me to. My allegiance to the Country Liberal Party, when I was a member, was, I believe, a reasoned allegiance. It was not blind allegiance despite remarks made by the Minister for Health and Community Services, he of breaking arms and legs fame. He tried to talk me down at a certain meeting. If he wants me to say where the meeting was, I will be quite happy to say it afterwards.

I still do not know why the CLP no longer needed me in its membership. I have not been told, but I have a pretty fair idea. I believe the coffers of the CLP were short of money although it did not even want my \$40 membership. It took my husband's \$40 membership fee but it did not want his membership. I do not know if other honourable members are aware that this shortage of money was quite apparent before the last election in terms of all the letters sent by the secretariat to, among others, all the school councils and committees. If that was not a blatant disregard for public feelings, I do not know what was. It could have been considered a malapropism in the extreme.

Mr Speaker, when motions for the membership of committees were moved by the Leader of Government Business this morning, I noted the deletion of the names of the 3 of us who are sitting on the crossbenches now. I am not particularly concerned about that. I am used to being ignored by the CLP but I will say that I was not ignored by the 2700-odd people in my electorate. That is what matters, not the CLP members opposite. However, I must say that I still have 1 or 2 friends among their membership. There are many people in the CLP whom I do not speak to now because I do not want to compromise their position, but I still ring them on the telephone and have confidential conversations. I do have a couple of friends.

I do not really know how the CLP backbenchers will cope with their added responsibilities on these committees. When I was a member of the CLP, a bit of a half Nelson was applied when the names for committees were discussed. It was a case of you, you and you - as you well know, Mr Speaker. With the added duties they will have, either their electorate duties are not very great at this time or they will ignore them, or they intend to work like little beavers. By ignoring the 2 independents and the representative of the National Party in appointing members to the committees of this Assembly, the government is ignoring some talent in certain areas. I am not a boastful person, but there are some things that I know more about than quite a few people on the other side, and so do my 2 colleagues on the crossbenches.

Mr Speaker, I believe that the fact that we on the crossbenches have been ignored in relation to these committees has pointed up, not the fact that we are worthy of being ignored, but the fact that somebody may be a bit concerned about what we will say and about our outspokenness. I believe that such outspokenness is what is needed these days and it has not occurred in the past. It does not hurt me at all; in fact, I believe it enhances my position. I am not speaking for the other 2 members on the crossbenches. I believe that I must have been important enough to be ignored. However, what the honourable members opposite forget in their opposition to we 3 on the crossbenches is the very reason for their being on the government benches: to fight the socialist philosophies of the Australian Labor Party.

Members opposite have forgotten their main aim. During the life of this Assembly, Mr Speaker, I am prepared for vitriol to be directed at we on the crossbenches rather than at the ALP, even as it was directed at me before the last election. It was directed at me in my electorate by CLP members and the government, through those members, rather than by the ALP. However, what those people failed to recognise in their small-mindedness was that this enhanced my position. The direction of this virulent nastiness at me enhanced my position in my electorate rather than detracting from it. If that is what suits the government members best, all I can say to them is: 'Go to it fellas, because you are not going to wear me down with it; it would take a lot better people than you to wear me down'.

As I said before, God be willing, I am here for the next 4 years whether the government likes it or not. Mr Speaker, I have a few friends in the CLP and for those I will speak. I will have quite a bit more to say on that at a future date. I am reminded of the former member for Arafura, Mr Collins, when he was first elected. He gave a series of adjournment debates on the uranium question, and we listened with bated breath from adjournment debate to adjournment debate to hear the next exciting episode of his antagonism for uranium mines. It may be that the CLP government will be in for a similarly interesting time. It will not concern uranium mining, but it may concern the reasons why I am where I am today and not on the other side of the Assembly.

Mr Speaker, I would like to add my remarks to those of the honourable Minister for Labour and Administrative Services. One could make something up about that title; not an acronym but something quite amusing.

Mr Coulter: Yes, I take it you will allow me to put your sign up when you are gone.

Mrs PADGHAM-PURICH: No, we have not got to that yet. I will get to that at a later date and also other people's wives and other people's husbands; don't you worry about that. I have a few stories to tell, Mr Speaker, though some members over there might not like them.

The minister spoke about attendance at Anzac Day services. The honourable minister and I used always to share a convivial can or 2 after the Anzac Day marches when we went along to the RSL Building afterwards. I know his very nationalistic and patriotic views on Anzac Day and similar services, and I agree with him wholeheartedly. I could suggest to the honourable minister that, perhaps next year, he broaden his interest in such things and come out to Humpty Doo because there Anzac Day is celebrated in a very interesting and community-minded way.

The honourable minister mentioned the interest of children present at the Anzac Day parade and the service, but I would say that the participation of children in the service was greater in the rural area than I have ever seen. The service and the commemoration were the same as elsewhere but, whereas in Darwin the adults repair to the RSL Club for a few drinks afterwards and perhaps an odd game connected with little round coins from which children are precluded, in the rural area the children were included in the communality. The schoolchildren came along and represented their schools officially and laid wreaths.

Mr Speaker, if we expect and wish our children to remember the brave deeds performed by our soldiers on Anzac Day and at other times whilst fighting to make Australia the beautiful country it is today, the way to encourage this patriotic feeling in children is by having them actually participate in celebrations on occasions such as this. Like the honourable minister, I agree that these occasions are very memorable and they must be attended by everybody who thinks as he and I do about our patriotic duty to our country.

The minister mentioned that there were no demonstrators in Darwin. If he had been in the rural area, he would have heard afterwards that we were prepared for demonstrators. We did not think there would be any because no television cameras were there. Those people are some form of lower life and only come out when the television cameras are there. A couple of ladies and I were prepared for any invasion on this occasion and I believe that we might have obtained some help from the blokes as well if any demonstration had occurred that would have been adverse to the interests of Anzac Day. I think any people taking part in an adverse demonstration would have been well and truly clobbered. If anybody takes the interest to read what I am saying today and is thinking of coming out to the rural area next year to mount a demonstration, if I am there next year at the Anzac Day service and if I am still of the same mileage as I believe I shall be, they will be clobbered next year. Mr Speaker, there is a time and a place for everything and the service one attends on Anzac Day is not the place for ratbags - and they are usually women - to display their wares and slogans and demonstrate so adversely against such a fine commemorative occasion.

Mr LANHUPUY (Arnhem): Mr Speaker, I rise in the adjournment debate to speak about a matter of concern not only to myself but also to members of the Assembly and Territorians generally. Let me first express the view that I believe that Mr Pat Dodson, who is the Director of the Central Land Council, when speaking in relation to the Mansell comments, spoke on behalf of the Federation of Land Councils as its coordinator. The Central Land Council, the Tiwi Land Council and the Northern Land Council have not so far made any comment about the relationship that Michael Mansell has with Col Gadaffi and the Libyans.

Mr Speaker, I rise to speak of the irrelevance of the demands and comments made by Mr Michael Mansell of the Tasmanian Aboriginal Centre. I want to point out too the positive achievements of the Hawke government as they compare with any possible achievements that might be gained with Libyan money or with the hopeless attitude of conservative forces in Australian politics. I believe the Australian Labor Party to be the only political party in the history of the Commonwealth of Australia which has carried out political power-sharing with Aboriginal people and extended the process beyond the abilities of any foreign operation. That was not an accident. Labor's policies and Labor's platforms are the only ones relevant to my people.

Mr Mansell and his friends are irrelevant to the welfare of any Australian, whether Aboriginal or not, and I say that in line with the comments made by the Chief Minister. The achievements of the Hawke government, which Mr Mansell is hoping to destabilise, have been enormous for all Australians. For Aboriginal Australians, they have been very significant, and I do not refer simply to the significant 46% increase in real terms in funding since 1983. Mr Mansell's antics must be giving quiet pleasure to those Australian extremists who are the notorious enemies of Aboriginal people - people like Queensland's Joh Bjelke-Petersen, the opportunists of the fragmented federal coalition, the ruthless people behind the scenes and the faceless operators in the political wings of the mining and the pastoral organisations, and other ratbag extremists. His antics must be giving pleasure to the members opposite who can take time off from spending millions in wasteful court actions to cheer on Mr Mansell in his efforts to discredit Australia's Aboriginal people and the achievements of the Hawke government.

But, just as our homegrown extremist groups cannot really hope to match the full excesses of the Gadaffi regime, neither can they match the achievements of the Labor government in Aboriginal affairs. Conservatives, like the present government or the utterly fragmented federal coalition, tend to dismiss those achievements, as occurs often in this Assembly. They say the handouts are welfare handouts. Those advances are not mere welfare handouts. The facts are different. Every dollar going to Aboriginal programs is accounted for by measurable outcomes of benefit to Aboriginal people. The federal government has also introduced more effective accountable procedures, in accord with the express wishes of Aboriginal and Islander people, to renew initiatives to increase Aboriginal economic independence and to reduce reliance on welfare. For example, under the Community Development Employment Program, Aboriginals are the only Australians who have chosen to work for the dole - and I repeat that for the Chief Minister: Aboriginals are the only people who have opted to work for the dole. Compare the achievements of Labor with those of the conservatives and what might happen if Mr Mansell and Col Gadaffi get their way.

Mr Speaker, I want to go through some of the achievements of the Labor Party in the time that it has been in office. Aboriginal people now hold secure title over 12% of the land compared with 1.3% for Canada's indigenous

people and 4.1% for the indigenous people of the United States. The government has supported the training and development of Aboriginal broadcasters and their involvement in public broadcasting. The government's heritage legislation has proved successful with 22 applications being amicably resolved through negotiations with state and Territory governments. The completion of over 2000 houses, the provision of an estimated 1500 housing loans by the end of this financial year through the ADC, the increased promotion and acceptance of Aboriginal art as an integral part of Australian culture - these are just some of the significant achievements in the field of Aboriginal affairs which this fellow Mr Mansell is trying to destroy by seeking overseas help.

There is no doubt that, in the past 4 years, Australia has seen a continuing commitment to Aboriginal affairs by the Hawke Labor government. That determination is a natural consequence of the well-known commitments of the Labor Party of which I am proud to be a member. There are things that Mr Mansell, in common with the tired conservatives, wants to stop. Mr Mansell finds himself among a very strange assortment of bedfellows: the likes of Col Gadaffi, Hugh Morgan, John Howard and Joh Bjelke-Petersen. What are their real aims? Essentially, they want to destabilise the pro-Aboriginal programs of the Hawke Labor government. Mr Mansell wants to sack Mr Holding who, I believe, has done more for the Aboriginal people than any other federal minister. He wants to double the funding for Aboriginal affairs and destroy and Commonwealth bicentennial arrangements, something I am personally very supportive of. Blokes like Mr Mansell are trying to tell the Australian community that it should cancel this project. He is being as unreasonable as the Northern Territory government which squanders millions of dollars fighting land claims.

Australians do not want foreign interference in their own affairs. There are problems which we will have to solve ourselves. Here in the Territory, there are health problems that are pushing up infant mortality rates. I have not heard much discussion about that from Libya which has concerned itself lately with attempting to conquer and destroy the black people of Chad. We do not want to see yet another form of extremism here. Australians have minds of their own and do not need to go abroad for money to overcome political and economic problems. Having made these comments on the political realities surrounding Mr Mansell's silly approach, let us consign him and his friends to the political dump because I believe they have nothing to offer.

In relation to the comments made by the Director of the Central Land Council, I would like to express my personal concern that he gave Mr Mansell's argument a Territory perspective which I believe ...

Mr Dale: Should he resign?

Mr LANHUPUY: ... he should not have done. I believe that the argument about seeking Libyan funds belonged to Tasmania and the Tasmanian Aboriginals alone. Giving a Territory perspective to the argument has placed us in a very grave situation.

Mr Dale: Should he resign?

Mr LANHUPUY: I do not employ Pat Dodson nor do I employ Mr Mansell. I am not the one who will judge what Mr Pat Dodson said.

Mr Dale: You can give an opinion.

Mr Hatton: You certainly do. You are an elected representative of the people.

Mr LANHUPUY: Mr Speaker, Mr Pat Dodson is employed by the Central Land Council and he gave an express view as the Coordinator of the Federation of Land Councils.

Mr Dale: You express a view as a member of the Assembly.

Mr Hatton: Are you an elected representative or not?

Mr LANHUPUY: Mr Speaker, if the Chief Minister does not listen, I will not repeat myself. I am trying to express a view ...

Mr Dale: You do not have to.

Mr LANHUPUY: ... and a genuine concern for people in the Territory about people like Mansell and his friends.

Mr Dale: Is he a fitting person to be in the Aboriginal movement in the Northern Territory?

Mr LANHUPUY: I do not intend to argue those points with you.

Mr Dale: Of course you don't.

Mr LANHUPUY: If we start getting those people in the Territory ...

Mr Dale: You have got one.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The member for Arnhem will be heard in silence.

Mr LANHUPUY: Thank you, Mr Speaker. Recently, I read an article in the Sydney Morning Herald concerning the problems that we have now in the Northern Territory. I believe that the sorts of lies being put about by Aboriginal people like Mansell will only serve to bring bitterness and unrest to our community in the Northern Territory and I totally support the comments made by the Chief Minister.

Mr COULTER (Treasurer): Mr Speaker, like my colleague the member for Port Darwin, I rise in this evening's adjournment debate to discuss the ceremonies surrounding Anzac Day. A week ago, I had the opportunity of travelling to Ambon with the forward party, the advance unit from the Second 21st Battalion, Gull Force, which was stationed at Ambon during the war. It was very interesting to have the opportunity to be in such distinguished company on the DC3 aircraft flying into Ambon and on the ferry as we travelled across the bay, and to listen to accounts of some of the activities that occurred in Ambon during the war years.

The Second 21st Battalion, Gull Force, was formed in Victoria. It trained there, then moved from Wodonga to Adelaide and thence by train to Alice Springs. The Chief Minister will be pleased to know that travelling on a train in those days was fairly hazardous. The train became bogged and the men had to camp beside the line for 10 days until the water receded and they were able to restore the rail and get the train going again. After reaching Alice Springs, they were trucked to Birdum, where they boarded another train which used to operate in those days, and were taken to Winnellie where a camp was supposed to have been set up for them.

Unfortunately, the pioneers had not arrived to set up the camp. When the members of the battalion arrived, all they found were some tents lying in a paddock. They established the first camp at Winnellie; the Nissen huts were erected some time afterwards. They then prepared to set sail for Ambon where they were to join the Dutch. At this stage, they numbered some 1131 or thereabouts. They were to join a Dutch force of 230 officers and 5000 men.

When they arrived at Ambon, they made camp and located themselves strategically throughout the island. The first flotilla of Japanese vessels to arrive at Ambon was made up of 22 troop carriers with 1000 men on each. The Australians and Dutch were hopelessly outnumbered and the Dutch decided to move camp. They left the Second 21st Battalion along with some loyal Indonesian soldiers to fight off the massive numbers of Japanese troops that were about to land. I understand that there were 4000 soldiers in the first Japanese landing party and the Australians held out for 5 days, hopelessly outnumbered. They were eventually imprisoned and the prisoner-of-war camp was situated on the site which is now the Australian War Cemetery.

As I said, it was a wonderful experience to be amongst these great Australians on their pilgrimage back to Ambon. I understand that they have been going back there since the late 1960s. Listening, along with my 2 sons, to stories about the events of those years made me realise just how good the diggers were in the Second World War. Some of the tales of atrocities committed against Australian troops in Ambon were horrific indeed. When a Japanese troop carrier exploded in the bay, 229 soldiers were massacred in retaliation - the exact number killed in the explosion. The Australians were beheaded. Of the 1131 soldiers in the battalion, 181 were repatriated back to Australia, whilst 690 graves are to be found in the Ambon War Cemetery.

The diggers have established many facilities on the island in appreciation of the help and support that they were given by the Indonesian people. Those projects include health programs which the diggers finance themselves to this day. The war graves themselves are kept in immaculate condition. The gardens are a credit to the Indonesians and the Australian War Cemetery Commission who look after them. I recommend that honourable members visit that war cemetery if they have the opportunity. I am sure they will realise the significance of the Battle of Ambon and the loss of Australian lives. The member for Ludmilla has reminded me of the name of the curator of the cemetery. I cannot recall his second name but his first name is Oscar. His surname is in the papers which I was given by some of the forward party of the Second 21st Battalion. The quality of the gardens surrounding this fitting war memorial are indeed a credit to him.

In every battle, there is a hero. One of the significant players in this particular battle was a soldier by the name of Doolan who established himself against all odds at a post overlooking the town and, with the aid of a machine-gun, was able to hold off the Japanese for a considerable time, inflicting heavy casualties on the enemy until eventually he was shot and beheaded. There is a memorial to this man at the site where he established his machine-gun post and carried out that particular act in an attempt to save the island from the invaders. The site overlooks the town and it was very humbling for me to stand where such a wonderful Australian had fought against all odds to stave off the attack on the island.

The members for Ludmilla and Jingili have spent some time on Ambon and, like them, I noted the results of Russian aid in the past. Many buildings were actually financed and built with Russian aid. When one hears about today's events relating to Mr Mansell and Mr Dodson and Libya, and looks at

just how close Ambon is to Australia and sees how Russian aid was used there, one realises just how vulnerable the north of Australia could be. It makes us realise that we must defend this wonderful country of ours against those that would take it from us.

Part of the university annexe built with Russian funds is a building which has been established between 2 gun emplacements built by the Japanese in a very strategic location overlooking the main entrance to the harbour at Ambon. One wonders why the Russians would have gone to so much trouble to establish themselves in a facility in such a strategically located area.

It really was a privilege for me to accompany these Australians - and I mean 'Australians' in every sense of the word - who not only faced unbelievable odds but survived and are today back on the island helping those people who helped them during those campaigns in February of 1942. Against that background, it pains me deeply to hear of Michael Mansell going to Libya. The old Anzacs must be turning in their graves at the news that such an action would be perpetrated on the rest of the Aboriginal community in Australia, and indeed all Australians, by one who describes himself as an Aboriginal person.

The acts of terrorism which have been attributed to Libya are indeed immense. One wonders just how low people will stoop in terms of seeking assistance to get their own way, a way which fails to recognise the rest of the Australian community. When those actions are condoned by a person holding office in the Northern Territory, the Director of the Central Land Council, that is an indication of the type of people who hold positions in the Aboriginal movement and who have manipulated Aboriginal people for their own purposes.

The Aboriginal people have been manipulated by the Australian Labor Party. They have been politicised and a social welfare regime has been forced upon them. It is known as the Department of Aboriginal Affairs and it has been set up solely to keep the Aboriginal people of Australia under the social welfare umbrella. It is an industry in itself which occupies the time of 380 federal officers in the Northern Territory alone, and it costs the Australian taxpayer billions of dollars a year.

Mr Speaker, if you add to that the millions of dollars provided directly to Aboriginal groups and organisations in the form of mining royalties by the federal Labor government, which the member for Arnhem talks about in such glowing terms, and realise the predicament that some of the people who receive those payments still find themselves in, it is clear how much damage this social welfare regime has done. It has been put in place by federal bureaucrats over a number of years and accelerated by the current federal government to ensure that Aboriginal people never emerge from social dependency. It has been created and developed by the Department of Aboriginal Affairs run by the federal minister, Mr Holding.

It is reinforced by people like Mr Dodson and some of the so-called white advisers who think nothing of running to a country like Libya, which has a track record of terrorism, death, murder and mayhem, to ensure that they get their way. When are we going to wake up to the people who are manipulating the Aboriginal people in Australia today? When will we blow up the social welfare umbrella over the heads of Aboriginal people and allow them to stand on their own feet and achieve the goals and ambitions and desires which I know that they are not only capable of achieving but want to achieve in spite of the stifling impact of the federal Labor government?

Mr BELL (MacDonnell): Mr Deputy Speaker, I have one question that I would like to put to the member for Berrimah.

Mr Coulter: The member for Palmerston.

Mr BELL: The member for Palmerston. I would request, Mr Deputy Speaker, a further copy of the list of members that somebody thoughtfully placed on my desk. I was able to refer to it quite easily.

I have one question to put to the member for Palmerston who rails seriously about social welfare umbrellas and public expenditure on this and that. He continually extols the brave new world of private enterprise as though the public sector has no part to play either in providing opportunities for Aborigines or any other people, be they young, unemployed or whatever. I have one question to put to him and I doubt that he will have guts to answer it. I would like him to tell us when he has not been paid out of the public purse.

To return to the substance of my offering in the adjournment debate ...

Mrs Padgham-Purich interjecting.

Mr BELL: If the member for Koolpinyah would like to do the same, I would appreciate hearing it from her as well.

Mr Deputy Speaker, I also wish to address the question of Mr Mansell's recent excursion to Libya but, before I do so, I wish to speak on Anzac Day. I had intended to speak tonight on this year's Anzac Day celebrations in my electorate and to speak more generally at a later stage during these sittings. However, the partisan comments of the member for Port Darwin along with some of the more reasonable comments that have been made about Anzac Day have encouraged me to make my remarks now.

The member for Port Darwin was chastising the opposition, and that seemed to be the essential part of his speech. He was complaining that the opposition was not represented at the Anzac Day celebrations in Darwin and he seemed particularly dissatisfied with the presence of Mr Curly Nixon there. I trust that subsequent comments from the Leader of the Opposition provided a satisfactory reply and that he will apologise to the Leader of the Opposition in due course. However, I have serious doubts as to whether he is big enough to do so.

Let me turn to the theme of Anzac Day. I believe that Anzac Day is the greatest of Australian celebrations. Since nobody has done so this evening, it is probably worth putting on record why it is so important for us as a nation. It is because Anzac Day celebrates the first time that Australian soldiers fought overseas as Australian soldiers, as opposed to Victorians or New South Welshmen, and were recognised as such around the world. The Gallipoli campaign was a disaster, but so many Australian families were either affected by that conflict or their knowledge of it, or by subsequent conflicts that have involved this country, that the spirit of Anzac Day is something that belongs to the whole nation. There could be no clearer example of that than the celebration we held at Yulara.

Before I come to that, I would like to make a comparison with the Australia Day celebrations. Quite frankly, we have to battle pretty hard to make Australia Day a celebration that really fits into the Australian community. We are working hard at it and a lot of money is spent on it. I

think Australia Day is a desirable celebration but, to be quite frank, to my mind Anzac Day is a far more Australian celebration. I have no difficulty about feeling proud of that occasion and all its associations. In the sensible part of the offering from the member for Palmerston, he referred to the deeds of Australian troops in Ambon. Those sorts of associations are part of our collective understanding of what Anzac Day means.

Given that Anzac Day is as important as many government members have suggested, I find it quite extraordinary that the government takes considerable trouble to ensure that it has a representative at Yulara for Australia Day but makes no effort whatsoever to have a representative there on Anzac Day. Mr Deputy Speaker, I would not have raised this. Far be it from me to tell the government how it should organise itself. However, since the member for Port Darwin sought in such a curmudgeonly fashion to make partisan comment in respect of Anzac Day, I suggest that, instead of simply picking out the mote in the eye of the opposition, he has a little look at the log in the government's eye in respect of the celebrations conducted at Ayers Rock.

Veritably, Mr Deputy Speaker, those celebrations are conducted at Ayers Rock. We had a dawn service. It was very early and very cold on the sandhill to the east of the Rock where dawn services have been held for many years. That particular sandhill, of course, has become quite famous through the Chamberlain case and I dare say it will be well known to honourable members. Less well known to honourable members will be the fact that the local member had to shimmy up the flagpole to get the rope through the pulley to raise the flag for the dawn service. However, I digress.

I should mention to honourable members that various people participated, although the number was not great. Some were visitors to the Rock. Nipper Winmarti and his family came to the service on the hill and, in terms of the deeds of former generations, it is worth placing on record here that the same Nipper Winmarti, who was involved in the Chamberlain inquest, was in northern Australia - I believe in Darwin, but I am not 100% sure of that - when it was bombed in 1942. I could not help feeling that his presence as well as the presence of Vietnam veterans gave the occasion an integrity that it otherwise would have lacked.

I mentioned that there were small numbers at the service, firstly at Sunrise Hill and, secondly, at the community centre at Yulara. I hope that, in future, those numbers will increase. I would like personally to thank Mr Ren Kelly of the Ernest Giles Tavern for his efforts in assisting with the organisation and also the local police for providing an Australian flag. Unfortunately, after we left 1 flag on Sunrise Hill, we had a little trouble finding another for the community centre. The local police came to our assistance and I am particularly thankful for that.

Whilst on the Anzac Day theme, I should mention my concern that, when the Woolworths store in Alice Springs closed as a mark of respect for that occasion, apparently no other retailers followed suit. I would like to pick up the comment made by the manager of Woolworths which I saw in the newspaper recently. If it is the case that other retailers did not close, I believe that Woolworths is deserving of support from this Assembly. I believe its action is to be encouraged and other retailers should take note.

Let me now turn to the comments of Mr Michael Mansell and the debate arising from them. Let me make it quite clear at the outset that I have no hesitation in dissociating myself from the comments made by Mr Mansell. I believe those comments were counterproductive in every sense.

Mr Dale: What about Mr Dodson?

Mr BELL: I will come to Mr Dodson in a minute. If you want to listen to what I have to say, drink your water and shut up.

Mr Deputy Speaker, I do not believe that it is either in the short or long-term interests of my constituents to support those sort of comments. I think that, if his comments were well known throughout my electorate, people would have no hesitation in rejecting them in the same terms as the member for Arnhem has done. Undoubtedly, there would be some people who interpret my comments today as an attempt to back down from a commitment to Aboriginal rights. If there are such people, so be it. I am prepared to live with that. People who have listened to the comments that I have made concerning Aboriginal people in my electorate will know that my commitment in that regard can hardly be questioned. Instead of offering cheap, shallow comments in this regard, I hoped the Chief Minister would pick up my point when I suggested that he look at the question of some mitigating circumstances.

Mr Coulter: What are they?

Mr BELL: I will pick that up because I believe it was the member for Palmerston who interjected about deaths from terrorists. I do not resile from my support for the government members' comments in that regard. I do not resile from supporting any sort of criticism of terrorist attacks but, to suggest that deaths from terrorists and the sort of deaths that occur in the Aboriginal community, can simply be ignored is to ignore some of the realities.

I have dissociated myself from those comments but it needs to be said that there can be no doubt that Aboriginal people have suffered, and some of them continue to suffer, extraordinary disadvantages in almost every aspect of their lives, whether you are talking about health, employment, education, housing and so on. However, to look back on the achievements of the past attacks on Aboriginal disadvantage, it can be said that some programs have worked. There has been progress. I think that needs to be placed on record too. However, I am sympathetic to people who feel that, in some areas, progress has not been quick enough and that there are outstanding areas of disadvantage. I am very disappointed that, in the context of this particular debate, not 1 government member has chosen to mention anything in that regard.

Mr Hatton: Wrong.

Mr BELL: Mr Speaker, let me say those disadvantages that strike right to the heart of what we are as a country in 1987 are problems that have to be resolved nationally, regionally and locally. I have no hesitation in placing on the public record that there is no place for an appeal to foreign regimes in solving those problems, least of all to those who, on the basis of the objective evidence available to us, have associations with terrorist activity. The only hope for the resolution of the problems of disadvantage, however pressing, is in the rule of law and I have no hesitation in endorsing that particular rule of law.

The member for Palmerston wanted me to refer to comments made by the Director of the Central Land Council, who also is an officeholder in the Federation of Land Councils, a national organisation. I suggest that the member for Palmerston take a particular note of the qualifications made by Mr Dodson when he said it certainly would not be on the basis of support for any sort of armed struggle, but for the purposes of improving the lifestyle and maintaining the services that we have.

Firstly, I want to disassociate myself from those comments. I believe there is no place for that sort of international appeal but I believe that it has to be seen in a national context. That national context is what people on the opposite benches seemed remarkably reluctant to consider in relation to all sorts of areas.

Mr MANZIE (Attorney-General): Mr Speaker, I wish to make some comment in the debate this evening regarding Mr Michael Mansell. I would certainly like to take issue with the member for MacDonnell who gave a one-sided perspective to this debate, as did his colleague, the member for Arnhem.

To say that this government considers that there are no problems in respect of Aboriginal people in the Territory is certainly something that cannot be substantiated in terms of our actions. The member for MacDonnell would know - as would the member for Arnhem if he did some research instead of relying on some bigoted speechwriter - that since self-government, this government has spent approximately \$1000m on Aboriginal affairs in areas such as education, health, housing, water and sewerage services, roads - almost every facet of living. There is still much to be done. There are still a tremendous number of problems. It is interesting that the member for MacDonnell is leaving the Assembly.

Despite what the member for Arnhem said, I think that history will show that the Hawke Labor government probably started the steps backwards in respect of helping Aboriginal people. The member for Palmerston pointed out that there has been a shift to a dependency on the welfare concept in the last few years. That is increasing rapidly and it is taking away any concept of incentive, of people working for themselves. It is taking all that away and is creating despair, misery and lack of hope among Aboriginal people. All they need is the ability to manage their own affairs and the funding to do so. This government is first and foremost in this country in terms of training traditional Aboriginal people as teachers, in police work and in the roles of health workers. We will continue to operate that way, contrary to the efforts of the federal government which has over 300 employees sucking up money that could be usefully spent by Aboriginal people in promoting solutions to their own needs and looking after themselves. I think all members on this side of the Assembly will continue to advocate the ability of Aboriginal people to manage their own affairs.

I certainly hope all members would have been terribly concerned about the media reports regarding Michael Mansell, a legal adviser to the Tasmanian Aboriginal Centre, an organisation that is funded by the Australian taxpayer. From what I have heard, I believe that he professes to be a person with some Aboriginal ancestors somewhere in his lineage. I certainly would not deny that that might be the case, but physical appearances do not indicate to me that this man would have suffered discrimination on account of his looks, the colour of his skin or the colour of his eyes. As the Chief Minister pointed out, this man is a lawyer. I would be very interested to know how he became a lawyer. I am sure it was at the taxpayers' expense.

However, this man, who is paid by the taxpayer, who has been educated by the taxpayer, has taken it upon himself to attend a conference in Libya, the home of revolution, the home of terrorism, run by Col Gadaffi who publicly professes support for terrorism of all types in all areas of the world. As we know only too well, he is taking steps into the South Pacific, into the area surrounding our country. We have it first hand from Michael Mansell that he is looking at Australia.

We have had reports from Libya of Mansell supposedly addressing people there and stating facts such as that people in Australia bury Aboriginal children in the sand and kick their heads off. Anybody who makes comments like that is obviously sick in the head. This person came back to this country and said that he would set up an Aboriginal nation with assistance from the Libyan government. He has said: 'The treatment that Aboriginals have had to suffer at the hands of the Australian government has amounted to terrorism'. The Australian government's terrorism towards this man has been in educating him and providing him with a job and salary. He says: 'I for one trust the Libyan government far more than the Australian government'. He trusts a government that is responsible for the bombing, the killing, the maiming of people right throughout the world, innocent people, women and children in airports. We have had examples of a young policewoman being shot in England by Libyan terrorists while carrying out her duty and actually protecting Libyans from other Libyans. A disgusting situation! It is a country which must be looked upon by all civilised people and governments as being the vilest of the vile. We have this Michael Mansell, this employee of the Australian taxpayer, saying that he trusts that government far more than he trusts the Australian government.

This man had the audacity to make demands. He said that, unless certain things are done by the Australian government, he will go to Libya to obtain funds. We all know that there is no such thing as obtaining funds from Libya without using those funds for the purchase of firearms, bombs and weapons, and without the training of people who receive those firearms or weapons. There is no such thing as a free meal. That money would probably come in the form of weapons and training for people to carry out terrorist acts on this country.

I believe that what is occurring here is far more serious than the comments by the media around the country suggest. It is the beginning of action by certain people to overthrow the constitutionally-elected government of this country: the setting up of an Aboriginal nation with support from Gadaffi-sponsored revolutionary groups. I certainly hope that the federal Attorney-General is aware of what is being said. I am sure that he is aware of the provisions of section 24C of the Crimes Act which states that:

Any person who engages in or agrees to, or undertakes to engage in, a seditious enterprise, who counsels, advises or attempts to procure the carrying out of a seditious enterprise, is guilty of an indictable offence.

A seditious enterprise is one which is defined in the act as:

to excite Her Majesty's subjects to attempt to procure the alteration, otherwise than by lawful means, of any matter in the Commonwealth established by the law of the Commonwealth or to promote feelings of ill will and hostility between different classes of Her Majesty's subjects so as to endanger the peace, order or good government of the Commonwealth.

I am sure that greater legal minds than mine will be looking at that in detail, but I believe the matter is of such seriousness that it has to be approached in that way. We must take steps to prevent any such entry into Australia of terrorism, terrorist ideas or concepts of encouraging people like Gadaffi to become involved in funding Aboriginal activists.

We must remember that, contrary to most other countries that have racial problems, Australia is a country that, through its legislation, its constitution, its common law, and its courts, promotes protection of people by law. This is in contrast to places like South Africa, Libya, some South American nations and Russia where there are legal sanctions against people because of their religion, because of the colour of their skin, because of their beliefs. In this country, it is the democratic right of all Australians, regardless of race, religion or colour, to proceed to live a life without interference from other people. Our rights are enshrined in law and this person, funded by the Australian taxpayer, would go overseas to a terrorist nation and bring death and destruction to Australia. He should stand condemned by all people in the western world.

Mr SETTER (Jingili): Mr Speaker, I rise this afternoon to speak about a couple of matters. First, I would like to refer to and support the comments made by the member for Palmerston regarding the Anzac Day ceremony in Ambon. I am very pleased that he has had the opportunity to visit Ambon and to walk through the tranquillity of that very beautiful war cemetery. Last year, I had the privilege to represent the Northern Territory government at the Anzac Day ceremony in Ambon, and a great privilege it was indeed, because it gave me the opportunity to meet the remnants of the Gull Force Association who, as the honourable member pointed out, revisit Ambon annually and have done so for a number of years.

There are 2 other groups that go to Ambon at this time as well. One is the Corvette Association, and that was the group that went into Ambon. Three Corvettes sailed into Ambon to try to rescue the prisoners of war. They were shelled by the Japanese. This was just after the surrender, but they had to depart. They returned a month later but, unfortunately, during that month, quite a number of prisoners of war died, which was a great tragedy.

The other group that attends that particular ceremony is the remnants of the light bomber squadron that was based on Ambon at that time. It was 13 Squadron. I believe it was raised here in Darwin and 1 gentleman, who lives in Parap, was a member of that squadron and was up there last year. That squadron was only on Ambon for 6 or 8 weeks and was bombing the Japanese as they advanced down through what is now the Indonesian Archipelago. During that 6 or 8 weeks, the squadron lost about 80% of its members. The last aircraft flew out of Ambon as the Japanese were attacking the airstrip. It was hit by many bullets as it was taking off but, although it was almost shot to pieces, it flew back here to Darwin.

It is indeed a wonderful experience to stand amongst those huge and beautiful rainforests in the quiet and listen to the speeches and to be moved by the emotion and the beauty of the whole place. To add a little to the history the honourable member related earlier, Gull Force landed on Ambon and were encamped on what was an old Dutch campsite, half way between what is known as the Halong Inn and Ambon City. Subsequently, that particular site became their prisoner-of-war camp and, for many of them, is now their grave site. About 300 of the force of 1000 to 1200 men were sent over to defend the airstrip on the other side of the harbour. The Japanese attacked the airstrip and about 50 of those people were killed whilst defending the strip. The squadron took off, as best it could, but 50 were killed. The remainder surrendered to the Japanese and were all beheaded just off the end of the airstrip. Today, one can see a small cairn in amongst the coconut palms and the village houses. If one did not read the little plaque on that cairn, one would never know what had occurred on that site. Within a few metres of that cairn, there were 2 mass graves where those fellows were beheaded. Their

bodies were thrown into those graves and were not retrieved until after the war and subsequently transferred to the main cemetery site. Of course, there are many unnamed graves in that cemetery.

The remainder of the force defended the city and Gunner Doolan was one of those. Those who survived were eventually interned on what is now the cemetery site. Of the 700-odd who were captured, only 181 survived that horrendous ordeal.

I have also had the privilege of visiting the site where Gunner Doolan made his defence of what is quite a steep hill in amongst the rainforest, again with villages all around. That site, with its lovely cairn, is maintained by the villagers and the Gull Force people return each year to pay their respects, together with the other associations. I have also had the privilege of meeting retired Lt Col Rod Gabriel who is the president of the association. He and I have communicated several times this year and have come to know each other quite well as a result of our meeting in Ambon last year. Lt Col Gabriel was very keen that the Territory government be represented in Ambon again this year. That was almost organised except that Air North, the charter company which normally flies to Ambon, decided it would not provide a charter plane for this particular Anzac Day because of the way the weekend fell. It was a 2-day weekend with Easter a week or so earlier. Air North flew a charter there for the Easter weekend and it was not economical to take a charter up on the Anzac Day weekend. That meant that nobody representing the Northern Territory government could attend. However, I did write to Rod Gabriel and, through the good graces of the Chief Minister, arranged to send a wreath which was laid, on behalf of the Northern Territory government, by a representative of Gull Force.

Now that we have commenced to participate in this pilgrimage, I would hope and recommend that we continue this for many years to come. I have 2 reasons for saying this. First, we owe it to our dead comrades, those who fought and gave their lives to preserve what we have here today, our freedom, and, secondly, the fact that Australians are very highly respected in the South Molucca region, in Ambon, and it is very important that the Northern Territory maintain and retain its association with that area. I believe that, as time goes by, we should put quite some effort into developing our relationships with Indonesia as a whole and that would be one of many ways of doing that.

Mr Deputy Speaker, I thought I would mention my thoughts on the Anzac Day ceremony in Ambon. It is a beautiful place. I know the member for Ludmilla has been there on a number of occasions and laid wreaths, as have a number of other members. The member for Fannie Bay and the member for Port Darwin have been there. I understand that the Chief Minister made a fleeting visit when he passed through last year and that he has expressed a hope and intention to visit Ambon at some future time, and I for one would be very pleased to see him fulfil that goal.

Mr Deputy Speaker, the other matter I would like to raise this evening is one that has been debated here for the last hour or more: the comments that Pat Dodson, Director of the Central Land Council, made on ABC Territory Extra this morning and also, of course, those of Michael Mansell. As you might have gathered from some of the comments I made earlier, I am extremely concerned about Mr Dodson's involvement with and support for Mansell's comments. I think that this is a very dangerous precedent indeed. It is not just a matter of 1 person supporting the comments of another. What we are talking about is support for a person who has been to what is the centre of international terrorism and who has made statements which are completely abhorrent to most

of us who sit here - indeed, I would certainly hope to all of us. It is totally unacceptable that a person like Mr Dodson, who holds such a high office within the Aboriginal movement, should support and sponsor such comments. I would support the call for him to resign forthwith because he has no right to represent any Aboriginal movement if he holds those views in the Northern Territory.

I would like to draw to your attention, Mr Deputy Speaker, some comments made by Mr Dodson on 27 November 1981. A conference was held in Alice Springs on that day and, in my opinion, it gave a full airing to Dodson's Marxist objective, the establishment of a sovereign Aboriginal nation. Mr Dodson and a well-known Aboriginal activist from north Queensland by the name of Mick Miller got together and established what was called, and I believe still is called, the Federation of Aboriginal Land Councils. Dodson is on record as stating at the time that there will be 'no agreement with Aboriginal people until the federal government comes to terms with the fact that we are a sovereign nation'. That is a quote from Mr Dodson in 1981, the same fellow who supported Mansell today - an admitted Marxist.

He went on to say: 'This nation belongs to the Aboriginal people and it has never been handed over or ceded'. His objective is clearly the establishment of a separate Aboriginal nation on the continent known as Australia. As far as I am concerned, in this country we are all Australians, whether we are of British, Greek, Aboriginal, Indonesian or Chinese heritage or whatever. We are all Australian citizens and we should all have equal rights and equal opportunities and I for one will not tolerate any less. I will not tolerate anybody like Dodson saying that he wants to establish a separate Aboriginal nation. He is on record as having said that in 1981. He is an acknowledged Marxist. That is the sort of person who is leading the Aboriginal movement in central Australia today - and we wonder why we have problems.

Let us have a look at the demands that Mansell made on the federal government. He said that the budget for the Department of Aboriginal Affairs should be doubled. That is an absolute joke. He knows full well that that could never happen. He calls for the sacking of Clyde Holding, the Minister for Aboriginal Affairs. That would not cause us any problems, but we have to consider, of course, that we might get somebody worse. He says that the bicentennial celebrations next year should be cancelled. That is the sort of support that Mansell offers to the Australian nation. When one looks at Mr Mansell, who calls himself an Aboriginal - and I understand it is his right so to do - he is as white as I am. I have a problem with somebody like Mansell calling himself an Aboriginal and going off to represent Aboriginal causes in Libya or anywhere else in the world. It just does not add up.

The other thing that concerns me is the politicisation of the Aboriginal movement that has been occurring in recent times. In the Sunday Territorian of 26 April, the Leader of the Opposition, in a departure from a prepared speech to the north Australian Labor Party in Mt Isa, referred to the growing political organisation of NT Aborigines. He said it was time the land rights debate moved on. That, of course, was Mr Smith, and that was confirmed by the member for Arnhem earlier.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The honourable member will refer to all members in the Chamber by their correct titles. The honourable member will refer to the Leader of the Opposition.

Mr SETTER: My apologies, Mr Speaker, I was referring to the Leader of the Opposition, the member for Millner.

We can clearly see that the Labor Party has undertaken a deliberate campaign to infiltrate the Aboriginal movement. That has been recognised by Oscar Tamsen, that learned scribe from the NT News, who said on 25 April: 'There is increasing evidence in the Territory that our Aboriginal people are being manipulated by self-styled, so-called advisers. On an increasing number of occasions recently, whites or non-fullblood Aborigines have been involved in blatantly directing clanspeople which way to go, either politically or financially, in their dealings with political or business associates'. I support what Mr Tamsen said. He was spot on.

Before my time runs out, let me refer quickly to a quote from the Sunday Territorian of 8 March by Mr Yunupingu:

The Labor Party has been strong in policies supporting Aborigines, but their federal counterparts in Canberra have not had the guts to stand up for our people. Aborigines will always have their country, no matter what politicians do. That is why we argue that our land rights should be in the Australian Constitution, taking it out of the hands of politicians who keep changing their minds to suit their own power games, and that should not have to happen because our law has always been there, constitution or no constitution.

I wonder, if one reflects back to what Mr Dodson said ...

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

Mr HARRIS (Labour and Administrative Services): Mr Speaker, I will be brief. I am very pleased that I have pricked the conscience of members of the opposition in relation to Anzac Day although it is a little upsetting to see that they have deserted the Chamber at this hour. I want to make it quite clear that, in the course of my remarks, I acknowledged that it was not possible for members to be in 2 places at the same time and I wish that the member for MacDonnell had listened. The point I was trying to make is that one must look at one's priorities and I hope that the members of the opposition do that in the years to come.

I would like to comment briefly on the member for Arnhem's statement that he felt that the Hawke government had done so much for the Aboriginal people. Mr Speaker, believe you me, he has been sold a pup. The Attorney-General was correct in his comments about the assistance and support that the Aboriginal people have received from the Northern Territory government. I would ask the member for Arnhem and members of the opposition, in relation to land rights and citizenship, who was responsible? An Australian Labor government? No! A Liberal government. I make the point that they are matters of significance which should be acknowledged.

In many cases, the Commonwealth government has withdrawn funds for Aboriginal people. It is great at setting up programs which will give so-called assistance to Aboriginal people and then, in the next breath, it will withdraw the money and blame the state or the Territory government for not continuing that funding. I have had responsibility for areas where this has occurred on a number of occasions.

The FORWAARD program is a wonderful program helping Aborigines with alcohol problems yet the federal government has withdrawn funds from it. I

have made representations on behalf of the government to the federal government to continue funding such programs. Those are the issues that the member for Arnhem should be spouting about, not how the Hawke government is supporting the Aboriginal people in the Territory. What about telling his people what the Hawke government is not doing for Aboriginal people? Since self-government, the Territory government has given tremendous support to the Aboriginal people, and that cannot be denied. It is about time the member for Arnhem, honourable members opposite, and indeed the electorates in the bush communities, acknowledged the support the Northern Territory has given them over the years. It has been tremendous.

Money was provided by the federal government to have assistant teachers in many communities. There were 43 when I was the Minister for Education. The federal government cut off the funds. We could not continue to support that effort because we did not have the resources. That will continue to happen where programs are set in place by the federal government for 5 years or 2 years and are then withdrawn. Who cops the bundle? Who is the bunny? The Northern Territory government.

In closing, I ask the member for Arnhem to look at the issues and to see the support that the Northern Territory government is giving to the Aboriginal people. By gee, it is difficult to get in touch with Clyde Holding and other members in the federal parliament and to try to get them to support us in our efforts to help the Aboriginal people.

Motion agreed to; the Assembly adjourned.

Mr Speaker Vale took the Chair at 10 am.

STATEMENT
Video Recording of Proceedings

Mr SPEAKER: Honourable members, I draw your attention to an innovation which has been introduced to the Chamber. Hansard has moved from its primitive accommodation at the rear of the Chamber and in the demountables and now has offices on the first floor of the Nelson Building. The Legislative Assembly is now monitored for Hansard purposes by television cameras. Honourable members will notice the 3 cameras mounted in the ceiling and on the side walls of the Chamber. The introduction of this system has permitted Legislative Assembly staff to make a video of all proceedings of the Assembly for historical and other purposes at very low cost. I am extremely grateful to the Chief Minister for his generosity and assistance in this regard.

In the future, this very basic system may be capable of being expanded to provide closed circuit television coverage of proceedings to ministers' and members' offices. It is my intention to have the House Committee keep the system under review with a view to reporting to the Assembly from time to time on the possible benefits which could accrue to honourable members through the introduction of this system.

TABLED PAPER
Auditor-General's Report on Prescribed Statutory Corporations

Mr SPEAKER: Honourable members, I lay on the table the Report of the Auditor-General on Prescribed Statutory Corporations for the year ended 30 June 1986.

Mr HANRAHAN (Leader of Government Business): Mr Speaker, I move that the report be printed.

Motion agreed to.

MOTION
Auditor-General's Report on Prescribed Statutory Corporations

Mr HANRAHAN (Leader of Government Business): Mr Speaker, I move that the Assembly take note of the report and seek leave to continue my remarks at a later stage.

Leave granted; debate adjourned.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT
Standing Orders

Mr HANRAHAN (Leader of Government Business)(by leave): Mr Speaker, I take this opportunity to draw the attention of honourable members to certain of the standing orders that affect debate on matters of public importance. I do so because of the presence in this Assembly of the crossbenches. I note with some disappointment - and I hope that it is not a sign of things to come - that the member for Barkly has been absent from this Assembly for 45 minutes this morning during question time.

I draw the attention of honourable members to standing orders 71(c), 77 and 94 which effectively limit the debate on matters of public importance to 2 hours. The convention in this Assembly is that there will be 4 speakers,

2 from each side. There is also provision in standing orders for any member of the Assembly to move that the debate be ceased. It is important to note that it is the intention of the government to ensure that the standing orders are enforced. Because of the position of the crossbenches, it is more important than ever that negotiations and discussions take place between the various Whips of this Assembly to ensure that everybody knows what they are doing and there is no confusion as to the meaning of those standing orders or the intention of the government to ensure that debate will occur along those lines. The government acknowledges that there will be certain circumstances where there will be negotiations to extend debates on matters of public importance and the door will be open to allow for that possibility.

DISCUSSION OF MATTER OF PUBLIC IMPORTANCE
NT Electoral System

Mr SPEAKER: I advise honourable members that I have received the following letter from the Deputy Leader of the Opposition:

Dear Mr Speaker,

Pursuant to standing order 94, I propose for discussion as a definite matter of public importance this morning, the following matter: the need for reform in the Northern Territory electoral system.

Yours sincerely,
Brian Ede,
Deputy Leader of the Opposition

Is the proposed discussion supported? It is supported.

Mr EDE (Stuart): Mr Speaker, it was unfortunate that, during the Assembly sittings held in November 1986, when the opposition raised matters of public importance which we considered worthy of extensive debate, a pattern emerged whereby the government would denigrate the matter and assert that it was not a matter of public importance but was, rather, a trivial matter which should not take up the time of the Assembly and should more properly be the subject of a question or speech in the adjournment. There is no way that even the CLP government could say that today's matter of public importance, electoral reform, is not a matter of the very gravest public importance.

Prior to the election, the opposition introduced a number of private member's bills. I seem to remember that one of them was on the Notice Paper at the time the Assembly was prorogued. We proposed a number of amendments in an attempt to overcome some of the problems that we saw in the electoral system of the Northern Territory. Unfortunately, the government described as 'piecemeal' our proposals to amend provisions relating to the disclosure of donations, the mobile polling system and so on. This time, we have decided to place before the government a range of matters which we believe require attention. We hope that they will not be treated simply as a political game or point-scoring exercise. We have been deliberately constrained in our approach because we believe the government, by this stage, must realise that there are problems that need to be addressed. We hope that the government will take our contributions in the spirit in which they are offered and will discuss our points with its officials with a view to legislative change or proposals for further discussion in this Assembly.

During the recent elections, there was an incident at the Wanguri Primary School where, during the count, polling officials decided that they would have a number of counters.

Mr Dale: Were you there?

Mr EDE: That meant that there was only one scrutineer with a number of counting points. That is allowable under our legislation. If this had been an election involving 60 000 to 70 000 voters, there might be a case, in the interests of obtaining a quick result, for justifying the use of a number of counters. However, even with the most assiduous and scrupulous scrutineer, in an election involving a count of no more than 2500 votes ...

Mr Dale: They were a mob of hoons from interstate.

Mr EDE: ... the job could have been done at one counting point in a couple of hours. Our view is that it was not necessary to have a number of counting points. It made the work of the scrutineers much more difficult.

Mr Dale: Oh, come on! The only problem was that the mob you had there could not count to more than 3.

Mr EDE: Mr Speaker, that demonstrates the need for a change so that the number of scrutineers allowed at the count is equal to the number of counters, not the number of tables. That is not a reflection on the people who were carrying out the count. We believe that it is quite possible - indeed, quite probable - that the counters got the count quite correct without the benefit of the scrutineers, but that is not the point. The point is that the scrutineers are there to assist the polling officials and to ensure that the polling officials do not inadvertently ...

Mr Dale: They are not.

Mr EDE: I am very interested to hear that interjection from the member for Wanguri. It seems that he believes that the job of scrutineers is not to assist the electoral officials ...

Mr Manzie: It is not to assist. It is to observe.

Mr EDE: He thinks it has to be a browbeating job. Certainly, if it were carried out in the way that he is carrying on now, it would have nothing to do with assisting the count.

Mr Dale: The scrutineers are not there to assist. You're a dill.

Mr SPEAKER: Order!

Mr EDE: We advise our scrutineers - and they see it as their job - to assist the counters, to help them to ensure that the signatures have been put on the back of the ballot papers ...

Mr Dale: A couple of broken fingers and things like that, Brian. Why do you think the police were called?

Mr EDE: Mr Speaker, I will beg your indulgence if I later engage in the same level of cross-Chamber interjection which you are now allowing the member for Wanguri to engage in.

If the polling officials got the count completely correct, that is excellent. But it does not change the fact that there must be an element of doubt as to whether that was the case. That is one of the major functions of an electoral system. An electoral system is meant to ensure not only that the

election is conducted so as to provide the exact results of the votes cast by the people, but that it is seen by all to do so. The trust of the people in the electoral system is fundamentally important.

It is absolutely essential that our electoral system be one in which the people have absolute and implicit trust. The government needs to trust the people to provide a result, and the people need to trust the system to ensure that that is the result that will emerge at the end of the day. The only way those things can be achieved is if the system itself is one which does not attempt to provide a result which is weighted in favour of the literate, the wealthy and the mobile. It must be able to ensure that every person in the Northern Territory has an equal opportunity to cast his or her vote, to make a choice of a member to represent them and to ensure that that is the result that is realised at the end of the poll. A number of factors in our system in the Northern Territory at the moment militate against that being the case.

I will proceed rather quickly through a number of points that we will be highlighting over the next couple of years or until such time as we are able to get the message across to the government that there needs to be change. As I said earlier, we hope that the government will take these matters on board and will come back to us in a reasoned fashion - not the inane chatter of the member for Wanguri - to discuss the individual points that we are raising and so help the people of the Northern Territory to gain more faith in their system. We do not intend to develop all the arguments in support of our major points today. We will outline briefly how each can affect the result of an election and leave detailed debate for a later day.

I have already covered the first point: that the number of scrutineers should equal the number of counters. The second point is to ensure that the number of people of voting age in the electorates is as close as possible to the mean across the Territory. We are proposing that the variation be no more than 10%. The current allowable variation is 20%. That is not simply a 20% difference between the most populous and the least populous electorate; it is a 20% variation from the mean. This means that there can be a variation of up to 40% between the number of voters in the least populous electorate and that in the most populous. That means that the voting power of an individual in that most populous electorate is 40% less than it is in the least populous. We do not believe that situation is acceptable in this day and age. We made a point of raising this during the discussion of electorate boundaries but it has not yet been accepted by the government. We hope the government will take it on board in the near future.

Another point relates to the distribution of maps showing the electorates as amended following the acceptance of the report of the Distribution Committee by this Assembly. The distribution of those maps was inadequate. Many people were confused about the whereabouts of the boundaries and many did not know which electorate they resided in. The boundaries were known many months before the election and we believe the Electoral Office should have been provided with funds to run a publicity campaign immediately after this Assembly finished its deliberations on the boundaries in November last year. After the election was called, 1 double-page spread appeared in the newspaper. In my electorate, that newspaper arrived at many points after the election had been held. It was probably planned that way, but it would not have mattered in any case because all 25 electorates were not shown in the paper. People did not know that no boundary change had occurred because the government would not give them a map which would have told them that. I am performing the work of 6 departments and 4 ministers now and therefore it is a bit difficult for me to take on the role of the Electoral Office as well. Not only was a map of

my electorate not included in the newspaper, but the member for MacDonnell found that his electorate was not included either. Even when something eventually appeared in the newspaper, it was inadequate. Possibly our 2 electorates are so large that they would need a whole newspaper to themselves. That is very poor electoral education.

The next point I wish to cover is the itineraries for mobile booths. We believe that there should be a procedure for issuing those itineraries in draft form within about a month of the completion of the redistribution process. If that happened and time were allowed for appeals and amendments, people would know whether they would have to travel to vote or whether they would be able to do so at the place where they are living.

Another point is the need to change our current preferential voting system to optional preferential. We have discussed this matter before and we will be discussing it again. I am most aggravated that, under the compulsory preferential system, I have to decide whether I want to give my last preference to a person of an extreme right fascist party or a person of the extreme left communist party. I find that rather a difficult decision to make. If I do not make that choice, it is a informal ballot. I believe that that is a reason in itself why people should be able to use the optional preferential system.

Another point is the how-to-vote card system. In the Senate election, people were able to indicate simply that they wished to follow the party how-to-vote card. That system has since been introduced in South Australia and I am told that it is working very well. The various candidates hand their official, how-to-vote card to the electoral office and, if they so wish, people can simply follow the card.

I was amazed that the positions on the ballot papers are still placed alphabetically. Other places have moved away from the system where you have to change your name to Ardvark by deed poll to have any chance of being elected - which reminds me of the CLP in my electorate. It is obvious that there is some advantage in being at the top of the ballot paper and a disadvantage in being right at the bottom. It is time that we changed that and drew lots.

We would like to see changes to the time periods. We believe very strongly that at least a week should be provided between the date of the calling of an election and the closure of the rolls. This would save many people from being disenfranchised, especially in the Northern Territory which, we must acknowledge, has a scattered itinerant population. It is perfectly natural that many people do not get on the rolls in time and we ought to acknowledge that. Unfortunately, every member of the public does not have as much interest in the electoral system as ourselves. We should be making it easier for them and the provision of an extra week would do that. In addition, if a person applies for enrolment through a post office and the application is postmarked before 6 o'clock on the day of the closure of the rolls, that should be sufficient evidence that the person had made a genuine attempt to become enrolled and the application should be accepted.

The Leader of the Opposition will be raising a number of other points. I would like to appeal to members opposite to approach this matter in the correct light and not to view our points as attempts to gain electoral mileage for ourselves. This is a genuine attempt to obtain a system of which the Northern Territory can be proud, one which will allow voters to have complete and absolute confidence that their wishes have been reflected in the election

result and one in which individuals will not feel cheated because the system has not given them sufficient time to enrol.

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

Mr HATTON (Chief Minister): Mr Speaker, I am pleased to rise in this discussion although in many respects it is a bit like the story of the broken record. When I was advised of this debate, the first thing I did was to turn to the record of the opening session of the last Assembly when exactly the same issues were raised. I trust that I can at least add some variety to the debate by raising a few other matters that may need to be considered. I am not totally blinkered or blind to the possibility of providing some form of electoral reform although I must say that some of the issues raised by the member for Stuart are not high priorities on my list.

I would like to deal with a couple of his points. He made the point that the tolerance should be reduced from 20% to 10%. He quite correctly noted that a tolerance of 20% is not a requirement but a maximum allowance. It is governed by the Northern Territory (Self-Government) Act and not the Electoral Act, and I ask people to note that. The legislation which governs it is outside the control of this Assembly.

Clause 13(5) of the act reads: 'For the purposes of subsection (4), each electoral division shall contain a number of electors not exceeding or falling short of the quota calculated under that subsection by more than one-fifth of the quota'. 20% is the maximum tolerance allowed and, when one looks at the actual variations from the quota, the largest is 16.2%. Next comes Arafura with 12.6% and Nhulunbuy with 11.3%. Virtually all of the seats are within the 10% quota.

That is determined by the Distribution Committee, an independent body. As honourable members opposite will recognise, there were a number of recommendations of that group with which both they and we disagreed. As a matter of propriety, we decided that we would not break the critically important independence of the Distribution Committee. Members may remember that the disagreements were associated even with the naming of electorates. The point is that the Distribution Committee is quite clearly an independent group.

I am surprised that the member for Stuart, as a member of this Assembly who is so concerned about this issue, did not raise what I would regard as a fundamentally important question. Why should a federal act of parliament determine the electoral procedures for Northern Territory Legislative Assembly elections?

Mr Ede: I cannot raise that in an MPI. It is outside your competence.

Mr HATTON: Mr Speaker, I believe this MPI relates to electoral reform. I am saying that this Assembly should be seeking that the federal government repeal from the Northern Territory (Self-Government) Act all matters relating to electoral procedures of the Northern Territory and that we should introduce those into the Northern Territory Electoral Act so that it becomes the province of this Assembly to determine all electoral procedures for the Northern Territory. Whether it is competent for us to raise that in this debate or not, it is a matter of public interest to the people of the Northern Territory.

Mr Ede: You can get away with that. I can't.

Mr HATTON: Northern Territory electoral procedures should not be determined by a group of southern experts sitting in conference in Canberra.

Mr Speaker, I now turn to the comments of the member for Stuart concerning the distribution of maps. I do not know what he did but, after the boundary changes were finally gazetted in January, I took the opportunity of circularising my electorate to ensure that electors in my area were aware of boundary changes. I am sure the Leader of the Opposition would have done the same. I seem to remember having received a copy of a circular that he distributed around his electorate. The member for Stuart had an easier task because he did not have any boundary changes. Presumably he was able to get around and campaign during the 3 weeks of the election campaign.

Mr Ede: I am not talking about my electorate.

Mr HATTON: He knew 4 months beforehand that there was never a suggestion of changing his electorate boundaries. However, he feels that we should spend more taxpayers' dollars doing the job of the local member through public servants. In fact, almost immediately after the declaration of the new boundaries, the Electoral Office published maps with shaded areas showing where there had been changes to boundaries. The maps were published in the media during the election campaign. The member should have circularised his own electorate if he has a real concern - as I have - to ensure that electors in his electorate know that they are in his electorate. I know he has a heavy workload. I know that he has to get into his 4-wheel-drive and go out bush for a few months at a time. It is good for business and it gives him an opportunity to make contact with his electorate from time to time.

It may be a sad fact to us, but people do not take much interest in where the boundaries of their electorate are, which electorate they are in or whether they are on the roll prior to an election being called. It is likely that any advice which is disseminated prior to an election actually being called will be ignored by Joe or Joan Citizen. It is a simple fact of life that people really have priorities other than politics and elections and do not pay attention to these matters except when they are expected to vote. That is why the publicising of boundaries and rolls is important when an election is being held.

I have some sympathy with the proposition of extending the period during which people can enrol to vote after the election has been called. I do not, however, believe that it is essential and I point out that such a period is not common in Australia.

Mr Smith: Yes it is.

Mr Ede: Just check the Labor governments.

Mr HATTON: Allow me to take the opportunity of looking at it state by state. The Commonwealth provides for 7 days, as does Victoria. South Australia and Western Australia require notice of the intention to issue a writ. New South Wales, Queensland, Tasmania and the Northern Territory all close electoral rolls on the day an election is called. Thus, 3 states and the Commonwealth have provision for keeping the rolls open.

Mr Smith: That is a majority in our book.

Mr HATTON: The Leader of the Opposition does not include the Territory in the count. That is typical of his attitude.

Mr Smith: Get on with the job.

Mr HATTON: There are 4 governments which keep the rolls open and 4 which do not.

Be that as it may, I have some sympathy for the proposition that the period be extended and I have been discussing options for amendment to our Electoral Act with the Chief Electoral Officer. In doing that, however, we would yet again pander to people's tendency to ignore their legal responsibilities. People have the responsibility of ensuring that their names are on the electoral roll. It is also a responsibility of local members to encourage people within their electorates to ensure that their names are on the correct roll.

We have considerable difficulty in maintaining the electoral rolls. Some problems are being overcome and others need to be addressed by this Assembly. Members will be aware of concerns about names of deceased persons on the roll and the suggestion that perhaps votes have been recorded in the names of deceased persons. I can advise the Assembly that the Chief Electoral Officer has checked the rolls for Port Darwin, which is the electorate where a number of names of deceased persons were found on the rolls, and he has advised that no votes were cast under those names. Rolls for other electorates are also being checked. Obviously, there will be further investigations if there is any evidence of votes being cast on behalf of deceased persons. I do not anticipate finding that this has occurred. I am sure members of this Assembly or their parties would not engage in such practices.

Other complications arise. It may interest members to know that our electoral roll is being maintained by the Commonwealth Electoral Commission. I hope honourable members are listening to this. Our roll is derived from the Commonwealth electoral roll and broken down into subdivisions. The roll is maintained in Canberra. New information needs to be transmitted to Canberra for inclusion in the records and it is subsequently printed and transferred back to the Northern Territory. There are time and logistics problems associated with this procedure.

With respect to those names of deceased persons which were on the roll, our Registrar of Births, Deaths and Marriages advises that we have been forwarding such names to the Commonwealth Electoral Commission which in turn advises that it has no record of receiving them. Obviously, there has been some administrative difficulty, but the Chief Electoral Officer for the Northern Territory has since taken on the responsibility of checking that the information is transferred on a monthly basis. The situation will be further improved in future because we are in the process of introducing our own computerised electoral rolls in the Northern Territory through the combined Commonwealth and Territory Electoral Office in Darwin. We should have the computer facilities in place in the next few weeks and the Northern Territory electoral rolls will then be on computer. This will certainly facilitate quick and frequent updating and the introduction of other electoral roll services to members that I know the Chief Electoral Officer has been working on. That will deal with many of those issues.

I should like to turn now to the issue of optional preferential voting. This is one of the old chestnuts of our friends opposite but they provide no evidence to support it. In fact, we had optional preferential voting in one election in the Northern Territory: the 1974 Legislative Assembly election. It was changed to a compulsory preferential vote in the 1977 election and, interestingly enough, the informal vote dropped after that. It hardly

indicates that optional preferential voting will increase the ability of the illiterate or less-informed members of the community to cast a vote. Equally, it has the problem of leaning towards a first-past-the-post vote with all of the undemocratic effects of such a voting system.

The preferential voting system is the most democratic voting expression in the world. When a person is elected - and that includes the members opposite, much to my dismay - it means that more than 50% of the people in an electorate prefer that person to represent them. That is what the preferential voting system says. In every case, when it comes down to the last 2 candidates, the preferred person is the person who is elected. That is the finest possible expression of the will of the electorate. If that means filling in 1, 2, 3, 4 on a ballot paper, so be it. At least it gives an honest expression of the views of that electorate.

Mr Ede: What about the informal vote?

Mr HATTON: Mr Speaker, I have already made the point that there is no evidence that optional preferential voting reduces the informal vote. In fact, the movement away from optional preferential voting resulted in a reduction in the informal vote between 1974 and 1977 in the Northern Territory.

The matter of following party tickets was also raised. This is a matter of ticking a box and following the party preferences. The member for Stuart would have us believe that this is now becoming the norm. It is in a couple of parliaments but, in every case, it is in respect of multi-member electorates, not single member electorates. It relates to the Upper House in Victoria, the Upper House in New South Wales and the Senate. My advice from the Chief Electoral Officer is that it is operating in multi-member electorates. This was done for a particular purpose.

I can remember a double dissolution in New South Wales in the late 1960s when there were 75 candidates on a Senate ticket and it took 10 minutes to fill in a voting card. The reason why optional preferential voting was introduced is that we have had a plethora of double dissolutions of the federal parliament in recent years. For some reason unknown to me, it seems to be becoming fashionable for federal governments to declare double dissolutions. In doing so, they have created massively long Senate voting slips. This has led to ticking the box in order to vote CLP or Liberal or Labor or whatever. It certainly has been successful in relation to the Senate. However, it is interesting that it has not been introduced for the House of Representatives which has single member electorates and it is assumed that people are able to count to 3 or 4.

In the Northern Territory, we have gone a bit further in the sense that we have improved the opportunities for people to vote, particularly Aboriginal people. I refer to innovations such as placing photographs on the ballot paper, assisted voting and the introduction of mobile polling booths to minimise the problems of postal voting in rural areas. All these measures have increased the potential for the Aboriginal vote in the Northern Territory. We have a very proud record of improving the capacity of Aboriginal people to cast a valid vote. It is equally interesting to note that about 90% of those eligible to enrol in Aboriginal electorates are on the rolls and that is equivalent to those in the non-Aboriginal electorates.

Interestingly, we have other problems in relation to the electoral rolls. There is evidence, particularly in bush and Aboriginal electoral rolls, of

people being on the roll under 2 or 3 or 4 different names. This often results from different spellings or a person moving from one location to another and, for quite valid cultural reasons, using different names in different locations. Consequently, these people appear on the rolls under different names. The process of getting people on to the rolls is successful, but not so the process of picking up their previous names and removing them.

There have also been indications, particularly in association with the development of the outstation movement, that some people are registered not only in the Northern Territory but also in Western Australia. It is quite feasible that people are registered not only in the Northern Territory but also in South Australia. These anomalies potentially give people more than one vote and it is essential that they be rectified. If a person is on the electoral rolls under 2 or 3 different names, there is potential for that person to vote 2 or 3 times. As an Assembly, we must address the problem of ensuring positive identification of persons who are voting and we must put in place a process that ensures that a person cannot have 2 or 3 names on an electoral roll. That must be changed. We must find a way of getting around it because it offers real potential for electoral malpractice. I am not suggesting that it has happened, but there is real potential for it to happen.

In one electorate, I referred a series of apparent duplications and triplications of names on the roll to the Northern Territory Electoral Office for examination and review. I think that should be done throughout the Northern Territory, and I believe we should institute an inquiry into the processes of ensuring the positive identification of voters, particularly Aboriginal voters, because of this unique and culturally-induced problem. There are 2 reasons for this: firstly, to ensure that there can be no electoral malpractice and, secondly, to ensure that names on the roll each represent one person. This will give us a true picture of the numbers voting, whether it be 50%, 60% or 90%, and what percentage of the roll is actually duplication or triplication of names of individuals.

Another difficulty is that, where additional names appear on a roll because of multiple identity, fewer actual voters would be on that roll. I am sure it would worry the member for Stuart greatly because he may actually have a very small number of voters in his electorate and he would rather that we expanded the boundaries to keep the electorate closer to the quota number. We could not possibly have a situation where the number of voters in his electorate was inflated artificially, and I am sure he would not want that to occur.

Mr Speaker, I really believe that we should conduct an inquiry into methods of positive identification of voters, in particular Aboriginal voters.

Mr Smith: Why don't you organise it?

Mr HATTON: I intend to do just that.

Mr SMITH (Opposition Leader): Mr Speaker, this may be the third or fourth time that we have raised these matters, but the positive comments of the Chief Minister indicate that we have probably made more progress on this particular occasion than all the others combined. That is a reflection that both sides of the Assembly perceive a need to make some changes to the Northern Territory electoral system. Obviously, we will not agree on all the changes that are necessary but it is pleasing to see the Chief Minister has indicated that he is at least looking at some of the matters we have raised.

I was particularly interested in his comments on the electoral provisions under the Northern Territory (Self-Government) Act. Quite clearly, those provisions would come across to the Northern Territory at the time of statehood. I thought, however, that the Chief Minister was perhaps advancing a case for moving those provisions to the Territory in advance of statehood, and that is something we would certainly be prepared to look at. The interesting thing about his comments was that, although he advanced an argument for the Territory assuming control of these provisions, he gave us no indication at all of what he would do with the new powers. We would certainly want assurances that the 20% tolerance factor would become a 10% tolerance factor and would not become the excuse to implement a Bjelke-Petersen gerrymander in the Northern Territory.

One of the unique aspects of the electoral system in the Northern Territory is that it is very difficult to gerrymander the system because there are very few obvious pockets of either Labor or non-Labor voters. Those of us who have spent any time putting together party submissions have found it very difficult to come up with boundary changes that would have an undue advantage for one party or the other. That provides us with a unique opportunity to talk about electoral reform without the hidden agenda of electoral reform being in the interests of the party proposing it. That is why, when we talk about reducing the tolerances to 10%, we are not doing so because of any perceived party advantage. We are talking about it because we believe it would lead to a fairer electoral system. The government probably could accept that argument in its saner moments.

The same applies in the timing of the closure of electoral rolls. I cannot see any political advantage in having a prescribed 7-day period before the rolls are closed after an election has been called. It simply makes good electoral sense. It provides the opportunity for people, whether they happen to be within 300 m of the Darwin or Alice Springs GPO, or whether they happen to be 500 km from the Darwin or Alice Springs GPO, to take the necessary steps to get themselves on the roll. Although there is a legal requirement for people to be enrolled, we all know that it is one of people's lower priorities. Many people tend to put it off and an enormous number of people were caught by the sudden announcement of the election this year. The effect was that those people could not vote. When that happens, people become alienated from the system and that is the last thing that we want. We pride ourselves on our democratic system and it is essential that as many people as possible be given the opportunity to vote. The opposition's view is that a simple change to the legislation would ensure that practically everybody who wanted to vote would be on the roll in time for an election.

Before I move away from the Northern Territory (Self-Government) Act, I want to comment on the provision which forces people to resign from aldermanic positions in order to contest Territory elections. It puts people in a stupid position and we have already written to the Special Minister of State, Senator Tate, urging him to introduce federal legislation which will remove that provision and replace it with a requirement that an alderman who is elected to the Legislative Assembly must resign his or her aldermanic position. That seems the most sensible way out of that particular problem. Many people see aldermanic positions as a training ground for preselection for the Legislative Assembly and I think that is only right and proper. We should be doing all that we can to encourage people to take that route rather than attempting to discourage people, as the present legislation does.

I also want to comment on the Chief Minister's remarks about optional preferential voting versus full preferential voting. I accept that political

arguments are involved and, for the record, the Labor Party's position is that an optional preferential system should be introduced in the Northern Territory. I accept that, with the present government in control, we are unlikely to get an optional preferential system. Finally on this subject, I advise the Chief Minister that the optional preferential system is presently in operation for elections for the Lower House in New South Wales. I do so in response to his comment that he knew of no Lower House where the system was in practice.

In terms of the full preferential system, I believe that we should have a close look at the card system. This is a system whereby an elector can express a valid preferential vote simply by marking the figure 1 against the most preferred candidate and, provided that candidate is a member of a political party, having preferences counted according to that party's how-to-vote card. I know this disadvantages independents, but it was only during the recent election that I saw the full impact of the difficulties the preferential system poses for some people.

I know my colleagues in seats such as Arnhem, Arafura, Stuart and MacDonnell are very familiar with the problems of explaining the full preferential system to many of their constituents. I came across this difficulty in the recent election because the boundary changes had put the Aboriginal community of Kulaluk in my electorate. On 2 or 3 occasions, it was very difficult to explain how the full preferential system worked and why it should work. To be frank, all that 99% of these people wanted to do was vote for Terry Smith. They did not see any reason why they would put a 2 or a 3 against the names of the other 2 candidates.

If you agree with the principle espoused by the Chief Minister that the best system is one in which 51% of the people indicate a clear choice, the card system facilitates this and makes it easier for people who are not particularly familiar with our complicated system. It is quite difficult to explain why you should vote 1, 2, 3. The card system preserves the principle of 50% plus 1% for the election of a particular candidate in a particular seat. Hopefully, the ramifications and implications of the card system can be more fully explored as the months proceed and as the Labor Party proceeds to introduce its amendments to the Electoral Act.

I was quite pleased that the Chief Minister and the Chief Electoral Officer had taken steps to remedy the perceived problems in keeping the rolls up to date and accurate and to improve the communications between the Registrar of Births, Deaths and Marriages and the Electoral Office. That is another matter on which we have written to the Special Minister of State, Senator Tate, asking for his support and cooperation to ensure that the rolls are more accurate than they are at present. It is embarrassing to relatives of deceased persons if they receive a letter asking why that person has not voted. It should not be beyond the wit of a modern electoral system to prevent this. I was intrigued by the Chief Minister's comments that, after the election, the Electoral Office was able to check out that no votes had been cast in dead persons' names in Port Darwin. If it was easy to check this out after the election in Port Darwin, it ought to have been possible to check it out in all electorates before the election to avoid the prospect of votes being registered in dead persons' names. I hope that the changes announced by the Chief Minister will fix that problem so that we will not in future have accusations that people have risen from their graves and walked into the polling booth.

Mr Speaker, I must admit I was somewhat staggered when the Chief Minister said that he thought there was a serious problem in at least 1 electorate with people voting more than once because they were registered on the roll under 2 or 3 different names. I was staggered by the fact that he thought it was a significant problem and I know the member for MacDonnell wants to address that matter in another debate. I was also staggered when, on the ABC lunchtime news, the Chief Minister went much further on that issue than he did in the Assembly this morning. I will quote the entire item.

The Chief Minister Mr Hatton told the Assembly there should be an inquiry into the identification process of voters, particularly Aboriginal voters. Mr Hatton said he would refer the case to the Electoral Office involving one electorate where there had been duplication and sometimes triplication of names on the roll.

That is essentially what he told the Assembly. He went on to say in a pre-recorded statement:

It may have occurred in quite a number of electorates but we have clear prima facie evidence that it has occurred in the MacDonnell electorate. I am not suggesting any malpractice as a result of that but merely a difficulty and confusion in the electoral rolls which needs to be addressed. The problem is of positive identification of voters, particularly Aboriginal voters who are very mobile from place to place, and in different locations and at different times will use different names. So if they are being enrolled, it will create complications on the electoral roll.

Mr Speaker, I find it unusual that the Chief Minister went much further in a radio interview outside the Assembly than he did when he had the opportunity to speak in this Assembly on this important subject.

The opposition believes that, for an adequate electoral system to be put in place in the Northern Territory, there should be a minimum of 4 weeks between the decision to call the election and the election itself. We support the following minimum times: a minimum of 7 days from the announcement of the election to the closure of the rolls and 14 days before the closure of nominations; and, for the closure of nominations, a minimum of 7 days before the commencement of mobile polling.

Mrs Padgham-Purich: Your job is to get there.

Mr SMITH: Unfortunately, I am not up to that job and neither are any of you. In the last 2 elections, where 6 hours were given to people to get on the roll, a significant number missed out. As I said before, those people who missed out have become disillusioned with the system and that is the last thing we want in any effective democratic voting system. The other point is that a 6 hour cut-off period effectively prevents any person outside major urban areas from becoming enrolled. We had a number of people out in the bush on the day nominations closed. They were enrolling people, collecting the enrolments and putting them on an aeroplane, only to find that the plane arrived in Darwin after 6 o'clock. Those people missed out.

Mr Setter: That is a nonsense. Why weren't they on the rolls before?

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The Leader of the Opposition will be heard in silence.

Mr SMITH: If you cannot accept that there are thousands of people who missed out on voting in this election because the rolls were closed in 6 hours, and if you do not accept that that is a problem, you do not have much regard for the democratic procedures that we supposedly follow in this country.

Mr Setter: Should they be fined for not doing their duty?

Mr SMITH: I can tell the member for Jingili that there were a significant number of people living in his electorate who were similarly disadvantaged. If it does not concern him that people in his electorate who might have wanted to vote for him could not vote because the rolls were closed too quickly, that is to his shame and I hope the people of Jingili know that. It shows the contempt that he holds for their opinions and the regard that he has for the democratic process.

Mr Setter: It happened in Millner too. You are talking rubbish.

Mr SMITH: I know it happened and I am concerned about it.

Mr SPEAKER: The member for Jingili will cease interjecting and the Leader of the Opposition will be heard in silence.

Mr SMITH: Thank you, Mr Speaker. Of course it is a fact that people in my electorate as well as other electorates were not given the opportunity to get on the roll. That is what makes me feel so strongly about it.

Another issue that concerns us is the question of mobile booths. I fully appreciate the enormous amount of planning involved in organising mobile polling. However, on this side of the Assembly, we believe that it has been deficient in some areas. The major deficiency in the operation of mobile polling is the lack of notice given to electors and candidates as to when and where they will be able to cast their votes. We believe a schedule of mobile polling booths should be circulated well before any polling is due to begin, and adequate time should be allowed after the publication of this schedule for candidates and political parties to lodge appeals against that proposed schedule where they feel it is necessary. The publication of this schedule well before mobile polling is due to begin will ensure that all electors know exactly when they will vote and where they need to go to register their votes.

In addition to this, we believe the Electoral Office has an obligation to inform candidates of changes to the mobile polling schedule well in advance so that the candidates have plenty of opportunity to rearrange their schedules. The difficulties with the mobile polling system are clearly illustrated by the voter turnout. In a situation where some electorates return a 52% and 54% vote, something is quite seriously wrong.

Mr Speaker, I conclude where I started. I think something positive has come out of this debate and I am pleased that the Chief Minister has taken up some of the ideas suggested by the member for Stuart and has advanced some other ideas of his own. It appears that he will have some problems with his own backbench on some of these matters. However, I hope that, by the force of his position, the logic of his argument and the support of the opposition, the Chief Minister will prevail and we will come up with a system that is fairer. Every eligible voter in the Northern Territory should have as equal as possible an opportunity to cast a vote.

Mr MANZIE (Attorney-General): Mr Speaker, I have sat here patiently and listened to both the member for Stuart and the Leader of the Opposition canvass the problems they see in the electoral system to support their application for a reformation of the system. At the end of it all, I cannot help thinking that I have probably heard it all before and it is just a sour grapes excuse for losing the election. However, I will try to look at it objectively and I will go through the rather inept arguments that have been launched by members opposite in support of their case.

First, I will cover some of the propositions put by the member for Stuart. He opened the debate by discussing a problem that he saw at the Wanguri polling booth and used that to support an argument that there should be changes in the way scrutineers are appointed and the role and number of scrutineers. It was rather difficult to understand what he was aiming at but we might look at the role of the scrutineer first.

Obviously, the member for Stuart is not aware of what a scrutineer is. He spoke of the role of the scrutineer in assisting the presiding officer in the counting of votes and the running of the booth. One of the problems that presiding officers have had in the past is exactly that: ALP scrutineers want to assist. They want to run the polling booth. Their role is not to do that. Their role is to observe and to notify the presiding officer of areas where they feel the act has not been complied with; it is not to count the votes and run the polling booth. I am sure the member for Stuart will sit down tomorrow morning and read through Hansard to see what he said. One of his problems is that he says things but his mind does not register exactly what he is saying and therefore it does not have a chance to give the little guidance it is capable of giving to his tongue when his mouth is open.

However, let me continue to talk about the situation at Wanguri. It was an unbelievable situation. The Chief Electoral Officer has the role of nominating how many counting tables he wants at a polling booth. Once he has made that nomination, a representative of each candidate in that electorate has the ability to provide a scrutineer and the number of those scrutineers relates to the number of tables. In other words, for 1 counting table, there is 1 scrutineer from each candidate.

Mr Dale: They were notified 48 hours in advance.

Mr MANZIE: Notification was given to all candidates of the number of tables that were to be at the polling booths. Some candidates were not very pleased with the particular number that was nominated for their electorate. I for one thought it could slow the counting down and possibly some extra counting tables might have been more advantageous. However, I accepted the role of the Chief Electoral Officer to nominate counting tables and, accordingly, I nominated 1 scrutineer for each, as was my right. Almost all CLP, ALP and independent candidates did that, except for one, the Labor candidate for Wanguri, who decided he knew differently. He sent a number of scrutineers who caused a tremendous problem in the polling booth when they refused to obey instructions given by the presiding officer, to such an extent that the police had to be called to enable these people to comply with the law.

It was a disgraceful example of behaviour by grown men who should have known better, men who were assisting a person who was standing for election. We have the disgraceful situation of the member for Stuart not only condoning that but saying that the system needs reforming because they could not manipulate it. Disgraceful! It is typical of the arguments that he puts forward.

Another point that is worth commenting on is the plus or minus 20% variation. As the Chief Minister has pointed out and as the Leader of the Opposition has also stated, it is a requirement of the Northern Territory (Self-Government) Act and it is beyond our control in this Assembly to change it. It is worth while pointing out that, in practice, the Electoral Office does try to ensure that those variations are within 10%. I think there are only 2 seats where it is in excess of 10%. There are a number of reasons for that. One relates to problems regarding the people on the rolls and I will enlarge a little on that. The other is that we have some areas of quite rapid growth in the Territory. I believe that growth will continue while the CLP is in government. That means that the Electoral Office must allow for growth areas so that we do not change boundaries every second week.

I do not believe that anybody could point to any possibility of a gerrymander. As has been stated, there is no hope of that sort of thing occurring in the Territory. I do not think that anybody in this Assembly would like to see such a thing occur. Apart from that, it is beyond the ability of this Assembly to make such changes. When that power is conferred upon us, obviously the matter can be addressed and we can decide whether we stay with the plus or minus 20% or vary it.

The member for Stuart claimed that information regarding boundary changes was not provided. The fact that the boundaries had been changed and people needed to be informed caused problems for everyone. The boundary changes were indicated in newspapers and on television as is required under the act. More importantly, most candidates worked very hard to ensure that people in their electorates knew them as candidates and were informed about what the boundaries were. I certainly did, as did most members on my side of the Assembly. The member for Stuart's boundaries did not change, yet he has taken it upon himself to say that this is an evil example of the need for reform. Not only did he have no experience of the problem; he could not show us that that in fact caused problems in the election.

Mr Speaker, in relation to optional preferential voting, the arguments have been put forward many times but I think that it only needs to be said that, in Australia, we have adopted a system that is different from that in the United Kingdom and the United States. That system includes compulsory voting for people over the age of 18 and compulsory preferential voting. Everyone is required by law to vote and everyone is required to list his best and worst choice in order. It is the only system that ensures that nobody is elected who does not have the support of the majority. It is contrary to systems in the United Kingdom where 70% of the people may not have supported the government in an election yet that government is in power. That is a total breakdown of the democratic process and I believe that any move away from compulsory voting and compulsory preferential voting will lead to a situation where we will have minority support for governments in office and that will be a step on the way to disaster.

People can advocate optional preferential voting but I do not think it can be shown conclusively that it is a successful system. The statistics that the Chief Minister quoted showed that, when we did have a optional preferential voting system, the number of people who voted informally was greater than under the compulsory preferential system. That indicates that the electors have the ability to differentiate between candidates. I believe that optional preferential voting would lead down the road towards a less democratic system.

The alphabetical listing of names is neither here nor there. I do not think that anyone would die at the stake over that particular issue. It is

appropriate to say that the electorate has common sense and sufficient intelligence to be able to differentiate between candidates. We do not have a problem with the donkey vote here. I suppose an example of that is the Leader of the Opposition whose surname begins with S. He managed to obtain the majority of the vote in his electorate. The member for Arafura, whose surname begins with T, also managed to succeed.

The rolls are required to close at 6 pm on the day the writs are issued. Most people who have taken any notice of the Electoral Act or who have any interest at all in the democratic process are aware that it is a requirement for people to be on the electoral roll once they are over the age of 18. Nobody simply takes his name off the roll. People are required to enrol and, when they change their address, they are required to notify the Electoral Office of their new address so that they remain on the roll. It is not a requirement for people to enrol when an election is called. It is a requirement that they enrol when they are over 18 and they have a responsibility to notify the Electoral Office when they move.

I think it is ridiculous to suggest that there is something undemocratic about the process of closing the rolls and to suggest that people will miss out on the vote because they broke the law in the first place. People have an obligation to enrol. The member for Stuart is the one who is primarily responsible for saying that the CLP government would not let people enrol. What a load of rubbish! People know it is a load of rubbish, but it makes me sick to hear people like the member for Stuart regurgitating it all the time. People have a responsibility to be on the roll. If we closed the rolls 7 days after the writs were issued, they would want to make it 14 days because they would think it might help them win an election.

Members of the opposition have to get it through their heads that they did not lose this election or the previous election because of the Electoral Act or the electoral system. They lost because people do not trust them and will not support them. All their waffling, all their arguments and all their carry-on to try to gain some electoral advantage is just balderdash and should be treated as such. We have one of the most innovative electoral systems in the country. We introduced mobile polling booths and were the first to do so. I cannot hear any denial of that. We introduced photographs in polling booths. We have been ahead and we will always be ahead because this government thinks ahead, unlike those people opposite who think in the past.

It would be nice to hear some words of praise for some of the innovations that have occurred through the Electoral Office and through the actions of the Chief Electoral Officer who does an excellent job under quite difficult circumstances. We are talking about an area that takes up one-sixth of the Australian land mass and which has a very sparse population. The Chief Electoral Officer does an extremely good job in ensuring that all Territorians can participate in the democratic process.

Mr Speaker, while we are talking about rolls, I think it is worth asking all members to have a quick perusal of the rolls for MacDonnell and Stuart at lunchtime, as I have done. In a very quick perusal, I found 160 names that were written more than twice on the roll for Stuart and 158 on the roll for MacDonnell.

Mr Ede: Rubbish!

Mr MANZIE: You have a look at it. It shows that perhaps he has never had a look at his roll. I would like to know how those people got on the roll. I

would like to know who signed and witnessed the forms that went to the Electoral Office. That would be very interesting indeed. I ask all members simply to have a look at the rolls for MacDonnell and Stuart and mark the names that appear more than once - twice or 3 times and sometimes 4 times.

MOTION

Revocation of Reserve Land

Mr HANRAHAN (Lands and Housing): Mr Speaker, I move:

that, in accordance with section 13(2) of the Territory Parks and Wildlife Conservation Act, this Assembly advises the Administrator, to revoke the declaration as a park of all that parcel of land at Howard Springs abutting Howard Springs Road and Gunn Point Road in the Hundred of Bagot County of Palmerston Northern Territory of Australia containing an area of 3120 m² more or less being part of Portion 2821 commencing at a point bearing 269d 57" 30' 1648.73 m from the most northern northeastern corner of Portion 2821 thence by lines bearing 262d 16" 61.78 m 251d 46" 30' 61.78 m 241d 17" 30' 61.78 m 230d 48" 61.78 m 41d 36" 118.72 m 65d 46" 30' 18.24 m 89d 57" 30' 126.5 m to the point of commencement, and originally declared as a park by an instrument dated 22 March 1985 and appearing at page 4 of Gazette No G13 dated 3 April 1985.

Mr Speaker, the reason for the revocation of this small portion of the Howard Springs Reserve is quite simple. The land is required so that the intersection of the Howard Springs Road and the Gunn Point Road can be upgraded and widened. As members will be well aware, the Howard Springs area is a fast-growing centre of population and residential traffic as well as traffic associated with the considerably increased recreational use of Gunn Point. Upgrading is desirable and even essential in the interests of road safety.

The area proposed for excision from the reserve is just over 0.3 ha. This represents only a small portion of the total area of the reserve which is 723 ha. Consequently, revocation will not detract from the existing values of the reserve and will be of great benefit to the residents of the area. The Territory Parks and Wildlife Conservation Act requires that this Assembly approves the revocation of a park or reserve or a part of a park or reserve. I therefore commend the motion to honourable members.

Debate adjourned.

BUILDING AMENDMENT BILL (Serial 6)

Bill presented and read a first time.

Mr HANRAHAN (Lands and Housing): Mr Speaker, I move that the bill be read a second time and seek leave to have my second-reading speech incorporated in Hansard.

Leave granted.

Mr HANRAHAN (Lands and Housing): In 1985, following adverse publicity about home building standards, the Minister for Housing convened a working party to report on the best means of achieving the maximum level of compliance with the Northern Territory Building Code in the most cost-effective way. One

recommendation of the working party was for the Building Act to be amended to provide greater penalties for second and subsequent offences.

Whilst the Building Act introduced in 1984 provides relatively severe maximum penalties, any conviction under the act relates to a specific project and does not take into account any previous convictions that the defaulter may have incurred under the Building Act. Therefore, each offence is treated as a first offence by the court and the penalties imposed may not reflect the fact that the defaulter has a dismal record of poor building practices. There have been cases where persons have defaulted intentionally because of the commercial reality that profits achieved by lowering building standards outweigh the penalties imposed by the act.

It is important that previous convictions are taken into account. The Building Amendment Bill ensures that corporations which have changed their identity since a previous conviction will still attract the higher penalties. The policing of building controls is a constant concern of my department and its policy is to prosecute, without exception, where wilful contraventions of the Building Code have occurred. This will complement the initiatives which have been taken. I commend the bill to honourable members.

Debate adjourned.

CROWN LANDS AMENDMENT BILL
(Serial 7)

Bill presented and read a first time.

Mr HANRAHAN (Lands and Housing): Mr Speaker, I move that the bill be now read a second time and seek leave to have my second-reading speech incorporated in Hansard.

Leave granted.

Mr HANRAHAN (Lands and Housing): It is not often that one has the opportunity to introduce amendments concerning what is perhaps the oldest statutory authority in the Territory. I refer to the Northern Territory Land Board. I consider that a brief resume of the history of the board will be of interest to members before I address the contents of the bill.

The first reference to the formation of a pastoral land authority is to be found in the Crown Lands Ordinance of 1912 which established the principle of leasehold tenure. That ordinance provided for the establishment of a Land Classification Board which classified the land before it was offered for leasing. Classified pastoral and agricultural land had to be advertised and the leasehold was granted by the board to that applicant who, in the opinion of the board, was the most suitable for the development of the Territory. The board comprised the Director of Agriculture, the Director of Lands and the Chief Surveyor.

The operation of the Land Classification Board caused dissatisfaction. The board did not achieve the desired aim because its classifications were inconsistent and it proved to be an irresponsible body in practice. No power of appeal against its findings existed and the magnitude of its power left the Government Resident practically powerless in the determination of rural lease conditions. With minor amendments, this ordinance remained in force until repealed by the Crown Lands Ordinance in 1923 which divided the Territory into 4 districts and laid down the annual rental to be paid for pastoral leases in

each of those districts. A Land Board under the control of the minister replaced the Land Classification Board.

Consequent upon the passing of the North Australia Act in 1926, the Crown Lands Ordinance 1927 was introduced repealing the existing Land Ordinance of the Northern Territory. The Land Board was replaced by the North Australia Commission but otherwise the new ordinance retained all other features of the 1926 ordinance.

Subsequently, in 1931, the commission was disbanded and both the Northern Territory Act 1926 and the Crown Lands Ordinance 1927 were repealed. The Crown Lands Ordinance 1931, which was the basis of the current Crown Lands Act, was in all major respects identical with the 1923 ordinance and a land board was again constituted.

In 1937, Messrs W.L. Payne and J.W. Fletcher were appointed by the Governor-General of Australia to inquire into land tenure and land industries of the Northern Territory. The Payne Fletcher Report recommended abolition of the Land Board:

The Land Board at Darwin, consisting of the Administrator and 2 other officers, need no longer be continued as it is only performing routine duties. The Administrator can fittingly exercise all the functions of the Land Board and generally act as Land Commissioner for the Territory. He would, of course, have the advice, if he required it, of the officers of the Territory service who, with him, now constitute the Land Board. This reform would also allow the Chief Surveyor to spend more time on field duties.

Subsequently, an amendment to the 1931 ordinance was passed in 1938 which gave to the Administrator the powers of the Land Board which then ceased to operate. In 1949, the Crown Lands Act was again amended to restore the Land Board once more but with reduced powers. Due to an increased workload, the importance placed upon expeditiously processing applications within Aboriginal reserves and the accepted need for the board to be an independent advisory board, a Land Board chairman, V.E. Wasilewsky, was recruited in January 1972 and appointed on 24 May 1972 to carry out full-time board responsibilities. Mr Wasilewsky is still the Chairman of the Land Board having given 14 years of service in the position. It is with regret that I have learned that Vic is due to retire in the near future. His guidance will be missed by all concerned with the pastoral industry.

Mr Speaker, I turn now to the provisions of the bill. The Northern Territory Land Board is an administrative and not a judicial tribunal. There is nothing onerous or contentious about the proposed amendments. The membership of the board is to remain unchanged with 14 members, including the chairman and deputy chairman. The only difference with appointment of members is that now the chairman will be appointed from the membership of the board whereas he is usually appointed separately to the other 13 members.

The Crown Lands Act is silent on the question of terms of appointment, provisions for reappointment and the dismissal of members. The latter can be covered by the Interpretation Act on the grounds that, where the minister has the power to do something, he has a similar power to undo that action. In effect, members are appointed until they elect to retire.

Over recent years, several pieces of Territory legislation relating to statutory authorities have been amended to provide for fixed terms of office,

replacement of members who resign, reappointment of members and dismissal on the normal grounds of bankruptcy, incompetence etc. The nature of the pastoral industry in the Territory is changing. There is evidence of close settlement occurring and an increase in the number of properties undertaking agriculture and horticulture. Because of the system of appointment of Land Board members, expertise in agriculture and horticulture is confined largely to government members of the board. They would be concerned normally with their own department's assessment of such applications in the course of their duties.

The board will benefit from an infusion of new members who are keeping abreast of technical and management developments in the rural and pastoral industries. Also, as the nature of these industries changes, the proposed amendments will allow the progressive introduction of new talent. A core of experienced members will be retained if the initial appointment of the new board is conducted in the manner of a half-Senate election. It is proposed that all positions on the board be declared vacant 3 months after the commencement of the proposed amendments, that half of the membership be appointed for 3 years initially and the other half for 6 years. At the expiration of the first 3-year term, an equivalent number of retiring members will be replaced or reappointed for a further 6-year term. While shorter periods of appointment, say 2 years and 4 years, could be considered, such periods would detract from the overall expertise of the board.

It follows that the amendments should contain provision for reappointment of serving members and for replacement of members who resign or die. Such members would be appointed initially for the remainder of the term of office of the member replaced. The need for dismissal of members for bankruptcy, criminal offences, and mental incompetence, and penalties for failure to declare an interest or for disclosure of confidential information and the like is self-evident. I commend the bill to honourable members.

Debate adjourned.

HOUSING AMENDMENT BILL (Serial 14)

Bill presented and read a first time.

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

The main purpose of this bill is to reconstitute the Northern Territory Housing Commission as a body corporate sole. Under the new ministerial and public service arrangements announced by the Chief Minister on 19 March 1987, the housing policy area of the Housing Commission was moved to the newly amalgamated Department of Lands and Housing and the design and construction of government housing was transferred to the Department of Transport and Works.

The Northern Territory Housing Commission is established as a body corporate under the Housing Act and currently consists of 5 members, a chairman, a deputy chairman, a tenant representative and 2 other members. Because of the new administrative changes and because most of the Housing Commission's activities are now absorbed within government departments, it is felt that this body corporate would be more effective if the composition of the commission were reduced to one. Under the proposed amending legislation, this person will be the chairman and he will be renamed the commissioner.

There are major areas of concern relating to legal, financial and property aspects if the commission is abolished as a body corporate. For example, there are approximately 9000 registered interests, such as property titles, loans and mortgages, which will cause a huge volume of work for the Department of Lands and Housing, the Registrar-General, banks and other lending institutions to effect any name change if the commission ceases to exist. The formation of the Northern Territory Housing Commission as a body corporate sole is seen as the most practical and economical method to meet the desired changes in government administration.

Mr Speaker, opportunity has been taken to rectify an irregularity in the Housing Act relating to determination of rents and sale prices of Housing Commission dwellings. Clauses 7 and 10 of the bill amend existing sections 23 and 35 of the principal act respectively so that it is made clear that rents and sale prices of commission dwellings can be determined either on an individual basis or as a group or class of dwelling, taking into account location or style of building. Mr Speaker, I commend the bill to honourable members.

Debate adjourned.

PAYROLL TAX AMENDMENT BILL
(Serial 13)

Bill presented and read a first time.

Mr COULTER (Treasurer): Mr Speaker, I move that the bill be now read a second time and seek leave to have my second-reading speech incorporated in Hansard.

Leave granted.

Mr COULTER (Treasurer): The purpose of the bill is to enable certain organisations, established to provide local government-type services, to be relieved of payroll tax liabilities. The Payroll Tax Act provides an exemption from payroll tax for local governing bodies. This term is not defined in the act. However, only authorities which derive their power from the Local Government Act are presently covered by the exemption.

In the Territory, local government services are provided through a variety of organisations, some formally created under the Local Government Act and others operating under different legislation. The majority of these bodies have been determined to be local governing bodies for the purpose of the Local Government Grants Commission Act. The amendment introduces a definition which will cover local governing bodies created under the Local Government Act, as well as those recognised under the Local Government Grants Commission Act. It will thus enable organisations carrying out similar functions to be accorded uniform treatment under the Payroll Tax Act.

The amendment will also ensure that wages related to Community Development Employment projects carried out by these organisations will not be subject to payroll tax. This accords with similar arrangements in the states. I commend the bill to honourable members.

Debate adjourned.

CREDIT UNIONS AMENDMENT BILL
(Serial 15)

Bill presented and read a first time.

Mr COULTER (Treasurer): Mr Speaker, I move that the bill be now read a second time and seek leave to have my second-reading speech incorporated in Hansard.

Leave granted.

Mr COULTER (Treasurer): This bill has been introduced to overcome a minor technical error in the existing legislation by creating a register. The act refers to a register which the registrar can use to record registration and deregistration of credit unions. However, the act does not provide for a register or any form of registration. The amending clause removes an anomaly from the act and provides for retroactive validation for the transfer of engagements of the Nhulunbuy Cooperative Credit Society Limited to the Public Service Cooperative Credit Society (NT) Ltd.

The 2 societies approached the Registrar of Credit Unions early last year with a proposal to merge their operations. The decision to transfer the engagements of the Nhulunbuy Cooperative Credit Society Ltd to the Public Service Cooperative Credit Society (NT) Ltd served the best interests of both societies and, in particular, offered members of the Nhulunbuy society access to a wider range of services. These include access to a larger loans fund, better interest rates on deposits, insurance and travel services and Visa Card. Meetings with members of both societies drew unanimous support for the proposal.

The transfer took place on 1 October 1986. At the time of transfer, regulations prescribing statutory procedures for a transfer of engagements had not been made. They were tabled subsequently in this Assembly on 11 November 1986. The proposed amendment to validate the transfer of engagements will formalise the actions of the 2 societies and the registrar which occurred in accordance with draft regulations. It will also confirm in the minds of members of the Public Service Cooperative Society (NT) Ltd in Nhulunbuy, who were formerly members of the Nhulunbuy Cooperative Credit Society Ltd, the status of their credit society membership. I commend the bill to honourable members.

Debate adjourned.

TRAFFIC AMENDMENT BILL
(Serial 5)

Bill presented and read a first time.

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

The bill is essentially the same as that introduced in the last sittings of the previous Assembly and which lapsed due to the prorogation. The purpose of the bill is twofold: to take some initial steps to upgrade Northern Territory drink-driving provisions and to upgrade the traffic infringement notice provisions, particularly the penalties. The bill makes it an offence for a person under 18 and others with learner and provisional licences to drive with alcohol in their blood. This will place the NT in line with the

states on this matter. All states already have zero or 0.02% alcohol requirements.

The zero alcohol requirement serves a number of road safety purposes. It will help to reduce the risk of alcohol compounding the problems of inexperience and will also encourage new drivers, from the start, to develop a habit of not driving after drinking and to arrange their social activities accordingly. It will mean also that persons regaining a licence after a drink-driving or other offence resulting in loss of licence for 3 months or more will have to conform with the same requirements; that is, because of their provisional licence status, they will have to ensure that, for the first 12 months, they do not drive at all after drinking.

Mr Speaker, I point out that, while the bill will make it an offence for these persons to drive with any alcohol in their blood, for practical administrative purposes the police will be working on a 0.02% blood-alcohol content limit, at least initially. This will put to rest the often misplaced concern that alcohol from cough mixtures or other medicines might lead to an offence. I say 'misplaced' because my advice is that there is no legitimacy in those concerns. A large amount of patent medicine would be needed to cause a positive reading.

Clause 5 is a minor addition to the bill that was introduced last year. It is to ensure police have the authority to analyse a person who is subject to the zero alcohol provisions when they believe there is alcohol in that person's blood. Penalties for zero alcohol offences are the same as for exceeding 0.08%. The first zero alcohol offence will be subject to a maximum penalty of \$500 or 6 months imprisonment. It will also incur an automatic licence loss for 3 months. Mr Speaker, these penalties are not inconsistent with current state penalties. However, penalties for 0.08% or more serious drink-driving offences are to be further reviewed as part of a major review of the whole Traffic Act now nearing completion.

The bill also removes the option of licence suspension from the Traffic Act. This will mean that the court must cancel a licence and nominate a minimum time before a new licence can be sought. This will restore the situation which existed before October 1984. Prior to October 1984, all persons losing a licence for 3 months or longer for drink-driving offences were required to obtain a new licence. This was stopped only because of legal advice that the practice was inconsistent with the legislation.

The bill updates traffic infringement provisions by simplifying the administration. The police will no longer be required to have all the offences printed on the tickets they issue as this was cumbersome. They will still be required to write in the offences so that the offender knows what he is charged with. The offences themselves have been updated and the penalties significantly altered better to reflect current monetary values. The existing penalties were set in 1977.

The bill also removes the current ban on retaining a record of those who have paid the infringement fine. The Northern Territory is the only part of Australia with this ban, which means that drivers who regularly come under police attention are normally only charged with respect to the action under attention. There is no account of their overall record. The change does not go as far as the introduction of a points demerit scheme, but it will provide a starting point for better information of driver performance and will enable more attention to be given to those drivers who show a persistent pattern of traffic law infringement.

Mr Speaker, I might add that the measures in this bill reflect the beginning of a series of measures to upgrade traffic and driver licence provisions that the government is developing to help encourage better performance on the road. In the coming months, I expect to be presenting to the Assembly bills to provide a complete new Traffic Act and to make significant amendments to driver licence provisions in the Motor Vehicles Act. I will be speaking separately on those matters during these sittings.

Before concluding, I would like to emphasise that, important as the various safety-based legislation measures are, the final responsibility must always go back to the individual who, in the final analysis, is responsible for most accidents. The role of legislation is to help identify what desirable road practice is and to improve the effectiveness of government and private resources being applied to road safety education enforcement. Mr Speaker, I commend the bill to the Assembly.

Debate adjourned.

SUSPENSION OF STANDING ORDERS

Mr MANZIE (Attorney-General): Mr Speaker, I move that so much of standing orders be suspended as would prevent the Summary Offences Bill (Serial 2) and the Firearms Amendment Bill (Serial 3) from being presented and read a first time together and 1 motion being put in regard to, respectively, the second readings, the committee's report stages and the third readings of the bills together; and the consideration of the bills separately in the committee of the whole.

Motion agreed to.

SUMMARY OFFENCES AMENDMENT BILL (Serial 2) FIREARMS AMENDMENT BILL (Serial 3)

Bills presented and read a first time.

Mr MANZIE (Attorney-General): Mr Deputy Speaker, I move that the bills be now read a second time and seek leave to have my second-reading speech incorporated in Hansard.

Leave granted.

Mr MANZIE (Attorney-General): Mr Speaker, it is appropriate that these 2 bills should be considered together. The Firearms Act is the responsibility of the Chief Minister. However, as the Firearms Amendment Bill is consequential upon the Summary Offences Amendment Bill for which I have responsibility, on this occasion the Chief Minister has approved of my dealing with the amendment to the Firearms Act.

The purpose of the bill to amend the Summary Offences Act is twofold. First, the amendment to section 43 of the Summary Offences Act is to ensure that stock mustering by means of helicopters is made subject to the requirement of section 43 of the Summary Offences Act. That section enables any owner of stock or his agent to lawfully enter upon the land of another person to drive his own stock from that land. To take advantage of the section, the stock owner must give 2 to 7 days' notice of his intention to muster to the landholder upon whose land the stock are located. It is an offence to conduct the muster without having given the required notice.

Since that section was enacted, mustering by helicopter has become common practice. The problem to be rectified by this amendment is that, when mustering stock from a helicopter hovering over the land, a person cannot necessarily be said to have entered upon the land. The law is not clear on this point. The common law courts have been inconsistent in holding people for trespass when occupying airspace over another person's land. Whether a trespass to land in common law is equivalent to entering upon land in summary offences legislation is another doubtful question. For this reason, the government has decided to amend the act to put the matter beyond doubt. The bill achieves this simply by providing that reference in the relevant section to an entry upon land is to include entry into the airspace above the land. This amendment will clarify the obligations of landholders and avoid any confrontation and litigation that may otherwise arise.

The further amendment to the Summary Offences Act requires consequential amendment to the Firearms Act. The purpose of these amendments is to abolish the requirement that the group of offences in part VIII of the Summary Offences Act be committed in a proclaimed locality. Most of those offences are antiquated and do not justify police enforcement effort. Two examples are conveying slops, nightsoil etc in the street between certain hours, and covering and securing entrances to cellars and coal holes. Some of the offences are duplicated in other acts. The government will be reviewing these and repealing unnecessary offences. Proclamations of new town areas have not kept pace with Territory development as the offences involved are largely moribund and so have not justified up-to-date proclamations being made.

The one exception is section 75(1A) which makes it an offence to discharge a firearm in a public place, near a public place or from a vehicle in a public place. The repeal of this provision is proposed in the Summary Offences Amendment Bill and the provision will be re-enacted, in a modified form, through the Firearms Amendment Bill. There are 2 reasons for this. First, it is preferable to have all modern firearms offences rationalised within 1 act, the Firearms Act, and, secondly, and more importantly, the expression 'public place' is widely defined in the Summary Offences Act and the discharge of a firearm would be made an offence of wide geographic application throughout the Territory.

The government has no wish to make illegal shooting and hunting activities that law-abiding Territory citizens and visitors to the Territory have engaged in for perhaps many years. Therefore, the amendment to the Firearms Act will require that an offence is established if the discharge of a firearm occurs so as to endanger, annoy or frighten, or in a manner which is likely to endanger, annoy or frighten, the public or any person. I commend the bills to the Assembly.

Debate adjourned.

TRESPASS BILL
(Serial 8)

Bill presented and read a first time.

Mr MANZIE (Attorney-General): Mr Deputy Speaker, I move that the bill be now read a second time, and seek leave to have my second-reading speech incorporated in Hansard.

Leave granted.

Mr MANZIE (Attorney-General): Mr Speaker, the purpose of this bill is to enact in 1 piece of legislation the law concerning criminal trespass. At present, the law concerning criminal trespass is contained in a number of places. Section 57(1)(n) of the Summary Offences Act deals with persons who trespass on enclosed premises with the intention of committing an offence. Section 91A of the same act deals with trespass on premises of the Territory. These sections are repealed by clause 3 of the bill and now appear in clauses 5 and 6.

Sections 118 and 119 of the Crown Lands Act deal with unauthorised occupation of Crown lands. These provisions are also repealed by clause 3. Under the bill, trespass on Crown land is dealt with in the same general way as trespass on private property.

Clause 7 provides that, if a person trespasses on any land, he will commit an offence if he is asked to leave that land but does not. For private property, the request to leave must be made by the occupier, as defined in clause 4, or a police officer who is acting at the request of the occupier. For trespass on Crown land, a direction to leave can be given by a person in charge of that place or a person acting pursuant to his direction. A police officer may also give a direction to leave Crown land in all cases whether requested to act by the occupier or not.

Clause 8 enables an occupier to warn a person to stay off his premises. A court may also order a person to stay off particular premises. The person who has been warned off premises commits an offence if he unlawfully trespasses on those premises after having been warned off. Clause 10 enables a police officer to arrest a person who trespasses contrary to clauses 7 or 8. He may also remove that person from the relevant premises without arresting him.

Clause 13 creates defences to charges in respect of clauses 5 to 8. In particular, it exempts a person from criminal liability for such things as trespassing in pursuit of game while hunting, or trespassing for the purposes of protecting himself or another on his or another's property.

Clause 14 provides that the bill does not affect the existing law or the provisions of the Tenancy Act which deal with what may be termed civil trespass.

Debate adjourned.

SALE OF GOODS (VIENNA CONVENTION) BILL (Serial 9)

Bill presented and read a first time.

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

I introduce the bill that has been prepared following an agreement by the Standing Committee of Attorneys-General to implement the United Nations convention on contracts for the international sale of goods through state and Territory legislation rather than Commonwealth legislation. The convention has been signed by over 20 countries, including the USA, most European countries and Singapore although not the United Kingdom nor Japan. It is considered desirable that Australia provide for such contracts in the manner of the convention. Matters relating to the sale of goods have traditionally been areas of state jurisdiction and therefore it is appropriate that the

Northern Territory rather than the Commonwealth should enact this legislation. All states have introduced or will introduce identical bills.

The convention is contained in schedule 1 of the bill. It predominantly relates to international transactions and its relevance to domestic transactions is insignificant. The present situation regarding the international sale of goods and contracts where parties are not signatories to the convention is that the private international law that governs a particular transaction will be different in most countries. For example, if a contract is made between 2 parties, 1 of whom belongs to a common law country and the other to a civil law country, the rights of the parties under the contract and the procedures for enforcing their rights are likely to differ significantly, depending upon which legal system is applied.

The convention applies one law to the sale of goods intended for commercial use; that is, that there will be no private use, subject to the exception in article 2 that the seller did not know at any time that it was for private use between a party in Australia and a party in another convention country. The convention governs only the formation of the contract of sale and the rights and obligations of the seller and the buyer arising from such a contract. The parties may include the application of this convention or derogate from its provisions. By virtue of article 7, questions concerning matters governed by this convention which are not expressly settled in it are to be settled in conformity with the law applicable by virtue of the rules of private international law. The convention provides uniform rules for determining the formation of a contract, the obligation of the seller, the obligations of the buyer, the passing of the risk and principles for assessing interest and damages for breach.

Apart from the convention itself, the bill consists of 7 clauses including the formal provisions. The bill provides that it shall bind the Crown in right of the Northern Territory and also, as far as is permitted, the Crown and all of its capacities. The provisions of the convention will have the force of law in the Territory and prevail to the extent of any inconsistency between it and any other law in force in the Territory.

The bill also provides that a document purporting to be a notice issued by a minister of the Crown in the Territory and published in the NT Government Gazette or a document purporting to be a notice issued by a minister of state for the Commonwealth and published in the Commonwealth of Australia Gazette or a document certified by a legal practitioner to be a true copy thereof containing declarations in respect of the convention, is evidence of the matters contained in the document. I commend the bill to honourable members.

Debate adjourned.

SUSPENSION OF STANDING ORDERS

Mr MANZIE (Attorney-General): Mr Deputy Speaker, I move that so much of standing orders be suspended as would prevent the Wills Amendment Bill (Serial 10) and the Public Trustee Amendment Bill (Serial 11) from being presented and read a first time together and 1 motion being put in relation to, respectively, the second readings, 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.

WILLS AMENDMENT BILL
(Serial 10)
PUBLIC TRUSTEE AMENDMENT BILL
(Serial 11)

Bills presented together and read a first time.

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

The purpose of these bills is to repeal legislation that provides for the deposit of wills with the Registrar of Probate and to enact legislation to enable the Public Trustee to hold these wills and maintain an index which may be searched by the public.

In 1969, sections 38, 39, 40 and 41 were added to the Wills Act replacing the old Administration and Probate Act which provided for the deposit of wills with the Registrar of Probates. Provision was also made for an index to be maintained and to allow for searching of that index. The Public Trustee Act also contains a provision whereby a testator may deposit his will with the Public Trustee. The will need not appoint the Public Trustee as executor.

The Public Trustee is not required to allow persons to search his register of wills held but, in practice, the register is available to the public. The Registrar of Probate holds approximately 500 wills and the Public Trustee holds approximately 4000 wills. Neither the Registrar of Probate nor the Public Trustee charge any fee for holding the documents or for allowing search of the register. Both offices hold wills dating back over 20 years.

Two offices in separate locations are providing an identical service, duplicating staff and resources. This also means that a person searching for a will must search both registers. By combining the registers in the office of the Public Trustee, unnecessary duplication will be avoided, saving time and expense. Mr Speaker, I commend the bills.

Debate adjourned.

ADDRESS-IN-REPLY

Continued from 28 April 1987.

Mr HANRAHAN (Lands and Housing): Mr Deputy Speaker, His Honour the Administrator has spoken of a second cycle of growth in the Northern Territory during the next decade and the Chief Minister has spoken of the new generation of our development as we move towards the 1990s. We are indeed a region on the move. As the Territory progresses, we are gathering strength, a strength based on the personal commitment of so many Territorians to endeavour in both the social and economic senses.

It is because of the Territory's continuing development that we are entering such an exciting period of our history. Territorians from all walks of life have a unique opportunity to share in this region's progress while being able to avoid the mistakes of the states and the Commonwealth. The Territory is often described as the world's last frontier and its people as pioneers. Both descriptions are aptly applied. We are pioneering a frontier of enormous wealth in natural and community resources. Territorians can be justifiably proud of their achievements in creating a sound basis for future progress across the broad spectrum of social and industrial endeavour.

No industry can better illustrate the remarkable level of achievement attained than tourism. The Chief Minister has already pointed to the successes of this still young, but increasingly vibrant, employment and income-generating sector. The origins of tourism were shaky, with little incentive and even less infrastructural support. However, at self-government, this Assembly resolved to provide impetus to the fledgling industry. The government took the bold decision to look to the long-term future of the Territory and actively to assist the travel, tour, accommodation, hospitality and service sectors of tourism. The potential was identified early but, more importantly, the determination of the ad hoc operators was recognised.

The results today are obvious and are having a positive impact on almost all Territorians. An estimated 1000 new jobs a year will be created in tourism from now on, doubling the industry's work force to 10 000 by 1991. The industry will be handling a record number of visitors this year - more than 700 000. The impact of that huge number of travellers on the economy obviously will be massive, an estimated injection of \$350m into the Territory economy. In terms of population, the Northern Territory proportionately is becoming Australia's leading travel destination. That fact and the success of existing facilities has prompted an unprecedented number of new tourist initiatives for the Territory.

At present, there are some 60 separate projects in various stages of construction and planning by private enterprise. Those projects are conservatively worth an estimated \$300m. They include new hotels and motels in Darwin, Alice Springs, Katherine, Kakadu National Park and Tennant Creek. At Kings Canyon, Mingatjuta Developments Pty Ltd has been offered a development lease over a parcel of land 7 km north-west of the canyon. When lease and development conditions are fulfilled, that company will be offered freehold title to the area.

It will be remembered that Mingatjuta, which at this stage comprises Destination Australia Marketing and Centrecorp, a company established by the Central Land Council on behalf of the Kings Canyon traditional people, will be developing a wilderness lodge, camping facilities and a roadhouse. The company plans to open the complex in the middle of next year. The Kings Canyon project will be a jewel in the Territory's tourism crown. It heralds a new era in tourism development in that it is pioneering new ground without government financial underwriting or support. I believe Kings Canyon will become a model for many other tourism projects in the Territory, particularly in light of the fact that it has direct Aboriginal equity.

Litchfield Park will soon be accessible to tourists and to residents of the Territory. Next year, roadworks will enable access to the park's major attractions from both Batchelor and the Wangi road. In addition, new accommodation facilities are being provided, with the development of casual overnight camping sites at Wangi Falls, the opening of a motel at Batchelor in the next few months and increasing camping capacity at other areas of the park such as at Florence Falls. On top of this, we are now involved in the study of further accommodation within Litchfield Park with a major Australian company. Unlike Kakadu, which for years has had limited accommodation, Litchfield will not suffer the same limitations on tourist use.

For some time, the Conservation and Tourist Commissions have been engaged in identifying and assessing new recreational resources in the Territory. Among the most exciting proposals are a wilderness lodge on the Cobourgh Peninsula, including safari camping, boating, shopping and convention facilities and an airstrip, and longer-range plans to open Gregory National Park.

Tourism marketing in the Territory is both aggressive and highly professional and is tailored to the highly-rated facilities and services the industry offers to domestic and overseas visitors. A major initiative has been the restructuring of marketing and development policy under the Tourist Commission, allowing greater coordination in identifying market needs, developing the product and in unifying a marketing program in close relationship with the private sector.

In terms of tourism development, the placement of lands, tourism and conservation under my ministerial responsibility, creates a practical tourism planning mechanism. This month, I opened the relocated Northern Territory Government Tourist Bureau in the new Ford Plaza complex in Alice Springs and the new visitors' information centre in Tennant Creek. Next month, a similar new information centre will open in Katherine.

Sales by the national network of Northern Territory Government Tourist Bureau operations show a year-to-date increase of 12% over the corresponding period last year. For the month of March this year, sales figures represented a massive 58% increase on March last year. We are doing extremely well.

I have sung the praises of the Tourist Commission for good reason. Its achievements to date and its continuing successes are no less than remarkable. Another arm of government which, to my mind, is no less remarkable is the Conservation Commission. Unlike the high profile which, by its nature, the Tourist Commission receives nationally and internationally, the Conservation Commission achieves its objectives largely out of the public spotlight. The commission is an impressive and vital division of the government staffed by a highly experienced and dedicated group of Territorians.

I am particularly pleased to be the minister responsible for this organisation and I wish to place on record my recognition of its work. It is fitting that 3 vital arms of government - lands, tourism and conservation - should be under 1 minister's responsibility as there are so many areas in which the 3 are involved. Through the conservation portfolio, the government remains committed to the development of parks and reserves throughout the Territory. Developments to which the government is already committed and to which I have already referred include Litchfield Park near Bachelor and Gregory Park in the Victoria River region, Kings Canyon in the Centre and Cobourg Peninsula in the far north. The economic link between tourism and the existence of parks and reserves is well documented. Studies have proven that the benefits accruing to the community at large from parks can be measured in real financial terms such as income from associated regional projects, sales and, of course, employment.

The Berry Springs Wildlife Park, at present under construction, has the potential to become a major tourist attraction in its own right and will be a significant economic bonus for the area. During last year, legislation was passed which will enable the establishment of local management committees for parks and other Conservation Commission lands. These committees represent a significant advancement in the involvement of Aboriginal people in land management for recreation and conservation purposes.

Negotiations are at an advanced stage regarding the establishment of committees for the management of Kings Canyon and Gosse Bluff in the Centre and for North Island in the Sir Edward Pellew Group. Cobourg already is a prime example of the way in which Aboriginal Territorians can be charged with the responsibility of managing their own land. I am hoping to table the plan of management for the national park during this year. I expect it to provide

for a range of developmental projects, one of which is a multi-million dollar resort project at Coral Bay in Port Essington.

In the latest reorganisation of the departmental structure, the Conservation Commission assumed responsibility for heritage matters. The government has an ongoing commitment in this area and the 1986-87 budget approved a total of \$137 000 under its heritage program for a series of projects, including restoration work on Albert Namatjira's house and the Catholic Church at Tennant Creek. The government has advertised recently for applications for project funding for 1987-88 with the level of support expected to be no less than that made available this year.

Through the Conservation Commission, we continue to monitor development projects in the Northern Territory which could have a significant effect on the environment. Through the Environmental Assessment Act, proponents of such projects may be required to provide statements relating to the expected environmental consequences that may evolve. The commission, of course, is also closely involved in environmental education through a program to increase the awareness of children in a wide range of environmental issues. The program, I am sure, augurs well for the future of our natural heritage.

Much has been said of late about the management of crocodiles. Naturally, crocodile attacks are tragic and gruesome but I believe they are taken out of context by some sections of the media, both local and national. Sensational reporting of the most recent attacks in northern Australia do little more than incite the fringe element within society. If only the same media devoted as much attention, effort and resources to the national and Territory road toll, perhaps then Australians would have a healthier respect for the motor car and its potential to maim and kill. What all of us have to remember to appreciate is that we share the crocodile's environment. The so-called right to safe recreational pursuit, no matter what the circumstances, is utter fallacy. None of us has a God-given right to enter a wilderness - and I stress the term 'wilderness' - with an unreal expectation that nothing can go wrong.

As I said in a recent media statement, the Territory is not another Gold Coast or Bondi Beach, thank goodness! Nevertheless, people still drown in both of those places when they take unnecessary risks or act with sheer stupidity. The 2 recent crocodile attacks in north Australia have naturally created public debate. In the main, the debate is welcome where it raises public consciousness regarding crocodiles and the do's and don'ts of entering the crocodile's domain. However, it fails when proponents of the final solution begin coming out of the woodwork, the anti-crocodile fringe which promotes wholesale slaughter of the animal.

I wish to make it quite clear again that there will be no change in the government's commitment to preservation of the crocodile and its habitat. There will be no culling and no exclusion zones. The Conservation Commission's ranger service will continue its long-proven and highly-effective trapping and removal program and its public education campaign. What I have instituted is a higher profile for public awareness but what I will not do is entertain any suggestion that the excellent crocodile management program should be altered. The expertise of the Territory's rangers and fauna researchers is unparalleled and in fact is sought after by wildlife authorities Australia-wide. The commission provides advice and assistance in crocodile management to many agencies because it is regarded as the very best in the field. I for one will continue to take notice of our own home-grown and world-leading authorities with regard to crocodile management in the Territory and not the bleatings of the gung-ho, shoot-'em-dead fringe element.

When we talk of conservation, we sometimes limit our horizons to what is best for today. However, I want to reaffirm the government's commitment to the whole spectrum of conservation issues in the Territory, not just for today but in order to meet the needs, expectations and aspirations of future generations. If we continue to determine natural resource management procedures with the future always in mind, we will not only achieve a workable balance between ecological preservation and public recreation but a total environmental experience unique in the world: the Northern Territory experience.

Mr Deputy Speaker, I now wish to turn to the portfolio of Lands and Housing, amalgamated in the recent administrative restructure. The Northern Territory is a leader in Australia in a number of important areas of land administration. It is an enviable record for this administration, considering the chaotic system that we inherited at self-government.

Some of our more significant achievements to date include: the development of town plans for all major Territory centres; the implementation of a regional structure plan for Darwin and similar plans for Alice Springs, the Katherine rural area, the Darwin rural area and Darwin Harbour, all nearing completion and designed to ensure that orderly and appropriate development occurs; the introduction of land management computer systems which are now available to the public, the professions and business; recognition of the Lands Information System, LIS, and the computerised mapping system, Mapnet, as the most advanced of their type in Australia; a vast improvement in the availability of residential land for development; ensuring the private development projects beneficial to the Territory can proceed unimpeded by releasing land for industrial development in a planned and controlled manner; implementation of the direct land sales scheme to encourage and accelerate development and to allow direct sales of Crown land to developers for specific projects; progress with the excision program for Aboriginal living areas on pastoral properties, for which some 30 offers have been made, 14 titles issued and a further 6 accepted to date - and one wonders when the Commonwealth will honour its side of the bargain; establishment of a rural land use coordination group; and the formation of a Rural Land Use Advisory Committee to guide the government on needs and priorities.

Our plans for the future include: the introduction of pastoral freehold title; expansion of the program of identifying under-utilised government land; further development of the Mount John Valley Tourist precinct in Alice Springs; the early construction of stage 2 of the Dinah Beach boat ramp in Darwin; and a shooting complex at Leanyer, subject to agreement with the shooting organisations.

Through the Northern Territory Housing Commission, the government has built 7000 new homes in the Territory since self-government, a remarkable achievement. The commission is expected to construct in excess of 200 dwellings at Katherine by the end of next financial year to cope with the demand caused by Tindal's development. That will increase our current dwelling stock by almost 40% in that town. The government's design and construct program is encouraging the private sector to become more involved in the public housing industry. A total of 310 design and construct homes have been built since the program's inception in 1983. There is a continuing, strong trend towards design and construct public housing.

Since self-government more than 9000 people have borrowed a total of \$451m under the Government Home Ownership Scheme. In 1984, the Northern Territory Home Purchase Assistance Scheme was introduced with the aim of increasing home

ownership by allowing low- and middle-income earners to purchase their own homes, and to encourage private sector involvement in home financing. During 1985-86, private lending institutions provided 55.7% of home funds for owner-occupied dwellings, compared with 45.5% in 1984-85. More than 18 000 Territory families have been accommodated in public housing since self-government. The waiting time is much shorter here than in the states. The commission arranges accommodation for its clients with a minimum of delay.

The Industry Housing Assistance Scheme was developed by the government to help industrial and commercial enterprises, the deliverers of essential services and the providers of community welfare services. The scheme provides accommodation for key personnel in locations where housing shortages and high costs would otherwise have a negative effect on operations. As at the end of January 1987, 195 dwellings had been let under this scheme. Through the Housing Commission, the government has implemented an apprenticeship scheme to ensure a continuity of skilled tradespeople within the Territory's building industry. A total of 12 apprentices in the scheme are hired out currently to private contractors to maximise their exposure to various site working conditions. The scheme has been extended for an additional 2 years, to July 1991.

The federal Labor government's high interest rates are putting the Australian dream of home ownership out of the reach of middle-income families. The Commonwealth's policies also prevent our government from continuing to offer cheap finance to Housing Commission home buyers. To make matters worse, the deadline of the federal government subsidy to maintain the 13.5% rate for existing bank mortgages runs out this month. However, the Territory government does not intend to allow the Hawke government to hold back home ownership in the Territory. Our plans to meet the new challenges we face and provide new directions in housing policy include an innovative shared equity strategy to help middle-income families out of the interest rate trap. The strategy will allow Territorians to purchase a proportion of their home and only have to meet mortgage payments on that portion. The government will hold the remaining equity until such time as family finances allow the remaining equity to be purchased.

A major upgrading program for older Housing Commission accommodation will be introduced. The government will release \$31m during the next 3 years to modernise units, and \$25m during the next 5 years to renovate some 300 older houses. To meet any oversupply of housing in the private market, the commission will buy rather than build new public housing. We will increase funding available for Aboriginal housing to meet urgent and important needs in both rural and urban areas. It is anticipated that funding will be increased by \$5m during the 1987-1988 financial year.

Through the Housing Commission, the government is establishing an Aboriginal Housing Information Referral Service to assist Aboriginal Territorians to locate suitable housing and to develop house management skills. The housing advisory group will work in close partnership with industry to respond to changing circumstances and to encourage greater private sector involvement in meeting the Territory's housing and accommodation needs. I might add that, at the recent Housing Ministers' conference in New Zealand, where I was represented by the member for Karama, the Commonwealth Minister for Housing took time out to compliment the Territory's building program for Aboriginal housing and commended it to other ministers as the example to be followed.

The Chief Minister announced significant changes and new initiatives in housing policy during the lead-up to the recent election. I would hope, at some time in the next 3 months, to be able to present to the members of this Assembly a totally new direction in housing policy taking account of these initiatives. It gives me great pleasure to support the Address-in-Reply.

Mr SMITH (Opposition Leader): Mr Speaker, I wish to start by addressing a couple of comments to the remarks made by the Minister for Lands and Housing. It is the housing area that I particularly want to talk about. These are reasonably inconsequential things but, certainly, they are quite important to people in my electorate.

I appreciate and thank the government for its commitment of funds to upgrade the older Housing Commission housing. It has been a matter of some contention in the Nightcliff, Millner, Rapid Creek area that people who are living in Housing Commission homes without solar hot water, laundries, built-in cupboards and other things, have been forced to pay the same rent as people living in the more luxurious houses that the Housing Commission now builds. I congratulate the government on that decision and hope that the money comes through quickly and that the people in those suburbs will see some improvement in their living conditions.

The other thing that the Deputy Chief Minister said was that, in future, the Housing Commission will rely much more on design-built houses rather than building its own houses. If that is a correct statement, I would hope that the problems that a number of people have had in the last few weeks, in terms of wanting to buy their houses and finding that the cost that the Housing Commission is charging is significantly higher than the valuation, does not occur again. That is a real problem for those people who are in that unfortunate position. I know of 2 examples, and I have been advised of others, where the Housing Commission is saying that the cost of the house to the tenant is \$12000 to \$14000 more than the valuation of the house as supplied by the Valuer-General.

Mr Hanrahan: There are good reasons for that.

Mr SMITH: There may well be good reasons, but that is no consolation to the people involved. The sort of problem they run up against is that they cannot get insurance on the property above the valuation supplied by the Valuer-General. They are asked by the Housing Commission to pay a deposit of 5% of the Valuer-General's price, plus the complete difference between the Valuer-General's price and the price at which the house is offered to them. There are significant disadvantages to people in that situation.

I do not think that the Housing Commission, as a matter of policy, can go into the design and construct business if it means it will consistently receive houses from the private sector that are more expensive than the Valuer-General's price for those houses when they are completed. I hope that the government will keep that in mind when it considers that option. I must say that I have no objection to the Housing Commission continuing not to build its own houses and relying instead on the private market to build houses for it, but it has to be within the context that the houses come in under the Valuer-General's price or, at least, no higher than the Valuer-General's price. Otherwise there will be a significant disadvantage to people who want to purchase those houses.

Mr Speaker, I must admit I was somewhat disappointed with the addresses given yesterday by the Administrator and the Chief Minister. The

Administrator's speech, which of course was prepared by the government, was big on vague generalisations but very light on specific commitments that will get the Territory going again. One of the few specific commitments is to the freeholding of pastoral land, and it is quite clear why that is there; it is an obvious payback to Grant Heaslip and his pastoral mates for sticking with the Country Liberal Party rather than joining the Nationals in the last election.

Mr Dale: You can do better than that.

Mr SMITH: Give me time.

The vision of the Chief Minister for the Territory and his plans for the next 4 years lasted only 20 minutes. He did not even have enough vision, or enough feel for the Territory, to fill out his 30-minute entitlement. When he sat down, I felt previous Chief Ministers Paul Everingham and Ian Tuxworth turning in their political graves. They certainly would have used every available moment to sell the achievements of the government to the people of the Northern Territory in what is one of the most important speeches a Chief Minister can deliver. Nevertheless, this Chief Minister used only two-thirds of his allocated time. That demonstrates that he does not have much of a vision of what will happen in the Northern Territory.

Before I proceed with more detailed comment on some of the issues raised in both the Administrator's speech and the Chief Minister's speech, let me outline the style that the opposition will adopt in the next 4 years under my leadership. We will be a constructive opposition. We will support government initiatives where they deserve support. We will seek to amend the government initiatives where, in our view, they need to be amended, and we will seek to reject government initiatives where, in our view, they should be rejected. We will not oppose government initiatives purely for the sake of opposition, but we will ensure that the government is kept on its toes and the excesses of government curtailed. Unlike the government's, our contribution will be well researched, carefully thought through, and substantial.

The opposition's basic credo is that the Territory should be developed in the interests of all Territorians, not just the chosen few. We commit ourselves to looking after the interests of ordinary people as well as the present government looks after businesses in the Trade Development Zone. We reject the gung-ho, Young Turks approach of the CLP government, because only the few benefit and many pick up the tab. We will adopt a responsible and businesslike approach which considers the needs, aspirations and quality of life of all Territorians. Economic development must balance the needs of people with the needs of business. They must go forward together. To ignore social development will destabilise any economic development and that apparently is a lesson that this government has not learnt yet.

In planning for our economic future, we have to start from our economic past and present. That, unfortunately, is not in good shape. A whole range of economic statistics indicate that the Northern Territory is in the grip of an economic downturn. The population growth of the Territory has slowed to a little over 2% on the latest figures and some say Darwin currently has a negative population growth. I have not been able to confirm that but certainly that is the feeling in some sections of the housing industry. It is clear that building approvals are well down, car sales are well down, and the amount of money we raise from our own resources through taxes and charges is also well down according to the half-yearly budget figures. On top of that, as part of its attempt to right the total Australian economy, the federal

government has put the squeeze on the Northern Territory, with the prospect of a tighter squeeze being applied in the May economic statement.

Most of these factors were known last August. The May statement obviously was not, but most of the other factors were. The opposition pointed out in the budget debate that the government's revenue projections were rubbery and were unlikely to be realised. Unfortunately, the government deluded itself. The half-yearly budget figures reveal that our fears have been confirmed. The government has responded with a number of desperate one-off measures that may well balance the budget for this year but will lead to significant budgetary problems next financial year. The chickens will then come home to roost.

Mr Coulter: Are we going to balance the books this year?

Mr SMITH: In response to the Treasurer's comment, he has persistently told us that the books will be balanced this year.

Mr Coulter: And you persistently said that they would not.

Mr SMITH: I have not. I have said we have a severe problem. I am prepared to accept that you may well balance the budget this year, but it will be at a significant political cost which I am about to outline.

According to the Treasurer, the government will balance the budget this year. It will do this by means of a number of one-off measures. For example, it is engaged in a massive sale of Crown land. Rezoning and auction signs have appeared overnight like mushrooms throughout the suburbs of Darwin and Alice Springs. The rush to sell land is so great that the ordinary rights of residents to object to rezonings have been diminished and auctions are being advertised before rezonings have been approved. There are many signs around which prove exactly that point and I could personally point out 3 of them.

Many capital works projects have been delayed so that the majority of expenditure on them will take place next year, not this year as originally planned. Such decisions, while they save the government money in this financial year, have a depressing influence on activity in the private sector. The half-yearly account figures also revealed that our cash balances have disappeared. In December 1985, the cash balance figure was \$89m. In December 1986, the figure was negative. Some of that money can be accounted for. \$10m went into the ambitious government plan to socialise ownership of our 5-star hotels. About \$30m went into a separate superannuation fund and some went into payouts to public servants who gave unpalatable and honest advice. Finally, between \$30m and \$40m has gone from the cash balances into our operating accounts in an attempt to balance the budget.

If we have a balanced budget at the end of the financial year, it will be because we have raided the piggy bank. It will not be because our incoming revenue projections and our outgoing expenditure projections have matched, as outlined in the budget last year. Measures like selling off all your spare land and using up your cash reserves help you out of a short-term hole but create a much bigger long-term trough. As I have said, we will probably balance the budget this year, but we will leave ourselves with one hell of a mess for the next financial year.

Let me predict that the next Territory budget will feature extensive spending cuts, particularly in respect of community services, and a dramatic increase in Territory taxes and charges. We are already being softened up for it. On a number of occasions in the last few weeks, the Chief Minister has

been giving us the message that things will be tougher next financial year. Of course, the reason he has given is federal government cutbacks and particularly the May statement. I do not deny that the May statement will impose some additional financial difficulties on the Northern Territory.

Mr Hatton: According to your Labor mates, it is \$1000m.

Mr SMITH: It may be \$1000m Australia-wide. It certainly will make life more difficult in the Northern Territory. However, the overwhelming reason why we in the Northern Territory will be facing reduced services and increased taxes and charges next year will be the inability of this government to properly manage the financial affairs of the Northern Territory.

Mr Perron: You have been saying that for 9 years.

Mr SMITH: I have not been here for 9 years.

There is no doubt that the Territory is entering one of its more testing periods and it will require hard work and commitment to lift us out of our current downturn. The Chief Minister stated that the key to success will be diversification in services, in industry and in opportunity. He coupled this with the assertion that the Territory is moving into a second stage of development - the diversification of our industrial base and the expansion of development east and west of the Stuart Highway. He went on to say that we 'need to develop secondary industries to enable downstream processing of our primary products'. I think he is right. For too long the Northern Territory has had a colonial-type economy where our raw materials are being ripped out and the processing done elsewhere. The sooner we can reverse that process and become involved in some processing of our own raw materials, the better.

Mr Coulter: A uranium enrichment plant?

Mr SMITH: The uranium industry is one of the few industries in the Northern Territory where further processing is carried out on site.

The difficulties of achieving this further processing are illustrated in 2 examples which the Chief Minister gave. The first of these is kenaf. The Chief Minister described kenaf as a potential major project. With respect, I would have to say that that is a bit over-ambitious at this stage. I have seen kenaf and I did not have to go to Thailand to do so. I was able to see it in Queensland where conditions and techniques are slightly more applicable to the Northern Territory than in Thailand. There is no doubt that kenaf has considerable potential but there is considerable proving up to do as well. It requires plenty of water regularly and large amounts of fertiliser.

The big problem at present is getting sufficient tonnage per hectare to make it a commercial proposition. That is a major problem and, in Queensland, they think they are only two-thirds of the way to achieving the necessary results. That still leaves them a long way short of the tonnage per hectare needed to make the growing of kenaf a commercial proposition. I think it is over-ambitious to call it a major project at this time. I hope that the government will proceed with caution to fully explore the feasibility of this crop, and that we do not lock ourselves into an over-ambitious start which again, in my view, would ruin it.

The second difficult area is in the processing of meat. We intend to process meat in the Northern Territory at a time when an increasing percentage of Territory cattle are slaughtered outside the Territory. The sad statistic

is that, currently, two-thirds of Territory cattle are slaughtered outside the Northern Territory. That is a fact despite the hoo-ha about Mudginberri and the need to break away from the tally system to enable our meatworks to operate profitably. Ironically, after the CLP's bankrolling and engineering of the tally system, supposedly to boost abattoir activity in the Northern Territory, pastoralists in the Northern Territory are supporting the tally system by sending their cattle interstate for slaughter. Two-thirds of Northern Territory cattle are slaughtered outside the Territory in abattoirs where the tally system is operating. Perhaps the Chief Minister had better have a look at his statistics. We had a bitter dispute which resulted in no positive outcome for Territory abattoirs. Our local slaughtering rate has dropped by about 14% in the last 12 months.

I continue to be amazed that, in all of the government's comments on future economic boosts for the Northern Territory, it continues to pay no attention to the defence boost we will receive over the next 10 to 15 years. The 2nd Cavalry Regiment will be in Darwin by the end of 1992 and, all going well, with a Labor Party government in Canberra, we will have a brigade in the Top End by the end of the century. The boost that that will bring to the Northern Territory is enormous: infrastructure worth close to \$1000m and an annual injection into the economy of close to \$100m. That is the biggest economic boost we are likely to get during the rest of the century, yet this government refuses to recognise it. Handled properly, in secondary industry alone, it will create many new opportunities for Territory businesses - certainly, many more opportunities than any other enterprise is likely to.

We are looking at 25 000 additional people in the Northern Territory. As I have pointed out on a number of occasions, that is the equivalent of another Alice Springs or another northern suburbs. My discussions in Townsville last week clearly indicate that, unless we plan for it carefully, we will miss a number of economic opportunities for Territory businesses and we will risk some severe social problems. If we start proper planning now, we will maximise the advantages that we can obtain from this major defence boost to the Northern Territory. Once again, I indicate that I am appalled that the government still has not addressed itself to the economic opportunities ...

Mr Hatton: Have you ever asked?

Mr SMITH: ... that the defence force boost will provide to the Northern Territory. If the Chief Minister cannot remember the number of times that we asked that question during the election campaign, he has a very short memory.

Mr Hatton: Ask me in question time tomorrow.

Mr SMITH: There are 2 major infrastructure projects that have occupied the attention of people in the Northern Territory: the airport and the railway. Unfortunately, the debate on the airport facility has been dominated by a cargo cult mentality which assumes that, if the airport terminal is constructed, there will be an automatic and dramatic increase in the number of international flights into the Northern Territory. I must say that I was disappointed when the Chief Minister fell into that trap yesterday - for the first time, to be fair to him.

All of us know, particularly the member for Casuarina who has had so much to do with trying to get international carriers into Darwin, that international carriers fly into Darwin not because of the airport facilities but because of the traffic. If any member wants a demonstration of that, let him go to Athens Airport which is almost as bad as Darwin Airport. However,

that is not to say that we do not need a new airport terminal in Darwin. The size of the airport and the volume of traffic clearly point to the need for a new facility. When we get it, it may have a marginal impact on the decision of international carriers to land in Darwin or not. In this context, we should remember that, at present, a considerable number of them have landing rights but are not using them. That indicates that there is no need, as the Chief Minister argued, to free up civil aviation requirements to allow new operators in.

It is time this government adopted a coordinated approach to attracting new international operators into Darwin. Last year, I suggested a coordinated approach based on the model that has been adopted in Western Australia because the Western Australian government has the runs on the board. It has been very successful in attracting new international operators to Perth. I cannot remember the exact number of flights, but there have been more than 10 new international flights per week into Perth in the last 12 to 18 months. That is because the Western Australians went about it in a very professional manner. They have not sent well-meaning but bumbling amateurs like the member for Casuarina overseas to represent them. They engaged an expert, a hot shot called Ron Smith. They pay him a small fortune but he is worth it because he knows the airline industry. He is on leave from Continental Airlines where he has a permanent position as vice-president. Ron Smith has been able to do more in 12 months than this government has been able to do in 7 years in terms of attracting new international carriers.

I would suggest that it is about time the government thought seriously about attracting a similar expert into the Northern Territory, on a contract basis, to coordinate the government's activities in this matter. I would further suggest, as I suggested last year, that the government needs to work very closely with new airlines that are identified as having potential for exercising landing rights in Darwin. It needs to join with them in mounting publicity campaigns within the feeder areas of those new airlines. However, that will not happen unless there is a coordinated approach.

The second major infrastructure item is the railway. For the record, I repeat the ALP's position on the railway. We support the railway. We believe it is appropriate, if necessary, for the government to make a contribution to the capital cost. We do not believe that it is appropriate for the government to make a contribution to the operating costs and we never have. The bottom line must be that the railway should operate without the benefit of government subsidy, and I hope that that is a bipartisan position because a government of our small size, with our limited resources, cannot afford to get into an open-ended commitment simply to obtain a railway.

Whilst on transport, I must recognise the fine state of the Territory's main roads. In fact, having within the last 4 weeks travelled to Katherine on the Stuart Highway, and having travelled on what Queenslanders call their main highway, the Pacific Highway, the difference is quite staggering. The main arterial routes in our Northern Territory road system are better than those in the states of Australia. This government deserves congratulations on that and so, of course, does the federal government, both this one and the previous one, for the amount of money they have made available for roadworks.

In the Northern Territory, we have a unique community, one which is resourceful and enterprising. Our Territory community has a heightened sense of community care and a significant change in government policy was articulated yesterday by the Chief Minister, banally couched in understatement and innuendo. He indicated that we are to look to community and voluntary

groups to undertake welfare functions. This philosophy is transparently an abrogation of government responsibility and a definite return to the user-pays theory. The problem is that very often the user cannot pay. It also sets us along the path of using unpaid labour, however altruistic and caring the motives of that unpaid labour. It also points clearly to ever-greater costs, whether by direct payment or fund raising, for the community. Does this mean an ever-shrinking availability of services, more costly services, or a requirement for community members in need of services to fund services themselves?

The other part of his statement in this area related to choice. According to the Chief Minister, we can choose which private hospital we can go to or which private school we should attend. We all like choice but, in the case of community services, it will be only the affluent who can afford that choice. The choice of government services should be a government priority only when all Territorians have a satisfactory basic choice, and that is far from the case at present. Too many Territorians do not have adequate medical, water and education services. That is where we should be making our major efforts and putting our major priorities.

I am not suggesting that people should not be encouraged to provide as much as possible for their own needs and neither am I suggesting that volunteer agencies do not do a good job. But, ask a parent of a disabled child or the manic depressive self-help group or the pensioners in Katherine how much assistance they receive from this government when they try to set up self-help and community-based care systems. Ask the burnt-out volunteer workers what they think of the idea of giving them even more to cope with.

Mr Hatton: They think it is a great idea.

Mr SMITH: I know we live in hard times, but we cannot condone the irresponsible devolution of services to people. Government still has a role in this area.

Mrs Padgham-Purich: You do not know what you are talking about.

Mr Hatton: We are not socialists; that is the difference.

Mr Dale: Name one, Terry.

Mr SMITH: I will name one: the crazy scheme that your government and you as the responsible minister had of sending criminally insane people back to their isolated communities. That was a crazy scheme.

Mr Dale: The magistrate sent them, not me.

Mr SMITH: That was one crazy scheme that obviously did not work. You know why the magistrate did that. He did it out of a sense of desperation because you people will not provide the proper facilities because of your crazy attitude that the community should look after its own. What happened when that person went to Yuendumu because there were no facilities in Alice Springs? Within 24 hours, there were a couple of serious incidents of child molestation. That is the sort of irresponsible attitude that this government has taken on those issues.

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

Mr EDE (Stuart): Mr Deputy Speaker, I move that the Leader of the Opposition be granted an extension of time to complete his speech.

Motion agreed to.

Mr SMITH (Opposition Leader): Mr Deputy Speaker, the other brief series of comments I want to make concern the government's efforts at consultation within the community. Quite clearly, the government is setting up a large number of advisory boards. The problem is whether these advisory boards will really provide access for ordinary people in the community to the government decision-making process. I hope that they do but, given the present record of the government, the type of people it appoints to such boards and, more importantly, the notice that it takes of recommendations from advisory boards, I despair somewhat.

The other problem is that you can too easily use advisory boards and the need to consult as a basis for inaction and not taking decisions when they should be taken. Under the present Chief Minister, this government is quite clearly engaged in a widening of advisory boards in a whole range of areas. It is certainly an area that we will be keeping a close eye on to ensure that things work properly.

It would restore confidence if the government consulted occasionally and responded to the feelings of the general community. It would help if it gave information or warning of some of its precipitous decisions such as the rezoning of the Darwin Primary School, the Dick Ward Drive rezoning, school council and contract management arrangements and NTEC connection charges - there is a whole list of them.

Mr Hatton: There is a Planning Act.

Mr SMITH: The Planning Act is quite a disgraceful act when you look at it closely. The minister can do what he likes when he likes.

We believe that the Territory should take its rightful place in the Commonwealth of Australia and, as we have said on many occasions, statehood is a proper status for Territorians to pursue. An important element is our ability to convince the rest of Australia that we are economically responsible and that we are able to manage our affairs in a businesslike and professional way. We cannot achieve credibility or acceptability and neither can we promote our cause if we continue creating scandals that make us the laughing stock of the Australian economic community.

Significant and respectable Australian business houses have had to endure shabby and damaging treatment at the hands of this government. Our image in the wider business community is very poor indeed. It is fair to say that we have to lift our game in that area if the rest of Australia is to take our bid for statehood seriously. Statehood is our ultimate constitutional goal. There are complex constitutional and economic processes involved in the run-up to statehood. Election polling by all 3 parties indicated that there was a need for extensive consultation with the community on the question of statehood. The Chief Minister and his gallery of advisers may be convinced there are no dollar disadvantages to statehood but the people are not. They were given similar assurances, of course, at the time of self-government. They know the web of fantasy that this government peddles about our future. The issue of statehood must be approached in a realistic and pragmatic way. All sectors of the Territory population will need to work together to make it happen. The Labor opposition is prepared to work to ensure that the Territory

prosper. We are prepared to get in there and apply ourselves to building the future of the Territory.

Labor has traditionally found its base support with ordinary families and it is ordinary families who will be burdened with the lion's share of the economic downturn we are currently experiencing. It is also those ordinary families who will be the foundation of our economic future. They already face the highest cost of living in Australia. Further erosion of services or increases in charges for those services will make the Territory a less attractive place to live and raise a family in. I urge the government to recognise this and ensure that the people of the Territory are not forced to seek respite from the high cost of living by moving interstate. We need a stable population who believe the Territory can provide sound opportunities and a bright future for their children.

The Labor opposition knows the reality that faces the Territory. We in the Labor Party have never shirked our responsibility to face up to that. We have historic references as witness to the ability of the Labor Party to pick up the pieces in times of crisis after conservative forces have found the going too tough or have put our backs to the wall. We know what needs to be done. The Chief Minister asks for a commitment from the Territory's people. He will get that if he puts economic management before economic momentum, if he puts his economic agenda in partnership with social development and if he remembers to put people first. If he does this, he will have our support and the support of Territorians.

Mr COULTER (Treasurer): Mr Speaker, could I just spend a few short moments of my Address-in-Reply speech to discredit the Leader of the Opposition even more than he has done through his own efforts.

We heard him predict that the Northern Territory will have a balanced budget this financial year. Hansard will show that tomorrow. Let us look back a few short months. I love doing this: my research on the Leader of the Opposition is very good now. Let us recall what he was saying on 22 January this year. On talkback radio, in response to Col Krohn talking about a mini-budget, he said: 'I said that the Northern Territory government will require a mini-budget and the reason why it will require a mini-budget is that its revenue projections, as it outlined them in the budget, are just completely unrealistic'. Today he is saying that we will be able to balance the budget. He talked about a budget blowout of \$38m and suggested in a press statement that taxpayers will be slugged by the CLP government. It goes on and on and on.

How much credibility, faith and confidence can people have in the Leader of the Opposition as an economic spokesman? One moment, he is running around adopting the 'sky is falling down' approach that I mentioned yesterday. Today, he tells us that everything is all right and that we will be able to balance the budget. When the quarterly figures are released on Friday, it will be interesting to see if he will be back on a mini-budget trail again or whether he will say that we will finish the year with a surplus. I will not dwell on this for much longer, but I do want to point out to honourable members the series of contradictions on which his position is based. Maybe that is the secret of being in opposition and, in particular, being the Leader of the Opposition. Fortunately, I have too many other important things to talk about in relation to the Address-in-Reply.

The future of the Territory is tied into energy. The efficient generation and delivery of power is the key to the Territory's growth through statehood

and beyond into the next century. Thankfully, we have been provided with the natural resources to address this task. Indeed, during these sittings, I will be delivering a ministerial statement on the Territory's energy problems and prospects and I will be seeking to inform honourable members about the genuinely exciting energy vista opening before us. I do not want to detract from the significance of that statement and therefore today I intend to focus on the aspect of energy which is the most tangible and which has day-to-day relevance for all of us: the cost.

Honourable members will be grateful to learn that there is a master plan to reduce the Territory's energy costs and, in coming months, the government will continue to implement the first stage of this plan. Such a master plan has been made possible only through the use of our own natural gas reserves in central Australia to generate electricity in Darwin and the regional centres. Northern Territory gas, transported through a 1500 km pipeline from the Amadeus Basin to Darwin's new Channel Island Power Station, means Territorians no longer have to rely on expensive imported fuel to generate electricity.

The fuel we have had to import in the past, and paid through the nose for, has had a detrimental effect on all energy costs and has been one of the most severe impediments to Northern Territory development. These high energy costs have trapped us in the vicious spiral of electricity costs. We could not cover the cost of producing electricity, but we needed more electricity to assist necessary growth and development and, the more electricity we produced, the bigger our losses became. All in all, it was a most unsatisfactory and gloomy situation.

In 1985-86, NTEC's operating loss was \$40m and I guess that can be put into perspective by pointing out that it represents a loss of about \$1000 per service. In other words, every time NTEC found a new customer, it lost another \$1000 on average. That \$40m loss was offset by a Commonwealth subsidy, put in place in conjunction with the self-government agreement in 1978, to take account of the fact that Darwin was operating an inefficient, oil-fired station at Stokes Hill inherited from the Commonwealth. But, in 1985-86, the Commonwealth callously sliced up the subsidy agreement under which we should have received about \$80m. Instead, we had to cop half only - about \$40m - and this year it has been reduced again to \$29m. Clearly, the Commonwealth has been of no assistance to the Northern Territory in its necessary task of generating more power at an affordable cost. Equally clearly, under its current regime, the Commonwealth does not give a fig about northern development and the cost of living to the people in the north.

Our master plan hinges on our own efforts. We can expect the lowest possible level of support from Canberra. We have shown that we are more than capable of helping ourselves. I will not go into the chapter and verse of the gas technology story today. I trust honourable members are familiar with the story of the successful completion of the Amadeus Basin to Darwin gas pipeline under budget and within schedule and the conversion to generation of electricity at Channel Island from our own gas reserves. I pass over it but I do not treat it lightly; it has been a magnificent achievement.

However, stage 1 of our master plan involves far more than the pipeline itself. It includes: completion of the \$225m Channel Island Power Station later this year and the commissioning of all 6 generators; the construction of a new \$33m gas-fired power station at Katherine; an \$8m zone substation and system control centre at Hudson Creek; conversion and expansion worth \$6m at the Tennant Creek Power Station; expansion worth \$13m at the Alice Springs Power Station; and development of the Mereenie and Palm Valley oil and gas

fields at a total cost of \$119m. All of this has radically reshaped our energy future and it is now certain that 90% of the Territory's power requirements will be met by cost-efficient gas within the next 4 years.

The use of gas will allow our electricity to stabilise. It will allow the introduction of more flexible pricing arrangements and permit business and domestic consumers to achieve real savings on electricity costs. The Territory's power grid will be extended, bringing new subscribers on line. As the consumption of gas increases, costs will decrease. The cost of gas will significantly decline in real terms over the next 20 years and, with the compounding effect, the average cost will decrease further as gas consumption increases. Predictable pricing will allow the Territory a luxury it has never before experienced. It will allow energy-intensive industries to plan for the future with confidence. It will provide the platform for the Territory's great lack: an established and broadly-based manufacturing industry.

I have instructed NTEC to prepare a realistic package of flexible tariffs for introduction on 1 July this year and to give priority to ensuring that the benefits of the new gas technology are shared by all Territorians as quickly as possible. Plans are also well in hand for an improved billing system and a payment system which consumers will find more manageable. It is also my firm intention to overhaul the area of customer relations. The use of indigenous fuel for the generation of electricity presents a range of new opportunities for growth and development. The Territory government will be providing a better electricity service to the community at a reduced cost and, if honourable members do not recognise that as the good-news story for 1987, they are hard to please.

They certainly should be pleased with prospects in the mining industry. I can draw attention to 26 new mines which can reasonably be expected to come on stream in the next 18 months. It is interesting to note that we now have a mines spokesman who would not be in this Legislative Assembly if it were not for the development of a mine. I am looking forward for the first time to hearing an opposition policy on mining. I have been asking for one for 12 months now but none has materialised. It must be a very small policy indeed. It is probably chipped out on the back of an aspro with a pick and sitting in the bottom drawer somewhere.

Most of the new projects involve mining for gold. They add up to a resource value estimated at more than \$1000m and capital investment of over \$100m. Earlier this month, development of the Goodall project at Mt Ringwood was announced by Western Mining and W.R. Grace & Co. This \$20m construction project will be producing \$32m in gold per year from 1989. Further major gold announcements can be expected and I will mention some of them for the information of honourable members. They include the following projects: Fisher Ridge, Metana Bridge Creek, Union Reef and Spring Hill in the northern region; Coronation Hill, Rock Hole and Jabiluka 2 in the Jabiru region; Mt Todd and Moline Dam in the Pine Creek and Katherine region; White Devil, Old Peko, Gecko, Orlando, Eldorado and the Perseverance Extended in the Tennant Creek area; and we will have the Tanami, Aritunga and Winnecke mines in the Alice Springs region.

Gold production in the Territory in 1987 is expected to double the 1986 output of \$95m. For the first time, the Northern Territory has produced in excess of \$1000m of mineral wealth in 1 year. It is interesting to note that the very small 4 km² of the Ranger Mine at Jabiru has produced over \$1300m of export earnings in the life of the mine. During the past 12 months, substantial gold mines have been announced and will be producing soon. With

the price of gold remaining buoyant and with the number of impending developments I have outlined, the future of the Territory's gold mining industry looks gilt-edged indeed. And that is not the end of it. Good prospects have been identified in the Pine Creek region and continuing exploration is highly likely to lead to further gold projects. It is interesting to note that Renison has recently commenced a program to double the size of its mine at Pine Creek with \$9.8m of capital works to ensure double production can be achieved.

Gold of course is not the only mineral to attract interest in the Territory. Platinoid metals have been discovered in substantial quantity at Coronation Hill. Mining for this highly-prized and highly-marketable commodity will form a significant part of the operation of this project when it starts shortly. Valuable deposits of platinoid metals have also been identified in conjunction with gold at the BHP joint venture lease at Rock Hole. Mining projects involving other minerals which could come on stream in the next 18 months include tin at Mt Tolmer, limestone at Mataranka, silver at Moline and Mt Hercules, and diamonds at the Robertson River.

The growth of the mining industry in the Territory is expected to continue at the rate of 30% in the next 12 months. It will be the task of this government to facilitate growth which stimulates the Territory and Australian economies, provides jobs for Territorians and Australians, gives impetus to support industries and brings services such as roads, electricity, hospitals and schools to areas which currently lack them.

It is our intention to reduce substantially the amount of bureaucratic red tape which slows the rate of development or which is perceived to slow it down. We will be implementing a degree of self-regulation for mining operations through amendments to the mines safety control legislation now being compiled. The self-regulation proposals place the responsibility for safety on management, with an emphasis on competent personnel undertaking aspects of inspection. Mines Division engineers and other specialists will monitor the application of the legislation requirements to establish that the mines are applying the appropriate standards. Stiffer penalties will be administered for failure to comply with the legislative provisions. Consultation with the mining industry has started and more detailed discussions will take place as legislation is developed.

The Chamber of Mines is considering ways of developing a code of conduct for mining companies in the Territory in relation to self-regulation. The code would embody basic agreed principles of self-regulation that all companies would undertake to respect and adhere to. When this regime is in place, it is expected that the frequency of visits by government inspectors will be reduced in proportion to the ability of management to respond to the challenge of self-regulation. I am confident that this initiative will assist in improving the standing of mine management. An overall cost saving is anticipated by government without a lowering of standards at mine sites. Some of these procedures are already in practice and appear to be working well.

I have signalled clearly to the mining industry that as much red tape as possible will be removed from the government processes in order to clarify and speed up applications for exploration licences. A comprehensive review of the Mining Act is under way with objectives including the removal of anomalies, strengthening of the legal standing of mining title, increasing access to Territory land for mineral exploration and also increasing access to Territory land for fossickers.

We are moving towards increasing privatisation of activities conducted by government which may be handled by private enterprise to the benefit of the public. In the water resources area, reviews are presently being conducted on privatisation prospects for drilling and water laboratory work. In the Department of Mines and Energy, an investigation is being undertaken into the scope for privatisation of compilation and marketing of technical information, services which are now offered by the Geological Survey Division.

Honourable members will be aware that a bill is being introduced in these sittings to establish a power and water authority. Matters relating to this new statutory authority will be properly debated during the passage of the legislation, but there is a benefit attached to this merging of services which should not be overlooked: the better standard of service and information that will be available to the public. Mechanisms will be put in place to allow a simple billing system for power and water and, importantly, to give consumers a much better deal in making inquiries, complaints or reporting difficulties about these essential services. I have not been satisfied with the level of assistance that is available to non-technical consumers seeking information about aspects of their services, and this matter is being given priority.

In the Treasury portfolio, it will be my duty - my difficult duty, it must be stressed - to maintain the philosophy of balanced annual budgets that has served the Territory so well since self-government. I mean my predecessors no disrespect when I say that their duties in that regard were easier than mine are in the face of a federal government that is increasingly hostile to Territory aspirations and increasingly neglectful of the cost disadvantages which Territorians must endure. In large measure, the strategy and course of the 1987-88 Northern Territory budget will be determined by the level of fairness with which the Territory is treated by the Commonwealth in the federal Treasurer's mini-budget, the Premiers Conference in May, and the federal budget itself. Let us hope that the federal government does not apply its standard formula whereby 1% of Australia's population bears 10% of the burden of any financial cuts.

Tax-grabbing items such as the horrendous fringe benefits tax have body-blow effects on the Territory, much more so than on any state, and the budget impact can be severe. A particular factor of concern is the Territory's share of taxation collection over which the Commonwealth exercises control. In this respect, the Territory faces greater uncertainty than the states because disturbing suggestions have been flowing from Canberra that the Commonwealth might renege on a 2% growth factor in our general funding. Worse, there have also been suggestions that our general funding could be reduced because of alleged overpayment in years gone by. To take away money already spent would be cruelly vindictive because the Territory cannot unspend money that was spent on roads, schools and hospitals years ago. I trust that the federal government will follow an honourable course and treat the Territory as fairly as it treats any of the states. That is all we seek - a fair go.

It should be noted that, despite hysterical claims and dire prophesies during the recent election campaign, no Territory mini-budget is in the wings. There will be no new taxes and charges during the life of the 1986-87 Territory budget. As it always was, the budget is still proceeding towards a balanced result. That will be achieved by tight control on expenditure and careful assessment of expenditure priorities.

In local government, which I am pleased to have again as a portfolio responsibility, initiatives previously set in motion are progressing

satisfactorily. Local government regulations are being drafted and circulated to municipal councils for comment, as was undertaken following the introduction of the new Local Government Act on 1 July last year. The establishment package for the Palmerston Town Council has been agreed to by a joint working party, except for 3 items which will be addressed by Cabinet shortly. Discussions on the Litchfield Shire Council establishment package will resume within a month.

It will be my intention to pursue the introduction of community government to more communities this year. So far, 10 community government councils have been established and it is expected that 4 more will be established within the next 2 months: Yuendumu, Pine Creek, Yirrkala and Dagaragu are communities that are considering community government. Progress towards community government is under way in 8 other communities.

The fledgling Northern Territory TAB continues to show steady growth in its turnover as it gathers greater public acceptance, and the confidence of honourable members of this Assembly has enabled it to progress as well as it has. You will be aware, Mr Speaker, that it is intended to link the Territory and Canberra win-and-place pools with the Victorian TAB and progress towards that is continuing. All the necessary approvals have been obtained and the only delay is of a technical nature. I am advised that the link should be operating at the start of August this year.

Of interest to the new member for Katherine will be the \$100 000 upgrading of the Katherine racecourse. I understand that, for the first time in the Northern Territory, we are about to introduce sprint racing or quarter horse racing within the coming year. I do not know a great deal about it but I understand that it will provide a new spectator sport for horse racing fans in the Northern Territory. It is interesting to note that the Darwin Turf Club at Fannie Bay is considering the introduction of sprint racing in the very near future also. No doubt, the member for Fannie Bay will be interested in that. It is a little like quarter-mile drag racing but with not so much horsepower.

These funds were made available from the Race Course Development Fund generated from the TAB turnover which, incidentally, provided funds to resurface the Katherine track in time for the annual Katherine Cup meeting in June. The Darwin Cup Carnival in August will be by far the most successful in the history of the Darwin Turf Club. Prize money has been boosted substantially across the board, particularly through the enthusiasm of Mr John Aspinall and the Diamond Beach Casino. I expect the 1987 Darwin Cup to gain international status.

Honourable members, particularly those from central Australia, have expressed concern about the grave social problems caused by excessive alcohol indulgence. Indeed, the Chief Minister gave some attention to these problems in his Address-in-Reply speech and they will be addressed in the very near future by this government.

Mr Speaker, I trust I have given some insight into the important matters for which I have ministerial responsibility. It will be my task to work towards continued development and growth in the Territory. Among my other portfolio responsibilities that I have not mentioned is the Territory Insurance Office and a range of authorities which are contributing to growth and development. Some of the announcements that emanate from those authorities will be of grave concern to Northern Territorians who believe in the future of the Northern Territory. I am sure that they will be supportive

of the growth mentality which these organisations exemplify. To ensure that the Territory does not live beyond its means will be a very necessary criterion of the 1987-88 budget. To create a better quality of life for all Territorians will be my aim during this term. Mr Deputy Speaker, I am grateful to have had the opportunity to make my contribution to the Address-in-Reply.

Mr MANZIE (Attorney-General): Mr Deputy Speaker, I rise to respond to His Honour the Administrator's address in relation to my education portfolio but, before I proceed, I must comment on the Leader of the Opposition's contribution to the Address-in-Reply.

I think that most of us in this Assembly were rather disappointed in the hypocritical stance that he took while claiming that the Labor Party is supported by ordinary people and that this government looks after big business. All Territorians know that the reason the CLP government is in power, and has been in power for many years, is the fact that it does have the support of ordinary Territorians because they see that what this government is doing is beneficial to them, their future and their families' future.

The hypocritical attitude of the Leader of the Opposition in blaming this government for the ills of the Territory economy that he spoke about was extremely disappointing. All Australians are aware that it is the economic attitudes of the federal government, its vindictiveness and lack of any principles of economic management, that have brought Australia - a country which had a very strong economy - and all of its citizens almost to the level of a banana republic. Every day, Australia goes \$1m further down the tube. We are spending \$1m more than we earn every day. That is a deplorable situation, and a situation which is starting to affect Territorians even though this government has managed the economy of the Territory in such a way that we have the highest growth rate in the country, the highest export earning per head, and the lowest unemployment rate. However, even with our success, we are starting to be affected by the horrible economic mismanagement and the socialist policies of Hawke and his cronies.

I think it is very disappointing, and all Territorians will be fully aware of that. The Leader of the Opposition is leaving the Chamber now. Obviously, it galls him to realise that people realise that he has no understanding. Certainly, he is hiding behind his speechwriter who is obviously very new and exhibits an extreme lack of understanding of what is occurring in the Territory. He would do very well to get a new speechwriter and to do so very quickly.

There were a couple of points that need comment. The Leader of the Opposition attempted to blame the Territory government for the performance of the abattoirs in the Territory even though all thinking people realise that the behaviour of the meat union is the only reason why Territory abattoirs are not operating. The union simply will not let them open.

He crows about his achievements in respect of the military. Everyone who took notice of the Chief Minister's comments regarding the Dibb Report during the last Assembly will realise that the government welcomes the military here. Indeed, the Territory has quite a history in supporting the navy, the army and the air force, and in arguing strongly that all military presence here results in increased benefits for Territorians. It is hypocritical for the Leader of the Opposition to try to hang his coat-tails on the notion that the cavalry has been attracted here through some magical efforts of his or that he is doing something wonderful to ensure that all Territorians benefit.

Mr Hatton: The only cavalry he could attract would be on its way to Custer's last stand.

Mr MANZIE: That is right. That is about the only thing he would offer them.

He shows a lack of any knowledge of what is required in respect of international flights. The federal government has to give permission for flights to come into Darwin. The situation at Perth is a perfect example of the federal Labor government's attitude. It is a vindictive attitude, one of looking after one's own and not caring about large areas of the Australian population. I am referring to the federal government's building of the Perth Airport. Obviously, it has nothing to do with the fact that Senator Walsh is Western Australian. I would not dare suggest that even though some unkind people might draw that inference. It is very disappointing when the Territory receives only negative reaction and a lack of any understanding. It again indicates that the Leader of the Opposition's speechwriter has no knowledge.

I cannot resist briefly referring to the subject of roads. We learned that the Leader of the Opposition has finally travelled by car to Katherine, even though the road has been open for a number of years, and has discovered how good the road is. Unfortunately, if he travelled all the way to Alice Springs via the Stuart Highway, he would see that there are a number of sections which still need widening. Those of us who have had any interest in Northern Territory road funding would remember the Accelerated Stuart Highway Program which the federal minister took away from the Territory. That was the program provided as a sop after the federal government reneged on its promise to fund the railway. It was to accelerate the completion of the Stuart Highway to national standard.

Mr Ede: You rejected the deal.

Mr MANZIE: We hear a cry about rejecting the deal. I was the minister at the time and I can assure the member for Stuart that no such thing happened.

Mr Ede: I can assure you that you did. Everingham said that he would not have a bar of it.

Mr MANZIE: Not only that, but Senator Robertson had the gall to publicly refer to the federal Labor government's increased funding. What a liar! He is an ignorant person like you.

Mr Ede: Everingham said that he would not accept the deal.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The Attorney-General will not refer to a member in another place in disparaging terms and the member for Stuart will limit his interjections.

Mr MANZIE: Mr Speaker, I withdraw any remark that may have appeared to have been directed at any member here or in another place, but I think it is important that members of the Territory community are aware of the ignorance of the member for Stuart and his hypocritical attitude towards Territory road funding.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The Attorney-General will withdraw that last remark referring to a member in this place in a disparaging fashion.

Mr MANZIE: I withdraw the remark, Mr Speaker. I certainly did not mean to cast any aspersions on any honourable member in this place, but I think that people must be aware of attitudes regarding the funding and development of the Territory.

Mr Speaker, I now turn to my portfolio of education. I intend to base my remarks on the Northern Territory government's education plan which was released during the recent election campaign. The plan is a framework on which to develop and expand the education sector in coming years. I emphasise the word 'expand' because it is not the Territory government's intention to rest on its laurels even though we already take great pride in our achievements. Nor will we fall into the trap of allowing the current climate of economic stringency to prevent us from preparing for our future needs.

The Territory is a growing place. Indeed, it is one of the few places in Australia which has continued to progress while some of the states have stagnated in anticipation of the phenomenal coming of the J-curve. In fact, the J-curve has been harder to find than Halley's comet. It is now perfectly clear that any national recovery will be in spite of all Bob and Paul can do to prevent it.

Meanwhile, we in the Territory must continue striving to meet new challenges. The greatest challenge will be to improve on our present system and to provide a better one for the future. That is the thrust behind our strategies for Territory education in the years ahead. Certainly, this will not be easy. Members would be aware that there are areas of Territory education in which it will be a number of years before most of the problems are overcome. It is important to note that the Territory government has addressed those areas, particularly in tertiary and Aboriginal education, and definite progress is being made. I must also point out that, in formulating a program for education, we have taken care to take into account the future needs of the Territory as it moves towards statehood.

One of our main aims is to give Territorians the full range of choice between government and non-government schooling which is available elsewhere in Australia. We will do this by continued liaison with groups active in the private education field and by offering direct and indirect assistance. For the benefit of members opposite, I should mention that, for every dollar the Territory government allocates to private schools, we save more than \$2 in the cost of providing an equivalent number of places in government schools.

The Territory government is also committed to upgrade the quality of education in our public schools. We have already embarked on a substantial capital works program for the government school system which includes new schools for Palmerston, Katherine and Alice Springs. Stage 2 of Sanderson High School is now under way and upgrading works for Berry Springs Primary School, Ludmilla Special School, Tennant Creek Primary School and the provision of a library resource centre at Milingimbi are in the pipeline. This is in addition to the \$1.4m which is to be spent on teacher housing in 5 Aboriginal communities this financial year.

The Department of Education is moving towards giving the community greater influence in the administration of education. Responsibility for such items as cleaning, ground maintenance, repairs and maintenance, minor new works and some supply functions are presently being handed over to schools and TAFE colleges. As honourable members may already know, the Territory has a proud record of community involvement in schools through school councils and this program will develop that involvement even further. However, the

government recognises that responsibilities cannot be transferred without an adequate support system. As a result, the Department of Education is presently well advanced on a program to install administrative computers in schools and the training of staff to use them. Additional staff were provided to schools some years ago when this process of transferring responsibilities began and, with the latest transfers, the department is reassessing the work levels of key positions. The government expects that, by 1990, most Territory schools will be fully established as corporations which manage virtually all of their own administrative functions.

1990 is also the year by which the government is aiming to have the Territory self-sufficient in teachers in major subject areas. This will be achieved with the expansion of teacher education courses at the Darwin Institute of Technology and Batchelor College. It will be complemented by a continuing program of Northern Territory teaching service scholarships for Territory school leavers. The department has awarded 49 teaching service scholarships for this academic year. That is in addition to the 83 scholarships already held by students. This represents a commitment of almost \$470 000 to student teachers this year alone. Supplying our own teachers is one of the foundations of the continued development and improvement of our education system. All honourable members would be aware of the difficulties we have faced in the past in recruiting and retaining suitably qualified teachers. Indeed, a shortage of teachers in southern states means that this situation is continuing to cause problems. The problem will continue to affect our education system until such time as our schools are staffed by teachers who are recruited and trained locally. The government is firmly committed to achieving that goal as soon as possible.

I mentioned earlier that it is the government's intention to ensure that our education system meets the needs of the Territory as it moves towards statehood. It can be said that the growth of the Territory will depend, at least in part, on access to a skilled work force. The Territory government aims to provide that skilled work force through a continued program of improving educational standards in our schools and in addressing areas of special need.

In particular, the government remains firmly committed to the continued development of computer education in Territory schools. This is an area in which the Territory is already one of Australia's leaders. The level of computer hardware in Territory schools, particularly primary schools, is the best in the nation. In addition to this, computer education programs in primary and secondary schools will be further developed and expanded in coming years.

The major initiative in education, which is already under way this year, is the provision of centres of excellence in regional high schools. These centres will give each school an academic focus and identity in line with its location in the Territory and its client community. For example, the government announced during the election that centres of excellence in agriculture will be established at the Taminmin and Tennant Creek High Schools. In keeping with the different environments of the 2 schools, it is intended to have Taminmin specialise in horticulture and Tennant Creek to specialise in the pastoral industry. It is also planned to tailor the courses in the centres of excellence to dovetail into TAFE courses and possibly lead on to studies at degree level at other Territory institutions.

The continued development of the tertiary education sector in the Territory remains a high priority of this government. In fact, this process

is essential to the government's aim of providing a work force that is able to cope with the Territory's future growth and development. We must cut through that vicious cycle in which Territory students, often with their families, have to pull up stakes and go interstate for a tertiary education. The Territory government cannot afford to settle for less than a system which will enable all Territory students to complete their tertiary education in the Territory. The establishment of the University College of the Northern Territory is a significant milestone in achieving this aim and I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate the Leader of the Opposition on finally offering his grudging support for this superb project. I look forward to hearing of his appeals to his federal colleagues for recognition of the University College.

The rest of the tertiary sector will not be left behind while the University College undergoes its inevitable transition into the University of the Northern Territory. While this process is under way, the Territory government will continue to encourage the Darwin Institute of Technology, the Community College of Central Australia, Katherine Rural College and Batchelor College to expand the number of degree, diploma and graduate courses they offer.

I might take this opportunity to clear up a possible misconception that has been reported to me regarding the Administrator's speech: that the university may be undertaking teacher, nurse and police training. Obviously, that is incorrect and the reading of the Administrator's speech will show that that is the case. I have had it reported to me by a number of people who showed concern. Teacher, nurse, hospitality and police education and other training will be carried out by the Darwin Institute of Technology and the Community College of Central Australia. The appropriate colleges are doing it now, and doing it very well indeed. As you know, Mr Speaker, a notable example is the nurse education which began at the DIT this year.

Another government initiative which got under way this year is the launching of the Northern Territory Open College. The Open College has been designed to give Territorians in remote areas access to a much wider range of formal and informal TAFE courses as well as vocational and pre-vocational training in such areas as tourism and hospitality. The Open College is also responsible for adult migrant education, secondary correspondence courses and for providing support for isolated students who are undertaking degree courses through other institutions. A measure of the Open College's success may be gauged by the fact that it attracted more than 2400 students in its first term of operation.

The Territory government is continuing to develop links between private industry and education, especially in the TAFE area. The Department of Education is presently improving arrangements for apprenticeship training and private industry is being encouraged to help develop these courses. In fact, employers now have the majority representation on all course advisory committees in the TAFE area. This means that employers are able to ensure that courses contain the elements they believe are necessary to train students for the work force.

The Territory's multi-racial population and geographical position will play major roles in the development of our educational sector. Some years ago, the government developed a policy of teaching languages other than English in our schools. This government is continuing to meet that commitment and, in the recent election campaign, we announced that, where possible, Greek, Mandarin, Italian and Indonesian would be introduced in primary schools and Japanese would be added to languages offered in secondary schools.

In his opening address to this Assembly, His Honour the Administrator mentioned the Territory government's intention to foster stronger links with our northern neighbours in South-east Asia and the Pacific. The Department of Education has a role to play in this process and, indeed, has already started to develop links with our Asian neighbours. South-east Asian students have been undertaking Darwin Institute of Technology courses for a number of years. In fact, there are 13 South-east Asian students presently enrolled at DIT. This is in addition to the student/teacher exchange program between the Territory and Indonesia and the 9 South-east Asian students now studying at the University College.

Mr Speaker, I now turn to an area of major concern to the Territory government: Aboriginal education. The Territory government can be very proud of what it has achieved since self-government when Aboriginal education was in a desperate situation. Teacher turnover was impossibly high - well over 100% in fact. For example, one school with an establishment of 13 went through 65 teachers in 3 years. That was a shocking state of affairs.

Aboriginal education has come a long way since then, but the Territory government is fully aware that there is still a long way to go. In recognition of this need, the Department of Education has launched a campaign to increase the achievement levels of Aboriginal students. This campaign, known generally as the 12-point plan, was developed in consultation with FEPP, the Aboriginal Education Consultative Group. The plan has, at its heart, one basic principle: that Aboriginal students must be encouraged to increase their levels of achievement.

It is apparent that part of the solution must be to encourage Aboriginal communities, and therefore Aboriginal teachers and parents, not only to help themselves but to begin taking the lead. With this in mind, one of our key objectives is to increase dramatically the number of trained Aboriginal teachers and principals in community schools. There is also a great need to provide education beyond the primary level within communities. The government is moving to achieve this through the provision of better post-primary, secondary and TAFE facilities in communities. This will involve the establishment of community education centres by merging post-primary and adult education facilities and staff in most communities. These centres will progressively offer a greater variety of courses to Aboriginal students, including the range of correspondence courses.

Another objective is to improve the teaching of English to Aboriginal students. To accelerate this program, the government is establishing a pool of experienced, second-language teachers to service non-bilingual Aboriginal schools.

I think it is true to say that outstation or homeland centre education is one of the frontiers of education in the Territory and, indeed, in Australia. This is an area where communications technology has a vital role to play. We hope that, through the use of radio and satellite technology, we will be able to break the tyranny of distance which continually frustrates our efforts to take education to small, isolated communities. To help overcome this problem, we are introducing, this year, a trial radio service from hub schools. This will help us to provide on-the-spot, in-service information as well as supply programs for children directly to outstations.

As I have outlined, providing educational opportunities to those living in isolated areas is indeed a major challenge to the Territory government. The need to meet this challenge and to upgrade and coordinate the delivery of

services to isolated areas has resulted in the establishment of a Distance Education Branch within the Department of Education. This new branch brings together the Secondary Correspondence School, 2 Schools of the Air and the Educational Resources Unit. It also administers the Open College. The government believes that the new branch will result in a substantially improved range of services for people in isolated areas.

The Territory government can take considerable pride in the development of its educational sector. Our facilities and standards are on par with the best in Australia and that achievement is more commendable in the light of the problems which must be overcome on a day-to-day basis. It would be foolish to deny those problems and the Territory government does not attempt to do so. Far from it - we are determined to overcome them. The Territory government is meeting the challenges in education and I believe the programs I have outlined will give the Territory a foundation on which to build the future.

Mrs PADGHAM-PURICH (Koolpinyah): Mr Speaker, in rising to speak in the Address-in-Reply debate today, I will say at the outset that, taking a broad view of the proposals and programs announced by the CLP government, I generally support the program outlined for the life of this Assembly. However, I have reservations on some proposals. I believe some of them simply rehash previous electoral promises. Some statements are a lot of hot air which do not mean a thing and, on others, I want more information. I will go briefly through the Administrator's speech because I think that is the easiest way of approaching this debate.

In the beginning of His Honour's speech, reference was made to the government wishing to have a strong partnership of interest between the community and its government. Reference was also made to a wish for greater participation by the community in the processes of government. The next statement was that there is a certain familiarity and informality existing between elected members and the electorate and that this government will seek to develop that relationship further.

Mr Speaker, there is no way that you or anybody else would make me believe that. That is a lot of hot air. It cannot be done and I do not believe members of the CLP government believed it themselves when they wrote it. How the dickens are they going to develop a further relationship between the electorate and the government in all the ALP electorates? They are not. How are they going to develop the relationship further between the elected members and the electorate in the electorates of Sadadeen and Koolpinyah? They certainly are not. I think they would have on the bottom of their list obtaining any positive relationship between the elected member and the electorate in the seat of Barkly. Looking at the situation very realistically, the 3 members on the crossbenches come below the ALP in the hate list of the CLP if there is such a thing already written out. To say that the CLP government will encourage a greater familiarity between elected members and their electorates is so much hot air and I do not believe it.

On the other hand, I agree that the Territory will have to rely more on its own resources and the resourcefulness of its people. There are great untapped resources in the community and I do not only mean in the physical sense but also in terms of people. There are so many people in the community whose qualities are completely wasted. I am talking about many people who have perhaps retired, people who live at home and who are not in the work force. To my knowledge, the CLP government has done nothing to find out exactly what resources exist among the retired people in the community. I am not talking about the dear old souls who are practically leaving this world.

I am talking about those people who retire from businesses in their 40s, in their 50s and even people over 60. Many of those people are still very active and could still contribute considerably to the development of the Northern Territory.

There are also people who stay at home. These are usually women and they are normally classed derogatorily in some quarters as housewives. These people also have much to contribute to the development of the Territory and it is up to the Northern Territory government to find all of these resources in the community.

Mention was made in the Administrator's speech of an economic agenda which the Northern Territory government is drawing up. This sounds quite interesting and I do not have my tongue in cheek. I would like to see it. I am sorry that the member for MacDonnell is not here at the moment because I am wondering if it is an agenda or an agendum but, nevertheless, I have the general meaning of what the government intends to do. I would like to see the details of this economic agenda.

I would also like more information on the claim that the Darwin gas pipeline has freed the Territory for the first time of the prohibitive power costs that have discouraged new industry in the past. I believe those prohibitive power costs that have discouraged new industry in the past are still with us. I do not speak with great knowledge of industry in general; I know most about primary industry. However, a chap living just outside my electorate wants the power put on and it will cost him between \$30 000 and \$32 000. There is no way that he can afford that. So much for the promise about prohibitive power costs to industry being relaxed. I cannot see that happening. I have made representations on this man's behalf. He is a genuine primary producer. To date, I have been told that he should not have gone to live there and that he should do his farming where the power is cheaper. That is the sort of answer I have received.

I believe the future of the Northern Territory relies much more on our regular trade with the countries to our north than it does with the south of Australia. There are many more people to the north of us, many millions more. They all have to live and, if we can sell them our primary products, that will encourage development in the Northern Territory much more effectively than if we try to send most of our goods down south. I am speaking in very general terms because time does not permit me to go into detail.

I agree that, in the past, the government has been very aggressive in its promotion of tourist development in the Northern Territory and I congratulate it on this. It has done a pretty good job through being as aggressive as it has and I think the amounts of money spent in the Territory by tourists, which all contribute to its development, are proof of that.

However, there is still a long way to go because, when people come to the Territory, especially those from Europe, Japan and other densely-populated countries, one of the big selling points of the Territory is the actual space. We who live in the Northern Territory cannot understand this, but we have had friends and relatives from Holland staying with us recently and that is something that they see as very important. Simply to walk down a road like the one running past our place, see the few houses that are there and the birds, wallabies etc, is something they cannot do in Europe. It is something completely new to them.

The next matter on which I would like to ask more questions is this you-beaut, so-called new idea of the Chief Minister's on which he is pinning all his hopes: the monoculture of kenaf. I do not think the Chief Minister had been elected when I first raised the idea up at a party meeting. Although I did not push it very much at the time; it is an innovative idea. I am not against new ideas just for the sake of being bloody-minded. However, I would urge the Chief Minister to go into all the details of its culture and to bear in mind a previous approach to monoculture where an attempt to grow leucena glauca at Mataranka folded up. I am not certain why it folded. Perhaps it was because of a shortage of investment funds. One does have to be very careful.

Looking at the growing and milling of kenaf from the broader point of view, we have to bear in mind that, if we were not so prodigal with our use of paper products, we might be able to exist within the resources available to us without involving ourselves in the problems associated with growing plants to make more paper. We have only to look at all the paper on our desks. Some of it we read and some of it we do not. Much of what we receive through the mail is commonly called by a 4-letter word which you, Mr Speaker, would ask me to withdraw if I used it. I am looking forward to hearing further details of the kenaf program from the Chief Minister in due course.

I could also suggest that the Chief Minister look at a program to grow cassava in the Northern Territory which was attempted some years ago. I believe it was grown on Jim Sullivan's farm but I do not know what has become of that project. However, it could bear further examination because it is a good source of stockfeed. If the Chief Minister is interested in the production of kenaf, he should also look at the growing of cassava and reconsider the production of leucena glauca, as long as the Minister for Labour and Administrative Services ...

Mr Harris: Tom's bush!

Mrs PADGHAM-PURICH: ... the member for Port Darwin is shut out of the room while the Chief Minister discusses it. Leucena glauca could prove to be the saviour of the pastoral industry here if we can grow it. I do not know the exact figures, but it supplies an enormous amount of protein to the diet of any ruminant. I am talking about coffee bush - leucena glauca cunninghamii. We have been trying to grow it for 3 years, but my goats have stripped the plants every year. The result is that I have only raised 1 bush. I have been trying to grow leucena on my place for about 20 years but it is so popular that the stock eat it down as soon as it grows. There are some disadvantages but these can be overcome by the addition of certain bacteria to the ruminant's digestive system which enables it to overcome the deleterious effects of ingestion of leucena.

I now come to the government's proposal to conserve our fisheries resource and assist the development of the industry. The government is to begin a major review of fish and fisheries legislation, and not before time. However, I would like to sound a word of warning here to the Chief Minister. I will not mention names or countries, but there are some countries in the world who are very interested and have very extensive prawn fisheries. Some people from those countries have come to the Northern Territory to - as we say - help us to develop our prawn fishery. I do not believe that some of these people who have come over here have worked with the best interests of this government and this country in mind. I believe some of them have come over here as white ants or fifth columnists to learn all they can of what we are doing and to undermine the industry here so that it will not compete on the world markets with their own industry.

I do not know whether the government is interested in my revealing the names of these people. Perhaps it knows them already and does not want to do anything. However, generally speaking, before we import experts from overseas to help us in a particular industry, we should look at the end result of that help. When our industry is developed, will it be in competition with the country of origin of the person who is helping us? If so, is he helping us in his own country's interest or is he helping us in our country's interest? In fact, is he really helping us at all?

Mr Speaker, I believe the Chief Minister is being a wee bit overenthusiastic when he says that the regulations currently applying to pastoralism and mining will take us into the next century because, in the normal course of events, this government will last until 1991. The next government will continue until about 1995 and the subsequent government until about 1999. That government's successor will go into the new century. The Chief Minister is talking about a time 3 government terms hence. I must applaud his wishful thinking; he may still be in government but I would not bet on it.

We come next to the conversion of pastoral leases to freehold. I know the Chief Minister has spoken of this before and I am in favour of it, but with reservations. I will be very interested to see what form of legislation the Chief Minister introduces because I believe the intention has merit, but I do not want to see the mining industry hindered any more than it is now. The mining industry is hindered enough as it is in terms of access to Aboriginal land. Without seeing the legislation, it seems to me as though the government hopes that 2 wrongs will make a right and not only will certain people on certain land councils try to hinder mining but people on pastoral leases will do the same. It is hard to blame people for trying to gain an extra dollar out of it, but I do not want to see mining brought to a complete standstill.

I do not want to see the pastoral leases freeholded willy-nilly. There is a certain pastoral lease just outside of Darwin which should have been taken over by the government from the lessee some years ago because he is not fulfilling his covenants, but nothing has been done about it. I can see considerable opposition to this legislation if it includes freeholding of properties like that.

I applaud the government's intention to encourage the formation of regional advisory councils. However, I would like to ask the Chief Minister a question: is one of the qualifications for inclusion on a regional advisory council membership of the CLP? At the rate at which the party is expelling members and its wish for other branches in Alice Springs and out our way to expel more, it could be a problem. With the drop in CLP membership out our way, I cannot see a reasonable advisory council being formed there if membership of the CLP is a requirement.

Mr Coulter: The one down at Virginia Road is already in place.

Mrs PADGHAM-PURICH: You reckon? I bet it doesn't include the neighbour who lives behind you.

Mr Coulter: No, as a matter of fact it does not.

Mrs PADGHAM-PURICH: Mr Speaker, the government seeks to reduce regulation on private industry so that private industry can run its own affairs, and this I heartily applaud. I also applaud its intention to do away with outdated and inefficient regulations. I have been wanting to see this for some time.

Representations have been made to me about over-regulation by the Liquor Commission and Building Board requirements in the rural area, to name just 2 areas. I hope the government does something about reducing their effects on my constituents.

The speechwriter for the Chief Minister has told us that the 'Territory's weather from arid heartland to tropical seafront can promote excess both in drinking and temperament, and that impinges on the rights of others'. If the Chief Minister intends doing a King Canute and changing the weather from the arid heartland to the tropical seafront, he has Buckley's. He is possibly a bit overenthusiastic in his efforts to change the drinking laws, although I do agree that there needs to be some review of them. I do not know what he can do about the temperament of the people and its relationship to the Territory's weather. He has a big problem there.

I would like to compliment the government on the introduction of community policing and the presence of policemen in schools. This has occurred in the rural area and I have heard only good remarks about the young constable. I believe he is doing a good job and I have heard the same from other high schools. I would also like to hear from the Chief Minister, as minister responsible for the police, whether there are any statistics concerning the lessening of juvenile crime as a result of the police in the schools. There probably are.

I want to comment briefly on a few points in the Chief Minister's speech. He used the words 'strong, stable and independent'. Those were the words used by the CLP in its election campaign. I am very pleased to say that the electors of Koolpinyah and Sadadeen did take note and elected strong, stable and independent candidates despite the CLP.

Mr Hatton: I was too strong on the stability bit, wasn't I, Noel?

Mrs PADGHAM-PURICH: I am pretty stable. Weather does not affect my drinking.

The Chief Minister wants the Northern Territory government to encourage the export of primary products. I heartily agree with this. The salvation of any economy rests with its primary industries but it is not enough these days simply to export our primary produce. We have to industrialise primary industry so that we export processed primary products. This would not only raise employment levels but would encourage new expertise to come to the Northern Territory. There are more prospects for this in the horticultural industry than any other that I am aware of. I have spoken to people in my electorate about such matters but, because most of the horticulture operations there are small, they may not offer economic prospects for industrialisation at present.

I must deprecate the Chief Minister's 'poor bugger me' attitude. He said: 'Many withstand isolation, separation from families or other disadvantages to live and work in the Territory'. Bring out the violins! Mr Speaker, we came up here because we chose to and that is our business. If you cannot stand the heat, keep out of the kitchen. If you cannot stand living in Darwin, get out!

Mr Hatton: Read the rest of it.

Mrs PADGHAM-PURICH: I know what the rest of it says: we are going to 'settle, develop and establish Australia's far north'. But cut out this 'poor bugger me' attitude! We are not a lot of soppy sheilas. If you come up here,

you have to leave all that down south. I don't want to keep repeating myself, but if people don't come up here by choice and if they don't want to live here, they can live somewhere else. What has made the Northern Territory is that the people have come here by choice, made their homes here and really worked.

I want to have a go at the Leader of the Opposition for a change. I am a bit fed up with his completely unrealistic approach to the implementation of community services. It is a pity he is not here. He is probably in the lounge or has gone home. He said that there is no choice in basic services for the people of the Northern Territory. Our health and education services would be in the forefront of services offered to the general community in Australia. He is always knocking people who are affluent or have a bit more money and want a choice. He is knocking again. What is wrong with people being affluent and being able to make choice of medical or educational services. To become affluent, you need to work hard and to know what hard work is, which is more than I can say the Leader of the Opposition does.

Mr Coulter: Nothing beats a bit of good old-fashioned greed.

Mrs PADGHAM-PURICH: It is good old-fashioned greed and jealousy. That is all it is. If he was talking about bad services, I would agree with him because I have knocked the government a few times already in this speech. However, I think his complaints are completely baseless.

The Chief Minister repeatedly mentioned the removal of regulatory procedures and unjustified red tape. The CLP government has been promising this ever since the Chief Minister came to office and I have not seen much of it removed yet. He said: 'Where regulation is required for reasons of safety, consumer protection or public interest, emphasis will be on self-regulation'. I believe that it is time that consumers accepted some responsibility for their actions when they buy goods or services. People selling goods or services should sell the things that they advertise but the consumers who buy those goods or services must also accept some responsibility for their own actions.

The Chief Minister mentioned an expansion of development east and west of the Stuart Highway in fairly vague terms. I would like to know whereabouts east and west of the Stuart Highway. It could be in Queensland or Western Australia. He is not very specific and I would like more information.

He also mentioned gold production. He said: 'This year, mining production is expected to exceed \$1000m for the first time'. I certainly agree with the government's attitude towards mining. If the federal government would only get off our backs and let us get on with mining of uranium under the safety conditions that have been set by various governments, we would be one of the richest areas in Australia and we would have no problems at all with finding dollars for anything the government wanted.

The only bright light in the mining scene is that the federal government did not introduce the threatened gold tax. You would have to be as blind as a bat not to see that, when you reduce or remove tax, you encourage growth. There is no tax on the production of gold and it is therefore one of the growth industries of the Northern Territory. One of its most encouraging features here is that it is mostly undertaken by small producers. There are very few big firms involved. There are small prospectors and fossickers and, in a few of the small goldmines there is direct Aboriginal involvement. This is all to the benefit of people involved in the companies.

I would like to compliment the government on the development of Litchfield Park. Any money spent there will pay great dividends both now and in the future. I believe Litchfield Park itself will vie with Kakadu National Park in its variety, grandeur and conservation values. I have been there but, in one day I could only see part of it. I will be going there again when I am sure there is easy access.

The Chief Minister mentioned for the first time what the Alice Springs to Darwin train is to be called. I do not want to introduce a sour note here but he wants to obtain Japanese money to establish the railway. We have been talking about Anzac Day and another railway that the same people built somewhere else. I raise that as a comparison.

The Chief Minister called this train the Maluka. We all know what that means.

Mr Collins: I don't.

Mrs PADGHAM-PURICH: For the benefit of the member of Sadadeen, it was the title of the boss in 'We of the Never Never'. I am wondering if the Chief Minister is wishfully thinking of a complimentary transfer of title between himself and the train. I think he would like to be the Maluka but nobody has called him that yet. Perhaps he is hoping that, if the train is called the Maluka, a bit will rub off on him and he will be the boss too.

I am pleased that the government will have a revision of police powers. I would like to see more restrictions placed on the issue of gun licences. I have spoken to the Commissioner of Police about this. The case I refer to particularly was one in which a person shot another person who was mowing his lawn quite peacefully. I believe the criminal who did it had sought psychiatric attention but, because he had sought it voluntarily, he was not registered as a person with a notifiable disease. As a result, although his mind was in a disturbed state, he was still able to keep his gun and his shooter's licence. I believe the situation in which people in that sort of condition can retain guns and shooter's licences must be examined. The law has to be tightened up to save normal members of the community from the depredations of people like that.

Mr Speaker, I conclude my remarks in this Address-in-Reply debate by expressing my loyalty to Our Most Gracious Sovereign.

Mr HARRIS (Labour and Administrative Services): Mr Speaker, I have a great deal of pleasure today in rising to speak to the Address-in-Reply and, before detailing the areas covered by my portfolio of Labour and Administrative Services, I will comment on the remarks of the previous speaker and the Leader of the Opposition.

The member for Koolpinyah raised the issue of leucena glauca. She mentioned that, if it is proved that it can be grown, we should produce it. I can assure the member for Koolpinyah that there is no doubt that leucena glauca or coffee bush can be grown in the Northern Territory. In fact, she only has to come into my electorate, to walk outside the door of this building to see it fronting the harbour on all sides.

Mr Perron: You do not have enough goats in your area.

Mrs Padgham-Purich: Can I graze my goats in Darwin?

Mr HARRIS: Mr Speaker, I would also like to take the honourable member up on that. If she could bring in a herd of goats every so often, they would be most welcome as far as I am concerned.

Mr Collins: She could tether them at the Assembly.

Mr HARRIS: It might clear the leucena glauca from my electorate.

Mrs Padgham-Purich: As long as you do not charge me agistment.

Mr HARRIS: The honourable member would be aware of the other problem that I have in relation to leucena glauca which is that it affects different animals in different ways. It has an adverse effect on horses. Unfortunately, if horses eat leucena glauca, they develop problems such as hair loss, hoof curling and so on.. I assure the honourable member that I will be fighting against leucena glauca production in the Northern Territory.

Another matter that the member for Koolpinyah raised was in relation to people coming to the Territory. She suggested that, if they cannot stand the heat, they should get out. I would like to say that the Territory has been growing over a number of years and we have had to recruit people from south to teach our children. We had to recruit nurses and professional people from the south because we had not developed our own ability to train such people. That is what we are doing now. Today, the Minister for Education outlined the advances that we are making. At the Darwin Institute of Technology, courses are being developed to expand teacher education and to advance the training of nurses. The University College is developing its courses so that, as we grow, we will become self-dependent in so far as our professional people are concerned. That is what is happening now. More and more people are staying in the Territory. Their children are progressing through the education system and they will be able to play their part in developing the Territory, in educating Territory children and in all other ways.

I wish to comment on some statements made by the Leader of the Opposition on the major defence boost to the Northern Territory. I am very pleased to see that the Leader of the Opposition welcomes the federal government's belated awakening to the defence needs of Australia. Indeed, it is the first time that I have heard the Leader of the Opposition comment on this subject in this Assembly and I am waiting to hear further comment from him in relation to defence in general. I think that he should make some statement in this Assembly about his attitude towards defence. Honourable members will be aware that I have been deeply concerned with the issue of national defence, particularly as it relates to our vulnerable northern coastline.

Whilst I too welcome this belated move to relocate a battalion to the Top End, my real fear is that too much time and money has been wasted and that the end result will be too little too soon. There is no doubt that the positioning of the 2nd Cavalry Regiment in the Northern Territory will give a tremendous boost to our economy and, as has already been mentioned by the Attorney-General and the Minister for Education, work has been in progress for some time to prepare us for the increased defence activity in the Northern Territory.

The areas covered by my portfolio of Labour and Administrative Services are pivotal to this government's philosophy of streamlining services for maximum efficiency. For the first time in the Northern Territory, private and public sector industrial relations, the Work Health Authority, industrial safety, employment and training and the Office of Equal Opportunity are

brought together as the responsibility of a single minister. These areas have ingredients in common, notably the maintenance of a conscientious and harmonious labour force. As the Minister for Labour and Administrative Services, I will be concerned with the efficiency of the work force at all levels, including productivity, morale and service conditions.

The streamlining and centralisation of resources is essential if the public service is to maintain its professionalism and delivery of service. Where industrial relations are concerned, advisory and advocacy resources have been centralised within the Office of the Public Service Commissioner. I intend to utilise the expertise which already exists there to introduce specific industrial relations training and information courses. Because a thorough understanding of good industrial relations is imperative, particularly in relation to management, every opportunity will be taken to promote this understanding at seminars, in-house sessions and the like. I will make further comment on that later during the course of these sittings. This is a constructive method of minimising disputes.

I would like to clarify one point in relation to a question that I answered this morning regarding the impending amendments to the Australian Conciliation and Arbitration Act. I may have given members the impression that, when we eventually attain statehood, the government will move to create an NT Conciliation and Arbitration Commission. The Leader of the Opposition commented on that but, before members oppose too strongly at that straw, let me clarify what I meant. The government does not intend to burden the public and the Territory with a proliferation of arbitral tribunals. To do so would create a duality at great expense with little return. The whole issue of industrial relations and statehood is a complex one. The Leader of the Opposition knows that and, obviously, the Constitutional Development Committee will have to consider the whole matter at the appropriate time.

Streamlining will extend to job classification in order to obviate the danger of similar positions being classified at different levels in different departments, and I am sure that members would be aware of that occurring in many cases. The likelihood of subjectivity, which tends to lead to under- or over-classification, will be alleviated by thorough examination of classification principles involving the creation of benchmark position descriptions.

In relation to personnel management, proper techniques of recruitment, including interviewing and selection procedures, will be introduced in an effort to reduce staff turnover and enhance the standard of recruits to the public service. Personnel officers will be trained in redundancy counselling, career planning, disciplinary matters and establishment planning.

The salary and benefits of senior public servants will also be rationalised. Those whose expertise is currently in excess of departmental demands will form a task force and their extensive specialised knowledge will then be used for major specific projects such as the Alice Springs to Darwin railway, the move to statehood, the establishment of a new international airport terminal and similar projects. In all areas, it is imperative that duplication be avoided and that the right number and levels of people are employed. It follows that training and retraining programs must be geared to precise community needs. To pinpoint these needs, research will be undertaken in the community.

To refer again to the comments of the member for Koolpinyah, it is important to find out what expertise we have in the community. The government

will be endeavouring to obtain that information. To encourage people to move into already oversubscribed careers is negligent. It is a waste of time, money and manpower. Selecting the right work area is particularly relevant to those people confronting redundancy and the young people who are joining the work force for the first time.

Where apprentices are concerned, employers must look to future needs. They must not allow themselves to be restricted by limitations which may well be purely temporary. An example which illustrates the benefits of forward thinking is the Government Printing Office which employs eight 4-year apprentices in the 4 printing trades of preparation, graphic production, printing and machining, and binding and finishing. To fulfil the terms of their apprenticeships, the apprentices study during 3 of their 4 years on a block release basis in Queensland. Occasionally such initiatives are necessary to ensure that the future demands of a growing population can be met.

The same principle applies to traineeship. I am happy to report that the Australian traineeship system is at last under way. It is a scheme jointly administered by the Northern Territory government and the Commonwealth government to provide work experience and training for young people between the ages of 16 and 18 who have left school without obtaining a Year 12 qualification. The training program includes both on and off the job components which take place at the work place and the Darwin Institute of Technology.

Traineeship schemes have involved many frustrations over the years. These were indicated in the Kirby Report in 1984 and still remain to be addressed. I am sure that with the goodwill of unions, employers, the Commonwealth and the Northern Territory governments, we will be able to come to grips with them. I can see light at the end of the tunnel even though I know that there are still a number of people who are terribly frustrated in relation to the speed at which we are moving in the traineeship area.

To date, 26 public sector trainees have been approved for the Northern Territory and those in the first intake should begin their program at the start of the Darwin Institute of Technology second semester in July. The graduation of the first private industry trainees took place recently at the Beaufort and trainees from the Australian Public Service have also graduated.

The success of these traineeships is in everyone's interest. I must emphasise that they are not intended to provide new members for trade unions nor cheap labour for employers. I made that comment when issuing the certificates at the Beaufort. Giving our young people relevant training in growth industries enhances their prospects of gaining permanent employment while, at the same time, providing industry with a properly-trained work force. I hope that unnecessary delays are now a thing of the past and that the horizons of traineeships can be broadened with more employers encouraged to see their value.

An exciting and already effective initiative included in this portfolio is the Work Health Authority which incorporates the Industrial Safety Division of the Department of Mines and Energy. The Work Health Act which came into operation on 1 January this year adopts a rational approach to industry, industrial injury or disease. It ensures that health, safety, compensation and rehabilitation are undertaken at minimum social and economic cost. The principles of compensation allow for an equitable distribution of benefits, with employers contributing according to the likely payment for workers. The

system previously adopted in the Northern Territory was unsatisfactory. It was similar to a system which is still operating in New South Wales where dissatisfaction is rampant and common law actions between employers and employees are forcing insurance premiums to impossible heights. Needless to say, New South Wales is seeking to follow the Northern Territory's example. Our new Work Health Act effectively abolishes common law cases.

The Work Health Authority's responsibilities include the licensing of insurers, exempting independent contractors, monitoring and acting on non-insurance and under-insurance, monitoring and advising on costs and premiums, answering questions on claims and benefits, monitoring the appeals process and monitoring safe work practices in industry. I am pleased to report that insurance premiums have already come down. The Territory Insurance Office has established new work health rates which can, according to the occupation, be up to 40% lower than previous premiums.

The attitude amongst insurers is competitive and the first 12 insurers and the first 3 self-insurers in the Northern Territory have been approved by the authority. It has received more than 1000 exemption applications, 700 of which have been processed. More than 5000 employers are now registered on the authority's employer database. Inadequate subcontracting arrangements, together with areas of non-insurance or under-insurance are being identified and there is still a great deal of work to be done in relation to the gathering of statistics. Local practitioners are preparing to establish a Northern Territory rehabilitation centre and the Territory's first private hospital, which opens towards the end of 1988, will provide a large rehabilitation unit.

Since the new act came into force in January, contingency arrangements have been in place to deal with people seeking to apply to the Work Health Court but no such applications have yet been made. That matter was referred to this morning by the Attorney-General in answer to a question. It is a tribute to the cooperation between the private and the public sector of the legal profession that the difficult task of drawing up the specific legislation to meet the requirements of all parties has now been satisfactorily completed and the rules have been put in place, as mentioned this morning by the Attorney-General.

The portfolio of Labour and Administrative Services also encompasses the principle of equal opportunities to which this government is committed. For too long, the issue of equal opportunity has been glibly interpreted as some kind of war between the sexes with claims by males or females that members of the opposite sex gain unfair advantages simply by virtue of their sex. Equal opportunities goes far beyond this. It is the benchmark of true democracy allowing equality of opportunity for every person regardless of sex, creed, colour, race, religion, age or handicap and it is this total concept of equality which we will be promoting. One of the initiatives already under way is a newsletter which will keep the public informed of individual rights.

Just before closing, I want to refer to the comments of the member for Koolpinyah in relation to cooperation and partnership and the need for greater contact with members and their electorates. It is extremely important that consultation and contact does occur and I believe that the comments made in His Honour's speech in relation to that will be borne out by this government. I am sure that, with the help of members of all persuasions, we will be able to improve consultation processes and I hope that the member for Koolpinyah will make the effort to help us to improve the government that is provided to the people of the Northern Territory.

Mr Speaker, it gives me great pleasure to support the Address-in-Reply.

Debate adjourned.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY (REGISTER OF MEMBERS' INTERESTS) AMENDMENT BILL
(Serial 1)

Continued from 28 April 1987.

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

Mr Speaker, section 4 of the Legislative Assembly (Register of Members' Interests) Act requires members to submit returns disclosing their financial and other interests as follows: section 4(1) requires returns within 90 days of 30 June each year; section 4(2) at the commencement of the act requires returns on a date determined by the Speaker; and section 4(3) requires returns within 60 days of making oaths of allegiance and office pursuant to section 13 of the Northern Territory (Self-Government) Act. Under normal circumstances, a member would submit only 1 return each year. However this year, particular circumstances have arisen which highlight the anomalies this bill seeks to correct.

The first session of the Fifth Assembly commenced yesterday, 28 April 1987. On that day, members made their oaths of allegiance and office in accordance with the requirements of the Northern Territory (Self-Government) Act. Section 4(1) of the Legislative Assembly (Register of Members' Interests) Act requires members this year to submit returns between 30 June and 28 September. The force of section 4(2) relating to requirements of the commencement of the act is now spent. Section 4(3) further requires members this year to submit returns between 28 April and 26 June. Members must therefore submit 2 returns this year within a period ranging from a minimum of 5 days to a maximum of 5 months. This requirement obviously should be unnecessary.

The bill therefore proposes some simple amendments to overcome the problem. Section 4 is to be repealed. New subsection 4(1) will require a return within 90 days after 30 June each year except where a member has already submitted a return under new subsection 4(2) in that year. Under new subsection 4(2), a newly-elected member must submit a return within 60 days of first taking his or her seat but a re-elected member is exempt from this requirement. The effect of the amendments will be to provide that a member will only have to submit 1 return a year under the requirements of section 4. Mr Speaker, I commend the bill to honourable members.

Debate adjourned.

SUSPENSION OF STANDING ORDERS

Mr SMITH (Opposition Leader): Mr Speaker, pursuant to standing order 306, I move that so much of the standing orders be suspended as would prevent the Leader of the Opposition moving General Business Notice No 1 relating to the appointment of a board of inquiry into the provision of a regular, reliable power supply to Darwin being called on forthwith.

Motion agreed to.

MOTION
Inquiry into Electricity Supply

Mr SMITH (Opposition Leader): Mr Speaker, I move:

that this Assembly, pursuant to section 4A of the Inquiries Act, resolves that a board of inquiry be appointed to inquire into and report to the Administrator within 3 months on the failure of the Northern Territory Electricity Commission to provide a regular, reliable power supply to Darwin and, in particular, to:

- (a) examine the circumstances behind the failure of the Darwin power supply since the opening of the Channel Island Power Station and any future failures that may occur during the life of the inquiry;
- (b) examine the adequacy and condition of equipment involved in the failures and report on the ability of the equipment to provide a reliable power supply for Darwin;
- (c) examine current operational procedures and report on their adequacy to handle day-to-day and emergency situations;
- (d) determine an appropriate schedule for the decommissioning of Stokes Hill Power Station; and
- (e) make recommendations on the future delivery of a reliable power supply to Darwin consumers.

Mr Speaker, a week ago, we would not have moved this motion. Three weeks ago, there was a major power failure in Darwin which annoyed and angered many people and in fact cost many shopkeepers and businessmen a considerable sum of money. We were assured at the time by the Minister for Mines and Energy that the appropriate steps had been taken. I myself felt that he had taken the appropriate steps in commissioning an independent outsider to examine the reasons why the power system had failed on that particular day.

A week ago, we were content with that approach. But, on Sunday night, we had another power failure in Darwin - this time for 3 hours - causing considerable inconvenience to everybody in the Darwin area and making sure that some people's phones ran hot. It is as a result of that second major breakdown that we have moved this motion for an inquiry to be established under section 4A of the Inquiries Act. I must stress, Mr Speaker, that we are doing this not in the belief, as the NT News would have it, that the head of the Minister for Mines and Energy should roll. Neither are we doing it in the belief that this inquiry should be used as a witch-hunt. Rather, we see it as the positive way of reassuring the people of Darwin in particular, and the Northern Territory in general, that this matter is being taken seriously by this Assembly. That will be achieved through an inquiry established under the aegis of this Assembly with a wide brief and the requirement to report back.

I think the concerns of people in the Darwin area have been very well demonstrated. They are concerned that there have been 2 major power failures and they have been given information - accurate or inaccurate - that there may be more power failures. Monday's NT News placard outside the newsagency in the mall and other places read: 'Power Faults On the Cards'. As a result of seeing that and as a result of reading Monday's NT News, the ordinary person in the street would have a very clear belief that there is a great likelihood that there will be more major power breakdowns in Darwin.

Of course, I cannot determine whether that is accurate or not, and that is not the point. The point is that there is a belief amongst the public that there is something seriously wrong and that it should be fixed. It has gone beyond the point where the public of the Northern Territory is prepared to accept an independent inquiry that reports directly back to the minister. They are demanding an inquiry, set up under the aegis of the Legislative Assembly and reporting back to the Legislative Assembly, so that all the matters relating to these particular issues can be fully investigated.

The status of an inquiry established under the Inquiries Act are such that the person or the board appointed has the ability to call for all papers, books and documents and the power to summon witnesses and examine witnesses on oath. That is a formal power which is given to that board by the establishment of the inquiry under the Inquiries Act. That guarantees that every person whom the board believes should be interviewed can be interviewed and required to give information under oath. It also provides the opportunity for anybody who might like to present evidence to the board of inquiry to do so. I do not think that is a facility being offered by Mr Cole at present. I have stated in the media that we consider Mr Cole to be an appropriate person to conduct the inquiry. We have no problem with his independence or his thoroughness. All we are trying to do through this motion is to ensure that the public is given the widest possible confidence that this Assembly is doing everything possible to get to the bottom of the situation.

As I understand it, the present inquiry has several restrictions that this motion seeks to remove. Broadly, Mr Cole is directed to examine the reasons why the power failure took place 3 weeks ago and again last Sunday. In our view, that could be interpreted by Mr Cole as being restrictive and may well lead to his not getting to the bottom of the problems that could confront us. What we have endeavoured to do is to present to this parliament wide-ranging terms of reference which will enable the board to get to the bottom of what is wrong with our power supply at present and make recommendations as to how we can be guaranteed a regular and a reliable power supply. I will go through the terms of reference once more.

Mr Coulter: They are copies of the ones I issued a week ago.

Mr SMITH: That is very nice. If that is the case, it is very coincidental too.

'Examine the circumstances behind the failure of the Darwin power supply since the opening of the Channel Island Power Station and any future failures that may occur during the life of the inquiry'. Obviously that is quite sensible and appropriate.

'Examine the adequacy and condition of equipment involved in the failures and report on the ability of equipment to provide a reliable power supply for Darwin'. There has been considerable speculation within the electricity industry in the Northern Territory over the last few months about the nature of some of the equipment and Monday's NT News ran some information on that. I am not entering into any judgment on the correctness or otherwise of that information. What I am saying is that concern has been raised about the nature of some of the equipment used and that, in order to allay the public's concerns, the inquiry's terms of reference should be such as to take that into account. Only by our doing that will the public be satisfied that an inquiry has been held and has got to the bottom of all our current problems.

'Examine the current operational procedures and report on their adequacy to handle day-to-day and emergency situations'. This again is quite self-evident. It involves examination of procedures and training programs that have been put in place for the operators for the Channel Island Power Station. It will involve looking at the manual switching system which I understand is currently in use because the automatic switching system that is supposed to operate the Channel Island Power Station will not be in place for another few months. I would like to know whether the problems were basically operational and human error, as has been suggested in some quarters, whether they were the result of equipment failure or whether they were caused by a combination of those factors or some other factors.

'Determine an appropriate schedule for the decommissioning of Stokes Hill Power Station'. That has quite clearly become a very significant matter to be addressed. Already we have had the short-term solution contained in the Minister for Mines and Energy's decision to recommission the second generator at Stokes Hill. I believe that that also ought to be a subject for the inquiry as should the question of whether we need more generators and how long we need the current 2 to continue operating.

The fifth and most important term of reference is to 'make recommendations on the future delivery of a reliable power supply to Darwin consumers'.

Even if the Minister for Mines and Energy says that those 5 points are covered by the terms of the inquiry that he has established, the point still remains that the inquiry will report directly to the minister and it will be the minister who will determine whether the results of the inquiry will be made public or not.

Mr Coulter: I have the responsibility.

Mr SMITH: Of course you have the responsibility but this parliament also has a responsibility, and I would suggest to you that it is a higher responsibility, to ensure that services provided to Northern Territorians are run effectively, smoothly and efficiently in the interests of all Territorians. I would submit that those 2 different levels of responsibility are not necessarily in conflict. Of course the minister has responsibility for the efficient administration of the system but, as I said, the parliament also has some responsibilities.

Mr Coulter: Are we going to have inquiries for every facility?

Mr SMITH: Yes, if we have serious breakdowns in the water and sewerage system or if the education system breaks down in a similarly serious manner, I would expect that the opposition would seek an independent inquiry. That is only fair and appropriate.

I certainly do not want to take my full half hour on this matter. We have a situation where, twice within 4 weeks, with very new equipment and under a very new system, we have had a major breakdown in the power supply to Darwin. It is not something that was anticipated. It is something that the minister and his NTEC staff say they do not know the cause of. They know what happened but they do not know why it happened. In light of those circumstances, there is an enormous amount of public concern. The public needs to be assured that the fullest and most open inquiry possible will take place into what happened and how things can be improved so that similar events will not occur again. The public of the Northern Territory needs to be assured that the report of that inquiry will be a public document which will come back to this Assembly

so that its contents can be fully debated. Anything less will be to sell the public of Darwin short.

Mr COULTER (Mines and Energy): Mr Speaker, for the Leader of the Opposition to speak for just 10 minutes on this problem which he says is of such grave significance is nothing short of a disgrace. However, I am glad that he had the common sense not to waste the parliament's time any longer. It is ridiculous that we had to suspend standing orders so that he could do this. He did not have the common sense to introduce the matter in one of the other forms available to him. To have put the matter on the Notice Paper so that it became a general business issue which would be debated in this Assembly 12 sitting days from now shows how important he thinks it is. Not only that, the report he proposes would take 3 months to complete. I do not have 3 months to wait for the results of this inquiry. I need to know now. That is why, on the very day that the power failure occurred, I ordered an inquiry. I had no intention of waiting for the Legislative Assembly to meet. I acted immediately. I contacted some people to determine whether a suitable person was available to come to Darwin and to inquire into the matter immediately.

The Leader of the Opposition is engaged in a cheap political game in an attempt to gain some headlines. He has standing orders set aside because he does not know how else to introduce his motion into this Assembly and then he speaks for 10 minutes on it. It is a disgrace.

The facts are quite simple. I was concerned about the first power failure. I had terms of reference drawn up and we set about instituting an inquiry. In fact, I went to the Chief Minister and suggested that we could do it under the Inquiries Act. Indeed the Minister for Industries and Development was also present at that meeting. It was decided that we needed to act immediately and that we should not wait 3 weeks until parliament could implement an inquiry under the Inquiries Act. We announced the inquiry on 9 April 1987, the day of the power failure.

Let me refer to the terms of reference and see if they can be recognised in the Leader of the Opposition's terms of reference which he put before us today. The terms of reference cover the loss of transmission of electricity on 9 April 1987. The inquirer is to report to the minister responsible for the power supply on the reason for the failure; what equipment, support or backup facilities are required to prevent further breakdown; what measures should be taken to prevent a recurrence; the adequacy of procedures to respond to possible failures; the staff's knowledge of the equipment and whether further training is necessary; the handling procedures for any similar occurrence; the proper time frame for the decommissioning of Stokes Hill Power Station or other facilities; and such other matters as may be deemed appropriate. These terms of reference were announced on the very day that the first power failure occurred.

I now wish to place on record the dedication of the NTEC employees, in particular the operators. They are experiencing very hard times at the moment as they continue to supply electricity services to the people of the Northern Territory. I pay great credit to the men involved in the supply of power to Darwin. They are operating under extremely difficult conditions. There was an outage today: No 1 generator was out for 7 minutes. Perhaps a little too conscious of the problems that have occurred, the operators decided to bring in some other generating equipment. The outage was a result of a broken hydraulic line in No 1 generator. Having a broken hydraulic line does not mean that No 1 generator is a dud.

The Legislative Assembly is not the place to discuss every nut, bolt and pipe used in the generation of electricity. That is the proper work of electrical fitters, hard-working dedicated operators who are working on Channel Island and at Stokes Hill today. They are meeting the challenge of this new technology. Katherine is about to get its new \$33m gas turbine. There will be a \$13m upgrading at Alice Springs and a \$6m upgrading at Tennant Creek. I have every confidence in these operators.

It is, however, a time of bedding-down and de-bugging very expensive and elaborate machinery. There are problems. Today's blackout lasted only 7 minutes because of my action in bringing Stokes Hill on line as a result of the second power failure. There is a cost to the community in this. It costs an extra \$1m a month to run the machinery at Stokes Hill, but we have decided to do it because we need that safety backup to allow us to have continuity of supply during this running-in period. The fifth turbine, by the way, went into action and will come on line next week as well.

The capacity of the new powerhouse is not a problem. There are some other problems which the investigator is examining. His report will be on my desk within a matter of weeks, not the 3 months that would satisfy the Leader of the Opposition. This issue once again differentiates between the opposition and the government of the Northern Territory. We are an action government. We acted on 9 April, not 27 April like the Leader of the Opposition.

We have done a number of other things to ensure the continuity of supply during the de-bugging stage of this massive project. It is not new to have power failures in major stations of this nature. Mr David Cole, the person conducting the inquiry, has highlighted to me several cases where new powerhouses have been brought on line and had failures. Prolonged delays in restoring power are intolerable, and we have implemented a number of contingency plans which provide the backup which was evident with the 7-minute downtime in the northern suburbs today. It did not hit the newspapers today because of the actions I took after the second power failure.

Does the Leader of the Opposition suggest anything new? He is obviously quite happy with Mr Cole as the inquirer because his press release says that he could become the commissioner. Whilst he has no lack of confidence in Mr Cole, a well-regarded man in his work with the Queensland Electricity Board, he also wants a panel of 14 people.

Mr Smith: Why don't you read the act?

Mr COULTER: I will go back to the terms of reference. What does the Leader of the Opposition say about numbers of people? He says: 'That this Assembly, pursuant to section 4A of the Inquiries Act, resolves that a board of inquiry be appointed to inquire into and report to the Administrator within 3 months on the failure of the Northern Territory Electricity Commission to provide a regular, reliable power supply to Darwin ...' A board! Can you tell me how many are on a board? I guess it could be a long board or a short board.

Mr Smith: You are a thick board.

Mr COULTER: Getting back to my point, there is no difference between the Leader of the Opposition and myself in respect of our confidence in the person conducting the inquiry. If there were, he would have said so in his press release. His terms of reference are similar to the government's. The only difference is that a board of inquiry can take statements under oath. I can

certainly assure the Leader of the Opposition that all of the people concerned with this project including the operators and suppliers of the equipment and the engineers have shown a high degree of willingness to provide information to the person conducting the inquiry. They do not want any problems. They are world-wide operators and they do not want a black mark against them. They are anxious to resolve this issue. They do not want a witch-hunt; they want results. They want this generator returned to action as fast as possible and, if there is a particular fault, they want it fixed. The only difference is that this person can demand information from these people under oath. Whilst there is a high degree of cooperation from all those people concerned, that is not necessary. There is goodwill on both sides and people are anxious to resolve these issues. I do not see that as a particular problem.

What other advantages does he gain under the act? He would be able to talk to people and hold meetings. He can do those things anyway. I think the Hatton government demonstrated on the day of the power failure that it is prepared to act immediately. We are prepared to cut red tape, get down to the nitty gritty and find out just what the circumstances are and what the issues are.

Obviously, the Leader of the Opposition has been given some information regarding the equipment that has been installed at Channel Island. That information was also given to the NT News recently and it was published under the heading: 'Putting Darwin in the Dark'. It gave some examples concerning the machinery and said that No 1 turbine had an oil leak, the fuel system would not work on No 2 and that No 3 turbine was overheating. I had the opportunity to speak to Toyo in Japan recently about some of those allegations. In fact, I had a copy of the newspaper with me. I presented another paper to the NT News which refuted all the accusations contained in the article where, unfortunately, there was a fair bit of selective reporting. I would like to make that paper available to the Leader of the Opposition so that he can be informed on some of the issues. I suspect information has been given to him by various people about the equipment and the operation of Stokes Hill versus Channel Island. However, the facts are clear and quite simple and most of the information supplied and used in the article in the NT News is false and misleading. In fact, the only conclusion that one can draw from that particular article is that somebody who is anti-development sought to concoct a story to satisfy his personal needs and to embarrass the government.

I have been holding lunchtime meetings during this week with David Cole, Keith Blinco from NTEC, and Ray McHenry from the Department of Mines and Energy, who is the chairman of the NTEC board. During those meetings, we have examined ways that we can fast-track other facilities that will minimise the outage time that is currently being experienced. As I said before, today's example of a 7-minute outage in the northern suburbs was an indication of that. However, it costs \$1m a month to have that type of security.

The Berrimah gas turbine station has also been scheduled for recommissioning to ensure that we can remote control that station and bring the reserves that are available to us there on line faster. We were waiting on some spare parts to arrive for one of the generators, known as the Blackstart generator, at Channel Island. Those parts arrived from Europe via Singapore today and will be installed within the next day or so and we will have that facility available to us.

We are looking at remote controlling the switchyard at Channel Island which previously took 45 minutes to change over manually. That is a factor that added to the outage time. Once again, I pay credit to the operators and

the men who have been called out to Channel Island to activate the switching devices at the yard. When that operation becomes remote controlled within the next 2 or 3 weeks, it will save considerable time in switching over.

The current mode of operation for Stokes Hill Power Station - that is, 2 machines on line 24 hours per day - will be available during the next 2 or 3 weeks while we develop these safety measures. As I said at the outset, we have some problems at Channel Island at the moment and I would hate to think how many times a nut, bolt, screw or pipe has come loose. I would like to see this debate being conducted where it belongs - out there with the dedicated and the expert operators who are currently running Channel Island with the benefit of their training and knowledge of these new machines that are state-of-the-art technology. Every time something goes wrong, they learn from it and their expertise is increased.

I see in the NT News today that the Leader of the Opposition intends to involve the member for Barkly in this debate. I am sure he would be only too pleased to tell members how the blades used to fly off the Alfa Laval turbines at 3.21 every day at Stokes Hill when they were installed just after the cyclone. He would be able to describe the outages which resulted from the malfunctions of those turbines straight after they were first installed. As I said, there are problems with all power generating equipment and that was just another example which Territorians will remember.

The member for Koolpinyah is aware of power outages in the rural area that occurred as the result of the activities of fruit-bats. Certain honourable members argued here that the outages were not caused by fruit-bats and NTEC received a caning because of its assertions. In fact, the problem was caused by fruit bats. Fruit-bat protective devices have been fitted to all the rural lines now and power outages of that nature have been cut to almost zero as a result.

The Leader of the Opposition's promotion of the need for an inquiry of this type is, quite frankly, simply nonsense. There has been a gestation period of some weeks since the first power outage on 9 April. On 27 April, he decided to announce this bright new idea. He must have realised that he would be sitting in the Legislative Assembly soon and tried to think up an issue that would embarrass somebody or catch the newspaper headlines for him. He thought that seeking an inquiry under the Inquiries Act would be a good strategy. He would have said: 'We won't call it a witch-hunt. We will go easy on it but it will get me good coverage'. Therefore, he came here and put the proposal to us, but he put it on the Notice Paper as an item of general business. If he had not moved for a suspension of standing orders today, we would have been talking about it in August. Under the terms and conditions he is suggesting, a report would be made to the Administrator in 3 months from that time, which would have taken us through to Christmas. That is the kind of action that the Northern Territory public can expect from the Leader of the Opposition.

I have acted responsibly. I have acted quickly to ensure that these problems are resolved as soon as possible. I have every confidence in the person who is conducting the inquiry. There is no need to appoint him as a commissioner at this stage. There has been a high degree of cooperation from all people concerned, including NTEC suppliers and engineers. I will have that report in front of me in perhaps 3 to 4 weeks time. In the meantime, I can assure Territorians that I have implemented contingency plans to ensure a continuity of supply of electricity. Furthermore, we are bringing various backup resources on line to ensure that we have the correct switching gear

which can operate immediately to bring about a continuity of supply. The 7-minute outage in the Northern suburbs today as a result of a broken hydraulic line at Channel Island is a very good example of the type of backup service that is now available to us.

In closing my contribution to this debate, I once again would like to pay particular tribute to the operators of Channel Island Power Station and I wish them well in their endeavours for the successful operation of the Channel Island Power Station for many years to come.

Mr LEO (Nhulunbuy): Mr Speaker, I do not think I have ever heard the Minister for Mines and Energy quite so defensive in all my life. For the benefit of the member for Katherine and the member for Arafura, who are both new to this Assembly, you can always tell when the minister is on the defensive because he inevitably substitutes noise for substance.

This motion was not moved with any idea of slowing down any inquiry into the operations of the new powerhouse. Indeed, the minister is to be applauded for his immediate actions in that regard. However, it is a fact that the substance of any final report is very important, whether it takes 6 months or 12 months to achieve. One of the principal reasons why we decided upon a power station in Darwin which could be supplied by local fuels was to attract industries to the Northern Territory. The assumption was that they would be able to depend on a reliable supply of electricity which had a calculable cost over a long period.

One of the criteria for attracting those industries, the reliable supply of electricity, has been subject to some public speculation. If business houses are to invest in the Northern Territory, they need to have very real reassurance about the supply of electricity. I am quite sure that the minister would realise the emphasis that people in the tourist industry and investors in the Trade Development Zone would place on the reliability of supply of electricity in the Northern Territory. If those investors are to receive any reassurances at all, then the substance and the status of the report that is eventually released to the public will have an inevitable bearing upon their willingness to invest in the Northern Territory.

I do not doubt that Mr Cole, the person whom the minister has commissioned to make a report, will do an extremely good job. I do not doubt that he would make an excellent board member, if not the only board member in an inquiry under the Inquiries Act. But the status of the report is very important to investor confidence within the Northern Territory. I would have thought that the minister would have contemplated the development of industry in Darwin a little more. He had no reason to be so defensive about his actions to date. However, the extremely defensive tone of his speech leads me to believe that perhaps he has some reason to adopt that stance. For the life of me, I cannot understand why we were subjected to that haranguing.

I would suggest that the government accept this motion because it is put forward in good faith. It is inevitable that the report resulting from any inquiry under the Inquiries Act would reassure potential investors of the reliability of supply of electricity to Darwin. I can assure members that, unless investors are confident of the reliability of supply of electricity to Darwin, they will be very reluctant about investing their money. Once again, we will be forced into the ridiculous situation of setting mackerel to catch sprats. We will have to keep pumping more and more money in to try to attract smaller and smaller investments. It is not a matter of the minister's actions to date; it is a matter of this Assembly's actions to date. The government

certainly did agree to bring this motion on at the earliest possible time in these sittings. As the minister pointed out, it could have remained on the Notice Paper for another 3 months. It is important that that does not occur. It is true that it may very well take another 3 months for a report to be produced. That may very well happen.

A report under the Inquiries Act inevitably must give investors in the Northern Territory far more confidence than any in-house report that the minister himself may commission. Quite frankly, I have seen too many in-house reports submitted by various government ministers that would not hold water for 5 seconds. I would ask that the government seriously consider the motion that the Leader of the Opposition has moved this evening because it is of vital importance to Darwin. Quite frankly, it does not mean a tinker's cuss to Nhulunbuy but it is very important to Darwin. If Darwin wants to continue to attract investment, then the government will have to ensure that both of the tenets given when the gas-fired power station was built - a reliable supply of electricity at a price that could be calculated over an extended period of time - are seen to hold good. If both of those tenets are not maintained, we can kiss goodbye to any idea of inviting people here to invest moneys in projects that rely upon them. I would suggest to the government most strongly that, in the interests of Darwin, it should support this motion.

Of course, there will be an interim report to the minister and the board may very well come back with precisely the same report. But the important difference is the status of the reports. The status of a report commissioned under the Inquiries Act is substantially greater than the status of a report commissioned by the minister. I suggest that members opposite should reconsider their attitude and accept the motion moved by the Leader of the Opposition because it is simply too important to ignore.

Mr PERRON (Industries and Development): Mr Speaker, I certainly will not take up much of honourable members' time. Indeed, the minister has very adequately dealt with virtually every aspect of this motion that the opposition has moved. The member for Nhulunbuy hit the nail on the head in that, quite obviously, the opposition is looking for a report of a different status. It is not looking for a report that will say anything different. That really demonstrates the absurdity of the motion before the Assembly and the absurdity of the member for Nhulunbuy's pleas to establish an inquiry under the Inquiries Act even though there is an inquiry already under way and the job is probably half completed by now. All he was interested in was status and slowing down the procedure. The work that the man has done would have to be done again by other parties or at least reviewed by other parties. Even though the board would hand down the same report, he suggested that more people would take note of it. Obviously, that is a load of nonsense!

The electricity system in the Northern Territory is designed to have a very high level of reliability. As I understand electrical design from my limited period as a minister responsible for NTEC in the Northern Territory, you can have as many backup systems in the entire electrical generation and distribution system as you want. The more backup systems that you have, the more reliability you can count on. But, of course, they all have a price. The minister mentioned that he has instituted a backup system in this period of uncertainty until we find out what is happening with the new equipment. His backup system is to start up a second generator and presumably keep it on a rolling stand-by at Stokes Hill. That is a commendable step because it means that Darwin people will be a little more confident that there will be a fast resumption of electricity supply if we have another significant blackout. The cost of the backup is \$1m a month. We may not take 1 unit of electricity

from that second generator. It may be there for a month or 2 and millions of dollars will have been spent.

The question is: how many backups do we want to ensure that we will never go without electricity? Perhaps the minister should fund the whole of Stokes Hill at full power. We could run 2 powerhouses in case something happened to one of them. We could run 2 complete power systems with 2 sets of high tension wires that cost millions of dollars. Then, we would be really satisfied. However, if we stretch the imagination a little, it is even possible to imagine events such as earth tremors or cyclones resulting in both supplies failing for a number of hours. Perhaps we should have done some forward planning and had further backup systems installed so that could not happen.

Honourable members may be interested to know that the Northern Territory Electricity Commission works on a design criterion of an outage of 1 day in 10 years. That is the criterion that has been adopted since we have had responsibility for the design of electrical equipment in the Northern Territory. When I first heard that some time ago, I thought that it was a pretty high reliability level, but we are paying for that sort of protection right through the system. When people sat down to look at policy in designing the Channel Island power system and its connection with the Darwin grid, they decided that it had to have 2 sets of high tension wires completely separate from each other so that, if anything happened to 1, there was another to fall back on. That was because they were working on this policy of no more than 1 unplanned outage in 10 years. To my mind, that is a pretty high standard. I did not ask NTEC whether it was standard across Australia or in countries such as the USA and Canada. Is the Northern Territory a little bit out? Unfortunately, I cannot answer that, but I do think that the standard is pretty high.

Quite obviously, even with a design criteria of 1 day in 10 years, you could have 5 days of outages in 1 year. It would be much like having Cyclone Tracy 3 times in a wet season or in 3 consecutive years instead of being a once in 250 years occurrence, which I think Cyclone Tracy was eventually determined to be. We are dealing with statistics and mathematical formulae and using them to try to predict world disasters and more minor disasters. Unfortunately, the world does not necessarily follow statistical formulae.

We must have a criterion to plan a generating system, and that is the one we have. I think it is a very good one. However, as we have seen with accidents like Chernobyl, the tragic Challenger disaster, train crashes and aeroplane crashes, machinery that is made and operated by man has a tendency at times to fail. No matter how well-intended the people and no matter how much money has gone into design and management, both man and machine are obviously fallible at times. I am sure that the equipment at Channel Island is no different. That does not mean that it is not the finest equipment of its type that you can buy in the world today.

I am sure that, in due course, we will hear suggestions for modifying the system, the techniques or some of the equipment in order to minimise the chances of similar significant outages occurring again. However, if anyone thinks that they can be totally eliminated, he is kidding himself. Nevertheless, we can take all reasonable steps to minimise them within a reasonable budget. When the minister receives a report that recommends certain action, he will have to consider the cost and the value for that expenditure in comparison to what we are spending already. I think that the motion from the opposition is an attempt to gain a bit of publicity and to

score points. I guess it scored a line in a paper somewhere around the traps but it was a futile attempt, poorly handled, and quite wrongly based from the start.

Mr EDE (Stuart): Mr Speaker, the Leader of the Opposition pointed out that the publicity relating to the second blackout has gravely disturbed private citizens and the business community in the Northern Territory. The blackouts have probably cost many hundreds of thousands of dollars in actual losses, damage to equipment and forgone business revenue. They have created enormous inconvenience for private citizens. Asthma patients and other people on systems that require electricity have had their very lives put at risk. The member for Nhulunbuy spoke of the dangers that this poses for the reputation of the Northern Territory as a place that business people and private citizens can come to in the knowledge that they will have a reliable power system.

Mr Coulter: We know all that.

Mr EDE: If the minister will restrain himself for a moment, he may hear why we have initiated this debate.

Mr Coulter: I very much doubt it but I will try.

Mr EDE: There is a need to restore trust. Trust in public utilities is an essential component of the decision that businessmen make before they relocate to the Northern Territory. You can spend all you like on trade development zones and incentives and guaranteed returns but, unless there is trust in the basic systems of electricity, water supply, hospitals and so on, people will not make the decision. You can have a business that generates 25% return on capital but you may not have planned for the fact that the electricity will fail every now and again.

We had the minister tell us this morning that he has had to truck in a flash new generator for the Chan Building over the road because he is worried about his own systems. That is all right for the minister. He is able to call up a flash generator to provide some backup for his computer systems, but there are many people around Darwin who lost a lot of data and who have a lot of recovering to do before they get back to where they were before the problem arose.

Mr Speaker, you too will have heard the rumours about the problems at Channel Island. I have had phone calls late at night from people who refuse to give their names but who say they work in the system somewhere. They give a degree of technical data but will not provide their names because of the witch-hunts and the way in which the Northern Territory government has politicised the public service. An inquiry under the Inquiries Act is a different matter. People have the right and indeed the obligation to be sworn and to tell the truth. They then receive some protection from the witch-hunts that the Northern Territory government is currently trying to carry out throughout its system.

The Minister for Mines and Energy made the stupid statement that the motion could have been on the Notice Paper until Christmas. Obviously, when we gave notice yesterday, we intended that it be brought on today. If the government refused to debate it, that would be on its head. The terms of reference refer to 'within 3 months'. Most people with any understanding of the English language know that 'within 3 months' actually means up to 3 months. It does not mean that you have to go the full term of 3 months.

That was beyond the understanding of the Minister for Mines and Energy who collapses in a heap when you get beyond nursery rhymes. He is trying now to upgrade his intellectual abilities to something like the Playboy level. That is why he has been seated next to the honourable member for Playboys.

He stated that he had this all organised in the first day. According to the newspapers that I read, it was some 8 days before he actually appointed the person to conduct the inquiry and that person did not start until 13 days later. This is the rapid movement that was generated by the minister. The real reason he finally got moving a bit was the second blackout.

Mr Coulter: Oh, leave me alone. The fellow was already here in Darwin by then.

Mr EDE: Mr Speaker, the 'Power Faults on the Cards' article in the NT News of 27 April reflects some of the current rumours about the power system in the Northern Territory which are causing the business community and private citizens to have these grave doubts. It is essential that the matter be brought out into the open in a forum which people can completely trust, where people can give information in the knowledge that they will not be subject to some interdepartmental witch-hunt. Such information can be fully assessed by an expert and tabled. But what does the minister do? He initiates an internal investigation ...

Mr Coulter: Do you know anything about this at all?

Mr EDE: ... which he will be able to vet so he can take out anything that is slightly embarrassing before giving the public a doctored report which he will finally release when he believes it is too late to cause him any political damage. Even then, people will continue to have the doubts that they have now. The rumours will continue to circulate through the community and we will have this continuing lack of confidence in the system.

Manifold rumours abound. For example, it is rumoured that the types of machines being used are known internationally to be duds. It is said that John Brown Engineering, the company which manufactures this equipment, has had enormous problems trying to work out the design faults in these machines and that sales negotiations in Brunei have collapsed completely with Brunei going to another system. I am not saying that all these stories are true.

Mr Hatton: Then why talk about them?

Mr EDE: I am doing that because the government has indicated that it will not support this inquiry. If the minister had supported it, I would simply have been able to tell the inquiry what I had heard from various sources and the public could have rested assured that the stories would be thoroughly investigated. They include the rumours that 3 of the turbines installed so far have major problems, that No 1 has oil seal problems which have caused it to go down twice and that it now needs a major overhaul, that the dual fuel system in No 2 will not work, and that No 3 has been de-rated because it was overheating and needs to be pulled down. As I have said, these are rumours. But they are rumours that need to be proved or scotched.

The minister has already spoken today about some problems with No 1. Maybe those are completely different to the problems that I have heard about, or maybe those have now been solved and it has other problems. What about the rumour that, because of the problems John Brown has had in selling these machines around the world, it has lately had to undergo complete financial

restructuring? Is it true that the installation engineers working for the company have had to take a 30% pay cut? Is it true that the government did a deal with John Brown to drop the penalty rates from \$40 000 to \$10 000 per day if Nos 4 and 5 are on the pads by May? Is it true that that deal is still current? We are almost into May now. Is it likely that they will in fact get those machines off and running by May? If not, what will be the deal? Will we be going back to the \$40 000 per day in penalty rates or will this company have to default, putting all our warranties in danger? Was the deal put together on the basis that John Brown would have the other 2 generators operational by the end of April or early May? Was there a deal and, if so, how is it going? The details still have not been given to us. We are talking about a difference of some \$30 000 per day.

Mr Speaker, is it true that Stokes Hill could have been converted to run on gas?

Mr Coulter: For \$2m!

Mr EDE: Is that the figure?

Mr Coulter: That is what it says in front of you.

Mr EDE: Thank you. I hope that that is confirmed. My information was a little bit different. It was that a \$500 000 rebuild of Nos 1 and 2 at Stokes Hill was carried out and that they were not utilised for anything like the amount of time that would have justified that.

Mr Coulter: They were not used at all.

Mr EDE: They were not used at all after a \$500 000 rebuild. Is that a fact?

Mr Coulter: It was more than \$500 000.

Mr EDE: Thank you. We do get information from these debates.

Mr Coulter: The Chief Minister will correct you in a moment.

Mr EDE: I hope he will be able to explain to the Assembly why more than \$500 000 was spent on Nos 1 and 2 at Stokes Hill and they were never used.

The rumours about the early closure of Stokes Hill were very persistent and the minister gave them some credence in something he said to the press. When the minister spoke about computers this morning, he said that this was a time of de-bugging. If he knew anything about computers, he would know that one of the fundamental principles of system changeovers is to run the 2 systems in parallel. This government thought that it could get around that fundamental principle with a cheap trick. It did not worry about the consumers when it pulled Stokes Hill out before there was a sufficient degree of parallel operation to work the bugs out of the new system.

Mr Speaker, I also want to know about the rumours of \$3m of bunkering oil which was purchased and supposedly is still sitting in the tanks over there. I know about another minister's proposals for setting up a bunkering facility for ships in transit and for using those tanks for that purpose. It is an interesting proposition and we hope we will get some information on it to consider during the course of these sittings. But, is it true that part of the deal to encourage the company was the fuel oil that was left over from Stokes Hill?

Mr Coulter: There is 60 t left in 1 of them so it is not very much of an incentive. Most of it is water.

Mr EDE: If so, Mr Speaker, why is any incentive required? Is this another means of cross-subsidisation of business to give an illusion of growth as against the reality?

There are also rumours that the major capacity at Channel Island is more useful if it is used for peak demand production and not base production. I would like information on that aspect so that we can see whether the types of machines purchased were thought at that time to operate as peak production units over and above the basic units, which would have been run out of Stokes Hill. We would also like to know whether it was intended to have a period where Stokes Hill would provide the base-load with the peak-load coming out of Channel Island so that the bugs could be worked out of the system before gradually moving the base-load across to Channel Island and reducing the load coming from Stokes Hill.

Mr Speaker, these are some of the questions that we would like answered. It is not only the opposition who would like the answers to these questions; it is the businessmen and the private citizens in the Northern Territory. All we hear, though, is this Greek chorus giggling from the frontbench opposite who obviously do not care sufficiently about businesses in the Northern Territory or the rumours that are circulating and undermining confidence.

Mr Speaker, in the Northern Territory, we are suffering from an incredible collapse of confidence at the moment. We have already spoken today of the downturn in the building industry ...

Members interjecting.

Mr EDE: Oh, the fringe benefits tax! Mr Speaker, here we go again. Is the fringe benefits tax now to blame for the total downturn of the Northern Territory economy? Is that why people are not buying new houses? Is that why they are not building new houses? That is a very long bow to draw at this time of the night. Anyway, we will be talking more about that over the next few days. I have a few pointers on the fringe benefits tax and the proposals that the Liberal Party is considering in case it ever returns to government, which is looking less and less likely as the days go by. However, I will not pursue that subject and be accused of straying from the debate in hand.

In conclusion, I hope that what I have said in the Assembly tonight will convince members opposite that they should rethink the decision which, obviously, they had made before they came in and listened to the points we have made. I hope that they will think about the need for confidence and trust that is absolutely essential for the economy of the Northern Territory, and will take up the Leader of the Opposition's proposal and act on it immediately.

Mr HATTON (Chief Minister): Mr Speaker, if this were not such a serious subject, one could be forgiven for thinking we were in the middle of comedy hour in the Assembly.

We have been listening to a proposal moved by the Leader of the Opposition. Yesterday or the day before, he told the community of his intention to raise this resolution in the Assembly. He did not get his procedures right and, with a bit of egg on his face, he had to ask us to agree to a suspension of standing orders. We thought that this matter was fairly

important, and it is important to debate the issue of the reliability of electricity supply and other such matters in the Assembly. No one denies that, Mr Speaker. However, the method and the purpose behind this particular resolution is a matter of some serious question.

Mr Smith: How else can we find out anything?

Mr HATTON: The Leader of the Opposition wants to know how else he can find things out. There is a particular part of the day's agenda called question time. Members opposite could use that opportunity to elicit information if they sought genuinely to obtain facts. Instead they waste the opportunities provided in question time by playing their own little political games day in and day out. Fundamentally, this motion boils down to an argument for status and for publicity. That covers all we have heard in the last hour.

There is no dispute from the opposition that the inquiry that was instigated by the Minister for Mines and Energy on the day of the first power failure is not comprehensive in terms of covering the issues. I would like honourable members to listen to the terms of reference for the inquiry that is currently under way, and which was under way when, unfortunately, the second power outage occurred last Sunday night. The inquiry has been set up to investigate and make recommendations on:

(a) the reasons for the failure; (b) what equipment supports or backup facilities are required to prevent further breakdown; (c) measures to prevent recurrence; (d) adequacy of procedures to respond to possible failures, advise on the knowledge of staff of the equipment and whether further training is necessary; (e) handling procedures for any similar occurrence; (f) what time frame should occur for the decommissioning of Stokes Hill Power Station or other facilities; and (g) such other matters as may be deemed appropriate to the circumstances within 6 weeks of the appointment.

There was no pressure for an inquiry. It was a unilateral decision of this government that the Minister for Mines and Energy move to get this inquiry under way so that we would know what the problems are and what could be done to counteract those problems and work towards the development of a reliable power supply in Darwin. That was the whole purpose of this inquiry. There is an assumption amongst members opposite that, for some unknown reason, we do not really want to have a reliable or cheap power supply in Darwin. I do not understand the logic of that notion. Not just this government, but some members opposite as well, have taken great pride in the development of that station and looked forward with pride to its full commissioning and the benefits which can flow through to the people of the Northern Territory and the people of Darwin in particular.

There is no incentive whatsoever for politicians, particularly the ministers in this government, not to want to know exactly what went wrong and what needs to be done to fix the problem and to provide power. They are our constituents out there. It is our community. In fact, most of us live in Darwin and suffer from the power outages ourselves. I can assure members that on Sunday night when people rang me and asked me what was wrong with the power, I was just as hot, bothered and angry as anybody else, as the Public Relations Officer from NTEC will attest. I wanted to know why the power had not been switched back on and why they did not know whether they could get it back on within 5 minutes. I think every other member of this Assembly would have asked the same questions. I might add that, as a consequence of last

Sunday evening, there have been a number of procedural changes, as outlined by the minister this afternoon, to further accelerate the response.

In this commissioning phase, there are chances that Channel Island Power Station will go down from time to time. We hope that that will not occur. The backup systems from Stokes Hill should correct those problems. That is not unusual in the conditioning phase of any facility, particularly something as complex as that at Channel Island. We could have kept Stokes Hill going full steam. We could have maintained that work force for the whole period until we were 100% satisfied that Channel Island would have no glitches whatsoever. The cost to the Northern Territory community, of course, would have been quite astronomical. That cost, which is at least twice the total revenue collected for electricity, would have been necessary if Stokes Hill Power Station had been kept running at full capacity for 6, 9 or 12 months, at the same time as running Channel Island. Financial arrangements for subsidies to power supplies in Darwin have been slashed by 75% over 2 budgets, and responsibility for that has been loaded onto the community as far as possible to offset the losses being made by NTEC and the loans it had to obtain. Members opposite, like us, have worked very hard to minimise the cost of power to the community. These are all balancing factors.

In a lighter vein, the member for Karama dropped a note here. He referred to Palmer's Law of Relative Electricity Supply. Electricity supply equals money constraints squared. Translated into symbols that is $E=MC^2$.

Mrs Padgham-Purich: That is Einstein.

Mr HATTON: Mr Speaker, the inquiry is in place. The only difference sought by the opposition is the creation of a board. Opposition members indicated that 1 person could comprise that board. If that is the case, why did the resolution not say 'a person' as referred to in section 4A of the act?

Mr Smith: If that is your only problem, we will fix it for you.

Mr HATTON: Mr Speaker, even if the opposition were to do that, it has already indicated that the person it thinks would be appropriate to conduct the inquiry is the person who is carrying out the current inquiry. The only other argument the opposition offers to support an inquiry under the Inquiries Act is some vague idea that the publicity that flows from it will be better and that there will be more public confidence. Could I suggest that, had we sought to set up an inquiry under the Inquiries Act, the opposition, trying to grab a headline, would have merely moved to form a parliamentary select committee to investigate electricity supplies in the Northern Territory. It is a little game of one-upmanship and nothing more. It is not an attempt to get to the bottom of the problem because that has already been dealt with. We do not intend to engage in that little game with the opposition.

Mr Speaker, something far worse has occurred this afternoon. The member for Stuart has decided to publicise and promote scurrilous rumours in this forum and, since rumours seem to be the order of the day here, I mention the very strong rumour that the article 'Putting Darwin in the Dark' was written by one Mr Ellis, a certain trade union official who was acting as agent provocateur for the ALP. The response to that article has been publicised and I think it is incumbent on me to take the opportunity to read that response in this Assembly. It is called 'A Response to putting Darwin in the Dark'.

'Putting Darwin in the Dark' is primarily a broad-based criticism of the decision to build Channel Island Power Station and of the

operation of the equipment. The writer has either deliberately overlooked the cost benefits to both public and private sectors of Channel Island Power Station versus Stokes Hill Power Station and also the cost penalty of running SHPS, after CIPS became available, of in the order of \$100 000 per week.

The criticism of the turbines in paragraph 2 is patently false. In fact, they are part of a family of the most popular turbines in the world. It is true that some of the units were held by the manufacturer for some years. However, it is not unusual business practice to manufacture additional units during a production run. This enables the manufacturer to offer better delivery times to the next customer. This was in fact done by John Brown for Channel Island.

The 'problems' that occurred at the Brunei Power Station are not relevant to the Darwin situation. A government decision to adopt combined cycle technology led to the construction of a new power station with subsequent downgrading of the existing station. Both stations are equipped with John Brown gas turbines.

All stated problems with the turbines at CIPS, as mentioned in paragraph 3, were correct. However, all faults have now been satisfactorily repaired. All these problems were commissioning difficulties resolved by the contractor in the normal course of rectification of commissioning defects.

With reference to NTEC's view on the supply of power in paragraph 4, it is generally well known that NTEC has put enormous effort into providing reliable power and into reducing costs of that power. The number and duration of outages has decreased dramatically over the last 4 to 5 years. Nevertheless, it is a condition of the Electricity Commission Act that NTEC shall not be liable for damages arising out of failure to supply electricity. It is doubtful whether any electricity supply authority in the world would be prepared to guarantee power supply. The reference to 'their inability to supply power' contained in paragraph 5 is not understood. To the best of NTEC's knowledge, the manufacturer has not gone broke although the installation engineers have indeed taken a pay reduction. John Brown Engineering has recently been bought out by Trafalgar House. This is a corporate matter and is not considered to be of concern to NTEC.

The present status of machine commissioning at Channel Island is: Nos 1 and 2 commissioned and in full commercial operation; Nos 3 and 4 commissioned and about to be taken over into commercial operation by NTEC - both units have been running and supplying power to the system for some time; No 5 in commissioning, due to go into commercial operation on 1 May 1987; No 6, the steam turbine, in construction with commercial operation date of 1 October 1987 - construction is on schedule.

The machines are not being rushed into operation. The program was set in early contract phases and is being adhered to. The early units, 1, 2 and 3, were somewhat behind schedule or slightly ahead of schedule. In looking at the numbers of sets available, it is important to also consider demand, maintenance, scheduling and reliability margins. The total installed capacity at Channel Island will be approximately 186 megawatts whilst maximum power in the

Darwin system is currently approximately 110 megawatts occurring in November/December 1986. This gives a comfortable reserve capacity.

No more people are being brought from the UK to help with installation. However, the contractor will naturally have representatives present. There is some rotation of John Brown staff. The contract contains no penalties but has provision for liquidated damages. The liquidated damages are being applied as specified and no deal has been done by the CLP or anyone else. The CLP does not deal with NTEC's contractors.

It is true, as stated in paragraph 8, that Stokes Hill Power Station could have been converted to gas. This was examined early in the decision-making process. However, other factors - reduced manpower, lack of space to expand etc - made this decision uneconomical. Furthermore, the extension of the gas pipeline to the city would have cost at least \$10m.

The rebuild of units 1 and 2 at Stokes Hill Power Station referred to in paragraph 9 was undertaken at the time the coal-fired power station was proposed for 1988 or 1989 - that is, the life of the Stokes Hill Power Station units would have had to be extended. When the decision was made to go to a gas-fired station, the rebuilding work was stopped. Stokes Hill could not have been upgraded for \$2m. The actual amount would have been a great deal higher.

Management did not meet on Thursday. This is presumably last Thursday 9 April, referred to in paragraph 10. Stokes Hill will not be recalled, as paragraph 11 states. Problems of Channel Island Power Station are not long term. They have already been fixed and the turbine supplier has contracted to provide the standard 12 months defects liability period. In fact, this period may be greatly extended. The technical skills developed at Stokes Hill Power Station are not relevant to Channel Island Power Station and therefore not justified in being retained. The date for closure at Stokes Hill Power Station has not yet been set.

The comment about grandiose visions etc in paragraph 12 is entirely refuted. The taxpayer is certainly going to benefit from the cheaper gas fuel generation. Approximately \$2.549m worth of fuel was delivered to Stokes Hill Power Station - referring to para 13 - last February. Most of this will be consumed by the end of June. A very minor safety margin may be left. All oil will be consumed before the final shut down of Stokes Hill Power Station.

With reference to the controls and communication of Channel Island Power Station in paragraph 14, both technical and financial controls have been most carefully monitored through the project. Communications to the power station are state of the art. The assumption that for \$2m there could be hassle-free power is wishful thinking, given the age of, and the likely cost of, upgrading of Stokes Hill Power Station.

In summary, there is little justification for the thrust of this document and its apparent mischievousness is deplorable.

This is the response from the Northern Territory Electricity Commission, Mr Speaker. I would not normally go through that range of answers but, since

the member for Stuart chose to refer to a rumourmongering document, it is appropriate that the responses provided by NTEC should equally be made available to this Assembly. I trust that the scribes of the media will take the opportunity to publicise that refutation.

Mr Speaker, I again say that the government has acted expeditiously and properly in examining as fully as is necessary the causes and possible solutions of the problems that led to the 2 power outages. Our decision was not made under any pressure but through a natural, logical and responsible attitude to ensure that we have cheap, reliable power emanating from Channel Island Power Station. That is the goal and desire of this government. To accede to the Opposition Leader's request for an inquiry under the Inquiries Act, because of the legalistic nature of such inquiries, will do nothing but treble the cost of the investigations. That is my advice on the cost of inquiries under the Inquiries Act versus the process of consultancy and inquiry that is under way now.

I challenge the Leader of the Opposition or any other member opposite to tell us how a public inquiry would provide more information than will be available through the current inquiry. I will be recommending that we reject this motion.

Mr TUXWORTH (Barkly): Mr Deputy Speaker, I was quietly amused at the wrath and the vigour with which the power blackouts were criticised recently. It brought to mind some of the incidents we had in the early 1970s after the cyclone. They were caused by equipment failures at Stokes Hill and were normally preceded by an explosion that you could hear from one end of the city to the other, after which we could have as much as 16 to 18 hours of blackness. We used to think that was pretty bad. Anybody who lived in Tennant Creek in the early 1950s would really know what a blackout is all about because they could last for 4 days at a time in those days. Spare parts were pretty hard to obtain because, like all the generating equipment, they came from England.

The introduction of the gas technology at Channel Island is a very big move for the Northern Territory and we would have to expect that there would be equipment failures or blackouts in the commissioning period. We would be naive to believe that we could get through the commissioning period without that sort of happening. Obviously, we have had those disruptions and they have caused a great deal of trauma within the community. In fact, there are many business people who are really frightened for themselves and the success of their businesses if the power outages should continue.

In anticipating that we would have those blackouts or equipment failures, we would also expect that they would be of a short duration, that it would not take us very long to find out what caused the problem and that the backup systems would come into play pretty quickly to restore power to the town. On each of those points, citizens have been let down. The duration of blackouts has been quite extensive by any standards.

It appears to me, after simply asking various people involved in the industry, that no one really has an answer as to what caused the outages. The failure of the backup systems is certainly a matter of concern to everybody. As the minister said, he has worked pretty hard to ensure that those backup systems work in future. But, the most disturbing aspect of the whole performance is that we cannot see where the problems are in order to fix them.

The minister's alacrity in commissioning an inquiry is to be commended. It is really important, however, and not just from the point of view of the minister or the government, that the report commissioned by the minister is made available to the public. The public must have access to that report so it can see what the causes were and feel confident that the problems will not last very long or threaten investment and livelihoods.

I have had representation today from members of the Federated Engine Drivers and Firemens Association. They told me that they are making a submission to Mr Cole and they are concerned that members of their organisation have had it put to them that sabotage was the reason for the outages and they feel that is a dreadful reflection on the union's membership. They want that issue cleared up so that it is not hanging over their heads. I think that is pretty reasonable because the FEDFA would be one of the most responsible unions that I have ever had to deal with in my years in government. Its attitude towards the generation of power throughout the Northern Territory was always hard, but it was responsible. I understand their concern that an accusation such as sabotage would be a matter of great concern to the union's membership.

It is also reasonable to expect that the report be made available to the public because there are so many components in the construction of Channel Island and so many people involved in it. They all ought to have the opportunity of being cleared of doubt. Were the problems in design? Were they problems of manufacture? Were they problems of installation? Were they problems of distribution? Were they problems of poor supervision by the government's consultants? What were the problems and who were the people concerned? If it is not possible to identify the problems, let that be said publicly too.

I raise this because the member for Stuart tonight has given us a fine example of why those people who have no involvement in the failures ought to be let off the hook. Everybody who has been on the Channel Island job, the design people, the engineers, the manufacturers, the consultants, the subcontractors, all of them, have their professional integrity in relation to that project. If problems relating to the project are not identified and the responsibilities clarified, every contractor and worker involved will have a cloud over his firm, his performance or his future. That is not reasonable.

We had an example tonight from the member for Stuart who had a couple of good throwaway lines about John Brown. He reflected on John Brown, which I understand is an English company of some 100 years' standing in the engineering business and is currently experiencing financial difficulties. The financial difficulties of John Brown overseas were attached to the problems at Channel Island and 2 and 3 put together made 5. It is quite possible that there may be no relationship at all between John Brown Engineering's manufacturing of generators for electricity generation and the overall financial position of the company. I will go on to say that the equipment purchased, although manufactured by John Brown, was General Electric equipment made under licence. General Electric will stand behind equipment made under licence anywhere in the world. We are not dealing with shonks and we are not dealing with equipment that was poorly designed or poorly manufactured because the GE mark is there.

Having made those points, I would now say to the minister, quite sincerely and in the interests of all people concerned, that he should change his stance about making the report public. It is not a witch-hunt. No one is interested in nailing people to the cross. It is important that people involved but not

implicated in any way at all with the failures and blackouts should have that made quite clear publicly as soon as possible because it is in their present and future interests.

Mr Speaker, I will close by saying that I was pleasantly surprised that the minister had moved so quickly to implement the inquiry into what had happened. In view of the fact that there had only been 1 incident, I thought that he might have moved a bit precipitously and it might not have been necessary, but hindsight has shown that his timing was good. He can capitalise on that by making the report in its entirety public for the whole community to see.

Mr SMITH (Opposition Leader): Mr Speaker, it has been a very interesting debate indeed. I do want to assure members opposite that the form that the motion took was resolved after the best advice possible, as you would expect.

Mr Coulter: Get another adviser.

Mr SMITH: It is quite clear that the advice from the best adviser possible worked, because the debate on this motion has been a very interesting one.

I also want to take up the question of the rapidity of the minister's response. He responded verbally very quickly. On 10 April the headline said 'Blackout - Top Probe Ordered'. However, it was not until 18 April - 8 days later - that we had news of the announcement of the appointment of Mr David Cole. It was also on 18 April that it was indicated that Mr David Cole would not begin work until the following Wednesday, 23 April. In other words, Mr David Cole did not take up work on this urgent inquiry for 14 days. He has now been in the Territory for a week. If we go to the NT News of 28 April, remembering that Mr Cole did not arrive in the Territory to conduct this urgent investigation until 2 weeks after the first power blackout - that is, last Wednesday - and remembering that this report is from last Monday, it says that 'Mr Cole is expected to complete the investigation within a week'. He has 2 major power breakdowns to investigate and 8 terms of reference, and he will spend 10 days in the Territory.

Let me read out the terms of reference:

the reason for the failure; what equipment supports or backup facilities are required to prevent further breakdown; measures to prevent a recurrence; adequacies of procedures to respond to possible failures; advise on the knowledge of staff of the equipment and whether further training is necessary; handling procedures for any similar occurrence; what time frame should occur for the decommissioning of Stokes Hill Power Station or for other facilities; and such other matters as may be deemed appropriate to the circumstance within 6 weeks of the appointment.

Nevertheless, we learn from the newspaper, and I am assuming that it is correct, that Mr Cole will complete his investigations within 1 week of Monday, which means that he is to be in the Northern Territory for a maximum of 10 or 11 days. Mr Speaker, that concerns me. We have had 2 major power breakdowns. According to the Minister for Mines and Energy, we have very detailed terms of reference yet Mr Cole is to spend only 11 days in the Northern Territory.

Members opposite asked what would be the difference between the inquiry as ordered by the Chief Minister and the Minister for Mines and Energy and the inquiry we wish to set up?

Mr Palmer: To obtain evidence under oath.

Mr SMITH: Right. Evidence would be taken under oath and it could also be taken in public. Advertisements could well be placed in the newspaper and people could be invited to present evidence. I will give you an example, Mr Speaker.

Mr Perron: You would have every nutcase in town at it.

Mr SMITH: I cannot add anything to that.

There are people who worked on that project who have scattered to the 4 corners of the globe. For example, we know of a person who was employed in an engineering capacity and is now living in the United States of America. Because of the particular role he played in the setting up of the Channel Island Power Station, he may well have something significant to contribute to this inquiry. He may well have: it cannot be put any stronger than that. If the government is determined to get to the bottom of the problem, it would provide an opportunity for all of the people who worked on the project to make a contribution. There is a better chance of doing that if our recommendation for an inquiry is accepted.

Of course, the other major differences between the government's inquiry and our proposed inquiry is the question of the status of the final report. The Minister for Mines and Energy is saying to the people of the Northern Territory and the people of Darwin in particular, 'Trust me', or, to quote a well-known phrase, 'Don't you worry about that'. I do not think that the people of Darwin are in a mood to trust the Minister for Mines and Energy or any other minister on this particular issue because they have been grossly inconvenienced because of it.

Not only have we had 2 blackouts but, in some areas of Darwin, there was a brownout preceding the second blackout and I am advised that that on its own was sufficient to do considerable damage to many of the computing facilities in Darwin. It can be of no reassurance to the poor, suffering people of Darwin that today the Northern Territory government installed a backup generator facility for the Chan Building. That would be no reassurance to them at all and I am sure that they will be even more concerned when they know ...

Mr HATTON: A point of order, Mr Speaker! The Leader of the Opposition's discussion of a generator has absolutely nothing to do with the particular matter before the Assembly.

Mr SPEAKER: There is no point of order.

Mr SMITH: Mr Speaker, the relevance of this generator to this debate is demonstrated by the minister's own comments in Hansard this morning, and I will read them to you:

The importance of continuity of electricity supply is recognised by people who install emergency generators. The generator that is now being installed will provide a continuity of electricity supply for a very valuable resource.

'Continuity of electricity supply for a very valuable resource'. If that is not an admission that the government cannot maintain a continuous supply through the normal NTEC system, I don't know what is. That will not give the people of the Northern Territory any confidence at all in NTEC. The minister's own words indicate that NTEC cannot provide a continuous supply of electricity to the Chan Building. Of course, the Northern Territory government can fix that; it spends the taxpayer's money and brings in this you-beaut facility. Obviously, the ordinary Territorian sitting in his home with his fridge or his freezer stacked full of goodies, does not have the capacity to buy a stand-by generator. Those people rely on the ability of NTEC to supply them with a regular and reliable electricity supply.

Mr Coulter: So under your government you would not provide backup resources for an \$80m computer system.

Mr SMITH: I would not be making stupid statements like that about the reason for installing it, and that is for sure. The minister condemns himself by his own words and, obviously, adds to the concern of people in Darwin about the reliability of their electricity supply.

In the last 3 weeks, we have had 2 major power failures in Darwin. We have an admission from NTEC officials - and this is no criticism of them - and from the minister himself that, although they know what happened, they do not know why it happened. Equally, we have statements from NTEC officials that they can give no guarantee that similar major breakdowns will not occur again in the near future. There are not too many power suppliers in Australia, for example, who have had 2 major breakdowns in 3 weeks, and it is in that context that we need an inquiry that not only is independent but is seen to be independent. It needs to be an inquiry that is not only independent in its operations but is also independent in the manner in which it reports its findings. That is the reason why we have introduced this motion for an inquiry under the Inquiries Act.

We want to provide the people of the Northern Territory in general, and the people of Darwin in particular, with the best possible reassurance that the faults that have occurred and which have resulted in those blackouts are being very thoroughly investigated indeed, and that the findings of the independent inquiry will be made public through presentation of the report in this Assembly and, obviously, will be the subject of debate in this Assembly. As I said when I introduced this motion, it is only through the combination of those actions that the people of Darwin will be satisfied that the inquiry has got to the bottom of the problems.

Mr Coulter: I look forward to your contribution to that debate.

Mr SMITH: Right, and hopefully I will get the chance to make it because I can only get that chance if the government agrees to the motion that we have before us.

Mr Speaker, it is easy for the government people in the ivory tower of the Chan Building with the 24-hour guaranteed power supply to make light of the inconvenience of those 2 recent power failures, and of the loss of income suffered by so many people as a result of those 2 power failures. The government has an obligation to ensure that the inquiry that is established is the best possible inquiry to ensure that the people of Darwin have the best possible guarantee that the truth has been found out and that it will be acted upon.

I conclude by passing on the contents of an unsigned note that I have received which I assume comes from the Chief Minister. This note does come from him, doesn't it?

Mr Hatton: Yes.

Mr SMITH: The note says: 'The minister will make the report available to this Assembly'.

Mr Speaker, I conclude by saying that, although this does not go as far as we would have liked, we have certainly reached a much better position than existed before this debate started.

Mr Coulter: Rubbish! I didn't say that I would not make it available in the first place.

Mr SMITH: You had 15 minutes to say that you would make it available, but you did not take advantage of that opportunity.

The Assembly divided:

Ayes 5

Mr Bell
Mr Ede
Mr Lanhupuy
Mr Leo
Mr Smith

Noes 15

Mr Collins
Mr Coulter
Mr Dondas
Mr Hanrahan
Mr Harris
Mr Hatton
Mr Manzie
Mrs Padgham-Purich
Mr Palmer
Mr Perron
Mr Poole
Mr Reed
Mr Setter
Mr Tuxworth
Mr Vale

Motion negatived.

ADJOURNMENT

Mr HARRIS (Port Darwin): Mr Speaker, I move that the Assembly do now adjourn.

It gives me no pleasure to sound the voice of doom in this Assembly, nor to say 'I told you so'. In the last sittings of the last Assembly some 6 months ago, I spoke on defence - the defence of our nation and particularly the defence of our vulnerable northern coastline. I criticised the Dobb Review for its short-sightedness and lack of realism in depending on a layered defence system - a denial system which would not allow Australian forces to resolve major conflicts on Australian soil; for rejecting the need for forward defence; for arguing that no island continent had ever suffered a full-scale enemy attack; for minimising the Australian American alliance while maximising the Australian New Zealand accord; and for insisting that we are surrounded by nations with stable governments and are safe from attack for the next 10 years.

I pointed out the immediate neighbouring trouble zones - Indonesia, Papua New Guinea, Kampuchea, the Philippines. I warned of Soviet activity in the Pacific, of the huge Soviet fleets centred on Cam Ranh Bay in Vietnam and I quoted Paul Dobb's own earlier words: 'The warning time for some political and strategic events is extremely short. Seemingly, we are often surprised by the unpredictable or irrational act of a nation state'.

The truth is that we live in a world made constantly irrational and unpredictable by the threat of nuclear holocaust. This exaggerates the fears of peace lovers and increases the lunacy of despots. But we cannot bow before the lunacy. We must face the fear, working positively for sanity.

Early in April, Margaret Thatcher caused some consternation when she openly confronted the issue in Moscow. Nuclear disarmament, she claimed, could lead the world to war, not permanent peace. There was grave danger in eliminating nuclear weapons without also eliminating conventional weapons. And how would this be possible? She pointed out that the 2 World Wars, whose massive destruction came from conventional weaponry, might have been averted had the nuclear deterrent existed in 1914 or 1939.

There are many who would argue against this philosophy, claiming Gorbachev's behaviour indicates a thaw in the Soviet attitude towards the west. I do not believe that this is relevant. Experienced Moscow watchers claim that Gorbachev's time as Soviet leader is limited. Who knows what type of hardliner would succeed him? We must be vigilant. We cannot afford to be fooled into complacency. We must assess our situation realistically. We must be strong in our own defence and strong in support of our major ally, the United States.

The disturbing truth is that the federal government has not been vigilant. It has not been realistic. It has been complacent and it has dallied unforgivably in compiling an effective defence strategy. But, belatedly, it has seen the folly of Paul Dobb's claim that 'Australia is one of the most secure countries in the world'. In this irrational and unpredictable world, no country is safe.

The federal government has belatedly dumped Dobb's strategy of denial. It plans to provide us with the largest military power in the south-west Pacific. Belatedly, it has recognised the Soviet threat at Cam Ranh Bay where the Soviet fleet now totals 720 ships, including 125 submarines, 80 surface vessels and the Minsk aircraft carrier. Of those who argue Moscow's new friendliness, let me ask: how long did the Soviets deny that Cam Ranh Bay, the largest forward deployment naval base in the world, had any military significance, even when confronted with photographic evidence?

The belated bonus for the Northern Territory will be the relocation of the 2nd Cavalry Regiment in the Top End, with the possibility of a brigade to follow. There is no point in evading the issue. It is an open secret. It is a logical assumption. In the event of attack, the Northern Territory, with its vast, vulnerable coastline, will be a prime target, and that is one more good reason why our railway project should proceed with all speed. Effective defence demands effective access to effective transport.

So with the Dobb Report dumped, we can look to our neighbours. We can prepare to meet our commitments to the 5 power agreement, giving training, expertise and assistance to Malaysian-Singaporean defence forces, confident that, amongst the ASEAN nations, we possess the largest military capability. But already too much time has been lost and too much money has been wasted.

We can only pray that we are not provided with too little too late, for Beazley admits that there are gaps in his defence strategy - gaps which will take at least 10 years to rectify. So we are back to Paul Dibb's pious hope that no hostile nation will attack us for 10 years.

This federal government's tardiness in coming to terms with reality has been shameful. The troubles erupting in our immediate neighbourhood have been a long time festering. An effective, comprehensive defence strategy should have been a prime objective of the federal government from the moment of taking office. The community has been aware of nearby trouble zones. The community can read newspaper headlines and absorb the comments of leader writers, but the government has seen fit to fool itself by handing out placebos. Indeed, the only reassurance for the Australian people in recent years has been the strong tie with the United States, a tie which the unthinking, unrealistic and uncouth minority would have us break.

The Democrats claim that our joint facility treaties are more beneficial to the United States than to Australia. They say we are made vulnerable by the existence of Pine Gap, Nurrungur and North West Cape. They fear the Russians will wish to cut off the avenue of tactical information provided by Pine Gap. Without Pine Gap, we would be vulnerable. The fear of the Democrats has the ring of unreasoned panic. The United States offers Australia the strong arm of protection. Without it, we would be helpless in the face of a nuclear threat. And when have the Soviets respected the helpless? When have they said, 'We will not fight you because you cannot fight back?' No doubt the people of Afghanistan would have some interesting comments on that subject.

Common sense dictates that Australia must strengthen its ties with the United States while developing its own effective forward defence force. Amongst the non-communist nations of the Pacific and Asia, Australia's lead must be confident and positive. How frightening to those nations must be the confusing and contradictory actions of this federal government?

In his defence White Paper, Hon Kim Beazley 'regrets' New Zealand's attitude to United States warships. What does Bill Hayden do? He makes Australia a signatory to the Raratonga Treaty which created the South Pacific Nuclear-Free Zone. In time of war, this treaty will effectively bar Australia from offering home-port facilities to United States warships even if Australia's very survival is at stake.

Let us look at the background of this treaty. It is the brainchild of the Pacific Trade Union Forum, established by the Soviet-sponsored Prague Congress of the World Federation of Trade Unions. The loudest voice of that forum comes from the influential former communist, the secretary of the Amalgamated Metal Workers Union, John Halfpenny. Needless to say, Australian trade union funds have been fed into the Soviet-inspired forum. But Mr Halfpenny has miraculously reformed. He is now heading for the Victorian Senate as a Labor man. There are rumours that he will soon lead the Victorian ALP. The political path which opens before this reformed communist is mind-boggling.

Is this federal government naive or is it just plain stupid? It is almost 6 months since I warned of danger zones in our region. Since then, the troubles have escalated. Paul Dibb's words - words which he rejected when reviewing Australia's defence capabilities - now have a horrifying ring of truth: 'The warning time for some political and strategic events is extremely short. Seemingly, we are often surprised by the unpredictable or irrational act of a nation state'.

The unpredictable and irrational acts affecting nation states in our region are now regular occurrences. The Reds are no longer under the bed: the Reds are in the bed. General Sejna, the Secretary of the Military Committee of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia, defected to the west in 1968. In his book, 'We Will Bury You', he stated that Soviet control of Asia would first require Soviet control of Australia. Certain islands of no apparent military significance would be selected. They would be fed money and weapons and, through political means, alliances with the west would be replaced by alliances with the east.

As the political commentator, B.A. Santamaria recently pointed out, this may have seemed fantastic in 1968. But what is the reality in 1987? Vietnam is a Soviet satellite. The Soviets are at Cam Ranh Bay. American bases in the Philippines are under threat as the country confronts civil war. Malaysian officials are said to have smuggled 2000 Soviet rifles to Philippines guerillas and a Philippines training camp is said to be in place in Malaysian Sabah. Remember that the Philippines and Malaysia are neighbouring members of ASEAN - uneasy neighbours, it seems. Indonesia is a virtual dictatorship dominated by its armed forces. Thailand is on the brink of revolution. There is a continuing problem of French administration in New Caledonia.

In Vanuatu, Soviet-sponsored forces are ensuring that there will be no opposition to Father Walter Lini in the country's November election. Fiji is known as the 'powder keg of the South Pacific'. It is the most influential of the island states. As a significant member of both the Commonwealth and the United Nations, it has been the linchpin of western democracy in that particular region. Now Fiji has a change of government - one which favours a Soviet fishing deal, an end to visits by United States warships and a non-alignment policy which places it alongside Vanuatu. But this new government must move cautiously. It is not too late for positive Australian intervention to reverse a Fijian allegiance to the left and to prevent it, too, falling prey to the insidious presence of Libya in the region.

The Prime Minister, Bob Hawke, says that he would back the French against any Libyan move in New Caledonia. If he means that, if he finds the Libyan presence so threatening, why does he allow the Libyan People's Bureau to operate openly in Australia? Once again, the behaviour of this federal government can only confuse the non-communist nations, the very people whom we should be reassuring with consistent and positive action.

B.A. Santamaria reports that, in the Pacific, 'Libya' is a pseudonym for the Soviet Union and that Libya is working politically to achieve the Soviet Union's ends. Col Gadaffi has already shown his hand, urging the Pacific nations to gird themselves against nuclear attack by Australia. Idiomatic that claim may be, but we live in irrational times.

Mr Speaker, as this alarming Soviet-inspired scenario unfolds around us, it is imperative that we act wisely and urgently, strengthening our ties with the United States, strengthening our defence forces, playing the Soviet Union at its own game and making our own political presence felt as a reliable and stable protector - a powerful force for good in Asia and the Pacific. There can be no more delays and no more confusion. For Australia's sake, we must wake up to reality before it is too late.

Mr SMITH (Opposition Leader): Mr Speaker, it is intriguing that the member for Port Darwin and myself wanted to speak on the same broad topic tonight. I must admit I missed the first part of his speech but I understood

that he said there was a 10-year gap in Australia's defence forces. Obviously, he meant a 10-year gap beyond our borders.

I think that one needs to go back into history a little bit to realise why there is a 10-year gap. It goes back to the White Paper that Ian Sinclair delivered on behalf of the Fraser government in 1977 and 1978. The problem with the White Paper delivered by Sinclair at that stage was that it committed an unrealistic share of Australia's gross domestic product to defence and the defence force, and the federal government found that it just could not deliver. The federal Cabinet was not prepared to make the political decisions to give the defence forces sufficient money to implement the White Paper.

Beazley has a similar problem. He knows that he has a finite amount of money to spend on defence and that he cannot get support from any of the political parties to spend more than the federal government is presently spending. Some hard decisions had to be made about how to best use that limited amount. After a thorough analysis, the decisions were made. Essentially, the forward defence concept advocated by the member for Port Darwin, and by Ian Sinclair in a somewhat more limited sense, has been thrown out and replaced by the concept of a layered defence which is based within Australia itself. There is the odd exception to that: we will still have a presence at Butterworth. The point is that you cannot have it both ways. There is not enough money. You either have a proper layered defence system or you have a proper forward defence system. You cannot have both because the people in Australia are not prepared to put the necessary money into it.

I would have thought that the decision that has been taken has significant potential for us in the Northern Territory. The point I want to make is this: had this White Paper recommended a forward defence policy, we would not be getting the major boost that we will get. This relates to a comment made by the Chief Minister in the election campaign when he said, 'We want an aircraft carrier'.

Mr Hatton: I never said it.

Mr SMITH: Don't spoil a good story. The comment made by the federal Minister for Defence at that stage was, 'You can have an aircraft carrier but you cannot have northern defence. The money is not there for both of them'. The hard decisions have been made. They have been made on the best advice available, and I apologise on behalf of the federal government - if I may be so bold - if it did not consult the member for Port Darwin. Perhaps it did make a mistake. However, it did undertake a very thorough investigation and it has come up with this layered defence proposal. We in the Northern Territory are great beneficiaries of it. As I said earlier today, we will receive \$1000m of infrastructure by the end of the century, \$100m a year into the economy as soon as everybody arrives, and 25 000 extra people. This is tremendous!

The issues I now want to address arise as a result of my discussions in Townsville last week. I went there because Townsville is now in a similar position to what ours will be in 10 to 15 years. Townsville already has an army brigade and a significant RAAF Base.

Mr Hatton: 35 years.

Mr SMITH: It will not be 35 years.

Mr Hatton: Townsville has had it for over 20 years.

Mr SMITH: You have missed my point.

Mr Hatton: No I haven't.

Mr SMITH: In Townsville I spoke to local businessmen and the Mayor about the implications of a major upgrading of defence. In my conversation with Mr Pat O'Keefe of the Townsville Thuringowa Development Board and with Mr Lappin of the Townsville Chamber of Commerce, it became clear that there is a role for government defence liaison, especially in helping to key the business community into defence bases. Both of them warned me about local business houses taking what they called the 'fatted calf' approach to a defence upgrading. In other words, sitting back and letting it all happen. Without going into a detailed study of the requirements and the changes involved in defence upgrading, local business houses and contractors in Darwin - as they did to some extent in Townsville - will miss the boat. There are different kinds of businesses with different kinds of practical approaches in dealing with the military.

The lack of effective liaison between the Northern Territory and federal governments at Tindal - and I am not solely blaming the Northern Territory government - has led to too many contracts being let outside the Territory. That ought to be a matter of some concern for the member for Katherine because one of the common complaints about the whole Tindal exercise is that we are not getting enough work out of it in the Territory. That is because of a lack of forward planning both at the Commonwealth level, where there is no particular interest in it, and at the Northern Territory level where we ought to have a particular interest in maximising the economic impact of such a major development.

Mrs Padgham-Purich: It is too late now.

Mr SMITH: It is too late. I agree. Early and detailed planning at Tindal would have ensured that much more of the work went to local firms instead of being left to chance.

Mrs Padgham-Purich: It is the federal government's fault, not ours.

Mr SMITH: It is not. The federal government, as I learned to my cost when I attempted to persuade it that it should be doing more for the locals, argued that it was not prepared to give any local preference because it had a responsibility to get the best value for money Australia-wide. It takes a vigorous presence from the Northern Territory government, working together with the federal government, to get that sort of attitude changed and to come up with mechanisms that will encourage and allow local businesses to obtain more of the work.

Defence planners, with their stringent budgets and rigid specifications, require detailed submissions resulting from good homework. The Beazley Defence Policy Statement clearly indicated that the Department of Defence is prepared to come more than halfway in helping industry to participate in planning and implementing projects. In fact, there is a statement in the White Paper that says that as much work as possible associated with defence establishments and installations will be done locally. The White Paper very clearly recognises the important spin-offs that there will be, particularly for secondary industries, in the major defence communities. These new developments will make us a major defence community.

The Northern Territory government can help to overcome problems businesses may encounter in preparing themselves or in stating their case. One way to do this is through seminars, some involving the total community and the total defence establishment. The organisation of these seminars should not be left to chance and the Northern Territory government should have a role in organising them. They are firstly a welcoming process, then a familiarisation process and then a specification process. They must be backed by solid homework. Without that process, the business of welcoming and accommodating the defence role here will reflect the same kind of half-baked approach which has characterised the handling of other major projects.

Of course, there are not only economic processes but also social processes. I was informed that the social factors affect business operations in Townsville as much as any other factor. The Northern Territory must avoid the problems which can ensue from setting up a major new community. We must avoid the problems of having large recently-arrived groups living together, the problems of a huge increase in the number of single young men and the problems of lonely army and air force wives stranded in suburbs where there are no other people during the day apart from other lonely army and air force wives. We must also attend to the special issues which arise from the arrival of a significant group of Aboriginal soldiers with the 2nd Cavalry Regiment. The provision of recreational facilities for all these people is a task of government and of business houses. That applies to just about every aspect of defence liaison. It requires the attention of a hard-working minister in the Northern Territory government. Unfortunately, the government has not taken that message to heart yet.

Mr Hatton: That is not true.

Mr SMITH: It would be good to hear it.

Let me spell out the annual income provided by army and RAAF wages and payments to industry in Townsville, which has a defence community of 4000 plus almost 2000 defence families. The total wage input is over \$43m and the total payments to industry amount to almost \$30m per year. That is just the tip of the iceberg. The amount generated by that \$73m, although it is impossible to put an exact figure on it, must be at least twice that.

I would like to place on record my appreciation of the time that I was able to spend with Mr O'Keefe and Mr Lappin from the Chamber of Commerce, and also with Townsville's Mayor, Mike Reynolds. He has offered his advice and the opportunity of further consultation on defence liaison. As an example of the close relationship between the Townsville community and the defence establishment in Townsville, it is the City Council of Townsville which actually runs Anzac Day. The Townsville City Council also has a social planner and a town planner who have major roles in ensuring that the defence establishment fits in as quickly and easily as possible with the rest of the community. The development of those roles facilitates better relations with the defence community from the brigadier down. It allows the community of Townsville, including the retailers, builders, employers, entertainment industries, sporting groups, banks, teachers, service organisations, ethnic groups and even the unions, to better acquaint themselves with the defence community and to maximise the benefits and minimise some of the problems which naturally occur when thousands of newcomers arrive.

It is time now that we moved along these lines and, if we are already doing so, it is time that the government stopped hiding its light under a bushel and told us what is happening. It is too important an opportunity to

miss. I would suspect that the Minister for Industries and Development is the appropriate minister and I hope that he will make a statement on this matter during these sittings.

Mr COLLINS (Sadadeen): Mr Deputy Speaker, last Friday night, I was the guest of the Alice Springs RSL sub-branch at its annual dinner prior to Anzac Day. It was a night to remember. I have heard media stories in the past about how Anzac Day is nothing more than a drunken carousal where people make fools of themselves. I can assure you that this night and the following Anzac Day were very memorable and thought-provoking occasions for me. At the RSL dinner on Friday night, there was a large contingent of people from the United States Air Force Detachment 421. This included some of the officers and there was a very strong feeling of comradeship between the Australians and the Americans.

There were many moving speeches, but the highlight was an address by His Honour the Administrator, Commodore Johnston. This was an off-the-cuff, from-the-heart, personal address and it received a standing ovation from all present. It came from a person who, although it may be hard to realise it, is himself a Vietnam veteran. Of course, one of the highlights of Anzac Day was that, at last, we have started to recognise that, no matter what the outcome of that war was, those veterans deserve our respect and admiration. It was also very clear that Commodore Johnston commanded respect and affection from the people to whom he spoke on that occasion.

It is very pleasing to see that, each year, more and more people come to the Dawn Service on Anzac Hill. There were at least 50 people at the Dawn Service, and the service in the middle of the morning after the march was attended by at least double that number, including many children. It is very pleasing to see that people are celebrating Anzac Day as a very important day.

I was quite interested in the speech of the Minister for Labour and Administrative Services regarding the defence of Australia. I draw the attention of the Assembly to a vehicle which the Russians have developed. I call it an aircraft, but it is really a mixture between a hovercraft and an aircraft. It is called the Caspian Jumbo because it was developed in the region of the Caspian Sea. This particular aircraft can carry 900 people complete with their military equipment. It travels about 20 m above the waves, can land at 45 km per hour which means it can put down almost anywhere, and travels at 600 mph.

Mr Deputy Speaker, the English Channel has protected England from invasion for many years, but I believe that Caspian Jumbos could end that role now. They would get a lot of troops over the channel very quickly. In Australian terms, these aircraft have the capacity to travel from Cam Ranh Bay to Sydney without refuelling. I just wonder what damage could be inflicted upon the Territory if 900 crack troops with all their equipment suddenly arrived here from across the waters between here and Vietnam. It certainly is a terrifying thought to me. They could arrive here and capture the whole of the city of Darwin before we knew where we were.

I know that we are developing over-the-horizon radar and it has magnificent capabilities, but it is far from operational. One of these aircraft could arrive and be the wooden horse which would make Australia's defence very vulnerable indeed. This brings me to what the Leader of the Opposition said about Australia having a limited amount of money which meant we could either have an aircraft carrier or northern defence, but not both. It seems to me that the huge amount of money about to be poured into

submarines might be a waste of time when you look at the Caspian Jumbo. What is the good of having sharks in the moat if you can flip over the moat with this craft? Half a dozen of them would create a massive problem and I believe that spending our money on submarines is a very questionable exercise.

We may be throwing money away which just cannot be justified. It would be far better to position the radar systems mentioned in the Dibb Review to give us coverage across Australia, both west and east, as well as the Territory. We could then use our aircraft to eliminate any of these vessels coming through. I think this is important and it needs to be examined. Defence decisions are pretty important because they can involve enormous expenditure and long-term commitments. I think the decision on submarines needs to be reconsidered. It could possibly be the wrong decision and one which we will regret.

The fact that we do not have the amount of money available for the defence that we would like in this uncertain world brings me to another point. Today's NT News refers to somebody by the name of Collins who says that Australia does not need to become involved in uranium enrichment and nuclear power. He suggests that there should be legislation against any research in that area: 'There is no reason for Australia to look at nuclear enrichment'. He is further quoted as saying that we have 1000 years' supply of black coal and 500 years' supply of brown coal to supply our energy needs. Perhaps he has not heard of acid rain. It seems to be making one heck of a mess in Europe. The nitric and sulphuric acids which come from nitrogen and sulphur in the burning of coal are doing tremendous damage to the world's forests and agriculture. That is one reason people who are interested in the environment should question his remarks.

The fact is that uranium enrichment would benefit the Australian economy. I have long advocated the proposition supported by Roger Watters of the Department of Mines and Energy, that Australia should become involved in the enrichment of our 0.5% uranium 235 to 3%, which is the level required for fuel rods for nuclear reactors. We should also be involved in the manufacture of the fuel rods to the specification of customers, and we should take back the spent rods, process them here to take out the high-level radioactive material and use the synroc process to store it in the arid regions of the Territory. Deep down under the earth, it would be perfectly safe for many thousands of years. The Australian economy needs the boost that that could give. The storage of high-level radioactive wastes is already a multi-billion dollar industry. The Territory presently has an annual expenditure of \$1000m. Uranium processing could bring in about \$10 000m each year. That would give us a few aircraft carriers. It would give us a whole lot more money to boost the Australian economy, especially when you remember that we have a national debt in the order of \$100 000m.

We really have to be serious about developing our potential. Far from making the world a more dangerous place, the Territory could control the material that went out and came back. We are mature and responsible people. We would have international safeguards and agencies to check that the dangerous material was stored in a safe place where it could not be got at. We would add to the safety of the world far more than some who do not understand these things and would argue that we would be adding to nuclear proliferation. Actually, we would be contributing to a much safer, more stable and freer world.

In my remaining few minutes, I would like to mention the fact that it is not only Darwin that has been without power. A section of the central

business district in Alice Springs has been without power during the last couple of days. I know there has been an industrial dispute. I do not know much more about it except that a log of claims was apparently involved. The power to the central business district was eventually restored at about 11.30 am yesterday but the Anzac Hill high school was out until this morning.

Those who know Alice Springs are aware that there has been massive growth there. I have been told that the situation with the power supply to the central business district is similar to what it was in Darwin 3 or 4 years ago when there was massive building occurring here and that the lines, in electrical terms, are 'cotton lines'. We hardly have enough capacity to take the power in. The power supply is a very important matter for Alice Springs. Private investment there certainly reflects the points made in His Honour's speech about development coming from the private sector. In the absence of the Minister for Mines and Energy, I would ask the Chief Minister to examine the upgrading of the power supply when formulating this year's budget. It is important. It could be undergrounded at the same time. Alice Springs needs a continual supply of electricity to its central business district which is where the private enterprise is concentrated.

When I asked the Minister for Mines and Energy a question this morning, he jumped in fairly heavily and said that the NTEC workers in Alice Springs had used this situation for their own ends. I feel for him a little on that, but I must say that the NTEC workers in Alice Springs have a pretty good reputation. They do not often use industrial methods to get their way and this is the first such occasion that I can recall. They are a pretty decent bunch of fellows and, before the minister jumps in with Queensland-style legislation, I would ask him to have a chat with them to find out exactly what their beefs are. I am sure that would be a far better way of handling the problem.

Judging by a message I received from NTEC this morning, the situation is pretty well in hand anyway. The problem with Anzac Hill high school involved the failure of a major line. It was not a 10-minute job to sort it out and the NTEC workers apparently worked all night to restore power. I commend them for that and I would ask the minister to have a chat with the fellows before he becomes too heavy-handed. I also ask him to give Alice Springs the same sort of guarantee he gave the people of Darwin today: that he will do everything possible to maintain an adequate power supply.

Mr BELL (MacDonnell): Mr Speaker, there are 3 subjects I am hoping to address in this evening's adjournment and I will try to get through them all.

There was mention on the ABC news of comments made by the Chief Minister about duplications on electoral rolls. He made specific mention of my electorate. There had been scuttlebutt about accusations that some people had, wittingly and with malice aforethought, voted twice. I was particularly concerned about that lest myself or the Australia Labor Party be assumed to have been part of it. The item was broadcast on the ABC news at 1.10 pm today and I will read it into Hansard:

Today the Chief Minister Mr Hatton told the Assembly that there should be an inquiry into the identification process for voters, particularly Aboriginal voters. Mr Hatton said he would refer the case to the Electoral Office involving one electorate where there had been duplication and sometimes triplication of names on the roll.

I pause here to say that it was quite unclear whether the implication concerned was a duplication of names or a duplication of people actually voting. The Chief Minister then when on to say, and I quote:

It may have occurred in quite a number of electorates but we have clear prima facie evidence that it has occurred in the MacDonnell electorate. I am not suggesting any malpractice as result of that but merely a difficulty and a confusion on the electoral rolls that needs to be addressed. The problem is of positive identification of voters, particularly Aboriginal voters, where they are very mobile from place to place and in different locations and at different times will use different names. So if they are being enrolled, it will create complications on the electoral rolls.

Mr Speaker, there are 2 clear implications in that. One could be that there are names on the electoral roll that appear twice. Another is that some individuals who live in my electorate are voting twice which, of course, they should not be. I had this out with the Chief Minister and I appreciated our conversation and the frank approach he took. I am satisfied that, in the Chief Minister's mind, he was referring to the first of those implications; namely, that he believes, as I do, that there are people who appear twice on the roll because of the enrolment procedures that apply. People are sometimes confused. They are wiped off the roll and sometimes they may re-enrol twice. There are various reasons for that, particularly in communities where literacy is not as high as it is in white communities around the Territory. I quite accept that.

I reject any possibility that people have voted twice. My scrutineers brought it to my attention that scrutineers from the Country Liberal Party were alleging this to have happened in my electorate. On the actual occasions that were drawn to my attention by scrutineers, this was palpably false. It was clearly demonstrated that it was not the case.

For the benefit of the Chief Minister, I have carried out habitation reviews, basically because the Northern Territory Electoral Office and the Australian Electoral Commission generally have not done so. I am quite happy to say that I know there are duplications on the roll. There is no point in trying to explain this to anybody who is responsible for the rolls because, unless you get some sort of declaration from the person involved, it is impossible to deal with the problem.

Let me point out in passing quite a serious problem with the rolls. I have already commented publicly on it but I will place it on record in the Assembly. I received representations from Mr Ben Clyne who would be well known to the Chief Minister. He now lives out at Ulbunalli, which is one of the living areas in the Kings Canyon Watarrka National Park. Ben and his family told me about an old lady who was part of their family and who had passed away a year or 2 ago. She was on the electoral roll in Flynn. It was a matter of concern to the family for reasons which are of more concern to traditionally-oriented Aboriginal people than to you or I, Mr Speaker. Being a conscientious local member, I contacted the Electoral Office and outlined the situation. I was told that the name could not be removed from the electoral roll until the Electoral Office received formal advice from the Registrar of Births, Deaths and Marriages. I was not sure about the legislative and administrative arrangements which apply in such a case and, because I was very busy with the election campaign, I was not able to follow it through. However, I certainly fully intend doing so.

I see that there is a representative of the Australian Broadcasting Corporation and a representative from the NT News in the gallery now so I certainly hope that any implication that electors in MacDonnell were rorting the system will be dispelled. I quite honestly accept the Chief Minister's explanation in that regard and let me assure both him and the Electoral Office that I will provide them with information that I have through my reviews of people who are or are not enrolled in my electorate. I intend addressing the question of turnouts in my Address-in-Reply speech so I will not discuss it further here.

A second issue I wanted to raise relates to the question I asked of the Minister for Transport and Works in question time today. It concerned the Tennant Creek Airport. I noticed with some interest that the late lamented Minister for Transport and Works announced with alacrity the proposed expenditure by the Northern Territory government on the Tennant Creek Airport. The announcement was made just prior to the last election and I am sure that there was no coincidence about its timing. Unfortunately, it did not do the late lamented minister's party any good, which perhaps is responsible for his departure. However, far be it from me to speculate on those messy matters.

Let me return to the issue at hand. Being a conscientious shadow minister, I made some inquiries about the Tennant Creek Airport. Heaven help the Northern Territory if it did not have a conscientious opposition. My inquiries reveal that Ansett Airlines has been involved with the Northern Territory government in negotiations about the upgrading of the Tennant Creek Airport. I was delighted to hear that, contrary to the information issued by the minister's predecessor before the election, which made absolutely no mention of these negotiations, Ansett Airlines was particularly concerned that the Northern Territory government had put it in the position where negotiations had to be broken off. I see a querulous look appearing upon the brow of the Chief Minister. Perhaps he might like to inform me otherwise, but my understanding is that Ansett Airlines was prepared to come to the party in respect of the upgrading the Tennant Creek Airport, on the basis of a 5-year licence to operate through it. The Territory government said: 'No, we will give you 2 years, and Ansett Airlines said: 'Sorry boys, see you later'.

I was delighted to hear that, in fact, the Minister for Transport and Works is continuing his negotiations. He was somewhat vague and far from explicit in his references to those negotiations but I shall look forward to hearing him, as I am sure you will, Mr Speaker. I am quite sure that the member for Barkly will also be interested to hear, as will all of us who go to Tennant Creek, about the future of air services for that town.

What I found particularly offensive, and this is the point I want to make, is that we get this Pavlovian-dog response from the Northern Territory government and its frontbenchers so frequently whenever anything vaguely connected with the federal government is mentioned. We have had several demonstrations of this today, but the particular one which comes within my bailiwick was that of the Minister for Transport and Works. He said there had been problems and it was all the fault of the federal government. My recollection of his remarks in question time this morning is that he said the upgrading was entirely the responsibility of the federal government in the first place, for a number of reasons. My recollection of his remarks does not scan particularly well. He went on to say that the federal government has neglected that airport for some 8 or 9 years. This is the bit that the Minister for Transport and Works does not know about, does not bother to tell us about, or on which he has not done his homework. The fact of the matter is that it does not do the Northern Territory and the people who live here any good when that sort of misinformation is disseminated.

Mr Speaker, let me tell you what the story is. In the financial year 1980-81, Ansett Airlines applied to the federal government for a pavement concession to run F28s out of the Tennant Creek Airport. Do you know who built the Tennant Creek Airport? Hands up those who know. Which year? No? A few erstwhile Ministers for Transport and Works? Yes, we have the member for Braitling who knows. It was built in 1943, and I am quite sure that the historical associations that have been brought to the attention of this Assembly recently through many Anzac Day reminiscences will not be lost. And by whom was it built? It was built by the Country Roads Board of Victoria.

Mr Manzie: Tell us about the Airport Local Ownership Plan.

Mr BELL: I have obviously got the erstwhile minister going. That is good; I hope he will contribute to this debate.

The fact of the matter is that Ansett Airlines was provided with a pavement concession by the federal government.

Mr Manzie: Where is the agreement?

Mr BELL: Since the minister has interjected and as I am not going to get on to my third matter, I will tell the Attorney-General that he is committing exactly the same mistake as the Minister for Transport and Works. That sort of whingeing and carping is the type of behaviour that has done this government and, in the final essence, every Territorian no good.

Mr Manzie: The agreement was signed. Why did they renege on it? There was a last amendment, was there?

Mr BELL: A pavement concession was offered in 1980-81 on the condition that the pavement held up. The pavement has not held up.

Mr Manzie: Whose fault was that?

Mr BELL: Hang on, you are not going to blame the federal government for that, are you? You blokes probably would.

Mr Dondas: But they own it. They should have been maintaining it.

Mr BELL: I hear ...

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The member for MacDonnell will be heard in silence.

Mr Manzie: You bit off more than you could chew that time, Neil.

Mr BELL: I will pick up the minister's interjection because it was the federal government, specifically the Department of Aviation, that made the concession in the first place in order to provide better services subject to certain conditions. Frankly, I do not accept that the federal government should be subject to the sort of falsehoods or the lack of understanding purveyed by the minister in question time this morning.

Mr HATTON (Chief Minister): Mr Speaker, I would like to refer to comments made by the member for MacDonnell, particularly with respect to references that I made in a debate earlier today and on radio at lunchtime concerning the discussion of a matter of public importance that occurred today.

It is true that, in the course of that debate on electoral reform, I raised a matter that I thought was of real concern rather than some of the nonsensical concerns being promoted by the member for Stuart. It concerned the difficulty of obtaining positive identification of voters and clarity in the electoral roll. I am pleased to see that the honourable member recognises that I was not making any suggestion that there had been any malpractice as a consequence of the state of the electoral rolls. However, it is true that we have a real concern that there is a culturally-induced circumstance that Aboriginal people, for their own reasons, do use different names in different locations at different times.

I made the point today that it is not something that one should assault or abuse people for; it is a fact of life. What we need to do in the Northern Territory is recognise that we have a unique circumstance and that equally we have an important responsibility to ensure that each person is on the roll only once, that each person is clearly identifiable on the roll, and that each person has an opportunity to vote, but an opportunity to vote only once. That is not to suggest that people would actually exercise the opportunity of voting more than once, but we must remove any potential for that to occur. We must remove the potential for less honourable people to take advantage of loopholes in procedures or circumstances to manipulate a vote.

It is pleasing to hear that the member for MacDonnell will talk about turnouts. I hope he addresses the full issue, because it is a matter of some concern. With respect to MacDonnell, I used the term 'prima facie' evidence. There are indications that the roll could be overstated by at least 158 people. That is a significant number and would change the turnout percentages significantly. That number is indicated by a cursory examination of the electoral rolls and from people who do not know the people who are listed on the roll as living in certain places. So far we have only looked at the cases where the same names appear more than once under different spellings or with given and surnames reversed.

Those sort of percentages are quite significant and may well mean that the number of people in the electorate could be grossly overstated. That could have quite serious implications in respect of the tolerances that are used in determining electorate boundaries. I do not suggest that it is definitely the case, particularly in MacDonnell electorate which is extensively over the tolerance limit. However, these are issues that we must address and I believe they should be addressed fairly, rationally and thoroughly. That is why I have suggested that we need to inquire into it. The Leader of the Opposition, by way of interjection, suggested it was a matter that I could deal with as the minister responsible and that I should initiate an inquiry. I have decided to follow his suggestion and I will proceed to initiate an inquiry. I can advise honourable members that I have spoken already with the Chief Electoral Officer and asked him to draft terms of reference for such an inquiry to be conducted.

Mr Speaker, I would like to deal briefly with a matter raised by the Leader of the Opposition, to clarify yet another piece of misinformation disseminated by him. He used it during the election campaign and tried to use it again tonight. When I interjected, his only comment was, 'Don't spoil a good story'. Mr Speaker, I think that tends to summarise the Leader of the Opposition's entire position on defence, but let me just deal with this.

He indicated that I have in some way suggested that we should be building an aircraft carrier rather than putting a military base in the Northern Territory. Let me say that I have never made that suggestion. I can quite

vividly remember a particular interview during which we were discussing the navy. I made the comment to the media person that we did not really have a blue-water navy. That person asked what I meant and I said, 'Well, you can't really have a blue-water navy unless you can provide air cover, and you can't provide air cover without some sort of a mobile platform on which the aircraft can land'. I did not suggest that we had to have that or that we had to have a blue-water navy, but I did not want people living under the misapprehension that we did have a blue-water navy. That was the sole context of that particular discussion.

Mr Speaker, I have consistently been an advocate for an increased defence presence in the north of the Northern Territory. In fact, our government has been working consistently and comprehensively towards the development of those defence facilities flowing from the Dibb Review and now the White Paper. Many times, I have challenged the Leader of the Opposition to ask me a question on the subject. Of course, he has chosen not to do that. He is frightened that I might actually tell him what is going on and spoil his good story. The truth is that the Leader of the Opposition was going into an election campaign after having spent months trying to commence one. The election was called and suddenly he found that his arts-led recovery did not really strike a chord with the citizens of the Northern Territory. He brought out a flash tourism policy only to find that we had done it in the last 8 years. Next, he decided to bring out a housing policy only to find it was in breach of the Commonwealth State Housing Agreement. He was in a bit of a quandary trying to work out what to talk about.

He rushed off to Canberra and asked his mates to give him something to talk about in the election campaign: 'I'm so embarrassed. I have to say something in the next 3 weeks'. His mate Kim Beazley said, 'We have this White Paper. You can beat up a story about the defence bases coming to the Northern Territory. Have a talk to Brian Burke about his Minister for Defence Liaison. Perhaps you can beat up a story about that and run with it for 3 weeks. It might get you through the election with some sense of having said something'.

Quite frankly, the concept of promoting and pushing the defence issue is very important for the Northern Territory. It is so important that we had been working at it for 6 months beforehand. We thought that we could not leave him with nothing to talk about in the election campaign. If he wanted to fantasise over the title of a Minister for Defence Liaison, that was up to him. We were just getting on with the job as we had been for months.

I have said that publicly on many occasions. He chooses not to hear that because, as he said tonight, he does not want me to spoil a good story. He still has not thought of anything new to talk about so he continues to talk about this particular matter. One of these days, he might actually read the White Paper. Someone might sit down with a dictionary and, in first grade language, explain to him what it means. Maybe he will get the intention and the undertakings clear in his mind and maybe he will speak some logic about what the real situation is in relation to the White Paper. Maybe he will address the real issues that we have to face.

In respect of defence, the White Paper makes a commitment for the movement of the 2nd Cavalry Regiment here by 1992. As I said during the election campaign, there would be 2 Territory elections and 2 federal elections by that date. I was talking about total expenditure of \$70m over that period and that is expenditure of a bit under \$15m a year over the next 5 years. It is hardly a justification for forming some department for defence liaison. It is

important and we should work for it, particularly given the fact that Darwin will lose No 57 Squadron to Katherine. It will take people out of Darwin but 2 cavalry regiments coming here will counteract that and provide a bit more for the Territory. It is very important not only for us to get the cavalry regiment here but to get it here quicker than the federal government is proposing.

I hope the Leader of the Opposition enjoyed his trip to Townsville. It is a beautiful city. If he had let me know he was going, I could have introduced him to my cousin there. He could have had a nice quiet dinner. He would have obtained more benefit for the Northern Territory, however, and he would have saved the taxpayers a few dollars, had he taken the opportunity on one of his many trips to Katherine to walk into the office of the Department of the Chief Minister. The Executive Officer there could have explained to him what we have been doing for the last several years in relation to defence liaison and planning for the introduction of defence forces into that town. We are facing the problems there at this moment. It is not something that occurred 40 years ago in a town on the east coast of Australia.

He would also be wise to address the fact that the White Paper makes no commitment to bring a brigade to the Northern Territory or Darwin. It says that, after the arrival of the 2nd Cavalry Regiment, the federal government will investigate the feasibility of bringing the brigade here and will investigate alternatives to bringing a brigade here.

On 3 March, Minister Beazley was at a luncheon in Darwin. The Leader of the Opposition loves flash titles. That one was called a decision-makers' lunch. I was a bit surprised he did not invite us there because we are the decision-makers in government here. I guess he had not thought of that at the time.

Mr Smith: Not the failed ones.

Mr HATTON: Mr Speaker, the Leader of the Opposition is a failed decision-maker. We are successful because the people of the Northern Territory made us a success last month. He is an abject failure.

The fact is that, 4 days before the election, Mr Beazley was in Darwin to promote the cause of the Leader of the Opposition in relation to the defence issue but he still would not make a commitment to put a brigade here. I have read his speech at that decision-makers' lunch. He would not make a commitment.

I think we need to work to get that brigade here. We have a lot of work to do to convince the military of the need to locate that brigade here before the year 2005. It has just completed a major refurbishment of every larger military base throughout Australia and it believes it would be an improper expenditure of a billion dollars before that time and that it could be better used elsewhere in defence. I do not not happen to agree with that view but it is the view of those advising the Minister for Defence. I know that he himself would like to see the brigade start to move into the Northern Territory around 1995.

I support that. But, make no bones about it, we have to get those defence people onside for that cause. We are doing that and have been doing that. As a result of this government's work, we have made some significant gains in respect of military attitudes. We have not trumpeted and fantasised with titles of Minister for Defence Liaison. We just got on with the normal

coordinating and federal affairs functions of the Department of the Chief Minister. We think that is what we are supposed to do, not fantasise over titles.

That is the reality of what is occurring and it is a reality that we do not want to oversell to the community. The benefits would be stupendous for the Northern Territory and for Darwin. It would take Darwin past the demographic take-off point if it occurred. However, we will not tell the community that we are about to have \$1000m spent in our town when a decision has not been taken. That would be irresponsible. We need to work to obtain the decision. If we can work together to achieve that, all the better. But grandstanding and nonsensical statements and criticisms over administrative arrangements and claims that we are about to have a boom are giving false expectations to the community. That should not be allowed to continue.

There is one other item I would like to deal with briefly tonight. I refer to the comments of the member for MacDonnell concerning the Tennant Creek Airport. I thought the Minister for Transport was totally reasonable when he said the federal government should be responsible for the upgrading and maintenance of the pavement on that airstrip because the airstrip belongs to it. That is what he said. I thought that was a fairly reasonable explanation as to why it should pay the bills. Nevertheless, we have committed \$1m.

It is true that we did have discussions with TNT to see whether it would contribute \$1m or \$0.5m towards it. We believe that what it was seeking in return was more than the value that we would derive. We believed that it was better for the Northern Territory that we pay that million dollars and leave our options open in respect of renegotiating Northern Territory intra-Territory services. It was not simply 5 years of flying into Tennant Creek that was at stake, but 5 years monopoly over the entire Northern Territory. We could have lived with 2 years but not with 5. I am sure that Australian Airlines would have been somewhat less than impressed at our making a decision when it has been working very hard at developing proposals to come into the Northern Territory. It is particularly keen to have services into Yulara.

One cannot make simplistic judgments on this. The one thing you can say irrefutably, particularly with Alice Springs and Tennant Creek, is that the federal Minister for Transport and Works took a unilateral decision. At 5 o'clock on a Friday afternoon, as I remember, we received a telex advising that he had instructed his department to cease negotiations over local ownership of those airports. We were well down the line to completing those negotiations. I think the Tennant Creek agreement was ready to be signed and the Alice Springs one was virtually completed. This was chopped out from under us because of his dream of a socialist airports corporation. That is what killed it - nothing else.

I believe we all ought to work to encourage the federal government to include the Northern Territory in this new airport terminals private enterprise ownership scheme because it could lead to real development in our air terminals.

Mr SETTER (Jingili): Mr Speaker, tonight seems to be the night to air one's comments regarding defence. I have comments that I would like to make about defence. I did not intend to express them tonight and, indeed, I will hold the majority of them over until tomorrow night. Because we have been talking about regional defence around the Northern Territory, I would like to

support what the Chief Minister has said in relation to the Leader of the Opposition's remarks.

I lived in Townsville in the early 1960s and I left shortly after the defence presence started to grow there, and I am referring to the army in particular. The RAAF has had a presence there since World War 2. I can assure members that, certainly during the construction phase, the army had quite an influence on Townsville - as is happening at the moment in Katherine - but, since then, the whole thing has settled down. I really wonder why the Leader of the Opposition took the trouble to go to Townsville to investigate a situation that has already been in place for the last 20 years. What could those people tell us?

When we have a look at Darwin, in particular, and at our defence establishments, we have 2 squadrons of the RAAF out here - No 75 and the base squadron. No 75 has been here for 3 or 4 years and the base squadron has been here since the war. We have quite a large naval establishment. There are 3 or 4 patrol boats and a facility at Larrakeyah which cost around \$20m. We have Coonawarra Naval Base at Berrimah and we have Larrakeyah. We have just about as many defence people in this city as they have in Townsville. I do not believe that Townsville can teach us anything about how to handle defence personnel.

There are certain short-term traumas in Katherine at the moment because of the huge growth associated with the transfer of No 75 Squadron and the support squadrons, but I believe that business people in the Northern Territory are well geared up to handle the defence situation. The Chief Minister pointed out that the Dibbs Review indicates that there will be an investigation into whether or not a brigade will be established in the Northern Territory, and that is quite a large 'if'. However, if that occurs and it averages out at \$15m per annum over that period of time, then I am quite sure we can cope with that increase in business around the Northern Territory.

Mr Speaker, I wanted to talk tonight about security in this Assembly. I was quite staggered today when I noticed 1 of the attendants walk in and pass 2 airmail bags to 2 members who then proceeded to open those bags in situ. I know the Northern Territory is a nice, quiet place and nothing much ever happens here as far as security risks are concerned. So far, we have not experienced the violence that has occurred elsewhere, but there has to be a first time. We heard a discussion last night about Mr Mansell and Mr Dodson and others jumping into bed with Col Gadaffi, and nobody can tell me that, with the sorts of things that are happening around the world today, one of these days some crazy will not walk through that door with a bomb or send a letter bomb to someone here simply because he does not happen to like him. The trouble is that we would all go with him. Did you see the member for Koolpinyah duck under the desk? I did. She went down very quickly.

We may laugh and joke about this, but if you try to enter the parliament precincts in Canberra, you will have to go through a security screen, be frisked and undergo the whole security treatment. If you go to most of the state parliaments - I have not been to them all but I have been to most of them - you will find their security is extremely tight. Indeed, last year, a politician said to me when he visited this Assembly, 'Don't you have any security?' I said, 'No, we don't. We have never had the need for it'. He said, 'You had better think about that'. Despite the fact that we are so remote here in the Northern Territory, there are plenty of crazies about and it is quite likely that 1 of them will slip a letter bomb in here. This is a matter that should be addressed.

I would be most surprised if the staff of the Chan Building had not already been briefed in the procedure of inspecting mail for letter bombs. I would be most surprised if that has not already occurred because it is certainly common practice in all Houses of Parliament and among the staff of all ministers elsewhere in Australia. I don't see any reason why we in the Northern Territory, and in this Assembly in particular, should not be very conscious of the need to address the security issue because, one of these days, it is likely to happen. It has happened many times overseas.

I was in London in September last year and, during that period, 5 bombs were exploded in Paris. London itself has experienced many terrorist bombings. A couple of years ago, the Conservative Party Conference at Brighton was just about bombed out of existence and a number of people killed. A bomb was exploded outside the Hilton Hotel in Sydney and therefore we should not say that it cannot happen here. I hope it never does happen, but we need to be conscious of the possibility. We need to be thinking of it and we need to address the issue. I am not suggesting for one moment that we have security guards at all of these doors and frisk people when they come in or put them through a screen or whatever, but we need to have some sort of contingency plan and some sort of policy in relation to security.

Mr Deputy Speaker, I would like to move on to another subject. I think it is very important that we record the history of this Assembly for future generations. At the moment, we do this via Hansard and other records and photographs. In fact, group photographs are to be taken tomorrow morning. We record all of these things for the benefit of future generations. If we come through the economic decline that the country is slipping into at the moment, perhaps one day it will be possible - and I notice that we have appointed a New Parliament House Committee once again - with a bit of luck and a change of federal government, that we will have sufficient funds to finance a new Parliament House. One must live in hope. We have a committee and I have no doubt that, one day, we will achieve that goal. We will have a new Parliament House fitting for the Northern Territory - perhaps the state of the Northern Territory, who knows?

However, there is a precedent that has been set in other parliaments in this country and elsewhere that we have not followed so far and I believe it is something else that we should think about and make a positive decision on. I am recommending that we commission portraits of our Chief Ministers. If you go to the parliament in Canberra, you will see portraits of most of the Prime Ministers of this country displayed. If you visit the state parliaments in Australia, you will see the same thing. The Leader of the Opposition is smirking, but perhaps, in 50 or 100 years, future generations will say, 'When we first obtained self-government and first established our parliament in the Northern Territory, why didn't those people think to record our heritage by commissioning portraits of our Chief Ministers?' We are in a very fortunate position at the moment because we have had only 3 Chief Ministers and they are all still very much alive.

Mr Smith: Some of them are not alive politically.

Mr SETTER: I am referring to their physical presence, and there is a wonderful opportunity for us now to capture those people on canvas ...

Mr Ede: Oils or water colours?

Mr SETTER: I would suggest oils. I think that is very appropriate. There is a wonderful opportunity for us now to capture a likeness of the

physical features of those people while they are still in their prime and have them on canvas for future generations. We should adopt that policy for future Chief Ministers as well. There are many very good portrait painters in the Northern Territory. I would not suggest that we engage Dobell or any of those fancy people down south. Mark my words that, if we do not do it, that opportunity will be lost forever. The Chief Minister has just had a new hairstyle and, if we do not take this opportunity, it will be lost forever, and we will be criticised by future generations for not taking it up.

I would like to change the subject once again, Mr Deputy Speaker. Something very disturbing came to my notice recently. A precedent has been set and I certainly hope that it does not continue to occur. We all know that it is necessary to obtain a permit to enter on to Aboriginal land. That is a system that has been established for some time in the Northern Territory and it is widely accepted. When a person wants to visit Aboriginal land and has a legitimate reason for doing so, he applies to the relevant land council. I wish to draw attention to the fact that a hawker, a gentleman who visits Aboriginal communities on a regular basis - indeed fortnightly - was granted a permit to visit a particular Aboriginal community to ply his wares. When the permit came back to him, one of the conditions that applied was that he was required to pay \$100 to the community council every time he visited that settlement. He was going out there as a legitimate business person with a permit to ply his wares and he had been doing this for a long time up until about 12 months ago when they insisted that he obtain a permit. Now, every time - once a fortnight - he visits that community, the council wants \$100 up front.

I really question whether that is a legitimate business practice and whether it should apply in the Northern Territory. It is something that I had never heard about before. It is certainly occurring and I intend to take the matter up with the Chief Minister to ascertain whether it is an acceptable practice in the Northern Territory. I would think that conducting business on an Aboriginal settlement should be no different from conducting business in any other community in the Northern Territory. One should not have to pay a levy or a handout, or whatever one might like to term it, every time one goes into a community to conduct legitimate business.

Mr LANHUPUY (Arnhem): Mr Deputy Speaker, I would like to make a few comments in respect of the statements made by the member for Jingili in relation to people being required to pay \$100 in advance to enter Aboriginal land. He knows perfectly well that he can go anywhere in the Northern Territory, Aboriginal land or otherwise, as long as he is performing his duties as a member of the Assembly. I do not know who he is actually speaking about but I have never heard of traditional landowners requiring payment in advance for people performing services, whether they be essential or otherwise. If that is the case, I hope that he takes the matter up further with the council concerned. I certainly would be interested in following the matter up personally.

I listened to the member for Jingili and the Chief Minister speaking about matters relating to our defences in the Northern Territory. If this government was sincerely interested in liaising with our defence forces and the Minister for Defence, I am sure that it would have made some sort of effort during the election campaign to propose the establishment of a liaison office, given the effects that the influx of defence personnel will have on the Territory economy and employment here. The NT government did not take that into account. It was just as well that the Leader of the Opposition went out of his way to represent the views of the people in the Northern Territory

on this matter. I issued a press release at the time, welcoming the announcement by the Minister for Defence, Hon Kim Beazley, that his department in Canberra was considering giving more funds for the defence of the Northern Territory. I believe that the Leader of the Opposition has done more than enough to secure this. The government did not take up this responsibility because it did not want to be seen as assisting the Labor Party in the Northern Territory during an election campaign. I am very concerned about that fact.

I also would like to briefly touch on a matter which the member for Jingili mentioned: the security of the Assembly. That has sometimes worried me because, quite often, people do come in without having security checks. That is no reflection on the staff of the Assembly and any regulations that may have been in force. However, I would like to commend the member for Jingili for raising the matter. As he said, security checks are pretty tight in the states. Mr Deputy Speaker, your life and members' lives may be at risk. Anything could happen. People are requested to report to the clerk at the desk, but that does not always happen and it concerns me.

Turning to another matter, I would very briefly like to express my sympathy to the people of the Gagadju Association on the death of Nipper Kapirigi, who was a traditional landowner of the Jim Jim Falls and one of the main traditional owners of the Koongarra Denison Mines area and who played a major role in the negotiations for the Kakadu National Park as it stands now. I believe he was a leader in his own right. In fact, I believe the Australian National Parks and Wildlife Service used him as an adviser on where the movie 'Crocodile Dundee' would be shot. He died last week at Jim Jim. He had asked to be flown back there after being transferred to Darwin. I would not be able to tell you exactly where he was buried but I would just like to pay tribute to him in respect of the contribution he made to what is now known as Kakadu National Park.

I met him when I was first working for the Northern Land Council. I certainly found him to be a man of knowledge and a man of good understanding who appreciated both cultures and their values even though he came from a different era of time. Elder Aborigines are now referred to as coming from primitive time. He possessed the knowledge as a person, which we can now appreciate, of areas like Obiri Rock, the Nourlangie cave paintings and certain areas around Koongarra where Denison has its mining leases. I would like to pass on my greatest sympathy to the people of Gagadju Association and the people in the Kakadu National Park.

I also report with pleasure on the success of the Barunga Festival held over the Easter weekend. I know it will be of particular interest to the members on the benches opposite because I did not see any of them there. I do not think any of them even camped around Beswick or Barunga. I was particularly surprised that the member for Katherine was not there.

Mr Reed: The member for Katherine was there on the Sunday.

Mr LANHUPUY: Mr Speaker, it is a pity that we might have to wait until 1991 when there will be a Territory Labor government and the benches opposite will hold people who can relate to the Barunga Festival and similar festivities.

On a happier note, I can report that the Leader of the Opposition was there and I know that he and his family thoroughly enjoyed the whole weekend. Barunga is about having a good time. It brings together thousands of

athletes, artists and spectators, and it highlights the social and economic importance of the Northern Territory's Aboriginal community, as you would be aware, Mr Speaker. The same type of festivities happen at Yuendumu Sports. I only hope that I will be able to see a few of our colleagues from the opposite benches in attendance at those festivities.

Mrs Padgham-Purich: Send us an invitation.

Mr LANHUPUY: I would like to take that on board. Barunga specifically made an announcement in a public notice in the NT News and the Katherine Times that no permits were required. The member for Katherine can correct me on that if he wants to.

The festival was excellently organised and I congratulate Robert Lee, Ray Fortymile, Helen Blitner, Cyril McCarthy and the committee. I especially congratulate the coordinating persons, Steven and Michelle, who are sports officers employed through the YMCA and the Department of Youth, Sport and Recreation. I congratulate them very sincerely. They played a very big part in the success of those festivities. We gain a lot from events like Barunga. The participation of all members of our community helps to build a strong healthy society. That is the best possible heritage which we can pass on to our children in the Northern Territory. No society should be dominated by any sectional interests to the disadvantage of others. As at Barunga, the Northern Territory should be taking a part which will lead to the fulfilment of the goals of all.

The contribution of Aboriginal people to the pastoral, mining, tourist and other industries in the Northern Territory needs recognition. It could do without the negative impact that some processes have had. I am referring to the ruthless and costly process of opposing land claims at every legal milestone. Just as there are one-eyed people who will always deny the cultural and economic value of my people, there is a one-eyed government which seeks to retard the progress of the Northern Territory by retarding the progress of one of its important communities. I am of course referring to the Aboriginal culture which dominates a third of the population of the Northern Territory.

Next year, members of the government should take the time to attend at Barunga and gain some inspiration from the festival. They might find a way out of their serious failings by barracking at the football or by looking at the dancing and the art work or by learning about traditional life and actually participating themselves at some of these events. In that way, we might see a will on the part of anti-Aboriginal people to do things that still need to be done.

We need to cut the infant mortality rate that brings shame to the Territory as a whole. This results mainly from the lack of clean water in communities such as Barunga. We need to guarantee a vote to Aboriginal people even though that appeared to be a bit of a joke to members of the benches opposite when the member for Stuart was speaking earlier today. We need to stop wasting public money on court cases which dishonour those who seek to conduct or obstruct land claims. We honestly need more of the spirit of Barunga in the Northern Territory and also amongst members of this Assembly.

I congratulate the people of Barunga and the communities who have made the festival great, especially the Town Clerk and the participating sportsmen and sportswomen who went to Barunga for the weekend. Once again, I express the hope that, if an event such as Barunga is held again, people involved with

youth, sport and recreation and people within the departments concerned with Aboriginal organisations take the opportunity to attend. I spent 2 or 3 days walking around and talking to people there without meeting any member of the government. I realise that you, Mr Speaker, were involved in Alice Springs with other sporting events and it would be a bit too much to expect your presence at Barunga. However, I am sure there are about 15 other government members who could at least have taken some time to be in Barunga to appreciate the cultural values of the festival. The Minister for Labour and Administrative Services commented that not 1 of our 6 members was able to be at the Anzac Day ceremony in Darwin. There are about 16 of his mob on the other side and not 1 of them made it to Barunga. If the member for Katherine was there, I am sorry I missed him.

Mrs PADGHAM-PURICH (Koolpinyah): Mr Speaker, what I have to say in the adjournment is of some consequence to 2 primary producers in the Northern Territory. One is a small, independent operator and the other is a large operator. I refer to Commonwealth legislation that came into force on 1 July 1986. It is called the Dairy Produce Act. This act will have dire consequences for the operation of 2 dairies in the Northern Territory. One is in the Top End. Its operators used to be in my electorate and they will be again at some time in the future when they set up a new dairy. The other is a very big dairy that has been newly-established in Katherine and which I recently had the pleasure of inspecting. To say that I was amazed at the set-up down there is to put it mildly. It is one of the most magnificent primary industry developments that I have seen in the Territory.

The legislation that was enacted in July 1986 in Canberra goes against the independent operation of the dairy industry in the Northern Territory. I will briefly describe the detriment it has brought to the 2 operations here, especially the small operation run by a couple whom I know personally. The family first received notification of the passing of this Dairy Produce Act on 20 November 1986. They had not previously been notified that this act was in force although it had been operating since July. They first became aware of it when they received a letter of demand for information regarding their output on 12 December 1986. They were asked for all their production figures back to 1 July 1986 and they were also asked for a payment which would have amounted to approximately \$1000 on their bulk production.

The gentleman and his wife passed the letter on to the Confederation of Industry representative. He wrote to the Department of Primary Industry in Canberra asking for more information on the act as it related to this particular dairy in the Top End. His letter was completely ignored. Dr Sarah Kahn of the Department of Primary Industry in Darwin asked the operators of the Top End dairy for at least 2 months of production figures for July and August. These were given to her. I assume the title of doctor related to her veterinary experience, but I am not certain.

The operator of the dairy applied for an exemption from the provisions of the Dairy Produce Act because, under the former Australian Dairy Corporation Act of 1972, he had been exempted. This was refused. The dairy had been exempt from the old provisions because it was an independent supplier marketing its own milk. Unfortunately, the exemptions do not apply under the new act. At no time were the couple's views sought on this legislation. They had no input and I do not believe that the Northern Territory government had any either, although I would like the minister concerned to confirm that.

The Australian Dairy Corporation and the Australian Dairy Farmers Federation stated, before the legislation was introduced, that they wanted

2 things. They wanted all outlying and remote dairy farmers exempted and they wanted them notified of changes to the Australian Dairy Corporation Act under the new Dairy Produce Act. Both of those requests were refused. I believe that there are 12 dairy farmers in Queensland who are in the same situation and have refused to pay the levy. The Top End farmer has refused to pay his levy because it will be the straw that breaks the camel's back. The Queensland government is very sympathetic to the poor dairymen but it is not supporting them because it regards the present situation as the lesser of 2 evils. It fears that, if it supports them in their intention not to pay the levy, southern milk could come into Queensland. We have read in the paper recently about the incursion of Victorian milk on to the New South Wales market and the trouble it has caused. The Queensland Department of Primary Industry has said that, if it obtains evidence of Victorian milk going into New South Wales to be sold at a cheaper price, it will demand that the levy be abolished. I believe the New South Wales government and its dairy farmers have said the same thing.

The Dairy Produce Act levy is to be imposed on all producers of whole milk and cream. The purpose of the levy is to subsidise the export of dairy products. If we have excess dairy production in Australia, it is a good idea to export it and we should help the dairy farms as much as we can. I do not know what happens in the states, but I know for a fact that the very big dairy in Katherine intends to export its excess production to Singapore at some future date with no Commonwealth subsidy. From my information, I do not believe that it is asking for a Commonwealth subsidy. I have also been told that QUF exports to Brunei, but only with the help of a Commonwealth subsidy. It is therefore possible that small-scale operators like this Top End dairy farmer - whose name I purposely have not mentioned - will have to pay levies they cannot afford to support firms like QUF.

It is a matter of grave interest to me, as it should be to all members interested in primary production in the Northern Territory, that recently the Australian government let 3 contracts for butter, cheese and milk for the defence forces. The Australian government let the butter contract, which was worth more than \$1m, to a New Zealand company. The cheese contract for the defence forces was let to a Melbourne firm and the milk contract was let to an Albury firm. I find this absolutely scandalous. Here we have a small-scale Top End farmer who will not be able to operate if he has to pay this levy, being asked to subsidise the so-called free trade in dairy produce between Australia and New Zealand. I believe there is a free trade agreement between Australia and New Zealand. However, it seems to operate only in the interests of New Zealand because I have not heard of any reciprocal arrangement that favours Australia over New Zealand.

The husband and wife team which operates this Top End Dairy works something like 100 hours a week. Public servants work less than 40 hours a week and these people work 100. If any member disbelieves me, he has only to visit the dairy, which is on the Elizabeth River. When the DPI inspector went down to this Top End farmer, he certainly came the heavy. He did not go alone but was accompanied by 2 federal policemen. I will talk about the workings or the operations of the federal police at a later date. Information was not requested but demanded of this dairy farmer and his wife. If any Northern Territory public servant went out with 2 Northern Territory policemen and demanded information, we could just imagine the hue and cry that would ensue in the media. We would not stand for it. However, because this is a single operator, nobody seems to hear about it. These are standover tactics of the worst kind.

The 2 policemen were the strongarm guys of the federal inspector - a most undesirable situation. It is the sort of situation that encourages people to get out the .22 or the shotgun and say, 'Do your worst, fellas'. This dairy farmer did not. I would have been tempted if they had come to my place demanding the same sort of information.

The dairy farmer pointed out to the inspector that the extra impost of the levy on his weekly takings would practically break him. This dairy farmer is trying to establish a property of his own which he and his wife and family can move to in the next couple of years. It will be in my electorate and I might say that I have yet to see a harder working couple in primary industry. The inspector said to them: 'It is easy mate. You have to pay this levy. Just put 5¢ extra on a 2 L bottle of milk'. That is pretty easy to say. At the moment, the dairy farmer can compete with milk imported from Queensland. If he has to charge an extra 5¢ for a 2 L bottle, it would make it far too dear for the ordinary person to buy and he would go out of business.

The inspector said to the dairy farmer: 'If you don't pay this extra levy that we want to impose on you, we will go to the shops where you sell your milk and charge them the levy'. The dairy farmer said, 'What if they won't pay it?' The inspector said: 'That is pretty unlikely because they want to stay in business too'. This inspector was quite serious in his demands that the levy be paid. I have contacted the minister's office regarding what he is doing about this situation. At some time during these sittings, I will be asking him a formal question on the matter.

I am glad that the Chief Minister has come into the Assembly because I want to refer to a particular incident. I do so with some regret but I believe this has to be said publicly. I hold the Chief Minister in some regard despite the fact that I am on this side of the Assembly, but his behaviour in an incident recorded on TV after the last election lowered him a bit in the regard of other good people in the community. In that incident, he displayed inexcusable and puerile lavatory humour which was quite beneath his standing as a party leader and our Chief Minister. This behaviour was not acceptable to many people in the electorate, especially people in the Koolpinyah electorate. I am not referring to refined and genteel people. I am referring to ordinary people. Amongst these are unlettered people, rough bushies, women who call themselves rough diamonds and others who live and talk roughly themselves but do not want to see a leader of government doing so. It is like telling a distasteful dirty joke in mixed company. There is a time and place for doing things and that was not the place to be displaying that sort of humour.

Believe it or not, people who thought highly of the Chief Minister still mention this incident with grave regret. I will pay the Chief Minister a compliment if he wants to accept it; if he doesn't, that is his business. I will pay him the compliment of saying that I believe he is basically a decent sort of chap although I think he is a bit naive about some things. One of these concerns the reason why the Deputy Chief Minister gave him the toilet brush to brandish in public on the occasion of the interview. I have no doubt that the Deputy Chief Minister was becoming a bit worried about his own position and had his own reasons for doing that. The view expressed by the public was that it might be his way of fighting back to denigrate his Chief Minister. I believe it may have been. It is the sort of humour I believe that the Minister for Mines and Energy would indulge in but not the Chief Minister. I sincerely hope that this sort of bad taste, this lavatory-wall humour is not displayed in future by the Chief Minister. It is far beneath his normal decent behaviour.

Mr HANRAHAN (Lands and Housing): Mr Deputy Speaker, I wish to comment on an issue that you yourself raised this evening during the adjournment debate, because I take it as seriously as you do, and that is the security that pertains not only to this building but to the Chan Building. I can assure you, Mr Deputy Speaker, that I will be raising the issue again. I am aware that the Chief Minister has conducted a quite extensive report into security. However, if I did offend by opening that airmail bag, please accept my apologies. I was not aware of the member for Koolpinyah ducking for cover.

The second point that I would like to touch on relates to the member for Arnhem's comments about Barunga. I think it is sad that he should exhibit what in my view is innocent naivete in drawing a parallel between Anzac Day and the Barunga Festival. Perhaps those parallels are symptomatic of the vast cultural differences that we have. I am sure every member of this Assembly would, at some time, have contemplated attending the Barunga Festival. I know I have, but life as a politician is simply a matter of priorities and I am sure that many of us opted for attending functions in our own electorates where we need to exhibit a certain amount of preference at such a time.

I would also remind the member for Arnhem that the Northern Territory government is one of the main reasons why the Barunga Festival has been so successful over recent years. I remember my time as Minister for Youth, Sport, Recreation and Ethnic Affairs when a significant amount of funding went into recreational and development officers as well as up-front grants for many varied purposes to ensure that the Barunga Festival was a success. Let me place on record, on behalf of all honourable members on this side of the Assembly, that we would like to see the continued success of Barunga and I am sure that, over the years, members from this side of the Assembly will take the opportunity, from time to time, to attend the festival.

One other issue raised by the member for Arnhem which needs to be addressed in a very serious light is his view that this government is obstructive and takes a bloody-minded view of legal matters related to land claims. Too often, members opposite forget that there is more to life than being an Aboriginal and that Aboriginal Territorians are not the only people in the Northern Territory. I would like to point out to the member for Arnhem that land claims, excisions and negotiations with Aboriginal people, including Kings Canyon, the settlement of the Kings Creek claim, Lake Amadeus, the Mataranka claim, the Gosse Bluff area and the Cobourg Peninsula are fine examples of this government being prepared to negotiate deals when it is not required to. It has continued to do such deals to the benefit of Aboriginal people, and to take claims out of the public arena in order to diffuse the confrontation. We continue to do that in an atmosphere of direct confrontation by people such as those leading the land councils and various Aboriginal groups.

I must say that the comments of Pat Dodson, a man who is supposed to be a representative of most central Australian Aboriginals, are nothing short of disgraceful. It is in spite of such people that the Territory government has continued to maintain a low profile and to attempt to settle many claims with Aboriginal people outside the confrontationist arena. We do that in the face of the continued failure of the federal government, despite all its promises, to introduce and pass through federal parliament, amendments relating to claims over stock routes, public purpose land and other areas.

I am really quite proud of the attitude displayed by the Chief Minister in most of these instances. He has not risen to the bait and become confrontationist and I believe that, at the end of the day, the attitude being

displayed by this government will be rewarded by success. The measure of that success will be that Aboriginal people will start to realise that they have a far better chance of economic and social success by working hand-in-hand with the Territory government and accepting that Territory title over their land, or our land, is a far better solution than that offered by the federal Land Rights Act.

Motion agreed to; the Assembly adjourned.

Mr Speaker Vale took the Chair at 10 am.

DISCUSSION OF MATTER OF PUBLIC IMPORTANCE
Future Direction of Growth in Alice Springs

Mr SPEAKER: I advise honourable members that I have received the following letter from the member for MacDonnell:

Dear Mr Speaker,

Pursuant to standing order 94, I propose for discussion as a definite matter of public importance this morning, the following: the Northern Territory government's inability to dispel the continuing uncertainty about the future direction of growth in Alice Springs.

Yours sincerely,

Neil Bell

Member for MacDonnell.

Is the proposed discussion supported? It is supported.

Mr BELL (MacDonnell): Mr Deputy Speaker, one of the more astounding spectacles during the recent Legislative Assembly election was the public slanging match involving the member for Flynn and the Mayor of Alice Springs. That public slanging match was about the government's support for future urban development in the member's electorate at the expense of the long-expected Undoolya development in Alice Springs.

The fact is that, in classic 'Yes Minister' confusion, the Northern Territory government has been dilly-dallying with respect to the plans for Alice Springs. Particularly, this has been the case with the original draft structure plan. The Northern Territory government is refusing to make decisions about the future direction of the growth of Alice Springs. By this, I do not mean where the next house is to be built. I do not even mean where the next subdivision is to be carried out. I am talking about a broad structure plan that enables both the private and public sectors to gain a clear idea of the direction of the future growth of the town for the next 10, 15 or 20 years. Now, despite government claims to the contrary over the years, this broad structure plan is not in place.

It is little wonder that the Alice Springs Town Council has become so frustrated, because the current debate is not just about the government being dilatory and taking years longer than it should to make decisions about the future growth of the premier tourist town in the Territory. Although there is plenty of evidence that the government has been dilatory, and this will become obvious during the course of my speech, this is not the only cause for concern. In addition to a tardiness that has throttled responsible development and created uncertainty, the Northern Territory government has gone outside even its own program of town planning and introduced the wild card of development in the Emily Hills area in the electorate of the member for Flynn. One can only wonder why.

As newspaper reports have indicated, there is much concern in the town of Alice Springs and in the business community there and elsewhere that no decision has been made as to whether the future direction of the town will be towards Undoolya or the Emily Hills area. It is not my task today to argue the relative merits of the Emily Hills and Undoolya options for the future growth of the town. I will leave that particular task to the Leader of the

Opposition. I merely point out that Emily Hills has been introduced as an option outside the undertakings given in this Assembly by previous ministers.

My task in this debate is to set the current furore within the context of a long history of government vacillation and indecision. Hopefully, honourable members will understand then why Alice Springs has been put in the ludicrous and intolerable situation in which the government is considering 2 options for the future development of that town, one of which is not even part of the structure plan.

Before I discuss the government's vacillation and indecision in this matter, let me return for a moment to the slanging match between the member for Flynn and Her Worship the Mayor of Alice Springs. In this public debate, the Mayor of Alice Springs said the Territory government was, to use her words, 'guilty of cronyism, back-scratching and favour-giving' in connection with the town's long-term planning directions. Those were strong words. It was an extraordinary claim to make and the member for Flynn, then Minister for Tourism and now Minister for Lands and Housing, responded with predictable venom. To use his exact words, he accused the Mayor of 'irresponsible and unacceptable behaviour'. This was in stark contrast to the fulsome praise he heaped upon her during the debate in this Assembly last November. On that occasion, he endorsed wholeheartedly the actions of the town council and Mayor Oldfield. I am sure members will recall that discussion of a matter of public importance, which involved different town planning issues in Alice Springs, and the effort made by the opposition to draw to the government's attention the need for a landscape value study and for a sensible policy on building heights instead of the existing adhocery. I presume that the Minister for Industries and Development will be responsible for responding on the government's behalf in this particular debate. I appreciate he was on the backbench at that time and may not have paid particular attention to the discussion of that definite matter of public importance. However, I refer him to the record of the debate held in November last year which is readily available in the Parliamentary Record. I have a copy here for him should he desire it.

To return to the slanging match, the member for Flynn accused the Mayor of irresponsible and unacceptable behaviour. He also challenged the Mayor to go to the police with her allegations, saying in a stern tone: 'If she is so sure about what she is saying, she should take it up with the police'. Obviously, the honourable minister was cut to the quick. Clearly, he felt he had been defamed. The Mayor made allegations of cronyism, back-scratching and favour-giving in relation to the Departments of Lands and Tourism and developers. There was no reason why she had to take those complaints to the police, but the honourable minister was deeply disturbed about them and felt that he had been defamed.

There does remain one question that I believe needs an answer. Why didn't the minister sue for libel if he felt he was being subjected to untrue allegations of cronyism and impropriety? Why didn't he issue writs for defamation? I assume that we would have heard had that been the case. Had the matter been sub judice, I certainly would not have been referred to it.

He said of the Mayor of Alice Springs: 'It is outrageous for a Mayor to suggest cronyism and impropriety from the Minister for Lands, myself and the developers'. Is the reason why the 2 honourable ministers have not brought actions against the Mayor about their concerns because there is a grain of truth in the Mayor's allegations? It seems to me that the silence of the member for Flynn and the silence of his lamented predecessor as Minister for

Lands, the member for Casuarina, speak volumes. I trust that some zealous journalist will ask both these members why, if they were so outraged by these comments, if they felt they had been so savagely calumniated, if they felt their reputations had been so besmirched, they did not bother to seek remedy through the courts. Their silence is deafening.

The government's vacillation and indecision has a history that goes back to before self-government. So often we hear the Northern Territory government saying that history only started in the Northern Territory with self-government. The fact of the matter is that the government's record in town planning for Alice Springs, in the short and long term, has been appalling. In the bad old Commonwealth days, that we hear these blokes rail about day after day in this Assembly, far better provision was being made for the planning of the Territory's premier tourist town.

I appreciate the return of the Treasurer to the Chamber because he might learn a little lesson in history. He has not been a member of this Assembly for a great deal of time and I trust he will take some interest in this. The last structure plan was prepared for Alice Springs in 1975. At that time, the population of the town of Alice Springs was about half of what it is now and the last structure plan for Alice Springs was promulgated under the Commonwealth's administration.

Mr Coulter: Pre-sacred sites.

Mr BELL: That interjection does not deserve a response. If the Treasurer feels that that has somehow affected the development of a draft structure plan in Alice Springs, he may like to contribute to this debate and tell us exactly how long-term decisions about which areas will be developed or not developed can be affected in that way. In fact, I will pick up the point. The very fact that the Northern Territory government's own legislation with respect to sacred sites needs to be taken into consideration strengthens the argument for long-term planning. Therefore, I presume that the Treasurer will be crossing the floor and voting with us about issues of this sort in the future. I thank him for his interjection.

The last structure plan for the town of Alice Springs recommended the Mount John Valley for tourist development. Mr Deputy Speaker, you will be aware that that plan has been fulfilled. What you will not be aware of, because you were not a member of this Assembly at the time, is that in 1983 we were being told by this very Minister for Industries and Development that the Mount John Valley development would solve the housing problems in Alice Springs because that was where the government would build houses. He will get up when I sit down and tell us how he changed the draft structure plan halfway through ...

Mr Perron: I didn't have much choice.

Mr BELL: ... that is, 8 years after it was promulgated. By itself, that would not have necessarily created a problem because that is what a draft structure plan is there for. What I am complaining about is that there is no plan in existence at the moment.

Let me just return to the extraordinary position the Minister for Industries and Development finds himself in today. Having said that we would not have tourist development in the Mount John Valley, the person who came after him, our present Chief Minister, when he was a neophyte Minister for Lands said: 'We are going back on that. The Northern Territory government

has taken a responsible decision and that area will be used for tourist development'. That is my first example of the sort of adhocery that has characterised the town planning of Alice Springs ever since self-government.

Mr Perron: It's a beautiful spot.

Mr BELL: Mr Deputy Speaker, I will leave the Minister for Industries and Development alone and I will just rue the fact that the Chief Minister is not here to listen to that. I hope he is listening to the loudspeakers because he has a fair bit to answer for too. I remember the rugged enthusiasm with which he took on his portfolios in February 1985. Mr Deputy Speaker, I am sure you will recall the speech to the Address-in-Reply that he made in response to my raising this issue in the context of that debate. He discussed at length the problems of the draft structure plan in Alice Springs and he referred to a number of studies that were being carried out. He referred to land development and also to the substance of this debate: the non-existence of a structure plan for Alice Springs. In February 1985, he had only recently been elevated to the frontbench. Referring to my contribution earlier in the day, he said:

Alternative areas for future development in Alice Springs were mentioned by the member for MacDonnell. We are not quite sure what he was referring to there. We assume he was referring to the draft structure plan which is being prepared by the Department of Lands. The draft was due for circulation in March this year. Recent decisions have been taken and proposals offered in respect of the location of the sewerage ponds in Alice Springs and these are significantly affecting that draft structure plan. As a consequence, it will not be available for public comment until April. One would anticipate that a structure plan would be completed by the middle of this year

That was in February 1985. We might have expected a little more action. More than 2 years ago, those were the comments from the Chief Minister in his capacity at that stage as Minister for Lands. The fact of the matter is that, 2 years later, no structure plan is in place. The Northern Territory government stands condemned for that absolute failure. It is a matter of deep concern to me that it has not been put in place.

Mr Hanrahan: I am about to prove that you are lying.

Mr BELL: I will pick up that interjection, and I hope I am not going to throw Hansard into confusion. The Treasurer interjected with the word 'flexibility'. By that, I presume he meant that the Northern Territory government's involvement in town planning and attitude to town planning was a flexible one. We continually hear the Northern Territory government talking about the virtues of private sector development, but the plain fact of the matter is that the private sector is incapable of responding to the rapid development of Alice Springs because of the Northern Territory government's refusal to promulgate a structure plan.

Mr Palmer: Promulgate. That is his word for the day.

Mr Dondas: Promulgate.

Mr BELL: I appreciate that the members for Casuarina and Karama have only their 500 basic words of the English language. Promulgate means to publish or to make available for public comment.

I dare say that somebody from the government side will get up in this debate and say there is plenty of land available in Alice Springs. Indeed, there is an oversupply of land at present. Honourable members will have heard recent reports of a downturn in the building industry. Correspondingly, at present there is a good supply of established housing on the market. Right now there is not a pressing demand for land for subdivision. However, those arguments are not relevant in this debate. Remember that I said at the outset that this debate was about a long-term structure plan; it is not about the immediate availability of land or housing.

Having been shadow minister for lands for a few years now, perhaps I have a depth of understanding of these problems which the government lacks. I certainly place my insight at its disposal and I trust that, having been convinced by the force of our arguments today, the government will mend its ways.

The Northern Territory government has failed to carry out any long-term planning and it appears that the CLP government is the captive of groups which have a short-term, get-rich-quick interest in the Territory, and the town of Alice Springs is suffering as a result.

Mr POOLE (Araluen): Mr Deputy Speaker, regrettably, the Minister for Industries and Development has to refuse the member for MacDonnell's kind invitation to reply to him today and that duty has fallen upon me. This debate recalls some fond memories of the longest sitting day in the NT Legislative Assembly, 26 March 1986. I think that this subject was last discussed then, at about 3 am. The members for Stuart and MacDonnell raised the subject which we are debating again today as a matter of public importance. Although I was not here in August 1983, Hansard shows that it was debated then as well.

Mr Bell: That was about housing.

Mr POOLE: No, it was not; it was about the lack of planning in Alice Springs. It was raised in June 1984, in August 1984 and in November 1986. And here we go again! I presume that the members of the opposition will be more accurate on this occasion, than they were on the last because Hansard shows that they did some crystal ball gazing about preselection by the CLP for the by-election in Araluen. It is quite apparent now that they were not very accurate in their comments.

When we talk about planning in Alice Springs, there are a number of issues which must be considered. These include the Undoolya and Emily Hills options, the Commonage, Ilpapa, the sewerage ponds, and building heights. First, I want to say a few words about the Undoolya and Emily Hills options. In 1985, there were 3 options for the future growth of Alice Springs. Public comment was called for on them. Let me say here that the government's position has always been that it will not be rushed into these vital decisions for Alice Springs and, whether the member for MacDonnell likes it or not, there is no shortage of housing blocks in Alice Springs. Of course, he does not want to talk about that, because the facts of the matter are that currently there are lots available in Larapinta stages 3 and 4, and on the golf course estate. There are still some blocks in Dixon Road.

Mr Smith: Ordinary people can afford to live near the golf course. They are just queueing up to buy blocks there!

Mr POOLE: There are plenty of ordinary blocks available in Larapinta.

Mr Smith: Yes, that is what I mean. Ordinary families.

Mr POOLE: The future development of Larapinta estate will probably house about 2000 people. With regard to the Commonage, Ilpapa Road and the sewerage ponds, there are many critical points. One of these is the relocation of the sewerage treatment plant which could cost as much as \$16m to \$20m. I understand that the Department of Transport and Works is examining the costs and ramifications of work on the existing treatment plant. Also to be considered is the cost to the Alice Springs Town Council and probably to the Northern Territory government of closing down the garbage tip. If the garbage tip is closed down, it may be that industrial development of the Commonage is appropriate. Rural subdivision of land south of the Commonage is subject to environmental constraints and these have to be considered.

With regard to the Northern Territory government's planning initiatives in Alice Springs, the primary thing to be said is that, despite the criticism the opposition has levelled, Alice Springs is the fastest growing town in Australia. It is a town that has virtually doubled its population in the last 10 years. Does it lack for anything? Does it lack hospitals, roads, schools, or bridges? No, it does not. All these things, of course, are initiatives of the Northern Territory government.

Despite what the opposition says, there has been orderly growth. Construction of the Todd River Bridge provided access to the Ross Highway farms area. We have seen government approval of plans for flood-immune access across the Todd River from the Stuart Highway to Stephens Road; the construction of Stephens Road to serve Mount John Valley and the eastern suburbs of Alice Springs; and a broad structure plan for Mount John Valley, after significant input by Alice Springs Town Council. Consultants have been commissioned on the development of the Emily Hills area. A policy for development along the Stuart Highway south of the Gap has been prepared and put on public display and assistance has been given by the Department of Transport and Works to provide a traffic management plan for the central business district. Significant time and resources have been devoted to flood mapping and warning systems are being developed. A central business district strategy plan has been prepared and implemented and one result of this has been the construction of the mall in Todd Street. A tunnel study has been carried out by the Department of Transport and Works. There has been a Commonage study by Gary Hunt and Associates, Pak Poy carried out a study on the strategy for developing Undoolya and there were studies on Larapinta in 1984 which have been used as the basis for the existing development. The government's track record for the development of Alice Springs is excellent.

Back in 1986, the then Minister for Lands, now the Chief Minister, spoke to this Assembly about the Alice Springs structure plan and the Joint Planning Committee. He asked whether it would be possible to move the seismic array within 2 or 3 years because, if that did not happen, the Undoolya option would be a non-event. That was not a town council matter or a Northern Territory government matter. It was a federal government matter and the opposition had no answer to that. At that time, the government was in the midst of determining, in the context of the 1986-87 budget, the completion and release of the various stages of the Larapinta development, particularly stages 4 and 5.

The government's problem was that the Australian building industry was being crippled by federal government policies and this was finally starting to impact upon the boom in Alice Springs. Building developers were making representations to the government for it to stop turning off blocks of land.

There were so many blocks on the market that there were signs of an oversupply. That has now happened. We are ahead of demand and there are many serviced blocks available today in Alice Springs. Thank God we did not release the full 2000 blocks onto the market a year ago.

The Northern Territory government would have been negligent to nominate the Undoolya option whilst relying on a federal government decision to move the seismic array. We all know how anxious the Australian Labor Party is to help the Northern Territory. However, the decision was eventually made to move.

Mr Smith: Yes. That was early last year - 15 months ago.

Mr POOLE: Evidently, but times have changed. Money is tight and will get tighter. Larapinta has been developed. Although it is described by the Alice Springs Town Council as a stopgap measure for the short term, it really provides an adequate bank of residential land blocks for the next couple of years. Even forgetting about the golf course estate, there are still a couple of hundred blocks available.

The Alice Springs structure plan document adopted by the Alice Springs Town Planning and Development Committee on 9 March favours the Undoolya option over the farms area. However, that in itself raises many important questions. 1000 lots at Undoolya will cost approximately \$13m while development of the farms area will cost around \$6m. Headworks at Undoolya to provide for 20 000 persons, not including the relocation of the seismic array and widening of roads, will cost a further \$24m. It is not a decision to be taken lightly. This council document says that the initial costs for relatively small numbers are lower in respect of the farms area option, but long-term costs for larger numbers of persons will be lower with the Undoolya option, which will reach a break-even point with around 20 000 persons. When we add that number to the existing population of Alice Springs, we have a city with almost the population of Darwin excluding Palmerston.

The same document states that there is need for upgrading of the arterial road network in various areas of the town. It argues that this is to some extent attributable to the development itself but also to general growth in Alice Springs. The Undoolya option will require the upgrading of Undoolya Road, the Wills Terrace causeway, the Sadadeen connector road, the Mount John Valley connector and possibly even arterials such as Schwarz Crescent and an additional length from there through to Undoolya Road. These upgrades will run to millions of dollars but will be spread over a number of years. These are not my words, Mr Deputy Speaker, but the town council's.

I acknowledge the need for a broad town plan, but surely we cannot blindly make a decision committing possibly \$50m over the next few years purely because the members for Stuart and MacDonnell think we should do so and have been saying so in this Assembly for many years. Even a blind man must realise that we are heading for tight Territory and federal budgets. Where is all this money going to come from? Are we going to get it from the well-known Territory supporter, Senator Walsh, and his Labor cronies down south? I think not. The future direction of growth in Alice Springs requires more consideration and careful appraisal than is offered by the opposition. As yet, I am not convinced that, until the Northern Territory government has costed and canvassed all the options, we can jump in with both feet. A number of important factors must be considered. These include deterioration of the economy caused by the federal government, the ageing of the Australian population and the decreasing flow of migration to the Northern Territory,

that is slowly emerging. There is only a 3 or 4 month waiting list for a Housing Commission house or flat in Alice Springs. These factors combined suggest that it is neither wise nor necessary to rush into a multi-million dollar project.

Mr Deputy Speaker, I urge caution. The developer's paper lists 4 advantages of the Undoolya option against 7 disadvantages, with 17 advantages for the farms area option and 1 disadvantage. The council dismisses this, and it is possibly right. However, the council's own list of advantages and disadvantages includes such things as savings on the establishment of town bus services. We all know that the cost of this service in Darwin runs into millions of dollars. The council talks of bicycle track networks and of people commuting short distances by bicycle. That would be a great advantage, but it is hardly a reason to go one way or another. Great industrial towns like Newcastle would never have expanded in that way: can you imagine commuting to Sydney down the Newcastle expressway on a pushbike, Mr Deputy Speaker?

During the last election campaign, this government gave a clear commitment to the Alice Spring Town Council that it would decide by May which option was to proceed. The government is adhering to this timetable: the council will have its decision. This will enable it to work on its broad-brush structure plan and to allow successfully for the growth and development of Alice Springs. The government has taken a responsible attitude on this subject and the only person who seems concerned is the member for MacDonnell. When the Town Planning Authority sits in Alice Springs, it has a majority of local members on its board. The town council is well represented. Those people appear to be happy to wait until May for the decision. I note that, in September 1986, the Centralian Advocate carried an editorial welcoming the then Minister for Lands' statement that, 'the government will not be pressured on the decision about direction of town development'. Mr Deputy Speaker, I suggest that the honourable members of the opposition should be happy to do the same and wait until this decision is handed down in May.

Over the last 4 or 5 years, there has been a great battle in the press between government, town councils and planning authorities. This has been well reported in Alice Springs, particularly through the Centralian Advocate. There have been fights over the extension to Lasseter's Casino. There have been fights between the minister and the Mayor, Leslie Oldfield. There has been great discussion and many differing opinions have been expressed with regard to the approved building height in Alice Springs. However, all in all, I think when one looks around the town and considers the last 5 or 6 years of development, what we have in Alice Springs is an attractive town that offers full employment and that has many new hotels such as the Gap Motel, the Outback Lodge, the Sundown Motel, the Alice Springs Sheraton, the Four Seasons property and the Alice Travellers' Village. I could go on and on, Mr Deputy Speaker. From an employment point of view, the tourist industry has provided great infrastructure to the town and, from the way our employment figures have boomed, I would say tourism in the Northern Territory has become the biggest employer of persons. Certainly, that is so in Alice Springs.

As a government, we are proud of what has been done in Alice Springs. We are proud of our track record, our roads, our bridges, our hospital and our schools. We are proud of the development that has occurred because, whatever members of the opposition might say, I cannot see anything that they can highlight to demonstrate that a town that has doubled in population has run into terrible trouble because of the lack of a structure plan.

Mr SMITH (Opposition Leader): Mr Speaker, I have this unusually broad perception. I feel that I have an obligation to the whole of the Territory and, where things are not going correctly, I feel that I have an obligation to make intelligent and informed comment.

I want to address a couple of comments to the member for Araluen. This matter is of great concern in Alice Springs and, without getting into the rhetoric of the pre-election skirmish between the honourable minister and the Mayor, quite clearly the feelings of the Mayor are shared by the Alice Springs Town Council. When I visited Alice Springs 6 or 7 weeks ago and requested a courtesy visit with the Mayor, I was somewhat staggered that that turned into a major discussion between the Mayor and a number of the aldermen and senior staff on the lack of an Alice Springs' strategy plan. If the member for Araluen believes that there is no concern in Alice Springs, he has not picked up the feel of the council, in particular, in Alice Springs. Its members are extremely concerned at the lack of a strategy plan. They were not happy to wait till May when I spoke to them 6 weeks ago; they were concerned at what had been happening and the government's inaction on that particular matter.

I want to pick up a couple of comments about the availability of residential land at the Larapinta and golf course estates, and I do not deny that there are numerous blocks there. But the problem is that both of those areas, for different reasons, have quite expensive blocks. Larapinta is expensively developed because of the nature of the terrain and, of course, the golf course estate is expensive also. Only Cabinet Ministers and others of a similar financial standing can afford to live there, because it has been designed as an exclusive residential area.

Mr Hanrahan: And I don't own it!

Mr SMITH: Who does? The bank?

Mr Speaker, there is or very soon will be a shortage of cheaper land in Alice Springs and we all know that ...

Mr Poole: There is no such thing as cheap land in Alice Springs.

Mr SMITH: There is no such thing as cheap land in Alice Springs! We all know that the main requirement in the Northern Territory is for cheaper land so that people on limited incomes can afford to buy their own homes. That is where the pressure will emerge in Alice Springs in the very near future unless something is done about it. We are not talking about a decision on Undoolya or Emily Hills today and work starting there tomorrow, because we all know that we are talking about a complete new area for development in Alice Springs and the lead-in time to put in the necessary headworks is at least 3 years and possibly closer to 4 or 5 years. It is a big undertaking to have those essential services and roads in place before actual building can commence. It is all right for the member for Araluen to say that there is no problem now and will not be in a 1 or 2 years time. The real problem is that we need to be looking 3, 4 and 5 years down the track and the timing for that has become very crucial indeed.

Mr Speaker, I want to remind the honourable member for Flynn of some comments that he made in this Assembly on 19 November 1986:

I did not hear the member for MacDonnell talking about the Alice Springs Town Council or its role in the development of a policy for Alice Springs. I would like to know why. As the government has

said, time and time again, we would prefer the Alice Springs Town Council to be the decision-making body in the formulation of policy for the town.

And later he said:

The government's view is that the initiative for any change of policy should come from the Alice Springs Town Council.

Haven't those words come back to haunt you?

Mr Hanrahan: Not at all.

Mr SMITH: Not at all?

We have a situation where the Alice Springs Town Council has come out clearly and unequivocally in favour of the Undoolya option. That decision has been reached by the Alice Springs Town Council on the advice of the Joint Planning Committee which has investigated this particular matter over the last 3 or 4 years. The Joint Planning Committee is a combination of relevant government departments, both at the federal and Territory level, and includes representatives of the Alice Springs Town Council. That Joint Planning Committee has looked at the issues in detail, over a long period of time, and has come out unequivocally in favour of the Undoolya option. That opinion has been agreed to by the Alice Springs Town Council and supported by it to the fullest.

If the words the minister spoke on 19 November 1986 had meant anything, one would have thought that, after such thorough inquiry and research by the planning committee and its acceptance by the Alice Springs Town Council, the government in turn would have accepted the recommendation, gone for the Undoolya option and eased the uncertainty that exists in Alice Springs at present. But, it has not done so. For reasons that I do not fully understand, the government is still fiddling around.

I am pleased that the honourable member for Araluen has advised us that the government hopes to make a decision by May of this year, and it is not before time. As I understand it, there are 2 major options that the government is looking at in the Alice Springs area, one being Undoolya and the other the farms area or Emily Hills. I guess there are some advantages in favour of the farms area over Undoolya. Of course, in the view of the Joint Planning Committee, there are many advantages in favour of Undoolya over the farms area.

On my reading of the matter, it seems to me that the farms option has some short-term advantages over Undoolya. If we are looking only at a 1000-block development, the farms area does come in significantly cheaper. But I would hope that the Northern Territory government can see further ahead than a 1000-block development for Alice Springs and that, when it is considering the strategic plan for Alice Springs, it is looking at a much more major development than that. It is clear that Alice Springs will continue to increase in a pretty dramatic fashion. It is clear that it has established itself as a major centre in the heart of Australia. It has a unique range of attractions within 300 km to 400 km of it, and it will continue to increase at a rapid rate. To look at a 1000-block development is not good enough, and I would urge the government not to do that but to look at the much longer term.

Mr Speaker, if we look at the longer term, at a population of 20 000 in this new development, it is at that stage that the advantages of Undoolya become overwhelming. The figures are these. At the 20 000 mark, the development figures for the headworks etc for the farms area and Undoolya are about the same - about \$28m for each. The problem is that, if we get beyond 20 000 we are then locked out of the farms area; there is no room for any further expansion in that particular area. We would then become involved in locating another area and in getting into the process of putting in expensive headworks again. The incremental costs in the Undoolya area are fairly low, and if the population increases beyond 20 000, Undoolya can be expanded pretty easily.

But, there are matters to be considered other than the headworks costs of establishing these new subdivisions. I was amazed by the comments of the member for Araluen who spent quite some time talking about the new roads that need to be built to get people from Alice Springs to Undoolya and vice versa. However, he made no comment about the major road transport problem there will be if the Emily Hills option is taken, and that is getting people through the Gap. A major problem, Mr Speaker! There have been some quite spectacular and innovative ideas proposed for getting people through the Gap. A 2-level highway has been proposed - one stream of traffic travelling above another - to solve that problem and I understand it has also been proposed that a tunnel could be driven through the MacDonnell Ranges.

Member interjecting: Ski-lift?

Mr SMITH: I have not actually heard of a ski-lift proposal but, with the creative mind of the Treasurer, you could probably get the government to help finance it.

If there are an additional 20 000 in the Emily Hills area, there will be a major problem with access via the Gap. Not only is it a very expensive option indeed, it is also an aesthetically unpleasing option. Not even the Northern Territory government, I would venture to say, would be prepared to tunnel through the MacDonnell Ranges or have streams of traffic travelling on top of each other to get through the Gap. That is a major problem and one of the most important reasons why the planning group opted for Undoolya rather than the Emily Hills area. Another important reason is that the edge of Undoolya is only 4 km away from the town centre and the middle of Undoolya is only 6 km away from the town centre. Emily Hills is about 12 km away.

The member for Araluen attempted to denigrate that aspect by saying that the discussion centred around whether you could ride a bike to and from work. Of course, Mr Speaker, it is much more meaningful than that. The distance that people have to travel to work, particularly if you are talking about \$4000 or \$5000 a day, is very important in terms of the energy resources that are used.

Mr Dale: Where does the \$4000 or \$5000 a day come in?

Mr SMITH: I mean 4000 or 5000 people a day. If there is a viable option of establishing a new centre within 4 km or 6 km of the town centre and another option of establishing a new centre within 12 km of the town centre, there need to be pretty overwhelming reasons for taking the 12 km option. Unfortunately, those good and overwhelming reasons have not been supplied. The government is not able to supply them because they do not exist. Quite clearly, logic indicates that, for all sorts of reasons, Undoolya is the best option for the future long-term development of Alice Springs. What is

particularly unfortunate is that it appears to be only the government of the Northern Territory and the particular developers concerned with the Emily Hills project who are unable to see the long-term advantages of going for the Undoolya option.

The decision on the future strategy plan for Alice Springs does need to be taken as soon as possible and I am pleased that the member for Araluen has said that it will be taken in May. I hope the minister will confirm that, because we are not talking about the planning needs for Alice Springs next year or the year after but about the long-term, future development of Alice Springs in an organised manner. Unfortunately, we have had a history of short-term planning in Alice Springs. In fact, the first debate I participated in on the question of planning in Alice Springs was a housing debate 2 or 3 years ago. Because of lack of planning, there was a severe housing shortage in Alice Springs. As a temporary solution, the Dixon Road Estate was developed and then the Larapinta Drive area.

We do not want to get into that position again. If a decision is not taken soon on the future direction of Alice Springs, we will get into that position. We are already very close to a shortage of cheaper land for the ordinary families who want to reside in Alice Springs. We need to start that planning now. We can only start the planning if this government makes a decision in relation to the direction Alice Springs should take in the future.

Mr HANRAHAN (Lands and Housing): Mr Speaker, I will be as brief as possible because there are only so many times that one can say the same thing. I hope that, this time, honourable members opposite will realise exactly what we are talking about. To clear up a question raised by, in particular, the honourable member for MacDonnell and Her Worship the Mayor of Alice Springs, may I say that, during the heat of the moment in the election campaign, I made certain comments in answer to Her Worship's very unreasonable and outrageous remarks regarding cronyism and back-scratching almost to the point of money changing hands, not between members of parliament but between developers and public servants within the Department of Lands. I took the greatest exception to those remarks and still do. I suggested to Her Worship at the time that, if she was prepared to back up those public statements with any proof, she should take the matter to the police because that was where it rightly belonged. Quite frankly, if any honourable member opposite seeks to condone that sort of action in the public forum, without anybody being called into question or at least called to present some proof, I certainly do not..

Mr Ede: I thought she was talking about you.

Mr HANRAHAN: Not at all. You obviously have not read what was said at the time.

Mr Speaker, I am pleased to report to members that one of my first official tasks in Alice Springs as the Minister for Lands and Housing was to call upon Her Worship the Mayor of Alice Springs. Once again, we continued a lengthy discussion on planning in Alice Springs and the future of the structure plan. At various times, we are at odds, and so we should be because that provides a very healthy forum for argument. I do not necessarily agree with everything Her Worship says and she does not agree with everything that I say but, we are able to overcome these small difficulties that come our way. I look forward to continuing a very close association with the Alice Springs Town Council, one that I have maintained since 1982.

I gave an undertaking to the aldermen and Her Worship that a decision would be made in relation to the future direction of Alice Springs - in other words, on the area in which the major residential development will occur - by the end of May. That will happen and let us ensure that we know what we are talking about because therein lies the confusion for honourable members opposite.

We are not talking about a decision of government that will present a structure plan to the town of Alice Springs. We will make a decision on where the major residential growth in Alice Springs will occur over the next 20 to 30 years. The development of a structure plan will follow from that. A structure plan includes such things as roads, services, water, sewerage, traffic flow, commercial developments, schools and social amenities, even down to bicycle tracks, the effects on the environment and consultations with the Aboriginal Sacred Sites Protection Authority.

That is a very complex set of arrangements, Mr Speaker, but it is all in hand. What honourable members do not realise is that much work has taken place already, in particular with the Undoolya option: the environmental issues, the sacred sites issue, the costs of provision of services, roads, electricity, water, sewerage etc. It has been done or is in the process of being completed.

What is being done with Undoolya is also being done with the proposition for the development of Emily Hills. The Leader of the Opposition is quite correct when he says that Emily Hills has some advantages, in the short term, over Undoolya. It certainly has some advantages as well in the long term. What the government has said, time and time again, is that it will continue to take the responsible course of action. It will properly analyse both options on a cost-analysis basis so that, when we present our decision, it will be a responsible one.

In the short term, the differences between Undoolya and Emily Hills are quite large. What has happened, unfortunately, be it through the council or various government forums, is that misinformation or selected information has been presented to the media and the public at large and people have drawn their own conclusions. Many of the facts, figures and dollar signs have been taken out of all proportion. One of the things that I have insisted on is that those numbers are crunched to the nth degree so that there will be no mistake about the direction to be taken and the reasons for the government's decision.

There are some particular problems with Undoolya and there are some particular problems with the Emily Hills option. These relate to the cost of relocating seismic arrays, the cost of land and to sacred sites. You may rest assured, Mr Speaker, that the government will make its decision by the end of May and that decision will be based largely on a cost-benefit analysis to the advantage of the people of Alice Springs for a long time to come.

There is one issue that I would like to touch on very briefly because it has been annoying me. I refer to the opposition's view of future problems of traffic flow through Heavitree Gap. I have lived in Alice Springs all my life and I know that, other than Heavitree Gap, there are 2 options for exit from or ingress to Alice Springs. If we are not going to allow an expansion to take account of the traffic flow into and out of Alice Springs - not for the next 10 years, but for the next 50 years - we have 2 options: people go west and come in through Honeymoon Gap or they go east and come in through Mt Undoolya. Or, Mr Speaker, and it is not as silly as it sounds, a tunnel

could be put through or additional roads on a cantilevered basis could be constructed on the bottom of the bed of the river in Heavitree Gap. Mark my words, that will be one of the single, most important decisions relating to where the town goes.

If it is Undoolya, one of the options is to go out through Mt Undoolya. We are investigating this. If people were not able to get through Heavitree Gap because of flooding or traffic problems, they would have something like a 60 km or 70 km drive to the airport. I am sure that would be well received by the residents of Alice Springs. We are talking about an issue that really has to be looked at objectively because it may be an only option to allow the traffic flow to pass through Heavitree Gap, regardless of where the town goes. That is what members opposite have not grasped. Whether the town is further developed at Emily Hills or Undoolya, those traffic flows will occur and problems will occur in Undoolya.

Mr Ede: They are not going to be the same.

Mr HANRAHAN: You keep talking like that. I am quite happy for you to read some of the reports. That is an offer that I make quite willingly to the member for Stuart who will realise in a very short period of time that what he is raising as 'the same traffic flows' are wrong. They are very different.

Mr Ede: That is what I said.

Mr HANRAHAN: They are tied to the employment opportunities that will exist whether the town develops south, east, north or west. If it develops south, I think the options for the town will be better in the long term. I will try to put in simple terms what will happen when we make this decision because a structure plan will not be created in 5 minutes; it will take quite some time.

Mr Ede: We know that. We have waited for years.

Mr HANRAHAN: We will make the decision on where the town will go and, believe it or not, we can have blocks turned off in Undoolya in a very short time - certainly in less than 18 months. We will then start to accumulate and put together all the information relating to the development of a structure plan. Anybody who has been reading the papers or noting the actions of the town council or the Planning Authority would realise that that process has already started. Height limitations are being exhibited for the Mount John Valley tourist precinct. After its meeting on Monday night, the town council announced that, following a request from the government and discussions with myself, it would review the problems faced by the CBD. The Department of Lands is looking at traffic flow problems in the east-west access from Undoolya.

Mr Speaker, probably within the next 12 months, after the proper public consultations take place, the structure plan may well be in its draft form and ready to be presented to the Alice Springs Town Council and the community at large for public comment. What is being said by honourable members opposite is irrational, largely hysterical and politically motivated. If they really want to know how much effect they had in the election campaign by raising such hysterical nonsense, they should look at the results in the 4 town seats and they will find their answer.

Mr Speaker, unquestionably, the government has moved in a responsible way and has displayed great strength by not bending to the pressure of a very

small but vocal minority who have chosen to take the easy way out, in political terms, to suit their own political ends. By the end of May, the decision will be made and it will be made on a cost-analysis basis and then the real work of developing the structure plan will occur. I am pleased to report to honourable members that the discussions and consultations with the Alice Springs Town Council will continue and it fully supports the course of action that I have taken. I look forward to presenting to the people of Alice Springs a structure plan that will take into account not only the short-term aims of the members opposite but that will look 50 to 100 years ahead. I can guarantee honourable members present that I will not allow the release of the structure plan until such time as it takes account of all those issues and, as a very minimum, takes account of the future development of Alice Springs for the next 50 years.

Perhaps I could raise one issue on which I solicit the support of honourable members opposite. One of the things that will become apparent in a very short time with the development of Alice Springs, regardless of where the town goes, is the lack of space for the CBD area to expand. If it is agreed that the building height policy will not be changed to accommodate new development, the central business district of Alice Springs has nowhere to go. We will not see the development of a CBD in Undoolya for at least 15 years. That leaves one option, and it relates to a decision made 10 years ago which was one of the greatest mistakes in the planning of Alice Springs: the decision to allow the development of the Australian National Railway yards on the town side of Heavitree Gap. I believe that the one option remaining is to put pressure on ANR to move its yards back out to MacDonnell siding. Rest assured, Mr Speaker, that we will preserve the present siting of the Ghan. I know that ANR is really a law unto itself and we probably have a limited chance of getting that yard moved. However, apart from the question of access to and from the town, it is one of the greatest obstacles for future planners to overcome, because ANR occupies a massive piece of land.

Mr Speaker, I feel sure that, with the confidence of the CLP government and the National and Liberal parties achieving government federally, there is no doubt that we will have a railway line from Alice Springs to Darwin although we will have to put up with continual knocking from the opposition. The biggest obstacle to overcome in the development of Alice Springs will be the handicap to CBD expansion posed by the current siting of the ANR yards. Their relocation would solve the expansion problems of the CBD and main shopping areas of Alice Springs for the next 30 to 50 years.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Resignation of Minister for Labour and Administrative Services

Mr HATTON (Chief Minister)(by leave): Mr Speaker, it is my painful duty today to inform honourable members of a number of events set in train by a speech made to this Assembly last night by the then Minister for Labour and Administrative Services. In that speech, the honourable member made remarks which were highly critical of neighbouring South-east Asian governments. Those remarks were directly contrary to the policies and attitudes of the Northern Territory government and have caused extreme embarrassment to the government and to me personally. Accordingly, Mr Speaker, I have today asked for the resignation of Mr Harris from the ministry, and Mr Harris has agreed. He has since tendered his resignation to His Honour the Administrator.

In the almost 9 years since self-government, the Country Liberal Party of the Northern Territory has expended much time and effort developing the closest possible relations with our South-east Asian neighbours. These

efforts have led to a close working relationship in educational and cultural areas and have also seen a significant increase in trade and commercial links between the Northern Territory and South-east Asia. Asking for the minister's resignation this morning was a step that I took with great regret. However, the policies of the Northern Territory government and the Territory's good relations with its South-east Asian neighbours must be paramount over any personal feelings of friendship or loyalty.

Because of the possible implications of last night's statements in this Assembly for Australia's relationship with the ASEAN countries, both the Prime Minister, Mr Hawke, and the Minister for Foreign Affairs, Mr Hayden, have been kept informed of today's events. The Indonesian government, through its consular officials in Darwin, has been made aware of my government's official position in relation to the unfortunate statements of last evening.

For the time being, I will assume responsibility for the Labour and Administrative Services portfolio. I will appoint a minister to these portfolio responsibilities in due course and I will inform this Assembly accordingly.

In closing, I wish to emphasise that my government's long-standing commitment to further developing strong relations with our Asian neighbours will continue. Mr Speaker, I move that the Assembly take note of this statement and seek leave to continue my remarks at a later hour.

Leave granted; debate adjourned.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

Mr HARRIS (Port Darwin)(by leave): Mr Speaker, it gives me no pleasure to address the Assembly on this occasion. Last night, I spoke in the adjournment debate on the defence of Australia. It is a subject which concerns me greatly and it always will concern me greatly. In talking of unrest amongst neighbouring nations, it was never my intention to criticise those nations, nor to thwart in any way the vigorous efforts of the Northern Territory government to develop closer and more friendly ties with our neighbours by means of a range of economic, social, cultural and educational activities. Indeed, it has been my privilege to have been closely involved with student and teacher exchange programs in the past.

My concern was to have Australia adopt a more positive approach to ensure greater stability in our region. Unfortunately, my remarks were misinterpreted as direct criticism of neighbouring nations. I repeat again that that was not my intention. The Chief Minister asked me this morning to withdraw my remarks and I have felt unable to do it. If I were to deny my statements and allow Soviet influence to go unremarked, I would indeed be guilty of criticising those nations. I reiterate that my aim was to generate debate on the subject. In this, it seems I have succeeded beyond my expectations and, Mr Speaker, at great personal sacrifice.

I feel deeply that all Australians should be alerted to the imminent Soviet threat and the need to support our ally, the United States. I hoped that my references to unrest in the South Pacific would be accepted in the context of the overall scenario of the region. They were not.

Mr Speaker, I am proud of the Northern Territory's achievements in developing good relations with such neighbours as Malaysia, particularly the east Malaysian states, and Indonesia and Brunei. The efforts and contacts of

ministers, officials, business people and students have proved vital in the establishment of a place for the Northern Territory in South-east Asia. I support and defend the Northern Territory government's record and I am committed personally to advancing this objective further. But, I would not be honest to myself if I did not stand by my beliefs, and it was for this reason that, with deep regret, I tendered my resignation this morning to His Honour the Administrator.

VALUATION OF LAND AMENDMENT BILL
(Serial 17)

Bill presented and read a first time.

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

Mr Speaker, the main purposes of this bill are: (1) to make available to rating authorities additional methods by which to value property for the determination of rates and so that these methods may also be used for other purposes, for example, rental assessment and land taxation; (2) to establish a Valuation Board of Review to hear and consider objections to valuations determined by the Valuer-General; (3) to provide specific power for the Valuer-General to obtain information relevant to any valuation methods adopted; and (4) to provide for the recoupment by the Territory of costs for valuation services provided by the Valuer-General to and on behalf of public authorities, municipal rating authorities and other local government bodies.

Mr Speaker, the need for alternative methods of valuation has been the subject of concerns held by Territory municipal councils, the Valuer-General, the Commonwealth Grants Commission and other interested bodies. Honourable members will be aware also that the Valuer-General is responsible for the valuation of all ratable land every 3 years, the next revaluation for Darwin being due in 1988.

It is now generally accepted that the concept of unimproved capital value as the only method of valuation is outdated. This traditional base has been supplemented in many parts of Australia with the options of valuations based on improved capital value, annual value - which is value related to annual rental return - or a combination of these as suited to a particular district or locality.

This bill provides for these alternative methods in land valuations and also recognises the necessity to include valuation of a stratum. Whilst council rates will continue to be levied on the basis of valuations made under the Valuation of Land Act, under the new provisions rating authorities will be able to choose, in consultation with the Valuer-General, which method or methods are best suited for a particular town or locality. I believe that the new provisions will give rating authorities the opportunity to achieve a more equitable distribution of the rate burden within their municipalities.

Mr Speaker, the proposal to establish a Valuation Board of Review will provide a person or rating authority dissatisfied with the decision of the Valuer-General an opportunity to object and be heard by a qualified, independent body for the cost of a lodgment fee of \$20. Currently, the only recourse for an aggrieved party is to make application to the lengthy and costly process of the Land and Valuation Review Tribunal, which is a Judge of the Supreme Court. An appeal to the tribunal will still be possible should an objector be dissatisfied with the decision of the Valuation Board of Review.

It is proposed that there will be a Valuation Board of Review panel consisting of not less than 9 members appointed by the minister. Members must be suitably qualified as a valuer, legal practitioner or a member of the Real Estate Institute of Australia. Three members of this panel will constitute a board. This new procedure for appeals either is provided or is being considered in all of the states.

In providing the additional methods of valuation, it will become necessary to extend the powers of the Valuer-General so that information relevant to the methods adopted may be obtained. Accordingly, clause 21 of the bill amends section 42 to provide specific power to the Valuer-General to obtain information on prescribed forms. Appropriate penalties for failure to comply have been provided.

Mr Speaker, I turn now to the recoupment of costs for valuation services. In view of past comments and findings of the Commonwealth Grants Commission, the Territory government will need to recoup as many of the annual charges resulting from valuations made by the Valuer-General as can be reasonably justified. Accordingly, clause 13 inserts a new section 17A which will oblige councils and other persons, such as statutory bodies, to pay the cost of valuations.

Provision has also been made for the minister to exempt a party from bearing all or a part of the cost of valuation. In consideration of the costs of valuation, I draw the attention of honourable members to savings in such costs brought about recently by the implementation of computer-assisted valuation techniques by the Valuer-General. It is expected that even greater savings can be achieved in the future. By way of example, the use of such techniques in the Alice Springs municipality during the 1986 revaluation resulted in savings of 25% against the 1982-83 revaluation cost, despite an increase in the number of assessments determined. Mr Speaker, I commend the bill to honourable members.

Debate adjourned.

SUSPENSION OF STANDING ORDERS

Mr HANRAHAN (Lands and Housing): Mr Speaker, I move that so much of standing orders be suspended as would prevent the following bills passing through all stages at this sittings: Building Amendment Bill (Serial 6), Crown Lands Amendment Bill (Serial 7), Payroll Tax Amendment Bill (Serial 13), Credit Unions Amendment Bill (Serial 15), Traffic Amendment Bill (Serial 5), Summary Offences Amendment Bill (Serial 2), Firearms Amendment Bill (Serial 3), and Trespass Bill 1987 (Serial 8).

Motion agreed to.

STATEMENT

Security of Legislative Assembly

Mr SPEAKER: Honourable members, during the adjournment debate last night the honourable member for Jingili raised a question of security within the Legislative Assembly. I advise honourable members that I have kept this matter under review since first being elected as Speaker.

In the plan for the construction of the parliamentary library within the Nelson Building, provision has been made for an entrance into the Assembly through the Assembly grounds via the foyer of the Nelson Building. It is

intended that all visitors to the Assembly will gain access through the Nelson Building when construction is complete. The foyer of that building will be manned at all times during office hours and, when the Assembly is sitting, by attendants who, if necessary, will be able to vet people intending to visit the Assembly. The total security of the grounds can easily be achieved by locking the gates adjacent to the main annexe of this building.

At this stage, I do not believe there is any necessity for a higher level of security to be introduced into the Assembly. However, I have asked the Clerk to contact the Commissioner of Police and to make arrangements whereby I can be informed if there is a possibility that members of the Assembly or the precincts themselves are at risk. At that stage, the security levels can be raised quickly. In the meantime, I intend to refer the matter to the House Committee for its continuing consideration.

ADDRESS-IN-REPLY

Continued from 29 April 1987.

Mr EDE (Stuart): Mr Speaker, after the 1983 election I thought that I would not be speaking in an Address-in-Reply debate for another 4 years, which would have been the beginning of this parliamentary term. However, there was a further Address-in-Reply debate when the member for Barkly replaced our honourable member for the Northern Territory, now apparently about to become plain Mr Everingham of Queensland. This happened again when the member for Nightcliff replaced the member for Barkly. Mr Speaker, instead of 1 Address-in-Reply debate over a 4-year term of this Assembly, we have had 4 over a 3-year period. An honoured tradition has now degenerated into an absurd exercise of pitiful government propaganda. The debates simply allow yet another leader of the CLP to trot out a load of tired old promises, none of which see the light of day, not that any one really expects them to. Indeed, I sometimes think that government promises uttered in Address-in-Reply debates rate even lower than CLP election promises.

Most members will recall that the first 2 Address-in-Reply debates during the last Assembly highlighted the priority of assistance to the young people of the Territory. Yes, Mr Speaker, they were the big priority area; all sorts of wonderful programs were hinted at. No priority has been attached to new youth programs. They seem to have become proverbial dead ducks. Young people, who believed in the numerous hollow government proposals and became involved in committees to advise the government have become frustrated, in many instances, and pulled out altogether. Maybe that was due to the regular procession of Chief Ministers we experienced during the last term of this parliament. Maybe the current occupant does not see youth affairs as such a big deal and has quickly allowed it to sink without trace.

However, the CLP not only breaks parliamentary traditions, it also creates a few of its own such as the changing of Chief Ministers. It is almost as regular as the changing of the guard at Buckingham Palace. Of course, when the Treasurer went down to Alice, he became another casualty in the changing of the guard at the CLP palace.

I for one hope we will not continue to see a never-ending procession of government leaders during this term. Members opposite may love the fanfare that accompanies the changing of the guard. They seem to love the ceremony and the chance to consume free sandwiches and cups of tea out on the lawn, while they try to make some civilised but usually fairly inane conversation with opponents whom they were vigorously slanging in pre-selection battles in

the elections only a few weeks earlier. You know what it is called, Mr Speaker? It is called the CLP 3-step knife dance. It goes something like this. You take 1 step forward and thrust the knife, 2 steps backwards, shuffle a bit to the right, change your partner and start all over again. That is what has been happening in the CLP over the last 3 years and it has done incredible damage, as its members well know.

Mr Speaker, I am afraid it does very little good for the development of the Territory. Look at housing starts which give an indication of the state of the Northern Territory's economy. Monthly figures show that they are around 20% of the level that they were only 3 or 4 years ago. It is no good members opposite indulging in their usual Greek chorus and whingeing about the federal government's policies. The decline in the Northern Territory has been far worse than that experienced by any state. It is the CLP's profligate spending on dream-world projects that has caused both the slump in the Northern Territory economy and the crisis in business confidence.

Birth was given to the dream-world situation back in the halcyon days when our Queensland friend was Chief Minister. It has never stopped. The government believes that there is a fairy godmother somewhere out there. When will it wake up to reality? As I said, I hope members opposite will be a little more restrained in their eternal internecine wars this time around. Maybe they could confine themselves to just knocking off the odd minister every couple of months. That could be classed as fair game but, in the Territory's interest, they should leave the Chief Minister alone.

Mr Speaker, I say this not because of any love of the Chief Minister, who is a pretty ordinary bloke after all. He is only the best of a bad bunch. I am saying it in a genuine desire to see a bit of stability in the Territory's government. The Chief Minister, of course, will receive his challenges. We on this side of the Assembly will pursue him and ask him to account for the incredible mess he has made of the public service. I think that the Chief Minister must be an avid student of John Cleese's videos on management style. He has certainly taken Mr Cleese's style to heart. With due respect to Mr Cleese, the Chief Minister has even thought up a few tricks of his own. Perhaps the Chief Minister got his ideas from a few episodes of Fawlty Towers because the similarity is remarkable.

The predecessors of the current Chief Minister were bad enough. The first demoralised the public service with his political patronage and the next one left the service highly confused with his corporate style of new-age thinking. Unfortunately, it took the present incumbent basically 2 days to destroy the public service. I believe that John Cleese is green with envy. In fact, I believe that he is going to offer the Chief Minister a job as a script writer at twice his current salary, because he is a born natural for that position. We will be pursuing him and his cronies to get them to explain some of the numerous scandals that have been associated with his fairly short time as Chief Minister. First, I would like to speculate on the pressures that he will face from another direction.

During the election campaign, the Chief Minister was described as a man standing with one leg on each side of a barbed wire fence. As you would appreciate, Mr Speaker, that is a very difficult and potentially dangerous situation if you want to run at any speed. There are not many occasions when I agree with the Premier of Queensland but, unfortunately, on this occasion, he was correct. Therefore, I would like to spend a little time analysing the forces that have placed our Chief Minister in this position. Like his predecessors, he has always had to straddle the often-conflicting philosophies

of agrarian socialism in the Country Party wing and the pragmatic opportunism of the Liberal wing of his party.

Who or what strung the barbed wire that makes this straddling effort so dangerous? It was done, of course, by the re-emergence of that group of forces that now term themselves loosely the New Right. The term itself is one of the great misnomers of Australian political history. I say that after due consideration of the many instances where names in politics show that they do not reflect the true nature of the group that adopts them. One, for example, is that sectional interest group that has the cheek to call itself the Nationals. Another is a group representing only 8% of Australians which controls our Senate whose members have the absolute cheek to call themselves Democrats. And, of course, there is that great font of amorphous, conservative, non-think that calls itself the Liberal Party.

Despite all these, I think the term 'New Right' takes the cake. For a start, they are not new. Their policies are straight out of the feudal period when a few of the rich robber barons controlled the wealth and power to the total exclusion of the workers of the day. That is where their policies come from, but their basic concepts are older than that: they go right back to pure greed and envy, right back to Genesis. These people deny the hard-earned lessons of thousands of years of experience in human relations. If the term 'right' carries the slightest connotation of being correct, these people are totally wrong. We know they are wrong because the world has seen how basically unsustainable their position is. Maybe they are 'right' in terms of the political spectrum. When we get that far from sense, decency and humanity, we are amongst the troglodytes and can expect anything at all - but nothing good.

In the Territory, the new arrival has surfaced in the form of the self-styled Nationals. They apparently had no right to use that term but that would not worry them. They are the product of an old man's dreams of making one last hurrah before he goes up to meet his maker or - more likely - down to meet his maker. The Queensland Premier and his core of minders illustrates to Australians that the advance of the cane toad is but the first wave. It is probably a coincidence that the seat of the self-styled parliamentary leader of the self-styled Nationals, Barkly, is the only area in the Northern Territory where these poisonous and toxic cane toads have unfortunately become established. It is, however, too good a coincidence to ignore. When Sir Joh set out to prove that he had worse to offer than cane toads and as the local Nationals were being disowned by their National partners at the federal level, it was self-evident that the Queensland import had to be termed the cane-toad faction of the Nationals. That would set them apart from the sheepskin Nationals who continue to exist as a fairly rare species in some of the states.

The cane-toad Nationals were euphoric in their support of their leader. He could do no wrong. He was the leader, the man who could take us all to the promised land. Not quite all of us, of course. Anyone who has had the opportunity to listen to him during his increasingly rare bouts of lucidity knows that he is very selective about who will live in his promised land. It is a strange thing about all the regimes in history which have embraced the messianic concept of leadership so beloved by the New Right that they have all involved the oppression of individual freedoms as the quid pro quo of setting up their messiah. That is natural because, if the messiah is omniscient and all-wise, anyone who disagrees must, ipso facto, be wrong. Wrongness, in the lexicon of such regimes, is the root of all evil. It is wrongness that prevents their great leap forward. It is wrongness that prevents the prophecies of their messiah or fuhrer chairman from being fulfilled.

These messianic cults set out to say: 'Give us your brains, give us your powers of reason and we will look after you. We will tell you what is right and wrong. Any doubters, non-conformists and the like have to be punished or, at the least, made the butts of community hatred'. Thus, in Queensland, we saw first the draconian laws against public protest. The government then turned on homosexuals, then alternative lifestyles and then the unions. The 40% of Queenslanders who still vote for the Nationals may find it worth pondering who will be next.

I recall reading a small passage by a Lutheran pastor in Hitler's Germany that went something like this: 'They came for the Jews but I was not a Jew so I did nothing. They came for the Communists and I did not support Communism so I kept quiet. They came for the sexual deviants and I did not support that sort of thing so I turned away. They came for the gypsies and I am not a gypsy so I said nothing. They came for the Catholics. I do not support Rome so I stayed silent. They came for me. I cried out for help but there was nobody there'. When a government tramples on the liberty of any citizen, of any race, colour, creed or political persuasion, it diminishes the civil rights of each of us.

We all know about the Queensland economy. We know that Queensland has the highest state taxes of any in Australia. We know that, in Queensland, public service numbers have grown faster than in other state in the last 15 years. We know that the public servants who actually deliver services are low in number whilst there are plenty in the upper echelons. We know that Queensland has the worst community services of any state. We know it has had the lowest growth rate in Australia for the last 3 years. We know that it consistently has the highest level of unemployment of any state in the Commonwealth and we know that it is a state where business is continually complaining about over-regulation.

Mr Speaker, the New Right has consistently attempted to develop a line that somehow public sector money is bad money, and that the private sector dollar is good money. I would just as happily receive a public sector dollar as a private sector dollar but apparently, in its wisdom, the New Right has decided that the public sector dollar is second-class. It is almost impossible to find any professional evidence or disinterested opinion which would back up its assault on the public sector. Its assertion that the public sector is bad for the economy is completely without foundation.

Australia had the world's highest level of average income at the turn of the century. We slipped to fifth on the OECD ladder in 1950, eleventh in 1960, twelfth in 1973 and are thirteenth today. It is interesting to note that most of the slippage occurred during the Menzies era. The New Right argues that Australia's decline in this area is due to what it describes as a 'burgeoning unproductive public sector'. But our public sector is actually quite small by OECD country standards in terms of government expenditure as a proportion of GDP. Most other OECD countries have experienced a similar growth in their public sectors over the same period. In fact, of the dozen OECD countries which are now ahead of us in terms of per capita income, all but 2 - Japan and Iceland - have larger public sectors than Australia. Every reputable, independent analysis of the relationship between economic performance and the size of growth of the public sector has failed to substantiate the criticism levelled by the New Right and its apologists in the Liberal Party.

Members of the New Right go on at great length about privatisation, the half-baked notion that profitable enterprises should be sold. They are not

sold because they fail, but because they succeed. That is crazy. It means capitalising the profits and socialising the losses. It is a massive rip-off. It is a means of ripping out of the hands of all Australians some of the most productive and most important enterprises that Australian ingenuity has developed over many years. Why do people in the New Right want to do this? Is it simply because they want to sell off the profitable facilities so that they can point to the unprofitable ones as examples of public sector inefficiency? Or is it because they do not understand the public sector or are unable to manage it? The New Right wants to give away the jewels of the public sector. It wants to give them away to the asset strippers and the tax avoiders who traditionally scavenge in the wake of conservative razor gangs.

Mr Speaker, the great public enterprises of this country have always been the backbone of our development. Think of the roads, the massive railway systems, the airlines, the telecommunications system, the mail system, the electricity and water supply projects and the hospitals. Where would we be as a nation without these massive enterprises? How would this country have developed if the government had not gone in, backed by the people of Australia, game to take on these enterprises and develop the country? In a developing and often forbidding continent, Australians have been resourceful in using their collective effort where the private sector has lacked either the motivation or the capacity to undertake the task.

I have heard the New Right's privatisation policy fairly accurately described as 'selling off the family car to get money for bus fares' or 'plundering the household savings for the sake of an afternoon of bingo'. Other people have described it as 'selling to the people of Australia what they already own'. Let us look at some of the operations that they have talked about selling off. These operations, they say, are intrinsically inefficient, and somehow can never perform as well as the private sector.

Mr Speaker, look at Australia Post. From a \$65m loss in 1973-74, it has gone to an operating surplus last year of \$23m. In 9 of the past 10 years, it has met all of its operating costs and has generated funds internally for half its capital expenditure. Qantas is one of the few profitable international air carriers in the world. Recently, it announced a \$63m profit which was the second consecutive year as a record. The Commonwealth Bank has increased its after-tax profit by 55% to \$236m. Mr Speaker, let us look at Telecom. In the last 10 years, Telecom has increased the number of households with a telephone from 6 out of 10 to 9 out of 10, and all at an affordable price. It is self-financing and returns to the Commonwealth hundreds of millions of dollars in interest every year. What would the Liberal Party say about that? The other day I read an article in a paper by a Mr Court who, I believe, has something to do with the Liberals in Western Australia. He said that Telecom's inefficiencies were caused by cross-subsidisation. In fact, he wants to sell off Telecom and close off all cross-subsidisation.

Mr Speaker, will the members opposite tell their friends down south and over in the west to get off our backs? We are one of the major beneficiaries of cross-subsidisation but there is a purpose behind that. It is because, over the years, federal governments have acknowledged the need to develop the north and the underdeveloped areas of Australia so that, in years to come, those areas can provide the impetus for further second and third stage development in the southern states. If the New Right gets its way and Telecom is privatised, and we end up paying the same amount per kilometre minute as is currently paid in the golden triangle down south, it will increase the cost of communications in the Territory to an extent where our whole development thrust will be severely blunted.

Mr Speaker, during adjournment debates, I will be addressing some of the inequities and the muddled thinking behind the taxation proposals conceived by the New Right and the Liberal Party but, today, I wish only to point out the basic inaccuracies, the inconsistencies, the impossibility of the basic political thinking of the New Right which wishes to re-establish the feudal system which was rejected by the world hundreds of years ago. Every time that it has surfaced, in places such as South America, it has been inherently unstable and has led to incredible damage to the economy and social disorder amongst citizens.

Mr FINCH (Leanyer): Mr Deputy Speaker, after 23 minutes, all I could possibly say in response to the member for Stuart is: no comment to no comment. I have never heard so much meaningless drivel dragged out for such a long time. His rather overbearing attempt at wit would rate an absolute zero in my book. I am reminded of the ring of an empty 44 gallon drum.

The member for Stuart made a big noise about promises broken by the Northern Territory government. I challenge him to deliberate over the next few days and come up with some substantiation for his claims. If we are to talk about broken promises, there are a number of examples in my contribution to the debate on the Address-in-Reply that I will draw his attention to.

In speaking in the Address-in-reply debate, I would like to take the opportunity to outline some of the directions proposed to be taken in the immediate future in relation to the portfolio of Transport and Works. But, first, I would like to place on record my appreciation for the opportunity to speak in the Address-in-Reply debate in my new capacity as Minister for Transport and Works.

Historically, transport has been one of the most important factors with which administrations throughout Australia have had to come to grips. After all, it is the principal prerequisite for settlement and development. Obviously, in an area as large and as sparsely populated as the Northern Territory, we have special transportation needs. Improved transport links are essential to this government's plans for sensible development of the Northern Territory and its many resources. As the Chief Minister has already mentioned, one of the most vital aspects in our drive towards greater future prosperity is the construction of a railway from Alice Springs to Darwin. The Territory is in a unique geographic location to take advantage of the economic growth of the South-east Asian region although, without that land bridge to the south that a railway would provide, our chances of playing an active and competitive role in South-east Asia will be severely hampered. I mention that particularly, not just for the Northern Territory's sake, but for the nation's sake as it seeks a way out of its current economic straits.

Railways the world over have been credited historically with opening up new frontiers and, although a railway would go a long way towards helping to unlock many areas of the Territory, the concept of a railway as a trailblazer could not be applied in a geographic sense. But make no mistake, Mr Deputy Speaker, the Alice Springs to Darwin railway will be an economic trailblazer that will open up new frontiers for a wide range of Territory enterprises. I believe one of the major commercial beneficiaries of the completion of the north south railway will be another area that comes under my responsibility. It does not take much imagination to realise that, with the opening of a railway, a new era of growth will dawn on the Port of Darwin.

As minister responsible for ports, I regard the prospect of such growth as extremely exciting, to say the least. Australia's ports have long suffered a

history of high labour costs, correspondingly high port charges and inefficiency. Sadly, in the past, the Port of Darwin has been no exception to the national rule, but positive moves are now being made at the port on the part of management and, I am pleased to say, on the part of the workers, to sweep away the old, stultifying practices of a bygone era. Their efforts have been greatly assisted by the infrastructure that has been put in place on the wharf by the Northern Territory government. The government is giving its total support to the efforts of the Port Efficiency Task Force, which is a body comprised of port users, employers and employees, to make the port a more competitive entity. However, nothing could help the Port of Darwin become more competitive than the increased level of national and international shipping that would result from the railway itself.

Those involved in the Port Efficiency Task Force are doing the groundwork and the railway will complete the picture. While it is clear that the railway will be a more economic way to carry many kinds of freight, naturally road transport will continue to be a critical element in Territory development. Yet, despite the best efforts of the government to improve our road system, as exemplified in our budgets, particularly since self-government, there is still a hell of a lot of work to be done in the most critical area of our roadwork network.

Anyone who has travelled around in the Territory can testify to the fact that the term 'off the beaten track' often takes on a whole new meaning in our neck of the woods. Road development, like so many other areas of Territory development, is being stifled by the seemingly uncaring attitude of Canberra, a city which, I might add as an aside, has one of the best road networks one could find anywhere throughout the world. The latest blow to Territory road development came recently with the findings of the Cameron Inquiry which has now been endorsed by the federal government through its Minister for Transport.

The result of the Cameron Inquiry's findings was to shift the bias in road funding away from places like the Territory towards the more populous states. The funding for roads in the Territory comes from 3 major sources: the Australian Land Transport Program, the Australian Bicentennial Road Program and the Territory government. The Australian Land Transport Program is a 5-year program which was put in place to provide general road funding, and it was based on a fuel levy to end in the year 1989-90. As a result of the Cameron Inquiry, some 10% of those moneys which were previously available under the ALTP have been reviewed by the federal government. The Territory received \$29m in ALTP funding in this current financial year and our share is now to be reduced while major cities of the south-east, with their well-developed road networks, will get more of the pie. In fact, New South Wales and Victoria will receive some 60% of the funds for urban roadworks. So much for the ALP philosophy of giving Australia's less developed regions an equal share. We heard from the member for Stuart about the the so-called dedication of the ALP federal government to development of the north. It is not reflected in the implementation of this reduced funding for development of the Northern Territory and other remote areas. I find much amusement in the concern of the member for Stuart about criticism of his federal buddies when, in fact, his own electorate and others like his will suffer in that the Northern Territory government will find it increasingly difficult to fund safe and accessible roads.

The other federal road program is the Bicentennial Road Development Program which was introduced in 1982-1983. It too has been cut back over the years. Principally, it was created to upgrade the national road network. We

have seen cutbacks and constraints in that area over the last few years. Under the program, the Territory received some \$10.8m for the current financial year. Only a very small percentage of that funding could be directed to what we would call outback roads. The Territory itself has contributed some \$25.6m in the current year for road construction and maintenance. Naturally enough, we are left carrying the bag and must pick up those projects in the more remote communities and settlements.

From the overall picture on funding, it is obvious that outback roads are of little concern to the federal government. I will be expanding later in this session on the inequities of the new federal funding policy so that honourable members will have a clear picture of just where priorities lie for the federal government.

While this all means that many areas of the Territory will continue to suffer as a consequence of poor transport links, there is another and more ominous spectre lurking over these outback roads. I refer to a subject that is very dear to my heart - road safety. On these outback roads, there is a very real prospect of death or injury resulting from poor road conditions. Despite the efforts of the Territory government, our roads continue to pose a potential danger to drivers, particularly visitors and those travelling long distances and especially so at night when drivers become tired. But it is not only bush roads that keep the Territory road toll unacceptably high. The road toll is increasing on all classes of roads. No matter how you look at it, Territory roads have produced an appalling legacy of death, disability, destruction and heartbreak.

This government cannot and will not stand by and watch this grisly tapestry expand with the passing of time. Consultation with a broad cross-section of the community and an ongoing review of road accident statistics has provided us with some of the answers needed to tackle the problem. I believe that, to be successful, the campaign against the carnage on Territory roads must address the issue on 3 broad fronts: vehicle safety, road safety and driver safety. I am not simply talking about the introduction of a series of harsh penalties; I am talking about a broad range of factors which need to be addressed in a balanced and sensible way.

There is a need for the establishment of higher standards in the 3 general areas I have mentioned. An acceptable standard for vehicles and roads can eventually be attained through technological advances, vigilance and funding. It is, however, the third area of driver safety that poses the greatest challenge. Improved driver education, beginning in schools, is the obvious first step towards bettering the driving standards and attitudes of Territory road users. But, given the vagaries of human nature, improved education will only go part of the way. There will be instances where only harsher and, I should emphasise, more predictable penalties will make our roads safer for the majority of users. The unfortunate truth is that sometimes it is necessary to legislate to save people from themselves, and seat belt regulations are a classic example of that fact. To preempt the criticism of those who may mistakenly believe that harsher penalties are an encroachment on civil liberties, let me make it quite clear that I believe the infliction of death and injury on other - and innocent - people is a far greater erosion of individual rights. This government will not shirk from its responsibility to protect road users.

There has been considerable talk lately, much of it fatuous, about the pros and cons of harsher traffic penalties. During this debate, which I consider to be necessary, there has been an unfortunate tendency to use the

adjective 'draconian' when speculating on possible new legislation. I realise the term is a handy throwaway for opposition members and journalists but it is hardly likely that this government, regardless of its desire to come to grips with the road problem, will ever be open to charges of introducing draconian legislation of any sort. We have only to examine some of the measures taken in other countries when it comes to drink-driving penalties to appreciate the true meaning of 'draconian'.

I read recently in a magazine that, in Malaysia, not only is the drunk driver sent to jail but so is his wife. Some people might think that that would be pleasurable and, in fact, some offenders might think that the wife should be doing time instead. Turkish people, who overimbibe and then drive, face the prospect of being taken some 30 km out of town and forced to walk back home. In El Salvador, the drunk driver faces the possibility of execution by a firing squad. Let me assure honourable members that we are not considering the El Salvador option, at least not at the moment.

There is one other major area of land transport that comes under my portfolio and which I would like to address: public transport. One of the major areas of contention concerning public transport recently has been the Darwin Bus Service. I am pleased to report that the differences which existed between management and the Transport Workers Union over the split shift system have now been resolved. Furthermore, the integration of the bus service is proving to be the success that it was always expected to be. We expect that, not only will the Territory gain economically from the integration of the service, but a better service will be provided to patrons. However, we will continue to monitor the performance of the integrated service to ensure that it is providing members of the public with the type of service that they require.

I have left addressing the final area of my responsibility until last. I refer to air transport and, more specifically, to air terminals. I do not want to dwell on the subject of terminals too long, because I am sure my feelings and those of the CLP government on this matter are well documented. For the benefit of the member for Stuart - voila! a classic example of broken promises by his colleagues in Canberra.

I want to make it quite clear that I intend fighting for new airport terminals for both centres - Alice Springs and Darwin - and for port-of-entry status for Alice Springs. I will continue that fight until the federal government sees reason and common sense. Recently, I made an unsuccessful attempt to view the plans for the new Darwin terminal which are currently in the hands of the federal Department of Aviation. I understand that those plans and even a model have been exhibited to potential users. Our request to view those drawings was rejected. The reason given was that we are not able to see them because, in the words of federal officers, 'they are not at a sufficiently advanced stage yet'. That is absolutely incredible, given that the federal Minister for Transport and the Labor Senator, Ted Robertson, announced in August last year that the Darwin terminal - mark II - was headed for the drawing boards. It seems to me barely excusable, to say the least, that some 8 months later, drawings are not yet in a state to be viewed. If that is the pace at which the federal government moves on its projects, it is no wonder that this country is in such an economic mess. In fact, it makes me wonder just how serious Canberra is about those plans. It would seem that nothing will eventuate from Canberra other than more money wasted on reviews, more money wasted on redesigns and, for the benefit of the member for Stuart, more money wasted on deals it has reneged on.

The Territory government is still considering private funding options for the Darwin terminal as well as for the Alice Springs terminal, should that prove feasible. We hope that such propositions might be attractive to the federal Treasurer and to those people who have influence in federal government, such as the Minister for Finance, and perhaps even to our good friend, the Minister for Transport in Canberra.

The Department of Transport and Works has played a significant role in the progressive development of the Northern Territory. It could be said that it has been in the front line of action and, since getting to know the personnel involved in the department better, I can see why it has been such a successful outfit. I am confident that the department will play an even more significant role in the Territory as we move towards the 21st century. Mr Speaker, I am pleased to have had the opportunity to speak in the debate on the Address-in-Reply and to confirm the Department of Transport and Works' positive attitude towards the ongoing development of the Northern Territory.

Mr BELL (MacDonnell): Thank you very much indeed, Mr Speaker, and proud I am to represent such a wonderful corner of this country. I use the term 'corner' lightly.

My chief feeling after the last election was a little bit like the way I felt the last time I played in a cricket match when I top scored and lost the game. I wish to place on record my appreciation to my constituents for their endorsement of my representation of their interests in this Assembly and elsewhere. It is quite humbling to have won with such a majority.

Some people have commented on the low turnout in the MacDonnell electorate during the last election. No doubt, honourable members will recall the comments made by the Chief Minister yesterday about the state of the rolls and so on. The fact is that the turnout in my electorate has rarely been higher than about 60%. In fact, 'turnout' is the wrong term. Only a low number of people get to the polls, for various reasons, and I would point out that the disproportionate use of mobile booths in the electorate of MacDonnell, which has been the subject of comment by me in this Assembly on numerous occasions, has contributed to the low numbers of people who get to the polls. The mobile polls should be used in places like the living areas at Kings Canyon, that I notice have already been the subject of comment from both the Chief Minister and the Minister for Lands and Housing during these sittings. They should be used also in some of the outstation communities around Hermannsburg and Papunya. I know the Chief Minister is well aware of the Apalurra Community, for example. I am sure that honourable members from central Australia particularly will be well aware of the recent venture in which Mr Herman Malbunka and his family, who live at Apalurra, are involved. I will not comment any further on that except to say that I wish them well with the proposal and I appreciate the Chief Minister's interest in that particular project. I believe his interest in that regard augurs well for the future of the Territory. I will return to that theme a little later in my comments today.

However, it is in communities such as that that mobile polls should be used. The Chief Minister knows exactly how far that community is from Hermannsburg and it is much closer than Nightcliff is to Darwin. Over the loudspeaker in my office, I think I heard the Attorney-General say yesterday what a wonderful innovation the mobile booths were. I do not disagree with him on that point. I believe that the mobile polling arrangements are excellent and should be used to pick up people in those smaller communities. Another example, that may not be so well-known to the Chief Minister, is the Mount Liebig community.

I will give another example which may very well prove to be grist for the mill of the Chief Minister's application to the Electoral Office. Some 540 people are on the roll at Papunya. These are very much ballpark figures, based on a partial review conducted with the very scant time and scarce resources available to me. Of those 540 people, about 170 actually got to the booth at Papunya on polling day between 8 am and 2 pm. I would say that between 2% and 3% of those people failed to appear because they existed as duplicates on the roll. Of those people, some 200 live at Mount Liebig which is some 60 miles to the west. In the past, I have recommended that a mobile polling booth should go to Mount Liebig but nobody has taken that suggestion up. I am not sure when I last made that suggestion. It may have been a suggestion I made to the Australian Electoral Commission at the last federal election when I was asked my opinion about where mobile polling booths should go. I said that booths should be at all those places that I have mentioned today.

I am not sure who is responsible for electoral matters ...?

Mr Dondas: The Chief Minister.

Mr BELL: The Chief Minister, thank you very much. I hope that the Chief Minister will take those comments on board. Let me assure him of my cooperation in carrying out whatever habitation reviews may be necessary. As he is probably aware, the Australian Electoral Commission, which is essentially responsible for the rolls, maintains a common roll with the Territory Electoral Office, unlike the situation in the states where separate rolls are maintained. Basically, I know who is living where and I carry out what I probably vaingloriously refer to as a habitation review. I only call it that because that is the term the Electoral Office uses and I cannot think of any other term for the rather less well-resourced exercise I carry out with a pencil and a rubber.

I appreciate the opportunity of representing my electorate in the terms I have referred to. I gave undertakings during the election campaign and I place it on record here that I will endeavour to represent the interests of all my constituents and that includes the majority of constituents who live in Aboriginal communities. There is now a sizeable population living at Yulara and in other tourist facilities around my electorate and, of course, there are many people working in the cattle industry and living on stations. I appreciate the opportunity to represent an electorate that is characterised by the big issues in the Territory. Mining, the pastoral industry and Aboriginal affairs are some of the liveliest issues in Australia today and I appreciate the opportunity to represent the interests of my constituents for whom those issues are important.

Recently, the member for Jingili attempted to imply that I was somehow a mouthpiece of the Central Land Council. Equally, there have been writers, notably in the Northern Territory News, who have maintained that my interest is solely in Aboriginal affairs. I make no bones about the fact that the interests of my Aboriginal constituents are pressing indeed, for the sorts of reasons that I have raised in debate here on many occasions and will continue to raise. However, anyone who suggests that they are my only interests has not listened too carefully to the variety of issues that I have raised in the past and will continue to raise in the course of my earnest representations on behalf of all my constituents.

Some of the other issues that arose during the election campaign are probably worthy of note in the Address-in-Reply debate. I think the question

In a very short and busy election campaign, the effort of having to get together the nominations, the photographs and deposits and put them in a bag to send up to Darwin is an unnecessary demand in a very tight schedule. After my experience of this problem in 1983, I contacted the Electoral Office prior to the calling of the election. I sought to ensure that we would be able to hand in nomination forms in Alice Springs because, logistically, it would have been far simpler and we would not have needed to worry about the mail between Alice Springs and Darwin. Initially, we had a favourable response but, when I sought confirmation in writing, it was not forthcoming. It may give some satisfaction to the Chief Minister that it was a distinct irritation to have to send our nominations all the way from Alice Springs to Darwin, particularly where a candidate has a vast area of the Territory to get around in the 8 or 10 days of campaigning that the Country Liberal Party allows.

There are various other issues surrounding the conduct of the campaign which deserve comment. The short time for canvassing the issues around my electorate was ludicrous. The refusal of the Northern Territory government to allow rolls to stay open after the issue of writs contributes to disenfranchisement, not only of Aboriginal constituents in my electorate but others as well. Many people at Yulara were disenfranchised for precisely that reason and the Chief Minister may very well change his tune in that regard. One of the other issues worth noting was the access to Pine Gap that I was able to achieve during the election campaign.

Mr Perron: They let you in?

Mr BELL: I thought somebody would pick it up. I had my tongue in my cheek for a while there, but let me reassure the member for Fannie Bay that I did not get in.

Mr Dale: I can relax.

Mr BELL: I am sure the honourable members who have spoken so fulsomely about defence issues will sleep much more easily in the knowledge that the member for MacDonnell was unable to make representations or canvass votes amongst the 30-odd constituents who live at Pine Gap. But I also want to make a serious comment on this. I think it is absolutely outrageous that it is not possible for any candidate ...

Mrs Padgham-Purich interjecting.

Mr BELL: To answer the member for Koolpinyah's interjection, I just point out that the people at Pine Gap are not being detained at Her Majesty's pleasure or, if they are, I have not been told so. I will place on record here that I intend making further representations to the Minister for Defence. I have no desire to see the security areas in Pine Gap. I am a humble member of a small parliament. Far be from me to imagine that the issues of global defence fall within our purview. But, 1% of my electorate lives at Pine Gap. I should be able to canvass votes, as should the candidates who choose to oppose me in an election. We should be able to obtain access on the basis of being able to knock on a door or make ourselves available in the facility at appropriate times. There is nothing anyone can say that will dissuade me on that fact.

Mr Speaker, to turn to some of the issues beyond my electorate which were raised in both the Chief Minister's speech and the Administrator's speech, I should say certain things. In moving the Address-in-Reply, the Chief Minister made much of his government's private enterprise approach to government. He

made the quite astounding claim that it is 'private enterprise which generates the basic wealth in our community'. The commonsense view is that economic development requires the cooperation of both the public and private sectors, as the Chief Minister well knows. He chooses to push out a few shibboleths like that when it suits him. Let's try to develop a little bit of bipartisanship on this particular issue. The fact is that wealth is created by both the private sector and the public sector ...

Mr Hatton: How does the public sector create wealth?

Mr BELL: I will tell him. I spent 8 or 10 years of my life as a schoolteacher. That is probably a serious bar in public life and probably the only people who suffer more calumny than schoolteachers are lawyers and politicians. In the popularity stakes, I took a few steps down. However, as a schoolteacher, I used to teach mathematics to kids between the ages of 13 and 18. As a teacher in the bush, I also taught kids to read and write. How well I did that is a different issue. I am not going to get into the vagaries of Aboriginal education which is a much more complex argument.

Let me just concentrate on my public-sector endeavours as a secondary mathematics teacher. There would scarcely be a department represented by ministers opposite that would be able to function if the productivity of people who had studied mathematics was not able to be harnessed by government and was not able to be harnessed by the private sector. I understand that the Minister for Transport and Works himself is an engineer and he will know the concerns of the Institute of Engineers about good education in mathematics. Let us have no doubts about the contribution to the production of wealth by a public sector activity like school teaching. We have, for example, a significant public sector investment in university education. It is a big issue in the Northern Territory. You are not going to tell me that that makes no contribution in terms of creating wealth. It might not be creating wealth in the sense of bars of gold or hindquarters of beef or the numbers on the cash register in hotels and wayside inns. However, in terms of creating a way of life, there can be no doubt that that sort of investment in service industries produces wealth. The Chief Minister might like to pick up on that. There are other examples and, if I had more time, I would be happy to discuss it at greater length.

This is where the Country Liberal Party government is bankrupt of ideas. It is we who understand the dynamic nature of the Territory community. It is we who understand the dynamic nature of the Australian community and the complex interrelationships within it, unlike this government's members with their rabid, blind adherence to the private sector. You can almost see them going down on their knees. I do not want to be misunderstood. As sure as the sun will come up tomorrow, there will be somebody on the government side who will say that Bell is getting stuck into the private sector. Let me make it quite clear that I am not.

The fact is that the opposition carries no particular brief for either the private sector or the public sector. We carry a brief for both. The Australian Labor Party has always taken those decisions on the basis of sharing the benefits of economic growth, justly and equally. This can hardly be said of the Country Liberal Party or any other conservative party in Australia.

Mrs Padgham-Purich: The person who makes the rule should keep it.

Mr BELL: I hear the honourable member for Koolpinyah. I was going to save her up for tonight. I will give it to her now. We had to put up with her whingeing and carping, not only in debate but also on Territory Extra this morning. It is terrific how the member for Koolpinyah says that positive discrimination in favour of women is valuable. But, if you are poor and black, you have to pull yourself up by your own bootstraps. I suggest to the member for Koolpinyah that she learns to do as she would be done by.

Since we are talking about political philosophy, what distinguishes us from the government in this regard? Let us consider that much-abused term 'socialist'. This term is used, quite undefined, to deride Labor Party governments and oppositions. As I said, we had one example of it on Tuesday from the member for Koolpinyah and legion are the occasions when the Chief Minister and other members of his frontbench have railed against the Hawke socialist government.

Mr Hatton: True!

Mr BELL: In passing, Mr Speaker, we should be thankful that he does not follow the example of the French journalist who commented recently on Aboriginal affairs in this country, and specifically in my electorate, and referred to the Hawke government as 'militant socialists'. I think that even the Chief Minister would be too shamefaced to refer to the Hawke militant socialist government. I see him nodding. Even he would be too shamefaced to say that, and that is a relief.

I am pleased to see we have the political reporter from the Northern Territory News up there because another offender in this regard is the Northern Territory News and its editorial writers. I trust that Mr Tamsen will take to heart exactly the semantic clarification I am making in this respect. The term 'socialist' should not just be banded around in an undefined way. If, at some stage, the Chief Minister wants to introduce a motion into this Assembly to better define the terms he uses, I suggest the term 'socialist' should be first cab off the rank. Let me assure him that I will be the first person to contribute to such a debate because right now he does not understand the word, and very few people do.

Mr Speaker, let me turn to the question of race relations. The government is to be congratulated, and I say that quite seriously and quite sincerely. The Chief Minister, particularly, is to be congratulated on his courageous statements, both during the election campaign and in his Address-in-Reply speech, about the relationship between the relative needs of black and white Territorians. I believe that 1 unremarked result of this election has been to take the issue of race relations off the agenda in debates between the major political parties in the Northern Territory. I appreciate the Chief Minister's contribution in that regard. I believe sincerely that he is to be congratulated, not only by every member of this Assembly but by every person living in the Northern Territory.

During the campaign, the Chief Minister deliberately eschewed any attack on Aboriginal land rights and, on Tuesday, the Administrator's speech echoed some of my own comments in this Assembly with the statement that 'in the Territory today, 2 radically different cultures are settling down side by side. One is go-ahead and the other more hesitant'. The Administrator's speech also referred to the fact that, in former years, there had been no real security of tenure for Aboriginal Territorians. He went on to say that land rights have meant that most Aboriginal Territorians have gained real security of ownership over land in the past decade. I point out that those words,

coming from a Northern Territory government, are new. They could not have come from a Territory government before this election. The Chief Minister is to be congratulated.

There are areas which the operation of the Land Rights Act have not affected and they have been mentioned before and will be mentioned again in debates on various issues that arise in this Assembly. Unfortunately, I do not have time in the Address-in-Reply debate today to comment on my shadow ministry responsibilities. I have responsibility for lands, housing, transport and works and legal affairs. I am sure that you will appreciate, Mr Speaker, as will other Territorians, the efforts that the opposition has made in the past to invigilate government legislation and to bring issues to the attention of the public. I have no hesitation in saying that I will continue to work hard in that respect to make sure that this parliament works effectively.

Mr REED (Katherine): Mr Speaker, I would like to preface my comments today by acknowledging the people of the electorate of Katherine and by placing on record my appreciation for the faith that they have displayed in me by electing me as their representative in this Assembly. I wish to affirm my commitment to provide them with effective representation in this Assembly.

The Katherine region has changed considerably in recent years and this change is reflected in the economic base of the electorate. 20 years ago, the economic base was dependent on the pastoral industry and, in Katherine itself, the public sector. Since then, it has diversified considerably. Whilst the pastoral industry remains a significant and important factor in the local economy, industries and private sector activities are becoming well established and are playing an increasingly difficult role. I would like to speak briefly on the development of some of these industries, commencing with those in the primary industry sector.

As indicated earlier, I believe that the pastoral industry has long been a significant factor in the economy of the Katherine area. Indeed, it is largely responsible for much of the early development, not only of the Katherine area, but of the Northern Territory as a whole, dating back to the days when stations were established following the epic droving journeys of the well-known pioneers such as Giles, Buchanan, Kidman, the Duracks and many others. For over a century, the industry has battled the adversities of cattle fever, flood, drought, isolation and the many other difficulties that go with pioneering any industry. In more recent times, improvements to roads, transportation systems and stock management practices have improved the lot of the pastoralists somewhat. However, life is still not easy. The industry is presently suffering from hardship whilst meeting the needs of the Brucellosis and Tuberculosis Eradication Campaign. However, I believe the long-term prospects of the industry should be enhanced by this expenditure by the industry and the government and that it will pay dividends. I am sure that the resourcefulness and determination of those in the pastoral industry will ensure its survival and continuance as a significant factor in the economy of the Territory.

I turn now to horticulture, an industry which owes its existence in Katherine to a few producers who have pioneered horticultural practices in the region. Over a period of years, a small number of producers have battled the elements and established a fledgling industry. In recent times, other growers have brought their experience and expertise to Katherine and, through personal endeavour and sacrifice, have established themselves as reputable growers of high-quality produce. The horticultural industry displays enormous potential.

High-quality Katherine produce, including cucumber, capsicum, rock melon, pumpkin, mango, tomato and other vegetables, is sought after on the local and interstate markets. Producers in Katherine have the ability to supply southern markets at a time when produce from the other areas is not available. The potential for sale of our horticultural products in countries to our north offers considerable possibilities for expansion in the industry. I believe that, over the next 5 to 10 years, our fledgling horticultural industry will become a major industry within the Northern Territory and will provide considerable impetus to our economy and employment opportunities. The agricultural industry also continues to expand, with some growers investigating the feasibility of installing pivotal irrigation systems to enable year-round production of stockfeeds to meet supply demands for the local market and to safeguard crops against the dry spells sometimes experienced during the main growth period in the wet season.

I move now to tourism. When I first became a member of the Katherine Regional Tourist Promotion Association 14 years ago, that association comprised a small number of people from the industry together with interested business people and members of the community. I have watched this industry grow in Katherine over the past 14 years. During this time, the number of tourists coming to the area has increased threefold or fourfold. This growth is continuing with the tourist facilities and services presently under construction in Katherine and Mataranka and major new hotel and tourism developments for the area in an advanced stage of planning. In his speech on the Address-in-Reply, the Chief Minister referred to the fact that tourist numbers will top 700 000 this year and that these tourists will spend in the order of \$350m while they are here. This quite clearly indicates the industry's potential. Although we have developed considerably in this area over the years, there is still a long way to go and much potential to be realised.

Katherine is now being recognised by prospective developers as a strategically located area to service the tourist industry on a regional basis. It is situated within reasonable distance of the Victoria River and, further to the west, the East Kimberleys region. To the east is the Roper River and the Gulf country and Kakadu is to the north. I believe the opportunities for the tourist industry in Katherine are yet to be fully realised and that there is great potential for development to service these beautiful spots.

I now move on to a major development in the Katherine area, one of which we are all aware. This is the Tindal RAAF Base. One really has to visit the base nowadays to appreciate fully the extent of this development and the impact that it will have on Katherine. Construction has now reached the stage where the extent of the development can be readily appreciated. By July this year, 25 RAAF personnel will be stationed at the base and those numbers will increase to something in the order of 100 by December of this year. On 1 January 1988, the base will become effectively operational in a technical sense. By the end of 1988, some 1300 RAAF personnel and their families will be domiciled in Katherine and the base will be fully operational. The Territory government is mindful of the impact the development of the base will have on Katherine and has been active in this area, but I will speak more on that matter at a later date.

Mr Speaker, the development of the RAAF base at Tindal has provided impetus for other developments within the electorate. It would be fair to say that, in recent years, the small industry and engineering businesses in Katherine have increased substantially in both size and number to service the

increasing township and development. The retail sector has been expanding also with major developments being undertaken by both local and Territory-based businesses and the construction of facilities for the accommodation of major retail outlets.

Engineering, light industry and the service industries have expanded to meet the increasing business opportunities and to service the needs of the base and the increasing population. It is these developments and the expansion of the private sector and industries, such as those I have referred to, which I believe have resulted in the broadening of the economic base of the Katherine electorate. Also, there has been enormous development in the area of public utilities and services. We have been fortunate in Katherine in that, in recent years, CLP governments have recognised the need for increased levels of services to meet the demands in the rapidly expanding community and I am pleased to say that, as a consequence, we have seen construction of many new Northern Territory government facilities and services. Indeed, I think it would be appropriate to record them here and I will list some of them briefly.

Earlier this year, we saw the opening of the new Katherine East Primary School and Child-care Centre. A 32-bed hospital ward is nearing completion. The construction of a new Katherine High School has just commenced to service the increasing school-aged population. A new Katherine power station is under construction. It will be a gas-fired power station and will replace the existing diesel-powered station on the Victoria Highway. Extensions to the water supply and storage reticulation and to the sewerage system have been undertaken. These and other programs have seen a government investment in Katherine to the tune of something in the order of \$100m. In anyone's terms, that could be considered to be substantial.

With development comes social change. The community is mindful of that change and is responding to it. I am sure that the community will ensure that new residents in the town, particularly members of the RAAF, will be welcomed, although they are mindful too of the fact that RAAF personnel are somewhat accustomed to transfer between centres, so they will be welcomed but not overwhelmed. We are aware also of the need to cater for change which will be experienced by our longer-term residents, and I believe that applies to all members of the community. In particular, we must ensure that we do not overlook our traditional ties and responsibilities to those people in the pastoral districts and outlying communities. Katherine has long been a regional centre, and I consider it is most important that that part of our lifestyle, and our services to the outlying communities, are not lost in the excitement of the development that we are experiencing.

Mr Speaker, in many cases the expansion that we are experiencing in the private sector, which I have outlined, and in the areas and sectors of industry and development, still require some assistance of various forms from government. However, I believe that the most important needs are being attended to. From the government's point of view, it is important that the private sector has maintained its confidence and opportunities to expand. In many cases, the assistance that is required is already being provided. However, perhaps in some areas, this needs to be reinforced.

For example, assistance is provided to the Northern Territory tourist industry and Katherine is no exception. In recent times, we have seen appointed to Katherine a member of the NT Tourist Bureau who will provide a very worthwhile service in the town. Of course, we are all mindful of the high regard in which the industry holds the services provided by the Northern Territory Tourist Commission. Indeed, I think it would be fair to advise

that, at a launch of a Katherine-based tourist company in Darwin earlier this week, it was pleasing to hear a principal of that company pay a great compliment to the Northern Territory Tourist Commission. I cannot recall his exact words, but he indicated that, when he goes to other places in Australia to promote his company, he is frequently met with comments like, 'You don't have anything to worry about because you have the Northern Territory Tourist Commission representing you, and you cannot get any better than that'. That is a great record for the commission to have and it can be justifiably proud that people in the tourist industry promote the NT Tourist Commission in such a way.

Mr Speaker, other areas will require assistance from the government also. I speak of technical rather than monetary assistance. For example, in the horticultural industry there is an increasing need for assistance to growers, particularly with marketing and pest control. This year, we have seen some southern markets closed off to some local producers because of a fruit-fly pest in the Northern Territory and resultant concern by authorities elsewhere in Australia that this pest could be introduced to their states. As a result, they have closed off markets for some produce. I hope that this is a short-term problem, and I know that the officers of the Department of Industries and Development are working on these and other matters and that the horticultural industry is receiving much assistance in this area.

Mr Speaker, at the risk of it being said that I will not rest until every development undertaken in the Northern Territory is placed in Katherine, I would ask honourable members to consider the relocation of the 2nd Cavalry Regiment when it is transferred to the Territory in 1992 or thereabouts. I support honourable members who this week have suggested strengthening our northern defences. The question of defence is a very important one. The RAAF Base at Tindal is a commendable development which will strengthen our northern defence. However, there is one aspect of the development which I question, and that is the ground defence of the base. The base covers an area of something in the order of 120 km². That includes the base proper and the radar installation nearby. The operational areas of the base itself are protected by a security fence patrolled by guards with trained guard dogs.

I would suggest that a base which has cost so much to put in place and which will play such an important part in our northern security requires considerable ground defence forces to ensure that it is not breached or damaged in any way, particularly in a time of emergency. The base will be providing defence services to the north for many years to come and, with such sophisticated equipment and the consequent expense to the Australian taxpayer, I believe that it would be timely to consider the placement of a reasonably-sized army unit in Katherine to safeguard the base. I believe that stationing all ground defence forces in Darwin would perhaps jeopardise the Tindal RAAF Base ground defences in that the intervening 300 km would provide something of an obstacle if, as so often can happen these days, there were a terrorist-type attack by a small group of commandos who could place sophisticated modern weapons with some accuracy from some distance from the base and cause considerable damage.

Mr Speaker, in closing I would like to support some comments made by the Chief Minister in his speech to the Address-in-Reply. I refer particularly to the government's intention to depend upon private enterprise to power the economy. As the Chief Minister said: 'It is investment, industrial expansion and resource development which create jobs and security and which generate prosperity'. I believe that the key to the future of the Northern Territory is the provision of an expanding economy and, with that, employment

opportunities for our children and the children of our friends. Mr Speaker, I would like to comment also on the Chief Minister's remarks in relation to employment opportunities in the tourist industry. The industry is already employing something in the order of 5000 people. I know that, in Katherine, the employment opportunities in that industry are expanding every year. As I mentioned before, we have in the pipeline many developments that are in the planning stage. This can only lead to increased employment and business opportunities for the local populace and the Northern Territory as a whole. Finally, I support the initiatives outlined in His Honour's address and commend it to honourable members.

Mr McCARTHY (Victoria River): Mr Speaker, there can be no doubt that the great majority of Territorians have endorsed the direction taken by the CLP government over the last few years. The result of the recent Territory elections on the promise of strong, stable and independent government is a clear indication of this. Very real constraints have been placed upon us by the blinkered policies of the Hawke government. The member for MacDonnell will probably jump up now and say that I am attacking the federal government, but there can be no alternative except to curb spending in the less productive areas of government and encourage private enterprise in the Territory to take up the cudgels and create an atmosphere of growth. Unfortunately, federal government policies are holding back Territory development which would enable this government and Territory people to manage our own affairs and significantly lessen our reliance on the whims of Canberra. These whims have ensured our dependence on Australian taxpayers, among whom are Territorians - a fact that some people appear to overlook. The direction proposed by the Hatton CLP government - to depend more on private enterprise to power our economy - is a step to the right. We must never lose sight of the fact that government was established to service the people, not vice versa. Private enterprise is people, people with the foresight and courage to stick their necks out, risk their money, employ other people, and build and develop industry and commerce. Governments are not as effective as private enterprise in these areas, except perhaps in the area of employing people.

The member for MacDonnell mentioned Australia Post. If Australia Post cannot make money when it is the only concern in the game, I would be very surprised. The policy of the federal Labor government in taxing private business into extinction to fund to ridiculous levels a gaggle of money-gobbling, socialist-oriented studies, and to create disincentives for private enterprise to get on with the job of creating wealth for all, is a recipe for disaster. This country is living beyond its means and, when we seek a way out of the financial morass, we are dealt blow after blow by the anti-enterprise policies and broken promises of the Hawke government.

The Territory government's policies, as laid down in the Chief Minister's speech to the Address-in-Reply and expanded on by the ministers in respect of their own areas of responsibility, are a welcome contrast. The move to create a sense of community involvement in the delivery of community care is an example. Where it can be demonstrated that private enterprise or non-government groups are able to equal or better the quality or cost of services, they are to have the opportunity to do so with some assistance, where necessary, from government. Of course, there will be times when that is necessary. I am convinced that private or community agencies, carefully selected for performance and integrity, are best equipped to handle many tasks currently undertaken by government at great cost.

This begins with the family unit which once took responsibility for many of the areas presently funded by government. One outstanding area where

government has usurped the responsibility of the family is in the funding by the federal government of single supporting parents. This has increased to 30 times what was envisaged when the benefit first became available. Previously, the family took financial responsibility in the vast majority of cases. It is clearly a family responsibility and should only be supported by government in cases of clearly identified need. It is very pleasing to hear that the government is to maintain its direction in moving back to supporting self-help in the delivery of services.

Every effort is made to stimulate new investment and employment. While this is encouraging, I would like to point out that it is not essential that areas of potentially greater productivity should receive the greatest extent of financial support from government. In some cases, they can be almost self-sustaining during development. For instance, in primary production, the cropping industry has received substantial financial support from government over the past few years. While not a large industry and perhaps one that will not go far beyond supplying the Territory's internal needs, the spin-offs from the cropping industry to secondary and tertiary industries should not be overlooked. The cropping industry has expanded into the milling and stockfeed industry, the chicken industry, lot-feeding of buffalo and cattle in the secondary sector, and to the machinery and fertilizer industries in the tertiary area. These spin-offs into tertiary industry are unlikely to be matched by the potentially much larger horticultural industry which has been developed largely through investment of producers' own funds.

I am looking forward to hearing from the Minister for Industries and Development in this debate because there are some concerns within the primary industry sector as to how primary industry fits within the scheme of the new department. While it is probably a logical move to group industry and development portfolios together, the fear exists that the primary production areas may be overshadowed by the high fliers of Territory development.

Directions for the next decade and beyond in the animal industry area must address the potential of the buffalo industry in the Territory. I am convinced that the buffalo resource, being unique in Australia, has tremendous potential not only as a food source but for tourism. Currently, we are seeing vast numbers of buffalo being destroyed around the Territory, not because of disease or damage they may be doing but, in many cases, because there are people who have no desire to see the buffalo continue as a resource in the Territory. We certainly need to watch carefully the national park areas under the control of the ANPWS because it became very clear to me recently that it is endeavouring to wipe out buffalo without giving an opportunity for people who require those beasts either for the meatworks - if that is all they are fit for - or for breeding, to get at them before they are shot. Hopefully, the Pastoral Industry Study will provide answers and impetus for the growth of the cattle industry in the Territory through and beyond the next decade.

Mining in the Territory is booming. The new goldmines which are getting under way in the Adelaide River, Hayes Creek and Pine Creek areas, coupled with other mines already in production, are providing optimism for productivity and earnings in the mining sector of the Territory. Unfortunately, mining is again being strangled by the land and mining policies of the federal government.

In my view, grouping of the tourism and conservation areas together is a logical move. Tourism has the ability to become the largest earner for the Territory economy. However, without the great beauty of Territory parks and the overall Territory environment, there would be little future for tourism

here apart from perhaps the odd casino. Tourism should not be allowed to overshadow the natural integrity of our park areas and careful consideration will need to be given to the natural desire of developers to construct facilities on freehold land within parks. I do not have any problem with the principle of constructing such facilities because we do want to attract people into the areas of greatest beauty. However, we also have to be aware of the fact that people on freehold land can be difficult to control, and there are some fragile areas and fairly sensitive wildlife in several of our parks.

I was pleased to hear the Minister for Conservation pay tribute to the Northern Territory Conservation Commission. There is no doubt at all in my mind that the commission is a top-notch organisation. The dedication and integrity of the officers in the commission is exceptional and they have the scores on the board to prove it, not the least of which was a recent winning of the world, basically, into accepting the Territory's plan of management for crocodiles.

Litchfield Park near Batchelor is to be developed and I am very much aware of the planned development of that park because I played a part in ensuring that that would come about. The loop road from Berry Springs to Wangi and on through the park and Batchelor was born of my effort to have this road built. My efforts in this regard were successful and the building of the road commenced during last dry season and is due for completion during this dry season. I well remember that, when I first mooted this road, it met with very strong opposition from within the then NTDC. Persistence paid off, however, and the road will be completed and will provide the shortest and cheapest solution to access to the park and provide Batchelor with a sound and permanent reason for being.

It may not be obvious to some members, but the route through Batchelor to the first point of interest within the park, Florence Falls, is 50 km closer to Darwin by road than the route from Darwin via Berry Springs and Wangi. In addition, there are only about 40 km of unsealed road on the Batchelor route and 110 km via Wangi. Hopefully, we will see plenty of traffic pass through Batchelor. I will be very interested to keep in touch with developments within the park which were initiated during my term as Minister for Conservation and very successfully carried on by and, no doubt, developed considerably more under the guidance of the present minister. However, I am keen to ensure that private developments currently operating, under construction or even envisaged in the area are given every opportunity to proceed without direct financial support from government.

I was pleased also to hear the comments of the Minister for Conservation regarding Berry Springs Zoo. It is a remarkable development which will become a must for every tourist and every Territorian to visit. The efforts of the staff at Berry Springs is commendable. As a result of their efforts, this excellent facility will be built at a fraction of the cost that it might have taken to build.

Gregory National Park facilities must also be developed in the near future. The Gregory National Park is placed right at our western gateway to the Territory. Timber Creek is obviously the logical place for development there. I understand from the minister that that is still to go ahead but, because of some financial constraint, a little later than was originally anticipated.

Crocodiles have been very much in the news. I am delighted to hear that the minister intends to ensure that crocodiles continue to be protected while

a greater effort is to be made to educate the public in the dangers they should be aware of when entering crocodile country.

Mr Deputy Speaker, there is quite a large amount of land in rural areas and in small towns that is unused. Much of it is land that was sold fairly recently but there is other land that may have been granted back in the time of Queen Victoria and which has not been used since. In fact, there is land in the centre of Pine Creek that has not had any movement on the title in the last 80 years. The owners cannot be found. I believe there are other such pieces of land around the Territory in areas that need development. In this case, there is a potential developer for that block of land who has searched the world for the owner and has been unsuccessful. He would very much like to get hold of the piece of land to develop a much-needed tourist project. I hope that we can do something to make it possible for people to get hold of land that is currently unused and which is unlikely to be used. I suspect that, in this case, the person who owned it is no longer living and his descendants are unaware that they own a piece of land.

In relation to excisions of Aboriginal living areas from pastoral properties, the government will maintain its efforts and that is highly commendable. The policy is working, much to the chagrin of the federal government which would have liked to have seen the Aboriginal excisions policy of this government fall on its face. In fact, that has not happened and Aboriginal people are now living on land that they have gained under that scheme.

Mr Deputy Speaker, an area of some concern to me is the delivery of education and health services to rural and remote areas. I believe that both of those functions are in need of some thought and perhaps new direction. The very nature of these services is such that the direction must come from government. One wonders at times whether the present education system is relevant for Aboriginals in remote communities. It assumes that Aborigines in communities will compete in similar areas with people in urban communities. In my view, this is unlikely and only a few Aboriginal people will require the effort that is currently provided in education for some time to come. I do not mean by this that we should withdraw effort, but we should be determining the real needs of Aboriginal people and providing them with the education that they seek.

The level of attendance in many schools is an indication to me that the present system is not as relevant as it might be. Aboriginal parents are not without concern for the future of their children and, if they believed that the present educational system was totally relevant, they would ensure that their children attended more regularly. I know that, in some communities, the attendance is good but, in others, it is appalling and the problem requires scrutiny and remedial action.

Last night, I attended a very important meeting in Batchelor to consider the future of secondary education in the area. There are approximately 50 students of secondary school age in the Batchelor feeder area but, because of the level of facilities and courses on offer in the secondary section, only about 25% of these attend the local school. The others are sent as boarders either to Darwin or interstate schools. A change can only come about with improved local facilities.

The roads in my electorate most in need of improvement include the Victoria Highway which is to receive some upgrading at this stage. I understood originally that that was not to happen until 1991 but there is some

widening of that road now. It is an extremely dangerous road given that it is used heavily by tourists, towing large caravans, who are unaware of the requirements of large road trains in that it is very difficult for them to get off the bitumen. That needs some attention. I know that the road will be funded under the federal system for main highways and it was not due for major work until 1990-91. The Cox Peninsula Road, a subject which I have raised here many times, is receiving some work this year through Bulldog Pass, a dangerous area that has taken some lives over the years. It needs some work done to it and it will be much improved by the work undertaken this year.

A project that has been put back year after year over many years is the Daly River Road which is used extensively by tourist traffic and still has a couple of unsealed sections which become very dangerous. It is scheduled for further sealing this year but that has been put back time and time again. I trust that every effort will be made to continue the sealing of that road this year.

Mr Deputy Speaker, I do not have much more to say. I believe that we have the policies for continued growth and development in the Northern Territory. I know that Territorians believe that and that has been reflected in this Assembly today. I strongly support the Chief Minister's motion on the Address-in-Reply to His Honour the Administrator and I commend it to honourable members.

Mr SETTER (Jingili): Mr Deputy Speaker, it is my pleasure to contribute to the debate on the Address-in-Reply to His Honour the Administrator's speech and to confirm my loyalty to Her Majesty the Queen. His Honour's speech established the direction for this government during its 4-year term when he defined its objective as being to advance the Territory economically, socially and constitutionally. We have come a long way in the 9 short years since self-government. The progress made has been quite astounding. When one reflects back to those early years and recalls the enormous task faced by Hon Paul Everingham and his Cabinet colleagues of the day, one can but wonder at what has been achieved. One has only to visit the major centres of population to see the astonishing growth that has occurred: bricks and mortar, new hotels, motels and business premises and, in the rural areas, developments in agriculture, horticulture, mining and our fishing industry.

What all this means in real terms is jobs, jobs and more jobs. For some time now, the Northern Territory has had an unemployment rate lower than any of the states. All this has occurred in spite of the federal Labor government's merciless slashing of our funding. It has broken almost every promise it ever made to the Territory and has done its best to thwart the progressive policies of successive CLP, free-enterprise governments. I do not doubt that, before it finishes its term, it will break the remainder of its promises. It is a sad reality that because of the socialist economic policies imposed on this country by the Hawke-Keating government, the buoyant times have gone. I heard the member for MacDonnell clarifying the term 'socialist' earlier on. We all now have to tighten our belts for the undoubted tough times ahead. We have no option. We are caught up in their mess.

Our own progress was evidenced by the Chief Minister's recent announcement of new administrative arrangements for the public service. These included a rationalisation of government departments and ministerial portfolios and responsibilities in order, where possible, to remove duplication of functions and overlapping of services. We can no longer afford to over-service. We must trim our ship and offload any unnecessary ballast so that we will sail as smoothly as possible through the rough waters that lie ahead.

His Honour indicated in his address that it was the government's intention to revitalise the Territory's economic momentum and that an agenda had been drawn up with emphasis on stimulating the private sector economy and providing for further and continuing diversification of our industries. This typifies the path we must undoubtedly follow in developing a successful, self-reliant economy in the Northern Territory. No longer can we rely on an economy narrowly based on the pastoral industry supported by some mining. Today, if this government is allowed to follow its policies without interference from Canberra - and there is certainly some doubt about that - we are on the brink of establishing a widely-based economy which will result from the efforts of hard-working and far-sighted people in the public and private sectors alike. These are people who have a vision of the future of this great Territory and who have been prepared to take risks and to have a go. That is what it is all about up this way: having a go.

It has always been the policy of this government to be outward-looking and entrepreneurial. That policy has paid off handsomely. It is not so with the opposition. It contributes nothing but knock, knock, knock. Its members are still knocking. I am sure some of those knocks come from their knees. They would be the most negative, inward-looking, tunnel-visioned group of people in this country. For the continued welfare of this Territory, it is very important indeed that they stay exactly where they are: on the opposition benches. I am quite sure that it will be a long, long time before they cross to this side of this Chamber if, indeed, that ever happens.

The path that this government is taking will lead to the development of new industries and will stimulate and further develop those already existing. Let us look at just a few of the achievements and opportunities that exist. These include developments in tourism and our national parks, mining, natural gas, secondary industry through the Trade Development Zone, agriculture and horticulture through the Douglas-Daly projects and other farming areas such as the Darwin, Katherine and Alice Springs rural areas. The fishing industry will continue to receive development emphasis, as will the pastoral industry.

The construction of the railway from Alice Springs to Darwin continues to be a government priority. In the future, this will be the key in developing the Port of Darwin as the major link between Australia and our northern neighbours. It will also enable us to capitalise fully on the good work being done by Nortrade. For several years past, it has been laying the groundwork for the eventual development of considerable trade with our northern neighbours. I compliment Nortrade on the excellent results achieved to date with the states of east Malaysia, but as yet I believe only the surface has been scratched.

Apart from the nations of Singapore, Malaysia, Hong Kong, China and the Philippines there lies an enormous potential market within Indonesia. Indonesia is a stable, anti-socialist, friendly democracy lying immediately to our north. It has a population of over 160 million people which represents an enormous market to those who might be dedicated enough to learn to access it. It can be done. Others have done it including countries like Japan, the USA, Holland, the UK, Singapore and a number of others. They have already accessed that enormous market and are taking full advantage of it. We have not been able to find the key. I would hope that Indonesia lies high on the priorities of Nortrade for the years ahead. I really mean that because it is so important.

I was also pleased to hear of further tourist developments referred to by the Minister for Tourism in his speech yesterday. He drew attention to

approximately 60 new projects which are currently on the drawing board or are under construction throughout the Northern Territory. These include new hotels and motels in Darwin, Alice Springs, Katherine and Kakadu and other tourist-related developments being considered for Litchfield Park - which is very dear to the member for Victoria River's heart - Batchelor, Wangi Falls, and Florence Falls as well as a wilderness lodge on Cobourg Peninsula. There are many others. In fact, in recent times, several people have approached me asking for guidance on the path that they should follow in contacting government departments to discuss their own entrepreneurial ideas for tourist projects out there in the great wilderness.

There are several important factors, apart from bricks and mortar, which are most important to the successful development of the industry. On previous occasions, I have drawn attention to the need for the provision of training facilities for Territory people who wish to seek employment in the tourism and hospitality industry. The new projects I have mentioned, and others in the pipeline, are creating new jobs at the rate of approximately 1000 per year. That is what development is all about: new jobs. I am pleased to report that, during the past 2 years, 2 major training initiatives have been undertaken to fill this need. I refer in particular to the many hundreds of jobs created in the industry recently. The Darwin Institute of Technology has established a range of short-term courses to provide young people, in particular, with skills which enable them to obtain employment within the industry - skills such as table or drink service, reception work and basic management. This has addressed the area of greatest need in an employment area which has been filled traditionally by transient people.

I can recall visiting Yulara on a couple of occasions and speaking to staff during my visits. I found that every person whom I spoke to came from somewhere interstate and all were on what was almost a pilgrimage. I do not blame them for that. Young people like to work at a job for a while and then move on somewhere else. That is fine - indeed, it is part of the tourist industry. I am quite sure that, if one visited the Sheraton, the Beaufort or any of the other hotels, one would find that a fair percentage of the staff are transient people who move into a town for several months and then move on. Tourist facilities provide an enormous opportunity for our young Territorians to gain employment within the industry. As a government, we have a responsibility to ensure that training facilities are provided for them. I recall speaking on another occasion in this Assembly about that. I am very pleased to see that we now have those facilities in place. The hotels will provide considerable employment opportunities for our youth, particularly given that tourism is our second largest industry and our largest growth industry.

For those who wish to pursue higher skills, the opportunity is provided at Gillen House which was established 6 or 8 years ago in Alice Springs. It has trained many young people in the Northern Territory. It tends to specialise in apprenticeships and also trains chefs and butchers and provides certificate courses in hotel management. I have visited Gillen House and it is a fine facility indeed. There is one problem with Gillen House and it does not relate to the courses it offers. I refer to its geographical location. I do not mean to criticise Alice Springs but it is a fact that, if the training facilities are in Darwin, the young people in Alice Springs or down the track have to come to Darwin to partake of that training and vice versa. I hope and trust that, one of these days, we will see our way clear to have a similar facility in Darwin. There is such enormous growth in this particular industry that I do not doubt for a moment that, in time, it will be necessary to provide extra training facilities.

A week ago, I had the privilege of attending the presentation of certificates to a group of young people who had just completed 12 months of training at the Beaufort Hotel. This program was initiated by the federal government in cooperation of the Northern Territory government, employers and unions. I was delighted to see this course reach a successful conclusion. I think it trained about 8 young people who are now employed at the Beaufort Hotel. Indeed, the Beaufort Hotel made the kind offer to send 2 of those young people to Switzerland for further training within the Beaufort chain. That is indeed a wonderful offer. I feel very heartened that, if they stay with the Beaufort Hotel in Darwin, 2 of those young people will have that opportunity.

About 10 months ago, I was approached by a young person who had just become involved in that training course. On that occasion, that student expressed to me extreme concern at the approach taken by a union official during a lecture which that person had sat through at the DIT. As part of the course content, the students were to be lectured by union officials on industrial relations. That is fine. I think it is absolutely essential and imperative because all employees and employers at various stages of their careers become involved in some way with industrial relations. It is a very important part of the course content. What concerned this student and what concerned me was that the union official who conducted the lecture took the opportunity to put pressure on these young people to join the union he represented. Indeed, he took the liberty of threatening the dismissal of those young people if they did not join the union. He made the statement that, if they did not join when they finished the course, they would never gain employment in the industry in Darwin. That is exactly what was said.

I was extremely concerned and indeed angry. In fact, I wanted to shout my point of view from the rooftops. This was a training course and the people involved were about 16 years old and they had just come straight out of school to the DIT. All of a sudden, they were being told that, if they did not join a specific union, they were finished. These young people, not understanding industrial relations, not understanding unionism or what their rights were, took fright and joined the union. I think it is a deplorable tactic for the union to use.

I immediately took the matter up with the responsible authorities but I was counselled at the time not to go public on the matter because negotiations were taking place behind closed doors and any public comment that I would make could only jeopardise those negotiations and perhaps even the course itself. I certainly did not want to do that. I took that counsel and I decided to say nothing and see how the scenario played out. I am pleased that a successful conclusion was negotiated and the course proceeded.

I understand from media reports that, in recent times, a similar course has been organised in Alice Springs and a similar situation has arisen there. There is some conflict between the union involved and the other parties to the proposed agreement. I do not know whether an agreement has been negotiated or whether it has been sorted out. I certainly hope that it has been sorted out. I believe that young people undertaking a training course should not be obliged to join a union. In fact, I do not believe that unionism should be compulsory. I think it is the right and choice of every employee whether or not to join a union. Certainly, it was not the original intention of the course that the unions adopt this approach. I certainly hope that this will not be allowed to continue.

The other factor that has influenced the development of tourism in the Northern Territory considerably has been the hard work done by the sales outlets for the Tourist Commission. Mr Speaker, over the last several years, the Tourist Commission has developed enormously, and I do not need to tell you that because you were directly involved in the opening of Tourist Commission offices interstate in the various capital cities and overseas in various key areas. I hope that that program will be continued and developed. I see a wonderful opportunity to develop new offices of the Tourist Commission in the United States and in Canada because that is really the major growth market. We have seen an enormous growth in international tourism in the Northern Territory in the last 12 months and I am quite sure that that will continue.

The development of sales initiative is absolutely critical to the development of tourism within the Northern Territory. The tourist operators who sell packages in the south and overseas need to be sold those packages up to 2 years ahead, because those wholesalers sell to retailers who, in turn, sell to the public. All of those programs have to be printed in brochures and distributed. People go to the retail tourist outlets to discuss the various tourism alternatives for their holidays and eventually make their bookings. It takes a long time from when we first initiate a program until people fill beds in our hotels in the Northern Territory and take tours to Kakadu or Uluru or wherever. It is very important that we continue to develop these tourism sale outlets because sales play a critical role.

On many occasions, members on the opposition benches have moaned and groaned about contingent liabilities. Those so-called contingent liabilities are, in fact, investments in the future because we have to take the punt, we have to be prepared to put our money into bricks and mortar and establish those facilities so that, when the wholesalers sell their packages and the people buy the tickets from the retailers, it is all in place. We cannot put the cart before the horse. I am quite sure that history will show that the developments that we have in the Northern Territory - Yulara, the casinos, the Sheratons, the Beaufort - will be extremely profitable and will have an extremely high occupancy rate. The people who had the vision to put those hotels and motels in place will be applauded for their actions.

Mr Speaker, there is one other thing that I would like to raise this afternoon and it is quite critical. I refer to airline access into the Northern Territory. At the moment, we have this ramshackle airport terminal and I will not dwell on that because enough has been said in this Assembly about that terminal. In spite of that, there have been people, including the Minister for Tourism, who have been negotiating with overseas airlines in an attempt to bring new airline services and packaged tours into the Northern Territory. One of the great stumbling blocks has been the Department of Aviation because that department provides the landing rights. For better or for worse, I understand there are some reciprocal agreements between Qantas and other overseas airlines. I further understand that, quite recently, one airline applied for landing rights here - I believe it was Singapore Airlines ...

Mr Dondas: And Thai and KLM.

Mr SETTER: Thank you. They have applied for landing rights but have been refused. It is not much good our putting in place these packages, establishing our overseas offices and doing all of the right things if, when we apply to have extra airlines flying here, we are stymied either by the Department of Aviation or by Qantas. That is just not acceptable because it is absolutely crucial to the development of the Northern Territory. We all

know the cost of internal air fares. It is fine for Qantas to fly its aircraft into Sydney, Melbourne, Brisbane and so on, but we know that not many of those tourists will pay the extra \$600 or \$800 or whatever to fly to the Northern Territory. If they were going in the other direction, we would pick up an enormous number of those tourists coming in from Europe. At present, they are overflying us, from the United States travelling via Tokyo, Hong Kong and those points, or from Los Angeles, Hawaii, into Cairns in north Queensland.

I believe that there is a wonderful opportunity for us to liaise with the airline concerned, which is Qantas in this case, and arrange packages so that those people could fly into Cairns in north Queensland, where they could spend 3 or 4 days in that tropical paradise, before taking the next Qantas flight to the Northern Territory. They could participate in what we have to offer, the wonderful scenery we have throughout the Northern Territory, and then perhaps join a flight out of Darwin and return to their final destination through South-east Asia. The sky is the limit, Mr Speaker. All those opportunities lie before us. I am quite sure that the Tourist Commission and the government will proceed down that path and it is only bodies such as the federal government, the Department of Aviation and perhaps Qantas, that will prevent us from achieving that long-term goal.

Debate adjourned.

MOTION
Revocation of Reserve Land

Continued from 29 April 1987.

Mrs PADGHAM-PURICH (Koolpinyah): Mr Deputy Speaker, in rising to support this motion, my remarks will also include support of an amendment that, with the agreement of the minister, I have suggested be included in this motion. I will give honourable members the benefit of my knowledge of the situation relating to the area involved and some particulars about it.

The motion refers to portion 2821, which is an area covered by a consolidation of land titles around the intersection of Howard Springs Road and Gunn Point Road in the Howard Spring area near the entry to the Howard Springs Nature Park. Portion 2821 includes a consolidation of section 277 and part of 278, 279 and 280. It includes only part of section 278 because a very small part of that section is in portion 2208 which is taken up with a navigational aid.

The Territory Parks and Wildlife Conservation Act states that this particular park was declared under section 12. The revocation is declared under section 13 and section 14 of the Territory Parks and Wildlife Act says that the Administrator has to consider a report of the Conservation Commission as to the advisability of a revocation. I do not object to it. Indeed, I believe it is necessary and I cannot see any objections coming from the Conservation Commission. Looking at it realistically, I believe that, if the Conservation Commission had objections, it would not have had its minister put this forward in the first place.

There is no doubt that there will be development in the Gunn Point area, and possibly in the near future, which means that, where the Gunn Point Road turns to the right off Howard Springs Road, it will be used much more. I have received no complaints from my constituents regarding this particular corner and, to my knowledge, no accidents have occurred there. Nevertheless, it would be sensible to upgrade it for the benefit of the people who use it.

Having indicated my support for this motion, I do not mean to contradict myself but I believe it is time somebody spoke out against what I consider to be road engineers' grandiose flights of fancy in some cases. I am not speaking against the level of maintenance of roads in rural areas. In my electorate, the roads are maintained by the Litchfield Shire Council, not the Department of Transport and Works. I am not speaking against the maintenance and upkeep of roads in other rural areas of the Northern Territory, but I am speaking against the designs that the road engineers put forward for upgraded roads, and I am talking about bitumen roads and the associated roadworks. I believe it is time that somebody spoke out against what I believe to be extravagant road design provisions and that is what I am doing now.

Department of Transport and Works' road design engineers are continuing to build more and more extravagant roadworks which I believe would be the most costly in Australia. In many cases, the roadworks are unnecessary in terms of increased road safety. Everybody would agree that road safety is necessary. However, I think sometimes that the road design engineers believe that their egos will receive a greater boost if they can increase the amount spent to implement their designs and the number of draughtsmen, clerks, road engineers, and labourers who are required to bring them to completion.

The Chief Minister said that we must economise during the current term of the Legislative Assembly because the funding that we receive from Canberra is running out and there are many calls on the public purse. To implement real savings, we could easily copy the federal coalition - if it is a coalition now - Waste Watch Committee. I believe that public funds have been wasted on some roadworks that I travel on almost every day when I travel to and from Darwin.

It is like talking about motherhood and apple pie when we talk about safety on roads - everybody agrees it is a good thing and nobody wants to speak against it. I am not speaking against the sacred cow of road safety when I say that more consideration should be given to economies in roadwork designs when they are associated with upgrading of roads, especially the bitumen roads around the Darwin area. I have spoken briefly to the minister about this. I am quite happy to tell him where I think extravagant designs have been incorporated in a couple of roads that the Department of Transport and Works road design engineers have created in the rural area off the highways and on main roads going into Darwin.

Mr Deputy Speaker, every road design engineer should ask himself at least once if a new project is really necessary and whether all the things he wants to include in the design are really necessary. If the Chief Minister is serious when he says he wants to save public money, I would suggest that he put me on a committee that considers the quality estimates and design for roadworks and I will save money by keeping the road design engineers and their feet firmly on the ground. The Minister for Transport and Works is a professional engineer and I am not but, if I could compare him to a laying hen in that a laying hen can lay an egg and I cannot, but I can still tell a good egg from a bad one. It is the same with extravagant road works.

Mr Hatton: Where does the rooster come into it?

Mrs PADGHAM-PURICH: Roosters are only necessary part of the time; the hens are more important.

Mr Deputy Speaker, the amendment that I have suggested that the honourable minister include in this motion involves only 1 word. I would like to see the

penultimate 'and' deleted from the motion because, as it is written now, after the words 'portion 2821' first appearing, if one includes the description in brackets and reads it as 'containing an area of 3120 m² more or less being part of portion 2821 ... and originally declared as a park by an instrument dated ...', because of the inclusion of the word 'and' one is left with the understanding that only part of portion 2821 was declared as a park when, in reality, all of portion 2821 was declared as a park. If the word 'and' were omitted, it would read, 'containing an area of 3120 m² more or less being part of portion 2821 ... originally declared as a park ...'. The whole of portion 2821 was declared as a park. The whole of portion 2821 was the park, not only the part that we are talking about which, by this motion, the minister hopes to exclude from the park area to make a road.

Mr Collins: It is a fine legal point.

Mrs PADGHAM-PURICH: I think that is pretty self-evident to all intelligent, honourable members so, having made my remarks about extravagant roadworks, the desirability of this particular road for road safety and spoken to my amendment, I will conclude my remarks.

Mr SPEAKER: Would the honourable member formally move her amendment.

Mrs PADGHAM-PURICH: Mr Speaker, I move that the word 'and', second last occurring, be omitted.

Amendment agreed to.

Motion, as amended, agreed to.

BUILDING AMENDMENT BILL (Serial 6)

Continued from 29 April 1987.

Mr BELL (MacDonnell): Mr Speaker, broadly speaking, after earnest deliberation about the Building Amendment Bill and some of the attendant issues of concern to the building industry that the government has attempted to address with this bill, essentially the opposition supports the bill itself. We note that the bill increases penalties for offences against the Building Act and introduces a provision whereby a builder cannot escape prosecution for a further offence by changing the company's name. Specifically, we note that clause 3 is an evidentiary provision which allows the Building Controller to aver previous offences and that clauses 4 and 5 increase penalties and provide heavier penalties for second or further offences.

Perhaps the most interesting and welcome clause is clause 6. This introduces a provision whereby a person convicted of an offence who has previously been convicted for the same or a similar offence as an officer of a body corporate, shall be deemed to have committed a second or further offence. My understanding is that this addresses an issue of concern, particularly to the Master Builders Association. Rotten apples in the barrel have been giving the industry a bad name. Some unscrupulous operators in the building industry have been performing shoddy workmanship and, having offended against the Building Code, have changed the name of the entity under which they carried out the work and moved into a different company. I am sure the vast majority of builders in the Territory will appreciate these particular provisions.

In the context of this second-reading debate, I would like to remind honourable members of the efforts of the opposition with respect to these difficulties. I remind the Minister for Lands and Housing that the question of builders' licensing has been a vexed one. The Master Builders Association continues to be interested in questions associated with licensing of builders and ensuring that irresponsible operators are not able to provide bad service for prospective home owners and are not able to give the vast majority of responsible builders a bad name. The Master Builders Association is to be congratulated for adopting a responsible attitude towards the industry. It is a matter of some concern that, in spite of the earnest efforts of the opposition and the matters of public importance that we have raised, the government has not seen fit to carry out a more thorough attack on the problems that are created by this small minority of irresponsible builders. Because of the high mobility of our population, the Northern Territory community is more subject to these problems than others might be. I appreciate that the Northern Territory government has a fascination, not to say an obsession, with laissez-faire politics. I believe its pig-headed approach to builders' licensing is perhaps one of the most glaring examples of its refusal to come to terms with acceptable regulation, particularly when the industry itself has requested it.

A further point that I would like to make is that the Labor Party's housing policy for the last election, which unfortunately did not feature highly in the public debate, included this particular provision. It is with some pride that I place on the record that the Labor opposition in this Assembly, with its responsible approach to the building and construction industry, will retain that particular policy in its platform and will continue to fight for it. Future home owners are fortunate that, in fact, there is a responsible opposition in this Assembly. If we were in government, it would be possible to act much more quickly to bring about a desirable state of affairs. However, let me just put the government on notice that the opposition in general, and myself in particular, will continue to pursue this issue so that home owners are protected and the building industry is able to operate within an acceptable licensing framework.

Mr Dale: Very naive Neil, very naive.

Mr BELL: I hear the Minister for Education, the member for Sanderson. I do not hear the honourable member for Wulagi. I will have to orientate my map here. I do not hear the member for Wanguri.

Mr Manzie: Tell me about New South Wales.

Mr BELL: I am pleased he has interjected again. That makes it so much easier for the Hansard reporters.

The opposition has never endorsed a NSW-type licensing arrangement. The fact of the matter is that there are various licensing arrangements around this country. I would be more than happy, and I believe that it is appropriate in the context of a bill such as this, if the member for Sanderson would rise and give us the fruits of his knowledge of the variety of builders' licensing legislation around the country. Interjections are not the way to do that, but second-reading speeches are.

I do not claim to have an encyclopaedic knowledge of builders' licensing legislation around the country. I am aware of the distinctions between the New South Wales legislation and the arrangements in Queensland. I do not have comprehensive notes before me, but my understanding is that the Queensland

licensing arrangements add a very small percentage to the cost of building each house. That provides a satisfactory indemnity arrangement for home builders, the people who are putting up the money.

This particular bill is about that small minority of builders who do not play the game and my concern is for the people who get caught. For most people, entering into a contract to build a home is a once-in-a-lifetime arrangement. It is an essential part of life for most people. Life centres around the home that they buy or build. They invest a great deal of time and effort, and I believe that the government should take a more responsible attitude to looking after them. The opposition supports a licensing arrangement.

Mr Dale: Tell us how licensing protects them, Neil.

Mr BELL: I hear the member for Wanguri interjecting. I am quite happy to explain to him the way a builders' licensing arrangement would protect the people who seek to build a home. A builders' licensing arrangement would give the government the power to say, on the basis of reciprocal arrangements with the states: 'Listen fellow, shape up or you will not work again.'

Mr Dale: They are fining them about \$200 in New South Wales.

Mr BELL: The member for Wanguri is not treating this debate with the seriousness it deserves. The shape of the housing market has changed dramatically over the last 15 or 20 years. The investment now involved, as anybody who is paying off a mortgage will know, is much higher than it was then.

While we are discussing the question of housing finance, which is intimately interwoven with the question of the relationship between builder and future owner, I would like to pick up a couple of points that the Minister for Housing has raised in debate over the last couple of days. I believe that all these issues are basically interrelated because, as the minister may or may not be aware, there are problems with the state of the housing industry in the Northern Territory at present, to judge by the comments of Mr Max Stewart of the Centralian Division of the Master Builders Association. The multiplier effect of money spent in the housing industry is of vital importance to the whole Territory economy.

It is worth while pausing, in a second-reading debate such as this, to consider the general impact of the government's failure to protect the would-be home owner and the considerable effect this will have on investment in housing in the Territory. The minister's comments in his speech to the Address-in-Reply were characterised by a high degree of Commonwealth-government bashing and a relatively low degree of understanding of some of the fundamental issues of concern to the housing market in the Territory. I have already mentioned the Labor Party's housing policy and the efforts that have been put into it.

Mr Palmer: It is illegal.

Mr BELL: It sounds as though the member for Karama is going to contribute to this debate too. He tells me the Labor Party's housing policy is illegal!

Mr Coulter: No, the Labor Party is illegal.

Mr BELL: I can imagine the members for Karama and Palmerston outlawing the Labor Party. I appreciate that we cause them sufficient concern for them to wish to try such a step. At this stage, even in the Northern Territory, political parties can legally promulgate policies. That is what we have done, and our housing policy was met with a great deal of interest and applause in the housing industry. It is worth placing on record that senior people in the Territory housing industry have personally passed on to me their congratulations on the effort and the thought that went into that policy. It was in sad contrast to the meagre offerings provided by the government in the lead-up to the election but, fortunately for it, the campaign was very short so the issues at stake were not able to be debated at any length.

The particular comment I refer to in the minister's speech in the debate on the Address-in-Reply was his reference to the federal Labor government's high interest rates which, he claimed, were putting the Australian dream of home ownership out of the reach of middle income families. I have a few comments about that particularly outrageous claim. The first is to reiterate what I said in a debate earlier this week: that the confrontationist attitude that this government insists on adopting towards the federal government is doing the people of the Northern Territory no good. Secondly, it is outrageous to claim that high interest rates are putting the Australian dream of home ownership out of the reach of middle income families. That is a gross over-simplification.

Mr HANRAHAN: A point of order, Mr Speaker! I have really have been very patient. I draw the attention of the member for MacDonnell to the contents of the bill before this Assembly. It has nothing at all to do with housing policy.

Mr BELL: Mr Speaker, as the Minister for Lands and Housing should well know, the nature of a second-reading debate is to canvass broadly various issues associated with particular legislation. The bill itself is an attempt to protect homeowners and I think a broad-ranging debate on the pros and cons of home ownership is quite within the limits of this debate.

Mr SPEAKER: There is a point of order. The member is reminded that he is required to contain his remarks strictly to the legislation before the Assembly.

Mr BELL: Mr Speaker, I note the point of order and I will return to the issues I was raising in a more appropriate context.

In conclusion, basically I want to say that the opposition supports this legislation but does not believe it is a satisfactory attack on the sort of problems that have been continually coming to light. I refer the honourable minister to the comments made in the second-reading debate by his lamented predecessor as Minister for Housing, the member for Casuarina, when he referred to adverse publicity about home building standards. I do not believe this bill goes far enough.

Mr COLLINS (Sadadeen): Mr Speaker, I had not intended to speak on this bill but, having heard the member for MacDonnell talk about licensing as the panacea to ensure that members of the public receive full value and a home that is soundly constructed, I was forced to rise to my feet. I have a vested interest in this in that I have done a fair amount of amateur building. Apart from having a brother who was a builder, I have not had any formal training. It is something that I have picked up by applying a reasonable amount of common sense and making fairly extensive use of the building inspector. The

former building inspector in Alice Springs has been very kind to me over the years in giving advice. Provided I did not try to pull any wool over his eyes, I could not have found a more helpful public servant. He epitomised what the Chief Minister has said about the public service helping rather than hindering the public.

On a number of projects around my own home, I have used the building inspector. At one stage, he commented to me after a final inspection: 'You certainly do not intend to have this building fall over'. I certainly did not put my time and effort into a building that would be unsafe.

The same building inspector was also very helpful indeed when the Uniting Church wanted a hall built. The member for MacDonnell is a member of the Alice Springs congregation as I used to be myself. We built a hall at the back of Adelaide House. I will not say that it was the prettiest brickwork but I can assure members that it is very strong. At every stage, the building inspector was called in to ensure we were doing the job properly because we were all amateurs. That hall serves a very useful function in that it is used virtually daily.

If there were licensing of builders, then I am quite sure that I could not obtain a licence because I am sure the people who want licensing will require the highest possible qualifications. It is a great way of protecting the industry so that they get all of the jobs. In the Territory, costs are very high, particularly for people in the more remote areas. Try 6 m of concrete brought from Alice Springs to Ti Tree and you will start to appreciate how expensive building can be. If licensing is introduced, amateur builders such as myself may be able to obtain a licence at first. However, obtaining a licence will become harder and harder because it is a way of protecting the industry. The net effect of all that is that the cost of building will rise.

On the other hand, I was invited recently by one of my constituents to have a look at a house that he had bought from the Housing Commission in Alice Springs because he was having some work done on it. The building had holes knocked in the brickwork at about 3' intervals except where there were windows. There was a hole about 1m from the bottom and a second one about 1m from the top. Great efforts had been made to drill holes into the foundation and bend a piece of half-inch rod and glue that rod in there. Another one was slipped in from the top into the bond beam which was anything but the bond beam that the building inspector taught me to build at my place. A bond beam should be a U-shaped brick which goes right around the top of the building which is then filled with rods and concrete and tied to the foundation by other rods and hooks. The bond beam in the house that I inspected had bits of brick jammed on the top of ordinary bricks to try to stop the cement - if there was any and I sometimes wonder whether it really was there - from falling through. It was a pretty shoddy job. The insertion of these rods made a complete mess of the house. After the rods were welded into place and the holes repaired, the house would have to be painted. I understand the contract was for about \$5000 per house.

It was in the original contract that the bond beam, hooks and rods should be there. However, the builders had decided that was unnecessary and certainly the inspectors had not done their job on those buildings. I believe that about 10 were being repaired. The ones that were being sold were being repaired first. I forewarn the Minister for Housing that I will be asking a question about how many houses the Housing Commission has had to spend money on.

The fault there lies with the builders. It was in their contract and, if they had not allowed enough money for that work, then I do not have a great deal of sympathy. My sympathy is with the person who wants to buy that house. He should be assured that he has a solid house. When it comes to building inspection, the question is where to draw the line of government intervention. As far as I am concerned, it is essential that the building be solid and strong so that it will not fall down. The finishing touches are a matter between the purchaser of the house, in this case the Housing Commission, and the builder. I do not believe the law should be involved too much in these matters.

I hope that the Minister for Mines and Energy will take this matter seriously because, despite the fact that he deals in millions, there are many people in this Territory whose greatest purchase is their home. They should be assured that their houses are solid and will not collapse. If 150 houses are involved at a cost of \$5000 each, that concerns a considerable sum of money which could have helped the Katherine racecourse and the Sadadeen Secondary College. It is a pity that ...

Mr Coulter: I don't believe it. He has suddenly become an activist for the racing world.

Mrs Padgham-Purich: He has got a horse.

Mr COLLINS: A nag or two anyway.

Mr Speaker, these matters are important. A tremendous amount of public money will be wasted because people have not done the job properly. It is just not good enough for mateship to develop and word-of-mouth agreements to be reached amongst people that certain things do not really need to be done. A building inspection job has to be done properly. The onus is on the builder in the first instance to do what he contracted to do and there has to be that backup to ensure that he has done it.

I have not had time to go through the bill as thoroughly as I would have liked to have done. However, it will increase penalties for people who are not doing the right thing in the building industry. Such people, by cutting corners, are reducing the quality of the buildings which, as I have said, are a major investment in most people's lives.

Mr SMITH (Opposition Leader): Mr Speaker, I wish to address relatively few comments to this bill. As the member for MacDonnell said, the opposition supports the bill but, in our view, it does not go far enough.

I want to take the opportunity once again to refer to a real case. It is the same case, unfortunately, that I spoke about at least 18 months ago where a couple has been caught very badly by an unscrupulous builder. They are still experiencing enormous problems. This couple purchased a block of land at Darwin River and negotiated with a builder for the construction of the house for an approximate cost of \$35 000. The house was so badly built that they had to spend an additional \$15 000 on it to get it into a condition that they could live in. They attempted to sue the builder who shortly thereafter declared himself bankrupt. Ever since, they have been attempting to get the builder to reveal his books to the relevant Northern Territory court. The builder has consistently declined to show the court his books and, each time he fails to meet the deadline, he is fined \$200 and that is it until the next time.

In all these processes of fighting with the builder, they have accumulated a debt of \$10 000 with a firm of solicitors. To put it simply, they entered into a building contract with a builder and they expected to be repaying about \$360 per month. Because of the additional \$15 000 and the additional \$10 000 for legal fees, they are now in a situation where, instead of paying \$360 per month, they are paying over \$800 per month in repayments.

The only way that they have been able to survive - and they both work - is to let out their house at Darwin River. Fortunately, the husband is a Commonwealth public servant and he has been able to obtain, on a temporary basis at least, a Commonwealth house. We all know that Commonwealth public servants still enjoy relatively cheap rents. However, it is disgraceful that a couple can be placed in this position by an unscrupulous builder and yet that builder can still advertise his product and can still build houses in the Northern Territory. Further, that builder, as a result of weaknesses in the legal system, can avoid fulfilling his responsibilities to the couple involved.

Mr Dale: Can you tell us how licensing would overcome that?

Mr SMITH: I am not arguing the case for licensing here. Licensing would overcome it in the sense that the builder is so bad that his licence would be withdrawn and other people would not have to take a chance with him.

More importantly, without arguing the question of licensing, I am arguing the question of the deficiency of current laws in the Northern Territory whereby people who entered in good faith into a building contract, who have been through all the legal processes at considerable expense to themselves, are still unable to obtain any satisfaction. The dream home for this couple has turned into a nightmare and there does not appear to be anything that anybody in government or outside government can do for them. That is the problem. Having raised this again, I think that I should approach the government again on an individual basis on this particular matter because it does concern me. From \$360 per week to over \$800 per week is a real nightmare for that couple and they face the anxiety of not knowing how they will come out of it. In the fair and egalitarian society that we believe that we live in, that is simply not good enough.

Mr Speaker, that is an example of the reasons why we support this bill and demonstrates why we have argued consistently for stronger consumer protection in the housing industry.

Mrs PADGHAM-PURICH (Koolpinyah): Mr Speaker, in rising to make my small contribution to this debate this afternoon, I will say at the outset that I support the proposed legislation.

Time did not permit me to make all the inquiries regarding this bill that I wished to, as the honourable minister has brought it on for debate today. I would like to ask the honourable minister some questions regarding clause 6, where reference is made to the fact that section 51 will be amended by the insertion of the new subsection. I would be interested to hear from the honourable minister who the officer of a body corporate is. I may be displaying my business naivete in this matter but, if one does not ask questions, one does not obtain information.

From reading the bill, I have surmised that the officer could be part of the management. If so, as part of the management of a body corporate that commits an offence the first time round, the second time an offence is

committed by a body corporate of which he is a part, he will be guilty. If he is part of the management, he may not have been part of the management that committed the offence, so it would be rather unfair to him if an offence occurred again. If that officer of the body corporate is a paid employee, I believe that the situation would be even more unfair. I am not disagreeing with the intent of this clause or of the bill. I applaud the intention of the bill. But, if this officer of a body corporate is a paid employee, does he carry the legal consequences of the legal disapprobation of his employer or employers from 1 job to the next? If so, he will become a leper in the business world whom nobody will want to employ and he may have only been carrying out instructions. I believe that that would be very unfair to this employee.

Mr Speaker, could the honourable minister tell me what the officer of a body corporate is: is he part of the management or is he a paid employee?

Mr HANRAHAN (Lands and Housing): Mr Speaker, I thank honourable members for their comments. May I say at the outset, if the honourable member for MacDonnell would like to open his eyes, he has had plenty of opportunity to address housing issues and their deficiencies or whatever he would like to call them in this Assembly on numerous previous occasions, and he should observe the rules of debate.

This government has done more towards the provision of houses for Northern Territorians right across the board, including Aboriginal people, than any other government in Australia has ever attempted to do for its people. Consider the Northern Territory Home Purchase Assistance Scheme, Aboriginal housing, shared equity schemes, the Industrial Housing Assistance Scheme and it goes on and on. Millions and millions of dollars have been spent specifically to ensure that Territorians have the opportunity to purchase their homes. The Territory has the shortest waiting list in all of Australia, outdoing other places by sometimes up to 3 years. It has been a very positive program with 1 deliberate aim: to ensure that people get to stay in the Territory, instead of leaving, so that we can build our permanent population base. I discard totally the comments of the honourable member for MacDonnell. However, I accept his support for the bill and I am very pleased to see this legislation coming forward.

The member for Sadadeen raised some issues that are being addressed at this very moment by the Housing Commission in Alice Springs. As to the legalities of those issues, I might advise the honourable member that, as he would be aware, in any dispute it is normal that legal advice is sought and that is under investigation at the moment. I am quite happy to provide the member for Sadadeen with a full brief on the situation with those particular houses.

In respect of the specific home that the Leader of the Opposition spoke about - the Paps A-frame down at Howard River - I am aware of the facts. It is an unfortunate case, but the Building Authority and the Building Board in the Territory has had no involvement with that particular case for some 18 months. If the Leader of the Opposition has a further proposition that he wishes to speak or write to me about, he is more than welcome.

Clause 6 really is a cross-reference to the actual public officer and is to ensure that, in any offence that is committed, it is for an act that a person knowingly committed as a public officer. It is a cross-reference aimed at tidying up the act.

Motion agreed to; bill read a second time

Mr HANRAHAN (Lands and Housing)(by leave): Mr Speaker, I move that the bill be now read a third time.

Motion agreed to; bill read a third time.

CROWN LANDS AMENDMENT BILL
(Serial 7)

Continued from 29 April 1987.

Mr BELL (MacDonnell): Mr Speaker, I wish to make a few comments on this bill. I trust that the honourable minister and his cohorts will bear with me. We note that the bill will amend the administrative arrangements for the Land Board, some of which changes are desirable in their own right and some of which will permit the appointment of people to the board who have expertise in rural industries apart from pastoralism.

Specifically, we note that the amendments will increase the size of the board by 1 - to 14 members - and specify the length of term of members which will be 6 years with eligibility for reappointment. The bill will give the minister the power to appoint a member to complete the term of someone who has ceased to be a member because of death, resignation or termination. We notice that the bill will give the minister the power to terminate the appointment of a member for inability, inefficiency, misbehaviour or physical or mental incapacity, and I will return to that in a moment. We notice that the bill rules as ineligible a member who is in various difficulties with his financial dealings, and that it inserts a confidentiality provision and indemnifies members against legal action for whatever they may do as board members. The bill also inserts a clause demanding a disclosure of interest by members. Basically, the opposition supports these amendments.

We note the particular provision that gives the minister the power to 'terminate the appointment of a member for inability, inefficiency, misbehaviour or physical or mental incapacity'. That is a fairly broad disqualifying clause. I wonder if there would not be a few ministers who would not be shivering in their shoes if the same rigid criterion were to be applied to their membership of the frontbench. However, Mr Speaker, I do not wish to score cheap points at the expense of people who are unable to defend themselves. I raise my eyebrows at this clause, but do not shout, 'shock, horror!' to the roof, let alone to the heavens.

Mr Speaker, I wish to mention a comment the honourable minister made in his second-reading speech about the nature of the increase in the breadth of membership of land board members. He mentioned that the nature of the pastoral industry in the Northern Territory was changing, that there was evidence of closer settlement occurring, and an increase in the number of properties undertaking agriculture and horticulture because of this. He went on to say that, because of the system of appointment of Land Board members, expertise in agriculture and horticulture is largely confined to government members of the board and they would be concerned normally with their own department's assessment of such applications in the course of their duties. I am not quite sure exactly why expertise in agriculture and horticulture should be largely confined to government members of the board, and how these amendments will actually change that. I am not clear that legislative requirements are necessary in that regard.

However, there is a general point about the membership of the Land Board that I want to make and that is that, apart from the government members that the honourable minister's predecessor referred to in his second-reading speech, the industry members, as it were, of the Land Board are usually taken from the pastoral industry. I note with some interest that they are to be taken from other agricultural and horticultural industries as is appropriate around the Territory, and the opposition has no particular difficulty with that.

However, I would make this point because of the nature of Crown lands: the people who live on them, and the people who are involved in their economic development and in established economic pursuits on those Crown lands, all have a legitimate interest in the deliberations of the Land Board and there are issues of concern to various interest groups. I draw the Assembly's attention to the recent controversy between the pastoral industry and the mining industry over proposed freeholding. I do not wish to make any particular comment about the freeholding proposal at the moment, except to say that I believe it will be one of the most contentious issues that this Assembly will deal with. I will say no more about that. This is neither the time nor the place and I dare say I would have the Minister for Lands and Housing leaping to his feet and calling points of order.

The composition of the Land Board is relevant. It is my view that environmental interests have a legitimate role to play on the Land Board. I am thinking of organisations like the Environment Centre and the expertise of the people who work for very little in providing independent advice about environmental issues, based solely on their studies of environmental science and related disciplines. I believe that such people have a role to play on the Land Board. It might make the deliberations of the Land Board more lively than I believe they currently are.

Another group of people who have legitimate interests are Aboriginal people living on Crown land. I will not digress by getting into the thorny area of excisions and the debate about the involvement of Aboriginal people in the pastoral industry and their attempts to obtain living areas. To reinforce this point, I mention that the minister referred to representatives from horticultural industry and other agricultural pursuits being represented on the Land Board. I draw the minister's attention to the Gibb Report which envisaged economic pursuits being carried out on excisions for Aboriginal people on pastoral leases. In the bipartisan sense in which the government and the opposition are seeking to involve the whole Territory population in sharing the development and the fruits of the Territory's resources, I believe that a case can be made for representation of these people on the Land Board.

With those comments, I reiterate that the opposition supports this legislation and commends it to all honourable members.

Mr PALMER (Karama): Mr Speaker, I will be brief. The Land Board and its predecessors have contributed greatly to the development of land management policies in the Northern Territory. The Land Board reflects the views and wishes of the pastoral industry, whilst playing a supervisory or governing role on land matters and land subdivisional matters.

The new provisions will allow for appointments for a period of 6 years with a roll-over every 3 years after the initial appointments. This will allow the composition of the Land Board to reflect the dynamics of the industry. It is an industry which is changing in its approach to the production of beef cattle and its attitudes towards land management and other

policies and procedures. There are pressures to use Crown land for other than pastoral purposes which create the necessity to have people on the board with expertise in other areas of land usage such as horticulture and agriculture.

I want to digress briefly by harking back to a debate held earlier today when the member for MacDonnell informed the Assembly that he had spent many years teaching our children about economics in Australia. I sincerely hope he taught writing and arithmetic and not reading, because he referred to a passage in the minister's second-reading speech. I will quote the same passage: 'Because of the system of appointment of Land Board members, expertise in agriculture and horticulture is confined largely to government members of the board'. That is correct, Mr Speaker, and this piece of legislation hopes to address that problem ...

Mr Bell: That is what I said. I asked a question, Mick. In spite of the very helpful seminar, I do not understand what you are getting at.

Mr PALMER: I suppose I never studied hearing.

Mr Bell: I am sure your audiology is up to scratch, Mick.

Mr PALMER: Mr Speaker, I maintain my position that he was quite wrong. Whatever he said, he was wrong.

Mr Bell: That is the sort of simple faith I need, Mick.

Mr PALMER: Mr Speaker, in closing, I must pay tribute to a couple of people. Vic Wasilewsky was Chairman of the Land Board for 15 years until December of last year, and he played a valuable role in the early years of self-government in helping to formulate government land policies and the fair implementation of those policies. I also should take the opportunity to pay tribute to Tom Lawler, a long-serving public servant of both the Commonwealth and the Northern Territory, whose son is in the press gallery today. Following his retirement in December this year from the Department of Lands, as the head of the Policy Administration Division, Tom Lawler has taken over the role of Chairman of the Land Board. His long experience in pastoral and land matters will again provide a valuable input into the future of land management in the Northern Territory.

Mr Speaker, with those few words, I commend the bill to honourable members.

Motion agreed to; bill read a second time.

Mr HANRAHAN (Lands and Housing)(by leave): Mr Speaker, I move that the bill be now read a third time.

Motion agreed to; bill read a third time.

PAYROLL TAX AMENDMENT BILL
(Serial 13)

Continued from 29 April 1987.

Mr EDE (Stuart): Mr Speaker, the opposition supports this bill. However, I would like to mention a few items which I hope the minister will be able to clarify in his reply.

When the bill was introduced initially, on 26 November 1986, in the course of his second-reading speech the minister stated that the amendment would ensure that wages related to the Community Development Employment Projects carried out by these organisations would not be subject to payroll tax. I presume that the minister knew the difference between Community Development Employment Projects and Community Employment Projects and that he was, in fact, referring to the former, which are projects operating on some Aboriginal communities where, instead of people receiving unemployment benefits directly, the money is paid in bulk so that people work on community projects in return for receiving their dole payments. This is money which they are quite entitled to, as is every other Australian in the same situation. They have simply made a decision that they will work to the benefit of the community in return for it. It is a program which unfortunately is not given enough publicity by the government. Those communities have not been given a great deal of credit for the marvellous decision that they have made. I have yet to find a non-Aboriginal community in Australia which has made a decision of that nature. I am looking forward to the time when those people who tend to denigrate Aboriginal people for being in receipt of the dole begin to look to their own communities.

My point is that, if we are talking about Community Development Employment Projects, I would like to know whether the same provision relates to Community Employment Projects or whether they are covered by another piece of legislation so that those same organisations which carry out Community Employment Projects in their communities have a similar exemption. I raise this because Community Employment Projects are not carried out solely by bodies of a local-government type. There are other organisations which carry out those projects and which quite possibly would not come under the definition of a body prescribed as a local governing body for the purpose of this act. It is impossible under the Local Government Act for one body to have jurisdiction over any part of an area which is already controlled by another local government body. For example, the area covered by the Tangentyere Council in Alice Springs is partly under the control of the Alice Springs Town Council. My concern is that a body such as the Tangentyere Council may not be able to be prescribed as a local government body for the purpose of this act and therefore may not receive the exemption on payroll tax for money spent on a Community Employment Project.

This leads me to a broader issue. I believe that, because of the nature of their activities, organisations such as the Tangentyere Council should be given exemption from payroll tax. For many years, organisations such as Tangentyere, the Institute for Aboriginal Development, the Central Australian Aboriginal Congress and other bodies of that nature did have an exemption from payroll tax. It was acknowledged that their services were not provided for the accumulation of wealth by shareholders or for the purpose of profit-making. They were simply community organisations working for the benefit of their members and the community generally. For a long time, that was taken to be sufficient for bodies of that type to be given exemption from payroll tax. Unfortunately, that seems to be going out of the window and the government is moving not just to get them to pay payroll tax but, in fact, to have the payments back-dated. That sort of retrospectivity would raise an enormous hoo-ha if it were applied to some people in the government's side of the political spectrum.

I ask the minister to indicate in his reply whether it is possible for bodies of that type to be prescribed as local governing bodies for the purpose of this act. If it is legally possible, I would like to know whether he would entertain submissions from bodies of that type to be generally exempt from

payroll tax or at least to be exempt for payrolls under the programs relating to community employment.

Mr Speaker, the opposition supports the bill.

Mr McCARTHY (Victoria River): Mr Speaker, the bill before us is designed only to broaden the meaning of 'local governing body' to take account of the bodies carrying out local government responsibilities and receiving funds and employing persons under the Local Government Grants Commission Act. I am familiar with a number of these bodies. There are many organisations incorporated under the Companies Act which carry out local government responsibilities and receive funding under the Local Government Grants Commission Act. As I understand it, these organisations are not presently exempt from payroll. The passing of this bill will allow them to fit into the criteria which would allow them to be exempted.

My reason for rising this afternoon was not simply to make that comment, but because I thought it was an opportune time to highlight the fact that there are some small communities that are likely to be left out of the current considerations of the Local Government Grants Commission for funding in 1987-88. Under previous administrative arrangements, these communities were funded outside the town management and public utilities area by the then Department of Community Development whose functions in this area have been taken over by the Division of Local Government and the Local Government Grants Commission. Communities such as Palumpa, with 120 residents and Yarralin, also with 120 residents, are not included in the considerations of the Local Government Grants Commission this year. They do not appear on the list of communities receiving town management and public utility funds.

I am sure that this is only an oversight and action will be taken to correct it but, if I am able to name 2 communities, there must be others in areas with which I am not familiar. I am aware that the Palumpa community has written to the chairman of the commission, inviting him and the commission to visit the community while they are in the general area. I trust that the commission will take up this invitation to see at first hand the needs of the community involved.

I note that the bill also exempts the wages paid under Community Development Employment Projects. This matter was raised by the member for Stuart. As I see it, the change is a necessary one which brings us into line with the states. I commend the bill to honourable members.

Mr LANHUPUY (Arnhem): Mr Speaker, I am very concerned about the legislation being introduced. I made representation to the Treasurer concerning Milingimbi. The new Local Government Act concerns people in my electorate and I have written to the Treasurer asking him to explain why organisations like the Milingimbi Council or the Galiwinku Council should have to pay payroll tax.

Council members and the chairmen are concerned that, if they do not enter the scheme delineated under the Local Government Act, they will have to pay payroll tax for 1986. This is not only worrying to them but, in terms of their funding, it is totally unreasonable. This government is increasing electricity charges, water rates and just about any other charge you like to name and now it wants to impose payroll tax on communities which are already struggling desperately to cope with unemployment. These communities are benevolent institutions. I would like the Treasurer to tell me where it leaves communities such as Ramingining, Bulman and Barunga if they do not

constitute themselves under the Local Government Act because, personally, I believe that is the catch. Those communities that took on responsibilities from the Uniting Church or the Methodist Overseas Mission, and were known as Aboriginal Community Councils, will be charged payroll tax back to 1986 if they do not constitute themselves under this government's Local Government Act.

Mr Hatton: Don't talk rumour. Talk fact in this place.

Mr LANHUPUY: I am not going to listen to the Chief Minister.

Mr Hatton: You should. You might learn something.

Mr LANHUPUY: He is too busy looking after his own ministry. I am worried about those people out there, people in my electorate who are so concerned ...

Mr Hatton: Speak logically for them.

Mr LANHUPUY: Hang on. They are concerned about the fact that they will have to pay payroll tax ...

Mr Hatton: Who said they will?

Mr LANHUPUY: ... because of this government's attitude.

Mr Hatton: It is only your assumption. Do you tell them these things?

Mr LANHUPUY: Mr Speaker, they are concerned. Milingimbi will have to pay this tax if the government does not recognise that it is a benevolent institution serving the needs of that specific community without receiving profits. It is a community set up under specific rules and regulations to serve the needs of 750 people.

I would like to know why and how that community is going to be charged. The government gives exemptions to organisations like the Salvation Army, the Uniting Church and a few others in the Northern Territory. I would like to know why it is not doing so for organisations in charge of places like Numbulwar, Bulman, Ramingining and Milingimbi. People there are trying to survive under CEP programs and the organisations are trying to get funds through work-for-the-dole programs, yet this government wants to impose payroll tax on the funds which might otherwise be utilised to help the communities to survive: to create sports facilities and activities which might attract youth away from sniffing petrol and drinking kava.

I believe the Treasurer and Minister for Local Government should look at this problem on a community basis instead of enacting overall legislation which will prohibit people from accepting the types of responsibilities they should have. The minister preaches that there are many organisations within the Northern Territory accepting local government. I am not saying that I am totally against it, but I am saying that there are organisations and communities out there which are only just surviving on the funds the Northern Territory government and other funding organisations give them. I think it would be unreasonable to expect a community like Ramingining, with an annual budget of about \$750 000, to pay payroll tax when it is endeavouring to use its funds to provide services such as housing. Mr Speaker, you would know that yourself. Yuendumu, for example, cannot survive under the total payroll tax this government is trying to impose. It is virtually fighting for its existence because it voted Labor, I believe. So is Numbulwar. I ask the

minister to consider those facts honestly. It is important. It concerns the livelihood of people. If those communities ask the federal government for money, all this mob says is: 'Handouts'.

Mr Coulter: You do not pay for anything: power, water, housing, roads.

Mr LANHUPUY: Mr Speaker, that is a typical reaction from the Treasurer. He is always like that.

Mr Hatton: Is it true?

Mr LANHUPUY: It is not true.

Mr Coulter: You pay for them, do you?

Mr LANHUPUY: The people out there pay taxes. The Milingimbi Council employees only 150 people.

Mr Coulter: That is out of 700.

Mr LANHUPUY: When you take the Department of Education, the Resource Centre people, the Department of Aboriginal Affairs people employed out there, they pay taxes. All the government cares about is the fact that some taxpayers' money goes into those communities.

Mr Coulter: What was your water bill last year?

Mr LANHUPUY: I am not going to answer that question. It is typical of this government's attitude. I could take the Treasurer or the Chief Minister out to places like Ramingining and Milingimbi and they would soon see that people employed under these schemes pay taxes.

Mr Coulter: How are you going with your medical benefits payments?

Mr LANHUPUY: Mr Speaker, it is totally unreasonable of the Treasurer to get up and say that those people are not paying taxes. My people, because they are employed through the land councils, pay double tax, but that is another point and I do not want to argue with the Treasurer about it.

Mr Coulter: Speak to the ranger if you want to know what paying tax means.

Mr LANHUPUY: Mr Speaker, I only wish that the Treasurer would understand what I am trying to say to him. It is an incredible burden for this government to expect communities struggling with great unemployment to pay payroll tax. At places like Ramingining and Milingimbi, there would not be enough money to even pay the payroll tax that the government imposes.

Mr HATTON (Chief Minister): Mr Speaker, I was not going to speak in this debate until I heard that speech by the member for Arnhem.

I would commence by making a couple of points very clearly. I commend the Aboriginal communities for the moves they have been making, including the development of the CDEP. Yes, they are providing leadership to the rest of Australia. It is a program that I would encourage all people on the dole to participate in. I think the Aboriginal people there have shown great leadership and a great level of responsibility in the introduction of the CDEP. It is also true that there are very serious problems in these

communities, particularly in the honourable member for Arnhem's electorate where, for a multitude of administrative, bureaucratic, legal and historical reasons, little or no employment is available, except that which is afforded through the provision of community services or government-related employment. I refer there to local-government-type employment in the community councils or work in the land councils or with the government departments in the areas. That is not all of it; there are shopping and other activities in those areas, Mr Speaker.

However, it is true that those communities do not have a tax base to draw on themselves. They are not in a position where they are charging rates or raising local revenue and they do rely on moneys that are made available through various forms of local-government-type grants, by the TMPUs or money through Grants Commissions, direct grants from DAA, or ABC or ...

Mr Ede: Basically the same situation as the Northern Territory government is in.

Mr HATTON: ... the Northern Territory government, Mr Speaker! I accept that.

However, what really annoyed me about what the honourable member was saying was that he promoted the idea that, for some reason, this government is hell-bent on charging payroll tax to those communities, without the slightest skerrick of evidence or even a suggestion that it will happen. If I can try to assist him, the point he was trying to make was that there is nothing in here that specifically excludes those organisations which do not fall under these various definitions, particularly the Local Government Grants Commission Act, and which have not accepted community government as an approach. He is saying that, if they choose not to adopt the community government approach, by his own interpretation, there is a probability they will be hit with payroll tax.

Paragraph (c) of the amendment - 'a body prescribed as a local governing body for the purposes of this act' - was put in there for the very clear purpose of addressing those communities. I am sure that the local member could approach this. It is very difficult to address until the legislation is in. But I am sure the honourable minister will confirm that it is the intention of that provision to say that they will assume it. We cannot draw a broad-brush exclusion because of the sort of situations that are being raised in other areas where organisations may not fall appropriately into this definition or where there may be people who properly should be charged payroll tax and could structure themselves in a way to subvert the legislation. Therefore, it is dealt with in a way that enables it to be dealt with properly, on a case-by-case basis, to ensure the intent of the legislation is properly applied. Mr Speaker, I think that is perfectly obvious to any rational, sensible person trying to understand how this law is intended to operate.

There is 1 point I wish to raise and that is that, unless a body has a payroll in excess of \$350 000 a year, it is below the exemption level anyway. It is necessary to hit the \$350 000 mark before payroll tax is chargeable. On a total budget of \$750 000, is the honourable member trying to suggest that the payroll is exceeding \$350 000 and, if so, by some substantial amount? There is then a gradation. They are quite significant sums of money but, if they are, I would believe that, under paragraph (c) they would be exempted in any case.

I would urge the honourable member opposite to adopt a responsible position and encourage those communities to take on the proposals of community government, work towards full local government and get decent political representation at community government or local government level as other Australians do. My government would welcome the opportunity of working with the honourable member in those areas and in those communities to encourage the development of income-generating employment there which may generate a tax base for those local government communities and, incidentally, provide a tax base for the Northern Territory government.

For the benefit of the member for Arnhem, people who are working all pay personal income tax, sales taxes and other taxes. When we buy goods, we pay sales tax. We buy cars and we pay sales tax and all that money goes directly to the Commonwealth. When honourable members opposite start sprouting on about how much money the Northern Territory receives from the Australian taxpayer, remember that every Territorian equally is an Australian taxpayer. I would suggest to honourable members opposite that the Northern Territory is, in fact, self-funding with the taxes raised from the pockets of Territorians paid directly to the Commonwealth, and by companies in the Northern Territory, and sales taxes paid on the goods and services of Territorians, and the multitude of excises and levies paid by Territorians.

Mr Ede: An interesting exercise, but I doubt it.

Mr HATTON: Mr Speaker, we may not be contributing to the overall general costs of Australia, such as defence, and we should work towards that objective, but I would suggest that we would be very close, if not at, the point where we are paying our way in our own internal affairs. I would ask honourable members opposite to recognise that when referring to the Northern Territory.

I say again that this legislation should be passed. It is clear and well defined and it can properly ensure that the intention is applied without creating opportunities for people to subvert its intention through some blanket regulations where there are certain sections of the population that are not covered by legislative provisions.

Mr COULTER (Treasurer): Mr Speaker, I thank honourable members for their contributions to this debate. It has been very worth while in terms of giving me some indication of the shadow spokesman on local government's views on local government issues that he is obviously well aware of. One thing that mystifies me a little is the communication gap that seems to exist between opposition members. I went to the Leader of the Opposition to ask whether there were any problems with this legislation and whether he wanted any detailed answers to anything. The Leader of the Opposition said that there were no problems with it and that they had no objection to it. Despite that, we have now entered into a lengthy debate about the issues involved.

If the member for Stuart had made some inquiries, and I am not expecting him to know every little change made to regulations, he would have learnt that this year, by regulation, I changed the act to allow Community Employment Projects to be exempt or for people to apply for exemption under that act. Under paragraph (c), the Tangentyere Council could apply to be exempted under this legislation and it could get out of it. However, I remind honourable members that, as the Chief Minister pointed out, the threshold is some \$300 000 so it is not necessary to consider that particular issue until the payroll enters that realm.

Mr Ede: Tangentyere is way above that. It is a big organisation.

Mr COULTER: Maybe it is, and it can apply and it can apply for exemption under this legislation. What is wrong with that?

Mr Speaker, some other communities have been mentioned today. I am not sure that Yarralin would be in the \$300 000 bracket yet. I know that it is a thriving metropolis and numbers of people move in there daily. I cannot carry the names of all the communities in my head. However, Palumpa and those types of communities probably would not be in that bracket. So what has happened? Community Employment Projects have already been exempted by regulation and people can apply there. Tangentyere can apply under paragraph (c). I am quite happy to accept an application from it for exemption. The Community Development Employment Projects is a particularly good program and really does demand admiration. Credit must be given for some of those programs that have been developed.

I took exception to some of the comments from the shadow spokesman on local government, in particular that those people were paying taxes. I can assure honourable members that there are many charges which people in certain geographical locations throughout the Northern Territory do not have to endure. I referred to those charges by way of interjection: water, electricity, medical benefits payments etc. I had a book that was lent to me by the member for Casuarina, but I think I have given it back. It contained up-to-date figures on the amounts of money that are made available to the Aboriginal population throughout Australia.

Let us go back 3 or 4 years. The figure then was \$263.955m in direct Commonwealth expenditure. On top of that, the Department of Aboriginal Affairs spent a further \$162.077m. The Attorney-General is giving me a figure for this year: \$575m. Recently, I read a paper which said that the Aboriginal plight is directly proportional to the amount of money you give it; that is to say, the more you give, the bigger the problems seem to be on the communities. It is interesting to go back to 1970 or 1971. Only \$24m was provided from the Commonwealth's coffers in those days. In fact, DAA provided about the same: \$19m. Of course, Mr Mansell is down there now saying we want to double it to \$1000m. Work that out per head of population and you will end up with another set of figures which is quite astounding.

This legislation provides for organisations, such as those the member for Stuart mentioned, to apply for exemption. I would like to pay credit, if I might spend a few minutes, to some of the local-government-type bodies which provide local government-type services throughout the community. Many of them have done much with very little over the years. Full credit should be given to them. The amendment will also ensure that wages relating to the Community Development Employment Projects carried out by these organisations will not be subject to payroll tax. I commend the bill to honourable members and thank them for their contributions.

Motion agreed; bill read a second time.

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

Motion agreed to; bill read a third time.

ADJOURNMENT

Mr HATTON (Chief Minister): Mr Speaker, I move that the Assembly do now adjourn.

Mr Speaker, today is a sad day for the Northern Territory for reasons other than events that occurred in this Assembly. Today, the federal government completed the passage of legislation to ban mining in Kakadu National Park. That is the most intrusive, unconscionable, unjustified, unrealistic, nonsensical piece of legislation ever perpetrated on the people of Australia. That legislation was introduced in a fit of pique because a federal government could not pervert the procedures of World Heritage listing of parks, because a federal government, for internal political motives, sought to manipulate the World Heritage procedures of the United Nations and failed, and because the people of the region on which it was trying to enforce this perversion stood up for their rights and were successful in the courts of the land in demonstrating that the federal government was acting improperly.

Let us make no bones about it: this legislation was introduced as a consequence of the Prime Minister taking the quite correct decision to export yellowcake to France to honour an international contract which never should have been repudiated by the federal government. Having done that, he offended his political mates and the rules of his party. Having done that, he decided to recover ground and became a born-again greenie. His public opinion poll said he needed to do a bit of work to win the 'greenie' vote for the coming election. The Northern Territory was chosen yet again to be the scapegoat for the federal government - the political scapegoat on that occasion. It was decided to accelerate World Heritage listing of Kakadu National Park stage 2. It is a matter of history that the Northern Territory government opposed that action because the federal government did not follow the procedures stipulated by the World Heritage Committee in determining such listings, because we felt that that listing would be unjustified and because we believed, quite properly, that the resources of that area should be properly examined and appropriate use of that land - an area of some 8000 km² - should be properly considered before any final decisions were made.

It is a matter of history that the federal government and the Australian National Parks and Wildlife Service, as a consequence of our actions, were unsuccessful. Following that, our government took the responsible action of seeking to write to the federal Minister for Arts, Heritage and Environment and the Prime Minister offering to participate cooperatively in detailed research and environmental investigation of that area as required for World Heritage listing so that, if they wished to proceed with their application for listing, it could at least be done under the rules of the World Heritage Committee and, more importantly, under the rules that this federal Labor government determined in 1984; that is, in full consultation with the state or territory and with the agreement of the state or territory.

I might say, Mr Speaker, we did not even receive the courtesy of an answer to those letters. Perhaps they had an election in the wind or perhaps they do not want to settle this matter.

Mr Ede: Perhaps you had an election in the wind.

Mr HATTON: If I had an election to win, why didn't I publicise and promote the fact that we had been trying to enter into agreements with the Commonwealth for that investigation and were getting no response? We did not seek to make political capital out of that for the purposes of the elections - not at all.

We did not raise any federal issues in the Northern Territory election campaign but I am standing here again saying that this federal government is wrong and its actions today are absolutely reprehensible. No federal government should be passing laws interfering with the rights of a particular state or territory, purely for political motives, purely in a fit of pique. Had it done the job properly in the first place, the circumstances of 1986 never would have arisen. They arose because the federal government would not follow its own rules. We offered to work by its rules and the UN's rules and the federal government would not even talk about it. It decided to use bully-boy tactics and introduced a law to say there should be no mining in Kakadu stage 2 and forced it through with sheer force of numbers.

In doing so, it is attempting and, at the moment has succeeded, to lock up a resource for Australia estimated in the vicinity of some \$40 000m in Kakadu stage 2 alone. It is stepping over the pre-existing rights of miners in those areas - rights, I might say, that were granted by the Whitlam Labor government, honoured by the Fraser government but have now been repudiated by the Hawke government which is intent on repudiating anything that does not fit into its plans for today. It does not think about yesterday or about tomorrow. The only thing that is important to it is tomorrow's opinion poll and next week's election. Beyond that, it has no vision for this nation. It will trample on anybody's rights in its desperate grab for electoral victory, and that is all that this is about. I say to this Assembly that I will be fighting for the repeal of that legislation through whatever mechanism we can find. If it means waiting until we get rid of this reprehensible government in Canberra, so be it. That piece of legislation will stand as a blight on the record of the Hawke government as long as it is in office and as long as that legislation stays on the statute books of Australia.

Mr COLLINS (Sadadeen): Mr Speaker, I support the Chief Minister in his anger at this move by the federal Labor government to prevent mining in Kakadu National Park because people who know Ranger, for example, as I have known it over the last 2 sessions of this parliament, know that it is one of the most controlled mines in terms of environmental protection. The way in which mining is undertaken at Ranger is something of which Australia can be proud. One of these days, we are going to wake up to the fact that, with its \$100 000m international debt, Australia is not in a position where we can afford these politically-motivated actions which we have been dragged into. I look forward to the day when this legislation will be repealed.

This morning, I asked a question of the Chief Minister. I felt it was fair enough to ask him because the subject cut across 2 portfolios. It was put to me by a representative of the racing club in Alice Springs that Katherine had been granted \$100 000 for its racecourse even though it had only 4 meetings a year and Alice Springs received only \$90 000. I am not saying that the minister was wrong about the amount of money that may have been spent in Alice Springs over the years and I am not really having a shot at Katherine. However, I had been working with the Minister for Education in trying to obtain some improvements at the Sadadeen Secondary College. I knew that he was having difficulty in getting money for lockers for the students there and it seemed pretty incongruous that this money could be spent for 4 race meetings a year.

The college in Alice Springs is the first of the secondary colleges in the Territory. It has been thrown into the deep end in contrast to the college in the Top End which is putting its toe in gingerly and easing itself into the scheme. I am proud that the college is in Sadadeen but it does not cater simply for the students of Sadadeen. It covers all Alice Springs and a number of students come from a much wider district than Alice Springs.

The students are in need of lockers so that they can store safely the books they do not need to take home for homework. It is something that they are very keen to get. I know that there are bus services, but a fair number of the students like to ride their bikes and the sheer weight of the books that they have on those bikes make them somewhat unstable. I suppose it is all right for a burly lad to carry a fair weight of books, but when it is a slight lass with an equal load, the bicycle can be rather unstable, even dangerously so. It would be good to have lockers for each of these students. I believe the minister has been able to find money for 168, but that is sufficient to cater only for the matriculation students. However, there are also the Year 11 students and I was delighted by the Treasurer this morning. After he had bandied many figures around about how much the government and other people have put into horse racing, he said he was prepared to have a look at this and try to find the money for the Minister for Education to help improve the conditions for the students at Sadadeen Secondary College.

I commend the Minister for Education. I have brought a number of the problems of the Sadadeen Secondary College to his attention and I know the college council, staff and students appreciate his prompt dispatch of people to sort out the problems there. I know that he is proud of the college and wants to see it become something of a showplace. It is the first of the secondary colleges. I believe that he is doing everything he can in that area and, of course, I will keep up the pressure and try and get the lockers for the Year 11 students, who are younger and study more subjects. They have nowhere to store their books, and have to take almost as many books back and forth with them as do the matriculation students. It is much better for the books if they are only taken from place to place when necessary and, of course, if the books belong to the college itself, the less wear and tear they are subjected to, the better condition they are likely to be in for the students who will use them the following year.

Mr Speaker, I intended to ask another question this morning. When I was a member of the CLP, I often said in the party room that our ministers sometimes took rather a long time to get to the point in question time. I used to say it, but I was not able to say it in the Chamber. It would be nice if we received some concise answers. I am sure that the people listening to question time on the radio would appreciate it if the answers were concise and to the point and many more questions could be asked. The government has the numbers and is not really frightened of members on this side of the Assembly when answering questions. Certainly, it would be nice if the answers could be brief and concise and we were able to ask a few more questions in the time available.

The question I would have asked this morning related to a section of land in Alice Springs which runs between Railway Terrace and the Stuart Highway and, in particular, an old railway building left over from the days when the Ghan used to pass by roughly where the Stuart Highway runs just north of Billygoat Hill. This railway building was first brought to my attention by certain members of the Lions Club of MacDonnell who said that it would make a beaut headquarters for the various service clubs. It is right in the heart of town. Their idea is to develop it, beautify it, paint it, change it around inside and provide a headquarters for the clubs. Because the service clubs in Alice Springs do a great job, I investigated the matter for them and was told that there was a proposal for a bus station to be built on the land to the north of the building. It was unfortunate because, if the railway building had been a little bit further to the south, towards Billygoat Hill, there would have been enough room to erect the bus station and the building could have stayed there. However, as it was, there was not enough room for a viable

bus station. Regrettably, the building was demolished. A bit of a sop was given to the clubs. They were offered land in the Dixon Road area, but with the cost of building and the limited funds they could raise, after enthusiastically accepting the land, they had to turn it in because they did not have sufficient funds to do anything with it.

Members of the last Assembly will recall that there was a bit of a furore in Alice Springs because St Vincent de Paul wanted to buy the squash centre. Of course, that upset the people in squash although I suspect it was somewhat of a ploy on the part of the St Vincent de Paul people to try to force the issue. They had been searching for a suitable piece of land for some time. The present Minister for Lands and Housing pulled a few strings and, lo and behold, said that there was some land on Railway Terrace. I understood that it was somewhat to the south of where the old railway building was. I was very surprised when I found out. They built virtually slap bang on top of where the old railway building was.

I do not know how much that building would have been worth, but it was the quarters of the men who came up from south to drive and staff the trains. It was fairly large. It seems a crying pity that the building could not have been offered to St Vincent de Paul. As far as I am concerned, it could have been offered to them for nothing and they could have tried to modify it to suit their purposes. I made a few further inquiries about what was going on. It was contrary to what I had been led to believe when I told the Lions Club that, if it had been further south, it would have been all right but the bus station was to go there.

We still do not have our bus station. I would like to know when that project, which is badly needed for Alice, is to get under way. I would like to know the real explanation why 1 building was knocked down and another built on the same spot. One explanation I was given, and I certainly will not be revealing my sources, was that the National Trust was a bit interested and it was decided to dispose of the building before the National Trust put its stamp on it. I hope that was not the explanation. A building worth possibly \$0.5m was demolished for no good reason. There was still room to the south of where the railway building was for St Vincent de Paul to have built. I am quite happy about that particular project, but the whole business seems a stupidity that does not add up. I believe I had the wool pulled over my eyes. Maybe it is easy to pull the wool over my eyes, but I think it is a crying pity that the service clubs of Alice Springs did not get that building. They would have put it to very good use. Those clubs do a grand job and help the town in many ways. It is a crying shame.

Mrs PADGHAM-PURICH (Koolpinyah): Mr Deputy Speaker, tonight in the adjournment, I would like to speak on several subjects. First, I was very sorry indeed to hear of the resignation of the member for Port Darwin whose honesty and honourable behaviour could be copied by other honourable members in the Assembly to their betterment. I respect the honourable member for saying what he did. I know him to have a high level of integrity, honesty, patriotism and honourable behaviour and I only hope that he continues to serve his electorate and represent it in this Assembly for many years to come. I would like to say that this was one ...

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! Honourable member, there is a motion on the notice paper today concerning the matter which you are raising at the moment and because of that you are unable to raise it in debate this evening.

Mrs PADGHAM-PURICH: Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker, I will turn to another subject.

Recently, a school sports day was held in the rural area at Fred's Pass Reserve which I believe would have been the envy of any other area in the Northern Territory. It was the Top End Rural Area Sports and was arranged mainly by Mr Peter Tolhurst and Mr Brian Deslands. It took in 11 primary schools in the Top End rural area. They played netball and Australian Rules football.

The children enjoyed themselves thoroughly. I went and spoke to the teachers, parents and children there. It was impossible not to appreciate the whole day, because it was absolutely perfect, even if you did not like football and netball. There were all these keen sports boys and girls and an absolutely beautiful venue. I had not realised, until I stopped and looked around, how beautiful the Fred's Pass Reserve is. I will be gracious in my remarks and say that the government has given quite an amount of money to the Fred's Pass Reserve Trustees and, over the years, the trustees have put the money to good use. A great deal of voluntary labour has gone into making the reserve as beautiful as it is, and the value of the money that has been given by the government has been more than matched by the amount of voluntary work that has been put in. The management of the reserve by the trustees is to be commended. It was a beautiful day: the grass was green, there was a cool breeze blowing, the sun was shining and the trees were all in leaf.

The reason for holding the Top End Rural Area Sports on that day was to pick a football team and netball team to play in the Territory Exchange, which will be played in 2 weeks time. I believe these final games will be played at Gardens Oval, and it is a great pity that they cannot be played at Fred's Pass Reserve because a more useful and beautiful venue could not be found.

There were 500 children at Fred's Pass Reserve on that day and I believe there could have been at least 1000 children playing there and they would have been accommodated with ease. The schools that were represented were: Howard Springs, Batchelor, Middle Point, Kormilda, Darwin River, Humpty Doo, Berry Springs, Adelaide River, Sacred Heart at Berrimah, Oenpelli and Jabiru. The teams that were picked from those schools, with a few reserves, comprised pupils from 9 schools.

One very interesting matter that I would like to raise today in the interests of equality was that the first Australian Rules team picked had the names of 2 girls in it. When the final names were picked, the name of 1 of those girls remained in the team. She is 12-year-old Lekesha Francis and she will play as forward pocket. I think that that might be the start of great things to come. Australian Rules has reached a very high degree of excellence in the Northern Territory and I believe that when, the girls and the women start to play, we are in for an even more interesting time. I wish them all success in the finals which will be played at Gardens Oval. I think the games will be very interesting to watch.

The Minister for Industries and Development answered a question from me this morning. I would like to make 2 corrections to his answer. He mentioned 2 small dairies in the Top End that I was talking about. One is a small dairy at Elizabeth River but the other, which is in Katherine, is certainly not a small dairy. For the minister's information, it has about 250 cows which makes it a very large dairy in anybody's book. The owners hope to increase their herd to about 1000 at some time in the future.

The minister commented that, if milk can be produced cheaper in Victoria than anywhere else in Australia, a possible scenario would be for the Victorians to produce milk for the rest of Australia. I would like to state that the milk produced by the Fitzgeralds at the Elizabeth River Dairy and by the Rowlands at Katherine Dairy can compete with the reconstituted milk that is currently on the local market as well as milk that comes from Queensland. If they can do that in the Northern Territory, they are to be commended. Everybody says that we have greater production costs in primary industry than elsewhere in Australia and, if those dairies are able to produce a product which competes very favourably with milk coming from interstate and the reconstituted milk already produced in the Northern Territory, that is a considerable achievement.

Mr Speaker, I have criticised people from time to time but I hold to the view that, if one gives it out, one must be also prepared to take it. If I make a mistake, I hope that I am always big enough to admit to it. It has been pointed out to me by the Minister for Mines and Energy that I made a mistake regarding that unfortunate incident with the toilet brush which I said he gave to the Chief Minister. He said that he did not do so. Therefore, it is clear that I made a mistake and I regret bringing him into the story if he had no part in it. All I can say is that, after seeing the incident twice on TV, I honestly thought that he had passed the toilet brush to the Chief Minister, as did many people in my electorate who spoke to me about it and, I believe, many people in Alice Springs. If I have impugned the reputation of the minister I apologise, but I would say the mistake was made honestly, if one can make a mistake honestly.

Mr LEO (Nhulunbuy): Mr Speaker, I want to address 2 matters in this evening's adjournment. One concerns some constituents of mine and their unfortunate experience in Darwin and the other relates to the rights under the Work Health Authority of employees in and around Darwin.

Relatively recently this year, some publicity has been given to a tourist development called Crab Claw Cove or Crab Claw Island. Whatever it is called, this resort is supposed to provide accommodation, when completed, similar to that found in various parts of south-eastern Asia. In fact, Crab Claw Island is so well known that the Deputy Chief Minister visited the place and was greeted with sausages and tomato sauce and then evacuated by helicopter.

There are 2 aspects which concern me about this development and the reports that I have had about it. One relates to implications for work health and safety there and the other is the matter of building standards. Apparently, the project is being constructed by a Mr Cantwell who is, no doubt, an entrepreneur of some skill, and he is employing people who have joined the increasingly long unemployment queues which tend to form outside the Department of Social Security office now. Fortunately for Mr Cantwell, these people are single. Unfortunately for them, generally they have no family in the Northern Territory and very little in the way of other support and therefore they are obliged to take whatever comes along, including employment by Mr Cantwell. The area, I am reliably informed, is infested by crocodiles and sharks and other beasts that roam wild in the Northern Territory. As I understand it, the infestation is so heavy that it has caused quite some alarm to the employees there.

I have been told that the only means of reaching this construction site in the middle of the jungle in the Northern Territory is via a 14 ft dinghy. This dinghy takes people, pipes, food and water to the construction site and presumably returns with the people when they want to leave. I am reliably

informed that the dinghy is noted for having more holes in it than it has oars. In fact, it has 3 holes and there are no oars. People are expected to strike out for this place in the middle of the jungle in this dinghy. Unfortunately, the employer does not provide the same service to his employees that the Deputy Chief Minister was able to avail himself of. They are not flown in there by helicopter. They are delivered there in this somewhat leaky boat, surrounded by crocodiles, sharks and various other large creatures which may devour people from time to time. That is one of the complaints that employees have brought back - these desperate people who have returned rather dazed and forlorn-looking from the wilds of the Northern Territory.

Another complaint relates to the living conditions that they have to endure there. Accommodation is virtually non-existent. Sustenance is in the form of a pretty regular diet of pasta and rice and they are told that that is it or goodbye. Unfortunately, they cannot say goodbye because the only means of getting out is the boat and the boss has control of that. As a result, they have to live on pasta and rice. The water is transported there in a 44 gallon drum in this leaking boat and, if the water runs out and the sea is rough or the motor does not work, they go without fresh water too.

One of the few luxuries provided at this construction site in the wilds of Arnhem Land is an electrical generator. Unfortunately, the electrical generator is not maintained very well. Indeed, it is so poorly maintained that I am told an area of some 10 m² around it is live. If you walk in that area, you get a boot, to the extent that one worker, whilst responding to a call of nature, received a very unfortunate shock indeed. I am sure that that person endured an experience that few of us would want to go through.

All of these matters do not go unnoticed by the employer. He is extremely generous, it would seem. Besides having 3 holes and no oars, the dinghy contains an illegal gill net. Whilst they are running backwards and forwards to collect their water, the employees are expected to dump the gill net and hope that they can come back and have a feed of something other than pasta and rice for the night.

Mr Manzie: What is this? Give us the punch line, Dan. Who owns the company?

Mr LEO: This, I am reliably informed, all goes on at the construction site at Crab Claw Island.

Mr Hatton: Where is Crab Claw Island? You were talking about Arnhem Land.

Mr LEO: No, it is out here to the west.

Mr Manzie: You said 'the jungles of Arnhem Land'.

Mr LEO: Well, it is in the jungles of the Northern Territory.

Mr Hatton: You are not very reliably informed because it is not a jungle.

Mr LEO: I suppose a mosquito-infested mangrove swamp would be a more accurate description.

Mr Firmin: What are they building there?

Mr Hatton: Devil's Island.

Mr LEO: Mr Speaker, the analogy that has been drawn for me is that Papillon went through very little compared to what these poor people are experiencing. In fact, escape from Crab Claw Island would make Papillon's escape from Devil's Island look like a hike with the local scouting group. I am reliably informed by the dazed and weary people who have wandered from this mosquito-infested swamp that they are not interested in picking up their pay. They are going to get away from Crab Claw Island, out of Darwin and out of the Northern Territory as fast as their feet or any available vehicle will carry them, never to return again.

This may sound very humorous and, indeed, I found it quite incredible when these stories were being related to me. However, I would ask whichever minister is responsible after today's events to investigate these allegations. They have certainly been put to the Miscellaneous Workers' Union and they have been put to me. I would ask him to investigate these allegations and to supply a report on the working conditions out there. I have had an indication from the Miscellaneous Workers Union that, after it had made repeated requests, some form of inspection was carried out there. I am not too clear as to the status of the inspection, whether somebody flew over the site at 10 000 ft and said, 'Yes, it exists', or whether somebody has actually been in there and seen these starving and miserable creatures wandering around in the mud and mosquitoes. I would like to be assured by the responsible minister that an on-site inspection has been carried out.

Mr Dondas: Is it outside town planning boundaries and Building Board boundaries?

Mr LEO: It is not outside the boundaries as far as working conditions and safety conditions are concerned. It is not outside the boundaries of the Work Health Authority.

Mr Manzie: It sounds like a tall story, Dan.

Mr LEO: I would like to be assured by the minister responsible for the Work Health Authority that employees' rights, in terms of work health and safety, are not being infringed upon by some barbarian who is building another Devil's Island in the middle of a swamp. Workers' health and safety has to be recognised no matter where people are employed in the Northern Territory. There are many unfortunate episodes in the Northern Territory's history of people being exploited by the unconscionable and the greedy. I want the minister responsible for the Work Health Authority to assure me and this Assembly that this has not happened or, if it has happened, that it will not continue to happen. The development, as I understand it, is being constructed with the use of some very questionable building practices. I have not been there and, quite frankly, I am not game enough to go out there after the reports that I have had. I am reliably informed that the building is likely to subside into the swamp which surrounds it and that there will be very little left soon. If that happens, perhaps it will not constitute a danger to visiting tourists and can be forgotten as a blight on the Northern Territory's history.

Mr Perron: For the adventure holiday-maker!

Mr LEO: For the adventure holiday-maker, says the member for Fannie Bay. I should imagine that visitors to Devil's Island thought that that was an adventure holiday.

However, I would not care to delve into this gentleman's commercial practices. If he is adequately insured and his guests are adequately covered, that is their risk and his fortune. However, I do suggest, for safety's sake and for the sake of the tourist industry in the Northern Territory, that the buildings be inspected in some way so that the safety of persons will be assured. We will destroy our fledgling tourist industry if, besides being bitten by mosquitoes, sandflies, crocodiles, sharks and whatever, the tourists subside into a swamp in the middle of the night.

Mr Speaker, I would suggest that it is very important to our fledgling tourist industry in the Northern Territory that that development be inspected. It is outside the town boundaries but, for the sake of the industry in the Northern Territory and for the sake of our reputation, I believe that it should conform with the building code that is in force in the Northern Territory.

I would like the Minister for Transport and Works to assure me that the place is of safe construction. If such an inspection cannot be conducted on an official basis, I am quite sure that Mr Cantwell and his wife, Maria, will gladly invite an inspector out there in order to save their good name and to promote their establishment as a safe haven for visitors to the Northern Territory. If somebody is injured out there as a result of shoddy building practices, we will destroy whatever chance we have of developing a reputable safari tourist industry. There are reputable operators, but they will go broke if the international people are forced to realise that there are more sharks out of the water than in the water. I hope that those ministers responsible will take those matters on board because they are of considerable concern to the Northern Territory.

The matter of workers' health and safety is of very personal concern to me because I have seen practices similar to the incidents that have been described to me out there and they are to be deplored by everybody in this Assembly. That must be investigated and this Assembly must be reassured that such things are not happening and that people are being paid the award wage. As far as the Building Code is concerned, I hope that Mr Cantwell takes on board what I am saying and invites a building inspector out there from the Department of Transport and Works or whatever to inspect the construction work and reassure the Northern Territory tourist industry that he is not a shark.

Mr Speaker, I am sure that members are aware of the other matter I wish to bring to the Assembly's notice, but I want my comments recorded in Hansard. I refer to my absolute disgust at the way 24 of my constituents were treated by a hotel owner in Darwin some 2 weeks ago. A group of young men came over to play basketball in the Northern Territory championships. There was the open basketball team and the under-18 basketball team. They booked into the Boulevard Hotel and paid some \$1900 for their accommodation for the 3 nights they were there. The manager of the team, upon getting to his room, was asked down to go to the reception area and told that, because the majority of his team were Aboriginal, he would be obliged to pay a \$100 insurance ...

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

Mr DONDAS (Casuarina): Mr Speaker, I rise to enlighten the member for Nhulunbuy about Crab Claw. In fact, I visited Crab Claw about 2 weeks ago. I flew to Crab Claw from Darwin; it was about an 8-minute flight. I landed on a landing strip about 150 m from the proposed development and was greeted by Mr Cantwell and some other people who were looking at the development at that time. I went over to get some idea of what this entrepreneur was doing. In

fact, Crab Claw Point is in Bynoe Harbour and is actually located opposite the illegal squatters area that is out there. At least, Mr Cantwell paid for his block of land at an auction last December. In fact, it was part of the Finniss River Station subdivision when it was sold. The member for Nhulunbuy is shaking his head. He knows all that, but he did not say that during the course of his speech. I am not going to raise the question of whether Mr Cantwell was paying award wages to his workers. I would not know that; however, I would assume that he probably would have been.

In relation to the nature and the standard of the building, it appeared to me to be of very solid construction. Mr Cantwell was the Darwin manager of a very large international construction company. Therefore, he has the experience and the expertise to be able to build a decent-sized building. In fact, he was the manager and the supervisor of many of that particular company's building projects in Darwin, Nightcliff, Fannie Bay, Casuarina and many other sites in the Darwin area.

I walked over the construction site, which is a Malaysian-type hotel where everything is off the ground by about 10 or 15 ft. He has a major restaurant and bar area of solid timber construction. It looked pretty good to me, but it was only about three-quarters finished. The refrigeration was being installed and they did not have a large generator in operation because it had only arrived that morning.

The main reason why I rose in this adjournment debate is because, so often, members opposite start denigrating people in the community who do not have a chance to defend themselves in this place. No doubt, Mr Cantwell's name is in the telephone book so that the member for Nhulunbuy could have obtained his address and asked him about the stories that he had been told. Instead of that, he makes accusations in this Assembly and says that he is 'reliably informed'. I would like him to say it outside the Assembly and see how he goes. Mr Cantwell may well slap a law suit on him. He should have the decency to check with the developer before denigrating him in here.

What he has said may be 100% correct but he has made no attempt to get in touch with Mr Cantwell to hear his side of the story. Mr Cantwell does not have the ability to come into this Assembly to defend his actions. That is the only reason why I am standing here. The member should fly over there and have a look at the development. The flight over and return costs \$25. If he cannot afford the \$25, I will give it to him. He could then come back to this Assembly and make his accusations.

I heard the honourable member say that Mr Cantwell obtained his workers at the CES. What is the Commonwealth Employment Service doing? It is supposed to inform workers on what they should be paid as carpenters or bricklayers or whatever. I would imagine that the CES would be aware of pay rates applicable for people going to remote areas.

I was nearly stranded there that night. While I was there, I sat around and I must admit the accommodation was pretty rough but, as the member said, it is out in the middle of nowhere. However, the meal was cooked by the ex-chef of the Telford in Darwin. It smelled like a nice lamb casserole to me. I don't know about fish and rice.

The member has made accusations on the basis of what somebody has said. How many people have walked into his electorate office and made accusations? No doubt, he has had occasion to pick up the phone, make inquiries and separate truth from fiction. In this instance, he has chosen to come into

this Assembly and attack people who do not have the opportunity to defend themselves. If he says the same thing outside, from what I have seen, I am sure that Mr Cantwell will have pretty good grounds for taking legal action. In fact, I will go over there and stay for a bit when it is finished. It will be very nice.

Mr Speaker, wherever you go, you will find crocodiles. I was out at the Finnis River Station homestead on Saturday. The billabong there is only from here to the Nelson Building away from the homestead and I nearly stood on a crocodile. It happens wherever you go in the Territory. These isolated areas are not Kings Park or a nice water garden somewhere in Sydney or Melbourne; they are wilderness areas. That development is a wilderness project. Why do you think people go to Kakadu? Apart from the escarpment and the bird life, they also want to see a few crocodiles and some wildlife. The Finnis River Station and the surrounding area has abundant wildlife: dingoes, kangaroos and beautiful birds. That is what he is trying to capitalise on. In the dry season people will be able to drive there if they don't want to fly. It will also give the Cruising Yacht Association another venue. People will be able to sail from Darwin on a Friday night, stay there over Saturday and Sunday and come back to Darwin for work on Monday, or Tuesday if it is a long weekend. At least, Mr Cantwell is putting his money where his mouth is. He is spending something like \$750 000 of his money to help develop the tourist industry. His decision to go there is a bloody bottler.

Mr SPEAKER: Order!

Mr DONDAS: I withdraw that comment.

It is a gutsy decision to spend \$750 000 in an area such as the member for Nhulunbuy described. We could go to Doctor's Gully or East Point, Marrara, Buffalo Creek or Lee Point and find plenty of sandflies and mosquitoes. Crab Claw Point is only on the other side of the harbour.

The member for Nhulunbuy talked about Papillon or whoever the poor guy on Devil's Island was. Crab Claw is nothing like Devil's Island. At least, people who want to go out there and do a bit of fishing will be able to catch a fish, which is considerably more than can be said for some of the trout fishing spots in New Zealand and Tasmania. People will get value for money, but they will have to be cautious. They will not be going to Kings Park or Hyde Park; they will be going into the wilderness of the Territory and it is a pretty rough place.

I will give Mr Cantwell's telephone number to the member for Nhulunbuy and he can follow the matter through. I hope he will then come back to this Assembly and apologise to Mr Cantwell.

Mr TUXWORTH (Barkly): Mr Speaker, I would like to raise a few issues this evening, mostly pertaining to my electorate. However, first I would like to mention the incident that took place last night when I believe honourable members had a bit of a laugh over a picture of mine that was in the custody of the Clerk. Mr Speaker, that picture was in the Clerk's office. It was given to me by an art student at the DIT. I should have looked after it and taken it home but I didn't get around to it.

Mr Smith: It would be worth thousands now.

Mr TUXWORTH: I wish it were. I would sell it.

Mr Speaker, the point I wish to make is that, under the circumstances, I would have thought it reasonable for the Leader of the Opposition, or even yourself, Sir, to say, 'Look, we borrowed one of your personal effects last night and had a bit of fun with it'. I thought that any article that was left in the charge of the Clerk would remain in the charge of the Clerk and would not be carted around the precincts by anybody. I think any member of the Assembly would be offended if his or her mail or personal effects were taken from the charge of the attendants and Clerks and waltzed around the premises. It is a matter of courtesy, and I raise it in that light. I will not make a big deal of it.

There are a couple of issues that I would like to raise without any reflection on the government at all. In the last 15 years, particularly between 1967 and 1980, many of the buildings in the Northern Territory were built under the supervision of the Commonwealth and, more recently, by the Northern Territory government. In many of those buildings, a considerable amount of asbestos was used in the air-conditioning. In those days, it was not recognised that there was any real problem with asbestos. Everybody used it and it was not regarded as a health hazard. Until recently, very little had been done even to ensure that asbestos was not used in buildings any more.

I would like to raise a point for the benefit of the Minister for Transport and Works. I would be grateful if he could advise me during these sittings whether the government has commissioned a report into those buildings in the Territory that were built within the time frame that I outlined a moment ago and whether asbestos was used in the air-conditioning installed in them. I want to know whether the government has made a survey of the amount of asbestos in those buildings and whether it has a program to replace the asbestos in those buildings over the next few years. Could he give us an indication of what the cost of that is likely to be and whether there is any likelihood of the Territory government making a claim on the Commonwealth for the cost that will be incurred.

I would be the first to admit that, when the asbestos scare occurred in about 1976 or 1977, most people thought that the greenies were at work trying to frighten the living daylights out of everybody working and living in major buildings that had asbestos in the air-conditioning. However, I think it is fair to say with hindsight that it has been proven pretty conclusively that asbestos is a public health hazard and should be removed wherever possible. I would be interested to hear from the minister on that in due course.

The next item I would like to raise relates to the portfolio of the Minister for Industries and Development. It concerns the Tennant Creek Meatworks. The Tennant Creek Meatworks was sold up at auction today. That is regrettable, because many people put considerable time and effort into trying to get that works off the ground. In fact, the government made a considerable loan to it at one time to ensure that it would be successful. While, in recent years, the works suffered from the disadvantage of having a depleted herd in the region that would normally be its catchment area, one of the main factors leading to the closure of the works has been the militancy and the attitude of the meatworkers. To be economic, that works has always needed to process about 50 000 head per year. On one occasion only did the works process 40 000 head and, for most years, it had been flat out processing 20 000.

My question to the Minister for Industry is: could he give me, at some stage, an indication as to whether the government made any representations to the company about the closure of the works and whether it was possible to keep

it open and, could he advise me whether the government got its money back or will it get it back after the sale has been finalised?

In my view, the closure of the Tennant Creek works is a very sad thing for the Territory. We have seen the closure of the Alice Springs works in recent years, Mr Speaker, which was a subject dear to your heart, and we have seen the incredible industrial dispute that has involved Mudginberri. We have a question mark about when the Katherine works will open. We are very quickly exporting all our jobs in this industry to the eastern seaboard and anything we can do to slow that down would be a worthwhile exercise.

The last point that I would like to raise tonight relates to the responsibilities of the Minister for Education. I have not had a chance to canvass the matter in detail with him but I will take the opportunity now because the point that I would like to raise is one that would probably escape the minds of most people.

In Tennant Creek and Katherine, there are Department of Education stores and personnel whose function is to deliver stores to remote schools. The word has gone out this week that the staff are to be retrenched and the stores are to be closed. I understand from the minister that it is a part of the belt-tightening exercise that has to occur. I understand that is the reality that will be with us for the next year or 2 in many places other than Tennant Creek and Katherine and in many departments other than the Department of Education. However, I would like to put it to the minister that these positions and the operation of the stores are really the key to the success of the operation and conduct of the schools in remote areas. If those stores are closed and those positions are retrenched or transferred, then the teachers in the remote areas will find it hard to teach, and the children in the schools will find it very hard to get an education.

From early experience, we found that one of the things that made it almost impossible for teachers in the really remote schools to keep their education system going was the non-availability of school books, paper, pens and all the rest of it. The other requirement was the capacity of the department to deliver materials to the school when they were required and not just when some truck happened to be going past or when a plane had time or space to put it on.

I would say to the minister quite sincerely that, if those stores are closed and if the positions are done away with, we are genuinely putting at risk the education of many children in remote areas who find it hard enough to get an education anyway. I am talking about the schools at Robinson River, the Aboriginal communities on the border, Borroloola, Anthony Lagoon, Walhallow, Alexandria Downs and Newcastle Waters, and I guess the other rural members in the Assembly could indicate 20 or 30 remote schools in their own electorates that depend on these stores and the jobs these drivers do to keep the schools adequately supplied with education materials and tools when they are needed. Mr Speaker, I say to the minister that I accept the challenge that he has before him in containing the budget, but it will be an extremely false economy if we close those stores and if those storemen and drivers are not available to deliver equipment and facilities to the children and the teachers involved.

I do not know if the minister has had an opportunity to have a look at schools in my electorate. If he has not, I invite him to come and see what some of the teachers and some of the children are doing in those schools. The programs they have set up and the effort they put in are tremendous. It is a

credit to themselves, and it is a credit to the department that they are able to sustain those schools and those places the way they do. Such a move would be a retrograde step.

My last point is addressed to the Chief Minister. The Chief Minister made a short statement in the Assembly earlier in the week about the railway. I welcome the possibility that we are making progress with the railway and I will look forward to seeing how negotiations and the study group proceed. I would be particularly interested to hear from the Chief Minister on the issue of freight, because the building of the railway is simple, the financing of it will be possible at some stage, but the key to its success will be freight: where the freight is to come from, when it will come, what levels of tonnage will be available, what sort of commodities will be trucked etc. I would say to the Chief Minister that, if he is making a statement to the Assembly, any delineation and explanation he would like to make about the freight that the railway is to carry and how that will pay for the railway, is a matter that I would particularly like to hear about and so would many other people who have a general interest in the railway. It is the most important aspect that we have to consider in relation to the construction of the railway.

I notice that the Chief Minister was very careful in his remarks the other day to say that he was not excluding the possibility of the government making a contribution or a commitment to the railway at some time. I would assume that we will have a government contribution in some way at some time and, that being the case, it will be all the more important for us to have some pretty detailed and solid facts and information about the freight that the railway is to carry.

Mr FIRMIN (Ludmilla): Mr Speaker, I would like to tell you something about what I did in the recent school holidays. I was the host to an American businessman and his wife at my house for a couple of days during the school holidays. This American businessman happened to be the chairman of a fund-raising group in a very large school in St Louis, Missouri. I was very lucky to visit him and his wife last year and they looked after me extremely well. We had been extolling the virtues of the Northern Territory during our visit to the United States and certainly during the period when they were in Australia. We asked them to come to the Northern Territory and stay with us for a few days and have a look at some of the most beautiful waterways in the Territory. We told them about our river systems, the wildlife and the other forms of tourist activities that they could undertake. Mr Speaker, you may imagine my shock, horror and regret that I had done so when I took them out to Kakadu National Park.

I have lived in the Territory now for nearly 21 years and, in my first 7 years here, I used to spend nearly every weekend in that area which is now known as Kakadu National Park. In fact, I attempted to buy property in that area in 1969 to run one of the first tourist operations there on a piece of country called Murella Park. Unfortunately, the lease was not transferred to me because of the intervention of the federal government. Nonetheless, I was in that area for many years and, every weekend, I helped to push tracks into some of the most beautiful lagoons to be seen in this country. As I said, I had extolled the virtues of this area to my overseas visitors. Let me hasten to add that, until this particular visit, I had not been to Kakadu during the last 7 years.

We jumped into the 4-wheel-drive at 9 o'clock one morning and, apart from a short break at the South Alligator Motor Inn, drove almost non-stop right through to the East Alligator, arriving there very late in the afternoon to

find that I had just completed what I consider to be probably the most boring long-distance drive that I have ever made. The only fauna that I saw on that trip were 4 snakes dead on the road and a couple of kite hawks - not another thing. I remembered that, 7 years ago, when you got as far from Darwin as Beatrice Hill, for example, you saw herds of buffalo across the plains, wild horses on the ridge country, wallabies and kangaroos and occasionally a wild pig. At the moment, the country out there is totally devoid of fauna apart from the bird life. As far as I am concerned, Kakadu National Park is a tourist rip-off.

Having reached the East Alligator River in the afternoon, we were directed by signs everywhere into areas that we were allowed to go, kept out of other areas by log barriers and permitted to park only at considerable distances from any of the things that were capable of being viewed, including the river bank and, at Obiri Rock, we had to park nearly half a mile from the closest point at which we could view a rock painting. With tourists in my company who were in their 60s, having flown in from New Zealand the day before, it was pretty distressing to have to ask them to walk half a mile up to the first cave, in wet season conditions, to see anything at all of what Obiri is all about. In fact, we had to leave them there while I walked another quarter of a mile to another area to see where on earth the little paths took visitors to these supposedly famous rock paintings which we used to visit regularly in the years past when we could drive right up to them so that we could see them with some degree of comfort in the wet season.

In the rest of the park, I was amazed to find that areas have been designated in such a fashion now that, if one wishes to camp at the East Alligator, one now camps some three-quarters of a mile away from the river, up in a scrubby piece of country that no one would want to camp on. I reckon I could find better camping sites in some of the mangrove areas on those grass plains behind the Shoal Bay dump than what they are offering to people for camping in Kakadu National Park. It is an absolute disaster, particularly when one recalls the days when we used to camp on the bank of the East Alligator River, on those beautiful sandy areas with the lagoon behind and all the beautiful water out in front. There was always a breeze blowing up and down the river. To compare that scene with the area where they are asking people to camp at the East Alligator at the moment is a mockery.

Mr Speaker, it did not get much better, I can tell you. We were unable to decide whether we should drive back to the South Alligator Motor Inn for the night or stay at Cooida. We had booked at Cooida so we decided to continue on. We drove back through parts of the park and, as I drove down the road, I was reminded of some of the areas that I had been into in years past. In several cases, I actually saw some tracks that I recognised where I had driven in myself over many years and put those tracks in place. We now found that access was denied us. The National Parks and Wildlife Service, for whatever reason, and no one ever quite knew why, had denied access. Log barriers were across the road saying 'No Unauthorised Access'.

Mr Ede: You put the roads through there and then all the wildlife disappeared. ANPWS close off the roads so maybe the fauna will return. That is the reason.

Mr FIRMIN: I put the tracks in in the first place. What I am saying is that people are being kept out by the log barriers across those areas. The wildlife has disappeared because the animals have been shot out or removed, not for any other reason. You know that quite well.

Mr Speaker, coming down the track from the East Alligator River and back down to the Cooida Motel that evening was just about as soul-destroying to me. We eventually got to Cooida that night and had a meal and, next morning, paid \$18 a head to spend an hour on Yellow Waters Lagoon to see a few more birds. We then spent the rest of the day trying to find our way into the waterways around the Murella area, Deaf Adder Creek and up Nourlangie Creek way. In fact, the only access that we were allowed into any of those areas was to the Airfield Lagoon at Murella Park.

At the moment, I think one would be better off sitting along the banks of the Conservation Commission's Howard Springs Reserve. It is a damn sight more comfortable and a damn sight more pleasant. You can actually see water. You cannot see water at Airfield Lagoon because there is no way you can get into it anymore. You certainly cannot get up into Sandy Lagoon because all that area is barriered off. You cannot get into the Nourlangie Lagoons themselves. The Dreaming Waters area and the Old Nourlangie Safari Camp have been closed off. There were log barriers across the road saying 'No Entry'. We had a look at Nourlangie Rock. It was permitted to go to the edge of Umbungbung Lagoon but the bitumen road down past Umbungbung was actually closed with great ...

Mr Ede: Wet season.

Mr FIRMIN: It was a bitumen road, not a bloody gravel road. I withdraw that remark, Mr Speaker. I am sorry.

Wet season conditions on a bitumen road down past Umbungbung did not require the road to be closed.

Mr Lanhupuy: From Pine Creek?

Mr FIRMIN: You know it well. The ANPWS has put in a bitumen road to Nourlangie Rock. The right hand turn just before that takes one down to Umbungbung Lagoon, which is signposted. The bitumen road goes past there down to the Nourlangie waterholes. Across the middle of the bitumen road was a great big barrier of red plastic Transport and Works-type detour material saying: 'No Access Past This Point'. For what reason? The whole area is a disaster in my view. The handling of the area by the ANPWS is beyond a joke. All the areas that should be open to the public, some of the best areas in the park, are being hidden away. I am yet to find out the reason for that.

I intend to write to the Australian National Parks and Wildlife Service and ask why most of these areas have been closed off. There are only about 2 or 3 lagoons that you can actually look at in the Kakadu National Park area.

Mr Lanhupuy: It is the wet season.

Mr FIRMIN: Most of them have a decent road to them. They have a hard-capped gravel road surface.

Mr Bell: What explanation did you get?

Mr FIRMIN: I haven't got one, but I will.

Mr Speaker, in the short time I have left available to me tonight, I will move on to something else that I want to remind members of this evening. Tomorrow is the 45th anniversary of the Battle of the Coral Sea, a subject that would normally be dear to the heart of the member for MacDonnell.

Mr Bell: And the member for Port Darwin.

Mr FIRMIN: And maybe the member for Port Darwin as well.

The 45th anniversary will be commemorated at the cenotaph at 10.30 am. I would suggest that members of the Assembly who are here should attend. The commemoration of the Battle of the Coral Sea is of great importance to Darwin. The battle was fought when most of the land forces of the Japanese army had marched down through the Malaysian Peninsula and worked their way through the area then held by the Dutch which is now the Indonesian chain and were heading towards Australia very speedily. The invasion fleets from Japan were heading down through the Coral Sea and were intercepted by the American forces in that area.

Some of those Japanese forces played a considerable part in the destruction of Darwin in 1942. The carrier fleet that was involved in launching the aircraft that destroyed the majority of the shipping in Pearl Harbour was involved in the bombing of Darwin on 19 February 1942. A considerable amount of shipping was lost here during that and subsequent raids. Particularly during that period, most of the capital ships of both the American and the Australian fleet were in harbour and we lost the Moanalua, and the Houston and the Peary, which both belonged to the United States. The Neptuna, the Mead, the British Motorist and the Manunda - the Red Cross ship which was in harbour at the time - barely escaped to Broome after having been severely damaged. I suppose, with Anzac Day just passed, many people tend to forget the importance of the Coral Sea commemoration. I would like to repeat my request for as many members as possible to attend tomorrow at the cenotaph at 10.15 am.

Mr LANHUPUY (Arnhem): Mr Deputy Speaker, I rise in the adjournment debate to speak on a few issues which are relevant to my electorate. However, first, I would like to express my personal disgust at what the Chief Minister said this afternoon in this debate concerning the Kakadu National Park and its nomination for World Heritage listing.

That was an incredible performance for a Chief Minister. He took the part of one sector of the Territory's population and condemned the views and aspirations of one-third of the population of the Northern Territory. As a Chief Minister, I believe he should be condemned. I thought that the Chief Minister had learnt his lesson. During these sittings, we have given him much praise in relation to what he said in the debate on the Address-in-Reply. He spoke so well about the common understanding of both races in the Northern Territory. I was astonished and disgusted at his speech this afternoon when he said that the Kakadu National Park was totally locked out. However, Mr Speaker, I intend to move on.

I wish to raise a couple of the issues concerning the township of Katherine itself. I was very concerned when I read an article about Katherine which was published in a southern newspaper last week. The influx of the military and the investment of funds there by the Northern Territory government will be of benefit to the Northern Territory. However, there is a very small group of people who are determined to destroy the original people who live in Australia and who constitute one-third of the Territory's population.

I would ask the Chief Minister and the member for Katherine to investigate whether an organisation such as the Ku-Klux-Klan exists in and is terrorising that community. I request the Chief Minister, as minister responsible for

police, to investigate such allegations because, as I said earlier this week in the Assembly, we have enough people in the Northern Territory capable of that sort of behaviour without having to call upon someone like Col Gadaffi. I am seeking to protect the interests of the people of the Northern Territory and Australia yet we have people within our own community who are trying to destroy the rights of the indigenous people in the Northern Territory.

Quite honestly, I am scared. People have come to me and said that this is actually happening in Katherine. When I was at Barunga for the Easter festival, people asked me to do something or at least to make representations on their behalf. As you know, Mr Deputy Speaker, there are communities outside of Katherine, such as Barunga and Beswick, that depend on obtaining services from the main township of Katherine. I am sure that the member for Katherine would have heard about allegations of this sort already. I would like the Chief Minister, as the minister responsible for police, to investigate those allegations and make a public statement that those activities are not being practised in Katherine.

In the past, a chapter of the Ku-Klux-Klan was actually established in Katherine. I am calling on this government to prevent those sort of activities, regardless of how it feels about Gadaffi, Mansell, Pat Dodson or anyone else. I speak on behalf of all my colleagues in the opposition, and we believe that activities of that kind should not be condoned by the Northern Territory government, particularly not by the Chief Minister of the Northern Territory who is responsible for the police.

Mr Perron: Are you suggesting he would condone such activity?

Mr LANHUPUY: I am not. I am asking all ministers in the Territory government to support the Chief Minister in such an investigation.

Mr Deputy Speaker, I was going to talk about the Milingimbi Collection but I believe a decision is pending on who the owners are. My people at Milingimbi are very concerned that we will lose touch with that collection which relates specifically to our livelihood and our spiritual and cultural life. I would ask that the Northern Territory government consider our plea. I was very pleased to hear the Minister for Education say that there are funds for the resource centre and library facilities at Milingimbi. That is excellent news, but I will touch upon that when I speak on the Address-in-Reply.

The other matter that I would like to refer to is kava. I had a brief discussion with the member for Jingili on this subject. In fact, I invited him to come to Milingimbi and Elcho Island and spend a couple of nights sharing with me the experience of sitting down and seeing people drink kava from 6.30 in the afternoon until 8.00 the next morning.

Mr Setter: I accept your offer.

Mr LANHUPUY: It is a matter of concern to me and I have often called on the Department of Health to undertake a monitoring program. I am not blaming the death of 2 of my nephews on kava consumption. Unfortunately, they died at Elcho after playing a game of football. However, I would like some sort of explanation of the fact that, in 3 communities - Milingimbi, Elcho and Yirrkala - there were 6 deaths over a period of 18 months of people under the age of 40. I have called upon the NT government to give more funds to the Menzies School of Health Research. I believe it was established for the purpose of researching tropical diseases and the effects of tropical

conditions that are experienced in the Territory. In the Assembly last year, I supported the allocation of more funds to the Menzies School of Health Research to enable it to carry out research into health problems in the Northern Territory, regardless of whether the people who suffer from them are black, white or brindle. If such facilities and institutions had been given the funds that they need instead of money being poured into 5-star hotels, casinos and the purchase of Oolloo Station, all Territorians would be much better off health-wise.

The government should look after people who reside permanently in the Territory. Many people come to the Northern Territory, make their money and then head off again after 4 or 5 years to their investments in north Queensland, like a certain minister that I heard about. A typical example is the former Chief Minister, Hon Paul Everingham, Territory member of the House of Representatives. If someone becomes Chief Minister here, he should make his investments here. We have been blindly led by people who want to make their money in the Territory and then get out. It worries me. The Aboriginal people are being blamed for problems here, but the investments of the Gagadju Association, the Gunwinggu Association and Yunupingu Industries will be made here in the Northern Territory.

The Aboriginal Benefits Trust Account spends its money in the Northern Territory and the Northern Territory alone. I believe Bridge Autos obtained more than 50% of its profits last year from sales to Gunbalanya and the Gunwinggu Association. Those facts need to be taken into account by this government which brazenly asks: 'Where are these people wasting their money?' I remember the former Chief Minister, the member for Barkly, saying that the Aboriginal people accounted for 50% of the health problems in the Northern Territory. Why is that? Whose fault is it, after 200 years of this sort of thing? Much as I would like to damn Mr Mansell's approach in trying to get funds from Libya, I ask what alternative he has?

These things really concern me. I would honestly like this government to consider some of the options available to it in terms of funding.

Mr EDE (Stuart): Mr Speaker, I wish to speak in tonight's adjournment on the problems of water supplies and the relationship between water and health. It is fair to say that, although the central Australian Aboriginal infant mortality rate is still unacceptably high, it has come down quite considerably over the past 20 years. At one stage, it was almost 250 per 1000. It is now down to around 35 per 1000. Whilst that is still 4 times the non-Aboriginal rate, it has declined, although it has tended to stabilise since about 1975.

Since the 1960s, about half the mortality of Aboriginal children in remote parts of Australia has been caused by diarrhoeal disease, pneumonia, or both. In fact, over the past decade, morbidity amongst central Australian Aboriginal children has risen. In discussing this matter, I will use the terms 'infants' and 'children', which are 2 different classifications in epidemiological and medical statistical terms.

As I said, morbidity among central Australian Aboriginal children has been increasing in the last couple of years. Diarrhoea-related morbidity is appallingly high. A survey by a Dr Hall selected a sample of nearly 200 central Australian Aboriginal children under 5 years of age. When he reviewed all available medical data, hospital and non-hospital, his analysis showed that, between the ages of 12 months and 17 months, each child had an average of 1.7 consultations for diarrhoea. In that age group, the incidence of diarrhoea was 1200 cases per 1000 children.

To give members some idea of the magnitude of the problem, during 1984, 674 children, 98% of whom were less than 5 years of age, were admitted to Alice Springs Hospital with diarrhoea. 92% of those were Aboriginals. We are talking about a population group of about 1500 children out of a total population of 11 000. Of that 1500, 674 were admitted for diarrhoea-related disease during that year; that is almost 50% of the children in that age group in central Australia.

Recently, the World Health Organisation Diarrhoea Diseases Control Program conducted a review of the effectiveness, feasibility and cost of a series of intervention methods, looking particularly at alternatives to case-care management. Case-care management involves hospitalisation and individual intervention by health workers. It is very expensive and it is not cost-effective. These are community problems and the idea is to look at alternatives to case-care management. The 4 strategies that were found to be the most cost-effective and feasible in a community situation were the promotion of breast feeding and improved weaning practices, the provision of water supply and sanitation facilities, the promotion of personal and domestic hygiene, and measles immunisation. Measles immunisation has been a priority task for some years in the Northern Territory. We have all heard ministers speak about the different ages at which immunisation is given and how these have been reduced. There is some argument in medical circles about the appropriateness of immunisation at various ages but I am not going to get involved in that. The study certainly confirmed the anecdotal impression received when talking to health workers, that Aboriginal babies thrive during the first 6 months of life. During that period, they are solely breast-fed and they experience much less diarrhoea than during the next 12 months of their lives. It would appear that, in that very early stage, breast-feeding is very effective.

This brings us to the other strategies: adequate and safe water supplies, hygiene and sanitation. If we consider that nearly 50% of the children in that age group are treated in hospital during 1 year, we could say that that was prima facie evidence that the government's record of overcoming these problems is not one it can sing to the high heavens about. We are now three-quarters of the way through the United Nations International Drinking Water Supply and Sanitation Decade. The goal of the decade was that every person in the world would have an adequate domestic water supply and excreta disposal facilities. That aim was to be reached by 1990. I am afraid that it is a matter of shame for the federal government and state governments of all persuasions that their chances now of achieving that goal in Australia, a developed country, are becoming increasingly remote.

Mr Speaker, without decent facilities, concepts such as self-determination and Aboriginal involvement become somewhat meaningless. It has often been said that Aboriginal health workers, for example, should be able to be agents of change. That is not a feasible concept to develop if the basic water supplies are not there. It is almost impossible to talk about encouraging personal and domestic hygiene when there is not the water there to enable it to be practised. I have explained many times the need for 20 L of water per person per day of actual consumption and the need to have water supplies within 20 ft of where a person is generally located.

Having opened up on that, I want to speak briefly on 2 areas in my electorate where, in spite of all the protests that I have made and the number of times that I have spoken in this Assembly about water, there are cases in point that demonstrate that the problem is still not being taken seriously. The first one is Arrawarra which is possibly better known as Soapy Bore, an

outstation community on Utopia Station. This is not a new community; it has been there for many years. The Jones family have been developing it since just after the station was purchased. In fact, we are about to get a school in that community. What they do not have, though, is an adequate quantity of safe water. They have 1 bore there which has real problems. It just will not supply enough water for the whole community. It is badly located in that the tank is not up on the hill behind the community but, for some strange reason, down below the community. Possibly, the explanation for that is that it is the old stock bore that the community is utilising rather than a water facility installed to provide for the specific needs of the community.

Mr Speaker, over the years that community has taken its water problem to DCD and every time DCD has sent out another batch of experts who say, 'Yes, there is plenty of water here. It is not very deep. It is only about 40 ft down. The water is of very good quality, as it is over the whole Sandover region'. But, the end response is always: 'We have not got the money'. It is not good economics to spend several million dollars every year on treating children in the Alice Springs Hospital and then to say that the money is not available to provide safe and adequate water supplies out in the community. I think that I may even be able to appeal successfully to the honourable Treasurer on that basis. It is rather hard to warm his heart and get him to see the problem from a moral point of view or as a matter of common justice. He may not even be particularly worried about our status before the United Nations and our failure in the International Water and Sanitation Decade. But, maybe he could look at it as a simple cost-saving measure. While the initial cost is reasonably substantial - it would be in the vicinity of some \$200 000 to run a fully reticulated water supply through the community - probably that money would be recouped within a number of years through savings on hospital admissions.

Once again, the other community is Anningie. I do not know how many times I have stood up in this Assembly and complained about Anningie. I have been complaining about the water supply there since I was on the Water Needs Committee in 1978. At that stage, we acknowledged that the major problem was that the groundwater there is very high in nitrates. While it is all right for flushing toilets, if anybody had such a fancy device out in the bush, or for washing clothes or for watering trees, it is not of an adequate quality for drinking. At that time, the idea was that we would put in a Mexican dam. I have spoken before about that. Over the last 6 years, various local experts have said that a Mexican dam was the way to go because there are enormous quantities of very good quality water moving along the Anningie River just beneath the surface. All that is necessary is to stop its flow sufficiently to be able to dam it back under the sand where the evaporation levels are far lower. A solar pump can then be used. It is not necessary to dig to any great depth because the water is taken from some 7 ft or 8 ft below the soil surface. That is then put into the drinking water supply for the community. It does mean that there will have to be 2 different systems. A bore has to be run alongside. There is plenty of water down there but, as I say, it is not good quality, but there is the availability of good quality water out of the creek.

At the moment, people are using a couple of small, hand-operated spear pumps out of that creek. That is their source of water at the moment. However, that means that people are walking over their water supply and so on, which is not adequately hygienic, and it is extremely difficult to pump enough water by that means in a reasonable period of time to ensure the amount of water consumed per person is anything like 20 L per day. From the anecdotal evidence we obtained when we were out there last, it is more likely to be in the vicinity of 5 L to 7 L per person per day.

Mr Speaker, all that I have been able to get out of the honourable minister on this is: 'I have a report. It says it is no good. The people will have to leave there and live somewhere else'. I do not think that is good enough for a community that has been living there for so long. The people have houses built there. They have battled hard for the land that they are now living on. It is not good enough simply to say, 'I have a report. You cannot have a look at it, but my report says it cannot be done'.

I presume that the water supplies of small communities still come under the Minister for Health and Community Services, but who would know with the recent changes? Maybe it is with the Minister for Mines and Energy. Who knows? However, whichever minister it is, I am asking him to let us see that report that the government has from that mob of Sydney consultants. Let us have a look at it and have a yarn about it with some of the people who have been living and working in the area, putting down water supplies for many years. Let us see whether the practitioners out there in central Australia cannot have a look at the plans and the things that are said to make it unfeasible, and maybe we can get this community a water supply.

Mr REED (Katherine): Mr Deputy Speaker, I rise to speak about an article in the Sydney Morning Herald of Monday 27 April. I believe it was this article that the member for Arnhem referred to earlier this evening dealing with the alleged activities of a Ku-Klux-Klan in Katherine.

Mr Deputy Speaker, it is to be regretted that the Sydney Morning Herald published this report which dealt with nothing but rumours of alleged Ku-Klux-Klan activities in Katherine. It is even more regrettable that the Sydney Morning Herald saw fit to publish the article on its front page and that the author was simply re-running an old story which the ABC ran in November and December 1986. As I recall it, that was when the story first appeared. Allegations were made suggesting the deaths of 2 Aboriginal people were related to Ku-Klux-Klan activities and 1 of those deaths is referred to in this article. It is worth while reading this paragraph to indicate the style that the author of this article has used:

Many Aborigines suspect foul play, especially since the neck of one of the men, Albert Nelson, 41, who disappeared on Christmas Eve, was said to have been broken. But Sgt O'Meara said coroner's reports had shown that no bones were broken and there were no suspicious circumstances. He said Aborigines often went swimming in the river, although some Aborigines told me that Mr Nelson could not swim.

Mr Deputy Speaker, I think that indicates that the author carried out some research for his story, but he chose to ignore the facts that he was given, and ran the rumours as he interpreted them.

I will not speak for too long on this matter, but I think it is important that some facts are put before honourable members and that it is made clear that the author has rehashed old stories which were unsubstantiated at the time when they were first circulated. They were rumours. In fact, he has used stories, which have been proven to be untrue, simply to prepare a sensational article, perhaps to gain some extra sales for the Sydney Morning Herald. I do not suppose that we can blame him for that.

Mr Deputy Speaker, I was a little surprised to hear the member for Arnhem request that a police investigation be undertaken in relation to this matter. I do not want to speak for the minister responsible for police, but it is clear that, when allegations are made in relation to the possible cause of

death of someone, even if they wanted to, the police could not avoid conducting investigations. As I understand it, the investigations in relation to both of these deaths have indicated, through the pathologist's report, that there was no question of foul play. I suppose for the full record we will have to wait for the coroner's report.

It is interesting to note also that, in November or December 1986, when these activities were first alleged to have taken place, the Northern Territory delegate to the Racial Discrimination Committee investigated those allegations and we have heard nothing from those investigations. I cannot say whether they were positive or not, but one would assume that, if they were, that fact would have been on the front page of the Sydney Morning Herald again. The Racial Discrimination Committee delegate was in Katherine again this week to investigate these matters and I will be seeking some advice from her.

The Ku-Klux-Klan is an organisation with which I am not very familiar, but I understand its members are pretty choosy about the colour of the things they wear. It is said that, at least in their own eyes, they are considered to be purists and they dress only in white to portray that purity. I would be surprised, given that background, if they dressed in black capes as reported in the article.

Mr BELL (MacDonnell): Mr Deputy Speaker, this will be both pleasant and unpleasant, but first to the pleasanties. In our edition of the local paper on Wednesday 22 April, we denizens of central Australia were greeted by the headline: 'TV Service - The Picture Is Getting Clearer'. The article went on to detail the happy arrangement that appears to be about to come to pass whereby Imparja Television and its previous rival, Television Capricornia, will jointly operate the commercial television service in Alice Springs. Honourable members will be aware that that was exactly the view adopted by myself and the opposition when the announcements were made by the Australian Broadcasting Tribunal in relation to the operation of the Remote Commercial Television Service. But far be it from me to seek any cheap support by merely saying that the on-again, off-again, on-again attitude of the Northern Territory government is anything other than welcome.

Mr Speaker, it is only the third day of the sittings and I am certainly not going to make any final pronouncement on the awards for the Society for the Prevention of Injury to the English language, but I do feel like recording that the Minister for Industries and Development has put in an early contender. It will be a prominent entry. When he was asked this morning by the member for Ludmilla about the principles of the proposed joint venture arrangement between Television Capricornia and Imparja Television, the minister responded: 'The government's position on the Remote Commercial Television Service has been consistent throughout the duration of the issue and has not changed'. That was remarkable, not only because it was tautological, but because I think the minister was well aware that he was about to be mildly chided - not criticised or beaten over the head, let alone kicked in it, but mildly chided because the government has been decidedly inconsistent in this matter. I really do not think the minister expected members of the opposition not to remark on the government's vacillation in this affair. Its vacillation has, however, been welcome because I believe that it is a sensible decision, as it always would have been, to allocate those funds to the successful applicant. I appreciate the comments that the minister made about the conditions that will apply and the question of technical expertise, and I really have nothing more to add except to offer my congratulations to the Territory government on its change of heart and to wish success to the joint venture between Imparja and Television Capricornia.

I certainly have placed on record previously my belief in the importance of the involvement of an organisation like Imparja in this project. There are wonderful possibilities. There was some concern that Imparja would be seeking to work with a Western Australian organisation which I think is called Golden West. To my mind, that would not have been a satisfactory arrangement from a Territory point of view. There are all sorts of reasons why Imparja should be able to get together with Television Capricornia, and it is to be hoped that this service meets everybody's expectations.

Regrettably, the other matter that I wish to raise is far less pleasant. It involves some public statements made by the member for Araluen, and I am sure that my comments will be taken to heart. I noticed that he asked a question in relation to DUI offences this morning, and I trust that he received a satisfactory reply from the Attorney-General.

Mr Collins: No. It was put on notice.

Mr BELL: He did not get a reply. That is quite right, and I appreciate the correction from the member for Sadadeen. Quite appropriately, because the question asked for extraordinary detail, it was put on notice.

There may well be honourable members who are not quite as aware as I am of the local background to this issue. I strongly suspect that this is the first shot in the honourable member's battle for a position on the frontbench. Of course, there are many conservative politicians who have ridden to glory on the back of poor old law and order. She is a much abused woman. At first, I raised my eyebrows when the usually sunny disposition of the member for Araluen revealed through his customary liberal comments about all sorts of matters was rudely shattered by the following piece in the little column he has as an advertisement in the Centralian Advocate. It is called 'Araluen Thoughts' and I will read the relevant extract:

Tuesday 31 March. Fine and sunny, a normal day in Araluen. 8.30 am: arrived at the office. Spent about \$200 cleaning graffiti off the wall with a sandblaster. 11 am: asked group of people sitting outside office with 5 dogs to move so I could at least open the door. 1.30 pm: checked that sleeping man on grass sidewalk on Milner Road was actually alive. He was and asked me for \$2. 5.15 pm: as I got into my car with my daughter I was shouted out by a drinker using language that would have made Andrew Peacock blush. A number of female shoppers visibly impressed. 5.45 pm: drove past school. Saw same man being attacked by lady with large empty coke bottle. Continued home with my children. Another normal day. When will it change?

I found that offensive. It is a regrettable fact that it is not unusual to see examples of public drunkenness in Alice Springs. It is not unusual to see Aboriginal people involved in that sort of public drunkenness and that sort of public brawling. I take exception, however, to somebody who remarks on those sorts of things in the context of his law and order campaign without at least attempting to draw to people's attention or to comment on some of the reasons for that sort of behaviour. It may win him a few votes in Araluen, but it is a fairly grubby tactic. I merely raised my eyebrows when I saw that. I thought, 'Goodness me, poor old Eric is suffering'.

I realised that it was part of a campaign when I saw the headline in the paper on the following Friday, 10 April: 'Poole Calls for Law and Order'. As I said, the poor old lady. She has served a lot of conservative politicians

well. The article on the front page was very long on diatribe. It is such an easy issue. Anybody can complain about law and order because he knows it is a sure-fire winner. There will always be more than 50% of the people who think there should be more of it. It is a little bit like motherhood. The people who are not impressed by it will not care 2 hoots one way or the other. There are no people who ever think there should be less law and order. It is an absolute winner. You have to be pretty cynical to launch your political career on this basis.

Apart from saying that we should discourage law breakers - and he will get 25 to 0 in here on that - the only substantial complaint that he made was this: 'Last week, it was reported, magistrates were having a blitz on drunken drivers. But, in Alice Springs in recent times, out of 36 driving under the influence cases, 11 drivers suffered no loss of licence after being found guilty'. That is terrific. Our magistrates are to be subject to percentage tests: 50% and you fail! Anything under 30% and you lose your job! Quite appropriately, the member for Araluen was lambasted for that.

If his concern about sentencing policies is genuine or he believes that there are particular cases that deserve more severe sentences, he should bring them up on a case-by-case basis. But, he merely says that 11 out of 36 is just not good enough and the magistrates will have to do better. What does he expect? Would he be happier with 18 out of 36 or 35 out of 36? Would he have committed hari kari if there were only 5 out of 36? It is absolutely outrageous! He deserved every bit of criticism he got from Magistrate Barritt. He deserved every bit of criticism he got from spokesmen for the Attorney-General. I hope he desists from his campaign and that nobody in the Country Liberal Party government or in its rank and file is impressed by it.

Mr SMITH (Opposition Leader): Mr Speaker, I rise to speak on 2 matters. First, I wish to make some comments following on from what was said by the member for Arnhem. Sometimes one wonders about the values of society and the values of politicians. Early this week, we heard some hysterical outbursts from members opposite concerning the actions and comments of Mr Michael Mansell. Perhaps I can understand those. I certainly do not want to give any impression that I support the actions undertaken by Mr Michael Mansell. We have had some equally hysterical comments about remarks made by Mr Pat Dodson. I found those less understandable. As it turns out, Mr Dodson was quoted out of context by the ABC. In fact, he has made an official complaint to the ABC about this. Secondly, when Mr Dodson's comments are analysed, he was merely saying that, if necessary, his organisation would have to consider looking outside Australia for money in order to continue the health, welfare and education activities that it is presently engaged in.

What I find particularly hypocritical, however, is the attitude of government members to a story published in the Sydney Morning Herald and to the member for Arnhem's statement that he has had repeated suggestions put to him that there may be a terrorist organisation in the Northern Territory: the Ku-Klux-Klan. I say 'may be'. Certainly, I am not making definite statements about whether this organisation is or is not operating in the Northern Territory. However, I find it particularly galling that members opposite can spend time and energy belting into Michael Mansell and Pat Dodson about something that as we all know will not happen - none of the Aboriginal groups in Australia is going to get money from Libya - whilst not 1 of them shows the slightest concern about the possibility that there may be a terrorist organisation operating in the Northern Territory.

There is a group of Aboriginal people in the Katherine area who believe that there is something wrong. They believe that there are people in that area who are not looking at Aboriginals in the proper light and who may well be prepared to consider the prospect of physical violence against them. I can put it no stronger than that.

I take on board the comments of the member for Katherine. Perhaps those people are wrong. However, I found it particularly distressing that the member for Katherine did not say what I would have thought was appropriate for him to say as the local member: that he abhorred the thought that there might be people in Katherine who might even consider such violence. He had the perfect opportunity to say, on behalf of himself, his constituents and the government, that, if any people are thinking that way in his electorate, they have his complete and utter condemnation. I would have thought, similarly, that senior ministers of this government would have said the same, because it is an important issue. Like it or not, once it gets to the front page of the Sydney Morning Herald, one of the major newspapers in Australia, it becomes an Australia-wide issue. It becomes an issue that 60 Minutes is interested in and will possibly film.

Mr Dale: It is last year's story.

Mr SMITH: Whether it is last year's story or not, it is certainly alive now and I would have thought it appropriate, to use a very mild word, that some senior member of the Northern Territory government expressed abhorrence at the prospect that it might be happening. But, we have not heard a word, and I think that is absolutely disgraceful. For the record, I want to say that I think it is absolutely disgraceful that that might be happening or that people might be contemplating it. If any evidence can be produced that it is happening, I believe that the full force of the law and the full force of the moral condemnation of everybody in the Northern Territory ought to be brought to bear on those people.

My second point concerns 1 May, May Day, which will be celebrated this weekend. I know that it is a practice amongst some people in Australia to condemn the actions of unions and the efforts of unions, but it is important that we reflect on why May Day became a carnival event and what has occurred in the 100 years since the first May Day, which was celebrated on 1 May 1886. It was on that day that strike action was begun in order to achieve the 8-hour working day. It was 3 years later that an international congress in Paris discussed and carried this resolution:

There shall be organised a great international demonstration, at a fixed date, so that on the same agreed day in every country and every town, the workers shall call upon the state for legal reduction of the working day to 8 hours.

On 1 May 1890, the first of those celebrations was held.

Mr Deputy Speaker, even in the Northern Territory, unions have had a very valuable role to play in improving the conditions of workers. I think the North Australian Workers Union has a special place in Australian history, because it was the union that went out and organised the workers in the pastoral industry who, before its efforts, worked under appalling conditions. But, thanks to the North Australian Workers Union, some sense was brought into conditions in the pastoral industry and a Pastoral Industry Award was introduced. Of course, that is the great achievement of unions. They have been able to represent the interest of workers and ensure that those workers

have proper and safe conditions of work and are given a proper remuneration for their work. Sometimes, it is too easy to forget that, and it is too easy to forget that, 100 years ago, people in Australia and in other parts of the world worked under absolutely appalling conditions. It is only necessary to read Charles Dickens to recognise that fact.

Unions have played a very important role in ensuring that the average working men and women are treated with respect and are rewarded appropriately for their efforts. Unfortunately, Mr Deputy Speaker, their task is not yet complete and, in that context, I want to refer briefly to the very sad event in Western Australia in which 2 young boys, Simon Amos and James Annetts, were recently discovered in the middle of the desert. They were in the middle of the desert basically because they were recruited to take up \$100 a week caretaker positions on remote cattle properties. They were 16 years old. They answered an advertisement and took up positions - as I understand it, basically on their own - on these very remote cattle properties.

After the event, we have the Australian Workers Union, the National Farmers Federation and Western Australia's leading rural employment agency saying that it is bad. Of course, it is bad and it should not have happened. It has happened, and the union involved in covering people in the pastoral industry and - now that it has become a national issue - other employer groups, have a job to do in Western Australia to ensure that it does not happen again. At present, there is nothing to stop it happening again. No award covers people in this situation in the Northern Territory at present. Until there is an award and until something is done to correct the situation, it will certainly happen again. In today's issue of The Australian, somebody from the AWU said: 'If parents are not more careful about where their children accept work, this will certainly happen again'.

Mr Hanrahan: Aren't they covered under a junior trainee award?

Mr SMITH: They are not covered under an award in Western Australia for junior trainees or anything.

The point I am making is that it is very easy to criticise unions but here is a case where, because there is no proper award in place and, for whatever reason, no proper union coverage of that particular occupational classification, 2 young people have died. In this day and age, that is not good enough. I do not know whether it could happen in the Northern Territory. I would hope not and I would hope that the responsible minister, when he is appointed, will look at the situation in the Northern Territory as a matter of some urgency, first to ensure that 16-year-olds cannot be sent to remote cattle properties to manage them on a caretaker basis and, secondly, to see if there are weaknesses in existing employment awards in the pastoral industry and, if there are, work with the appropriate industrial organisations to ensure that these are remedied. In this day and age, we should be able to come up with a system that protects 16-year-olds and does not send them out to very remote parts of Australia - particularly if they are city kids - where they have had no experience of the conditions and where their odds of surviving, as has been demonstrated in this case, are very small indeed.

Motion agreed to; the Assembly adjourned.

Mr Speaker Vale took the Chair at 10 am.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT
Ministry and Administrative Arrangements

Mr HATTON (Chief Minister): Mr Speaker, I must advise the Assembly that, on Friday 1 May, His Honour the Administrator swore me in as Minister for Labour and Administrative Services. This is a consequence of the resignation of the honourable member for Port Darwin from that portfolio. I can advise honourable members that I will be retaining that portfolio for the duration of this week and a new minister will be appointed on Friday of this week. I will advise the Assembly later in the week who that minister will be.

DISCUSSION OF MATTER OF PUBLIC IMPORTANCE
Work Health Act

Mr SPEAKER: Honourable members, I have received the following letter from the Leader of the Opposition:

Dear Mr Speaker,

Pursuant to standing order 94 I propose for discussion, as a definite matter of public importance this morning, the following matter: the problems caused for injured Territory workers by the failure of the government to adequately plan for the introduction of the Work Health Act.

Terry Smith
Leader of the Opposition.

Is the proposed discussion supported? It is supported.

Mr SMITH (Opposition Leader): Mr Speaker, in question time on Wednesday of last week, the Attorney-General spoke at some length about work health. Of course, the reason why he did that is that certain aspects of the application of the work health legislation have been in the news recently and have been brought to the attention of the public and the government by union officials who have correctly identified a series of problems.

There is evidence of political paralysis in the work health system which is now only starting to become apparent. I will outline several examples which will demonstrate that the government has clearly lacked the political will to follow through its legislation and to make it work. So far, the public debate has focused on the Work Health Court. Last week, the Attorney-General was adamant that the Work Health Court has been in a position to hear applications since 1 January this year. Among other things, he asserted, and I quote from last Wednesday's Hansard:

The simple fact is that the Work Health Court has been in a position to hear applications since the first day the Work Health Act commenced. That means any person who needed to have a claim decided by the court was able to go through that process.

And later he said:

As in previous times, when the Workers Compensation Act used to operate, applications are made through the Clerk of the Courts for any action that needs to be taken in that court.

I would like to enlighten the Attorney-General and members opposite about what the act provides, not about what the Attorney-General believes it provides. Section 95 deals with rules and procedures. We now know that those rules were signed a week or so ago, the day after this matter was brought to the attention of the public by Mr Peter Tullgren of the Miscellaneous Workers Union. We also know that it has been a lengthy process and that there is no criticism of the Chief Minister inferred by this delay. But what we want to know is why did it took 3 months, after the act became law, for the rules to be put in place, particularly as we all know that the introduction of the act itself was deferred on at least 2 occasions last year? First, we had a deadline of 1 July 1986 for the introduction of the act and then a new deadline of 1 November 1986. It was finally introduced on 1 January 1987. I would have thought that any competent government would have had the rules in place by then. That is my first point.

My second point is this. In order for a court to operate, there must be rules and processes in place. The rules themselves provide for the functions and powers of the registrar and proceedings before the court. We still have not seen the gazetted appointment of the registrar of the Work Health Court. Mr Speaker, I put it to you that, without rules, there can be no court. If you, Mr Speaker, or any other member of the Assembly is not convinced of that, ask any lawyer or magistrate. The matter is further complicated by the way in which one may make application to the court. This is clearly set out in section 104 which reads: 'Proceedings for the recovery of compensation may be commenced before the court by application in the prescribed manner and form or, where there is no manner or form prescribed, in such manner or form as the court approves'. There is no prescribed form and, as I understand it, it is not proposed that there will be a prescribed form. The form which will be used to make application to the court is in draft form even now and has still to be approved by the court as a court rule. The court has not sat and no rules setting out the form have been introduced.

Mr Manzie: I do not understand it.

Mr SMITH: No, you do not understand it and that is why you gave that misleading answer last week. The point is that we do not have any forms. We cannot have any until the court approves it and the court has not sat to do that. The court has not sat at all. The form is the only means by which a worker may make application to the court and yet the form does not exist.

The act is quite specific: there cannot even be a preliminary conference without the proper paperwork. In the Attorney-General's mind, the court may well have existed but, clearly, under the law, the court did not exist. The rest of us were in the dark, but that is not unusual these days in the Northern Territory. Even if I were to accept that, with the best of intentions, the Work Health Authority, the Attorney-General and the magistrates all genuinely believed that some sort of temporary court arrangement was available, and that diligent people have been working to have the proper procedures set in place, I cannot accept that, of the 50 or so workers whose claims have been rejected, there has not been 1 instance where the worker would have disputed that rejection in court.

The fact is that the Work Health Authority could not direct workers to a court that was not yet operational. Insurers and employers would have nothing to gain by telling a worker that they would not pay compensation but that, some time in the future when the court was set up, he could file a dispute in the court. Of course, the act says that a worker must do that within 28 days of his or her claim being rejected. With no court, no court rules, no

registrar and no forms, how can a worker take the matter before the Work Health Court? Quite clearly, those workers have lost their rights. They are caught in a legal catch 22. I am sure that, when we finally have those forms, many of those workers will want their positions arbitrated by the court, provided their 28 days has not expired.

Perhaps there are 50 potential applicants who will be ready to rush into the court on day 1 - that is, if they have not starved or died as a result of their condition or injury or if they have not taken themselves off to Sydney or Adelaide at their own expense because, technically, albeit temporarily, they had no way of fighting for their rights. I know of such cases, and I will be happy to share with the Attorney-General or the Chief Minister some of the details I have of specific cases. I will give an example now.

Mr Speaker, a fellow was electrocuted whilst working on a site in Katherine. He was unable to make a claim because the Katherine Hospital did not have the new work health claim forms - not the court application forms, which would be bad enough, but the basic claim form.

Mr Hatton: Date?

Mr SMITH: I do not have the date. You can find out from the Work Health Authority.

This fellow was outside the system from that point. He was discharged, still traumatised and suffering from burns, and told to go home. He was living in a donga and had found himself to be in an impossible situation. He contacted his union and the union paid to bring him to Darwin. The insurer did not want to know him because he had not filled in the correct form. That is hardly his fault, given that the form was not available. The Work Health Authority told him to go to a doctor. The fellow wanted to be reunited with his family in Sydney to recover and a local doctor supported that request. He was told by the loss assessors that he had to have a psychiatric referral before he could go to Sydney. However, no psychiatrist could see him inside 3 weeks. During this period, the employer, to his credit, was paying him, but that was all. The insurer was disowning him. He was told that he should not have come to Darwin but should have stayed in his donga in Katherine. Finally, the union put him on a plane for Sydney. We are talking about a man who had suffered burns, who had died and been revived after an electric shock, who was traumatised and alone in the Territory, who went backwards and forwards between insurers, doctors and the authority and, for weeks, no one wanted to know!

However, the very day after this matter became public, the insurance company suddenly discovered that it cared about this unfortunate individual and sent a letter to his union promising him the world: compensation, rehabilitation, expenses, doctors appointments, the lot. Until some publicity was given to the failure of the Work Health Act to function properly, until the government and the Work Health Authority were galvanised into action by some very well placed comments by union officials, ordinary individuals who had been severely injured were being deprived of their rights and were being left to their own resources and the resources of their unions to ensure that they at least received some assistance - assistance that should have been provided to them by the Work Health Authority.

What I would like to know is what will happen to the people who have been caught in this legal limbo, who have not had access to the forms and, because the court did not exist, could not have gone to the court even if the forms

had been available. We know now that the forms were not available. I want an assurance that justice will be done and that those people, even if it requires an amendment to the act, will be given a fair hearing and that they will be adequately compensated for their losses resulting from this incredible situation and government incompetence. There is no excuse or justification for this callous and careless situation.

The second point I want to make relates to the total lack of information on or promotion of the work health system. This may well account for the fact that no applications have ever been made to the Work Health Court. There has been next to no information made available to the public or to workers and unions about work health. There has been no promotion campaign and very little publicity. One can only assume that the government would rather people did not know about their obligations and rights. Surely there is a responsibility on the part of any government, when it makes far-reaching and sweeping changes, to ensure that there is an adequate and public education program. People are disadvantaged as a result of their ignorance, and that is no excuse. Of course, equally, governments have an obligation in such matters to ensure that people are not ignorant and that employees know their rights.

The government has failed to promote workers' rights adequately and this includes its failure to liaise with worker organisations to promote the new system. Requests for information by organisations such as the Trade Union Training Authority have resulted in bundles of brochures rather than detailed packages of instructions for delegates and unionists. Vague public addresses on the principles of the scheme are not what people need. They need detail on the processes that need to be followed and education on the scheme itself.

To give an example, during the election campaign the Attorney-General was asked by one of his constituents, who happens to be a trade unionist, whether his work place could have someone from the Work Health Authority come and talk to workers about their rights. The Attorney-General promised that he would send someone along, but nothing has happened.

The Work Health Authority does not have an adequate budget to cover the required level of public education or dissemination of information. There is ignorance in the community about this matter. One cannot say this is the worker's problem. Everybody is a partner or should be a partner in the process. Employers, insurers and employees are entitled to know what their rights are.

There has been a total failure to monitor whether or not all members of the compensation process are complying with the few requirements that actually exist under the act to provide workers with a full explanation of their rights. For example, what steps have been taken to ensure that employers have been accepting claims and passing them on to insurers within the prescribed time? We know of 1 case at least where this did not happen.

Mr Hatton: Give us details.

Mr SMITH: I will give them to you later.

What steps have been taken to ensure that, where a claim fails to be processed within the time limits set down in the act, it is accepted automatically as provided for under section 87 of the act? What steps have been taken to ensure that, where a claim has been made and the insurer rejects it, the proper form setting out the unsuccessful claimant's rights has been given to the worker? In the absence of any other means of recovery, with the

abolition of the right to sue at common law, it is not good enough for the government to presume, as it usually does, that no applications have been made to the court because the new system is working perfectly. Efforts must be made and resources must be allocated to make this new system work. Political will must be applied to make the new system work and only political will can make the system work. There is no problem with the act or the system; the problem lies with the way they have been implemented and promoted.

It is interesting to contrast the approach of the Northern Territory government in promoting its work health legislation with that of the Victorian government. John Cain, the Premier of Victoria, has promoted his Work Care system in places far and wide. He has made sure that everybody concerned, both in the state and outside, knows about it. Money, resources and professional expertise were utilised to educate people and facilitate acceptance of the scheme. It was sold to the Victorian public. He even went to West Germany and promoted his Work Care scheme as an incentive for businesses to come to the garden state. In the Northern Territory, we cannot even promote the Work Health Scheme successfully to our own employees, the people most affected by it. There is an abysmal ignorance amongst employees in the Northern Territory about their rights under this new scheme. The ignorance results from the failure of the Work Health Authority, and obviously the government, to promote the scheme ...

Mr Hatton: Prove it.

Mr SMITH: 'Prove it', he says. The proof is all around him. The proof is in the fact that there have not been any applications to the Work Health Court although, as I said, it is a legal impossibility to make an application to the Work Health Court.

Mr Hatton: You are wrong there for a start, but keep going.

Mr SMITH: This sort of system suffers from the Cinderella syndrome. It only disadvantages workers. We all know that does not matter to this government. Also, ministers cannot use it to get into the centre ring of the media circus, as they can with their other Disneyland developments.

There is a serious problem with the implementation of the Work Health Scheme in the Northern Territory. Workers are being deprived of their rights because they do not know what their rights are. We are 4 months into the new scheme. No registrar has been appointed for the Work Health Court. There still has been no meeting of the Work Health Court, and there are still no appropriate forms to enable people to apply to the Work Health Court.

This government stands condemned by its failure to provide properly for the development of systems and procedures that will enable this important new act to work properly.

Mr HARRIS (Port Darwin): Mr Speaker, the opposition should look seriously at the matters that it brings before this Assembly because, quite frankly, everything the Leader of the Opposition has said is a load of nonsense! He has made some very serious allegations about the Attorney-General. If he feels that the Attorney-General has misled this Assembly, perhaps he should say so. The opposition should listen to answers to questions that are given in this Assembly because the Attorney-General has been very clear about the situation. Let me just spell it out once again. The arrangements were in place from the very beginning. The court was set up by the act of 1 January 1987 and, pending the formal rules, matters were to be dealt with by

directions made by the Chief Magistrate. Forms, rules of procedure etc were to be such as the Chief Magistrate considered appropriate at the time.

There have always been, and there will continue to be, processes which can be followed when a worker feels that he has been poorly done by. I must say here, however, that no inquiries have been received by the Work Health Authority or the courts. We have a great deal of respect and concern for the workers of the Northern Territory and, if there is a problem, they should contact the Work Health Authority and put their case.

Mr Smith: They would not even know it exists.

Mr HARRIS: Mr Deputy Speaker, what a load of nonsense! Let us look at the campaigns which have been undertaken. There was information on the radio and in newspapers. Leaflets were distributed. Talks were held with union groups and employer groups. Plenty of information was disseminated. It should also be made very clear that, when I recently announced the names of insurance companies which had become Work Health Authority insurers, I commented that there was a need for promotion and we are proceeding with that. During the coming Expo, an education program will be mounted in relation to the Work Health Authority.

There was adequate planning for the act. The planning dated back to February 1984 when we established a board of inquiry into the system of workers' compensation in the Northern Territory. This was done because there was widespread dissatisfaction with existing services. There were tremendous costs, delays and a lack of emphasis on rehabilitation, a very important aspect of the Work Health Act. There were also some problems caused by employers who were avoiding proper premium payments. The new system was drawn up to provide a rational approach to work health, minimising social and economic costs. That has happened. The principles of compensation under the new act are: benefits to be equitable and as certain as possible, new systems for delivering benefits not to be costly, and all employers to contribute according to likely payouts to their workers. The new act was introduced and effective from 1 January 1987.

There have been long and detailed negotiations between government lawyers, unions and private sector lawyers to ensure that the rules for the Work Health Court met all the requirements. In the meantime, contingency measures were in effect from 1 January. It is no good saying that they were not. They were in effect and, if people were affected or felt hard done, they should have contacted the Work Health Authority. To date, no claims have been forthcoming. Specific rules have been drawn up and should be in place in a few days. I understand that approval for the gazettal has been given. This has not happened simply because it was raised in a public forum. The process has been under way for some time and it would have been irresponsible to shoot from the hip and introduce rules without considering the entire picture.

The new system is working very well and I might say that perhaps the Leader of the Opposition should check with the other people involved in the work health industry because they are happy with the way in which matters are proceeding at present. I might add also that more than 5000 employers are registered on the Work Health Authority's data base and, at present, 3500 or more are on the computer. Monitoring indicates that the claims process is proceeding smoothly. At this time, the non-insurance and under-insurance areas are being investigated. Already, as a result of the Work Health Act, the cost of premiums is falling. The TIO has established work health rates which, depending on the occupation, can be up to 40% lower than previous

rates, and that fact is being advertised on television and through the radio. Perhaps the opposition should monitor such matters as well. The Territory system is effective and is admired by the states. In fact, New South Wales is looking at adopting many aspects of our Work Health Act and is looking to introducing a similar scheme.

I do not know the particular instance the honourable member referred to at Katherine. The insurers have the first right to say yes or no to a claim and then the Work Health Authority will intervene if it becomes aware of the action that has been brought against it by the insurer. Again, I emphasise that the insurers have the first right to say yes or no to a particular claim.

Mr Deputy Speaker, the opposition has given us yet another example of its knocking attitude to any government initiative. The Work Health Act is innovative legislation which has received a great deal of support right across the board. It has many positive aspects. It has been in force only for a very short period. In fact, in 4 months, a great deal has been achieved and a considerable amount of hard work has gone into making sure that the act is able to work. I can assure honourable members, as the Attorney-General assured honourable members, that the act is able to work and is working effectively. Already, we have 2 private sector rehabilitation services in place for injured workers in the Northern Territory and a third private rehabilitation service is planned for the private hospital when that is built.

The Northern Territory government has always been interested in the welfare of the workers of the Northern Territory. We have sought always to provide an equitable and fair system of compensation and to give the workers access to it, and that is what the Work Health Act does. In my view, the members of the opposition have not contacted the Work Health Authority, nor have those people who have concerns in relation to their compensation claims so that those matters could be investigated further. Once again, we see the knock, knock, knock.

Another positive point I might mention concerns the introduction of the Work Health Act and the resultant administrative changes that have been announced by the Chief Minister. The Work Health Authority will be able to have a greater presence in many other centres throughout the Northern Territory. Indeed, when the Industrial Safety Division of the Department of Mines and Energy became the responsibility of the Work Health Authority, that gave an even higher profile to the authority in Alice Springs and other centres such as Katherine and Tennant Creek. For the benefit of the member for Nhulunbuy, the Work Health Authority will be visiting Nhulunbuy shortly and a review will commence soon into the provision of rehabilitation services in the various centres throughout the Northern Territory.

Mr Deputy Speaker, these are positive things that have come out of the Work Health Act and the administrative changes that have been announced by the Chief Minister. We have been working to ensure that workers in the Territory are looked after and compensated for injury in a fair manner. As I pointed out earlier, the Leader of the Opposition should have checked his facts. Access to the courts is available to people. That has never changed.

As I pointed out, if he honestly believes what he says, he is making very serious accusations against the Attorney-General. If he does believe it, perhaps he should make those accusations in a formal manner. I am sure the Attorney-General can well and truly quash those accusations as he has already done so. A great deal of consultation has taken place and, as has been explained, there is no doubt that applications can be heard. That assurance

has been given by government. The contingency plans have been in place from day 1 of the Work Health Authority. We have not adopted an ad hoc approach to this matter. The opposition stands condemned for making those comments, because a great deal of work and effort has gone into making sure that the act can work effectively.

Mr Smith: The point is that it has not worked effectively.

Mr HARRIS: Can you say exactly where it is not working?

Mr Deputy Speaker, the Work Health Act is an innovative act. It is leading the way in Australia and, in fact, many states are looking at following its direction. My suggestion to the Leader of the Opposition is that he be more positive and try to have some input into the system which is assisting Territorians. If he has problems in relation to workers, he should let us know about them. The government is only too pleased to investigate any problems. I say to the Leader of the Opposition, stop knocking and act positively.

Mr LEO (Nhulunbuy): Mr Deputy Speaker, I can see why the member for Port Darwin no longer has ministerial responsibility for this matter. He may have committed some other faux pas within this Assembly but certainly his grasp of the matter before us at the moment is minimal to say the least. For the minister's education, this debate is about bringing the problems to light, as we see them and as I am sure any sane person in this Assembly would see them.

The member for Port Darwin has a totally inadequate grasp of the portfolio which was his, if only for a fortnight. He has a completely inadequate understanding of what is happening within the entire area of workers' health, industrial health and the implementation of this very important piece of legislation in the Northern Territory. We had several misgivings during the passage of that legislation. Indeed, the committee stage of the bill was one of the longest that I have sat through in this Assembly.

For the edification of the honourable member for Port Darwin, there has been no union involvement in developing the rules under which the new Work Health Court is to operate. That is not because they are not interested but simply because they have not been asked. The more important aspect of this is that the act was commenced before any rules were established. Given that you are a follower of certain codes of football, Mr Deputy Speaker, you can appreciate that that is like turning 26 people loose on a ground to play a game for which no rules have been developed. It is hopeless. Nothing can be achieved that way and that is precisely what has happened with the introduction of the Work Health Act.

The Leader of the Opposition spent quite some time on the development of the court and its processes. I imagine that the Chief Minister will respond to our comments after lunch and, therefore, he will have enough time to prepare himself. I hope that the Chief Minister will produce for this Assembly a form that a worker can use to apply to the Work Health Court if he is injured. I would like to see such a piece of paper because, quite frankly, I do not know at the moment whom an injured worker should apply to. If the Chief Minister produces such a form, I will gladly make copies of it and distribute it to my constituents who are equally ignorant of where they can obtain such pieces of paper. I have never seen one, Mr Speaker. I do not know that much else can be added about the operation of the court and its rules.

I am glad to note that it would seem that the Chief Minister intends to reply. At least, he will speak with some understanding of the matters before us because, unless this Assembly can be given some assurances after lunch, as I predicted when this legislation was passed, it will stand as a recipe for industrial disaster. There is no other way in which it can be viewed by any sane or rational person who has had anything to do with industrial relations either in the Northern Territory or elsewhere in Australia. When this legislation was passed, I said that the minister would be directly involved with 80% of the industrial disputes at the Nabalco mining and processing plant because 80% of the disputes there are about industrial health and safety. That will be compounded immeasurably if the minister responsible cannot even answer those people with whom he has involved himself directly. I hope that 1 of the responders in this debate can, in fact, give us some tangible proof that the court system is working.

I have other concerns about the operation of the Work Health Authority and these centre principally on the entire question of rehabilitation and the inspectorial powers of the Work Health Authority. I would like to hear from the Chief Minister how many rehabilitation centres will be set up in the Northern Territory and where they are to be established. Are they to be at Alice Springs, Tennant Creek, Katherine, Darwin, Groote Eylandt and Nhulunbuy? Of course, it is impossible to set up a rehabilitation centre at every place where there is employment in the Northern Territory, but what measures will be taken to accommodate adequately injured persons who undertake rehabilitation in any of those centres. I would also like the Chief Minister to tell me how many insurers have invested in these private rehabilitation centres.

Mr Hatton: Do you know?

Mr LEO: I do not know. I have no idea.

Mr Hatton: Do you know if there are any?

Mr LEO: I have been told that at least 1 has and I would like the Chief Minister to confirm that.

Mr Hatton: Which one?

Mr LEO: The private rehabilitation centre in Darwin.

Mr Hatton: Which one?

Mr LEO: Mr Speaker, I am sure that the Chief Minister will have adequate time to investigate that matter between now and 2 pm.

Mr Hatton: I am responding straight away. You had better tell me now if you want me to answer it.

Mr LEO: Mr Speaker, if the Chief Minister cannot respond with some clarity and sanity in this debate, then I would suggest that his grasp of the subject is as poor as that of the previous speaker.

Mr Hatton: You haven't even asked the question yet.

Mr LEO: Mr Speaker, the other matter on which I would like a response from the Chief Minister concerns the inspectorial powers of the Work Health Authority. I want to know whether or not the Work Health Authority has the right or obligation to inspect mine sites and, if not, why not? I want to

know the definition of a 'mine site'? In Nhulunbuy's case, does a mine site only include the mine where ore is dug out of the ground and moved to some place for crushing and transportation? In the past, it has included the entire processing operation on the Gove Peninsula. If that is what is to happen, I want the Chief Minister to tell this Assembly that, so that I can advise my constituents accordingly. I am quite sure that mine workers in other parts of the Northern Territory, be it at Jabiru, Tennant Creek or wherever they are contributing to the wealth of the Northern Territory, want to know what their rights and obligations are under the Work Health Act. However, quite frankly, after some investigation, I have not yet been able to establish whether or not I should tell my constituents to approach the Department of Mines and Energy, the Work Health Authority or some other body to obtain advice on their rights and obligations.

This is very important. It is not just to satisfy the smug claims of any minister who happens to feel that he owes a personal debt to employers, but because we will lose, at a very rapid rate, our most valuable resource in the Northern Territory: a qualified work force. There is a great shortage of qualified people in Australia generally, and it will be incredibly difficult to attract people to the Northern Territory when the rest of Australia knows that a worker in the Northern Territory can expect to spend 40% of his working life sitting on the grass because there is no satisfactory work health and safety act which will protect workers' lives and their family incomes. It is a fact of life that, unless this Chief Minister and this government take that seriously, we will be in dire straits. We will have real problems in the Northern Territory. It is simply not good enough for the minister to stand in here and say that the act is fine and everything in the garden is lovely. I can tell him that the act may be fine in his eyes but I have certain other personal views on it.

Nevertheless, the legislation is in operation in the Northern Territory and we have to live with it. The problem is that it is not operating satisfactorily at all. It is an act that, because of its irrelevance, may as well not exist. That is certainly the view of people with whom I have spoken, whether they be from Crab Claw Island, Katherine, Nhulunbuy or wherever. Those people do not see that this legislation has any bearing on their lives whatsoever. They do not know how to make an application and they do not know whom to approach if they think they are in immediate danger of personal injury. They do not know how, where, and under what circumstances they would be rehabilitated if they were injured.

Those were the burning issues when this legislation was passed. I thought it was about centralising this extremely important part of the development of the Northern Territory. Industrial health and safety will play a very large part in the development of the Northern Territory and, if we do not get it right, we will go down the tube. I thought that the passage of this act would set up under one centralised body, the Work Health Authority, the appropriate power to institute the changes and systems deemed necessary for the continued and improved work health of people employed in the Northern Territory. Neither of these objectives has been achieved yet. As I said last week, the then minister responsible for the act could not even tell me whether or not Nabalco employees should go to the Work Health Authority or the Department of Mines and Energy if they had any inquiries about safety in the work place. That simply is not good enough.

We have a game. We have 26 players on the field and a damn sight more besides that, I can assure you. There are no rules. The government has simply turned the players loose with no rules at all. Not only are there no

court rules, there are also no rules, as far as I am aware, in respect of the inspection of sites. I cannot tell my constituents whom they can approach to have their work place inspected. No rules have been established for that yet and it is now 5 months since the commencement of the act. This act will achieve one thing: it will make many insurers stinking damn rich at the expense of the health of working people in the Northern Territory.

Mr HATTON (Chief Minister): Mr Speaker, that last outburst is what one would have to call the comedy spot. I must say that the member for Nhulunbuy has been improving his acting performances in the Assembly and his feigned anger is quite amazing. The only danger I can see is that perhaps the honourable member was seriously angry which would merely exemplify his incompetence in understanding some of the fundamentals of this legislation.

As honourable members know, this act involved perhaps the most extensive consultation and debate ever given to legislation in this Assembly. It certainly took longer to process through the committee stage than any other bill in my experience in this Assembly. Prior to its passage, I think we spent 5 or 6 weeks debating clauses, and a number of amendments and adjustments were agreed on during the course of the committee stage to make the legislation as appropriate as possible. This bill was so complex that we allowed detailed argument and consultation ad nauseam with the insurers, the employers, the trade unions, the legal profession and the medical profession for 2 years in order to develop the legislation and the rules surrounding it. The opposition says now that it does not know how the law operates. I find that incomprehensible. Not one fact has been mentioned during this debate. We have heard a number of allegations, vague statements and reports of hearsay but no hard data at all to support this matter of public importance.

Let me just deal with a couple of the matters. First of all, it was said that injured persons do not know how to apply for compensation for those injuries. It was said that we have set the game in motion without any rules. The first lesson to members opposite is that, under this Work Health Act, when a person is injured and wants to lodge a claim, the claim is still lodged with the insurer through the employer. If the member for Nhulunbuy wants to know how to go about that, he should read the regulations to the Work Health Act which were promulgated on 19 December 1986, to come into affect on 1 January 1987, the day the act came into force. All the forms are there for lodging claims. They were printed and circulated to all the insurers prior to the 1 January.

Members say this government has been remiss in not letting the community know what the Work Health Act was about. They do not even open their own mail boxes! We spent considerable sums of money on television, radio and press campaigns in December, promoting the Work Health Act and its implementation. We had the claim forms prepared and circulated in December along with leaflets on various aspects of the legislation. Letter box drops took place in December on the introduction of the Work Health Act. We have given briefings to trade unions in Darwin and Alice Springs and there will be further briefings in Gove next week and in Groote Eylandt the week after that by arrangement with the trade unions there. We have spoken to employer groups in Darwin, Alice Springs, Katherine and Tennant Creek and with insurers all down the Track. This is in addition to the multitude of consultative processes that I was involved in last year, as the responsible minister, with the various representative groups. I went through all the details of the act's operation with the trade unions. It is a shame that they did not produce any formal or detailed submissions but, despite that, they have an active and continuing role through the advisory council of the Work Health Authority.

In respect of the court rules, I am advised that there were provisional court rules in place from 1 January and any person wishing to lodge a claim in that period could have done so. There has been an acting registrar, the Deputy Clerk of the Court, since 1 January. I can also advise this Assembly that detailed work health rules have been prepared and signed by me as the minister responsible.

Mr Smith: When?

Mr HATTON: Mr Speaker, I signed those on 1 May, after I had been sworn in.

Honourable members opposite would have us believe that we have drafted this very complex document and had it approved by the Department of Law and the Chief Magistrate since the trade union had an article published in the newspaper. How ludicrous! The fact is that the Work Health Authority has been working on this since before the act commenced and I can say that the authority deserves great commendation for producing such a document in so short a time. It is not easy to produce such a document.

Mr Smith: 10 years and 4 months?

Mr HATTON: The Leader of the Opposition opens his mouth and digs a bigger grave for himself. He has no conception whatsoever of the complexity of developing rules and procedures for a court ...

Mr Smith: You have no feeling whatsoever for injured workers in the Northern Territory.

Mr HATTON: ... to ensure that people's rights are properly protected. In opening his mouth, he is criticising personally all of those hard-working public servants who slaved away, last year and this year, to develop the rules and to ensure that they will work. They have done an excellent job on this, and in excellent time - I would be almost inclined to say in record time. They deserve our commendation for the excellent job that they have done.

I might indicate some of the other actions that have been taken by the Work Health Authority in the implementation of this legislation. Because of the detailed processes of consultation and preparation that occurred before the commencement of this legislation and because we knew where we were going and were able to act promptly, its implementation has been amazingly smooth.

Mr Ede: No one can find it.

Mr HATTON: Allow me to deal with a few of the issues that ...

Mr Ede: You hid it.

Mr HATTON: ... honourable members opposite failed to mention. Mr Speaker, I am forced to interject myself because they really do not understand.

Mr Smith: You have to interject yourself?

Mr HATTON: I think they ought to learn the truism that one cannot keep one's ears and mouth open at the same time. They would be better if they kept their mouths shut and their ears open so they could hear some truth for a change rather than the nonsense they have been trying to perpetrate on this Assembly.

Mr Speaker, I mentioned before that, with respect to making claims, apart from the details of the claim, the worker follows similar procedures to those which existed previously. He goes to the employer, obtains a claim form, fills it in and forwards it to the insurance company. That is what he always did. There are follow-up procedures under the work health legislation. A much tighter control is being built into the system but, had we introduced that prior to the legislation being in existence, honourable members opposite would have said that we were being very previous ...

Mr Ede: Very previous? I wish you were previous.

Mr HATTON: ... and would have been wasting public moneys because we may then have had to readjust and change them. We did not assume that we would barrel the legislation through this Assembly without amendment. Honourable members know quite well that, as a result of lengthy debate, we accepted a number of amendments proposed by the Leader of the Opposition. Because we are a responsible government, we do not resile from that. We will listen to responsible arguments on the rare occasions that they come from the other side of this Assembly.

Since the commencement of this act, the authority has approved 13 insurers. There were 14 applications but 1 was rejected. There have also been 3 approvals for self-insurance.

One of the provisions of this legislation clarifies the issue of persons exempted because they are self-employed persons. Honourable members will recall that there was lengthy debate on this. Under this legislation, a person is deemed to be covered by workers' compensation unless he has an exemption certificate. Again, the Work Health Authority has been working exceptionally well in this regard. I have 2 sets of figures that will give an indication of the extent to which the work is proceeding. As of 14 April, there had been 999 applications of which 714 had been approved and 20 rejected, leaving 265. As of 5 May, there have been 1080 applications received and 825 exemption certificates have been issued, with 23 rejections. There are still 232 outstanding. That is an exceptionally rapid rate of processing. Of course, members opposite fail even to recognise those elements as being of any importance whatsoever.

The clarification of who is and who is not covered by the act, and the working of exemption certificates and subcontracting arrangements, has been a source of continuous concern and litigation for years, as I am sure even the honourable member for Nhulunbuy will readily recognise. This legislation is rapidly dealing with that situation and I again commend the staff of the Work Health Authority for the expeditious way in which they are proceeding.

For the first time in the Northern Territory, the staff of the authority are working on a statistical base which will give us a clear indication as to where the accident risks are. It will give us a statistical framework for addressing issues of industrial safety and also for providing advice to the insurers so they can make proper actuarial assessments of the insurance premium rates that they should be charging. I must say that it will take some 12 months to compile, but we are already collecting available statistics on accident frequency and severity. Rather than waste any of the Assembly's time now, I will not deal with those.

In respect of rehabilitation services, there have been 2 private services commenced in Darwin, the Industrial Rehabilitation Service and the Northern Territory Rehabilitation Service. Other agencies, including the South

Australian Sports Injury Service, have indicated an interest in Darwin and the Work Health Authority is developing a package to encourage more interest in Alice Springs by private rehabilitation services. I might say that hospitals provide a rehabilitation service throughout the Northern Territory. In addition, there are private doctors and the new private hospital in Darwin will have a rehabilitation service. The expansion and development of private rehabilitation services in the Northern Territory are a direct response to this legislation and the policies of my government in promoting the development of private medical services and the principle of choice for the community.

Another important element which has been a matter of some considerable debate was the cost of workers' compensation. I am pleased to advise that there are indications already that workers' compensation premium rates are reducing as a consequence of the work health legislation. I am advised that private insurers are maintaining their minimum discount of 10% and I am aware that they are discussing premium levels in general. The Territory Insurance Office has revamped its rates so that an overall drop of around 15% is evident. The authority knows of instances where, for occupations for such as bricklayers, the rate prior to the legislation becoming effective was around 20% while rates now being quoted are 12% to 15%. Fishermen, who were experiencing rates of 36% plus, are now able to purchase cover for 10%.

These are indications of the success of this legislation. Rehabilitation services are commencing throughout the Territory, insurers are in place, exemption certificates are in place, the forms were ready before the legislation came into force, the court rules have been put in place in almost record time and provisional rules applied in the intervening period, and an advertising and promotional campaign was conducted by the Work Health Authority during December following the passage of the legislation in this Assembly. This is all evidence of a responsive, responsible government dealing with its legislation. The professionalism of the Work Health Authority staff in implementing this legislation is a credit to them and to this government.

MOTION

References to Public Accounts Committee

Mr PALMER (Karama): Mr Speaker, I seek leave to move a motion to refer 3 matters to the Public Accounts Committee. These are matters which were referred to the committee in the previous Assembly.

Leave granted.

Mr PALMER (Karama): Mr Speaker, I move that:

- (1) the following matters be referred to the Public Accounts Committee for inquiry and report:
 - (A) the patterns of expenditure of government departments and authorities that rely on annual budget appropriations to determine whether there is any evidence of accelerated year-end spending and the circumstances that have led to such accelerated expenditure;
 - (B) the actual and contingent liabilities of the Northern Territory government, in particular the Yulara development, the Alice Springs and Darwin Sheraton Hotels, the Alice

Springs and Darwin casinos and the proposed development on Myilly Point and on, and adjacent to, the site of the old Darwin Hospital;

in considering this reference, the Public Accounts Committee shall not consider the appropriateness or otherwise of government decisions or policies;

- (C) all matters concerning a recent decision of the Northern Territory government relating to the aero-medical contract, including the adequacy of tender documents, whether all relevant matters were considered in assessing the tenders, whether proper procedures were followed in assessing the tenders, and whether the Tender Board formed for the purpose was properly constituted;

this matter shall not be considered by the committee until such times as all litigation referring to the matter has been completed; and

- (2) in considering these references, the committee be empowered to consider the minutes of proceedings, evidence taken and records of the previous Public Accounts Committee established in the Fourth Assembly.

Mr LEO (Nhulunbuy): Mr Speaker, I will not take up much time on this matter. In fact, this motion results from a meeting of the Public Accounts Committee. Obviously, it has been referred to the 2 major parties represented in this Assembly. I urge all honourable members to support this motion so that the committee can proceed with the business it was charged with in the previous Assembly. Before this year is out, we hope that we can give this Assembly and the people of the Northern Territory substantial reports on those matters.

Motion agreed to.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

Mr MANZIE (Attorney-General)(by leave): Mr Speaker, I make this explanation as a consequence of statements made by the Leader of the Opposition during the discussion today of a matter of public importance. That matter of public importance related to the Work Health Act and the Leader of the Opposition spent much of his time attacking statements I made to this Assembly on 29 April about the operation of the Work Health Court.

Mr Speaker, the statements of the Leader of the Opposition clearly implied that I had misled this Assembly. That is an extremely serious charge to make against any member and one which causes me great concern. The Leader of the Opposition took exception to my statement that the Work Health Court has been able to operate since the day the Work Health Act commenced. I would like to make it clear that I stand by that statement. Section 95 of the act gives the Chief Magistrate the power to make practice directions regulating the practice and procedures of the court, including the practice and procedures to be followed in the registry. Draft rules have been put in place under that section. Section 101 states that each clerk of the local court is an assistant registrar of the Work Health Court since the act came into force. Section 104 says that applications may be made to the Work Health Court in the prescribed manner and form. There is provision for those applications to be made and there has been since the act commenced.

I reject the allegation by the Leader of the Opposition that my earlier statement was incorrect. When he raised the issue, I considered taking action under either standing order 62 or standing order 83 which relate to offensive or unbecoming words or apparent breach of privilege respectively. However, I have taken the charitable view that his allegations were made in ignorance and not from malice. I would remind the Leader of the Opposition that he has a responsibility to ensure that his statements to this Assembly are based on fact, particularly when they imply that a member has misled the Assembly. I would recommend to him that he ensure his future statements are based on more accurate research than the one he made this morning.

MINERAL ROYALTY AMENDMENT BILL
(Serial 18)

Bill presented and read a first time.

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

It is now nearly 5 years since the Territory's Mineral Royalty Act came into force. It is a profits-based royalty regime which is innovative and contains many positive features for both government and industry and which, since its enactment, has generated considerable comment. When the act was commenced in 1982, the government undertook to review it after it had been operating for a suitable period. In December 1984, the government subsequently initiated an internal departmental review. While the review was to be wide-ranging, the department was instructed to examine specifically whether the administration of the existing system could be simplified, whether a profits-based regime was appropriate and whether a lower royalty rate would attract greater exploration and mining activity under the act.

The review resulted in the publication, in June 1985, of a discussion paper which was circulated to the industry. Although the 1985 review of the Mineral Royalty Act enhanced support for a profits-based royalty, it did reveal areas of industry concern that were well reflected in the NT Chamber of Mines' own submission that the royalty rate was too high, the definition of 'profit' needed changing, the costs of final mine rehabilitation should be deductible and certain changes should be made to improve administrative provisions in the legislation.

The changes which the government now proposes in this bill respond in large measure to the industry's views and should be welcomed by the industry. Although it is not intended to alter the existing 18% royalty rate, the government proposes to provide major concessions by way of changes of items of expenditure eligible for deduction within the royalty rate. The admission of these concessions and other changes to the royalty system will allow major advantages to accrue to companies in the Northern Territory.

Mr Speaker, I table an information paper for the benefit of honourable members. The paper explains in greater detail most of the amendments which are being proposed in the bill and which, in effect, will bring about a significant lowering of the royalty burden at the unchanged nominal 18% royalty rate.

A major factor in the effective lowering of the royalty burden is the proposed treatment of interest and depreciation. Industry has sought continued recognition of depreciation and interest in the definition of 'profit' and changes to the depreciation basis for the Mineral Royalty Act.

The government agrees that deductability of interest and depreciation should continue in the determination of profit. However, to avoid a number of problems associated with the recognition of capital expenditure and interest charges, it is proposed to encapsulate such changes in a single, periodic, capital recognition deduction, known as CRD. Such a deduction would stand in place of all depreciation and interest deductions allowable on an asset-by-asset basis.

The CRD concept is commonly encountered in mortgage repayments where a single, equal monthly payment recovers both capital and interest. In the case of CRD, a 6-monthly deduction is envisaged in line with the 6-monthly basis for royalty payments. Incorporated within the CRD deduction will be an assumed interest rate, generally 2% above the long-term bond rate. Just as mortgage instalments may be varied to take account of interest rate changes so too a CRD, once determined for an asset, could be periodically varied to take account of changes in prevailing rates of interest. In detail, there will be 3 categories of capital assets recognised with different periods over which the CRD deduction will be made. These are specified in the information paper which I have tabled.

The government has also accepted an industry request that, for administrative efficiency and equity reasons, the profit for royalty should be closer to book or accounting profits. Accordingly, the definition of 'profit' in the act will be altered so that it accords more closely with that determined under generally accepted accounting principles. The industry also expressed concern at the number of items in the royalty calculations that are subject to secretarial or ministerial discretion. While a review of royalty legislation in other states does not support this contention, the point was taken by government.

The amendments reduce the areas of discretion and go further to allow a royalty payer to seek and obtain a written and binding determination on how allowable deductions in the royalty payer's particular circumstances will be interpreted ahead of project development and before expenditure is incurred. This could require considerable resources on the part of the government and hence will need to be monitored closely in its operations.

To counter any attempt to exploit loopholes for royalty avoidance purposes that the elimination of discretions may leave open, a general anti-avoidance provision will be inserted. Therefore, while facilitating the negotiation of allowable deductions prior to commencement of production, there will be provision for variations of a determination in case of avoidance.

The industry has also asked that private royalties paid to other parties be treated as deductible costs. Commonwealth, not Territory, policies endorse the concept of private royalties in relation to mining on Aboriginal land. This represents an abrogation of the Crown's ownership of minerals on behalf of the whole community and is not an acceptable concept to this government. Industry representatives have asked that such royalties be offset against profits with a resulting revenue loss to the Territory. The only way that this would be acceptable to this government is if there were full recompense provided by the Commonwealth.

In giving consideration to the many industry submissions made, the government has also accepted the suggestion that a greater incentive to exploration could be achieved by increasing the extent of the exploration expenditure deductions which may be claimed against the royalty. In this regard, provisions have been made in the bill to weight exploration

expenditure certificates for exploration expenditure incurred at 150% and to increase the capacity for that expenditure to reduce royalties payable in any one year from 25% to 35%.

Under the existing provisions of the act, eligible exploration expenditure must be established via exploration expenditure certificates issued by the Department of Mines and Energy. It may represent exploration carried out by the royalty payer anywhere in the Territory or exploration expenditure certificates purchased by the royalty payer from another person. The original concept of allowing exploration expenditure as a deduction against royalty was intended as a major incentive to increase exploration activity throughout the Territory. However, to date, there has been little trading in certificates and little to suggest that the incentive is working. Total annual exploration expenditure has remained constant and the only exploration costs currently being used under the scheme are costs essentially incurred directly by production unit holders.

The achievement of maximum utilisation of Territory mineral resources is inextricably linked to the quantity and quality of exploration activities being undertaken. It is therefore important that every effort be made to stimulate additional exploration activity which will ensure progressive development of new mines. Clearly, the strategy incorporated in the 1982 Mineral Royalty Act was not enough and the amendments now proposed may well be the answer to providing the right incentive to attract increased exploration commitments to the Territory. Obviously, only time will show the effectiveness of the revised exploration incentive. It is proposed that the amendment exploration expenditure provisions will operate from 1 January 1987, and the government will be monitoring the scheme closely to ensure that its objectives are being achieved.

The government proposes that the amended legislation be effective from 1 July 1986 to allow for the calculation of royalty payments for a full financial year. All new mine developments and existing mines at the next renewal of their tenements will come under the amended act automatically. Mines which committed capital under the 1982 act will come under the amended act from 1 September 1987, unless they have elected prior to that date to remain under the 1982 act. The government believes that the concessions incorporated into the amendments proposed are advantageous and that all projects will elect to come under that amended act. In summary, the introduction of a capital recognition deduction, and other changes to what constitutes the profit for royalty will result in an effective drop in the royalty rate. This, combined with other measures, will ensure that an efficient and improved Mineral Royalty Act will operate in the Northern Territory.

Mr Speaker, I want to emphasise the extensive nature of the consultative process between industry and government that has taken place over a period of nearly 2 years in developing this legislation. In the main, it has been the wish to maximise this consultation with industry that has prevented the bill's earlier introduction and passage. The changes to the act will have major implications for increased investment in mineral resource exploration and development in the Territory, and the government is committed to ensuring that the proposed amendments are brought into effect as soon as possible.

Mr Speaker, I commend the bill to honourable members.

Debate adjourned.

ADDRESS-IN-REPLY

Continued from 30 April 1987.

Mr COLLINS (Sadadeen): Mr Speaker, it gives me pleasure to rise and add a few words in support of the Address-in-Reply to His Honour the Administrator and to pledge my loyalty to Her Majesty and, implied in that, my loyalty to Australia and to the free and open society.

His Honour mentioned on the first page of his address that we live in a rather interesting situation in the Northern Territory, where our electorates are small and the people of the electorates can get to know us and we to know them. I believe that is a strong factor in why I am here today following the events prior to the election. I thank the people of Sadadeen for their support and I pledge my support to them during this term.

His Honour said that, because of the tough economic times which we are in, the Territory will have to rely far more upon its own resources and its people in the coming years. But, Mr Speaker, wouldn't it be nice if we were actually allowed to develop many of our resources? I am thinking particularly of uranium. It would be great to take a few adventurous and sensible steps with the uranium, not just to take it to yellowcake but, as I said in the Fourth Assembly, to enrich the uranium to fuel grade, 3%, which is way below weapons grade, produce the rods to the orders of overseas countries where they have nuclear reactors for the energy cycle and take back the spent rods, reprocess them and store the waste in the synroc process. We have the capacity. We have 1 of 3 places in the world which is considered to be really safe for storage of such materials, and yet we are hamstrung.

Mr Ede: Not at Ti Tree!

Mr COLLINS: Not at Ti Tree. There is water in the ground at Ti Tree and we cannot contaminate that, but it could be put 1 km or so down in a dry area without any problems whatsoever.

The people of the Territory are a very important resource. I know many of them are hurting from the interest rates which they have to pay on their mortgages. I am disappointed to see quite a large number of homes up for sale in Alice Springs and to hear the message around the traps that people are finding it too expensive to stay in the Territory. That is their belief. Whether they will be better off down south, whether they will find it any easier there is questionable in my book and I hope that, if they take the decision to leave, it will be taken with great care. In the past, we have seen many people leave the Territory to go south and, a very short time later, they have returned.

However, times will not be easy here. We will be relying upon our resources and upon our people and it would be very handy if we had a government in Canberra which was a little more sympathetic and would let the Territory make the contribution which it has the potential to do for Australia and its people. The only good thing I can see about the knowledge that we have a huge deficit is that 1 day somebody will wake up to the fact that we must rescind the stupid legislation relating to mining in parks. As I have said, it can be done. At Ranger we have a magnificent demonstration that people can look after the environment and still reap the wealth it contains.

Statehood is another item on the government's agenda and I do not think there is anybody in this Assembly who does not support it. However, I begin

to wonder whether, when we finally attain statehood after the long haul, it will be worth having because the federal government seems to be doing all it can, through various back-door means, to take away the powers of the states. There are many examples of this. I heard some comment earlier about the Companies and Securities Act. Now that we have uniform legislation, the federal government is saying that it should take control of the legislation in the states. I ask the minister to stick to his guns and fight that one because ...

Mr Ede: I thought you were for small government?

Mr COLLINS: I am, but small government does not necessarily mean small parliaments. I will come to that point later on. I am glad you raised it and I am sure you will listen with interest to what I have to say.

The government should be the facilitator which creates the climate so that the private sector can get on with creating the wealth. To draw on my past experience as a teacher, I learned after a time that I could not do the learning for the kids. The teacher's art is to create a climate for learning. Certainly, the teacher presents the material but he also must create a learning climate. No matter how well prepared he is, if he cannot create the right environment, learning will not occur and his efforts will be doomed to failure.

The same applies with government. The government has to learn that it cannot do it all. It must create the climate within which the private sector can do the job. Basically, that is the Chief Minister's aim. Of course, it is one thing to have an aim and another thing to achieve that aim. Sometimes, when you are in power, it is too easy to take the credit for everything. The government has many things to be proud of but we must never forget that the government on its own is nothing. The efforts of the people are vital to the whole process of development and the Territory becoming a place which will contribute to Australia's wealth and a place of which we can all be very proud.

Mention was made of the rail link. I recall that the member for Port Darwin referred to it in his famous speech the other day. I dare say he will not forget that speech for a long time and I support wholeheartedly much of what he said. He referred to use of a rail link for defence purposes. I mentioned the Caspian jumbo that can carry 900 fully-equipped soldiers. We need to look to our defence. Nevertheless, headlines outside the newsagency today indicate that there will be cuts in defence spending. I almost feel as though we are being done in the eye. Perhaps I am becoming jittery about the world situation, but I know that many other people are concerned at defence spending cuts. The morale of the armed forces is very low and the resignation rate is very high.

His Honour also mentioned a review of regulations promised by the Chief Minister. I was on the backbench committee in the previous session which examined regulations and it came as somewhat of a surprise to me to find that, when we asked the business community to identify which regulations were annoying and costing time and money, we did not obtain any sensible answers. The business people could not nail it down, even in the broadest possible terms, except for one thing: the high level of taxation and the resulting disincentives for business.

In Britain, experts interviewed some 100 different companies and presented a White Paper to the government. They came to the conclusion that each

company employed about 1 person solely because of government red tape. Some of the companies had as many as 100 employees while others may have had only 1 or 2. A broad spectrum of companies was looked at. Some had actually employed more people due to the red tape. I have come to the conclusion that Britain has much more red tape than Australia has even though it has only 1 parliament. Here we have both the Territory and federal governments involved. This situation goes back over many years and, therefore, I am not necessarily simply having a shot at the present federal government. Over the years, there has been a trend towards more and more regulation and that has resulted in a cost to the people in both time and effort. I am sure that, if a review is done and help is given, we will find out what is bugging the community. Then we will be able to tie it down and do something useful. I look forward very much to this Assembly rescinding legislation and subordinate legislation in order to make life easier for business through the removal of the government's foot from the jugular of the people who create the country's wealth.

His Honour spoke of land rights and the role they had played in helping to give Aboriginal people ownership of land. We know that there are some areas which cannot be claimed, and these include stock routes and stations. That is well recognised by all of us. I have said many times that I question whether land rights in their present form are really giving ownership to individual families. Large tracts of land tend to be granted to trustees of an area. The Queensland Minister for Aboriginal Affairs has spoken about how a community, when granted individual rights to blocks of land, changed from a rundown, belligerent, heavy-drinking society into one in which individual families developed a bakery, service station and other businesses. He mentioned that the people developed pride and the drinking problem was receding into the background. I would like to see the Land Rights Act changed so that individuals could have ownership of their land.

Mr Ede: It is a different culture.

Mr COLLINS: The member for Stuart says that it is a different culture. I have spoken with an Aboriginal gentleman - I will tell the member later on who he is - who comes from an area south of Alice Springs. He said that individual ownership of land was part of the society. He is a traditional owner himself and he has land. Even if other tribal groups have a different culture, I think they are seeing the benefits of ownership of property. Things are changing and one has to catch up with the times.

In his reply to His Honour, the Chief Minister used the expression 'strong, stable and independent'. I must confess I rather like that. I could not afford TV coverage but that term 'independent' may well have been very useful to the member for Koolpinyah.

Mrs Padgham-Purich: I am strong and stable and independent.

Mr COLLINS: Yes, we both are. I thank the Chief Minister for his support on that one.

The Territory government should be thankful that people do perceive it as being strong on the whole. In respect of the term 'stable', last year there were a few ripples around the traps. Above all, what the people like is the independent bit.

Mr Dale: That is 1 out of the 3 we have. How are we doing?

Mr COLLINS: You will just have to wait and see about that.

The matter which is worrying Australia more than anything else, particularly the business community and those who create wealth, is tax. It is a fact that incentive has been destroyed by the heavy tax load. The increased tax grab has reached a stage where the best brains in the country are spending their time trying to work out how people can avoid tax, either legally or even illegally. Successive governments have promised more and more in the way of services and have put their hands into the hip pocket of business to pay for them. It is reaching a stage where it is hurting. People are not willing to take on new staff or to expand their businesses because rewards are not worth the hassles and risks.

I agree with the Chief Minister that Territorians are contributing to Australia's wealth. We could contribute much more, particularly through uranium mining, if we took those steps. If there is anything good about our being so deeply in debt, it is that we may one day be forced to take those steps and the Territory will make a very great contribution to Australia.

What saddens me is that, when our people create wealth and they are taxed on that wealth, the tax flows to Canberra. Then the Territory is told that it must do a reasonable job in terms of revenue-raising and we have to apply payroll tax and mining tax etc in an effort to fill our own coffers. The Government makes an effort that way and incurs some of the odium that attaches to that. In many ways, that is counterproductive. A gold tax was proposed and seems to have been dropped because it was very clearly demonstrated that the negative effect of applying a gold tax would mean mines would mine only the rich ore and the poorer ore would be left in the ground. Without a tax, the miner would take lower grade ore, extracting more gold in the long run and the Territory and Australia would benefit in terms of employment. A gold tax would have had a negative effect and I am glad the federal government had the common sense to listen to that argument.

It would be nice to know just how much Territorians do actually contribute in tax. That seems to be 1 of the best-kept secrets around the traps. The federal government does not reveal how much was collected from the Territory or, for that matter, from the states either. It would be nice to have some figures on it.

The Chief Minister mentioned 4 principles which he wants to work on over this period of government. The first relates to small government, and that brings me to my friend, the member for Stuart. I believe that many people think that small government simply means a small number of members in parliament. Actually, small government results when government reduces the number of services it provides. I strongly support the 3-tier system of government that we have in Australia: local government, state or territory government and federal government. I believe that power should be shared and the states have to guard jealously the powers that have been given to them so that power is not concentrated in 1 place. It is very obvious that the people in Canberra would like to see power concentrated.

On the other hand, we have to be careful that, when we kick the federal government in Canberra, we do not, at the same time, give local government an unduly hard time. We have to trust local government and give it powers for it to handle its responsibilities. To me, small government is not a matter of having only 2 tiers of government or reducing the number of members in parliament. Over the years, governments have said they will do this and that for the people. They have eroded the private enterprise sector and they have

had to dig deep into the pockets of the taxpayers to pay for the services provided. Often they do not do the job well. Everything is provided in bulk so that services cater for the broad mass of people and the innovation that would be there if the private enterprise sector were involved is missing completely.

That brings me to 1 of the key points and an argument that I would have had with the member for Stuart when he tried to damn privatisation the other day. Mr Speaker, I have known for a long time that the federal Treasurer, Hon Paul Keating, has been getting all the privatisation books that he can lay his hands on from Centre 2000 in Sydney. 12 months ago, he was sucked in by the British unions, not by the union members but the union leadership. He was sucked in by those people and ran an anti-privatisation camp which was so effective that the Liberal Party decided it was better not to use the word. It decided it would implement the principle without naming it. However, after damning privatisation, now Mr Keating and his advisers have started to find out what privatisation is all about and it is becoming quite clear that they may well put it on their agenda and steal the thunder from the Liberal Party, John Howard and the Dries.

Of course, it is 1 thing to espouse it when it is sensed that the nation feels that that is the way that we have to go, but my support of privatisation comes basically from a belief which I hold very strongly. The way to obtain smaller government is not for the government to try the usual trick of, say, cutting the budgets of government departments. If that is done, it will be found that the wages of the public servants or their amenities will not be reduced. By closing down a children's hospital, a considerable sum may be saved. That sort of recommendation may be made but it will be politically unacceptable.

However, the methods of privatisation are politically acceptable. I think the Liberals' biggest mistake was the desire to make a gung-ho charge to privatise Australian Airlines and Qantas as though it is something that they would impose on all employees. Because they did not understand it, it was very easy for employees to become fearful and to oppose it. Privatisation will only work if the vast majority of the work force know, understand and have had plenty of time to debate and deliberate on it amongst themselves, to determine that the deal that the government is offering them is at least every bit as good as what they have.

The beauty of privatisation is that often it will provide employees with the opportunity and incentive to better their lot. That has been done most successfully, and Britain has led the way in this. When members of the work force have become shareholders in the private company, when they have had that extra incentive, it has given them a reason to get off their backsides. When they were public servants, they would be paid the same amount whether they worked hard or whether they did not. When some people are lazy, that makes industrious people less inclined to work hard, given that they are being paid the same wage as the lazy ones. That is human nature and human psychology. We cannot get away from that and, in the same situation, we would all be tempted to react in the same way.

Privatisation can change that attitude, particularly when members of the work force become shareholders in the private enterprise and have a chance to better their lot. There are many examples of that occurring, not only in Britain but even in China and a few other communist countries which are dabbling with it and adopting a change in attitude. Privatisation leads to a change in attitude when people become shareholders and can own their own

homes, as they do in Britain through the vast deduction scheme that has been implemented. They feel as though they belong and they will give of their best. That is what this country needs. It is what this government needs to do.

I believe the Chief Minister's intention is along those lines and I look forward to seeing successes in that regard. To use the housing example, the Alice Springs section of the Department of Transport and Works could be privatised. That might only be a small section but it is not obligatory to privatise the whole organisation. If the people working in that section went over to the private sector, they could be given some guarantees - for a fixed time period - of receiving government work. They would also be able to take on private work. I am satisfied that there are plenty of people in the public service who would like that extra incentive to improve their circumstances and those of their families. In this way, little by little, the government would be able to reduce the size of its work force whilst still providing services to the public and reducing its need to put its hand in the taxpayer's pocket. I trust that the government will work very hard to persuade public servants that this is what is needed.

Various groups within our public service could look at ways and means of privatising their activities. Perhaps they could approach the government and say that they would like to go private. Once privatisation had caught on in Britain, public servants themselves nipped out schemes which were accepted by the government. This allowed that government to offer a 2% across-the-board cut in taxation. We have not had that in Australia where governments generally give with 1 hand and take away the other. Fiddling with the system at its fringes, such as has happened with the fringe benefits tax, only creates disruption which can be very detrimental to the country. I am sure everybody who has been involved with the fringe benefits tax will appreciate just how disruptive it has actually been. It is better to stick to the system you have unless you are actually able to reduce taxation, which is what Australia must do. Taxation must be reduced in order to restore incentive and motivation for the people of this country.

We are only small in the Territory and the Territory government has only limited powers. However, I look forward to raising this subject from time to time and to seeing just how well the government succeeds in its efforts to reduce the size of government and to encourage the private enterprise sector to create wealth and jobs for the people of the Territory, particularly the young people of the Territory.

Mr FIRMIN (Ludmilla): Mr Speaker, in his address to the Assembly, His Honour the Administrator spoke of the need for a particular commitment by Territorians. The commitment required of Territorians is to be resourceful and innovative in developing the Territory's wide range of resources. The resources I refer to are plentiful and include mining, fishing, agriculture, horticulture, primary production, energy, manufacturing, tourism, electronics and human resources. How successful the Territory will be in continuing its previously unprecedented growth rates - rates which have far outstripped those in the rest of Australia - will only be determined by the innovative ideas of Territorians themselves. Since self-government, we have laid a foundation of infrastructure, both physical and legislative, for the private sector to build on and to take advantage of. The next period of growth requires a commitment from and by Territorians to take advantage of the framework the government has developed.

Major developments which have contributed to the Territory's growth are well known. They include: the Yulara Tourist Development; the Amadeus Basin to Darwin gas pipeline; the development and building of the Trade Development Zone; the Norgaard study into the Territory fishing industry which saw the completion of the Darwin fishing basin as part of the infrastructure identified as required for the fishing industry to expand; and the completion of the Alice Springs and Darwin gas turbine power-stations which, together with further rationalisation of Territory power supplies, will give us one of the cheapest power supplies in Australia in years to come and one which, incidentally, will not be using overseas fuel supplies which I expect to become even more expensive as we near the turn of the century.

The Port of Darwin, with the twin facilities of its new container crane and the roll-on roll-off wharf, together with the creation of landbacked warehousing and storage areas, is one of the most modern small ports in Australia. This represents a considerable investment in the overall export plans of the government.

Further developments the government intends to pursue have been enumerated by the Chief Minister in his speech to the Address-in-Reply, but I will highlight several which I believe complete the scenario which I wish to set. I refer to the completion of the north-south rail link, the upgrading of the major airports in the Northern Territory and the completion of an international airport in Darwin. Coupled with the completion of the Northern Territory's communications network, these additional major developments will provide a complete package of road, rail, sea, air and communication links with the rest of Australia and our overseas neighbours. The government will actively pursue additional projects as they are identified and will continue to encourage new industries to the Northern Territory.

The tourist industry has been one area of development where Territorians with diverse interests have accepted the challenge to be innovative and to meet the new and emerging demands of their clients. We have seen as diverse responses as an Angora goat farm development in Alice Springs, with its attendant cottage industry of handknitted woollen goods from handspun yarn, to specially designed tourist launches for the viewing of wildlife on the Top End's rivers and lagoons. Also, the tourist industry is responding with better training for its industry workers and, last week, I had a great deal of pleasure in attending the Beaufort Hotel's presentation to its apprentices at of their certificates of the completion of their year's training which I had the pleasure of launching in 1986 for the then Minister. These students have all been offered contracts with the Beaufort Hotel which has also offered overseas training contracts to 2 students.

The major tourist support areas are being catered for but what is required is a better response to public relations by the majority of small operators, particularly the wayside inn and caravan park operators on our major highways. There are still too many reports of people being left with difficult problems or faced with a lack of care or service up and down the Stuart Highway. With the completion of the south road and the state of the nation's economy, more and more people in Australia will spend their hard-earned holiday funds in the best way possible, and that will not necessarily be on high-priced air fares. I believe more and more Australians will use motor vehicles and caravans to maximise their funds and, with the media coverage being given to the Northern Territory as a result of the Tourist Commission's activities and films such as 'Crocodile Dundee', the number of road tourists to the Northern Territory will increase at an incredible rate.

With the increased road traffic will come a responsibility to ensure that tourists are respected and given all the help they need so that, on their return home, they will be encouraged to tell others of their enjoyment in travelling to the Territory. All service providers will have to look seriously at the manner and the attitude they adopt. We can no longer afford the luxury of presuming that, because the tourists, in some cases, are on the one and only road in the region, they can grin and bear it.

The manufacturing industry in the Territory has yet to take off in a big way, but there are some encouraging signs. Some businessmen have made exceptional efforts to meet the needs of both the local and the interstate markets, with potential for overseas orders just around the corner. One of those is Tristar Marine in McKinnon Road, Berrimah. This company has designed and manufactured state-of-the-art, high-speed aluminium cruisers and successfully sold them to several states in Australia to the extent that their order book is now filled for the next 6 months. At the same time, the company has been working in tandem with Telecom Australia to develop a fully-portable truck and or trailer-mounted satellite earth station for use with Telecom's ITERRA network of telephone and data communications services.

Recently, we have recently seen the commencement of the first canning factory in the Northern Territory by a Victorian gentleman who, I might add, is in his mid-70s. He has shown true entrepreneurial spirit by dismantling his machinery in Victoria and personally trucking it overland to the Top End and commissioning it. He is now commencing his first runs of canned pet meat product. He told me last week that, because of the high quality meat offcuts he is able to obtain in the Northern Territory, it is probably the best product he has made in the 40-odd years he has been in the industry.

He has also been innovative in many other ways. He has designed and patented a method of producing tin cans from recycled material and, using a new process - again which he has designed and patented - to flatten his cans for boxing prior to transportation to other plants around Australia. The freight saving made by using this method is exceptional. On receipt at his canning factories, he uses a simple process to return the can outers to their original shape, places the bottom on, fills and seals them with a top and, after labelling, they are ready for sale. There is no indication on the cans that they have been flattened at any time nor is there any degradation of the cans or crimping of the metal. It is people like this man that we intend to encourage and more Territorians need to take a leaf out of his book.

There are several more examples of innovation by Territorians and some of these are in the horticultural field: the production of table grapes at Ti Tree, the cut-flower industry that is developing around Alice Springs and many others. Today, I wish to highlight plant cloning developments by Dennis Hearne of Tropicus Nursery in my electorate.

The advances made by Mr Hearne in the last few years are phenomenal, to say the least. To visit his laboratory in his nursery at Coconut Grove and to see the advances he is making in his field is like being a participant in the television production 'Towards 2000'. The results of Mr Hearne's pioneering endeavours are now starting to show rewards that are extensive. He is recognised as a leader in his profession and has joined with several major overseas interests to enter the European flower market with multi-million dollar projects. These projects, based both in Holland and in Darwin, will set the scene for further expansion and I am certain that we have a major world company entering its formative years right here in Darwin. Fortunately for us, Mr Hearne is a Territorian of long standing and has a commitment to

the Territory. When he was first attempting to enter the world market, it would have been very easy for him to take his technology and set up in Europe, close to his potential market. However, he persevered and has now decided to remain Territory-based and market his product offshore.

Mr Speaker, those are some of the examples that I wished to use to indicate that, if Territorians are innovative, they can and will succeed not only in producing rewards for themselves but in creating further jobs, attendant markets and in assisting the future growth of the Territory.

Mr Speaker, I now wish to comment on the recent Territory elections. Like many other members of the Assembly, I found my electoral roll to be grossly inaccurate but, unlike some members opposite, I do not blame either the Northern Territory Electoral Office or the closure of the rolls in the short period before the election. The onus is on constituents to advise the Electoral Office of altered circumstances such as entry into the Northern Territory since the last election or a change of name or address.

It is extremely difficult for the Electoral Office to check completely the validity of the rolls between elections even though it conducts occasional door-to-door checks. In my electorate, with its highly mobile population, it is almost impossible. The defence forces within the boundaries of my electorate - RAAF Darwin and HMAS Coonawarra - both had a major turnover of personnel at Christmas time and there was considerable juggling of personnel on and off base while repairs were being effected to Cyclone Tracy-damaged houses. These factors made the roll numbers up to 400 persons out when combined base figures were taken into account.

The caravan parks of Shady Glen, Overlander, John White and the Sundowner in my electorate also counted for approximately another 110 voters incorrectly enrolled. These problems will continue in years to come. When one considers that one of my opponents enrolled a further 60-odd people at only one of the caravan parks, one can only guess how many of those will still be resident at that caravan park at the next election, be it federal or Territory. I am already receiving 'address unknown' returned letters for a number of those people who were enrolled only the week before the closure - some 2 months ago.

The Winnellie industrial area showed some 112 voters on the roll in my electorate but, after teams of my workers had visited every industrial and commercial premises and their caretakers' dwellings, they were unable to identify any more than 42 persons correctly enrolled. This is unavoidable with the staff turnover in that environment. Even with the short closure, Ludmilla rolls increased substantially between early January and the election.

Despite this, the voter turnout in my electorate was down to around 66%. The call by the opposition to increase the time for the closure of the rolls will only exacerbate the problem in electorates such as mine. With an extended closure period, a considerable number of temporary visitors to the Territory would be placed on the rolls. Most of those, as in the recent election, would probably not vote anyway and would cloud the issue for the next review by the Electoral Distribution Committee. My roll has already had some 400 deletions since the election and I expect many more to emerge as the Electoral Office works its way through the non-voter lists. I also intend to advise the Electoral Office of the incorrect enrolments that I have discovered and expect that, when these are taken into account, my total enrolments could almost result in the 20% negative tolerance occurring. While I am on the subject of my electorate, I would like to thank the voters who saw fit to support me even though a considerable proportion of them were not previously in my electorate.

In closing, I also wish to support the Chief Minister in his expression of loyalty to Our Most Gracious Sovereign and to thank His Honour for the speech which he was pleased to address to this Assembly.

Mr TIPILOURA (Arafura): Mr Speaker, I wish to take this first opportunity available to me in the Assembly to thank the many constituents of my electorate for their support in the recent election. I am aware of the responsibilities of this office and I will do my best to work hard on their behalf over the next 4 years.

The high point of achievement in recent times for most Aboriginal Territorians was the passage of the 1976 Land Rights Act introduced by the conservative Fraser government. Even that act ignored the people who are probably Australia's most deprived - the Aboriginal people living on cattle stations. The battle to keep those hard-won gains has been non-stop ever since. Aboriginal Territorians are constantly being portrayed as unreasonable and difficult because of their refusal to hand back without a protest rights that took 200 years of struggle to achieve.

The most disturbing development for us recently has been the total and sudden abandonment of the cross-party support that existed for 20 years at the federal level. This support recognised the special place that Aboriginal Australians have in our nation and the special problems that we face, problems which, while unique to us in Australia, are shared by indigenous people around the world. I refer of course to the most recently released policy of the former federal coalition, its policy on Aboriginal affairs. It has clearly been determined, because of the current problems faced by the federal opposition, that Aboriginal Australians are the most expendable people available to the Liberal Party in its endeavours to convince its former National Party colleagues of its New Right policy. The worst aspect of this policy, without doubt, is the attempt to give respectability to its main aim: to completely wash the federal government's hands of any responsibility to Aboriginal Australians.

I could do no better in response to this proposal than to quote the editorial of the conservative newspaper, The Australian, of 8 April 1987:

Aboriginal affairs is a question of national responsibility. The Aborigines do, like the indigenous people of the United States, Canada and New Zealand, have a special problem which needs to be dealt with on a national basis. Other nations, when examining the way we treated the Aborigines, used not to be terribly impressed when the Commonwealth government claimed Aboriginal rights were not its responsibility, but that of the states. Imagine what the reaction would be if South Africa chose to claim that apartheid was the responsibility of the provinces and nothing to do with the central government? The coalition should immediately rethink its proposed policy.

Mr Speaker, I can only add my support to that statement.

The Liberal and National parties have completely failed to understand the importance of the 1967 referendum. One of the major factors in the success of that referendum was that some states had not and would not meet their responsibilities towards Australia's Aboriginal people. That political situation has not only remained unchanged but, where state rights disagree with Aboriginal rights today, state rights still win out every time. This policy statement is a huge step away from the largely cross-party support for

Aboriginal affairs that has existed for the 20 years since the 1967 referendum.

The aim of the statement, that the Commonwealth will give up its responsibility for all special programs for our people and hand them over to the states, is political doubletalk for saying that they will not be carried out. Wholesale cuts in funding are proposed to the services to the most disadvantaged people in Australian society. There is not a single mention anywhere in the statement of the fundamental principle of self-determination for Aboriginal people.

Mr Connolly proposes to repeal the Aboriginal Heritage Protection Act, which already contains the principle that the Commonwealth will only become involved if the states fail to act. Health will become exclusively a state responsibility. This means that the funding of Aboriginal medical services through DAA will cease. The statement says that the responsibility for Aboriginal housing will be returned to the states. This shows a complete misunderstanding of how the current funding procedure operates. The Commonwealth States Housing Agreement provides clear guidelines for coordinating the provision of housing for Aboriginal people in the states. The Connolly statement rules out public funding for commercial broadcasting licences. This, of course, is a transparent attempt to undermine the feasibility of Imparja Television, which is in line with the general dishonest way in which the whole policy statement is presented.

The Connolly proposals, if ever implemented, will damage the reputation of this country in terms of its treatment of its indigenous people. It will be an interesting exercise, particularly in terms of the politics of our own South Pacific region, to see Australia attempting to argue with any credibility that any failures in the treatment of Aboriginal people here are the responsibility of the states, not the Commonwealth of Australia.

I said earlier that the Connolly statement is a dishonest document. It attempts to put a respectable face on the complete abandonment of federal government responsibility which it proposes. Its major implications are all left unstated. The statement makes it clear that there will be a drastic cut in overall funding for Aboriginal programs, despite the fact that we continue to occupy the lowest position in Australia, according to all social and economic indicators. The statement makes no mention of the campaign by the NT and Queensland governments to remove the protection of Aboriginal freehold title which applies to Aboriginal land, an exercise designed to deprive Aboriginal people of their land quickly in the same way as has happened elsewhere in the world, including the land formerly owned under freehold title by the Maori people of New Zealand.

The policy is loaded with meaningless good intentions. The phrase 'we will encourage' appears constantly, but it is completely lacking in any commitments to actual programs except those that will seriously disadvantage our people. No detail is provided in the statement as to how any of the proposed policy directions of the state will be coordinated. The reason is, of course, that the people who have drafted this statement neither know nor care if such policies will ever exist. This policy statement is a backward step to return Australia to the pre-1967 position in the area of Aboriginal affairs. In the middle of the release of policy documents by the former coalition, which are supposed to advance the position of other Australians, our people have been sent 20 years into the past. This statement is proof positive of the destructive control of the New Right in the former coalition, a control which has led to the destruction of the coalition itself within the past few weeks.

Despite the many unstated areas of this policy, it makes 2 things very clear: any future conservative government will preside over massive cuts in expenditure on programs for Aboriginal Australians and any future conservative government will attempt to deny responsibility, both domestically and internationally, for the economic and social condition of our people. This policy statement calls upon the states to do for Aboriginal people all of those things that neither the states nor the former coalition did when they had the opportunity to do so.

In view of the self-destruction of the federal coalition, I would like to conclude my comments on the policy statement by calling on those members of the federal Liberal Party who can still call themselves Liberals to produce a Liberal policy on Aboriginal Australians and not to continue to use Aboriginal Australians as human sacrifices on the altar of the New Right of the National Party.

Mr Speaker, representing the seat of Arafura presents a great challenge because of the wealth of resources, both human and natural, contained within its borders. Arafura contains the whole area of operations of 1 of the Territory's major land councils - the Tiwi Land Council. It contains many Aboriginal community townships and the greatest concentration of Aboriginal outstation communities in the Northern Territory. These places contain a people - my people, Mr Speaker - who have a special way of life and culture much older and very different from the rest of Australia, which we are determined to preserve for the mutual benefit both of ourselves and of Australia as a whole. The area produces much of the outstanding Aboriginal art and craft of Australia which represents not only the living culture from which it comes, but produces export earnings for the Territory of over \$4m a year.

Arafura includes the whole of what will be Australia's greatest national park, the Kakadu National Park, with all of its potential for both the conservation of its landscape and wildlife and the revenue generated by the millions of visitors who enjoy its unique beauty. It contains both of the only uranium mines in production in Australia and the important township of Jabiru, which serves the workers of that industry, will act in future as a focal point for the great tourist potential of the area. This tourist industry will outlive the mining operations and ensure a continued and prosperous role for Jabiru in the future development of the Northern Territory.

In other words, Arafura contains the mineral which generates much of the public debate on the issues which dominate the political life of the Northern Territory, the same issues that will also dominate debate in future years on the achievement of statehood for the Northern Territory. That statehood can only be achieved fairly if the current rights of all Territorians are preserved. No Territorians can be seriously expected to welcome the prospect of statehood if they are to be the losers by it. Indeed, Mr Speaker, if major sections of our community were disadvantaged, statehood would not be worth having as we would all be the losers in the end.

The Territory continues to be the most dynamic and challenging community in Australia, a place where the very different aspirations and needs of the people who make up its community can be met for the benefit of all. I pledge myself to the task of working for that goal, not only for the benefit of the people of my electorate but also for the benefit of the Northern Territory as a whole.

Mr DALE (Health and Community Services): Mr Speaker, I congratulate the honourable member for Arafura on his maiden speech and particularly on the way that he presented it. However, I must say that the whole speech smacked very much of a past member - the member's present electorate secretary. I saw him in the precincts of the Assembly only a short while before that speech was delivered. I hope that the honourable member for Arafura will not become simply a mouthpiece for his electorate secretary. The majority of that speech was on federal issues and, I believe, totally inappropriate. I wish the honourable member well in his parliamentary career, and I hope that he is left to his own devices in future. His own contributions will have much more significance for this Assembly than input from his electorate secretary.

Mr Speaker, a key objective of this government is to provide an integrated network of health and community services. The intention of these services is to mobilise available resources of individuals, families and community organisations in the best way possible to improve the health and social well-being of all Northern Territorians. I am talking of the quality of community life in the Northern Territory. These services are the basics upon which people will rely as the Territory continues to become a more attractive place in which to settle and invest, a place where people can seek the good life for themselves and their families. This is the context of the government's decision to amalgamate 4 departments to form the new Department of Health and Community Services.

With the amalgamation of these 4 departments, the government's resources, designed to provide services for those in need of social and physical care, can work more closely together. The one-stop-shop concept of health and community services has long been promoted by the World Health Organisation as the most effective system. The key result will be more efficient delivery of such services. This means greater value for the Territory's service dollar, better opportunities to develop and maintain the quality of Territory life, and services in line with this government's policy to cut red tape and the unnecessary bureaucratic barriers of the past.

Mr Speaker, I draw honourable members' attention to 1 example of the old bureaucratic maze people had to face. Let us take the case of someone interested in developing better entertainment and recreational facilities for young Territorians. This person might share my view that we are far better off investing money in projects such as the Marrara Sporting Complex where exuberant youngsters can channel their energies into positive, character-building activities. He might agree with me that such investment in our youth can reduce the need for spending money instead on the construction of grimmer institutions designed for those who have grown to view our society with bitterness.

Under the previous arrangements, this person would have discovered that 1 department was responsible for youth affairs and another was responsible for youth welfare issues. He might have also considered Sports House as a place to submit a proposal or approached one of the 3 Cabinet ministers with portfolios which had an interest in his project. Having once stepped into this maze, his idea might have slowly compressed under the weight of advice and inquiries from different offices. He might have decided it was easier to simply forget the whole thing. In a few years time, people who might have benefited from his idea would have found that there was another government organisation handling their affairs: the department responsible for youth correction.

We must also consider the case of a distressed parent who needs help with a child already at risk. The family does not need the added pressure of having to learn to play the frustrating game of running from one department to the next seeking assistance with a growing catalogue of problems. Under such circumstances, the people in greatest need are likely to be the first to be intimidated by what seems to be a bewildering array of bureaucracies. Similarly, aged people in our community dealt with one department for community health services and residential care. Another department was responsible for community welfare services and the administration of concessions for the aged. There were contradictions across the sphere of government-provided social and health services. Responsibility for the behaviourally-disturbed, for instance, was also split between 3 departments.

Under the new arrangements, those who provide health and psychiatric services for children and those responsible for welfare services and child day care all work together in 1 department. Those who administer the Juvenile Justice Act share the resources of the child psychologist of the Psychiatric Services Division as well as the expertise of people trained in youth counselling and sports promotion. The nurse who visits the aged in their homes can liaise more effectively with those who provide pensioner travel assistance schemes. These departments have always shared a core clientele.

These days, officers delivering a service do not have to weave their way through the separate departmental structures which in the past hampered their ability to coordinate the services necessary for each individual. Isolated or fragmented services, while serving only 1 aspect of family needs or providing a partial service to only 1 family member without regard to the broader consequences, often fail to strengthen the family as a whole. Where services are not integrated, gaps will occur. It distresses me to realise that, quite often, the people with more difficult problems are the first to fall through those gaps.

I am determined that the integration of our health and community services will facilitate a more efficient response to the needs of the Territory community. The sheer expanse of the Territory and the wide dispersal of communities in rural areas create problems when the principle is accepted that all people are entitled to the same high standard of health and social care which this department intends to provide. The services of this new department are highly decentralised to meet this challenge. We do not recognise or accept the existence of the Berrimah-line mentality. For example, Aboriginal health workers are based in 76 remote communities across the Territory. Community welfare workers regularly visit 188 remote communities from regional offices in Alice Springs, Katherine, Tennant Creek, Nhulunbuy and Darwin.

I must stress that, in rural as well as urban areas, health problems in a family can often be symptomatic of social or financial difficulties. The problems may never be solved unless they are approached with a broad overview and tackled on several fronts at the same time. I see this approach as a strength of the new department. An example of this approach is reflected in the innovative training program being adopted for Aboriginal health workers as a result of the integration move. The new training program expands the clinical role of the health workers. They will receive training in environmental studies, community welfare, family services and sports and recreation skills.

The perspective and confidence these new skills instil in the individual health workers will enable them to help remote communities confront and cope more effectively with problems such as petrol-sniffing in a more effective

way. Even more importantly, the health worker in the community health clinic is in a key position to spot potential problems long before they are too big for the community to handle with its own resources. This government intends to continue to encourage remote Aboriginal communities to develop responses to health and social issues relevant to their own needs. We are not in the business of transplanting urban European models of service to remote Aboriginal communities. It is a fallacy to assume that what works in town will work out in the bush. This government's continuing development of the Aboriginal Health Worker Program, the Aboriginal Community Worker Program, the Remote Areas Funding Scheme and the progressive establishment of Aboriginal women's resource centres are all examples of genuine efforts to provide the most appropriate services for a diverse range of Aboriginal cultures.

I would like now to highlight an area of community responsibility which has been a concern of this government for some time: the upgrading of care for the intellectually-disabled. A key development in this area is the introduction of adult guardianship legislation which I hope will come before this Assembly in June. The proposed legislation will help provide proper care programs for those unable to look after themselves. The Mental Health Act provides for treatment and care of the mentally-ill. The Community Welfare Act provides for guardianship of people under the age of 18 who require care. There is no legislation, however, which provides for care of adults who, because of some intellectual disability, cannot manage their own affairs. Given a proper environment, care and opportunities for learning, many such people show significant improvement. They can, with further development of services, live in their own community.

Another example of this government's commitment to encouraging community-based organisations to take more responsibility for delivery of care services in their own area is my department's current involvement with FORWAARD, the Foundation of Rehabilitation With Aboriginal Alcohol Related Difficulties. FORWAARD provides a valuable social service by taking alcohol-dependent people out of the community for periods of rehabilitation. Its closure will mean that more Aboriginal offenders will be sentenced to prison. There are many other community-based organisations which provide similar care and services.

This government recognises there is a need to ensure some integration of activities in the drug and alcohol rehabilitation area and will be taking steps to achieve a more efficient system. However, the Commonwealth government's decision to pull out of its commitment to FORWAARD is a grim warning to us all. Unlike what Mr Tipiloura - or perhaps his electorate secretary - would have us believe, it signals the intention of the current federal government to abandon its responsibilities to a growing section of the community which is in need of help. I am not referring simply to the victims of drug abuse. I am talking about people who use a variety of community services. By escaping from its funding commitments, the federal government is throwing these people to the wolves. There is no indication that the federal government will top up Territory funding so we can provide some help in its place. It is a betrayal of social responsibilities by the federal government, which once held itself up to the needy as the great care giver. It is also a betrayal of the Territory and its people's aspirations. I really want honourable members to take note of how the floodgates have been opened by the federal government. It will be withdrawing from the Northern Territory and, in particular, from the Aboriginal communities.

Support for community-based initiatives is the key to my department's approach to helping people tackle what they perceive to be problems of

substance abuse, whether this involves petrol-sniffing, consumption of kava, heroin or even tobacco. Petrol-sniffing is a significant problem in Aboriginal communities and this government can claim national leadership in coordinating strategies to help communities reduce the disastrous effects of this phenomenon. Aboriginal self-management is a key element in our approach to this problem, which we will continue to monitor and evaluate with long-term strategies in mind.

With regard to kava, I must point out that very little is known about the clinical effects of this compound root substance on people if excessive quantities are consumed. My department's Drug and Alcohol Bureau has been studying kava consumption in Aboriginal communities since 1982 and, at present, there are several Arnhem Land communities and outstations where kava is drunk regularly. We have also provided assistance to the Menzies School of Health Research to study different aspects of the use of this substance and its effects. In some places, up to 75% of the men drink kava and anywhere between 8% and 50% of the women. This figure varies markedly from one Aboriginal community to the next.

Much criticism is being made of the money spent on kava and the impact of this on scant community financial resources. I might, however, point to the level of consumption of another drug on these same communities: tobacco. I am advised that the money spent per week on kava and tobacco is very similar. I must admit that I am unaware of the amount of money spent on alcohol in these communities before kava came to be used as a partial substitute. It is my present intention to allow for more research on this substance before seeking the commitment of Cabinet to some form of regulation of supply, if that is deemed necessary. It is a common error to imagine that those who complain most loudly on behalf of Aboriginal communities are also the most anxious about their welfare. I raise these points to illustrate the need for all communities, urban or rural, to be aware of the dangers associated with substance abuse.

Before going to another area of my portfolio, I would like to raise another issue of genuine concern in Aboriginal communities. This is the introduction of a radical new treatment for trachoma. Members may recall recent publicity about a randomised control trial of treatment for this debilitating condition in the Territory. The trial itself was laudable in that it was the first research work of its kind in the world, comparing the benefits of eye washing with the use of eye drops in trachoma treatment. Throughout the world, daily eye washing has been considered the most effective treatment for some years. However, the results proved otherwise. The eye drops, applied for only 1 week each month on a daily basis, are the most effective treatment and defence against this disease. This trial has significance anywhere around the world where trachoma is a problem. I have already arranged for an eye-drop program to be instituted in Aboriginal communities for all school-age children. That program will begin later this month.

Mr Speaker, I would like to address for a moment the importance that this government places on the role of the family in Territory society. One of the cornerstones of this government's community services policy is support for the family to enable it to care for its members. The family performs a crucial role in caring for and rearing children. The extended family also plays a vital role in the care of the elderly or disabled as well as providing experience and help for new parents in giving care to the young. The greater part of helping and caring in our community consists of the work carried out by families, neighbours or friends through informal networks. Many people may

not even realise that these networks exist until they are in need themselves. It is vital that we support these informal networks rather than work against them to try to replace them.

There are 6 functions involved in this government's primary role in the provision of community services. These include establishing policy, coordination of services, funding, safeguarding service standards, support and training, and the provision of a core of services which it would be inappropriate to transfer to the private sector or other levels of government. The policy of this government is to encourage and promote the involvement of the private sector and local government in providing health and community services. By application of this policy, the government can give Territorians a choice in the type of hospital and medical care that they desire. As an example, the Northern Territory Patients Assistance Travel Scheme, which has replaced the old Commonwealth scheme, known as IPTAAS, provides transport and accommodation assistance to people in isolated areas so that they can obtain specialist medical and dental services not otherwise available.

Recently, work has begun on construction of Darwin's first private hospital. A number of other initiatives are planned in line with this government's plan to provide alternative services. The government is encouraging the transfer of private medical and dental care to the private sector. This government believes sessional employment of private practitioners and specialists will help encourage more to settle in the Territory. To this end, the government also believes specialists employed in the public service should be given the right to establish private practices. The government also plans to help establish a private hospital annexe with a 24-hour medical service at Palmerston.

Amalgamation of the 4 former departments will allow the government to adopt a more streamlined approach to grants funding. This relates to any area of community activity where grants can apply - welfare services, arts and culture, ethnic affairs, sporting bodies, youth projects and so on. Community organisations will see an immediate benefit in this approach. They can expect more efficient support and develop their own operations accordingly. In the past, community agencies have suffered from multi-source funding with multiple accountability requirements and procedures. Streamlining this process will help community organisations immensely and will allow the government to devote more resources to the development of services at regional levels. Services will be provided in an environment more attuned to local conditions.

As far as sporting organisations are concerned, I can assure them that this government will continue to provide funding for development throughout the Territory. All regional centres are monitored so we can be aware of future needs. Our investment in the fostering of good health and achievement in sport is reflected in the growing number of successes by Territory athletes at national levels of competition. From football through to combined athletics, we have been rewarded with national acclaim where Territory individuals or teams have been given a chance to test themselves against the best in Australia. Our initiatives have not been restricted to the youngsters either. The success of the Honda Central Australian Masters Games in Alice Springs late last year has encouraged us to develop and expand this exciting concept with a similar event in Alice Springs in 1986.

This government's ethnic affairs policies have been based on pride. Territorians are proud of the fact that people from so many different cultures have been able to settle here and contribute to the richness of the Territory lifestyle. Through special purpose funding, representatives of many ethnic

groups have been able to establish cultural centres where their families and the rest of the community can gain knowledge and appreciation of our heritage. This government has also supported the establishment of coordinating groups such as the Ethnic Affairs Council, an interpreter and translator service and a migrant resource centre to provide integrated assistance where people have need of it.

I would like to address another area of concern to a number of Territory families: the provision of residential and respite care for the disabled. Our general approach is to give people the chance to live fulfilling lives within the community as far as possible rather than be faced with a growing number of institutions. There are, however, some facilities which this government does intend to develop to ease the burden which has grown heavier on a number of families in recent years. I refer to the undertakings given by this government in the lead-up to the recent Territory elections to provide special facilities and services for the disabled. There was a time when Territory families caring for a disabled child had to leave their home here and move permanently south where respite and residential care facilities were available. I believe the Territory has been the poorer for the departure of those families in which the qualities of caring and loving have been given a chance to shine. No more, Mr Speaker. This government gave a commitment which I intend to see through.

Adult day programs will begin within a month when a new annexe opens at the Tamarind Centre in Darwin. Extensions are planned for the high-security ward at Royal Darwin Hospital so that the capacity of this facility can be developed. A psychiatric assessment team has begun operating in Alice Springs. Its services will be augmented by extensions due to be developed at Alice Springs Hospital over the next year.

Mr Speaker, another area of my responsibility where innovation has become the norm is correctional services. Despite the fact that the Northern Territory has the highest imprisonment rate per capita in Australia, this government has a proud record of achievement in its correctional services programs. The imprisonment rate per capita is about 4 times higher than the national average yet the Territory government has demonstrated time and again an innovative approach to alternatives to imprisonment.

The prison system is not a service in which the government actively seeks to drum up business. I derive no pleasure in announcing that, late last week, the Territory's prison system recorded the highest number of inmates it has ever held at any one time. It gives me no consolation that this severe pressure on our prisons reflects a similar trend of rising imprisonment rates across Australia, according to figures released by the Australian Institute of Criminology at the end of April.

I accept that there is an enormous impact on individual families when a member offends against society and is imprisoned as a result. However, I am also aware the community suffers severe financial burdens because of the need to keep people in prison. Although our present system is lean and efficient, it still costs in the order of \$90 per day to keep 1 person in detention. Even more frightening is the current cost estimate for construction of purpose-designed prisoner accommodation which runs to just over \$100 000 per cell.

It is part of my responsibility to minimise the cost to the community of necessary services such as the penal system. To that end, I introduced a community service order scheme at the beginning of this year. The scheme

offers an alternative to imprisonment for people who choose not to pay fines imposed by the courts. More than 150 people have taken the opportunity to participate in labour-intensive, community work projects around the Territory since its inception. I have been so encouraged by the success of this scheme that I am now considering development of legislation to provide for home detention of selected offenders. This new alternative for people convicted of non-violent crimes will allow them to continue employment and support their families while restricting their freedom of movement. I hope to introduce appropriate legislation in the June sittings of this Assembly.

I am also considering more prison farms similar to the successful Beatrice Hill venture which I implemented last year. Prisoners at this minimum-security institution are fully employed on rehabilitating a rundown cattle venture: clearing *Mimosa pigra*, constructing stockyards and cattle runs and carrying out other work necessary to allow this property to be placed on the open market. There is scope for similar ventures in other regions of the Territory, either on abandoned pastoral properties or in the development of facilities in Conservation Commission parks.

I have implemented a similar program, which I believe is unique in Australia, to help in the rehabilitation of juvenile offenders. This concept provides a realistic, rigid custodial program in which the community, especially tourists, benefit from the work. During an 8-week trial last year, a group of young offenders constructed the first wilderness camp. They carried out day-to-day activities necessary for their own survival, as well as useful community work. While remedial education is a major part of the camp, youngsters on the program also learn job skills which can help their future employment prospects.

Mr Speaker, on average, about 70% of the Territory's prisoners are Aboriginal. It is my intention to continue with innovations aimed at reducing this high proportion of Aboriginal representation in our penal system. For some time, juvenile justice probation and parole officers have been stationed on Aboriginal communities that have significant social problems. The aim of this program has been to encourage the communities concerned to be more involved in the supervision and rehabilitation of offenders. Another initiative unique to the Territory is the Aboriginal Community Correctional Officers Scheme. Aboriginal officers, nominated by their communities, are being trained in probation and parole duties. The concept has also demonstrated an ability to overcome cultural barriers. The program is operating, on a trial basis, at 2 remote communities and I plan to expand it to other communities.

Mr Speaker, so far in this outline of my department's activities and future direction, I have addressed at some length activities in Aboriginal communities. In the past, cultural barriers have made it difficult for this or any other government to introduce any innovation that might prove beneficial to the general health and welfare of the Aboriginal population. The department contains a small but professional multi-media communications unit dedicated to delivery of information to the Territory's Aboriginal population. With the help of a range of established print and video programs already accepted in remote Aboriginal communities, it is my intention to develop this unit's capacity to inform and educate this sector of the Territory's population on a range of issues vital to its future development.

Mr Speaker, I come now to an area of activity in my department which I have had a long association with and interest in: the Office of Consumer Affairs. In my capacity as a backbencher, I was fortunate to be made chairman

of a committee appointed to review the government's policy and legislation on consumer affairs. The final report and recommendations of the working party were received by me, as the responsible minister, shortly before the last election. As was outlined during the election campaign, this government is committed to a complete overhaul of this legislation. Its highest priority is the system of registration of motor vehicle encumbrances, supported by appropriate legislation. I hope to introduce that legislation in the June sittings of this Assembly. The government will consider a set of general guidelines covering other areas of consumer affairs. The guidelines will provide a context against which the government can consider proposals for changes recommended in the report.

The overall thrust of the government's initiatives and programs that concern my department in this area is to provide as much opportunity as possible for the community to participate. However, we must focus also on the prevention of health and social problems, as well as their treatment if they occur. It is one of the reasons for which the government funded the Katherine Social Planning Project late last year to employ a social planner and a community development worker. For the same reason, the government placed a high priority on the planning and provision of community services at Palmerston. The department's health promotion program initiatives emphasise prevention of communicable diseases, such as AIDS. Other programs highlight the dangers of drugs and alcohol for young people. New programs being developed will consider ways of promoting a safe and healthy community environment.

It is a basic tenet of this government's philosophy on the community and health issues to provide an environment which promotes the well-being of the individual. Mr Speaker, undoubtedly, 1 of the Territory's most valuable resources is people. Members of this Assembly are aware of the difficulty of attracting professionally-skilled people to the Territory. Competition for certain specialist skills means the Territory is disadvantaged in comparison with the more densely-populated states. One of the big advantages of the amalgamation in this new department of health and community services is that the skills of professional people will become more accessible to a wider range of user groups.

This government believes that health and community services should be designed so that they can achieve the effective delivery of integrated services to users which: are available and accessible at the local level; relevant, appropriate and focused on the needs of users; flexible, adaptive and responsive; enable users to live in as normal an environment as possible; enhance the competence and reliance of users; are developed in consultation with users and providers; and are regularly reviewed for cost effectiveness. The new Department of Health and Community Services will achieve these objectives. It will do so with a more efficient and effective use of each Territory dollar. The policy and program initiatives, which the government has established in the health and community services area, will provide an integrated network of services which will mobilise individuals, family and community resources. This network will enhance the social well-being of the Territory's population and provide the basis from which we will be able to realise the Territory's full potential.

Mr PALMER (Karama): Mr Deputy Speaker, Northern Territory economic development has progressed at an astonishing rate since self-government. However, we cannot allow ourselves to be deluded that the growth rate that we have experienced will be self-generating and continuing. The government not only has a positive role to play in promoting the economy, it has an

obligation to those who elected it to do so. In times of fiscal constraint, the government must balance its budget and programs in terms of the greater long-term good and, if that means promoting business and industry at the expense of low priority or less urgent social programs, so be it.

The problems of the needy and impoverished can be resolved ultimately only by providing them with opportunities to participate in the economy, in a productive manner, with the means available to them. Of course, there are those whose circumstances dictate that they will never be able to participate in the economy and no one denies society's obligation is to cater for those people.

I have previously described the domestic economy as being like a fairy floss machine: drop a small amount of sugar in the middle, and the result is a large volume of fairy floss. In economic terms, the sugar is foreign earnings, through trade and tourism, and the fairy floss is the resultant multiplier effect on the domestic economy. In the context of the Northern Territory, 'foreign' should also be taken to mean our cousins in the Australian states. To ensure domestic economic growth and stability, the government's primary objective must be the promotion of export-oriented industries whilst, at the same time, reducing the domestic market's reliance upon imported products.

Obviously, the industries which present themselves as the most likely to provide the injection of foreign dollars, essential for the health of the economy, are mining and tourism. I do not intend to stand here and recite an inventory of the Territory's mineral wealth: clearly, it is staggering. It is the responsibility of this government and of all Territorians to ensure that the mineral resources contained within our borders are exploited to their maximum potential. No one has the unfettered right to tie up that potential forever whilst, at the same time, expecting the economy to provide them with their every need through government handouts. Equally, no government has the right to tie up the nation's resources at the behest of small and largely irrelevant groups of mendacious economic parasites.

If allowed, mining and its kindred industries will form the cornerstone of the Territory's industrial diversification. The gas stripping plant, gas liquefaction plants and, if attracted to the Territory, the proposed BHP manganese processing plant, are evidence of the diversification and value-adding opportunities that are available. If the establishment of heavy industry in the Northern Territory requires concessions from government, then government must provide those concessions because, if we do not, governments elsewhere will and those opportunities will be lost forever.

Australia earns hundreds of millions of dollars annually from the export of uranium yellowcake from Northern Territory mines. The claims of the anti-uranium lobby that somehow the export of Australia's uranium contributes to the proliferation of nuclear weapons are both nonsensical and misleading. Any nation with the resolve and ability to produce nuclear weapons can obtain weapons-grade material from seawater. If we, as most Australians do, accept the production and export of yellowcake and if we, as most Australians do, have a reasoned concern about the proliferation of nuclear weapons, and if we believe that could happen through the slippage of Australian-produced uranium into weapons-producing programs, then we who have the means to do something about that must do it.

The major downside to the production of nuclear energy is the vexing question of what to do with the resultant waste products. The storage of such

waste has the potential of developing into a multi-billion dollar industry and I believe it is time we stopped pussyfooting about and opened up for public debate the issue of nuclear waste storage in the Northern Territory. The basic facts are clear. The more heavily-populated, industrialised nations do not have the space or the land forms suitable for the storage of such waste; the Northern Territory does. Other places in the world geologically suitable for the storage of such waste are not blessed with the political stability of the kind that could guarantee the security of those storage facilities; the Northern Territory is. Other countries do not have the professed resolution of doing their all to prevent nuclear proliferation that Australia has. Finally, as a major beneficiary of the nuclear fuel cycle, Australia has an obligation to accept some of the less palatable side products of that industry.

In its bicentennial year, the greatest gift Australia could give to the rest of the world and all humanity would be the provision of an environmentally sound and politically, as well as militarily, secure repository for the world's growing stockpiles of nuclear waste. To ease the burden of moral responsibility, there is, of course, the economic gain that could accrue. As I said previously, that could be in the order of tens of billions of dollars annually. If the government is half serious about securing the economic future of the Northern Territory, it must lead the debate about the possible involvement in the nuclear waste storage industry.

Mr Speaker, the other industry where our potential for foreign earnings is far from being realised is tourism, both domestic and overseas. In terms of the overseas tourist, it would be foolhardy to believe that the Territory could become a major tourist destination in its own right. However, it could and should become a 'must-do part' of any tourist itinerary. The average American and Japanese tourist is largely ignorant of the geopolitical regions that make up the states and territories of Australia. Most start out believing that both Ayers Rock and the Great Barrier Reef are within half a day's drive of Sydney. Most are confused by the competitive public advertising in the marketplace by the various Australian tourist commissions. The thrust of the Northern Territory's marketing strategy should continue to be directed at the travel industry itself with a view to convincing the sellers that we have a worthy product and one which should be considered by all wishing to spend their vacations in Australia, South-east Asia or the South Pacific.

Marketing programs are not enough by themselves. Those working in the industry need to be continually educated on the needs of our overseas guests. The industry needs to be reminded continually of the necessity to remain competitive on a cost basis with other places striving for their share of the tourist dollar. When it is considered that, in excess of 90% of our overseas tourists are from our major trading partners or OECD nations generally, and that most of them are ordinary working people, the industry must be mindful that the largest single factor in the formulation of a holiday itinerary is cost. To remain an attractive destination, cost must be contained whilst providing a high level of service.

At present, for a number of reasons, Australia is an attractive holiday destination and, in the mid-term, that position can be expected to be maintained. However, as the market is largely dependent upon word-of-mouth promotion by homecoming holiday-makers, we must ensure that those leaving the Territory do so satisfied that their decision to come here has been vindicated. The government must maintain and expand upon its industry training programs and we must impress upon the industry that its future is entirely in its own hands.

The traditional base of Territory export earnings has been the pastoral industry. Whilst the outlook for the Territory's pastoral industry is sound, the industry will require continued government support. On previous occasions, I have spoken in this Assembly about the problem of jobs lost to the Territory through the export interstate of large numbers of fat cattle for immediate slaughter. I am pleased to note that the Leader of the Opposition has finally woken up to that. The government must tackle the problem seriously and come to terms with the fact that, unless the establishment of smaller in situ Territory abattoirs is encouraged and unless a long-term plan for the meat slaughtering industry is put in place, along with industry incentives or concessions, that drain or loss of jobs across our borders will continue.

I have been concerned for some time about aspects of the BTEC program. I have no doubt that the imposition of the program has little to do with the potential transmission of diseases to consumers of Australian beef but has much to do with non-tariff barriers to trade. It is with that in mind that I question the zealousness with which some of the aspects of the program have been carried out. I am particularly concerned at the number of cattle and buffalo that have been destroyed as part of the shoot-out program. It is my belief that many of the beasts that were destroyed could have been harvested for transshipment to meatworks and it is my belief that at least some pastoral industry interests took advantage of previously high levels of compensation payments to make quick, short-term profits at the expense of the long-term good of the industry. Without accurate figures, I am unable to estimate positively what the lost value of production would be but I can confidently say that it would run into tens of millions of dollars. I believe the government should completely review the operations of BTEC to ensure that, in its wake, we are left with a viable industry.

Fishing is another industry about which I have previously spoken and in which I take a keen interest. The government must be applauded for some of the initiatives it has taken in encouraging the Northern Territory fishing industry, foremost being the safe harbour at Frances Bay.

A great deal of emphasis has been given recently to the development of aquaculture in its various forms. I do not believe that encouragement and promotion of aquaculture can be seen as encouraging or promoting the fishing industry in general. Aquaculture, I am sure, can put high quality, high value products on gourmet tables around the world less expensively and in greater volume than the traditional methods of catching and processing those products previously could. However, the volume demand for fish products worldwide is not for prawns and barramundi and the like but for the relatively cheap and plentiful products of the pelagic fishery.

The Northern Territory government, through its minister, must steadfastly continue with the development of that side of the industry. It is there that large numbers of jobs can be created and it is the area that will provide a sound basis for the numerous small industries that thrive around major fishing ports. The Northern Territory is without an indigenous wealth base created by the fishing industry and, as a result, the Territory government will be required to provide incentives for young Territorians to enter into the industry.

In the past, our offshore fishery has been largely in the hands of interstate or overseas interests and has been worked by vessels whose home ports were elsewhere and whose crews were recruited elsewhere. There was little opportunity or incentive for young Territorians to enter the industry

and there was no development of a significant industry-created wealth base with a capacity and willingness to reinvest in the industry. Major investments by government in fishing industry infrastructure, such as ports and support facilities, cannot be left to rely on the good faith or whims of foreign or interstate interests. The long-term viability and protection of those investments lies in the establishment of a strong, indigenous manpower and capital base.

By the provision of training facilities and low-interest capital, the government could contribute significantly to the establishment of that base. The next 4 years will be crucial in setting the economic course that the Territory will steer into the 1990s and beyond. The time has now come when the CLP government must take the bit between its teeth and make decisions that, in the short term, may evoke vociferous minority-led opposition but which, in the long term, will establish the base upon which the Northern Territory's economic success can be built.

Mr Speaker, turning to more pedestrian matters, I would like to take this opportunity to express my thanks to those who helped me during the recent election campaign and to register my gratitude to the people of Karama for the faith they have shown in me.

In my first Address-in-Reply speech to this Assembly, I spoke about the detrimental effects a certain A. Vigilax was having on the quality of life of the people in my electorate. I am happy to report that A. Vigilax has been the subject of an environmental remodelling and chemical warfare assault which seems to be having the desired effect. However, I would remind the Minister for Health and Community Services that a few skirmishes do not make a war and that the fight must go on.

I spoke previously about the lack of commercial and community facilities in Karama. I am assured by those people responsible that an early start may be expected. However, I place on record now my determination, by whatever means I have at my disposal, to ensure that those very necessary facilities are provided for the people of Karama.

Mr Speaker, I endorse the outline of the government's policy contained in the Administrator's address and commend it to honourable members.

Mr LEO (Nhulunbuy): Mr Speaker, the member for Karama spoke about the need for economic development but failed to recognise in any way the social development of the Northern Territory. The speaker before him, the Minister for Health and Community Services, epitomised a problem that is developing within the Northern Territory.

The Minister for Health and Community Development opened his speech, and indeed departed from his speech writer's plan, by suggesting that the member for Arafura was in some way recalcitrant for using the services of a person who could assist him with writing his speech. I would suggest that we could save the Northern Territory government's budget a considerable amount of money if all ministers threw their speech writers clean out the door. Indeed, if the Minister for Health and Community Services threw his speech writer out, he would save us a great deal of money. I have never yet heard another minister or any other member of the government in this Assembly assault any person of European descent for daring to use the services of a speech writer, but the Minister for Health and Community Services regularly rises and ticks off people of Aboriginal descent because they dare to do that.

It epitomises everything that is wrong with this government. It is all very well for members opposite to have speech writers. It is all very well for them to have flunkies hanging out of their ears, writing their speeches, but when the member for Arafura employs his speech writer - who I know has spent 2 days on it - to assist him in preparing his maiden address to this Assembly, then the Minister for Health and Community Services thinks that that is beneath contempt and in some way should be brought to the notice of this Assembly.

The Minister for Health and Community Services is developing a record, and it came through in his speech to the Address-in-Reply, that all things Aboriginal are to be in some way deplored in this Assembly and are to be deplored by the Northern Territory government. It was mentioned 6 times today by the Minister for Health and Community Services that the overcrowding in our jails is the sole responsibility of Aboriginal people in the Northern Territory, people who comprise 25% of our population. I think that it is quite deplorable that 25% of our population contributes 75% to our jail population. The minister offers no hint of a solution. He is irresponsible. It is all to be left to the member who represents those people in this Legislative Assembly. His government's department has no role to play in this. It totally ignores the plight of Aboriginal people in the Northern Territory and those people may as well not exist as far as the minister is concerned. It is all left up to the members who have electorates with large Aboriginal populations.

Mr Speaker, a large number of Aborigines reside in your electorate and, I assume, you share at least some of my frustration and anger at the absolute bloody-mindedness of this minister who consistently abrogates his responsibilities. As far as he is concerned, all things pertaining to Aboriginal people have nothing to do with this government or members opposite, but are the sole responsibility of the people who try to represent them fairly in this Assembly. The only way Aboriginal people will ever obtain any fair representation is through their elected representatives getting up and speaking on their behalf because you cannot rely on a single government minister to ever do that.

The Minister for Health and Community Services talked today about the imprisonment rate of Aboriginal people. It is a fact that many Aboriginal people go to jail because their domestic circumstances are so absolutely deplorable. Being sent to Berrimah Prison seems like a holiday to some of those people. I am sure everybody knows at least half a dozen people who have put themselves in for vagrancy. They are broke. They are on their uppers, and they have put themselves in jail under the old vagrancy laws so they can at least get a feed. There are certainly people in those communities who regard jail as a place where they can go to get a bunk and a feed.

The answer is not to say that those people are in some way lesser persons because they think like that, because they crave a little human dignity. The answer is to improve the conditions of those people in the communities where they live. But, this minister and this government refuse to recognise that. Since I have been a member of this Assembly, I have not seen ...

Mr Dale: You have done nothing to help them.

Mr LEO: ... one Northern Territory government minister, the people who hold the purse strings, raise a finger to come to assistance of those people. Before any minister gets up at his desk and deplores some poor ignorant Aboriginal person sitting out there in the scrub, I want to see him do a little bit more with his money.

Mr Dale: What have you done?

Mr Manzie: Tell us what you have been up to.

Mr LEO: I am going to bellyache about it as long as I am in this Assembly.

Mr Dale: That is all you ever do. You know nothing about it.

Mr LEO: Mr Speaker, I will tell you about one of the most important contributing factors to crime and the imprisonment rate in the Northern Territory, and the statistics will bear me out. Alcohol abuse is a major contributing factor to crime in the Northern Territory and it does not matter whether you are black, white or brindle. To my mind, a more credible way of attacking the problem of alcohol abuse in the Northern Territory would be to link alcohol consumption with the expenditure of Oxford scholars - dollars. At the moment, we have no control over excise. There is a federal levy on alcohol and I am sure every member in this Assembly would recognise that. However, liquor licensing fees contribute to the cost of alcoholic beverages in the Northern Territory. I would like to see a system introduced ...

Mr Dale: What about petrol-sniffing?

Mr LEO: Mr Speaker, if the minister will kindly shut up, I will get on with my speech.

Mr Dale: This is disgraceful.

Mr LEO: I would like to see a system of liquor licensing fees, related to alcohol content so that the fee is not effectively paid for water. I happen to like a beer on a warm day but, at the moment, liquor licensing fees are linked directly to the cost of the product from the wholesaler. Therefore, if you pay \$10 in direct costs, you pay a percentage of that in licensing fees. I would like to see licensing fees linked directly to the alcohol content in beverages. This will probably cost me buckets of votes in Nhulunbuy but I am going to say it anyway: I believe that those people who consume more alcohol - not more beer or wine but more alcohol - should be contributing far more to the costs incurred by the Northern Territory government. The fee would be paid on the percentage of alcohol in the beverage. Whether it is 2.1% as in some beers or up to 60% as in some fortified spirits.

The only problem would be, and I can hear them bellyaching already, is that the outlet would have to be controlled in some way. It would require rigid control of outlets where alcohol is sold to the public. That will require more red tape, more regulation, more regulators and certainly more expense. But I do not believe there is any alternative. I cannot think of any other way of attacking this monstrous problem of the excessive use of alcohol that we have in the Northern Territory. I would like to hear from government ministers if they have an alternative approach. Unless the cost of alcohol and not the cost of water is somehow related to the consumer, I am afraid we will have bigger and bigger jail populations. We will have more and more people going through the courts each year on charges of driving under the influence.

Mr Coulter: Go and drink where the taxes are least.

Mr LEO: I just heard from the Treasurer that you can drink where the taxes are lowest. If people want to go to Queensland and kill themselves or

go to Queensland and be jailed, that is fine. I just do not want them doing those things in the Northern Territory where I live and where I contribute to their welfare.

One of the more parochial matters I wish to speak on relates to the largest community in my electorate, the township of Nhulunbuy. Mr Speaker, I am sure you are aware of the problem of land tenure in Nhulunbuy because I have spoken about it ad nauseam in this Assembly. The matter of land tenure and local government has been an issue ever since I have lived there and I know the Chief Minister is well aware of it. It is not a popular issue to pursue and a large percentage of my electorate will not support me in what I am about to say. However, I say to the government that the question of land tenure and the acceptance of local government in Nhulunbuy is a matter of high priority within my electorate. The fact is that, sooner or later, the mine will close down and the bulk of the population will clear off. Sooner or later, it will be a ghost town. There is no walking away from that. It is a fact of life and it does not matter if it happens now or in 20 years or 50 years. Sooner or later, it will happen and, unless we start planning for it now, there will be a huge socio-economic vacuum, not only in the township but in the whole of the east Arnhem region.

I hope that the Northern Territory government, as a matter of some urgency, will start negotiations with the mining company, the Aboriginal landowners and the federal government - the 3 bodies most involved - to develop a lease to succeed the present one held by the mining company. Such a lease should come from the traditional owners and should be held by the Northern Territory government and should extend over a period of 50 to 99 years. It should not be tied to mining because, unless alternative industries can be developed in Nhulunbuy, the whole east Arnhem region will suffer a huge socio-economic loss. Nhulunbuy will just be a great hole in the ground. That would be a great pity. Thousands of people have gone to that mining town, earned very large incomes and invested them wherever they wished before leaving the Northern Territory. Aboriginal people there have also been affected by this and now have needs that cannot be fulfilled by our society. I would hope that the Northern Territory government will proceed with negotiations for a new lease.

Indeed, the Hon Paul Everingham once said that the big problem with pursuing local government in Nhulunbuy was that 99.99% of the population did not want it. Probably that is true. The very large majority of the European population of Nhulunbuy does not want local government. Those people are there to earn their incomes and to return eventually to where they came from. However, I believe that there is a broader responsibility to the people who will live there forever, the Aboriginal people. That responsibility is to continue to pursue the retention of that lease by the Northern Territory government.

Since I last made a speech in an Address-in-Reply debate, a number of substantial new communities have come into being within my electorate. One of these is Galiwinku. I may be corrected on this, but I think Galiwinku is the largest Aboriginal community in the Northern Territory. It has a floating population of around 4000 and a static population of about 2500. I have had a number of discussions with various bodies and groups on the island. Indeed, the Chief Minister and myself visited there for the debate on statehood, which I found very worth while.

A number of other purely electorate matters have raised themselves in relation to the community of Galiwinku. One relates to the police presence

there. I am not too sure who is now the minister responsible for police. I assume it is still the Chief Minister. I would ask him to examine the conditions under which the police aide is employed there. In this community of 2500 persons, the police aide is equipped with a motorbike and a uniform and very little else. I understand that, when the aide was introduced to the community, the policy was that the community would pay for a motor vehicle for him, should one be required, but that if the community decides that the police aide requires a cell, the community will have to have to pay for that.

For quite justifiable reasons, the community believes that it is the responsibility of the Northern Territory government to supply those things, through the NT Police Force. A community of 2500 people is not an insubstantial one. There are less substantial communities which have a police presence, and that includes a motor vehicle and somewhere to put apprehended persons. The ludicrous situation on Elcho Island is that, if the police aide apprehends somebody because of a public misdemeanour or crime, there is nowhere to put that person. The offender cannot even be thrown into the back of a paddy wagon for the night until he can be evacuated to Nhulunbuy. There is absolutely nowhere to put a person who commits an offence and I believe that the community's requests for both a vehicle and a cell demonstrate a desperate need in that community.

Another of the more substantial communities in my electorate, of course, is Gapuwiyak. In the last budget, almost \$1m was allocated for both the health centre and the school at Gapuwiyak. To date, there are absolutely no signs of either of those facilities being built. For the edification of honourable members, the health centre is a building which would be condemned in Darwin. It is not fit for human habitation, let alone fit for medical practice of any sort. It would be condemned in any other part of the Northern Territory or Australia. Part of the school at Gapuwiyak operates out of 2 old, aluminium caravans. That is not the total facility, but part of it. There is a shortage of space for the normal pursuits of education. Funds have been allocated to alleviate this situation, but I have not seen any sign that that work is in progress. I would ask the minister to respond on that matter during these sittings so that I can report to those people that this work is to progress.

Mr Speaker, education in Aboriginal communities leads me to the next point. I know that the Leader of the Opposition does not agree with me on this, but it was with some dismay that I realised that the Northern Territory government saw fit to spend some \$12m on a university in the Northern Territory during this financial year. For the information of members generally, a teacher in outstation schools in east Arnhem Land - I cannot speak for the rest of the Northern Territory, but certainly in east Arnhem Land - can expect to be laid off at the end of the school year in November. They do not receive normal holiday pay; they are not teachers. They are laid off and, at the beginning of the school year, they are expected to reapply. Inevitably, there is a lapse of time before the person is re-employed. I had the extremely disappointing and bewildering experience in my electorate once again this year whereby children were not receiving any education because there were no teachers for them in the outstation communities and, at the same time, the Territory was subsidising overseas students to attend a university.

Mr Hatton: Wrong.

Mr LEO: We are not subsidising overseas students who are attending a university, but we are spending \$6m on university students this year. I found that bewildering. Last year, when there was some debate in this Assembly on

the establishment of the University College, I said that I would be reassured if the minister could give me a categorical undertaking that the introduction of this university would not result in the cut of a single peso in the general education budget. I was given that reassurance. However, to date, whilst there may not have been a cut of a single peso, from my experience and experience within my electorate, there has been absolutely no indication that expenditure is in any way either keeping abreast of inflation or keeping pace with the educational needs of children in communities within my electorate.

I am certain that the minister or his officers will read Hansard and I hope that the budget this year does not reflect any cut and he keeps abreast of the educational needs of children within my electorate. If we, as so-called enlightened and educated European Australians, cannot convince Aboriginal people that we are genuine in what we say to them, if it is not clearly demonstrated to Aboriginal people in the Northern Territory that we want them to participate in every facet of our society, if we do not demonstrate that - and this is not 'fearspeak'; this is a fact of life - we will end up with a Northern Territory population that has a minority that is economically disadvantaged because its race has determined its educational facilities and background. If that happens, then these people here may very well be able to go away and smile ...

Mr Manzie: Give me an example where we have cut back? You are talking garbage.

Mr LEO: Mr Speaker, 1 example! I have just given half a dozen examples and they happen to occur every year in the outstation communities in my electorate - if the minister had been listening. I suggest you pull your head in and keep your gob shut and listen.

Mr Dale: You are consistent, Danny, you always have been below the belt.

Mr LEO: I withdraw all of that, Mr Speaker.

Mr SPEAKER: It was not my intention to ask the member to withdraw, but I would suggest that he moderate some of his language.

Mr LEO: Thank you, Mr Speaker. If, in the Northern Territory in a generation's time, we, as humane, enlightened and so-called intelligent persons, cannot demonstrate to a large minority of our population that they have a stake in the Northern Territory's future and they will not have to continue to rely upon federal government policy, which they are forced and obliged to rely on now, then they will be forced more and more to rely on whatever assistance they can get in the pursuit of their needs.

Mr PERRON (Industries and Development): Mr Speaker, the Territory has come a long way since self-government. It has been only 9 years since we accepted a large degree of self-determination from the Commonwealth and, during that time, we have done very many bold things, most of which, in one way or another, have emanated from this Assembly. The infrastructure projects that have been undertaken include: Yulara; port development in Darwin; the gas pipeline and the Channel Island Power Station; the Sheraton Hotels in Darwin and Alice Springs; the Beaufort Hotel; the University College; the ADMA farms in the Douglas-Daly region, which are still in an experimental phase really; the Marrara and Hidden Valley sporting complexes in Darwin, which are quite substantial infrastructure developments in their own way; and a safe anchorage for fishing trawlers in Darwin, which is a fairly recent development.

During that time, we have also been seen some very significant legislative reform. The Motor Accidents (Compensation) Act comes to mind. The abolition of common law rights under the Motor Accidents (Compensation) Act was a very bold step by legislators here. It was not done hastily. Indeed, it took a considerable period of inquiry and legislative development before it came into force. The Public Service Act, which was enacted at the time of self-government, was a very innovative piece of legislation. Among other things, I recall that it provided that promotion in the public service should be based on efficiency and, at that time, that was regarded as a pretty remarkable and bold step. It took 2 years and several drafts before the Criminal Code was enacted finally by the Assembly. It had a little tussle with the Commonwealth during its course, but it broke new ground in the law and was accepted only after very considerable study and consideration.

The Work Health Act again broke new ground in respect of common law, and I believe that other states will follow our lead and we will be regarded as pacesetters in this field. The Local Government Act introduced the concept of community government, a unique system whereby local government could be designed specifically for an individual community. In other words, the community government could have very few or wide-ranging powers; the system is tailor-made to suit the particular community.

I am unaware of any legislation in Australia that is the same as our Liquor Act. There may not be any legislation quite like it in the Westminster system. Our legislation is unique in that it enables a community to vote and elect to have a dry area completely or a liquor licence tailored to meet its needs such that it can sell a particular product in particular quantities at particular times. Even though we have problems in respect of liquor, this was a bold and innovative attempt by legislators in the Territory to tackle a difficult problem. The Superannuation Act is another example of innovative legislation. It is a Superannuation Act for public servants which actually allows the commutation of benefits. That, again, is a step forward.

This innovative legislation and the infrastructural development that has occurred provide a sound base for us to build on for the future. We need to ensure that we maintain some of the vision that inspired us to set that base in place. The most important infrastructural development that is occurring at the moment is the Trade Development Zone. It is disappointing that there appears to be a sour note of criticism in some quarters about the Trade Development Zone. Some people are impatient because they want instant results. We have rarely been able to provide instant results. In an advice from the initial trade zone consultancy to the government - a document which was tabled in this Assembly - a US consultant suggested that 'quick returns should not be expected' and that 'the Territory government should think in terms of what it might achieve over a 5 to 10-year period, doing all to attract 1 significant pioneer industry in the first 1 to 2 years'.

I quote a very brief portion of the Leader of the Opposition's speech during the second-reading debate on the Trade Development Zone Authority Bill:

I conclude by saying that the Trade Development Zone has an exciting potential. Hopefully, we can all say, in 10 to 15 years, that it has been one of the most farsighted things this government has introduced. I conclude, as I began, on a note of warning, which I think everybody shares: it will not happen on its own, but will only happen with hard work on the part of all those concerned.

It was a little over a year ago that those remarks were made by the very person who seems to be so critical these days. The achievements of the Trade Development Zone will grow from the base that is being established now in the zone. To date, 10 letters of intent have been signed from Asia and 2 from Australia. Of these, 7 have been converted to primary agreements and leases. They represent private investment of \$10.99m and call for the provision of 11 700 m² of factory space. A further 7 letters of intent are on offer and the zone is expected to make a significant contribution to the government's commitment to provide 1000 new jobs per annum in the Territory.

Experience has demonstrated that we are looking at a minimum lead time of 18 months to 2 years from the signature of a letter of intent to commencement of operations in the Trade Development Zone. We have not had much experience before in trade development zones. Indeed, it is the first one in Australia. I guess we could be forgiven for not having much experience. We have learned that first someone must be attracted to look at the zone and interested to the extent that he signs a letter of intent. He then prepares a business migration proposal which is considered, in a fairly slow and tortuous process, by the overworked and understaffed Australian immigration system overseas. After he receives his business migration approval - and he would be foolish to order equipment before he had all his approvals - he has to order his equipment to set up in the zone. Most businessmen will be bringing brand new state-of-the-art material. The whole process takes something like 18 months to 2 years.

It is a sad fact that it is taking the Australian authorities 6 to 8 months to process business migration applications in Hong Kong. I am told that the Australian office there is understaffed and has trouble coping. Sadly, both the United States and Canada are also in Hong Kong and other such places trying to attract business migrants to their own countries. I understand that their offices are able to process applications very much faster than can be done in Australia. The companies setting up in the trade zone at present are those that took initial interest and were contacted by the authority some 18 months ago. Successful negotiations with companies that visited Darwin in February and March this year could result in their setting up in the zone in late 1988 at the earliest.

In line with experience of such zones overseas, it is expected that the majority of firms setting up over the next few years in the Trade Development Zone will be companies from outside Australia. Certainly, our experience to date confirms this. Authority marketing programs will continue to be targeted at Asia and Australia for the balance of this year. Already 120 Asians, in 9 separate groups, have visited the Trade Development Zone. These have paid for their own air fares and accommodation and have been attracted here by our agents in Asia. A further 5 groups are scheduled to visit Darwin from Hong Kong, Taiwan, Thailand, Singapore and Malaysia this year. Further seminars are scheduled for the southern states of Australia this year and will be an ongoing part of the marketing program. In addition, a survey is under way in New Zealand of those companies exporting into South-east Asia who may see the benefits in being significantly closer to the marketplace. Should the outcome of this survey prove positive, New Zealand will be included in our marketing programs.

Before leaving the subject of the TDZ, I must say that recent criticisms by the Leader of the Opposition are very disappointing. During the course of these sittings, the opposition has referred to the importance of appearance and demonstration of confidence to business people when we are trying to attract them to establish in the Territory. Despite that expressed view,

which I support, members opposite persist in putting down the trade zone from time to time in a public and unwarranted way. The 2 points they seem to criticise in particular are the cost of facilities and the cost of promotion and incentives.

Honourable members should bear in mind that the assets there - the roadworks, electricity works, water, sewerage, the headquarters for the TDC, the factories - are all assets which are out there on the ground. \$12.68m worth of assets have been built so far. \$8.53m of those are regarded as TDZ assets - factories, headquarters etc - and the rest are public assets in the form of roads, sewerage, street lighting, landscaping and so on. If the TDZ folded up tomorrow, there are \$12m worth of assets in a very handsome industrial complex which would, no doubt, be used in one way or another. In no way could those funds be considered to have been squandered. It is an investment, just as the money that has gone into promotion and incentives to attract people to come into the zone is an investment in the future. The dollars we are spending today will be paying off for years to come. We have just got the project rolling. As I pointed out, it takes some 18 months to get someone into the zone. We cannot stop now. We have the promotion cranked up and it has to roll along while people start flowing into that zone as they have already begun to do.

Mr Speaker, on the broader issues of trade and marketing by the Department of Industries and Development, the immediate priority target markets for Territory produce will continue to be places like Brunei, Malaysia, Singapore, Papua New Guinea, Indonesia and Hong Kong as well as the Australian domestic market. Secondary priority target markets will naturally depend on the availability of Northern Territory produce and price competitiveness. Markets such as China, the Philippines, the United States and Taiwan will continue to be monitored and opportunities taken as they become available. It is expected that these opportunities will develop over the next 4 years and appropriate research will be undertaken with bodies such as Austrade to determine the priorities.

To promote the Northern Territory and its products and services, a number of exhibitions and seminars will be attended; for example, the Malaysian Building and Construction Exhibition, a central Australian Expo in Alice Springs which will be conducted for the first time this year, Brunei Build, Australian Expo 88 in Brisbane - and we are examining now the role that the Northern Territory government will have in exhibiting in that forum - a trade exhibition in Melbourne as part of the bicentennial exhibition, the NT Expo, food fairs such as one the one in Hong Kong relating to food distribution to the hotel trade, and Indonesian building and construction exhibitions.

The Business and Industrial Development Division of my department will be involved during the next 4 years with projects such as the formulation and implementation of a strategy for encouraging regional development in the Northern Territory and the identification of industrial and business development opportunities. I particularly point out, for the benefit of the Leader of the Opposition, that the Northern Territory government recognises the economic benefits which will flow to the Territory as a result of increased activity through the defence forces. We have already established contact with the supply officers in the 3 arms of the forces in Australia and we have had discussions with companies which have contracts or are proposing to bid for contracts with the defence forces for things such as the servicing of Tindal Base, the F18 aircraft and the Black Hawk helicopters with which I understand Australia has decided to equip the 3 arms of the forces. All of the people who are involved in that area, if they have not already been

contacted, will be receiving attention from Northern Territory officers with a view to identifying business opportunities for us.

We will also be fostering the establishment of new industries and businesses and the expansion of existing ones through the selective provision of limited interest subsidies and or grants. The government Industrial Development Division will also be continuing work towards the installation of a private government telecommunications network. Now that there is no dispute regarding the holder of the RCTS licence in Alice Springs, I hope that, in the not-too-distant future, Alice Springs, Katherine and Tennant Creek will have commercial television. It may take us a little longer to get remote community television in place. Obviously, that will depend on the availability of satellites but, in the meantime, there is no reason why the majority of Territorians living in those major centres outside Darwin should not be serviced.

I am pleased to advise that Cabinet has directed the task force on fishing industry development to recommend an approach to implementation of phase 4 of the Norgaard Report which presented a conceptual plan for the development of a dedicated fishing harbour and onshore facilities at East Arm. It is anticipated that the task force will report shortly on the first steps which need to be taken towards the development of the fishing harbour and onshore fish processing facilities. A major survey on recreational fishing in the Territory was finalised recently as part of an overall study of recreational fishing. That study is due to be completed shortly. It will form the basis for developing management arrangements which will recognise the importance of recreational fishing to Territory residents and tourists.

Important initiatives to foster Territory fishing and related industry growth have already been taken. These include the construction of the mooring basin in Frances Bay and the planning of a fishing harbour. These are anticipated to encourage expansion of Australian interests in the offshore marine resources of northern Australia. At the same time, support will be given to private sector initiatives to adopt the technology of aquaculture for prawns and fish, including barramundi, to Territory conditions. Unfortunately, the Northern Territory has not yet seen success achieved by those few private enterprise projects that have entered formally into the aquaculture business. However, people still believe that aquaculture has a big future and I certainly believe it myself. It is a matter of coming to grips with nature in this particular region.

The pearling industry is receiving our attention. Honourable members may not have been aware that commercial harvesting of pearl oysters was discontinued in the Territory about 25 years ago. In those days, the emphasis was on collecting pearl shell or mother of pearl as it was known. Recently, a working group, comprising Territory and Commonwealth officials, examined the legislative, biological and other relevant aspects and developed a draft proposal for harvesting of pearl oyster for culture and industry development. We are combining with the Commonwealth in that examination because the Northern Territory's jurisdiction extends only to 3 miles offshore, after which we are in Commonwealth waters. We feel that there is potential for further development of the cultured pearl industry through harvesting of those resources in the Northern Territory.

In the animal industry areas of my department, efforts will be made to improve the efficiency of Territory beef production by some 20% over the next 10 years through the provision of advisory and research services to promote production, health, marketing and product quality. In conjunction with the

Northern Territory Development Corporation and the cattle and buffalo industries, the former Department of Primary Production determined the terms of reference for a major study into the pastoral industry to develop an integrated development plan. The major objective of the study was to provide a strategy for developing the beef cattle and buffalo industries, to increase productivity, and to develop the economic potential of a range of associated secondary industries. I am pleased to advise that the report has been completed and I hope to be able to have copies printed for distribution throughout the industry in the near future. I will ensure that all members obtain a copy.

The department is actively fostering the development of disease-free domesticated buffalo herds as a suitable resource base for a viable long-term and environmentally-sound meat and live animal export industry. We are aiming for a minimum of 20 000 disease-free breeding animals by 1992 and a live export target of at least 5000 animals per year. We are doing some work on pig production and this ties in with our action to encourage the expansion of the Northern Territory stockfeed industry, which will supply the poultry industry and possibly the goat industry as time goes by.

On the subject of goats, the economic viability of a Northern Territory goat industry is being examined. The Territory will encourage the development of such an industry through research and advisory services should it prove a viable option for pastoral leases and if appropriate environmental safeguards can be introduced. I will try that again. I will go back a paragraph. It will encourage the development of such an industry through research and advisory services should it prove a viable option for pastoral leases and if appropriate safeguards can be introduced. The English is not quite right there. We will also identify market opportunities in South-east Asia which can be exploited when the goat industry is a success. At the moment, we have about 60 goats on the Coastal Plains Research Station which will be studied for some time to assess their reaction to local feeds and so on.

The dairy industry is one which has made the news lately. The Northern Territory has 2 small dairies and we will attempt to encourage them to develop efficiently with a view to achieving self-sufficiency in milk production if possible. To that end, I will be travelling south shortly to discuss the federal government's dairy industry levy with the federal Minister for Primary Production.

We aim to assist the Conservation Commission to control or eliminate feral animals which have a significant negative effect upon the productivity of the pastoral industry. There will be particular emphasis on animals which may affect the success of the BTEC program or exotic disease eradication.

In the southern region, we have successfully concluded the privatisation of the cattle saleyards under the management of the Northern Territory Cattle Association. This may enable the Northern Territory Cattle Association to move further down the market chain and involve itself in areas that will improve its ability to market beef. These include the use of modern, high-tech communications in live weight and electronic selling which may enable people to get better prices.

The plant industry is of great significance to the Northern Territory. Field crops and horticultural production are very significant and, although I will have to cut short many of the things that I intended to say about both those areas, it would be appropriate for me to indicate that the government gives them a high priority. Whilst the grain industry has had its problems

over the past few years, we hope to resolve some of these with the installation of irrigation equipment which can cover large areas and overcome the horrendous problems caused when the rain does not fall at quite the right time.

Plant disease and insect control are also matters for considerable concern. We will be running programs to control noxious weeds in the Northern Territory. I am pleased to advise honourable members that 2 species of insect have recently been released into the environment to attack *Mimosa pigra*. The insects that have been released seem to be thriving pretty well on the weed. That will not eliminate that noxious plant in the Northern Territory, of course, and we will have to continue mechanical means of infestation control as well. Nevertheless, it is a start. Further studies on insects to attack our noxious weeds are being conducted in our laboratories at present. Weed control is a problem throughout the Territory with the spread of seeds through the harvesting of hay and its distribution from 1 property to another. I have asked for a complete review of the weed control legislation in the Northern Territory and hope to introduce some initiatives in that regard in due course.

In closing my remarks on the Northern Territory's agricultural and pastoral industries, I refer to those who used to say that Australia was an enormous country, most of whose land was quite useless, and inhabitable only on its coastal regions where productive land existed. Modern research into agricultural watering systems, fertiliser and groundwater supplies has demonstrated that the remote areas of Australia have an enormous productive capacity. What this country really needs is another 15 million people to help us get on with the job.

Mr Deputy Speaker, I support the motion.

Mr DONDAS (Casuarina): Mr Deputy Speaker in rising this afternoon to speak in the Address-in-Reply debate, I would like to cover some of the points raised by the Leader of the Opposition and also the member for Stuart. To begin with, I would like to pick up the comment made by the Leader of the Opposition in regard to land sales. He said that the Northern Territory government had held a fire sale in respect of land. I find that to be a rather unusual comment from the Leader of the Opposition because the minister responsible for lands has a responsibility to administer Crown lands. Land is a very important resource and also a very important tool for government revenue raising.

When one looks at the development of Alice Springs, Darwin, Katherine and even Tennant Creek, one finds that there has been a tremendous change in land usage in the last 5 years. One really only has to consider the development that has taken place in Alice Springs more than in any other region of the Territory. Darwin went through its period of rapid development in the post-Cyclone Tracy period which gathered momentum in 1975 and continued until at least 1981. By that time, many things were happening in central Australia and tourism was on the rise. Arrangements had to be made rather quickly to provide infrastructure to encourage tourism to that region. In the last 12 to 18 months, there has been a slight downturn in the demand for land there. This is because, 4 years ago, the Northern Territory government decided to create a tourism precinct in Mount John and, in the last couple of years, that has taken much of the development pressure from areas surrounding Alice Springs and focused it in the one region.

I took umbrage at the Leader of the Opposition's reference to a 'fire sale'. He referred to the number of signs that went on display, not only in

Darwin but other Territory centres. The Department of Lands, through the Planning Authority, displayed signs on various blocks of under-utilised land. I would like the Leader of the Opposition to consider that term 'under-utilised'. In Darwin, Katherine, Tennant Creek and Alice Springs, there are portions of land that have not been put to productive use. The revenue that we obtain from the sale of such land goes into community services. It would be as difficult to indicate exactly where those funds are used as it would be to say where funds derived from TAB or the Liquor Commission go. The funds go into Consolidated Revenue and are disbursed at the appropriate time. I would like the Leader of the Opposition to consider for a moment that, if the Northern Territory government did not make a strong effort to gain such revenue, there would have to be cuts in services. Cuts in services have been forced on us by the federal Labor government. The federal Labor government has recognised that the Northern Territory has a billion dollar budget and, because it does not have anything going for it up here, it gets out its scissors and snips away. We have been left to our own devices.

I do not think Territorians would like to be known as bludgers, as people with their hands out all the time for revenue from the Commonwealth government. But, if we were to gain all the revenue that was generated in the Northern Territory and which our government does not receive, we would not have to stand in line with the rest of the states. I refer to excise duties, personal tax, uranium royalties and other royalties.

The Leader of the Opposition said also that the Minister for Lands and Housing can do anything that he likes. What a load of nonsense! The Town Planning Authority is a statutory authority which operates under an act of this parliament which gives little scope for it to be directed by a minister. From memory, in the 12 or 13 months during which I was Minister for Lands, I directed the Town Planning Authority on only 1 occasion: and that was to put on display some unproductive land in McMillans Road. By means of a special request, I asked the authority to put a particular lot on display. On no occasion did the previous Minister for Lands direct the Town Planning Authority to do something that it did not want to do.

This can be a very ticklish situation when developers are knocking on the door indicating that they want to invest \$1.5m that will result in the employment of 20 to 30 people. In most cases, I had to direct the developers back to the Town Planning Authority to go through the proper planning processes. One could only indicate that there would be no problem with the minister provided that each of the Town Planning Authority processes had been undertaken. The statement by the Leader of the Opposition that the minister responsible for lands can do what he likes is really a load of rubbish. At the beginning of his speech, he said that his party would do the right thing by the Northern Territory and be constructive, not destructive. He said that only last Wednesday or Thursday, and yet he can turn around and start making all these innuendos and accusations.

The member for Stuart raised a point about the Tennant Creek Airport. He referred to the matter of Ansett providing financial assistance for the upgrading of the airport. It is quite true that an approach was made to Ansett when we had been told by the Commonwealth Minister for Transport that there was no money in his bin for any upgrading of the Tennant Creek Airport. Only 5 months earlier, the federal government had been negotiating with the Tennant Creek Town Council for the local ownership of the Tennant Creek Airport at a transfer cost of \$4.5m. Once again, the Commonwealth changed its mind overnight, left the people of Tennant Creek up in the air and put our regional airline service at risk. We had entered into an arrangement with

Ansett to provide a regional service from Groote, Gove, Darwin, Katherine, Tennant Creek, Alice Springs and Yulara.

Being reasonable men, we approached the Commonwealth and said its officers had indicated that the airport could be upgraded at a cost of about \$2.1m. We asked if it would proceed with upgrading the airport if the Territory government paid \$1m of the cost. The Tennant Creek section of the regional airline system is very important to the development of that system. Since we received at least a responsible response from the federal minister, we thought that it would be only fair to ask the operators whether they would provide some financial assistance for the upgrading of that particular facility. Of course, Ansett were interested but there was a quid pro quo: 'Sure, we will put in \$500 000. We will help the Northern Territory upgrade the Tennant Creek Airport, but we want an extension of our contract. We do not want a 2-year contract; we want a 5-year contract'. That placed the Northern Territory government in a very difficult position because, only 12 months before, we had called for expressions of interest to see whether airline operators in Australia would be interested in providing a regional airline service. At that time, we said we would be letting a contract for a 2-year period only.

Mr Speaker, that was not good enough for Ansett; it was trying to put the screws on the Northern Territory government in order to obtain a monopoly of regional airline services to the Northern Territory for 5 years. We must remember that there are other airline operators in this country and another very important company operator within the Northern Territory, and that is Australian Airlines. Ultimately, Australian Airlines will get itself into a position where it may have the aircraft necessary to provide this regional service. I think that the decision made by the government at the time, not to accept the \$500 000 and not to close its options off as far as regional airline systems are concerned, was the proper one.

The Leader of the Opposition raised a matter in relation to the Trade Development Zone. It has been raised in this Assembly by many previous speakers. The Minister for Industry and Development quoted the latter part of a speech by the Leader of the Opposition from the Parliamentary Record of Wednesday 6 June 1987. However, earlier in that debate, the Leader of the Opposition said:

Mr Speaker, as I have said, the opposition supports the objectives outlined in this bill. Since the bill was introduced, I have been fortunate to have had the opportunity to see a couple of similar, but not identical, areas in operation. My main conclusion is that it will take a concerted effort on the part of the proposed Trade Development Zone Authority and the government of the Northern Territory to get this thing off the ground. It will be no easy matter and it will not happen by itself. I am pleased to say that the light of realism is shared by Northern Territory government officers whom I have spoken to and the Northern Territory government itself.

A few moments ago the honourable minister outlined the costs of the Trade Development Zone. We know that some \$8m approximately has gone into construction of the infrastructure for the zone itself but, more importantly, another \$4m has been spent on the provision of other services which will open up the whole of the East Arm area. In fact, in concluding his speech on the Address-in-Reply, the minister mentioned the fact that Cabinet had now approved phase 4 of the Norgaard Report, which will have a tremendous impact

on the East Arm region. The infrastructure that has been put in place will provide a better road service, a better water and sewerage service and a better electrical reticulation service to the cement factory there and to the other small organisations that are establishing in that area. But, more importantly, now that Cabinet has made the decision to proceed to stage 4 of the Norgaard Report, the land at East Arm is suitable for the development of infrastructure to support another initiative that has been developed by this government: the safe mooring basin.

The safe mooring basin was the target of some criticism from my Labor opponent in the recent elections who said that it was a bit of a dead duck because there were no boats in it and that it would not work. But what that man did not understand was that the constructed basin was to be completed and handed over to the government by March or April of this year. We took it over a little bit earlier to let the fishing fleet and the fishing industry within the region know that it would be open this year during their season. If we had not brought the opening forward by a month, the fishing fleet might have thought that the basin would not be completed and made arrangements to go back to their home ports such as Cairns or Fremantle. It was important to illustrate to the fishing industry that that particular facility was 95% completed and could be used. In fact, it was used very successfully during the recent cyclone threat.

However, the point that I would like to make is that the members of the opposition carp and criticise rather than recognise and support a good idea. The attitude of members opposite to the safe mooring basin reminded me of their attitude when we moved to establish Yulara. They made a song and dance about that at the time. They said that it was a waste of public money and that the facility would not be used. If we had not taken that decision 5 years ago, Yulara and international tourism in that region, not only for the Territory but also for Australia, would be a non-event. Prior to the construction of those facilities, the numbers that we were getting in that area were infinitesimal compared to the number of visitors there today.

The point that I am trying to make is that, when the Leader of the Opposition rose the other day, he knock, knock, knocked on his desk. I think that, every time we get up, we should knock on our desks. I hope there is nothing in standing orders prohibiting us from that particular action. I thought we might receive something new and fresh from the opposition but, after reading the Leader of the Opposition's speech on the Address-in-Reply, I realised that, when one comes down to the nitty-gritty, it is the same old sick story.

Another subject that I would like to raise is the success that we have had with the Indoor International Sports Stadium. The complex at Marrara is the headquarters for judo, gymnastics, basketball and table tennis. The indoor facility is really humming along with 10 000 to 15 000 people using it each month. It is something that every Darwinite and Territorian can be proud of. Last year, we had the Taekwondo World Championships in Darwin and some 1100 tourists came here during the quiet time of our tourist season and provided a very important cash flow into the community.

Mr Deputy Speaker, there has been considerable criticism from both sides of this Assembly, and from many organisations, regarding the government's intention to proceed, in these tight economic times, with the Northern Territory Football League headquarters. The point that I try to make both inside and outside this Assembly is that the particular facility that is being constructed, whilst it may be the headquarters for the Northern Territory

Football League, will become Darwin's outdoor international sporting stadium. That is the point that everybody has missed. If we have an outdoor stadium with under-cover seating for 4500 people, which is capable of catering for any outdoor sport, we will encourage more national and international competitions to be held here. Gardens Oval is too small for that. When the NTFL leaves the Gardens Oval and goes to Marrara, it will release a facility for one of the minor sports that does not have a home.

The move to create an outdoor sports stadium at Marrara should be viewed in this light rather than be seen merely as a \$6m stand for 1 of the bigger sports in the Northern Territory - Australian Rules football. It is an outdoor, international sports stadium that will be used in much the same way as the indoor stadium has been used. Of course, Australian Rules football will have the main call on it. I believe we must look at the future needs of the community and that is what we are doing. At self-government in 1978, we inherited a deficiency of sporting and recreational facilities.

Mr Deputy Speaker, another point I would like to cover is tourism. When one considers the infrastructure that is planned or is under construction in the Northern Territory, the figures are staggering. I am told that, at the moment, there are 60 projects relating to tourism in the planning stage or under construction. The federal Minister for Tourism said the other day that, by 1997-1998, Australia could expect something like 2.5 million international visitors to this country. That figure is staggering when one considers that, at the moment, the number varies between 250 000 and 300 000 a year. In other words, in 10 years time, 10 times more international travellers will be visiting Australia. If that flows through to the Territory, as is the case in the tourist industry at the moment, the infrastructure that we have in place or that is planned will hardly cater for that growth. All we are catering for now is the immediate growth in the next 12 to 18 months.

We have yet to see the impact of the south road between Adelaide and Alice Springs on tourism. We have not seen the impact of that on the coach market. We do not know what numbers we are likely to have. It has been guesstimated that there may be a 300% to 400% increase on last year's figures, when the road was not open. We need to take into account also that there has been an increase in services by Australian Airlines and Ansett. I am told that there has been an increase of 12% to 14% in the number of bookings with 1 of the major airlines.

We have 60 projects on the drawing board or under construction at the moment and I am quite sure that, once the infrastructure is in place, we will be able to attract a bigger percentage of the market because I do not think that the states are undertaking such infrastructural development. The Northern Territory was the first to realise the impact of tourism and what it does for the economy of a community. Of course, when we look back to 1978, we had 5 or 6 people in the Tourist Bureau, as it was called in those days. Today, we have something like 60 or 65 people working in the whole organisation and every penny that has been spent will be well worth it in the long term.

A subject that is very dear to my heart is the Darwin Bus Service. This year saw the introduction of an integrated service for the first time. Prior to the opening of this school year, a school bus service operated in addition to the public transport system. I would like to thank publicly the staff of the Darwin Bus Service, the unions and everyone else who was involved in the integration of those 2 services. Everybody cooperated tremendously in the introduction of a complicated system and made the new service work very

smoothly. As the former Minister for Transport and Works, I want to thank those bus service employees, including drivers and mechanics, who played their part. The integrated system is now working well.

We had a hiccup in the system with split shifts but that has now been substantially ironed out. Most people involved with the running of our bus service know that a very good effort was put in by all. The travelling public is starting to realise the benefits of the integrated system which has produced a better and more frequent service. We do not hear too many complaints about it now. There will be complaints from time to time because no system runs perfectly, but I believe that the integration of the school bus service was achieved efficiently and well.

Another point raised by the Leader of the Opposition relates to the freeholding of pastoral land. In his Address-in-Reply speech, the Leader of the Opposition said something along the lines that we will freehold pastoral properties because we have to pay off our CLP mates in the pastoral industry for not drifting to the National Party. It is in Hansard. It was a disgusting statement because the Chief Minister and former Minister for Lands said 18 months ago that he would move towards the freeholding of pastoral properties and try to put legislative mechanisms in place that would make it work. The Leader of the Opposition began by saying that he intended to be more constructive but, when we come to the bottom line, we realise that that is a lot of drivell.

I want to refute his statement because it is not true. We have been working on the freeholding of pastoral properties for 18 months and the subject was referred to the government's Rural Advisory Council for advice on how the non-legislative aspects could be accomplished. The Chief Minister said that he hoped to be able to introduce the legislation very early in the life of this Assembly. This is not because of any debt to be paid, but because it is a sensible measure to help an ailing industry which, 10 years ago, was second only to mining in its importance to the Northern Territory. These days, it is running about fourth. The only way we will pull it out of the doldrums is by giving pastoral landholders considerably more confidence. If they have that confidence, they will borrow money to develop.

The Leader of the Opposition spoke about the benefits of establishing the 2nd Cavalry Regiment here by 1992. He said that the federal Labor government would spend \$100m to establish it here and there would be \$100m of recurrent annual expenditure yet the Northern Territory government was not very excited about it. The reason why we are not excited about it is that the federal government hinders Northern Territory development. We had Hawke's promise that, if the Labor Party were elected to power, the Northern Territory would get the railway. Then, there was the question of uranium mining. Our third mine was ready to go, but uranium in the Northern Territory was no good even though uranium at Roxby Downs in South Australia was all right. The Prime Minister sat on a bulldozer on the site of the proposed new airport terminal. He kicked it over, dug the first sod to start a development that we needed and then he reneged. In terms of tourism development, we have been trying to get a hotel at Jabiru for 18 months. Both the Gagadju Association and the Northern Territory government want it. Everybody wants it but the federal ministers do not want to give approval. We have been negotiating with the Commonwealth to turn the old bombing range at Leanyer into a pistol and shooting club. We cannot do that until the ordinance is cleared. When Mr Beazley was up here about 3 or 4 weeks ago, he said it would take 5 years. The only reason we are not getting excited about the 2nd Cavalry Regiment coming here is that we do not believe it will happen.

It has given me great pleasure today to speak to the Address-in-Reply and to express my loyalty to Her Majesty the Queen.

Mr TUXWORTH (Barkly): Mr Speaker, it is with great pleasure that I rise to respond to the speech delivered by His Honour the Administrator, to register my allegiance to Her Majesty and to Australia and to say, on behalf of the people of my electorate, that we are damned lucky we are Territorians.

I wish to canvass a range of issues today and I will start with the Tennant Creek meatworks. It is a matter which needs to be raised again and again because there are so many aspects to it. When the CLP government decided in 1980 to support the construction of meatworks in Tennant Creek, there were many who said that it had never been done before and it could not be successful in Tennant Creek. Since then, the meatworks has been operated by many major companies in Australia who are successful at meatworks operation, including Souerys, Gilbertsons and IXL. None of them has been able to make any money out of the Tennant Creek meatworks. I am sure that would astound most people because it was always conceived that the meatworks, being located in the middle of the herd, would be relatively well placed to compete for animals and that, provided it was run efficiently, it would be an asset to the Northern Territory.

As time went on, it became obvious that the Tennant Creek works and perhaps many inland works will never be assets for the states in which they are situated. The reason for this is the thuggery of the Australian Meat Industries Employees Union. The Tennant Creek meatworks has had its share of problems within recent days. One was a lack of cattle and another was its involvement in the meat scandal which arose several years ago and which certainly did not help its good name. However, neither of those problems came anywhere near that caused by the thuggery of the union inside the works. The union determined that all the men in the Tennant Creek meatworks would receive at least what meatworkers on the eastern seaboard received plus any concession they could screw out of the management.

The union stooped to some pretty low levels to screw the management. I recall one occasion when there was a yard full of prime beef that had been bought from a sale at Bond Springs. It was ultimately shipped to Adelaide because the cattle started to lose condition. When the men saw the fine animals in the yard, they walked off the job and made outrageous demands on the management for additional concessions. In the end, the management decided to send the animals to Adelaide before they all died, and to wind down the operations of the meatworks. That meatworks has to process 50 000 head per year to pay its overheads and expenses. In recent years, I do not believe it has processed 20 000 animals. Is it any wonder that companies such as Gilbertsons, IXL and Souerys have found it convenient to walk away?

When a consortium was formed late last year to review some of the inland meatworks in Australia, I took the trouble to meet its members. I wanted to see what views they held about Tennant Creek meatworks and its future. They believed that, on paper, it was a very good works which should compete well, but that the grip that the union had on it was such that it would probably never be successful and it would never compete with the major works on the eastern seaboard. These were men who had operated meatworks inland in Queensland and New South Wales for over 40 years, men who knew how to operate an inland meatworks and make it pay. They said that they were beside themselves with the Tennant Creek problem and they even held concerns for the future of meatworks in Alice Springs and Katherine. They believe the Katherine meatworks, with its particular catchment area, should be one of the

leading meatworks in Australia. However, the same problem of industrial relations is keeping it on its knees. Even at this stage, the Katherine works has not indicated exactly when it will open and cattlemen are walking around in the Barkly, the McArthur River and VRD areas wondering where to dispose of their cattle.

This leads me to speak of what we might do with the meat industry in the Northern Territory. Having been involved in the furore over Mudginberri, having watched the Tennant Creek meatworks closed and sold for a couple of hundred thousand dollars, and having watched the meatworks in Alice Springs have its difficulties over recent years, where does the Northern Territory meat industry go from here? The advice which members of the consortium gave to me was that there is a future for the small inland works that kill 40 to 50 beasts per day, work every day of the year and do not have the same industrial and supply problems that the major works have. Their view was that, if the Tennant works dropped back to killing 50 animals per day, it would probably kill 50 animals per day forever. There may be other areas in the Northern Territory that could sustain a small works that would do the same thing, and they should be supported. I would like to raise that for the minister's consideration at some future time. Rather than see us export all our jobs in the meat industry to Queensland or Western Australia and see them go forever, perhaps we should review our meat industry policy. If the name of the game is to move to small works and have more of them, fewer industrial problems and less AMIEU control, then let's look at that seriously.

Mr Speaker, I would like to speak about another issue that has come to my attention and I raised this in the adjournment debate the other night. I will do so again this afternoon because there is some other information that I have to hand that I would like the Chief Minister to comment on. I asked the Chief Minister the other night whether he would be prepared to provide information - either in a comprehensive statement on the railway or at some other time - relating to the tonnage that the railway is likely to attract, where the tonnage is to come from, what the time frame is and when it will eventuate.

In the last few days, I have received information suggesting that, in putting the railway package together, the government has given certain indications that land grants may be available on each side of the railway to the successful tenderer. While that is a package that has been offered in America in the past, and has certainly worked because it got its railways ...

Mr Hatton: Not necessarily on either side of the railway.

Mr TUXWORTH: Not necessarily on either side of the railway. If the Chief Minister could cover that issue in his statement, it would be of great interest to Territorians. Many people would be concerned that, if the railway went through or near their property, they would be affected by it. That is not an unreasonable concern.

Reflecting on the events of the last election, there is no doubt that we have ushered in a new era in Northern Territory politics with the beginning of 3-cornered contests. There is no doubt that they are here to stay and that my party will go from strength to strength in the future. It is our intention to contest the federal elections and we will be pointing out quite clearly to the constituency the differences between ourselves, the Liberals and the Labor Party at the time.

In my own electorate, the competition was pretty willing and that has always been the case. This election was no different and many people were

concerned that some unusual tactics and terrible things were done and said in the course of the campaign. I did not find that to be so; to me it seemed just another election in the sense that elections fought in my area have always been pretty willing and no side has given any quarter, and neither they should.

In so far as threats to Aborigines are concerned, I would disregard that in the sense that there is no doubt people said to Aborigines as they were going to the polling booth, 'If you vote for Smith or Hallett or Tuxworth, they will build an incinerator and you will die or your babies will have 2 heads'. I happen to be 1 of the people who heard that said by a school teacher from Elliott to a couple of Aborigines and I am not surprised about it. Mr Speaker, I can tell you that, in 1977, at Warrabri, a place close to the heart of yourself and myself, Aborigines were told that, if I were elected, I would be down the next day to pick up all their children and take them away. In 1980, when Elliott was in my electorate, the Aborigines there were told that, if Tuxworth was elected, there would be no more social security cheques. Compared to stories like that, the story this time around was about par for the course and I was not surprised that it occurred.

The election result was the beginning of a new era and it will put a new stamp on Territory politics forever. I was interested in the comments made yesterday by the member for Stuart in his very emotive outburst about the New Right. I thought that that was pretty interesting, but it is not the New Right - it is the Right. It has been there for a long time. It is just that the Right is becoming vocal. What we see now in Australian politics is that the Right is no longer allowing the Left to control the agenda and the debate in Australian politics. The essence of the Australian political system is all people being able to stand up and have their say. We now have a situation where some of the traditional concessions and values that have been won over the years by people on the left side of politics are being threatened, and they are using pretty emotive statements to describe the efforts of the Right or the New Right or the Far Right, or whatever it is, to try to put some balance back into the Australian political scene. Whatever you or others may think of the New Right, Mr Speaker, Australians like John Stone, Charles Copeman, Hugh Morgan, John Laird and Bob Ansett are all successful and great Australians in their own way. The fact that they are prepared to stand up and propose a philosophy that many people do not want to hear, simply because they believe it is good for the country, is something that we should not be afraid to listen to or consider.

What is happening is that the New Right is creating a mood in Australian politics that is allowing openings for the National Party and people on the right wing of the Liberal Party to move their policies in the directions that are likely to bring recovery to the Australian economy. Many people will condemn what these Australians and right-wing politicians have to say for the simple reason that their hard-won concessions and the values they believe in are being threatened. The bottom line - and I think we all know it in our hearts - is that, if we do not make some changes, there will not be much left for us to all share. In the next election, Australians will have some pretty clear choices relating to taxation, industrial relations and a whole range of other issues. Whether they accept them or not is another matter but the choices will be there in a way in which they have not existed during the last 20 or 30 years.

I would just like to move on to the matter of taxation because it is something that is pretty dear to my heart. I believe the level of personal taxation that we have in Australia at the moment is the very thing that is

cruelling the country and reducing our standard of living. I come across so many people in the community, not just in the Northern Territory but all over the country, who do not want to work overtime. Some of them do not even want to work, some do not want a promotion and some do not want to consider an investment risk that might bring them a few extra dollars for no other reason than that it would move them into a tax bracket that does not make it worth their while. Mr Speaker, you know such people in your electorate.

In my own electorate, miners want to work only 4 days per week, because days 5 and 6 incur such a tax penalty that they take home about \$20 per day. A company complains that maintenance workers will not do overtime, doublers and triplers to keep the plant going because the tax bill is so great for their extra effort that they just do not want to work. Among our own friends and associates, we know how few people want to put their hand in their pocket and take a chance with an investment because it may not be worth it. Leave the interest rates and the risk of the investment out of it, Mr Speaker; even if they get a good return, the tax burden on it does not make it worth while. Until we come to grips with the high level of personal income tax in this country and the effect that it is having on every Australian in influencing him not to put in that extra effort, our standard of living will fall. We cannot escape the reality that, in this community, the people who rely on welfare and social security payments obtain those payments from the productivity of every other Australian's effort. In the next week, we will experience what happens when productivity drops in the country. The Prime Minister has foreshadowed that, next week, there will be major cuts in the social welfare field. No one wants to do that, least of all a Labor government. The reality is that there are not enough people producing, working, paying tax and creating wealth to give any more money to the people who are receiving welfare and social security benefits, neither is there any capacity to borrow any more because we are in enough trouble now.

The great losers in the Australian community, as a result of our high taxation policy, which is reducing everybody's output, are the people who are receiving social welfare and social security payments from the Australian system. It is not a matter that influences this Assembly particularly at all, other than that none of us likes paying any more tax than we have to, and that is pretty natural. I am not advocating that tax be reduced so that everybody can have an easier life. I am advocating that personal income tax be reduced so that many hundreds of thousands of Australians, who are capable and who ought to be out in the work force doing dozens of things and creating opportunities, get back to work.

Mr Speaker, I would like to move on to communications systems. I have made many speeches in this Assembly about the great need for improved communications in the Northern Territory. Quite often, my comments have been regarded as pork-barrelling for people in remote areas. I still hold the view that the wealth of the Northern Territory is not created in the mall in Alice Springs or Smith Street in Darwin. It is created out in the community and, regrettably, most of the people out in the community do not have a method of communicating. Until we can get a communications system that puts every Territorian in direct contact with people involved in commerce, government and trade, we will only frustrate our own development. I heard the minister say before the election that the plan for the Telecom communication system was a goer. I heard him say the other day that it was not on, because there were now some problems and the deal was not all that it appeared to be. Whatever the deal is, there is a desperate need for the system out in the remote areas and the development of the Territory will be heavily reliant on it.

I was at McArthur River the other day and so was the Minister for Mines. He was looking at the McArthur River 'Here's Your Chance' project. I stood and looked at the meatworks which has been sitting there for 4 years and has not killed a beast. It is capable of killing 20 000 to 25 000 animals a year and used to provide a really good service for people in that area whose animals would make it to that meatworks but could not get into any of the others. That meatworks closed for a range of reasons, but 1 of them was that the operator could not telephone to order a spare part or to make a sale or to get information on the markets. I can remember very clearly one occasion I was there. The kill was complete and a number of pantehnicons had been filled with meat. The manager ran out, jumped into an aeroplane and flew into Katherine to ring around Australia to find buyers for his pantehnicons of meat. Eventually, the meatworks closed. One of the things that might have helped it survive - and I say 'might have' rather than 'would have' - was a good telephone system that would have enabled the meatworks to keep in contact with the market. If we ever get a chance to open that meatworks again, it will rely on a telephone system to stay in the market and sell its meat. Not only does business and commerce need the satellite, so do the education system and the government for their own communications. I cannot commend it too strongly to the minister involved.

The high-temperature incinerator has come and gone as a political issue. It was a major issue in my electorate during the election and, although the anti-incinerator campaign was designed to knock off the ALP candidate, it nearly got me too. It is an issue that is never likely to raise its head again, at least not in my electorate. However, the government did commission a report which was completed. Whatever it says, I think it would be good for posterity if the government sent the report to Tennant Creek Town Council so that it could keep it on file. At some time in the future, some enlightened people might read it and decide to do it. I am not saying it will happen in my lifetime, but others might like to look at the proposal.

I turn to the matter of the recent attacks by members of the government on the judiciary and the magistracy. I can say that there would not be a minister in government in Australia who has not felt the disappointment or frustration of having had a run-in with the judiciary. That is par for the course. I can assure honourable members opposite that it frightens the average John Citizen in the community to see politicians having violent arguments or disagreements with the judiciary and the magistracy. Whatever we politicians may think about the justification for such arguments, the reality is that most Territorians are very uneasy about them. We all have our concerns from time to time and, although it is convenient and perhaps makes you feel warm inside to burst into print and kick a judge or magistrate in the head, there are other ways for members of this Assembly to deal with their problems with the judiciary and the magistracy.

In recent days, town planning has been high on the public agenda in the Northern Territory with differences between councils and government in Alice Springs and Darwin. From frustrations experienced within my own home town of Tennant Creek, I know that it could never be argued that the town planning section is doing well. I could point to some circumstances where it has actually lost considerable investment for the community. Perhaps that investment went to another town, but it was certainly lost to my community. There is now a good case for Territorians to consider whether town planning should remain with the Northern Territory government or be given to local government in the respective major communities. I would advocate that it is now time for that to happen.

I would also like to raise the issue of the Tennant Creek Airport. I would like to commend the government for meeting the threat of the Commonwealth which is determined to go no further than to make it a commuter-standard airport. I would like to say to the members of the Labor Party on my right that the actions of the federal minister can only be deplored. The strip was built 40 years ago. It has been resurfaced twice in 40 years. It was not much to ask of any government, leaving politics aside, to have the strip resealed to a satisfactory standard to enable it to take modern aircraft. The federal minister's position is just bloody-minded. He held a gun to the head of the Northern Territory government in an unfair way. I think it is fair and reasonable that the Territory government has taken its present position in the interests of the Territory's development and its future tourism prospects.

Next week, the people of Borroloola will go to the polls to elect their first community government. This is a momentous occasion. There is no community in the Northern Territory that needs and deserves local government as much as Borroloola does. It has a population 400 people and there is a total of 2 telephones among the lot of them. They rely on a weekly mail service and the good offices of many people to keep the community functioning at a reasonable standard. They have a problem in respect of the racial balance within the town and the problems of a small town that is trying to diversify and build up industries such as fishing and tourism. The advent of local government in Borroloola will be a great thing. It will not come easily. There will be a fair number of problems, but it will certainly give the people an opportunity to begin to assess their priorities and decide for themselves what is important and what needs to be done first.

Another matter I want to raise is that of research stations in the old Department of Primary Production. We have several research stations around the Territory and they have all made a contribution in their respective areas. I would like to put to the minister that there is an opportunity and a need to establish a research station on the Barkly Tablelands to examine several aspects of cattle production, particularly the survival rate and the weaning period of calves. As you know, Mr Speaker, the Barkly is very much like the Alice Springs area. It has a pretty good turnoff and, if a research station could improve that turnoff, even by 10%, the government should consider it.

Mr Speaker, I have had a great deal of pleasure in responding to His Honour's remarks.

Mr LANHUPUY (Arnhem): Mr Speaker, in speaking to the Address-in-Reply to His Honour the Administrator, I would like to say that I believe that the Northern Territory is facing a critical time in its history. It is a critical time for all the people of the Northern Territory. In his contribution to this debate, the Chief Minister indicated that there were hard times ahead. We all know that development is important for the future of all Territorians, but we need social development as well as economic development.

It is good that the government is in favour of a partnership between Territorians and their elected representatives. We already have that on this side of the Assembly. We know and work as a team with the people whom we represent. They know that we understand their problems and aspirations. I would welcome a move by the government to form a better relationship with my constituents. Mr Speaker, my people and the people whom I represent would be pleased to participate in the process of government. We want a say in our future. We do not want to be treated with less care and dignity than other citizens are.

All of us who live here have a commitment to the Territory. That commitment will continue, no matter which government is in power. Such a commitment requires partnership. I invite the government to form such a partnership with my constituents. Statehood will be a result of a successful partnership, but it is a long-term goal, and one that can be reached only if all people in the Territory share the responsibility and commitment to become a full member of the Commonwealth. We have to prove ourselves to the rest of Australia.

I would like to touch briefly on some of the issues that His Honour the Administrator raised in his address. I welcome the trade development that His Honour outlined to us when he sought to make us aware of the potential development that we can tap into in respect of our northern neighbours. I believe that the Northern Territory government is doing well in terms of ensuring that trade lanes are open and ensuring that we strike a relationship that will be on-going after statehood is gained for the Northern Territory. Mr Speaker, as you may be aware, people in my area enjoyed trading with our northern neighbours for some time prior to legislation introduced by the federal government restricting people of Macassan origin from trading in beche de mer, or trepang, which they had done over a long period of time. I can still remember within my area Macassan trees, Tamarind trees, that were planted by those people who traded with my people in the past.

Tourism is one of those major aspects of development in which my people need to be involved. As the Minister for Tourism said, we need to ensure that the Northern Territory is seen as a tourist destination and to capitalise on the success of films like 'Crocodile Dundee', that have provided an opportunity to expose the Territory further within the tourism industry, not only in Australia but throughout the world. Of course, we have heard much about a belief that my people are doing their best to stop development, especially within the Kakadu National Park. That is not the case. The Chief Minister stated in this Assembly that the people of the Gagadju Association were willing to establish a resort or a motel in order to attract people to visit and stay in the Northern Territory. That is part of the commitment that we have shown through the land councils by trying to cooperate with the Northern Territory government.

Mr Speaker, as you are aware, Aboriginal people can provide a special component for overseas visitors and share their land and culture with them. People visiting places like Ayers Rock and Kakadu desire to see the specific contribution that Aboriginal people make to the Northern Territory's tourism industry. We have only touched a very small part of that. We ought to explore it further and exploit it so that the Northern Territory people as a whole benefit from it.

In relation to fisheries, His Honour the Administrator told us that onshore processing may be considered by the Northern Territory government in the very near future. If such projects get off the ground, I would like consideration to be given to establishing them at places like Nhulunbuy and Groote Eylandt. Certainly, that would create an employment base for people in these regions thereby relieving the dependence on mining companies like the Gemco and Nabalco.

Mr Speaker, as you would be very much aware, many people in my electorate are very dependent on the jobs that are being created by the Northern Territory government, the federal departments, Gemco and Nabalco. If they cannot obtain employment of some kind through these channels, usually they turn to unemployment benefits. The creation of onshore processing plants

would not only encourage people in my electorate to participate, but it would provide a worthwhile economic base in those areas. The flow on from such activities would give employment and dignity and would assist the local economy.

I welcome the intention to establish advisory councils. It is a good idea, but only if they are representative and if the government listens to them. Time and time again, this government has set up organisations to advise it on services and other matters. There seems to be a tendency for the government, or the minister responsible, to take into account only those people who have had some sort of relationship with its political party. This has happened very often in areas that I have been involved in. There are people in my electorate who have a much greater contribution to make in terms of developing a particular area or region than those who have been appointed to these advisory councils. I would ask the ministers concerned or the Northern Territory government to take into account the need to appoint people who have specific qualifications to work in those positions, not only those people who have political ties with the governing party in the Northern Territory.

In respect of education, I have no comment to make on the NT University College other than that I believe that it is needed to attract the type of professional people whom we need in the Northern Territory. We need to be able to give them some incentive to come and work with us. So often, people from the Northern Territory go south or overseas to further their own personal education and sometimes we lose those people.

His Honour the Administrator spoke of liquor and problems related to it in the Territory. It is a problem, not just for Aboriginal people, but for everyone in our society. It is very destructive, especially for my people. I did not welcome the extension of takeaway licences announced by the Chief Minister during the election campaign because I believe that that is a ticket to hell for many communities outside Darwin, Katherine and Alice Springs. A matter that really concerns me is that, on one hand, the Northern Territory government tried to introduce legislation to control some of the drinking habits of Northern Territorians and yet, on the other hand, it is trying to extend business hours for takeaway outlets. That is a matter that I am very concerned about, especially for people in outback areas who often drive for several hours to reach a liquor outlet, and the Chief Minister would know whom I am talking about. I welcome the amendments to the Traffic Act which acknowledge the link between road deaths and drinking.

In relation to matters in my shadow portfolio, I was pleased to hear the Minister for Health and Community Services give at least some sort of undertaking to the Assembly that there will be an ongoing inquiry into the consumption of kava in communities, mostly in my electorate. He said too that he was very interested in implementing a program in relation to trachoma. These are matters that we have raised very often in the Assembly because we have close contact with the people. Trachoma affects many people in central Australia because many do not have access to clean water. The honourable minister has said that at least 1 wash a day is necessary to avoid contracting that disease. Some people in my electorate sometimes do not have clean water and I hope that the minister will continue to do what he can in relation to all the other commitments that he has given.

I was very pleased to hear that the minister has at last taken some advice from the Labor Party and that respite care and psychiatric services have attracted his attention. The government intends to provide more funds for

such community services and this is very much needed. This matter was raised with the government 4 or 5 times during the course of the last Assembly.

I was also pleased to hear the Minister for Health and Community Services indicate that he intends to introduce legislation during the June sittings that will enable offenders to undertake community work programs and also be detained at home.

I was very pleased to hear the minister support the moves towards establishing local governments throughout the Northern Territory. There are many Aboriginal communities in my electorate that are willing to take on local government which would give them a free hand to make laws and regulations affecting the good government of their community. However, I would like to express a concern and I hope the minister will take note of this. There is a conflict between the elected council and the traditional landowners of a specific area, especially in a small community. A situation is created where the Northern Territory government supports a proposed local government whilst the landowners are supported by the local land council. I express that as a matter of concern to me personally. I noted with interest that the community of Milingimbi expressed a desire to take on local government whilst, at the same time, the traditional landowners are still seeking the views of the land councils. I have no idea what the land council is offering them in terms of advice.

Mr Speaker, in conclusion, I wish to thank the people of Arnhem for their support in electing me once again even though the electorate boundaries have been changed so dramatically. My home base at Galiwinku was taken away and placed in the electorate of Nhulunbuy. Many people on Elcho Island still think that I am their member until such time as I take a map out and say: 'I have been given a corridor which runs from the north-east crocodile islands and goes right down until it reaches Barunga, Hodgson Downs'. Once again, the people of Arnhem were not fooled by the number of people that tried to seek or gain entrance to the Assembly as the member for Arnhem.

Mr Smith: They are not stupid.

Mr LANHUPUY: As the Leader of the Opposition says, they are not stupid. I had to get out more often, and I hope to continue to do so. I am not reflecting on the ability of the member for Nhulunbuy, because I am sure he will be able to represent the views of the people at Lake Evella and Galiwinku very well.

I would really like to thank the people at Duck Creek, Barunga, Beswick, Bulman, Mt Catt, Alyangula, Umbakumba and Angurugu. I would like to express my thanks to those people and I pledge my loyal support to them. I will ensure that their views are heard in the Assembly whether they be on matters relating to mining operations, land rights legislation or a dinghy being blown away by a cyclone. I intend to do my best to represent them.

Last, but not least, Mr Speaker, I welcome my colleague, the member for Arafura to the Assembly. I would like to say that neither of us is here to provide a source of irritation to the editorial writers of the NT News or other papers. We have been chosen by the people of our electorates to represent their views and I can assure you, Mr Speaker, that we shall do so.

Mr POOLE (Araluen): Mr Deputy Speaker, it gives me great pleasure to respond to the Administrator's address and pledge my loyalty to Australia and the Queen. Firstly, let me record my thanks to the Araluen electorate for

electing me once again as its local member. I should also record grateful thanks to those members of my party who worked with me to assure my re-election.

One of the results of the CLP government's progressive development policies is the enlargement this year of my electorate. That is due to the population growth in Alice Springs. My electorate has quadrupled in size and now includes the new Larapinta housing development. Along with the new development, of course, have come some problems with water run-off and the need to formulate some policy on retaining walls on elevated blocks of land. I am pleased to say that new Department of Lands and Housing has reacted very promptly to residents' concerns and these matters are well in hand. Another problem in the new development area is that, whilst there is an abundance of open bushland space, there is a lack of the small park-type developments that other areas of Araluen have. Because of the high percentage of families with young children, this matter will need to be addressed in the near future.

One of the positive moves for central Australia was the change in education policy and the conversion of Alice Springs High School into a junior high school. I am pleased to tell this Assembly that that conversion was handled very well and, in the coming years, the school will go from strength to strength. This is a far cry from the fuss and controversy last year when it was announced that the Aboriginal students at Yirara College would be given access to genuine secondary qualifications at Alice Springs Junior High School.

I derive considerable pleasure from being able to say that that scheme is now in place and working very well because, when the move was announced last year, it was attacked severely by 2 of the members opposite. Those members refused to accept that the government's intention was to give Aboriginal students access to genuine secondary qualifications or that the department would put in place support services for Aboriginal students at Alice Springs High School.

I point out that it is early days yet but I draw the attention of the members for Stuart and MacDonnell to the fact that more than 20 Yirara students have completed their first term at Alice Springs High School. Last year, the corresponding number was only 6. I also wonder whether the honourable members read an article in the Alice Springs newspaper last week under the headline, 'Yirara Students Hit It off'. That article said that the success of the Yirara students at Alice Springs High School had led to a request by other Yirara students to join them.

I understand that much of the credit must go to the teachers at Alice Springs High School and I believe they should be commended for their support of the Yirara students. These teachers responded very positively to the needs of students and were very helpful in establishing homework classes at Yirara. Teachers are involved with those classes on at least 3 nights a week and I have no doubt that that had much to do with the good response that has been achieved. I understand also that the Aboriginal counsellor, who was appointed late last year, reports that parents in the feeder communities for Yirara are largely satisfied with the education their children are now receiving.

Last year, Mr Deputy Speaker, you would have believed that Aboriginal students at Yirara were being actively discriminated against. As was said at the time, the intention was to give those students access to better qualifications and a far greater range of options in their studies. That is an intention which is not only reasonable but also responsible and the government is working to ensure that that is achieved.

Whilst on the subject of high schools, I am pleased to see that this government is continuing to expand the community school policing program. I have discussed this with a number of school teachers at Alice Springs High School and the program is working extremely well. Many juveniles have sought counselling from the resident police officer and I understand the level of advice offered by the officer has been gratefully received by the students.

Obviously, the Northern Territory government's policy to promote tourism in central Australia has assisted the development of the Alice Springs. It has created jobs and is responsible for an influx of new Territorians who are staffing hotels, motels and businesses that continue the economic growth of the town. In Araluen itself, we are seeing the development of a new shopping centre and 2 new private schools, 1 of which opens on 17 May this month - the Lutheran Primary School. Of course, the continuing boom in population has resulted in difficulties with the traffic plan and it was pleasing to hear the Minister for Transport and Works' comments relating to assistance being given to the Alice Springs Town Council by his department. The widening of Larapinta Drive and the new lighting on the same road will improve the quality of life in central Australia.

Mr Deputy Speaker, this government's record in job creation and its continuing, sensible development programs will ensure full employment in central Australia. It was pleasing to hear the Administrator's comments with regard to the Alice Springs to Darwin railway. It has obviously come 1 step nearer. When this project comes to fruition, as I am sure it will, I can see one of the most successful container ports in Australia becoming firmly established in Darwin. This will have the major benefit of creating southbound container traffic which, if not lowering the cost of freight to the Northern Territory, will at least contain cost increases that other parts of the country will suffer.

I know the business community in Alice Springs will welcome this government's plan to make natural gas from the pipeline available to the central business district over the next couple of years. This should help contain the costs of operating businesses in Alice Springs.

It is pleasing to see the results of horticultural development projects at Ti Tree finally coming onto the market in Alice Springs. As the member for Sadadeen well knows, the government's progressive policies in this area could be said to be bearing fruit.

I was very pleased to hear the Chief Minister announce the concept of regional advisory councils. A decentralised advisory council can firstly identify prospective new enterprises and then assist those entrepreneurs to initiate their projects. These bodies will also be warmly received by the business community.

The government's combination of the Housing Commission and the Department of Lands will certainly make life easier, not only for tenants, but for those of us who deal very regularly with those bodies. I commend this government's initiative, which has already enhanced the means by which elected members can service and assist their constituents. I have some ideas with regard to grouping relative government departments or authorities and I intend to discuss these with the appropriate ministers over the next few months so that I can play my part in assisting this government to cut the costs of bureaucracy.

I will not go into the subject of development of Alice Springs Airport other than to say that it is needed urgently.

Let me finish by delving into a matter that was raised during this debate. I refer to alcohol abuse. The cost to the community is immeasurable and the degradation that some of my constituents suffer is appalling. The problems that they create for others in the community are equally appalling and it is pleasing to see that this government is considering ways and means of addressing them. I very much believe that governments have underestimated the willingness of the community to compromise its own lifestyle to offer some benefits to a very small percentage of the population. It is something that we as politicians should take stock of and devote as many resources to as possible.

I strongly support the announced government policies and the Chief Minister's motion for the Address-in-Reply to the Administrator, and I commend it to honourable members.

Mr HATTON (Chief Minister): Mr Deputy Speaker, I take the opportunity to thank honourable members, particularly those members who made a positive contribution to this debate.

Mr Bell: That's okay, Steve.

Mr HATTON: I take the opportunity at the outset to thank the member for MacDonnell because he made an abnormally positive contribution to this debate in respect of my press statement associated with electoral matters. He can rest assured that I will take advantage of the offers that he has made for us to work towards improving the electoral system for the benefit of all Territorians and to overcome the extreme difficulties that exist within his own electorate. I also thank the honourable member for recognising the efforts that our government is making in trying to resolve many of the interracial tensions of the Northern Territory. I trust that we can continue to work on a cooperative basis in the future, particularly during the course of this Assembly, to achieve some real gains for the entire community of the Northern Territory. I do not say those words lightly and I am sure the honourable member would appreciate that.

I might extend similar comments to the member for Arnhem who, in this afternoon's debate, added his voice to support a cooperative approach to development of the Northern Territory. Honourable members will know it is my view and my government's view that we need to find methods whereby we can provide economic opportunities for Aboriginal communities to address many of the severe problems that are the root cause of their difficulties rather than merely attack the superficial symptoms of the problems that exist in many of our Aboriginal communities.

I must address the issue raised by the member for Nhulunbuy and others in the course of debate. It is wrong, improper and unjust to make the allegation that we have racially differential educational objectives in the Northern Territory. No doubt, there are serious cultural and other problems associated with Aboriginal communities but, to respond specifically to the member for Nhulunbuy, I refute totally that there is any suggestion of a different form of education for Aboriginal people as distinct from that for white people. There is a difficulty. It is not racial difference. It is locational difference. Obviously, it is more difficult to provide identical standards of educational services to very small, scattered communities in outstations. It is possible to provide more services in larger centres but, obviously, even

those do not get the level of services that the major centres of the Northern Territory receive. I recognise that we need to address the problem but I refute the implication and suggestions of the member for Nhulunbuy that we are doing that on any sort of racial lines. Anybody who knows anything about the serious problems of trying to provide educational and other services on Aboriginal land, in particular in Arnhem Land, will appreciate the extreme complexity of the problems and will not make crass comments which serve only to undermine our attempts to provide a constructive approach to development.

In this context I must say that I was particularly disappointed in the statements made by the member for Arafura. It is a convention of the parliament that members are heard in silence during their maiden speeches. The honourable member should also be aware that it is equally a convention that maiden speeches are kept non-controversial. In my view, and that of anybody who listened seriously to his speech, the member for Arafura failed badly in his maiden speech. It was a rather pathetic speech, principally because he spent his entire time addressing a policy of the federal Liberal Party in respect of the Land Rights Act, which is an act of the federal parliament. He spent little or no time in discussion of matters which had been debated here. I am pleased to say that he recognised the likelihood of those policies being introduced but, for a maiden speech in this Assembly, I thought he failed rather badly to address many of the issues associated with his electorate or to address any of the matters before this Assembly which are of direct relevance. I am sure that the honourable member will have plenty of opportunity to make other statements during the course of this Assembly. I look forward to those debates in which he speaks with some interest. Let us hope that he does not use this Assembly purely as a vehicle to promote federal election campaigns.

I now turn to the Leader of the Opposition's remarks because he has the obligation of providing the basic statement on the opposition's position. I was quite pleased with his opening remarks. He said that he will provide 'a constructive opposition'. I thought perhaps he had learnt something from the last election and the electorate's reaction to the sort of nonsensical whingeing and whining, carping and critical knocking approach that the opposition has adopted for the last 3 or 4 years. He even went on to admit at last that the Northern Territory government will achieve a balanced budget, having spent an entire election campaign promoting the concept that there was no way in the world we could achieve that. But my hopes were dashed all too soon. He retired straight back into the same nonsensical, carping criticism that has been the hallmark of the Labor opposition in this Assembly for years and which is the reason why it is sliding further and further into political oblivion.

It is a real concern to me that the opposition keeps this up. It attacks the morale of the Northern Territory Public Service consistently. It undermines the confidence of the Northern Territory business community and the community generally with the obfuscation and misinformation that it spreads around at a rate of knots. We are already reaping the results of much of the damage members of the opposition created in their campaign of 1984 when they kept harping about and criticising the amount of money the Northern Territory government received from Canberra. They kept promoting per capita funding bases and the idea that the government was receiving too much money from Canberra. Mr Speaker, people like Senator Walsh actually listened to them, and Senator Walsh and others picked up the cry. We have seen massive attacks on the funding of the Northern Territory. Agreements have been broken left, right and centre by the federal government, and I lay most of the blame for that at the feet of the Labor opposition.

Members of the Opposition ought to look very carefully at their own constituencies where the greatest per capita expenditure by this government goes. The big per capita expenditure is in the Aboriginal and rural communities. The attacks that may be made on federal funding this year will place enormous pressure on us and what we can provide. I am not signalling any punches. I am not in a position to signal the punch because I do not know what we are likely to face. We do not receive the privileged briefing sessions that Labor governments seem to obtain. We have to wait until 14 May to hear the effects of the mini-budget whereas, apparently, the Labor Premiers have already been briefed. I would ask honourable members to remember that when it comes time for us to balance our budget for 1987-88.

Mr Speaker, allow me to address a couple of other issues. I am sure that, if the Leader of the Opposition had any honesty, following the outline of programs given by the Ministers for Education and Health and Community Services, he would apologise for his statement that we might ignore social development. My colleagues have outlined quite comprehensively a wide range of community services that will be addressed as well as the economic imperatives of the Northern Territory.

There are other issues that I must address in order, again, to correct misinformation. The Leader of the Opposition said that 'many capital works projects have been delayed so that the majority of expenditure on them will take place next year, not this year as originally planned'. That is wrong. Our capital works program is going ahead. I have had it confirmed this afternoon that our capital works program is as per budget and I am advised by the Minister for Transport and Works that the revote is as per budget and the cash expenditure is as per budget. That is another of the lines of misinformation that were being fed to the community. If the Leader of the Opposition had wanted to check any of these facts, he could have raised any of the issues during question time on the 3 sitting days last week. But, no, the opposition is not interested in the facts; facts muck up a good story as far as they are concerned. And, yes, Mr Speaker, we can predict a difficult budget.

Mr Speaker, I would like to address a subject that I addressed in an adjournment debate last week as did the Leader of the Opposition. The Leader of the Opposition said:

I continue to be amazed that, in all of the government's comments on future economic boosts for the Northern Territory, it continues to pay no attention to the defence boost we are going to get over the next 10 to 15 years.

Then he spoke about the 2nd Cavalry Regiment, brigades and a number of other things.

Mr Speaker, you would be aware that I addressed a number of these matters recently, but I would like to advise honourable members of the extent to which this government and previous CLP governments have been addressing the issues of defence and working in coordination and cooperation with the federal government since as far back as 1982, when the honourable Leader of the Opposition was still trying to find his way around Millner.

The cooperation between the Northern Territory government and the Commonwealth government over the development of RAAF facilities in the NT is one of the untold stories of intergovernment cooperation, Mr Speaker.

Mr Smith: Who says this?

Mr HATTON: I am saying it.

For about the past 5 years, Commonwealth and NT government officials have been working together, quietly and effectively, to facilitate the planning and orderly development of the RAAF base at Tindal and the wide-ranging and substantial expansion of community facilities which has been necessitated by that development. In August 1982, in response to a request by the then Prime Minister, Mr Fraser, the then Chief Minister, Mr Everingham, offered assistance to the Commonwealth in assessing the feasibility of locating a RAAF fighter squadron at Tindal. Up to that time, Commonwealth thinking had been directed towards a RAAF development in Darwin. In November and December 1982, the Department of the Chief Minister coordinated a study of the economic impact of the construction phase of the RAAF base, based on Defence Department strategic planning for the Tindal development.

In January 1983, the then Acting Chief Minister, Mr Perron, wrote to the Prime Minister proposing the formation of a joint consultative committee involving the Commonwealth and NT governments and the Katherine Town Council. The committee's role was to facilitate a Tindal RAAF Base development study. The Prime Minister agreed to the proposed Joint Consultative Committee and asked the Minister for Defence to implement the proposal. The JCC held its first meeting in Darwin in March 1983. In March 1984, the NT government made a submission to the Commonwealth Public Works Committee hearing on the Tindal project. This submission strongly supported the proposed development. In August 1985, the Commonwealth gave a firm go ahead to the Tindal project in its 1985-86 budget.

In December 1985, the Department of the Chief Minister established a regional office in Katherine to ensure the close coordination of the NT government's infrastructure and community development in the Katherine Tindal area. Planning for the social and community needs of Katherine have increased in importance with the continued development of Tindal and the increase in Katherine's population. These matters fall within the province of the JCC. This body has become more localised in its representation to ensure the harmonious social development and integration of incoming RAAF personnel and new civilian residents to the town. The NT government, in cooperation with Commonwealth agencies, has actively encouraged the participation of Aborigines - I hope the Leader of the Opposition is listening - and identified opportunities for their employment. This has included the establishment of a firm of Aboriginal construction contractors.

The NT government is considering proposals to establish a government centre which will provide services from a single, convenient location. In recognition of the emerging social issues arising from the Tindal development, the NT government is commissioning a comprehensive social planning consultancy to examine these issues in order to assist the planning and delivery of local services.

Mr Speaker, in respect of our future developments, I remind honourable members of what I said in the Assembly in June of last year when I made a statement in respect of the Dibb Report, and I quote from that speech.

Under the Australian Constitution, national defence is a Commonwealth responsibility. However, I consider it important that the Northern Territory government maintain a close interest in defence matters, particularly in the light of the Dibb Report and its important

recommendations affecting the Northern Territory. Accordingly, I have asked my department to monitor developments in the general area of defence policy, as it relates to the Northern Territory, to conduct or arrange further assessments of specific defence issues affecting the Territory and advise on Commonwealth Territory relationships with regard to defence matters.

I said that in June 1986 so now we know where the Leader of the Opposition got his ideas for his election campaign.

Mr Speaker, we did that on 9 July. Mr Dibb briefed the Northern Territory Cabinet on his report. At that meeting, he was told of the government's support for his views on northern defence and its willingness to cooperate with the Commonwealth on their implementation. On 18 August, I wrote to the Minister for Defence, Mr Beazley, urging the earliest possible implementation of the report's recommendations affecting the Northern Territory and pledging the full cooperation of the Northern Territory government. On 14 November, I briefed the then Australian Army Chief, who is now the Chief of the Australian Defence Force, General Gration, on land options for the siting of future army bases and training areas in the Top End.

In December 1986 and January 1987, Territory government departments and agencies provided detailed information, as requested by the Strategic Defence Study Centre of the Australian National University. The information supplemented data already collected by the centre's staff during field trips in the Territory in 1986. The centre was commissioned by the Northern Territory government in November 1985 to undertake a fully comprehensive study on the subject of the Territory in the defence of Australia. On 3 March 1987, the Minister for Defence announced that the 2nd Cavalry Regiment, presently based at Holsworthy, NSW, would be relocated to the Darwin area by 1992. He also announced that, shortly the Australian Defence Forces would undertake detailed studies on the build up of army units in the Top End to brigade strength.

Those studies are under way. We have been participating in them even as we have been working consistently with the armed forces and the Department of Defence since the Dibb Report was released, first, to encourage the implementation of that report into the White Paper, which is a critically important role and, secondly, to work with the Department of Defence on the early planning for the bringing in of the 2nd Cavalry Regiment. We are well advanced. We did not make a song and dance about it because I made the point quite clearly in a ministerial statement last June. After all, Mr Speaker, it is a normal and natural function of government to pick up such matters and work to promote them as proper intergovernmental relations dictate, and we have been doing that.

Mr Speaker, you will be aware of recent reports that we have pressed ahead for a further Joint Consultative Committee to be established to enable defence matters to be considered properly in an equally successful exercise in Darwin and to promote the movement of that brigade to the Darwin area.

Whilst I am encouraged, I am somewhat amazed to hear the Leader of the Opposition talk positively on an issue concerning the defence of the realm. The record of his party on defence issues has been truly woeful for as long as we can remember. The majority of his party spokesmen do not want the war planes of our major ally to land in Darwin for refuelling. They would adopt policies designed to prevent US Navy visits to Darwin and they would close down the vital joint defence facilities at Pine Gap. I understand that all of

these policies are heartily supported by the endorsed ALP candidate for the next election to the House of Representatives. In sum, the Territory ALP posture on defence veers between the extremes of throwing flowers and waving a white flag. In marked contrast, the CLP has a long and proud record of promoting the defence of the Northern Territory and strengthening military ties with our allies. The Alice Springs to Darwin railway has immensely important strategic defence implications. When the future of US military bases in the Philippines appeared to be under threat during the last weeks of the Marcos regime, this government offered the NT as a possible relocation site. We have supported Pine Gap and welcome visits by American warships and planes.

The CLP has an overwhelming record on the issue of defence and I am pleased to report that the energetic and consistent advocacy of strengthened northern defences has continued with my own administration. I have enthusiastically welcomed the Dibb Report which has placed a proper emphasis on the importance of the north in the defence of Australia. Members will recall that I made a full statement on the subject in the Assembly during the last session. I have written to both the Prime Minister and the Minister for Defence to offer the full support and cooperation of my government in the development of this policy in relation to the NT. The White Paper on defence has now been published and the Commonwealth has formally announced plans for the relocation of 2 cavalry regiments to Darwin by 1992. Commonwealth departments can proceed with detailed planning. Consequently, I am writing to the Minister for Defence to offer constructive suggestions on positive forms of cooperation between our 2 governments in this sphere.

This is not an area about which I saw fit to bang gongs and posture in public. Defence, after all, is not a subject over which the NT has a constitutional responsibility. Rather, we have been the quiet achievers. We are in agreement with the thrust of the Commonwealth White Paper on defence. We have made clear our support, encouraged its implementation and, most importantly, are seeking to ensure that the Territory economy gains maximum advantage from the developments.

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

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

Motion agreed to.

Mr HATTON (Chief Minister): We are in agreement with the thrust of the Commonwealth White Paper on defence. We have made clear our support, encouraged its implementation and, most importantly, are seeking to ensure the Territory economy gains maximum advantage from the development.

The opposition latched on to the defence issue purely as an opportunistic election ploy. It did not do it any good at the polls and it will not do it any good now. Territorians know whom to trust when it comes to concern over defence. I have made available to the Assembly, chapter and verse, the endeavours of successive CLP governments to promote defence issues. I would be happy to lend the Leader of the Opposition a postage stamp from my own wallet, the back of which should provide ample space in which to record the corresponding ALP defence policy before the recent election campaign.

Mr Bell: Your white adviser wrote those lines, Steve. They are not original. Author, author!

Mr HATTON: Mr Speaker, with that I again thank honourable members for their contributions to this debate. I am sure that the totality of debate on the Address-in-Reply will outline a comprehensive and detailed program of activities designed to address the social and economic needs of the Northern Territory through the period of this Assembly and on towards the year 2000. Those speeches, along with the many plans we indicated during the election campaign, form a blueprint that will lead the Territory into a bright future. As I said in my opening remarks, we are faced with far more difficult problems than our predecessors were and we have far less resources with which to address them. It is true that we will need to rely on the resources of the Northern Territory and the resourcefulness of its people. We do not need carping knockers in that process. We invite the opposition to join us cooperatively in dealing with what will be difficult times for government. The difficulties the government may face in its program of reducing the cost of government to the community will in no way act as a deterrent to the opening up of the potential of the Northern Territory.

I trust that we can resolve some of the very serious issues that we must address in dealing with Aboriginal Territorians. Now that the member for Arafura is back in the Assembly, I would like to make 1 comment. It is not intended to be any more than a constructive comment. I seriously believe that Aboriginal Territorians are and should be fully participating citizens of the Northern Territory in all respects. I note that Aboriginal Territorians have the right to vote and to participate in the formation of government in the Northern Territory and, therefore, have a voice in the law-making of the Northern Territory. I think that, in the long-term development of the Northern Territory, it is important for Aboriginal Territorians to recognise their responsibility to be bound by the laws of the Northern Territory in the same way as other Territorians, and to stop once and for all spreading the nonsensical story that this government is going to take away from Aboriginal people the freehold titles to land that they already have. It is simply a falsehood to make that allegation. I refer to it because the member for Arafura commented on it in his speech to the Address-in-Reply. I know that story was being spread during the election campaign and nothing can do more damage to our ability to bring communities together than to continue that misinformation.

Honourable members know that we have brought out an option paper in relation to land rights after statehood. We do not have a fixed position on that. We do want to participate through direct consultation with the Aboriginal people themselves. We hope that we can do that in an honest bipartisan way which not only addresses very important and serious issues which relate to statehood, but which, in the end, will create a cohesive Northern Territory which will hopefully be a society where we can all live together with some degree of mutual respect.

Motion agreed to.

Mr SPEAKER: Honourable members, I intend to present the Address-in-Reply to His Honour the Administrator at Government House at 4.30 pm on Thursday 7 May, and I invite all honourable members to accompany me at that time.

ADJOURNMENT

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

Mr BELL (MacDonnell): Mr Speaker, there are a couple of matters I wish to raise in this evening's debate. Before I start on the issues I wish to address at greater length, I will respond to the comments made by the Minister for Health and Community Services in his extraordinarily uncharitable and curmudgeonly response to the maiden speech of the member for Ararua.

I know that the member for Nhulunbuy has already dealt with him fairly severely in that regard, but I would just like to draw to the minister's attention the appalling performance of the Minister for Industries and Development. I certainly heard it over the loudspeaker. The minister was talking about the development of the goat industry and the issues that arise from that. He said 'Hang on, that does not scan. I will try that paragraph again'. He went on like that and it sounded just as bad the second time as it did the first. I am not chipping the Minister for Industries and Development. I just want to draw to the attention of his colleagues that what is sauce for the goose is sauce for the gander. I get sick and tired of the view of government members that white advisers are okay for whitefellows but no good for blackfellows.

The next issue I wish to speak about in this evening's adjournment debate arises from the Northern Territory Cattlemen's Association annual general meeting. I spent Saturday morning at the association's annual general meeting. As I said in my speech to the Address-in-Reply, being particularly keen to represent the interests of all the people in my electorate, I regard it as my duty to take an interest in organisations such as the Northern Territory Cattlemen's Association and I want to place on record my concern that it is fairly difficult to do so. As the executive director said: 'Oh well, Neil, if you feel you will be comfortable, you are most welcome to come along'. I certainly went along and I will say that I was made to feel very comfortable and I appreciated the opportunity to be there. I learned a great deal about the variety of issues that are of concern to the pastoral industry, and one that I particularly wish to comment on this evening is that of finding export markets for Territory beef.

The Treasurer was not there but the Chief Minister and the Minister for Industries and Development were there. No doubt, they will recall the most informative contribution given by Mr Bob Coombs, the Executive Director of the Cattle Council of Australia. I was most interested in his concerns about the need to get Australian beef into Japan and his view that Australia was a little fish in a big pond. That was not the metaphor he used when he was talking about the relationships between the United States and Japan and the trade war between those countries which has been occupying headlines in the financial sections of newspapers and even in the readable sections.

He said that Australia was a little bit like an ant caught between 2 giant sumo wrestlers, which probably represents the situation in dollar terms of world trade. He referred also to the prospect and the hope that South Korea would buy more Australian beef. He believed that this might be the area in which export opportunities for Territory beef would be enhanced. He also referred to the European Economic Community diminishing its lakes of wine and mountains of butter. What do they have of beef? It is probably mountains too. If Europe ceases to dump as much subsidised beef on world markets, that may very well open up windows for Territory beef as part of the Australian

beef industry. Those contributions were interesting, as were his comments about computer-aided livestock marketing and the more contentious issues of growth promoters and the brucellosis and tuberculosis eradication programs.

Various other comments were made to the annual general meeting, including some from the Minister for Industries and Development and the Chief Minister as well as office-holders of the association. My particular concern, apart from the general interest I had in attending the meeting to find out about the association's concerns, was one which I want to get across to the government members in this Assembly, to the association itself and to the producers in my electorate.

The fact is that the association has a very political tone about it. It is very difficult for a Labor politician such as myself to pass off as if unnoticed certain comments in the president's report - for example, quite ill-considered judgments about the Commonwealth government. In particular, the tone of the section in the president's report which is headed 'Finance' is that of a politician taking a political angle, and that concerns me. It is not what I expect of an industry organisation.

Mr Perron: Was it accurate though?

Mr BELL: I will pick up the comment from the Minister for Industries and Development because I am sure that he will believe it was accurate. I do not believe it was. I believe that it was singularly partisan. It gave no credit to the genuine attempts and the successes that the federal Labor government has had in that complex fiscal arena. The president of the association referred to the Hawke government's current account deficit as a measure of 'how much Australia is living beyond its means'. He said that it had 'skyrocketed from \$6600m or 3.8% of gross domestic production in 1983 to a massive \$13 800m of GDP in 1986'. He went on: 'Commonwealth unemployment over the past 3 years has increased by a massive 29 000 people'. Why Commonwealth unemployment? Why not unemployment in the states as well? The Leader of the Opposition has mentioned the huge amount of unemployment in Queensland and I believe the Chief Minister has remarked on it as well. But the President of the Cattlemen's Association has chosen to highlight, in a fairly severe way, only the shortcomings of the federal Labor government.

I respect his political views but they must be seen as political views. There is no mention, for example, of the increased value that the devaluation of the dollar gave to beef exports. There is no question of taking a balanced view of the fiscal policies of the Commonwealth government.

That bothers me, but that is not my point. My point is that, having spent a large section of his speech in bucketing the federal government, we then listened to comments from the Executive Director of the Cattle Council of Australia. The Chief Minister and the Minister for Industries and Development will recall, when Mr Bob Coombs was talking about the potentially lucrative Japanese market, who it was that the Cattle Council of Australia was hoping would intercede on behalf of the Territory beef industry. Did it say that it hoped the Chief Minister of the Northern Territory would? No! The Executive Director of the Cattle Council of Australia said that it was hoping the Prime Minister would intercede on its behalf. I cannot imagine the Prime Minister turning round to intercede on behalf of an industry whose spokesmen take that strong a political line in what is supposed to be a speech canvassing industry issues. The only chance that the cattle industry has of obtaining representations by the Prime Minister on its behalf is that his attention may not have been drawn to the fact that that sort of diatribe had been directed against him and his government.

The other issue that I wanted to raise this evening relates to a responsibility of the Treasurer, and I refer to the Racing and Gaming and Liquor Commissions. Honourable members will recall that the opposition opposed the incorporation of the Liquor Commission with the Racing and Gaming Commission when legislation was passed through this Assembly some time last year. We opposed that particular rationalisation. I believe this is a particularly good example of the correctness of our stance. I refer to the question of the confiscation of vehicles in dry areas.

Mr Speaker, I have received representations from various people because they have had their vehicles confiscated in dry areas in my electorate for offences therein. I am on public record as saying that I believe that the punishment should fit the crime. The plain fact of the matter is that, for relatively small amounts of booze being carted into restricted areas, people are effectively receiving fines of around \$20 000, depending on the value of the vehicles that are forfeited.

There was a recent case, for example, of 2 men who came up from Victoria with a ute valued at about \$5000. They deliberately set about running grog and they were caught between Hermannsburg and Areyonga. They were caught and had their vehicle forfeited. I have absolutely no sympathy for them. However, there are many other cases where the matter is not clear cut. The opposition has said frequently in this Assembly that responsibility for decisions about confiscations should rest with the courts, as was the situation prior to the amendments in passed 1981.

A particular case bothered me and I will refer to it at greater length at some stage. Before the amalgamation of the Liquor Commission and the Racing and Gaming Commission, it was still possible to get the Chairman of the Liquor Commission to decide sensibly about confiscations. Subsequently, there was some concern that the Liquor Commissioner did not have the power to return vehicles confiscated under the act, but it appears that he does.

I would like to deal at greater length with this but, at the moment, I will simply flag a situation in respect of a Mazda bus at Santa Teresa that was the subject of correspondence to and articles in the local paper in Alice Springs. This community bus was confiscated and the Chairman of the Liquor Commission said that the vehicle would not be returned and that it would be disposed of by auction. People from the Santa Teresa community, including Brother Cletus Reid, wrote to the local paper and, lo and behold, we found that a spokesman for the minister responsible for the Liquor Commission said the bus was in good working order and was ready to be handed over immediately. He said that there was no question that the bus was carrying liquor at the time it was confiscated. The spokesman said, however, it was realised that many hardships were endured by the community without the bus and the decision was made to hand it back.

I am pleased that the minister has returned to the Chamber. I refer him to a letter from the commission dated 15 July 1986 re the recovery of Mazda TZ3500 bus confiscated under section 96 of the Liquor Act 1978. If he would like to see that, he would be most welcome.

Mr HATTON (Chief Minister): Mr Speaker, tonight, I would like to inform this Assembly of some notable achievements by a group of very hard working and dedicated young Territorians. These people are our young Territory swimmers who recently returned from the Australian Age Titles in Adelaide. I know almost all of these young swimmers personally. I have had the opportunity, over a number of years, to teach some of them to swim and to coach others at

different times. I have watched them grow and develop as swimmers in the Northern Territory. They are all people of whom the Northern Territory can be very proud.

First amongst these is Megan Fanning who is now firmly on the road to the national selection trials for next year's Shell Olympic Games because of her brilliant performances in Adelaide. Megan is a very talented young Territorian and I believe honourable members should be made aware briefly of the dedication required to bring out that talent. At the height of her training program, Megan swims 60 km to 70 km per week. Starting before school every morning, she trains for 1½ hours. In the evening, she does half an hour of gym work followed by at least 2 hours in the pool. It takes a special kind of commitment to sporting achievement for 15-year-old girl to undergo such a rigorous training program and she has been doing similar programs for quite a number of years.

Megan has her sights set on studying law and I am sure the dedication and determination which she has applied to her swimming will give her the qualities necessary to follow through that goal. Her father, Peter, is already undertaking legal studies at the University College of the Northern Territory and I hope Megan will choose to take up her studies at that same institution.

In 1985, the Lendlease Foundation brought representatives of the Australian Institute of Sport to the Territory to take selected athletes through their paces. As a result of that visit, Megan was invited to attend the AIS late in 1985 even though she was, at that time, only 13 years of age. She trained at the institute again last year when, I understand, she was still the youngest swimmer at the AIS. She returned late in November to finish Years 11 and 12 in the Territory. That speaks volumes for the standard of education that is provided in the Northern Territory rather than some of the hype we hear about our Territory education standards.

This year, Megan has continued to develop as a champion athlete. In fact, in the 5 weeks before the Adelaide titles, she was able to cut 2 seconds off her 200 m medley and freestyle times under the guidance of her coach, Greg Bush, at Nightcliff pool. When one considers that championships are won and lost by mere 100ths of a second, that is quite an improvement in just 5 weeks.

In Adelaide, she took the silver medal in the 15-16 years 200 m medley in a time of 2.05.07. Her performance makes her the fourth fastest female swimmer over that distance in Australia, regardless of age. I am informed that the 3 swimmers who have better times are all older than she is so Megan has plenty of opportunity to improve her standards even further. Megan is now just 1.8 seconds short of the Australian record for the 200 m, and she intends to be up to that mark in the next 12 months. Her switch to 200 m events this year also paid dividends in her old speciality, the 100 m races, because she managed a personal best of 59.54 seconds over the shorter distance in Adelaide as well.

Mr Speaker, Megan is a credit to herself, her parents, Peter and Denise, and her coach, Greg Bush. Already she holds virtually every title in her age group in the Territory and most of the open titles as well, and she now has the opportunity in February next year for selection to compete in the ultimate sporting arena, the Olympic Games. I understand that Graham McGufficke is the only Territory swimmer to have won a medal at a Commonwealth or Olympic Games, winning gold in the men's 4 by 200 m freestyle relay at the Brisbane

Commonwealth Games. It would be a matter of great pride for Territorians if Megan Fanning were selected to represent Australia at next year's Olympic Games and then went on to bring home glory for her country, her Territory, her family and herself. I am sure honourable members will join me in wishing her well in her quest.

Like Megan, many of the other Territorians who competed in Adelaide are members of the Nightcliff Swimming Club. In fact, 7 of the 10 young NT athletes who went to the age titles train at Nightcliff Swimming Pool. I have a soft spot for the Nightcliff Swimming Club, having coached there myself for some time, and it happens to be in the best electorate in the Northern Territory as well.

The Territory team consisted of Megan, Karen Pile, Simone Jackson, Janine Kuhl, Scott Winter, Scott Bretherton, Auki Henry and Ian Vander-Wal. Two other swimmers, Joanne Cutts and Natasha Townsend, went to Adelaide for the experience of national competition. Scott Bretherton and Auki Henry are considered to be the most talented 12-year-old swimmers to emerge in the Territory for many years, and Ian Vander-Wal, who is coached by Fred Wilson at Parap pool, distinguished himself at the Australian Age Championships in Adelaide by earning a silver medal in the 100 m freestyle.

Mr Speaker, in conclusion on this matter, I wish to say that the Territory has good reason to be proud of the quality of its young sportsmen and sportswomen, but they can only achieve their potential by competing against athletes of national calibre. The CLP government recognises this requirement and generously pays half the air fares of Territory competitors selected for major competitions interstate. From my own experience in sporting clubs, I know that there are many people behind the scenes who give their time and money to help these young competitors.

I believe that honourable members of this Assembly should recognise their work as a real contribution to the Territory's future through our young people. Often these young people do not get the credit or publicity they deserve. They are not in the high-flown sports that catch the newspaper headlines. They are not at the speedways or in Aussie Rules teams, Rugby League teams or the glamorous spectator sports. They are competing in sports that, in many respects, require far more dedication and commitment to the task, often for little or no reward. I think they deserve the commendation of everybody here. Certainly, I commend them and I respect them for the amount of effort they put in. They are a credit to the Territory and an object lesson to those who would criticise the youth of today. There are many youths like them in many areas of endeavour, and we should recognise those people rather than carp continuously on those in our young community who are a cause of concern to us all.

Mrs PADGHAM-PURICH (Koolpinyah): Mr Deputy Speaker, I would like to say at the outset that I may finally have won over the Minister for Industries and Development. He seems to be talking favourably about goats and the goat industry. My compliments to the minister: keep it up.

Mr Perron: It's just goats, goats, goats from now on.

Mrs PADGHAM-PURICH: The honourable minister can see now that if he cannot beat me he had better join me, and he has done it in a most interesting way.

Mr Deputy Speaker, this afternoon I will be using extensive notes as an aide-memoire. I am rather concerned about the possible introduction into the

House of Representatives of further ID card legislation which will come before the Senate in the future. What I am about to talk about will affect the cattle industry in the Northern Territory most deleteriously.

It is believed that this legislation could be introduced by our federal colleagues and it will work to the detriment of the cattle industry and, in fact, the whole stock industry in the Northern Territory. Some misguided people think that the introduction of an identity card will overcome tax evasion and welfare payment rip-offs, but I do not think it will. It will work to our detriment in the Northern Territory and will certainly have serious implications for farmers here. The ID card will have to be carried and produced for financial transactions, which will mean that any stock sold in the Northern Territory cannot be sold without the selling agent sighting the card. The agent will have to check the photograph on the farmer's or pastoralist's card, record his or her number and inform the Australian Taxation Office of the sale and the amount paid. Failure to do so could result in the agent being fined \$20 000. The ID card cannot be presented by another person, such as a stock carrier, on behalf of the farmers or pastoralists selling their stock.

It may be asked how this card will affect stock owners? Under the card system, it seems that only the actual breeder or owner may present his or her animals at a sale. As we have said, the owner must arrive at the sale with his or her card. The procedure, when he or she arrives at the sale venue, will be rather chaotic! The stock will be checked for external parasites, brands will be checked and tail and ear tags will be recorded. The breeder or owner will be checked also against the likeness to a photograph on the ID card and the card number recorded. Presumably, if the animals are passed in, the breeder has to be derecorded.

Mr Deputy Speaker, some stock owners generally sell their stock within their own area and are probably well enough known to their stock agents. But the identification system will prove very inconvenient, particularly for those pastoralists living any distance from towns, as well as engendering a feeling that they are being treated as criminals who are unworthy of trust. It will not be good enough for pastoralists to ring up their agents by telephone and give the ID number unless the agent has previously sighted the card and is satisfied the person he is talking to is the rightful owner of the said card. As a result, it would appear that the pastoralists regularly selling stock through a local outlet may be able to reduce the inconvenience caused by the ID card once the initial hassle has been overcome.

Another problem that many people will encounter in the Top End, especially in the Darwin rural area, is that many beasts are sold privately on farms. Presumably, the vendor will have to inform the Taxation Office in a similar manner to a large pastoralist. If we are selling stock, we will need a stack of forms in order to remit all the details and we will need to equip ourselves with the special machines required to identify the cards' digitised strip. The problem of completing the forms correctly then arises. Many of us have trouble getting our voluntary registration forms correct but, in this case, we have to recognise we may face a \$20 000 fine for any mistakes on this ID form.

To implement the ID card will cost taxpayers about \$1000m and involve employing another 2150 public servants. Estimates indicate that it will cost business \$2000m to comply with the rules, regulations and extra paperwork relating to the card. As the ID card relates to pastoralists and people engaged in primary industry with regard to stock in the Northern Territory, it will be a case of the involvement of desk-bound Johnnies who have no idea

whatsoever how the enterprising and productive section of our populace operates. Should the Australia Card legislation be introduced in the new session of parliament, the unintended consequences of it must be brought to the government's attention, and I will be doing that myself. If not, with all this tripping and toing and froing to abattoirs, ports, brokers and sales, who will be left to run the farm?

Mr Deputy Speaker, in the time left to me, I would like to comment on certain remarks made by the Minister for Tourism in his reply to a question on the crocodile industry. I know something about the crocodile industry and I will hazard a guess that my knowledge could be equal to the minister's if not a bit more extensive.

Mr Smith: You are modest.

Mrs PADGHAM-PURICH: I am not really modest because I don't think the honourable minister knows an awful lot about it. He said that the crocodile industry would soon be organised to develop its own slaughtering facilities, and I am not knocking the crocodile industry or crocodile-slaughtering facilities. I believe this will be a marvellous boon to primary industry in the Northern Territory and will also contribute quite a few dollars to the tourist industry. However, if the abattoir planned for the crocodile industry is to be located near the existing crocodile farm in the Darwin rural area, I would like to draw the minister's attention to the recent development application put to the Rural Planning Authority for an 800 head feed lot in that locality.

There has been violent opposition by residents to this feed lot proposal, so much so that we have been told verbally that the development application will be withdrawn, although we have not seen anything in writing yet. I would hate to see any problems arise from the building of a crocodile slaughtering facility and I believe considerable thought has to be given to its placement. If it is to be placed in the rural area, it could be in the Treasurer's electorate, although the people over there are still coming to me for help and support. I do not know how many of them go to the Treasurer. I do not want to see any hitches with the building of this crocodile abattoir and I urge the minister to advise the industry to take all care with the development application for this facility. I may be corrected, but I believe that the crocodile farm is in an RL1 zone and an abattoir there would be a consent use only in in RL1 zone or, more likely, it could be prohibited..

The minister extolled the virtues of crocodile meat in relation to husbanding our native resources in the form of crocodiles. I also have a personal interest in husbanding native resources in the form of wallabies. I have talked to somebody who is interested in crocodile conservation in the Northern Territory. He has very progressive ideas regarding how animals which are normally protected can, under certain farming and husbandry conditions, be included as exotic meats in our restaurants. With his help, there may be some enthusiasm in certain quarters for husbanding our native resources in the form of wallabies which are not on the protected list so that they can appear in our restaurants for the benefit of our tourist industry.

The minister repeated what I have been saying for some time: the conservation of our native resources in the form of certain fauna can best be carried out if a management program is undertaken for those in the wild at the same time as an enthusiastic form of farming is carried out. Animals in the wild then tend not to be regarded as something to be shot out for sport and their bodies left to rot. They tend to be regarded as having more value and

the true conservationist looks at them with different eyes because a dollar value attaches to them. It could be said that this is a very second-rate way of looking at conservation of our native fauna. I do not care really which way you look at it. The sensible way of approaching the conservation of our native fauna is to put dollar signs on them so that they are available for people to buy and sell and breed. This encourages a true realisation of their value in the general community.

The minister stated that crocodiles caught by the Conservation Commission are given to the farms for breeding. That is probably partly right but, to my knowledge, most of the crocodiles caught by the Conservation Commission are the old rogues that are too old to hunt in an active way and go looking for easy tucker around the fish cleaning areas at wharves and jetties. These are the ones that present problems. They are usually old rogue males. Whilst one male may be used actively in a breeding program on a farm, a whole collection of males will not be of much use in a breeding program. They would just create trouble. However, they could be slaughtered and their skins used. They are of use, but not necessarily in a breeding program.

We have something interesting to look forward to in the development of our crocodile industry. The ANPWS has supported the industry by presenting papers by officers of the Conservation Commission and people contracted by the commission. It is a pity that the ANPWS does not also support Territory control of Kakadu and Uluru National Parks but that is a story for another day.

Mr SETTER (Jingili): Mr Speaker, I thought this evening that I would express my concern regarding what I consider to be the politicisation of the Aboriginal movement in Australia and in the Northern Territory in particular. It has been evidenced over the last day or so by some comments that have been made by the members for Arafura and Arnhem. The Leader of the Opposition smirks away, but let me just quote him. The NT News of 26 April reports him as follows: 'Territory Labor Leader, Terry Smith, yesterday pointed to a new direction in the Aboriginal land rights debate. Mr Smith referred to the growing political organisation of NT Aborigines. He said it was time the land rights debate moved on'. He was addressing a seminar, the Northern Australian Labor Party Forum in Mt Isa. Mr Smith went on to say that 'Northern Territory Aborigines were taking a stronger formal role in the Labor Party through active branches in the party'. I do not have a problem with political party branches in Aboriginal communities at all but I do have a problem with the deliberate manipulation of the Aboriginal movement by any political party.

What really drew this to my attention was comments by journalist Oscar Tamsen in an article in the NT News of 25 April. The headline was 'Aboriginal Advisers Leave Room for Doubt'. Mr Tamsen said:

There is increasing evidence in the Territory that our Aboriginal people are being manipulated by self-styled, so-called advisers. On an increasing number of occasions recently, white or non-full-blood Aborigines have been involved in blatantly directing clanspeople which way they should go, either politically or financially, in their dealings with political or business associates. The pity of it all is that these self-styled do-gooders are not necessarily operating in the best interests of Aborigines but rather in the interests of their own pockets or outside political interests.

I was very concerned about that because, over a long period, we have seen the infiltration of the Aboriginal movement by so-called white advisers. They have enormous influence in the Northern Land Council, the Central Land Council and on the thinking of Aboriginal people generally. We see the Michael Mansells of this world. I understand that he is about one-sixteenth Aboriginal and, with his blue eyes, claims to be an Aboriginal. That is his right but I have a problem with it. It is the Mr Mansells of this world who are having a detrimental effect on the Aboriginal community at large. I really grieve over that because, if this direction is not reversed, in the long term, Aboriginals will pay a heavy price for it. I think it will work to their detriment.

There has already been discussion in this Assembly about Mr Mansell's infamous visit to Libya and the events that occurred there. This morning on national television, I saw Mansell in debate with Hon Clyde Holding, Minister for Aboriginal Affairs. Mr Holding is very concerned and disturbed about Mansell's activities and told him so this morning. It would appear that Mr Holding is doing his best to find a way to get rid of this embarrassing person. And so he should, because Mansell is employed as a legal adviser for Aboriginals in Tasmania and is using his own position to mislead those people. But it does not stop there. We now read in the media that there are other Aboriginals who intend to visit Libya.

Let us have a look at this. An article in the NT News of last Friday or Saturday was headed: 'All Hell Could Break Loose - Activist'. The article quotes Kath Walker as follows:

Aborigines could not be blamed if they responded to a call by the Libyan leader, Col Gadaffi, to stage a revolution for freedom in Australia', an Aboriginal spokeswoman said yesterday. 'Who can blame us if all hell breaks loose?', Aboriginal activist and poet, Mrs Kath Walker, said from her Stradbroke Island home near Brisbane. In a speech to a Pacific peace forum in Tripoli, reported yesterday in Brisbane's Telegraph, Col Gadaffi said Aborigines should join a revolutionary war against imperialists.

Kath Walker, of course, is a well-known Aboriginal activist. She has been stirring the pot in Queensland for years now. In fact, her son was one of the leaders of those terrible marches that occurred in Brisbane about a decade or so ago. We all remember seeing the confrontations that occurred between Aboriginal activists and the police on that occasion. That is what Kath Walker says.

Let us look at the spokesperson for Aboriginal people in Cairns. On 1 May, the NT News reported under the headline, 'More Blacks to Visit Libya': 'The Queensland Aborigines plan to meet Libyan government officials despite the row over Libyan backing for Aboriginal rights. Cairns Aboriginal legal adviser, Mr Terry O'Shane, defended relations with Libya'. Mr O'Shane and a group of other Aboriginal people from the far north of Queensland have said that they also intend to visit Libya with their hand out and seeking some indoctrination.

It is a very interesting name: Terry O'Shane. The question is raised in my mind whether Terry O'Shane is related to Ms Pat O'Shane. I suspect that they may well be brother and sister. Ms Pat O'Shane is currently the head of the New South Wales Department of Aboriginal Affairs.

Mr Smith: That is nonsense. She is a magistrate.

Mr SETTER: She is a magistrate? I stand corrected, Mr Speaker. I will check that point. According to the information that I have, she was the head of the Department of Aboriginal Affairs in New South Wales. Regardless of that, she received wide acclaim when she became Australia's first Aboriginal barrister. Ms O'Shane is the former wife of Mick Miller who happens to come from Cairns in the far north of Queensland. Thus, you see the connection between Terry O'Shane, Ms O'Shane and Mick Miller.

Ms O'Shane has a long history of pro-communist activities. She has been involved with the Soviet front organisation, the Congress of International Cooperation and Disarmament. She was also active in organising protests against visiting American warships and was a delegate to the Nuclear Free Pacific Conference in 1980. In 1977, Ms O'Shane wrote a booklet called 'Law and Disorder Politics - the Police and Civil Liberties' which was published by the Queensland State Committee of the Australian Communist Party. She has also written on a number of occasions for the Communist newspaper, The Tribune, and attended the Labour and Communist Movement Conference in 1980.

Ms O'Shane, like a number of other radical, leftist Aboriginal leaders, holds a high position within the New South Wales government. Indeed, throughout other Labor governments in this country, there are several other people who have been involved in universities with the Aboriginal land rights movement, radical activists, who also now hold responsible positions in Aboriginal affairs in those governments.

Mr Smith: What is wrong with that?

Mr SETTER: I will tell you what is wrong with that. What is wrong with it is that these people are Marxist activists and what your Labor governments are doing is allowing such people to be placed in positions of considerable influence to the long-term detriment of the Aboriginal movement. You cannot tell me that those people will act as conscientious public servants and do their job. They will be using those positions to influence the people with whom they work with their Marxist ideas.

The Australian taxpayer's money is being used to further the Marxist activities of people like Ms O'Shane who, doubtless, is related to Mr Terry O'Shane who stated in Cairns only this week that he and a number of friends - and no doubt Mick Miller, a long-term activist in the Aboriginal movement, is among them - will be visiting Libya for the same reason that Mansell has just visited Libya. If we do not take note of that, then we will pay the price down the line.

Mr Ede: This is the craziest stuff that I've heard for years. It's loony.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The honourable member for Stuart will withdraw that remark.

Mr Ede: Mr Speaker, I unreservedly withdraw.

Mr SETTER: Let us talk about a friend of the member for Stuart. I refer to his colleague, Mr Dodson. We heard about Mr Dodson last week too. He put his foot right in his mouth last week when he aligned himself with Mr Mansell and he very quickly tried to back away from that. In fact, on 30 April, a Ms Rosemary Sullivan wrote to the NT News: 'Media Twisted Dodson's Remarks'. She said: 'An orchestrated campaign has distorted the remarks made by Central Land Council Director, Mr Pat Dodson, about Tasmanian Aboriginal Centre's Libyan connection'.

I have an verbatim extract of the ABC's Territory Extra report of last week. If I can quote from that, Mr Speaker ...

Mr Ede: Quote the lot instead of taking little bits out.

Mr SETTER: Mr Speaker, I have only a few minutes left to me and it is simply not possible to do that. I quote: 'Pat Dodson: "I think Michael is quite correct in what he is saying"'. Further on: 'And I suppose we have indicated in the past already that what Michael Mansell has done is the kind of thing that Aboriginal people will be forced to do. If Libya has indicated a sense of support, a sense of solidarity with a cause and has got money that can be better used by us for the assistance that we need, it is going to be a serious option that we cannot afford not to consider'. So said Mr Dodson.

Mr Speaker, let me just go on to something else. Recently, we have heard Mr Yunupingu talking about a separate state in the Northern Territory. He said in the Sunday Territorian of 3 May:

Our message is still not being heard clearly and understood by the people of Australia: that we are suffering as the people in South Africa are suffering. Why don't people listen? The reason is that, in South Africa, there are guns and violence and that makes people listen. The Australian government supports the struggle of black people in South Africa but ignores us because we suffer quietly. What are they saying to us? Are they saying they only take notice of people with guns?

Mr Yunupingu tried to back away from that in the newspaper this afternoon.

Let me tell you, Mr Speaker, about something that was said some time ago. The idea is not new at all because, in 1981, in the book entitled 'Identity' available through Communist bookshops, Dr H.C. (Nugget) Coombs, who headed a group called the Aboriginal Treaty Committee, said: 'We decided to work for a treaty between your people and the Australian government which would say, for the first time, that you have been fighting for almost 200 years'.

Mr McCARTHY (Victoria River): Mr Speaker, I would like to speak about a matter that I have raised in the Assembly before. I refer to the presence of bombs on the Whatleys' farm at Tortilla Flats. There are plenty of them there; they are finding more bombs there by the week.

The presence of live ordinance on the Whatleys' property at Tortilla first came to my notice during 1984 or early 1985. At the time, I raised it with the then Minister for Lands and the then Chief Minister and sought their support in getting some action from the Minister for Defence to whom the Whatleys had been writing for some years. Certainly, action was taken at that time by the Chief Minister and by the then Minister for Lands. The Whatleys are the largest rice growers in the Territory and they do a very good job. They purchased the property 10 years ago from a Mr Wilkes who had purchased it from the federal government. It was sold to Mr Wilkes as a rice property. In 1986, the Whatleys won the award for the best crop in the last growing season.

The presence of bombs on the property has been causing concern for many years to the family and to people who work on that farm full time or part time. Often, the Whatleys have had to bring in heavy machinery, either harvesting machinery or graders, to clear areas of the property. The danger of hitting one of these very large bombs is obvious. The bombs can be anything from quite small ordinance up to about 225 lb. The most common that

they have been finding recently is 60 lb. I do not know if you have ever seen the crater that such a bomb leaves when it is exploded, Mr Speaker, but it is quite devastating. It leaves a crater that is probably 6 ft or 8 ft deep and twice as wide.

The first correspondence that I have from the Whatleys to the Minister for Defence is dated in 1984-85. The first response that the Whatleys had from the Minister for Defence was only recently. The only excuse offered in the first paragraph of that letter was that this situation dates back to World War 2 and it takes a long time to research information dating back that far. The response came about after a number of submissions from Senator Kilgariff and Hon Paul Everingham who took the matter up on behalf of the Whatleys at my prompting. The Minister for Defence came back with the response that it had taken that long to research the information.

Mr Speaker, the property, Prague, at Tortilla comprises 4000 ha of land. A fair portion of that is reasonable land for the growing of crops, in particular rice. The only area on that property that is marked as a bombing range covers 100 ha - 100 ha out of 4000 ha. I do not know whether you can see this paper, Mr Speaker, but that is a drawing of the property and the little dot represents the bombing area. It is delineated by a number of signs that the Department of Defence repaint regularly and that is the only protection people have. That is the only means by which people can become aware that they are actually on a bombing range where there is live ordinance which is very temperamental and can go off at the drop of a pin. That fact was stated in a letter from which I will read a few excerpts later. People could be walking across that property at night and not even realise that they were on a bombing range and could come to quite a gruesome end.

The Minister for Defence has told the Whatleys that to rid their property of this live ordinance is too costly. 'The land is not worth it', he says. I will quote from a letter from Mr Beazley:

It was clearly recognised by all parties at the time that no amount of searching could provide a guarantee that every item of UXO would be found. Indeed, this is still the situation today in any search that might be contemplated, whatever the location and whatever the circumstances.

Mr Speaker, that really surprises me, because I understood that the Department of Defence was clearing a portion of Leanyer Swamp to create a dumping area for the people of Darwin. Is the Minister for Defence trying to tell us that, if we go to dump rubbish at the new tip at Leanyer, we are in danger of being blown sky high? Is that what he is trying to say, because that is what he says in this letter. He says that it is impossible to clear the land effectively.

Mr Smith: It is because they want to cultivate it.

Mr McCARTHY: I cannot imagine how a dump can be run at Leanyer without cultivating the soil. There are bulldozers there, digging many metres into the ground. To grow rice, it is only necessary to cultivate to a depth of a few centimetres.

Mr Deputy Speaker, there is no doubt at all that the Minister for Defence speaks with a forked tongue. As I said before, the Minister for Defence said to a reporter, I think it was on the 7.30 Report, that the Whatleys were fully aware of what they were buying when they purchased the property. He said also

that there was a caveat on the lease indicating that the property was covered with bombs. In fact, there is no such caveat. There is a caveat indicating that there is an area of 100 ha that is a danger to life and limb if you actually go on it. All the department is prepared to do is put up a number of signs. There is no fencing. Cattle can go on there and be blown sky high. Already the Whatleys have lost a very valuable animal which fell into one of the craters. It died of thirst and hunger in one of the bomb craters which was left by the Department of Defence when its officers exploded a 60 lb bomb recently. To my way of thinking, that is irresponsible of that department, and that is the nicest way I can describe that behaviour.

Mr Wilkes, the original owner of the property, was not even aware that there was ordinance outside that 100 ha plot. The Minister for Defence said in his letter, 'I note that the main target area forms a considerable and possibly key segment of the homestead area you plan for rice cultivation in the future'. That is ludicrous. Mr Beazley, the Minister for Defence knows that it is ludicrous. The Whatleys told the minister that, if he would fence that piece of land forever so that their cattle did not go on it and there was no danger of friends or foes going there and being blown sky high, they would be delighted.

The minister went on to say: 'It is again emphasised that any attempt to plough within the signposted area is fraught with danger and in no circumstances should it be contemplated'. Mr Deputy Speaker, the Whatleys have never contemplated ploughing in that particular part of their property. They are not stupid; they are sensible Territorians. They have a young, growing family and they have grandchildren from their eldest son. They are not about to see any member of their family killed as a result of going into that very dangerous part of their property.

The Minister for Defence went on to say that he could possibly clear the land to a depth suitable for rice cultivation. The bombs have been rising out of the ground every year. They actually come up out of the ground and can go back into the ground. I do not know if members have witnessed this phenomenon but, with the water underneath them, the bombs have created a tunnel. It has been explained to me by a man from the Department of Defence who knew what he was talking about. These things go under the ground. They can create tunnels and they rise up in the wet season and actually go back down the hole again in the Dry. The bombs rise and sink depending on the amount of moisture in the ground. According to Mr Beazley, if they clear for rice there is no guarantee that they will get them all anyway. After the ground has been cleared, a bomb could rise up from deeper in the ground and, if the land is ploughed in the following year, somebody could be blown sky high.

Jeannie Whatley, the 16-year-old daughter of the Whatleys, began to write a letter which was given to me by her parents. It was written to the Minister for Defence. I will read the last paragraph.

I do hope that this letter will change your personal views and that you will look into this matter more deeply. I hope that we can come to some agreement between the government and my family. I pray that the next time that I write to you I will be writing to say thank you.

That was the last paragraph of the letter. I will read the paragraph before it.

However, the facts that are stated in this letter are my own views. This letter started out as an English prose for my pre-matric

subject, but I felt so strongly about it that I decided to actually send it. In recent years, I have found 10 bombs in the paddock opposite the bombing range. I found them when my horse kicked them, so the 10 times that my horse kicked them was 10 times that I could have been blown up. The RAAF says that the bombs are very temperamental, which means that the bombs can be hit with a hammer one day and the next day all you have to do is drop a needle on it and boom, that's the end of you.

Mr Deputy Speaker, I went down to Prague when 1 of the 60 lb bombs was found recently. The press were there. Foolishly, we did not go down to have a look at the bomb before the RAAF arrived. Once they looked at it, they would not let us within 1 km of that bomb. They said that even movement of a person walking near it could explode it. The movement of a camera could explode that bomb if it were temperamental enough. The bombs deteriorate over time with rust and corrosion and can explode. They would not let us anywhere near it but, unfortunately, those bombs have been turning up on a regular basis, popping out of the ground, in paddocks where people have been moving about their business for years. They know the area like the backs of their hands and, as Jeannie Whatley said, they have found 10 bombs of up to 225 lb there in the last few weeks. I can vouch for the RAAF's concern because I have been there and I have seen it. They would not even let the press have a copy of the photograph they took.

Mr Ede: Was it one of ours?

Mr McCARTHY: We don't know. They have found bombs down there that they could not identify.

Mr Deputy Speaker, we do not have a lot of land to play with for cropping in the Northern Territory. This is a valuable piece of land at Tortilla. The Whatleys bought it 10 years ago as a family concern, to grow rice and as something to leave to their children. They bought it from a man who had owned it for only a few years and who had bought it from the federal government. They were told that it had been cleared of ordinance. They knew that there was a 100 ha bombing range in one part of the property that they could not use and they had no ambition ever to use that piece of land. They would be quite happy if somebody would cut it off, bury it, do whatever with that piece of land.

The Whatleys only wish to have a property that they can pass on to their children and a property on which the children can do a day's work without the possibility of being blown up. Mr Beazley indicated in his letter that the property was not worth the expense of clearing the land of ordinance. Jeannie Whatley said in her letter to the minister:

On the 7.30 Report, you said that there was a caveat on our lease. There is nothing of that nature stated on the lease. I don't think that you looked deeply enough into the situation before you spoke publicly on the television. When I watched the program, I thought that you were trying to get the taxpayers upset at the thought of paying to clear our property of bombs. You stated that, if the RAAF did clean the property of bombs, there would still be a possibility of unexploded ordinance lying dormant under the ground. This implies that there is no use in clearing the property in the first place.

As I said, Mr Deputy Speaker, do the residents of Darwin, next time they walk out to the dump ...

Mr Smith: It is not on the dump site.

Mr MCCARTHY: As I understood it, the Department of Defence cleared the dump site out there and gave a guarantee that nobody would be blown up when they had finished. Do the people of Darwin have to face what the people of Tortilla are facing right now? If so, it would indicate to me what I've always believed: that the federal government does not give a damn for Territorians.

Mr TIPILOURA (Arafura): Mr Deputy Speaker, I rise to bring to the attention of the Assembly a matter that has been of serious concern in my electorate for some time: the lack of cyclone shelters. I would like to say right at the beginning, for the benefit of the member for Wanguri, that what I am about to say has been written for me, on my instructions, by my electorate secretary, Bob Collins. There are 2 reasons for this: firstly, I told him to do so and, secondly, that is what I employ him for. I will do a deal with the member for Wanguri. When the government gets rid of the speech writers, press secretaries and the ministerial staff who work with him and other ministers, I will get rid of my staff.

The problem of cyclone shelters is certainly not confined to the community of Nguu, but I will use that community's experience as an example of the problem that it and other communities in my electorate are facing by using information contained in the letter I wrote on behalf of the Nguu Council to the then Minister for Community Development, Mr Coulter, on 17 April 1986.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Nguu is a big community of over 1200 people. The lack of a facility for public safety in the event of cyclones - which are not rare event - is a situation that would not be tolerated elsewhere in Australia. It is not that the government is unaware of the situation. It has been talking about doing something about it for at least the past 10 years. At present, there are no suitable buildings built to cyclone standard at Nguu which are available for use as public shelters. For example, the store, the restaurant and so on are so fully utilised with stocks and machinery that it is not possible to use them for any other purpose.

The facts are as follows: sufficient shelters are not available; cyclone drills in communities have shown that a considerable amount of family distress is caused through too many people trying to crowd into scarce facilities; and, during the cyclone watch period, there is a very low level of community confidence, with our people knowing there are no decent buildings to provide them with real safety. The fact that lives have not been lost in the past has nothing to do with good management but simply good luck. If something is not done about it soon, loss of life is something that regrettably will happen one day. There has been recently a terrible tragedy in Western Australia. It cost the lives of 2 young boys. Quite rightly, everyone, from politicians of all parties to union officials, is talking about the event, about inquiries and royal commissions into poor working conditions and practices which appear to have led to those deaths. I hope that we will not be having debates here in the near future to discuss what should have been done to prevent loss of life in these communities because of the lack of proper facilities for public safety.

Mr Deputy Speaker, everybody knows what needs to be done. I would like to ask the government again to address seriously the issue of providing these

much-needed facilities, either by constructing new multipurpose buildings or possibly by upgrading suitable existing buildings to cyclone standard.

Mr SMITH (Opposition Leader): Mr Speaker, I must begin by informing the Chief Minister that the record he claimed this morning for the Work Health Authority in fact belongs to the Victorians. I am advised that they managed to have the rules covering their act in place at the time the act was introduced which, I believe, was 30 September last year.

I want to address some remarks made by the members for Wanguri and Jingili. I am constantly amazed, as are other members on this side, as to how white advisers can be okay for you and I or anybody else who has to employ staff but, when it comes to Aboriginal groups, white advisers are something much more sinister. It is an attitude that reveals the unconscious racism that so many people in the Northern Territory feel. It also reveals an assumption that Aboriginal people are simple-minded and easily manipulated.

All I can say is that the people who make those sorts of comments have never met with, talked with or attempted to negotiate with Aboriginal people. My experience, which I must admit is not as wide as that of some of my colleagues, is that Aboriginals are just as tough and demanding in their negotiations and just as clear about what they want as are other members of the community. It is not until we come to that realisation and accept that Aboriginal people have minds of their own, with very definite ideas of where they want to go in this life, how they want to get there and what they expect from governments and their fellow human beings, that we will come to grips in the Northern Territory and the rest of Australia with their legitimate needs and aspirations and with finding a meaningful place for them in Australian and Northern Territory society. Unfortunately, it appears that it will be a very long task indeed reaching that realisation.

However, my main comments tonight are directed at the Treasurer who, again today, has shown his normal, abysmal ignorance of his own portfolios. This time, his abysmal ignorance was revealed in the question time this morning when he attempted to come to grips with the relationship between the Territory Insurance Office and his government. Thanks to the new Hansard methods, I am able to provide some direct and illuminating quotes from the Treasurer's comments this morning. I quote: 'The TIO is responsible to its policy holders'. He is right; I do not disagree with that. 'They are the people that TIO is responsible for. It has to provide a return on their investments. It is the TIO board that does that, not the taxpayer'. That is half correct.

He went on to say: 'The TIO can enter commercial deals, have them investigated and make that commercial decision knowing that it has the full power to do so'. He went on: 'In this particular case, the Territory government did not, in fact, direct the TIO to acquire. It made that commercial decision on information that was provided to it. The board then made the decision'.

Mr Coulter: What is wrong with that?

Mr SMITH: Mr Deputy Speaker, in summary, what he is saying is that the TIO has a right, unfettered by government, to make its own investment decisions. That is what he is saying in those comments.

Mr Coulter: No, it is not.

Mr SMITH: 'Secondly, the Territory government in this case did not direct the TIO to acquire Hungerford Refrigeration'. You can read into that that it did not approve either, because that was the question I asked.

Those are clear and unequivocal statements that have been made by the Treasurer. What is the real position?

Mr Coulter: And you have already agreed that most of them are correct.

Mr SMITH: Section 7, which the honourable minister was quoting this morning and obviously did not understand, reads: 'Except as provided by or under this or any other act, the office, in the performance of its functions and the exercising of its powers, is subject to the written directions of the minister'. Take out the words at the beginning: 'Except as provided by or under this or any other act'. The sense and the meaning of this section is in the last part of that sentence: 'the office is subject to the written directions of the minister'. Far from being independent, far from being responsible to its policy holders and having an unfettered right to make commercial investment decisions, section 7 says that 'the office is subject to the written directions of the minister'. I am not saying whether that is right or wrong. What I am saying is that the minister did not even know what was in his own legislation.

Section 6 deals with the powers of the TIO. Its investment powers are outlined in paragraph (2)(n) which reads: 'The office may invest its money in any investment available to the Public Trustee under the Public Trustee Act and in any investment or investments of a class of investments approved by the minister'. We had the argument advanced to me outside the Assembly by somebody who had spoken to the minister that, because it says 'may', it does not mean 'shall'.

The honourable minister was attempting to imply that there was some discretion. That merely indicates the depth of the minister's ignorance about his act. One needs to read it in context. What it says is that 'the office may invest its money in any investment available to the Public Trustee under the Public Trustee Act and in any investment or investments of a class of investments approved by the minister'. It does not say that it may invest its money anywhere else. That is the only section that talks about the investment of money.

Mr Coulter: This is irrelevant. It was approved by the minister.

Mr SMITH: I am coming to that. I am trying to get rid of that feeble excuse that the minister did not have the temerity to put forward in this Assembly. I am glad that the honourable minister now accepts that that investment decision needs to be approved by the minister.

My question is: which minister, acting in what capacity, approved that particular investment decision for TIO? I am giving him due notice because, obviously, it takes the honourable Treasurer a long time to sort his way through these things. I hope that, when the question is asked tomorrow, the answer is that the investment by the TIO in Hungerford Refrigeration was approved by the minister who, at the time, had responsibility for the TIO. It would be my reading of the legislation that, if it was approved by any other minister, that approval is not valid. Quite clearly, the legislation provides that the approval has to be by the responsible minister.

I have heard outside the Assembly, on ABC radio, that the approving minister was the member for Flynn. As far as I am aware, he has never been the Treasurer. I am not sure whether he has been the Acting Treasurer or not, but that will be an interesting question.

Mr Perron: Acting ministers have full authority.

Mr SMITH: I do not deny that. It will be very interesting to see whether in fact he was the acting minister at the time the matter was approved.

The point is that the whole business has demonstrated the Treasurer's incapacity to know what is in the legislation that he is supposed to control. He has gone from a position this morning where there was no requirement whatsoever for ministerial approval for such an investment decision to an admission, by interjection, that there is a requirement for ministerial approval of such an investment decision. That, of course, is the point that I have been trying to make right through this exercise. It is time that the Treasurer lifted his game or that somebody else was found who could take on such an important and sensitive job.

In an attempt to assist the Treasurer in dealing with further questions on Hungerford Refrigeration, I want to give him advance notice of some questions that we want to ask tomorrow.

Mr Coulter: Why?

Mr SMITH: In the hope that you might be able to give the answers, not give conflicting answers and not embarrass yourself. Those are the primary reasons.

First, is Hungerford Refrigeration Pty Ltd a trustee company for the Hungerford Family Trust?

Secondly, what form is the TIO capital investment in Hungerford Refrigeration Pty Ltd - shares, a debenture or a loan?

Thirdly, what charge, if any, does TIO have over the assets of Sheetmetal Fabrications Pty Ltd?

Fourthly, how has the \$700 000 investment of TIO been disbursed within the Hungerford corporate structure and how has the investment been secured?

Fifthly, how many directors from TIO have been appointed to the Hungerford Refrigeration Pty Ltd board and who are they?

Sixthly, has the charge over assets held by Carrington Confirmers been discharged?

Mr Speaker, I hope that, having had notice of this, the minister will be able to provide us with more meaningful information tomorrow on this particular matter and will avoid putting his foot in his mouth, as he has on so many occasions in respect of this.

In the brief time I have left, I want to speak about something else. Many members will be aware of the plight of a Darwin resident, Mr Barry Markham, who is hiding his car, for which he paid \$8000 to Thrifty Rent-a-Car, because that same company now tells him that it neither sold him the car nor is it legally his. The blame for some of this appears to fall on a company called

Darwin Marketing Services which is the business of a Mr Colin Fitzgerald. However, that does not excuse Thrifty Rent-a-Car nor does it excuse the government's tardiness in tightening up security for members of the public exchanging hard-earned money for cars.

There are a couple of minor things that come out of this. I would like to know why, when the evidence is so clear that Darwin Marketing Services and or Thrifty Rent-a-Car have been operating in the used cars business without a used car licence, there has been no activity from the responsible minister to undertake an investigation into how that occurred and to look at the possibility of prosecution of that particular company. I am advised that, if you trade more than 1 or 2 cars in any 1 year, you require a used motor vehicle dealers' licence. On its own admission, Darwin Marketing Services has traded at least 13 vehicles and, quite clearly, it has no licence. We checked and found that it was operating without a licence. It is quite clearly in contravention of existing Territory legislation and there has not been a peep out of the government as to what it will do about this particular matter.

I would have thought that, embarrassed as the government might be by this particular issue, it would have had the gumption at least to investigate why Darwin Marketing Services or Thrifty Rent-a-Car could be selling cars without a licence and to consider the possibility of taking legal action against them. If it did that and gave it the proper publicity, it would quite clearly dissuade other potential used car dealers who want to operate without a licence from doing the same thing.

The sad thing about the Barry Markham affair is that it is not the first time it has happened. There have been previous examples, including a Katherine couple who - luckily enough - experienced their misfortune just before the election campaign started. They, of course, were reimbursed by the government at that time.

Mr Coulter: Not by the government.

Mr SMITH: They were reimbursed by the government.

Mr Coulter: It was the Motor Traders' Association. That is the second time you have been wrong in the past 8 minutes.

Mr SMITH: They were reimbursed by the Motor Traders' Association which was leant on by the government.

To get back to my point, the advantage that the Motor Traders' Association then had was that it was accepting responsibility on behalf of the licensed motor vehicle dealer. That is the added complication in this case, and it makes it much harder for anybody to do anything about it. I accept that point. The point is that there are legislative models available throughout the rest of Australia. Queensland and South Australia have come to grips with this problem.

It is not good enough for this government to deny the problem. The minister said it is a bit like buying the Sydney Harbour Bridge. It is not like buying the Sydney Harbour Bridge at all. It is a very common transaction which most people in the Northern Territory enter into at one stage or other in their lives. If they go to the Motor Vehicle Registry and obtain a certificate which says that they own the car, they should be able to expect that it is correct. We have to fix up those procedures so that people obtain clear title from the Motor Vehicle Registry. When people come away from

there, they must be secure in the knowledge that the car they have just paid \$8000, \$10 000 or \$30 000 for will not be taken from them as a result of inadequacy in the existing government legislation. In my view, this matter has a very high priority and I pledge the opposition's assistance to the government in any efforts that it may make to formulate some decent legislation which will stop further innocent people in the Northern Territory being ripped off.

Mr COLLINS (Sadadeen): Mr Deputy Speaker, this morning I asked a question of the Minister for Health and Community Services regarding the rumour - if I might use that term - that a CAT scanner will be made available to Alice Springs by his department. I had intended to raise this matter earlier in these sittings but other matters seemed more important last week.

One of my own children was sick a few months ago. The staff of the Alice Springs Hospital were very professional but also very kind and very human in his distress. He had some extremely bad headaches and, at one stage, he became delirious. They wanted him to have tests in case something very untoward was occurring. To have the tests, he would have had to fly to the Flinders Medical Centre. It would have been a fairly costly exercise to have flown him down there. They wanted him to remain lying down, which would have meant his occupying several seats.

One of the things on my agenda for this sittings was to see if I could persuade the government to do something about a CAT scanner for Alice Springs. If the rumour that I heard this morning is correct and the government is already taking steps in that regard, I am very pleased about it. Alice Springs is in the centre of Australia, 1000 miles from anywhere. More and more tourists are visiting and there was an accident on the Stuart Highway just the other day. There are plenty of accidents where head injuries occur and, if the hospital has the ability to perform a CAT scan on a person who has been injured, no doubt lives would be saved. In addition, a great deal of money would be saved through not having to fly people to Adelaide for this particular X-ray technique. Hopefully, our own surgeons would be able to handle such patients, save a great deal of money for the taxpayer, and save lives in the process. I commend the government on the action it has taken in relation to this matter.

This morning, the member for Araluen raised a matter which is of interest to me and which I have raised here before. It concerns the Wills Terrace and Stuart Highway intersection in Alice Springs, the location which was commonly called Kettle's Corner, a name which is slightly off-target since the road has been realigned. I am pleased to see that a submission for lights at that particular corner will be proposed for budget consideration. I would also like to see consideration given to providing coordinated pedestrian lights to the Catholic Church crossing by the Alice Springs Youth Centre. The road runs east-west there and, at certain times of the year, there is a problem with sunlight affecting motorists' vision. Windscreens very easily become dusty in Alice Springs and it can be very difficult to see in the early morning and the late evening. Many people use that crossing, including churchgoers, students of the Catholic primary school on the way to Anzac Oval for their sports, tourists on their way up Anzac Hill, the Aboriginal people from the Charles Creek camp, and the students who attend the youth centre. The town is growing and more and more traffic is using Wills Terrace. I would like the government to take on board my suggestion that pedestrian lights be installed there and that they be coordinated with the traffic lights proposed at the Wills Terrace and Stuart Highway intersection. This would make the crossing safer for our children and all the people who use it.

My last point relates to an occasion of some pleasure. On Friday night, I attended the last of 3 evening sessions of the inaugural Alice Springs Eisteddfod. It included musical items, singing, choirs, instrumental solos and bands. The evening I attended was very pleasant indeed and I heard similar reports of the Wednesday and Thursday night sessions. My wife is very much involved in music in Alice Springs and she told me that people had a great time.

I would like to pay tribute to the people who put the eisteddfod together. Mrs Marlene McNeill had been involved with eisteddfods in Darwin. She knew the ropes and coordinated the whole show very well, ably assisted by Mr Charles Barnard and his wife Barbara, Mrs Caroline Parker, who is a music teacher at the Ross Park Primary School, and Mr David McColl. These people were the nucleus of the group which organised the eisteddfod, but many other people were involved, including students young and old and their teachers. The event gave a great deal of pleasure to many people and I trust that it will continue for many years to come.

I would like to pay tribute also to the adjudicator. I would not dare guess the lady's age, but she was getting on a little. She was a very lively, active and gracious adjudicator indeed. Her name was Miss Elizabeth Todd and she had worked at the Sydney Conservatorium of Music. She had the ability to criticise gently so that, even when being criticised, the people felt encouraged. I know about this because, in a rather cheeky way, I was silly enough to have a sing myself. I had not practised for a fortnight and I would have been very critical of my own efforts. However, the adjudicator's comments left me feeling that I would be game to have another go at some time. She made the children and all the performers feel at home. It was a happy event and I commend all of those involved. I trust that the Eisteddfod in Alice Springs will go on from strength to strength. It is a very musical town and I believe people will rise to the occasion so that, next year, it will be far bigger and better with many more people taking part and giving pleasure to those who come to listen.

Mr EDE (Stuart): Mr Deputy Speaker, I have a very important matter that I wish to canvass in the adjournment tonight so I will not spend much time by dignifying the remarks of the member for Jingili with a full reply tonight. He is quite within his rights to continue to make lunatic remarks in this Assembly. He can continue with his meandering McCarthyist nonsense because, fortunately, he is largely irrelevant.

The matter I would like to raise is one I have some knowledge of. It is raised continually in the press and it concerns white advisers. I think the generic term of 'white adviser' would apply to my own activities for the last 20 years. One of the pleasing developments of the last 7 or 8 years has been the number of Aboriginal people who are taking over positions in organisations. It is unfortunate that, when we see advertisements in newspapers to the effect that 'Aboriginal people are encouraged to apply', people like the member for Jingili jump up and claim that it is racist. On the other hand, when a non-Aboriginal person is appointed, in spite of the wishes of the Aboriginal organisation to have an Aboriginal person in the position, that person suddenly becomes a white adviser and an object of derision.

Mr Deputy Speaker, I am quite proud of the fact that, in the 2 Aboriginal organisations for which I was chief executive officer, I was able to train Aboriginal people to take my place. After all these years, both of those Aboriginal people are still the chief executive officers of those

organisations and they have gone from strength to strength. The white advisers in many of these organisations provide advice, training and specialist skills so that the Aboriginal people can make their decisions on directions for the organisation without having to get themselves bogged down in the problem of not being able to implement those decisions because they do not have particular skills.

The Chief Minister continually says in debates in this Assembly that his government is extremely enthusiastic about helping Aboriginal people in the Northern Territory and that nobody can have any doubts about its commitment in that area. I would like him to reflect on the remarks of the member for Jingili and ponder whether the Aboriginal people would doubt his commitment and the commitment of his government if they heard such remarks.

The Minister for Health and Community Services also made some remarks earlier. Unfortunately, whilst the man himself is irrelevant, the position he holds is not. Of all departments involved with Aboriginal people, the Department of Health and Community Services is probably the one with the most important role. The minister, who told us about his desire to break arms as a form of control of substances abuse, made some remarks earlier today about the maiden speech of the member for Arafura. These have been very adequately canvassed by my colleagues. What amazes me, however, both in respect of his comments and those of the member for Jingili, is how white advisers are apparently inappropriate for Aboriginal people but quite appropriate for non-Aboriginal people.

The only off-the-cuff remarks the honourable minister made were to denigrate the member's maiden speech. The remainder of his speech was read out. It did not even appear to have been prepared by his ministerial staff. It sounded like a straight departmental brief which he attempted to read during the time allotted to him. He even fluffed that. He could not finish in time, Mr Deputy Speaker, and he attempted to speak over your voice so that he could get in the last few lines. It was a most inept performance, yet he had to the cheek to criticise the member for Arafura.

My main point tonight concerns the history of the Northern Territory government's involvement in the land claim process in the Northern Territory. I am afraid to say that this has now shown itself to be a role of continual obstruction and delay. The government has opposed every claim that has come before the Aboriginal Land Commissioner at an estimated cost of some \$10m to the taxpayer of the Northern Territory. Another weapon that the Northern Territory government has used is the legal delaying tactic. It has instigated a multitude of actions and has appeared before the Supreme Court, the Federal Court and the High Court. In the 10-year history of the Land Rights Act, the Northern Territory government has appealed to those 3 courts 24 times. In all those appeals, the government has been successful only once. If there were points of law which had been reasonably discussed in the Department of Law and which needed to be explored in order to obtain a ruling, one could understand. One would expect that a reasonably competent ministry would have a success rate of between 25% and 50% in such actions. However, when one realises that it has had only 1 success over all these years, one is left with the belief that they are simply frivolous appeals designed to thwart the land claim process.

Mr Deputy Speaker, we also had the extremely expensive, very damaging and wasteful publicity campaign that the government undertook over the handover of Ayers Rock. But, the most opposed claim to date has been the Warumungu Land Claim.

Mr Perron: The Ayers Rock one was pretty expensive to the ALP.

Mr EDE: Mr Deputy Speaker, I am glad for that interjection. It underscores exactly what it was - purely a political con trick.

It is estimated that the government's actions in this case have cost about \$1m and the delays that have been caused have meant that this case has dragged out over 8 years. We had the recent bias case in respect of Mr Justice Maurice.

Mr MANZIE: A point of order, Mr Deputy Speaker! The Warumungu and Kenbi Land Claims are the subjects of an appeal by the NLC and, therefore, the matters are sub judice and should not be commented on by any member in this Assembly.

Mr EDE: Mr Deputy Speaker, I wish to speak to the point of order. In a proceeding before the House of Representatives, Mr Speaker Snedden ruled on the matter of sub judice as it related to appeals. I think that his remarks were something along the lines that he did not believe that the august judges would be swayed by the remarks of politicians, and that the whole matter of sub judice was more appropriate to jury trials than to appeals. I submit that this subject is not sub judice.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: There is no point of order. However, I must point out that, should the honourable member's comments refer particularly to a matter before the court, then I will have to reconsider this ruling.

Mr EDE: Mr Deputy Speaker, I have no intention of going into the details of that case because it is only 1 of some 7 appeals which have impacted on the Warumungu case - some 7 appeals lodged by the Northern Territory government.

Mr Deputy Speaker, I would like to have a look at the government's actions in the case and compare the way that the government has acted in this case with the way that the land council ...

Mr MANZIE: A point of order, Mr Deputy Speaker! The actions of the government in relation to the Warumungu Land Claim are being questioned. As I said earlier, the matter is the subject of an appeal to the High Court and, according to Pettifer, and this was upheld by the Speaker during previous sittings, matters that are the subject of appeals are sub judice and, therefore, are not fit matters for discussion in this Assembly. It has been held in the House of Commons that matters that are sub judice are not proper matters for discussion in the parliament but are matters that can be discussed at a later stage when the relevant court actions have been completed.

Mr EDE: You are just trying to use up my time.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: The honourable member will refrain from referring to the matter that is before the court.

Mr EDE: Mr Deputy Speaker, without going into detail, I wish to name a number of cases which have been used by the government as a mechanism to delay the settlement of the Warumungu Land Claim.

Mr MANZIE: A point of order, Mr Deputy Speaker! Again, the honourable member is referring to the Warumungu Land Claim. He is referring to what he perceives to be the attitude of government, and I think all members are aware that the whole subject is one that reflects on the direction of government and

possibly the actions of government. All honourable members would be aware that this is the subject of an appeal and, as such, it would be sub judice. Again, I would ask, Sir, that you consult Pettifer in relation to the appropriateness of members of parliament discussing a matter that is before the court.

Mr EDE: Mr Deputy Speaker, I wish to speak to the point of order.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Honourable member for Stuart, I believe that you have already made the point that you attempted to make and I would ask you not to make any further reference to that court case.

Mr EDE: Mr Deputy Speaker, I have absolutely no intention of referring to that particular case. However, I am referring to the general position as regards the Warumungu Land Claim, which exists as a land claim regardless of the matter which is under appeal. A number of other court cases have been settled which have had an effect on the Warumungu Land Claim. For example, the application made ex parte Japanangka in 1982, where the Northern Territory government secretly alienated 9 blocks of land after the claim had been lodged but just prior to the hearing.

Mr MANZIE: A point of order, Mr Deputy Speaker! The honourable member is continuing to speak on the Warumungu Land Claim. He is obviously very ignorant of the processes of the parliament and the processes of the judiciary. Mr Deputy Speaker, you have pointed out to the honourable member that he should confine his remarks to matters that have no association with the Warumungu Land Claim. Pettifer is quite clear in relation to matters that are sub judice. The member for Stuart is reflecting on the attitude and the actions of government in relation to this particular matter, and it is one that is not fit and proper to be raised in this Assembly while it is before the courts.

Mr EDE: Mr Deputy Speaker, I wish to speak to the point of order.

The point I am making is that, regardless of the major argument surrounding the point that is sub judice, the matter of the Warumungu Land Claim itself is not sub judice; it exists quite distinctly from the subject matter under appeal before the High Court.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Honourable member for Stuart, the comment that you have made in regard to this matter reflects on the government's attitude towards that particular matter. Once again, I would ask you to refrain from any further comment on that matter. The honourable member's time has expired.

Mr EDE: Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker, and thank you, honourable members.

Mr PERRON (Fannie Bay): Mr Deputy Speaker, I will respond briefly to some of the points made by the member for Stuart. Firstly, his statement that every Aboriginal land claim made in the Northern Territory has been opposed by the government is incorrect, and I would have thought that the honourable member would have known that by now.

The honourable member said that the Northern Territory government had appealed to various levels of the judicial system within Australia on matters relating to land rights and indicated that, because the government had not succeeded in 25% or 50% of those matters, that demonstrated that the government was procrastinating. He does not understand that it was genuinely testing what is, in fact, a piece of legislation that is unique in the

Westminster parliamentary system in the form of the title it establishes and the system of claims which it allows. Of course, it was required of the Northern Territory government, as the only party before the commissioner representing the people of the Northern Territory, to test the legislation and to test the strength of claimants' claims before the commissioner, because there was no one else there to test the strength of claims. Obviously, the member for Stuart would simply have the land council present applications for land under the act and have no parties whatsoever before the commissioner to present cases of detriment to the broader community or to test any of the claims but simply to let the land councils decide matters among themselves. I am afraid that life will not be quite that easy.

The member should be aware that the Northern Territory government has a responsibility to appear before the commissioner in every land claim and at least present facts before the commissioner. Indeed, in most cases, the commissioner seeks from the Territory government a whole raft of detail about waters, minerals, roads, stock routes and so on. I have advice that, of 108 claims that have been lodged since 1977, 23 have been tested through the judicial process.

Mr Deputy Speaker, the main reason why I have risen to my feet tonight is to express my concern at the matters raised in the editorial of today's NT News which commences: 'More than 200 Aboriginal leaders, from all parts of the Territory, will converge on Lake Bennett tomorrow for a meeting that has been described as Australia's first black parliament'. We are told by the newspaper that this group is meeting there to debate the question of proposed amendments to the Land Rights Act and the lack of veto powers in those amendments for exploration and mining on Aboriginal land.

The editorial goes on to state: 'The people most affected, the majority of Territorians, will not be represented. Instead, they have been asked to be patient bystanders to a farcical charade that will not only determine whether any new exploration or mines will go ahead on half the Territory's land mass, but the establishment of a government within a government, the so-called black parliament'. People have said, from time to time over the years, that the Land Rights Act will establish a government within a government in the Northern Territory, or a state within the state, or that it will establish a black state in Australia. Indeed, from what we read in the newspaper, that sort of scenario is frighteningly real.

The resources that people will be talking about tomorrow are resources beneath the surface of 50% of the Northern Territory which is either claimed or has been destined to be Aboriginal land. These resources belong to all Australians and to all Territorians yet it seems that the future of the exploration and mining of that material will be decided by a group of 200 black people tomorrow who are most decidedly not representing Territorians generally. We are not just talking about private royalties here because, if you are black in the Northern Territory, you are entitled to claim private royalties. You cannot if you are white but you can if you are black. In this instance, we are not debating that. That seems to be a fait accompli. Even in the amendments proposed by the federal government, as I understand them, the private royalties will remain - if you are black.

What we are talking about is access to the resources which belong to all Territorians. Over the past few years, we have seen the Northern Territory placed under considerable financial pressure by the federal government to get our hands out of the purse. We cost it too much money. Our answer to that would be: 'Give us control of our own destiny. Give us control of mining in

all of the Northern Territory and give us a reasonable slice of the royalties which we can reasonably ask from such mines and we would be happy to take our hand a little bit further out of the federal purse'.

To give an example of the sorts of resources which lie beneath the Northern Territory, which belong to us all and which could be used to help the Territory stand on its own feet, the Ranger mine, covering some 4 km² in the uranium province, has produced \$1000m worth of uranium in something like 4 or 5 years. That is an example of the sort of resources that lie beneath the surface. What about the next 4 to 5 years or the 4 to 5 years beyond that? There is much more in the Ranger deposit to be mined yet and, of course, the Ranger deposit is only a shadow of what lies beneath the surface as any geologist in Australia who has looked at the subject could tell you.

Royalties in the Northern Territory to the government amount to \$11.8m per annum at present. That, of course, is bearing in mind the fact that we do not have control of exploration on 50% of the Northern Territory. That land has been locked up for some 11 or 12 years since the Land Rights Act came into being and a freeze was imposed on mining on certain lands for a period. We have been unable to obtain any resolution between land councils and mining companies in respect of permission to explore on most of the Aboriginal land since that date.

The \$11.8m worth of royalties we receive today is a fraction of what we should be receiving. Exploration would have taken place had it not been for the provisions of the Land Rights Act which, as I have described in this parliament on at least 2 occasions, is the most racially divisive piece of legislation in Australia. It has created, as the editorial says, 'a rift between black and white Australians'. It is making it worse. We now have meetings of 200 Aboriginals to discuss the future of 50% of the Northern Territory. The resources beneath 50% of the Northern Territory are being discussed by 200 non-elected Aboriginals. I would like to protest and I am very pleased at least to be able to record my protest in Hansard even if I cannot do much more than that on this particular occasion.

Mr COULTER (Treasurer): Mr Speaker, I rise to speak in tonight's adjournment on a similar issue to that mentioned by the member for Fannie Bay. Although the member for Fannie Bay has canvassed most of the issues, the point that I would like to make is about the white advisers. Can I remind the member for Stuart that it was white advisers who went out to the Aboriginal people in the Coronation Hill area to explain to them where the Bulla site was. Coincidentally, there was no interest in that particular area until BHP went out there and proposed a mining program for the area and drilling exploration activity was to commence. These so-called white advisers ...

Mr Ede: You know that is wrong.

Mr COULTER: I am very pleased to hear him say that because there are another 15 issues that I will raise in a moment and I hope that he concurs with me that, on all these issues, they got it wrong.

Mr Ede: You know that what you are saying is wrong.

Mr COULTER: They did get it wrong. Did they represent the interests of the Aboriginal people in that particular area? Did the traditional owners want to mine in that particular area? The member for Stuart says that the 200 Aboriginal people at the black parliament tomorrow at Lake Bennett will be the landowners.

I can give an example where traditional owners of a particular piece of land have given an undertaking to a mining company that they want a mine to be developed and exploration to continue. The Northern Land Council is representing those people and it is a case of the dog wagging the tail. The Northern Land Council says that they cannot go ahead and the white adviser says that he has a deal for them.

Mr Ede: Be specific. What are you talking about?

Mr COULTER: Mr Speaker, the traditional owners in this area want to go ahead with mining development. It will all come out in the next 2 days. I will advise the honourable member and no doubt he will concur with me again.

The member for Flynn will have some representation soon in relation to another sacred site. At first, a half mile radius with the sacred site at its centre was declared by the Heritage Commission. That has now been changed into a triangle by the Aboriginal Sacred Sites Protection Authority. There is only 1 mistake: the triangle does not include the sacred site that was protected by the Heritage Commission in the first place. That is the kind of advice that the Aboriginal people are sick and tired of.

Mr Ede: Details. Give us some details.

Mr COULTER: The details will be forthcoming, and I will be interested to hear the honourable member for Stuart's excuses in relation to that particular case.

The fact is that the traditional owners no longer have confidence in the land councils to represent their point of view. That was obvious here tonight when we heard the member for Arafura talking about the Tiwi Land Council. They are doing very well over there because they have their own representation and their own land council. But, the people at Peppimenarti, for example, may not be so confident in the Northern Land Council. Ask the people at Barunga and other people around Katherine how much confidence they have in the Northern Land Council to represent them. I have spoken to the traditional owners at many places. Mr Deputy Speaker, speak to the people in some of the areas near Ranger 68 and see if they have any confidence in the land councils. The fact is that those people have lost confidence in the land councils.

We are told of the meeting that is to be held tomorrow and that Mr Hawke has told them that they must come away with the answers. He will no longer accept some of the nonsense that has been given. As I said in response to a question that I received from the member for Ludmilla, it was interesting that Mr Dodson was speaking to Mr Holding about the amendments to the Aboriginal Land Rights Act. Dodson, the man who supports Michael Mansell's application to Libya, was at the Minister for Aboriginal Affairs' office seeking to have the amendments to the Land Rights Act knocked back. Nevertheless, the member for Jingili has been accused of being a lunatic because he was trying to demonstrate the connections between the people involved.

Without wishing to indicate that there is a machiavellian plot involved in this, it will all unfold in the next couple of weeks and it will be clear that a select few have taken control of the land councils and the Aboriginal organisations throughout Australia and have helped to politicise the Aboriginal people. As I have said many times in this Assembly, one of the things that these people are intent on is keeping the Aboriginal people under a social welfare umbrella so that white advisers, such as themselves, will continue to be employed. If free market forces were involved and the

Aboriginal people had to engage their own lawyers to negotiate for them, those advisers would not have a job. They would not get a job working as electorate secretary for the member for Stuart because he would not have them either.

Mr Deputy Speaker, tomorrow is a significant day in the further development of the Northern Territory. The veto that Aboriginal people have over mining and other activity on their land by which the vast mineral wealth of the Territory can be locked up will be tested severely tomorrow. The amendments are being sought eagerly by the Prime Minister himself. Indeed, I have spoken to the Prime Minister about some of these issues, particularly the sacred sites issue, the number of vetos and the private royalty agreement. I have spoken to him informally, and he suggested to me that some of these people do not help themselves very much by some of the fictitious sacred sites claims that have been put on mining areas and some of the private royalty negotiations that some people enter seeking conditions better than those offered to white Australians. I believe that that will be tested tomorrow also.

I wish the negotiators well. I do not wish to give him the kiss of death, but particularly I wish well the Minister for Resources and Energy, Hon Gareth Evans, when he is down there tomorrow seeking some sort of agreement. Of course, the 3 musketeers from the left will also be there. We all know the attitude of Mr Hand and the lunatic left that he represents. We know what case he will be putting.

Assembled there tomorrow will be 200 Aboriginal people who do not represent the traditional owners of the Northern Territory. The traditional owners have had many painful experiences where the land councils have taken them on the wrong path. We have had many examples where they have not represented the traditional owners' views and they are pretty well sick of them. The lunatic left, the other 3 people, will make up the other element. No doubt, there will be quite a few white advisers - the same white advisers that have claimed sacred sites where there were none and the same lawyers who negotiate on behalf of the land council people but who have not been successful because their demands have been so unreasonable. There will be people there who would not know the meaning of a disjunctive or a conjunctive agreement. People who have never been out in private industry and have never had to work for a living will be down there tomorrow.

I have said many times in this Assembly that the Northern Territory is Australia's Alaska and that most of its wealth is locked up. The member for Stuart refers to Canada from time to time. I ask him to tell me the size of the land claims in Canada. Most of them are a few square miles or acres - not claims amounting to half the size of the Northern Territory which is over 140 000 km². Currently, that land is locked up and unavailable for mining exploration. Are we suicidal? This is at a time when Australia is in an economic crisis and we have the opportunity available to dig ourselves out of a hole and become one of the world's great resource countries. This is at a time when Aboriginal people are going to Libya to seek aid, at a time when we have land councils assembling that do not represent the views of traditional owners and at a time when the Northern Territory is being criticised by Senator Walsh for not pulling its weight. I have spoken to Senator Walsh about that. Let us be quite clear that he does come in for quite a lot of unfair criticism.

Mr Ede: That is right.

Mr COULTER: His argument boils down to this, and I want the member for Stuart to remember this. He is a hard worker, a wheat farmer and he does not need my help or for me to stick up for him. He is a Western Australian who knows the benefits of resources and the great wealth of Australia.

Mr Ede: You have just given him the kiss of death.

Mr COULTER: He said that the Northern Territory economy is parasitic but more parasitic than it needs to be because of outside influence. That is his position and he believes that that influence should be removed. I can only support what he is saying. We can only tell him to get his colleagues off our backs and let some real Australians, some real Territorians, show how it can be done. However, we cannot do that if they want to establish a parliament within a parliament, a state within a state. We need to have the access that any other state in Australia has to its mineral wealth. If mining companies spend millions of dollars on exploration, we need to ensure that they are given the opportunity to capitalise on their investment.

Mr Ede: What have you against disjunctive agreements?

Mr COULTER: They would never occur anywhere else in the world and they should not happen here in the Northern Territory.

Mr Ede: Canada and the United States.

Mr COULTER: You tell me of a disjunctive agreement in the United States.

Mr Ede: In Canada and the United States, the Indian people have the veto and they can get private royalties.

Mr COULTER: Mr Deputy Speaker, he obviously does not know what he is talking about. He keeps on shooting himself in the foot every time he opens his mouth.

Mr Ede: Details.

Mr COULTER: He will get more details than he can handle.

I think tomorrow will be a very significant day for the Northern Territory if we do get the support of Senators Walsh and Evans and they are able to convince their lunatic left. I guess they have that problem and they have to live with it. If common sense prevails and we do not set up this elite society within a society, the traditional owners can have faith and confidence that they will be represented. That can only happen if we go directly to the source. All that we want to be able to do is go directly to the traditional owners because the Northern Land Council model of negotiation has not worked. The 14 land applications that Mr Yunupingu spoke about in the newspaper the other day boiled down to 1. The other 13 were in the Nicholson River area and there was already agreement on them. One successful application has been processed. Is that a record of success? The Northern Land Council has the gall to say in the newspaper that there have been 14 agreements. That shows how gullible the Northern Land Council thinks the people of the Northern Territory are. We are not that stupid.

I believe Mr Yunupingu is too great a man to have written the things that were in the paper on Sunday. I know him personally. I have negotiated with him many times. I believe that column does not represent the Galarrwuy Yunupingu that I know and that it has been written by a person who does not

represent the views of traditional Aboriginal owners throughout the Northern Territory of Australia.

Motion agreed to; the Assembly adjourned.

Mr Speaker Vale took the Chair at 10 am.

PETITION
Takeaway Liquor Licence

Mr EDE (Stuart): Mr Speaker, I seek leave to present a petition that is not in conformity with standing orders.

Leave granted.

Mr EDE (Stuart): Mr Speaker, I present a petition from 461 citizens of the Northern Territory praying that the government refuse to grant a takeaway liquor licence to the Melanka Lodge. The petition does not bear the Clerk's certificate as the prayer is directed to the government rather than to the Legislative Assembly. Mr Speaker, I move that the petition be read.

Motion agreed to; petition read:

We, the undersigned citizens of the Northern Territory, respectfully petition the Speaker and honourable members of the Legislative Assembly as follows. We request that: (1) the government refuse to grant a takeaway liquor licence to the Melanka Lodge through BRILAN NT Pty Ltd; (2) the government place a moratorium on further takeaway liquor licences until such time as an investigation into liquor outlets in Alice Springs is held; and (3) the government amend its legislation to place a limit on the number of takeaway liquor outlets. As in duty bound, we ever pray.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT
Territory Energy Plans and Prospects

Mr COULTER (Mines and Energy)(by leave): Mr Speaker, the events of the last half decade leave little doubt about the role of energy in the Northern Territory. A series of achievements, events and decisions have impacted on the Territory economy during this time: the completion of 3 major energy pipelines, the development of the Amadeus Basin as an oil and gas producer, the development of the Jabiru oilfield, the removal of Commonwealth operating subsidies from the Northern Territory Electricity Commission and the collapse of the world oil price. It is imperative that the development of the last half decade continues. Of equal importance is the need to find the means whereby the adverse effects of national and international energy market developments can be offset.

The Amadeus Basin to Darwin gas pipeline is a shining example of how we in the Territory can address our energy problems locally, in spite of conventional wisdom, and how we can discover new and viable solutions. There is no doubt that the construction performance on the Amadeus Basin to Darwin pipeline is a credit to the Territory and to the industry participants. The project was put together in record time, was completed ahead of schedule, came in ahead of schedule, and was between \$90m and \$100m under the estimate of cost used in the pre-signing economic evaluations. The project has allowed the use of indigenous Territory resources and provided the opportunity to stabilise and eventually reduce the real cost of electricity to Territorians.

The expertise and experience gained in putting together and bringing to fruition the Amadeus Basin to Darwin gas pipeline will be exploited to take advantage of other development opportunities in the future. The future of the Territory will be founded on cost efficiency and price competitiveness. This

future can be assured by promoting sound development and finetuning our current activities. In this regard, we have already moved in respect of electricity to introduce more flexible tariffs and reshape patterns of energy usage. This is to make sure NTEC and its domestic and commercial consumers can share the substantial benefits resulting from the increased use of gas - if you like, the first fruits of the conversion to gas technology.

The changes in tariffs are not radical compared to those elsewhere in Australia but it is only now, with the pipeline completed, that Territorians can enjoy benefits similar to those taken for granted in other places with population centre advantages built up for more than a century. If demand can be increased and part of the daytime peak demand on NTEC systems can be moved to night-time time-of-day periods, plans for the purchase of additional generating plant can be revised and NTEC can operate at a lower unit cost.

In line with this, the Territory government announced recently that it would introduce these measures: a time-of-day tariff for an 8-hour period during the night for domestic consumers, a \$50 rebate for the purchase of home air-conditioners, a 5% to 10% discount on total electricity bills for businesses increasing electricity consumption by more than 25% per year, a reduced rate of 5% to 10% for pioneer industries for the first 3 years of operation, and an expansion of the existing time-of-day tariff for business consumers to make these tariffs more attractive to as many businesses as possible.

This is what can be offered now as we move further into the gas economy. Territory electricity will stop being the most expensive in Australia and the range and flexibility of tariffs will increase. Unfortunately, it will not be possible to offer real tariff reductions in the short term. This is because we have had to cope with a federal government that has vindictively repudiated its agreement and has cut the NTEC operating subsidy savagely. I take heart, however, that recent Commonwealth attitudes, demonstrated by the partial restoration of the 1986-87 operating subsidy, will allow us to plan for the future with a little more confidence. Of course, in an effort to attract large energy users, we will consider marginal energy pricing on a case-by-case basis.

To complement these developments in tariff structures, the government has moved to promote energy efficiency in the public and private sectors. The government's energy management program has already been responsible for instituting savings of more than \$350 000 per year in air-conditioning costs in public buildings. This will be achieved by a once-only outlay of \$305 000 in plant and building modifications. This energy management program is to be extended through funds made available by the Department of Industries and Development to assist the private sector to use energy efficiently. A fund has been established to support this program and already the scheme has attracted considerable interest.

It may seem strange to fund a program promoting energy efficiency while offering lower tariffs for increased electricity consumption. However, we need to promote industry competitiveness by reducing unit costs and simultaneously encourage industry to exploit market positions and increase output. Efficiency means growth, and that is the name of the game. The government's energy policy will encourage both efficiency and growth.

Energy consumers in remote communities have not been ignored, as the government is active in demonstrating and introducing cheaper alternative methods of power generation. Diesel generator facilities are very expensive

to operate and maintain in remote areas. Research by the Department of Mines and Energy has contributed to the commercial development of a power supply system which offers significant benefits to remote settlements and cattle stations. This is known as the battery-augmented diesel generator system. This particular system and a wide range of other commercial applications of alternative energy will be demonstrated at Darwin's first Alternative Energy Expo, to be held from 28 May to 31 May 1987. I urge honourable members and all those people who are interested or involved in remote power generation to avail themselves of the opportunity afforded by this exhibition of alternative energy.

The development of the past half decade has been stimulating and it has not come to a halt. The next chapter of the Territory's fast-unfolding energy story will be the construction of a gas stripping plant in Darwin to produce LPG, LNG, helium and other products and an LNG plant in Alice Springs. These plants will allow wider use of Territory gas for power generation in the fishing and mining industries, in the service and domestic sectors and in transportation. The volume of helium extracted from the Darwin plant will satisfy the entire Australian market and some export markets and Darwin will become the world's third source of helium, after Poland and the United States.

Currently, agreements are being negotiated to facilitate the reticulation of natural gas in Alice Springs and I expect these agreements to be finalised shortly. Also, we are seeking to take the benefits of the Amadeus Basin to Darwin gas pipeline to communities by extending the NTEC power grid. For the first time, NTEC's marginal cost of electricity generation is less than the revenue earned from the sale of its product, leading to the stabilisation of prices and the economic viability of such extensions. The first such development could be the construction of a 132 kV transmission line to Jabiru to service the Ranger mine, the Jabiru community and, hopefully, isolated settlements in the area. Honourable members may be aware that discussions are currently under way for the sale of Amadeus Basin gas to South Australia. I am pleased to add that similar negotiations are being pursued with Mt Isa Mines for the supply of Territory gas to Mt Isa. With the successful completion of the Amadeus Basin to Darwin pipeline, we have created an environment where Territory gas is now a far more marketable product and will support development of new gas markets and maximise opportunities for Territory development.

The interplay between these developments and the progress of the Mereenie oil and gas fields, the Palm Valley gas field and the Bonaparte Gulf fields puts the Territory in a good position to exploit its energy resources to the community's maximum benefit. A national pipeline grid, which many have scoffed at, is close to reality. I am working to ensure that the crucial Amadeus Basin to Moomba link is operating by 1990. In relation to this, I am keen to see the results of drilling at the Bonaparte Gulf Petrel No 4 well. The joint venturers have an obligation to drill this well before March next year and it will play a key part in progressing the development strategy of the Bonaparte Gulf field.

Unfortunately, the oil and gas industry has been severely affected by the 1986 collapse in crude oil prices. In his recent address to the Australian Petroleum Exploration Association, the federal Minister for Resources and Energy, Senator Evans, indicated there was little comfort for the industry if it was looking to the Commonwealth for relief from its currently inequitable tax burdens. This is in spite of the outlook for declining Australian self-sufficiency and the most severe downturn in oil exploration and development experience for many years.

The outlook for petroleum self-sufficiency in Australia in the next decade is extremely disturbing. We can expect self-sufficiency to decline from around 90% to under 50% in this time. If this was purely the result of market forces, there would be little we could do other than to encourage the economic exploitation of our petroleum resources. But this is not the case. The Commonwealth has determined that the petroleum sector must pay a disproportionately high rate of taxation through oil excise. How can the Commonwealth justify its active promotion of the decline in the petroleum sector because of its reluctance to review its revenue commitment? Of course, the answer is not difficult to find. The oil industry contributes about \$7000m a year to Commonwealth coffers, above and beyond income and company taxes. As long as the federal government refuses to review its expenditure commitments, and taxes the oil industry disproportionately to satisfy these commitments, the outlook for petroleum self-sufficiency remains gloomy.

The Northern Territory has led the way with profit-related royalty schemes and, in these sittings, we have introduced a 150% tax deduction on mineral exploration. It is about time the Commonwealth started thinking about the future. I urge the Commonwealth to follow us in promoting exploration and building a more secure future for Australia. The Territory is committed to promoting the equitable treatment of this vital sector of the economy. In real terms, the Territory has moved quickly to offer the Mereenie oilfield royalty relief and it has since moved to introduce a resource rent royalty at Mereenie to minimise the adverse effects on this project of the oil price collapse. This resource rent royalty regime is similar to the Territory's Mineral Royalty Act and its introduction will maintain the Territory at the forefront in development of such legislation. I expect the resource rent royalty agreement to be in place before the end of this financial year.

Considerable exploration interest continues in the Timor Sea and Bonaparte Gulf regions. We are looking to release acreage in the Bonaparte Gulf and Arafura Sea later this year. Onshore, the Bonaparte Gulf, Amadeus and Georgina Basins are stimulating a deal of industry interest. In this period of dampened exploration activity, it is imperative that we seek to enhance our knowledge of our wealth and energy resources. Last year, the Jabiru oilfield came on-stream. At this moment, the Jabiru No 5 well is being completed and the production facility on the Jabiru venture is being extended. Drilling will start shortly on an additional appraisal well on the Challis structure, and plans for production for that structure will be finalised. Our knowledge of the energy resource of the Timor Sea is embryonic, but the area stands out as one of the most exciting in Australia. In order to encourage onshore exploration in the Territory, I have requested a review of the Petroleum Act to ensure maximum use of drilling funds in the Territory. I expect results from this review in the very near future.

It is surprising that most people in Australia, including Territorians, do not think of the Northern Territory as a major energy exporter. Since 1980, however, that is exactly the role we have played. The energy that we export is not a traditional hydrocarbon. It is in the form of uranium. In recent visits overseas, in particular to the GasTech Conference in Germany, I was continually asked when the Northern Territory's wealth of uranium will be fully exported and when Territory uranium will become available to world markets. Those are questions that I cannot answer. The Territory has an energy reserve in the form of its uranium wealth which far exceeds any known petroleum reserve in the region. Yet, for reasons peculiar to the federal government, opportunities to exploit that reserve are denied to us over and over again. The world has recognised that the future belongs to uranium. Some of the world's leading specialists in the petroleum sector are

acknowledging that fact openly. It is essential that the Territory be allowed to exploit its wealth to its maximum benefit and that it not be hamstrung by Commonwealth policies which are inconsistent, out of date, illogical and short-sighted.

In Hawaii last year, I visited an independent oil refiner and bunker fuel marketer operating in a local trade development zone. I was embarrassed to find that this refinery imports crude oil from Jabiru and Bass Strait, processes it, and ships it to Singapore for the bunkering of ships servicing Australian ports. At my invitation, representatives of the company have since visited Darwin and discussed the establishment of a bunkering service in the Top End. I am keen to encourage the development of a proposal to bunker, out of the Territory, freighters operating in northern Australian waters. At present, very little international shipping is bunkered out of Australia. Most is bunkered out of Japan at a fairly high cost or out of Singapore after significant route diversions.

We are exploring the possibility of establishing a bonded bunkering facility in Darwin. We believe this will have the effect of attracting a number of international shipping companies here for the primary purpose of fuel bunkering. There can be no doubt that, while bunkering, ships would take on stores and utilise other services from the local community. With the increased intensity of vessels using the Port of Darwin, there would be an improvement in our shipping services. Once a freighter is in port, the possibility of discharging its cargo to the Trade Development Zone and the transport of products overland from Darwin takes on a fresh new reality.

The ramifications of this for the rail link between Darwin and Alice Springs, and for local petroleum suppliers and other industries, are obvious. This can only come with competitive pricing of petroleum products attracting the market from overseas. These bunkering proposals are modest and yet, if I can refer back to my visit to Hawaii, I was questioned as to why crude from Jabiru oilfield was not being processed in Australia. The potential of the Jabiru and Challis fields and of the Ashmore Cartier region in general is enormous. It will be a major source of supply for petroleum products used in Australia for years to come. It would be reprehensible if we did not come to increase the value of the product by processing Jabiru crude in Australia. Australia needs to cease merely paying lip service to the philosophy of increasing the value added of Australian products by promoting local processing. It needs to get down to doing something about it.

Mr Speaker, in 1986, we saw the completion of the Amadeus Basin to Darwin gas pipeline, the development of central Australia as a major oil and gas producer, and the first commercial oil from the Jabiru oilfield. But that is not the end of the story; the next chapter is already unfolding. Modern economies depend on energy of 1 form or another. This government intends that energy will play an increasing role in improving the competitive position of the Territory's economy. In some ways, we have completed the easy part. It now remains for us to exploit the results of our efforts to date and to maximise on the advantages.

Mr LEO (Nhulunbuy): Mr Speaker, I move that the Assembly take note of the statement.

The minister has made a comprehensive statement on the state of energy resources within the Northern Territory. Probably, it is a timely statement given that the gas-fired power station is now on-line and the pipeline between Alice Springs and Darwin is complete. One, R.F.X. Connor who, of course,

suffered greatly at the hands of the disbelievers in a previous federal government, would be smiling, I would suppose, at people talking now about a national pipeline grid, but it is a developing reality. I do not think that anybody doubts that it will happen, and I am sure that Rex Connor would be gratified that his ideas are becoming accepted, if somewhat belatedly.

I have a question. The honourable minister can answer it at any stage, either during this debate or at some other time. It is related to the gas pipeline and is pertinent to the development of the entire Northern Territory for decades into the future. How reliable will the supply of gas be? I should imagine the government has contingency plans in the event that something happens to the gas pipeline, either through an act of God or an act of man. We will become more and more dependent on the gas pipeline as time goes on and it is important, not only for the residents who rely upon the electricity supply in Darwin, but also for future developers in the Northern Territory. Future developers who may come to the Trade Development Zone or to other parts of the Northern Territory will rely upon the electricity generated from the gas that is supplied from Alice Springs, and people will be using the gas in the gas stripping plant and producing various products there.

I am sure all these people would welcome a statement from the minister, reassuring them that there are well-developed contingency plans in the event that an act of God or an act of man, as I say, disrupts this very long pipeline. I am not too sure where it would rate on the scale of pipelines throughout the world, but certainly it is an immensely long pipeline which passes over very difficult terrain in places. I am sure that any assurance that the minister can give to the Assembly would be more than welcome.

I welcomed the minister's very brief reference to the Alternative Energy Expo to be held in Darwin at the end of this month. If it is at all possible, I intend to visit Darwin to attend it, and I hope other members do too. I suspect that the alternative energy sources that are on offer and perhaps more readily adaptable to the climate and the terrain of the Northern Territory are potentially very exciting. People in isolated areas, and the vast bulk of the Northern Territory is isolated, will have to rely more and more upon alternative energy sources. Although there has been a bit of a slump in world oil prices, inevitably the price of fuel will increase: as King Farouk put it, that is as sure as death and taxes. People in isolated areas will need to rely more upon the emerging technology which is involved in alternative energy supplies.

I would hope that the products displayed at the Expo will be advertised widely throughout the Northern Territory, particularly in the more remote areas. It is fairly pointless to advertise alternative energy technologies in Darwin where they are likely to receive little use, if any. There needs to be extensive promotional activity throughout the remoter parts of the Northern Territory where this alternative technology can be more readily used or better adapted.

Mr Speaker, there is 1 comment I would like to make. Once again, the minister commented on the federal taxes imposed on the oil industry to the tune of \$7000m a year. That is an impost upon a very vital industry. I would not seek to make excuses for any federal government in this matter. However, in a rational world, if some proportion of \$7000m is removed from the oil excise, then expenditure would have to be cut or money raised somewhere else. I would prefer a more rational debate about where we are to cut expenditure because that will have a profound effect upon the Northern Territory. We have only 1 member in the House of Representatives. Although we have 2 Senators,

they come from each of the major parties. It does not matter which party is in power federally, the reality is that the Northern Territory has 1 seat. The sooner we can debate the economy of the Northern Territory and the degree to which we are affected by cuts in expenditure or increases in taxes more rationally, the more likely we will be to be able to plan our future rationally.

There is a more human side to wealth creation. I listened this morning to various members opposite speaking about the wealth that could be created in the Northern Territory. I do not doubt for a second that the Northern Territory has a great future. If, in the process of developing these resources that can bring us wealth, we neglect the human element of our Territory, I would predict that our success will be very short lived. Certainly, the Aboriginal Land Rights Act has affected the exploration of uranium and hydrocarbons within the Northern Territory. When contemplating the development of resources on their land, the primary concern of Aboriginal people is for the future of their children and their children's children.

In another debate, it was pointed out that the biggest proportion of the prison population in the Northern Territory comprises Aboriginal people. That is quite true. I would ask the Minister for Health and Community Services to investigate where these people come from. I would doubt very much that they come from outstation communities or the more remote communities. I would suspect that the large proportion of those people are in prison as a direct consequence of the conflict of cultures: this line between a very wealthy, technologically-advanced, cosmopolitan European mining population and the traditional Aboriginal culture. When the traditional owners - and it is not the land councils - speak fearfully about what mining will bring to them, their fear is not so much related to the white people who will come on to their land nor to the money they will receive, rather it is related to their concern about the future of their children and the future of their culture.

In future, when the minister is speaking about the result of various resource-based developments on Aboriginal land and speaking to the land councils, I hope he will contemplate the stark reality of the existence of the Aboriginal people. Suddenly, they have a very large, new community, be it Nhulunbuy, Alyangula or Jabiru, right next door to their own communities. Suddenly, they feel the full impact of another culture on their lives. Inevitably, this brings the social dislocation which is so plainly evident in the Northern Territory. Perhaps our very large prison population is a direct result of large resource developments in areas where Aboriginal people pursue a more traditional lifestyle and where their culture has not quite adapted to the stringencies of a European society. In future, when the minister is talking about resource development with Aboriginal people, I hope he will be more conscious of their fears of potential disturbance. It is possible that, in most cases, those fears can be allayed. If they cannot be allayed, I am sure some accommodation can be made so that their fears need not be realised.

This was brought home to me when there was some discussion of the pipeline going to Gove. The Aboriginal people across Arnhem Land were absolutely terrified. Their fear did not relate to the pipeline crossing a sacred site or anything like that. The problem was that it would mean an influx of more and more European people who would bring with them their culture and all that that entails. The inevitable disruption to their homes, their families and their lives absolutely terrified the Aboriginal people. They have seen social dislocation of that kind occur around communities such as Nhulunbuy and Alyangula where there has been significant European intrusion into their lifestyle.

With those few comments, I welcome the Minister for Mines and Energy's statement. I think the Territory has an exploitable energy resource that needs to be further developed. The pipeline has provided impetus for the future. Further development will require sound planning and goodwill by all parties so that the continued exploitation of resources in the Northern Territory is not accompanied by human misery.

Mr HANRAHAN (Lands and Housing): Mr Speaker, I rise to fully support the Minister for Mines and Energy's statement. Indeed, it is a very timely statement. Energy and exploitation of our natural resources will always be critical for the development of the Territory.

I am always a little bemused by the comments from the members opposite. I will take the opportunity to remind members of the attitude adopted by the former Leader of the Opposition on the announcement of the gas pipeline as a major project. Honourable members will recall his remarks and his puppets opposite were eagerly applauding him at the time. He was one of the greatest knockers of the Alice to Darwin gas pipeline that this Territory has ever heard. That is typical of the continuing attitude of members opposite to the development of the Territory. There were times when the former Leader of the Opposition in this Assembly said that it could not be done, that it was impossible and would cost too much money. He said it was uneconomic and would increase the cost of electricity. His band of followers opposite, that mob of knockers, really experienced some glee at the time. It is particularly heartening to note that they fully support the Alice Springs to Darwin gas pipeline now and recognise the obvious economic benefits that it brings to the Territory economy.

They displayed exactly the same attitude towards the development of Yulara which they acknowledge today to be one of the greatest incentives to tourism in the Territory. They recognise that tourism in the Territory would not have been what it is today without the far-sighted vision of members of this CLP government.

Mr Bell: Not this one. The previous one.

Mr HANRAHAN: It is indeed encouraging to note that honourable members opposite are starting to change their attitude towards the development of the Territory. As the Minister for Mines and Energy has pointed out time and time again, the days of the members opposite knocking and denigrating the economic development of this Territory must come to an end. Members on this side of the Assembly have positive vision concerning the development of the Territory economy.

I will digress a little to point out the benefits of the delivery of gas to the economy of Alice Springs. The diesel conversion of the generators at the Alice Springs powerhouse is almost complete. I understand that the first of the new turbines is about to go in and plans are on the drawing boards for the second to be installed in about 5 years time. This will complete the total conversion to gas as the energy resource used to supply electricity to Alice Springs. In addition, there are developments occurring directly associated with the development of the gas pipeline at the Brewer Estate. The Minister for Mines and Energy mentioned various gas-stripping plants and conversion units that are being developed and it is most encouraging to see the fruits of the continued exploration and development of gasfields in the central Australian region.

When we talk about energy, we should not ignore the other resources that are available in central Australia. Some major research has been done in respect of solar generation of electricity and additional exploration for oil. We in the Territory are acknowledged as being among the world leaders in the development of new technology, particularly in the solar energy field. I direct members' attention to the efforts of Telecom in installing overland bearers with the use of solar-generated power. The expertise and engineering efficiency of Telecom in the use of solar power is to be commended. It is one of the areas in which I would like to see much more work done and it should be encouraged in the Northern Territory.

The benefits of the Alice Springs to Darwin gas pipeline have been twofold. It has allowed exploration for further resources, including oil and gas, in central Australia and it has brought to fruition the idea of a national grid for dispersal of this gas resource throughout Australia. I have mentioned, as have other members in this Assembly, that this was the vision of the former Whitlam minister, Mr Rex Connor. His idea then led to some rather dramatic events involving the development of a national grid. The benefits of such a grid to the Territory will be many indeed, and they will become more evident as time goes by.

I am aware, as are several other members of this Assembly, of continued negotiations by the Minister for Mines and Energy for the connection of the central Australian grid to the Cooper Basin. From past ministerial statements, we know also of the immense potential for the development of Bonaparte Gulf and the piping of gas onshore for connection to a pipeline that eventually will deliver gas, not only for the generation of electricity in the Territory, but that will be available for sale elsewhere Australia through a national grid. One of the most important initial links of that development will be the connection into the Cooper Basin. I certainly wish the Minister for Mines and Energy every success as he continues those negotiations.

I am also aware that the various stripping plants and liquefied gas plants will have other major benefits. For example, the government is looking at the possibility of locating a gas turbine at Yulara and delivering gas there via a pipeline or by trucking it there in a liquid form. That is just one example of the opportunities that the availability of gas will present to the Territory.

The construction of the gas pipeline has been one of the greatest initiatives the Territory has seen. In future years, with the development of the Bonaparte Gulf and the sale of natural gas all over Australia, it will become clear that those who were involved in the initial decision and who had the fortitude to carry the project through are worthy of the commendation of members of this Assembly. One of the major reasons why the Northern Territory government took the decision to develop the gas pipeline at the time at which it did was the continued threats of the federal government. I am sure no member of this Assembly would condone the arbitrary decisions made in recent times to remove the electricity subsidy to the Northern Territory.

The generation of electricity by gas will continue to be one of the major reasons why, in 10 to 15 years time when the system is fully developed, the Territory will be able to predict confidently at all times the cost to industry of the generation of electricity. It certainly has not been able to do that in a climate where the federal government arbitrarily strikes millions of dollars from the Territory budget. I forget his exact words, but I think it was Hon Peter Morris who suggested that all that Territorians do is sit in air-conditioned offices and that we are a lazy lot who do not work. I do not

think that even the members opposite would be prepared to support the arbitrary slashing of the Territory budget without prior consultation or forward notification. If they are happy to condone that action of the federal government, let it be on their own heads. However, there is no doubt that the development of this pipeline and the gas energy resource in the Territory will continue to play a major part in the Territory economy.

The minister spoke of the possibility of the development of a bunkering system associated with the Trade Development Zone and I fully support this. As that idea develops further, no doubt we will again see members opposite knocking it. They will say it is too expensive and that it cannot be done because this is the Territory. They will have myriad reasons why it will not work and I am sure they will not be slow in giving them to us.

I am happy to support this very important statement from the minister and I am looking forward to considerable comment from members opposite on where they see energy resources developing in the Territory. I commend the statement. I believe this project is a further example of how the Territory CLP government is prepared to be far-sighted and visionary even when constantly facing the knocking, anti-development attitude of the opposition. In closing, Mr Speaker, I point out to all honourable members that the opposition's record in Territory development is absolutely nil.

Mr BELL (MacDonnell): Mr Speaker, there are several comments that I wish to make in relation to this statement as it affects my electorate and as it affects the passage of business through this Assembly. However, before I go on to the points I wish to address, I would like to respond to a couple of comments made by the Deputy Chief Minister in relation to the opposition's position being anti-development.

I think it is worth placing on record that, for example, the Darwin to Palm Valley pipeline was originally a brainchild of the opposition's.

Members interjecting.

Mr BELL: Mr Speaker, I appreciate that we have several new boys on the government frontbench who ...

Mr Dondas: John Reeves was jumping up and down and said it was not going to work in 1983.

Mr BELL: Mr Speaker, I hear the honourable member for Casuarina ...

Mr Dondas: And 1984 as well.

Mr Manzie: The Northern Territory opposition thought up parliamentary democracy.

Mr SPEAKER: Order!

Mr BELL: For those members who were not here then, and for those who have been interjecting, they will be able to verify from the Parliamentary Record that, in fact, such a pipeline arrangement was proposed by Mr Jon Isaacs, a former Leader of the Opposition. I raise this point solely so that the Deputy Chief Minister will realise that the opposition has been capable of making many constructive suggestions for the development of services and for the provision of adequate development of the Territory's resources of whatever shape and form.

Members of the opposition spend a considerable amount of time keeping an eye on what the government does, and we make our criticisms as is appropriate. If these prove to be of such embarrassment to the government that its members are forced to make this accusation that the opposition is anti-development, then so be it. It is untrue, and I believe that Territorians appreciate the efforts that the opposition makes, both in keeping the government honest and in coming up with positive proposals like that for a pipeline from Darwin to Alice Springs, joining the Top End and central Australia.

Just a point of fact for the Deputy Chief Minister, before I pass on to his colleague. The arrangements for the use of Palm Valley gas in the Alice Springs powerhouse are, in fact, a conversion to gas. They are a gas conversion; they are not a diesel conversion as he mentioned in his speech. It has been ...

Mr Collins: He was talking about converting from diesel to gas.

Mr BELL: Yes, that is quite right. The member for Sadadeen is quite right. The last time that I had a look at the powerhouse in Alice Springs, they were gradually incorporating more engines that would run on dual power, both gas and diesel. But, this was a conversion to gas, contrary to what the honourable Deputy Chief Minister had to say.

I have 4 points to make specifically about the statement made by the Minister for Mines and Energy. First, I hope that this will be taken in the spirit that it is given. To the extent that the honourable minister is responsible for the continued development and the continued utilisation of the Territory's gas resources, I unreservedly offer him my congratulations. I know that he has put considerable time and effort into negotiation in various forums for the development and use of this resource so, lest we be accused of being negative in entirety, let me place on the record that, quite unreservedly, I offer my congratulations to the honourable minister in that regard. As all politicians know, congratulations from the opposition to the government do not make the newspapers, probably because nobody out there will be particularly interested. However, for his benefit, I put it on record anyway.

My second point relates to a procedural step in relation to ministerial statements, since the advent of the member for Nightcliff as Chief Minister, I have been hoping that a continuing atmosphere of cooperation between government and opposition would prevail and that, with statements of this nature, that are obviously deeply considered and prepared well in advance, copies would be made available to the opposition at least the evening before they are to be delivered in the Assembly. In order that the opposition may do its job and that backbenchers may do their job of making sure that, to the extent that statements affect their electorates, they are able to contribute sensibly to debate, there should be opportunity for backbenchers - and I am contributing to this debate as a backbencher, whose electorate is affected by much of the content of this statement, and I will come to that in a minute ...

Mr Coulter: It is all a matter of trust and I am working backwards from 8 o'clock in the morning.

Mr BELL: I did not quite pick up that interjection, Mr Speaker, but if it is some sort of an apology explaining why the minister was unable to give copies of the statement to us yesterday afternoon, I would be interested to hear it. I find it difficult to understand why the statement had to be embargoed until 8 o'clock this morning, and I would like to hear the Chief Minister respond to that particular point as well.

My third point will be even less like music to the ears of the honourable minister than my previous point was. It is that, time and time again, we hear the minister whingeing about Aboriginal land and the lack of ability of Aboriginal land to ...

Mr Coulter: Do you want to have a look at the map?

Mr BELL: Yes, pass it across here. Could I have a copy of that map and I will make a reference to it in passing.

Mr Coulter: Do you want the names of the petroleum companies that have applied as well? I will get them for you too.

Mr BELL: Certainly, I will refer to it, Mr Speaker.

I do not want to foreshadow future debate later today, but I get sick and tired of hearing the Minister for Mines and Energy complaining about how much trouble he has with Aboriginals, and how much trouble he has with Aboriginal land. Yet nowhere have we heard either the Minister for Mines and Energy or the Minister for Lands and Housing refer to the little squabble that occurred between the mining industry and the pastoral industry over access to pastoral land. We always hear whingeing over access to Aboriginal land.

I am pretty disappointed in that, for a variety of reasons that I hope will become clear as I continue. During the debate on the Address-in-Reply, I said that I thought that a new spirit had crept into the second Hatton ministry. When I heard the rabid ravings of the Minister for Mines and Energy during question time this morning ...

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The member for MacDonnell will withdraw that remark.

Mr BELL: I unreservedly withdraw any imputation about the conduct of the Minister for Mines and Energy that might have been ...

Mr SPEAKER: The honourable member will withdraw that remark unreservedly and without comment.

Mr BELL: Which remark, Mr Speaker?

Mr SPEAKER: Rabid ravings.

Mr BELL: I unreservedly withdraw the remark about rabid ravings as it applies to the Minister for Mines and Energy.

Mr SPEAKER: The honourable member will withdraw that remark unreservedly and without any further comment.

Mr BELL: I withdraw unreservedly without further comment, Mr Speaker.

The vociferous comments we heard from the Minister for Mines and Energy in question time hardly brought light to this matter. I draw the minister's attention to the fourth paragraph of his statement to illustrate how tendentious his remarks become in respect of Aboriginal land. He said that 'the Amadeus Basin to Darwin gas pipeline is a shining example of how we in the Territory can address our energy problems locally, in spite of conventional wisdom, and how we can discover new and viable solutions'.

When the minister sums up, I hope he will tell us how the Northern Territory government has negotiated with the land council over that pipeline corridor. I hope he will explain to us how the companies involved negotiated with traditional owners who have been represented by the Central Land Council. Dare I say - and I am sure it ranks as apostasy with the members of this government - they were assisted by non-Aboriginals employed by that organisation. I hope the government will allow them that, given the extraordinary complexities inherent in the construction of a pipeline of that sort.

Since the Minister for Mines and Energy drew my attention to this map, can I just show the extent of it. I will show it to the member for Barkly and perhaps he will be able to tell me whether it takes in Tennant Creek. It does not get down to Tennant Creek or central Australia. That is the sort of nonsense we get from the Minister for Mines and Energy when he is making statements about what Aboriginal land is used for and what it is not used for. He trumps up maps like this in front of the press. It is a map of about half of the Northern Territory. He ignores the goodwill of Aboriginal people that is required in negotiations of this sort, and suggests that their ability to contribute to the economic life of the Northern Territory is irrelevant. I get sick and tired of it, Mr Speaker. On one hand, the Chief Minister is saying positive things about the involvement of Aboriginals in the future of the Territory and, on the other hand, we get this sort of claptrap, this absolute nonsense, from his colleague. And they wonder why they are not trusted!

Mr Speaker, let me refer to pages 10 and 11 of the statement. I want to place on record the extent to which this matter is of concern to me. This is one reason why I would have appreciated the opportunity to have a copy of this statement earlier than 10.30 am in order to consider its implications.

Mr Coulter: It was distributed at 8.00 am.

Mr BELL: The Minister for Mines and Energy says 8.00 am, but I did not get my copy until 10.00 am.

Mr Hanrahan: Speak to your colleagues.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The member for MacDonnell will be heard in silence.

Mr BELL: When I first entered this parliament in March 1981, it was customary practice that all members would receive a little brown envelope, with 'Confidential' marked across it, containing each statement that a minister would give the following day. I recommend that practice to this government if it wants sensible debate.

Mr Speaker, I draw the honourable minister's attention to page 10 where he says that 'the Northern Territory has led the way with profit-related royalty schemes and, in these sittings, we have introduced a 150% tax deduction on mineral exploration'. Because I have an extensive electorate where there are large numbers of exploration licences, this is a matter of concern to me and I would like to be informed further about that.

My second comment refers to paragraph 3 on page 11. The minister said in his statement: 'In real terms, the Territory has moved quickly to offer the Mereenie oilfield royalty relief and it has since moved to introduce a resource rent royalty at Mereenie to minimise the adverse effects on this project of the oil price collapse'. This, of course, is a matter of

considerable interest to me. The minister will be aware that the Ngurratjuta Pmarenytjara Association is responsible for the receipt and dispersal of royalty equivalents. Its members will be particularly interested in that also. I know they have made representations to the minister because of their concern about decreasing royalty levels. This is a good example of the extent to which Aboriginal people, through the Land Rights Act, have a genuine interest in the development of Territory resources. It is a matter of concern to me, and I will be looking at it much more closely as I am sure the Ngurratjuta Association will. There is a nexus between the royalty equivalents received by the Aboriginal Benefit Trust Account and traditional owners and the royalty that is levied by the Northern Territory government. I will be taking a particular interest in this matter because I know that many of my constituents will be concerned.

As I have said, I would have liked to have seen this statement rather earlier. If I had seen it yesterday, I might have been able to make a better-informed contribution to this debate. At this stage, I merely wish to note that concern on the part of my constituents.

Mr PERRON (Industries and Development): Mr Speaker, there are 2 things which could change the entire progress and development of the Northern Territory in a very short period and both of them are related to energy. It is somewhat ironical that those 2 things which could revolutionise the way in which we see the Territory growing are energy-related because of all the problems we have had in the recent past in relation to electricity costs in the Northern Territory.

The first would be an end to the insane policies that this current federal government has and, indeed, the former federal government had on uranium. The second would be the finding of enormous subterranean reserves of oil and gas. If that is likely to happen, it will probably occur in the Jabiru Joseph Bonaparte Gulf area. To return to uranium, what we should have seen in this country about 10 years ago was a complete go-ahead for the uranium industry in Australia in all its facets. We should have had a complete go-ahead for exploration to identify quite clearly the extent of the enormous reserves in the uranium province in order to ascertain exactly how much of the world's cheaply-recoverable uranium we have in the Northern Territory. As a nation, we should then have sought to play a very high-profile role in the world's uranium industry in order to keep track of the uranium that is used for peaceful purposes and in order to have Australia adopt a position of significant international influence, something which it does not have at present and something which would earn this country very substantial sums and create enormous employment.

We have discovered in the uranium province some 20% of the world's easily-recoverable reserves of uranium without even looking very hard. Most experts seem to agree that, if an extensive drilling and exploration program were conducted, a great deal more would be discovered. Maybe we could have 50% of the world's easily-recoverable reserves of uranium. Maybe we have that and we do not know it, and maybe we never will. One can imagine what sort of influence Australia might have exercised on world markets if it had had access to that sort of information and policies that allowed those deposits to be recovered.

Australia should have decided that it would adopt an internationally responsible position and play a leading role in the entire nuclear chain. We should have been looking at uranium enrichment in Australia. If it could not be done in the Northern Territory because of logistical problems or the lack

of a cheap power supply or whatever, perhaps the uranium enrichment plant could have been placed somewhere else in Australia. That is not enormously important. It could have been established in the area that was most suitable economically and logistically.

We should also have developed techniques for the transportation of uranium products. We could have had a very handsome high-tech industry based on research into transportation techniques and storage facilities for the transport of uranium in its various forms. We could have developed specially built ships to ply the world's sea routes to carry this potentially highly dangerous and very valuable cargo. Australia could have been right into that sort of game. We could have been bringing spent fuel rods back into Australia for the disposal and storage of the nuclear waste. Australia is a leader in the development of that technology with synroc. Work on it is continuing and, hopefully, in due course, that exciting invention will earn Australia some very substantial sums of money.

The way we are going, however, our returns will be in the form of royalty payments because someone else will be making that money somewhere overseas, solidifying the waste and depositing it somewhere in the bowels of the earth. As things are, Australia will be really lucky to get royalty payments from synroc. We should be developing a storage facility here in Australia, and reaping the rewards. Instead, successive federal governments seem to think that it is all too hot to handle politically and they do not want to know about it. They would rather bury their heads in the sand, sell other countries a bit of uranium and hope that none of it ever comes back to Australia in any other form.

That thinking completely overlooks the fact that the uranium industry around the world is not shutting down; in fact, it is expanding, has done so for years and, no doubt, will continue to do so for the next several decades until fusion reactors become a reality. It is a fact that the world will be crisscrossed with containers carrying uranium, in its various forms, from yellowcake right through the spectrum to spent fuel rods and high-level nuclear waste products. These materials will be transported around the world from place to place. Other countries will be building and operating massive processing plants and reprocessing plants around the world, and receiving the benefits that stem from that activity, benefits both in the substantial number of skilled people who have to be engaged and trained to build these plants and to operate them and, of course, the very substantial level of employment that is created by all facets of the uranium industry.

Unfortunately, Australia does not want to know about all that because it is all too hard to cope with. It would rather sell a little uranium and make the purchasers sign an agreement that they will not use it for nuclear weapons proliferation. I do not think that that is very good. I would rather see Australia play a higher role and have a greater level of influence in the entire chain and gain some benefits instead of sitting back and hollering every time it suspects some country somewhere around the world is acting irresponsibly in terms of the disposal of its waste. One can imagine the problems that countries such as Japan have with the disposal of waste given the area of the country and the density of its population. The attitude that we seem to adopt is that, if they want to use nuclear power, what they do with their waste is their problem. I do not think that is a very responsible attitude.

The second area that could revolutionise the Northern Territory as we know it today would be very substantial discoveries of reserves of oil in the

Joseph Bonaparte Gulf. That could be the case as more and more exploration leases are issued and companies drill those very expensive holes. We may well have a significant oil deposit right on our shores. If we have such a deposit, there will be many spin-off benefits to the Territory and many people will be paying attention to us. Certainly, the upgrading of the defence facilities here are very welcome but that will be child's play if there are significant reserves of a nationally-significant commodity such as oil off our northern coast.

How much attention would the world have paid to the Middle East were it not for the oil. We have been preoccupied with the Middle East for a long time and with good reason. I would suggest that most schoolchildren today would not know where the Middle East was if those countries did not have any oil. Nobody would be very interested in dates, onions, camels, goats and some scraggy sheep.

The minister mentioned an important matter for the Northern Territory: alternative energy systems. Because the Northern Territory covers such a vast area, it is important for us to obtain small generators of energy that are as efficient as possible. I am very pleased to hear that the minister and the department have developed new concepts in this regard such as the package unit. I am sure many people in the pastoral industry and the agricultural industry will be interested in that.

As I have said in this Assembly before, the one thing that will limit the population of Australia in the future will be the supply of water. We can grow sufficient food and we have plenty of space to accommodate people. But, as the world's population doubles and trebles, Australia's problem will be supplying enough water. It seems that there are substantial quantities of water beneath the surface in Australia but, getting it to the surface economically and in a usable state, will present many problems. There are problems already in some areas of central Australia. Anything that we, as a government, can do to have energy systems developed which will minimise costs in outback Australia will be of great benefit.

The honourable member for Nhulunbuy spoke about the tax imposed on oil. According to the minister's statement, the federal government receives some \$7000m a year through that tax. That is \$7000m from oil reserves, over and above ordinary company taxation. If I recall rightly, the import parity pricing, which started this great rush to tax fuel, was to be a temporary tax. From memory, it may have been the former coalition government in the federal parliament that introduced that tax. Import parity pricing was to raise, at that time, \$1000m a year and help Australia out of the economic plight it was in. Sadly, it seems that many taxes start life being temporary taxes. This particular tax is now bringing in \$7000m a year and the government has become so dependent on that sort of income that it cannot afford to remove the tax, or that is what it claims.

Mr Smith: It is also very useful in encouraging local prospecting.

Mr PERRON: In response to that interjection by the Leader of the Opposition, there are many ways in which prospecting can be encouraged. I do not know that that is the most effective. There would be many ways in which government could assist companies to get on with the job without increasing the burden on them with cash bidding and that sort of scheme which the industry has been very critical of. Hopefully, in due course, governments will realise that taxing fuel in this way is not really serving Australia's best interests, and they will review the tax on oil. It is an unfair tax and its effects are felt throughout the community in terms of costs.

The member for Nhulunbuy spoke also about the social problems he saw emanating from mining. In this debate, we are talking about a statement on energy and he would have been talking about mining materials, such as uranium, which might lead to the creation of towns where formerly Aborigines were free to roam, much as they have for centuries past. The social disruption that mining can bring causes Aborigines to worry about their own futures and their children's futures, and he said that that might be why such a high percentage of the Territory's prison population is Aboriginal.

I do not propose to say that he is wrong in any way, although I would like him to contemplate the role that alcohol may have played among that 70% of the prison population who are Aborigines. Perhaps the honourable member would say that that is related directly to the social problems that Aborigines experience, and that is where the theories of the honourable member and myself about what underlies the fact that 70% of our prison population are Aborigines might diverge. Certainly, for whatever reason that alcohol is abused, it plays a most significant role in that regard.

Mr Speaker, to conclude my comments on the minister's statement about energy, I simply say that the Northern Territory is in somewhat of a Cinderella state in regard to energy reserves. The Territory has been neglected for so long by the Commonwealth and, since self-government, we have made significant steps forward in getting exploration under way. The advent of the Aboriginal Land Rights Act 2 years prior to self-government, and the various freezes that have been brought in over the years against mining exploration, have left us in the Cinderella state we are in today as far as recognising the true energy potential of the Northern Territory for Australia is concerned. It will be many decades before we realise the full energy potential of the Northern Territory so that it can make its proper contribution to this country and the rest of the world. I am sure that the minister, with his high-profile interest, will do everything in his power to ensure that the Northern Territory capitalises on its energy resources. I support the statement.

Mr COLLINS (Sadadeen): Mr Speaker, the Minister for Mines and Energy said on a couple of occasions this morning that Mr Walsh had called Territorians parasites. A parasite is something which depends upon some other organism and does not contribute anything in any way, shape or form. We may be parasitic, but we are forced to be parasitic. I believe that, if the federal government would get its foot off our neck - and I include in that the coalition government to 1983 as well as the present Labor government - we have the resources to stand on our own feet well and truly. We would contribute far more to Australia than Australia has ever given to the Territory. We might have had a reasonable deal for a few years under the Memorandum of Understanding but, all in all, Australia has given very little to the Territory.

It has been said that the Territory's energy reserves, in terms of uranium, are greater than the Middle East has in terms of oil. I do not necessarily agree with the Minister for Industries and Development that we need to go out and find every uranium deposit in order to determine exactly where we stand. We have located enough deposits now to get on with the job and develop the industry. However, I despair at the behaviour of people of all political persuasions in Canberra. They just do not seem to understand. Having watched 4 Liberal Senators on television on Monday night, I think 'Wet' is the ideal word for them. They really have not got their feet on the ground. I despair at the situation.

The only hope I see, as I said the other day, is that we will get into such an economic mess that the day will come when some of these decisions are rescinded and we get our feet on the ground and go for broke in the uranium industry. We would then enrich our uranium to 3%, the level required for the uranium 235 isotope required in the energy cycle to make up fuel rods. We would take orders from other countries and ship the fuel rods in containers. I follow this industry closely and I know that a steel container has been developed and tested for this purpose. A freight train was driven into it at great speed and the train was wrecked but the container was not damaged. It is, therefore, possible to move this material safely and responsibly across the world, to bring back the rods once they have been spent and to reprocess them into the Australian product synroc which was mentioned by the Minister for Industries and Development.

Synroc, from a chemical point of view, is a mixture of 4 oxides of metals which, when mixed with a highly radioactive material, will bond electronically, atom to atom. It is a material from which water will not leach any of the uranium or fission products. It is as safe a material as one could get. I would be happy if were buried at 100 ft - and that is 10 times deeper than necessary - in the form of synroc at my place at Ti Tree. If that were done, I would seek permission to have a system whereby pipes would be inserted among the synroc material. The pipes would come up in a closed circuit and have heat exchanges with another circuit. I would have a very cheap supply of energy because the radioactive material would still be giving out energy and heat would be generated in the process. Perhaps that would be better than trying to run solar ponds on stations in remote areas where energy is very costly.

That is only a minor part of the use of energy from uranium but it could be examined as a possibility. The energy is definitely there. It is a matter of devising a system of heat exchange so that the water which goes down near the radioactive material does not come in contact with the water in the secondary system which would produce steam or be used to heat the gases in engines such as those that have been developed by the solar ponds people. That is a simple idea that could be used.

There are billions of dollars to be made in the uranium industry. As it so often does in so many areas, Australia supplies only the raw material, the uranium oxide. We miss out on income that could be gained from processing the uranium. In the process, we would be creating a safer world. We have ideal places to store the waste products of the nuclear industry. I am sure the International Atomic Energy Commission would be happy to help us monitor the situation and the world could be assured that the uranium which we were supplying was being used for peaceful purposes.

I heard a story the other day that Australia does not need any nuclear energy because it has enough brown coal for 500 years and enough black coal for 1000 years. We can pollute the world with acid rain. We can forget about the nuclear energy. The day will come when we will be forced to reconsider that whole situation. As several members have said this week, Australia is getting itself into such a mess that the uranium industry will be the only way out. That day may be much closer than many of us realise.

Politics is a funny game. People can be damned at one particular time and then praised at a later stage. Several people mentioned the former Whitlam minister, Rex Connor. I never met the man but I have been told that he was a very difficult person to get on with. He was the Minister for Mines and Energy and people in the mining industry found it very hard to obtain an

audience with him. He would push them aside and was generally considered to be downright rude. However, the man did have a vision of gas pipelines crisscrossing Australia in a national grid. It was scoffed at at the time. When I was younger, I might have scoffed myself because I may have been very partisan at the time and anything that Labor did was most probably wrong. As you get a little older, occasionally you see something which is very good. It was nice to see that he was receiving a little recognition today for a vision that was ahead of its time.

Mr Speaker, I heard some of the arguments from the government side today and I was a little amused by them. I recall that, back in 1983, the Territory Cabinet had made its decision to use coal on Channel Island. The point of putting the station on Channel Island was that it would be accessible to the coal ships. The gas option was regarded as too expensive. One member of this Assembly held out, and I did not get this from him. I forget the exact situation, but it may have been during last year's turmoil that the Minister for Industries and Development said that Cabinet had been determined on coal and that the member for Barkly, who was the Minister for Mines and Energy at that time, had fought in Cabinet for time in which to check out the gas option. He fought the rest of the Cabinet and he was given 6 months. He was told that the government would still go ahead with coal.

During that 6-month period, the member for Barkly, as Minister for Mines and Energy, went overseas to find out about the new technology of putting gas pipelines together. He came back and encouraged the private sector to become involved in financing the project. Today, we have a project of which we can all be very proud. We are not burdened with 32 unions or so between the Queensland coalfields and the bunkers at Channel Island, as we would have been, any one of which could have interrupted our energy supply or the energy supply of Darwin. The unions could have put us in a difficult situation. Today, we have a gas pipeline which has been claimed by the government as its achievement.

I would make it plain that I have nothing to gain personally from this. I was not made a minister under the member for Barkly when he was Chief Minister, but let me say very loudly and very clearly that the truth of the matter is that every foot of that gas pipeline has Ian Tuxworth's name stamped on it. It is absolutely true that, if he had not gone for it and stuck to his guns, but had taken the soft option and said that he was overruled by Cabinet, it would not have happened. I am aware that every thinking Territorian is grateful to him that we have this supply of energy. That pipeline did not cost too many dollars of Territory money, not too many at all. Such of the taxpayers' money as was spent would have gone on overseas trips to meet the right people and perhaps on hosting a few people here and there whilst negotiating for finance for this purely private-enterprise deal. That is the sort of deal that I am interested in seeing the Territory obtain. It is the best deal. It is the sort of deal which the Chief Minister says we have to go for in this term of parliament. I support him absolutely on that.

Members on the government side can be pretty flexible in their thinking at times. I sometimes wonder what would have happened if our first Chief Minister had not been so impetuous. When the manager of Hilton Hotels in America told him that there were not enough things to keep people long in central Australia, he came back and said that we would arrange a deal with Sheraton for hotels in Alice Springs and Darwin and, if we had to invest taxpayers' money, so be it. I will agree that many jobs have been provided as a result of that, but also many people invested their own money and have been hurt.

In one sense, it amuses me to see how each Chief Minister tends to support the one who preceded him. Certainly, the member for Barkly was supportive of the decisions made by his predecessor. In the light of all events, I wonder today whether he would have been quite so happy to do so again. However, I bet, if the chances were there today, and we were looking at encouraging international hotels to establish here, the present Chief Minister would be out there working to see if he could not encourage private-sector investment right from the word go. It might have required much more effort, but he would be in a much better position. As a result of our contingent liabilities and the difficult economic climate that has been brought about by federal government policies, the present government has no option but to seek private enterprise deals. In many ways I am very glad about that. I believe it is the way we should go.

Mr Speaker, I trust that, in due course, members of this Assembly will recognise the fact that the member for Barkly was the man who took on Cabinet single-handed and put together a deal on the gas pipeline for which we can be very grateful. We could have been burdened with a coal-fired power station on Channel Island, belching smoke and polluting the atmosphere. Instead, we have a pretty good deal. We had a man of vision there. He made a few mistakes politically, and that is for sure, but this is not the time to go into that. However, let us give credit where it is due, and it is due to Ian Tuxworth in relation to that gas pipeline. It would be good to see the partisan politics dropped and due recognition given to that fact. I am sure that the Territory, and the Assembly would be better places if we did that.

Debate adjourned.

DISCUSSION OF MATTER OF PUBLIC IMPORTANCE
Utilisation of NT Pastoral Land

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Honourable members, I have received the following letter from the member for MacDonnell:

Dear Mr Speaker,

Pursuant to standing order 94, I propose for discussion as a definite matter of public importance this morning, the following matter: the inability of the government to institute the legal and administrative arrangements necessary for the effective utilisation of the Northern Territory's pastoral land.

Yours sincerely
Neil Bell
Member for MacDonnell

Is the proposed discussion supported? It is supported.

Mr BELL (MacDonnell): Mr Deputy Speaker, there can be little doubt that 1 of the most precious resources of the Northern Territory is its lands. In the discussion of this particular matter of public importance, the opposition wishes to concentrate the attention of members particularly on the pastoral lands. The pastoral industry, generally, strikes to the very heart of the access of western European culture into the Northern Territory. After the coming of the overland telegraph, it represented the first private, economic investment in the Northern Territory. It represented people fighting against some of the harshest conditions in the world to establish markets and properties in order to build an industry that has been subject to considerable problems.

There has always been an intense relationship between government and pastoral lessees throughout the history of the development of the pastoral industry. I believe that, in the context of this debate, it is of great importance that the opposition draw the attention of members to a variety of concerns that have been brought to the attention of Territorians in various contexts over the last few years. Before I address the particular areas that will be referred to by the opposition, let me just enunciate some principles that we believe should guide the thinking of all Territorians when it comes to a consideration of appropriate legal and administrative frameworks for the use of pastoral lands.

The first principle is that we must ensure that the resources of pastoral land are used to produce whatever is humanly and technologically possible to meet the needs of all the people of the Territory. That is an important principle.

The second principle is that access to those land resources should be as equitable as possible and that all Territorians, indeed all Australians, should be able to use those leasehold lands on as equitable a basis as possible, to produce whatever may be possible. That is the second principle: a relatively equitable access.

The third principle is that those precious land resources should not be degraded but, wherever possible, enhanced. That is the framework within which we want to discuss this matter of public importance. First, where possible, we have to use the land resource productively. Secondly, we have to do so on as equitable a basis as possible. Thirdly, we have to act to make sure that those land resources are not degraded.

In this particular debate, I intend to address the pastoral inspection system and some other related concerns. The pastoral inspection system has the objective of ensuring that land resources are used to the maximum benefit. That relates to the first of the principles I mentioned. The pastoral inspection system also has to ensure that land resources are not degraded. These are competing principles. As in many areas of public administration and of human life generally, there are competing principles which have to be balanced. Good public administration consists of striking an appropriate balance between the competing interests of different sections of the population. In my contribution to the discussion of this matter of public importance, I will be concentrating on the best possible use of pastoral land resources, the question of possible degradation and the extent to which the pastoral inspection system serves to meet those particular ends.

The Leader of the Opposition will address the second of those principles. He will address the question of how equitable the use of those pastoral lands is. In case that concept is not familiar to honourable members, let me talk specifically about sections of the Crown Lands Act which prevent the aggregation of pastoral land. We have enshrined in the Crown Lands Act provisions which prevent any individual from leasing particular areas of land. As I said, the Leader of the Opposition will address that particular issue.

There has been considerable interest in the pastoral inspection system during recent months. It has been the subject of public debate and interest within the pastoral industry for many years. Mr Speaker, I am sure that, with your experience as a representative of an extensive rural electorate, you will be aware of some of the contentious issues associated with the pastoral inspection system. A code of conduct was promulgated as recently as 1985, under the ministry of the member for Nightcliff, now the Chief Minister. That

has now become particularly contentious and I believe that some of the issues surrounding that should be aired in this debate.

Off the back of the proverbial truck, the opposition has been able to obtain some quite interesting departmental and ministerial correspondence. In case honourable members are in any doubt as to whether the pastoral inspection system is contentious, let me just allow them to hear the contents of a letter of June 1985 from the Executive Director of the Cattlemen's Association to the our present Chief Minister:

Dear Mr Hatton,

You will recall our meeting in your office on Monday 27 June during which we discussed several issues of importance to the members of the NT Cattlemen's Association. In particular, we discussed at that meeting a need to have prepared a code of conduct outlining, among other things, responsibilities of government employees who visit or inspect pastoral leases and a need to have lessees provided with copies of government inspectors' reports for comments before the report becomes a permanent record. On both issues, you concurred with our position and registered an intent to initiate ministerial direction to relevant departmental officers. I have been instructed by the association's executive committee to formally thank you for a most rapid and positive response to our concerns. It is extremely gratifying to deal with a minister who makes informed practical decisions.

Yours sincerely,
Cliff Emerson
Executive Director.

I do not receive letters of such heavy endorsement from the Northern Territory Cattlemen's Association. Obviously, a cosy relationship exists between the minister and the executive director of the association, and good luck to the pair of them. However, let me contrast that letter with a memorandum from the Director of the Rural Land Management Branch of the Department of Lands in relation to this letter. It is headed, 'Cliff Emerson's letter concerning code of conduct'. I now quote from the memorandum:

The proposal to have pastoral inspection reports sent to lessees for comment prior to becoming a permanent file record will lead to protracted negotiations and all sorts of representations, as we have evidenced in the case of Koolpinyah Station Pty Ltd, Claravale and Mr Heaslip's leases. Surely, where there is a simple default problem, this will be the subject of a letter or default notice and will already have been discussed with the lessee or manager. In the case of perpetual conversions, any matters which may jeopardise the success of an application or should be rectified or resolved to enhance prospects of an application or have again been discussed, a lessee should be left in a clear position to assess the requirements of the legislation and decide whether he wishes to proceed with an application at any time during processing.

The problems with opening up comments by lessees I think are obvious, let alone the added administrative workload and delays that would be experienced in processing perpetual lease conversions, other actions and transactions. A code that reduces the policeman image of all

inspecting government officers should not reduce the government's information base to a degree where we will be in a poorer position to respond to the industry, the government or any other parties who may need information or assistance.

Issues such as foreign investments, size of pastoral holdings, drought relief, abuse of the land resource, range management and progress under the disease eradication program are under everyday scrutiny.

That is some of the advice that came from within the department. I draw honourable members' attention to such phrases as 'protracted negotiations' and 'the problems with opening up comment by lessees are obvious'. The Director of the Rural Land Management Branch had an obvious concern about the department's activities being hampered. He was, of course, firmly stepped on. We are bringing this situation into the murky light of day. I am quite sure the minister would prefer not to see that happen but the fact is that there are serious problems with the pastoral inspection system. The minister has been receiving conflicting advice from within his department and there are serious concerns in the community about the capacity of the pastoral inspection system to satisfy the sort of principles of good government administration that I have already referred to.

Let us enumerate the concerns about the pastoral inspection system. First, there is the practice referred to in those 2 documents I have quoted, under which a pastoral lessee must be advised of a particular report thus creating an obligation on the department which is administratively difficult and does not necessarily enhance the lessee's knowledge or understanding of what is involved in the particular inspection. Another concern which has been the subject of public debate, particularly in the lead-up to the last election, has been the question of the accompaniment of pastoral inspectors by a lessee, his solicitors and, in one particular case, by the inspector's superiors. A related issue is the direction of pastoral inspectors by senior officers to amend reports that they have prepared.

Mr MANZIE: A point of order, Mr Speaker! The member is getting into the realm of a matter which is presently before the High Court and, as such, comes under the sub judice convention that this Assembly has followed for many years. He is a member with sufficient debating skill not to need to stoop to scoring cheap political points at the expense of a very important convention. Clearly, I refer to the Warumungu and Kenbi land claims which have been the subject of a judgment handed down by the Federal Court which is now being appealed against in the High Court by both the Northern Land Council and the Commonwealth of Australia. I refer to Pettifer's House of Representatives Practice, at page 464, because our own standing order, which is a general rule, states that:

In all particular cases not provided for hereafter or by sessional or other orders or practice of the Assembly, resort shall be had to the practice of the House of Representatives of the Parliament of the Commonwealth of Australia in force for the time being, which shall be followed as far as can be applied.

Mr Speaker, the relevant House of Representatives practice is laid down by Pettifer on page 464, and I will quote from that because it is quite important and I believe it should be laid out in full.

Notwithstanding its fundamental right and duty to consider any matter if it is thought to be in the public interest, the House imposes a restriction on itself in the case of matters awaiting or under adjudication in a court of law. This is known as the sub judice convention. The convention is that, subject to the right of the House to legislate on any matter, matters awaiting adjudication in a court of law should not be brought forward in debate, motions or questions. Having no standing order of its own relating specifically to sub judice matters the House has been guided by its own practice and that of the House of Commons as declared by resolutions ...

Mr BELL: A point of order, Mr Speaker! I believe that the honourable Attorney-General is bringing up quite tendentious points in order to use up very scarce debating time available for these particular issues.

Mr SPEAKER: There is no point of order.

Mr MANZIE: Thank you, Mr Speaker.

As I said earlier, obviously the member has the skill to enable him to conduct debate in accordance with the subject of this MPI, without referring to any matters which might be before the High Court. He is trying to resort to cheap point scoring. This is very important, and I will continue to quote from Pettifer.

The origin of the convention appears to have been the desire of Parliament to prevent comment and debate from exerting an influence on juries and from prejudicing the position of parties and witnesses in court proceedings. The essential difference between the sub judice convention and contempt of court is seen as that: '... the former is imposed voluntarily by Parliament upon itself and exercised subject to the discretion of the Chair, with the object of forestalling prejudice of proceedings in the courts. The courts of law on the other hand protect themselves from prejudicial comment outside Parliament by the exercise post hoc of their powers to punish contempts'.

Mr Speaker, it is by this self-imposed restriction that the House not only prevents its own deliberations from prejudicing the course of justice, but prevents reports of its proceedings from being used to do so. I believe that it is very important that we follow the practice that this Assembly has always followed. It is quite a sensible practice and self-imposed. It is in the public interest and it is to prevent prejudice to the position of parties before the court. It is a convention in the Westminster system that matters that are before the courts are not raised in debate in Parliament. Accordingly, I ask that no reference to a matter that is before the High Court be allowed to be raised in this Assembly.

Mr BELL: Mr Speaker, that is quite ridiculous. If all the matters that could possibly be before the courts of this land were to be taken into consideration, this Assembly would never sit. That is the plain fact of the matter. I will get on to the question of the use of the sub judice convention in a moment, but there can be little doubt that the workability of the pastoral inspection system ...

Mr SPEAKER: Is the honourable member for MacDonnell speaking to the point of order?

Mr BELL: Yes, Mr Speaker, I am speaking to the point of order. It is important for me to cast this particular matter in the context of public debate so that I can make my comments about the sub judice convention and its sensible application.

I notice that the Attorney-General has chosen this occasion to bring out his beautiful new green copy of Pettifer and quote from it rather selectively, but I trust that he has read it quite thoroughly. As he should know, the fact of the matter is that the sub judice convention exists - and he referred to it himself - in order to ensure that jury trials are not prejudiced; to make sure that the 12 good persons and true who sit in judgment in jury trials are not affected by public debates such as this. The sub judice convention does not apply in the same terms to cases that are to be heard before judges alone. Let me draw honourable members' attention to a comment from Speaker Snedden who, in ruling on the sub judice convention, had this to say:

There is a long line of authority from the courts which indicates that the courts and judges of the courts do not regard themselves as such delicate flowers that they are likely to be prejudiced in their decisions by a debate that goes on in this House. I am quite sure that is true, especially in the case of a Court of Appeal or, if the matter were to go beyond that, the High Court. I do not think those justices would regard themselves as having been influenced by the debate that may occur here.

Mr Speaker, if that particular comment from Speaker Snedden in the House of Representatives can be held to be true, how much more is it true in a small parliament such as ours? I believe fundamentally that the questions raised about the pastoral inspection system and the context in which we are debating one of the most important resources should be allowed to proceed. Surely questions that may or may not be before courts really are not a matter of concern as far as affecting any appeals before the High Court are concerned? The question of whether a pastoral inspection system is operating and operating well is something that should be debated now.

Mr EDE: Mr Speaker, I would also like to make the point that the Attorney-General rose in this matter to bring the issue of the appeal to the High Court rather than the actual operations of the Aboriginal Land Commissioner himself under the sub judice convention. To the best of my knowledge, 2 aspects were involved in the appeal: the Warumungu land claim and the Kenbi land claim. The verdict was handed down in respect of both those matters. It was the aspects relating to the Kenbi claim that were appealed to the High Court. The appeal had nothing to do with the Warumungu claim.

It is drawing an extremely long bow to link the issue of stock inspections with the Warumungu claim. It is to draw an even longer bow to link the Warumungu land claim with the Kenbi claim because the issues were completely different. The issues eventually came down not to a matter of bias but rather to the relationship of the commissioner with the Cabinet members, past and present, in the Northern Territory government. It was not an issue which has anything whatsoever to do with pastoral lands or anything to do with central Australia. I believe that, on that basis alone, the sub judice convention cannot be seen to apply and, as such, the point of order should be negated.

Mr MANZIE: Mr Speaker, it is extremely disappointing to realise that the member for Stuart has not read the judgment of the Federal Court, nor has he made himself aware of the claim that has been lodged with the High Court for

leave to appeal in relation to this matter. It is disappointing that he can rise to discuss such a serious matter without having full knowledge.

This is a matter which is within your discretion to rule upon, Mr Speaker. Pettifer is quite specific: 'Matters awaiting or under the judication of a civil court shall not be referred to in motions, debate or questions from the time the case is set down for trial or otherwise brought before the court, nor from the time of the writs being issued'. Further, Pettifer states: 'The House recognises that the courts are the proper place to judge alleged breaches of law. It is a restraint born out of respect by parliament for the judicial arm of government, a democratic respect for the rule of law and the proper upholding of the law by fair trial proceedings'.

Mr Speaker, the High Court is the proper place for all the matters relating to Warumungu and Kenbi to be canvassed. This is not a proper place for them to be canvassed. It has been laid down as the practice of the House of Representatives and of the House of Commons, and it has been a practice of this parliament, not to debate matters which are sub judice, and I believe it would be quite a serious blow to the democratic process if we moved away from that.

It is very disappointing that the member for MacDonnell and the member for Stuart are unable to debate this matter of public importance, after canvassing equitable land use and land degradation, without referring to a specific matter which is before the High Court. This shows a complete lack of an understanding. The member for Stuart says that we can separate these matters. I will say again that he has not read the judgment of the Federal Court, because the verdict regarding Kenbi was based on what occurred in the Warumungu hearing. The matters are interrelated. They cannot be separated and the grounds of appeal that have been lodged by the Northern Land Council and the Commonwealth of Australia actually state the 2 matters together. I would urge the honourable member to read those grounds of appeal because, if he is raising these matters when it is inappropriate to do so, he should at least have some knowledge and understanding of what he is talking about. It is an indictment of him that he has not done so and I believe that we should uphold the convention that this Assembly follows the procedures of the House of Representatives and the House of Commons.

Mr SMITH: Mr Speaker, the Attorney-General's comments on this matter suggest that a group of judges of the High Court in Canberra wait anxiously each day for their daily fix of the Northern Territory Hansard which so impresses them with the wisdom it contains that they become prejudiced in their deliberations on any matters that are debated in this Assembly. Of course that is not the case, as was recognised by Mr Speaker Snedden in relation to the House of Representatives. I do not want to go over his words again but he said essentially that judges of the High Court are not delicate flowers. They are able to deal with comments made in parliaments and, because of their legal position, experience and training, they are able to ignore whatever may be said in such forums, even in the unlikely case that they actually read transcripts of their proceedings.

Mr Manzie: What about the convention?

Mr SMITH: I am trying to tell you what the convention is. As outlined by Mr Speaker Snedden, the sub judice convention does not have the same application in relation to matters before the High Court as it does to matters that are tried by jury, as happens in criminal cases. That is one level of the argument, Mr Speaker, and I would put it to you that, in the absence of a

rule of our own, the convention expressed by Mr Speaker Snedden indicates quite clearly that there is no point of order.

My second point is that this debate is not about the Warumungu land claim. We are debating the pastoral inspection system and the use of pastoral land in the Northern Territory. I do not deny that the question of pastoral land use came up in the Warumungu land claim, as did the questions of the growth of Tennant Creek, of stock routes and stock reserves and of land rights themselves. As the member for Stuart has said, excisions are central to this whole issue. The Warumungu land claim has been continuing for 8 years and, the way it is proceeding at present, it is likely to continue for another 7 or 8 years. We cannot allow a debate in this Assembly on so many important issues to be stopped by a ridiculous attempt to impose a sub judice rule.

Mr Speaker, if you accept that the Warumungu land claim is sub judice, it is your job in this instance to draw the line and to identify the central elements that are sub judice. Clearly, there are elements outside that central kernel which, whilst they may relate to the Warumungu land claim, are not essential to the legal argument. These are the matters which we are debating today. They may have come up in relation to Warumungu, but they are not essential to the Warumungu land claim. For this Assembly to be deprived, on that basis, of the opportunity to debate a very important topic, the use of pastoral lands in the Northern Territory, would be something little short of disaster.

Mr BELL: Mr Speaker, I was aware that the sub judice issue might come up and spoke to you personally about this before the Assembly sat today. I spoke to the Attorney-General during the morning's proceedings. I have quite deliberately eschewed any reference to Mr Justice Maurice or the comments of the pastoral inspector, Mr Graeme Hockey. However, as I said in my reference to departmental correspondence, a wide variety of ancillary issues have come up in respect of that case. Deliberately, I have steered clear of the central issues in the case, but I believe that general comments about the pastoral inspection system, whether they have come up during the Warumungu land claim inquiry or not, are fair game for debate in this Assembly.

Mr MANZIE: Mr Speaker, it is very disappointing to hear the remarks of the member for MacDonnell. I thought he had a greater respect for convention.

Mr Bell: I do. That is why I put a day's work into studying it.

Mr MANZIE: He just wants to get into a mud-slinging role. I will not say much about the Leader of the Opposition. He raised his voice. He thumped his desk. He did not understand what he was talking about. He said the matter did not relate to the Warumungu land claim hearing or the Kenbi land claim hearing, but he does not want to know. Again, I really urge him to do some reading.

Mr Bell: Stop playing the man, Daryl. I was not doing that, nor were any of us.

Mr MANZIE: Mr Speaker, the convention is quite clear. I will just go through this very slowly for the benefit of the member for MacDonnell. Pettifer says: 'The House not only prevents its own deliberations from prejudicing the course of justice but prevents reports of its proceedings from being used to do so'. That is a pretty clear-cut convention and it relates to the rights of the parties involved.

The cheap point-scoring of the member for MacDonnell has achieved its aim. He can probably go home thinking he has done very well because he has achieved a headline or obtained some coverage in Hansard.

Mr Bell: My lifetime ambition!

Mr MANZIE: However, if he does not have the ability to debate the subject of his matter of public importance without referring to a specific matter, he is obviously not fit to raise any subject for debate in this Assembly. I think that almost any member here would have no problem in keeping a matter that is in front of the courts separate from the subject of a debate. I am sure that nobody will take issue with matters of substance being raised in debate and discussed logically. I think that he has the ability to do that and, Mr Speaker, I would urge you to restrict his debating to that issue.

Mr SPEAKER: I take the points raised by the Attorney-General and his contention that discussion or reference to this case may prejudice the position of parties before the court. It has been a practice in this Assembly that, when discussion by the Assembly of a matter before the court or the reporting of such a discussion may - and I emphasise 'may' - prejudice the position of parties before a court, no discussion on the matter is permitted. I intend to maintain that practice and I rule that no further reference to a matter before the court may be made.

Mr SMITH (Opposition Leader): Mr Speaker, I move that the member for MacDonnell be granted an extension of time of 5 minutes to allow him to complete his remarks. It was approximately 5 minutes from the end of his speech that this point of order was raised.

Motion agreed to.

Mr BELL (MacDonnell): I thank honourable members for their indulgence in that regard. The last few comments I wanted to make were to show that a variety of issues were associated with the question of the pastoral inspection system, that related to the maintenance of that land resource and the relationship between pastoral inspectors and lessees. I have drawn clear attention to a divergence of views within the department in that regard. For that reason, I believe that the constructive proposal that I want to outline in the time left available to me is something that the government will accede to.

I am proposing that a select committee should be set up by this Assembly to look at the question of the utilisation of pastoral lands in the Northern Territory. Such a select committee would serve this Assembly well. Honourable members will be aware of the Martin Report on the tenure of pastoral lands and the study being carried out by the GRM Pastoral Company. Some of the issues raised should be referred to such a select committee. I resented the Attorney-General's comments that the opposition had less than constructive aims in raising this matter of public importance. I believe that the setting up of such a select committee by this Assembly would serve the good purpose of obtaining input from the various sections of the Territory community.

Mr Hatton: Why didn't you move that?

Mr BELL: I am doing that now. I am foreshadowing that, on the next general business day - and I presume that, by the time the next general business day comes around, we will not have to worry about matters that may or

may not be sub judice - the opposition will move that a select committee of this Assembly be set up to consider various legal and administrative arrangements associated with pastoral lands. It is in those terms that we raise this matter of public importance. Since so much has been ruled out of order that could have been available for comment, I trust that there will be a positive response from the government.

Mr HANRAHAN (Lands and Housing): Mr Speaker, may I say at the outset how disappointed I am with this matter of public importance. In fact, I could only describe it as farcical. The member for MacDonnell stated quite clearly how he intended to address this matter.

I agree with him that land is a great resource. He said that, within the legal and administrative framework, he would like to see 3 principles in operation: land must be used to meet the needs of all of the Northern Territory, access and use of land should be on an equitable basis, and land resources generally should not be degraded. That is fine, but he spent 15 minutes without touching on a single point raised by him as being the main points of contention in his matter of public importance.

Use of matters of public importance discussions is what has been degraded in this Assembly by honourable members opposite. I give notice that I am contemplating a reference to the Standing Orders Committee which will address the issues revolving around the use or misuse of standing orders, in particular those relating to matters of public importance.

The member for MacDonnell trotted out an interdepartmental memo. In fact, that memo was trotted out by the Leader of the Opposition during the election campaign and was printed in the media. It is nothing new. He also read to honourable members of this Assembly a letter from the President of the Cattlemen's Association addressed to the Chief Minister thanking him for his excellent efforts in sorting out a code of conduct. I fully support the action of the Chief Minister.

To show how ignorant members opposite are, in particular the member for MacDonnell, let me outline for him what his matter of public importance purports to do. It states that the legal and administrative arrangements necessary for the effective utilisation of the Northern Territory's pastoral land do not exist. In other words, the government of the day is negligent in its duties. That is utter rubbish! For the benefit of members opposite, I will outline some of the procedures adopted by this government relevant to the use of pastoral land. Let me start with the role and functions of the pastoral inspector. The role of the inspector is to enable various types of applications required by statute to proceed - in other words, to inspect and report. His role involves the administration of rural and pastoral lease covenants, perpetual lease applications, subdivision lease applications, lease variation applications, rental appraisals, transfer applications being expedited without inspection, stocking level and range land condition assessments, drought condition assessments and keeping lessees in touch with land issues relating to pastoral and rural industries.

The department provides basic property mapping details for the updating of topographical mapping by Mapnet as part of national mapping. It also provides updated information and maps to other government departments and agencies, private enterprise, the Bushfires Council and gas pipeline communication and construction authorities. The Department of Lands and Housing, at the request of the Department of Industries and Development and the Conservation Commission, provides up-to-date inspection reports of pastoral or rural

properties where requests are made by this department for comment or input in respect of subdivision and perpetual conversion applications or any other rural land use or allocation proposal.

The department responds to many ministerial requests for officer appreciations using, in particular, the local knowledge of the pastoral inspection officers. It responds to requests from Aboriginal groups to inspect their lands with a view to developing or rehabilitating a pastoral enterprise - for example, Robinson River, Hooker Creek, Peppimenarti and Palumpa. In drought situations, it determines the distribution of stock within a lease and, more specifically, upon land surrounding each watering point so that potential degradation can be monitored. The department provides comment and assistance to the Department of Industries and Development in terms of reporting infestations of various weeds. The department services the Land Board and detects and reports soil erosion and environmental damage to the appropriate authorities. Property reports and plans are provided to facilitate preparation of BTEC programs.

Mr Speaker, those are some of the matters that are addressed by pastoral inspectors in the Department of Lands and that is part of the function of ensuring that the use of pastoral land in the Territory is up to scratch. No mention was made by honourable members opposite of the roles that the Conservation Commission or the Department of Primary Production play in the management of pastoral lands. Those very significant factors were completely forgotten by the member for MacDonnell.

Might I also add that there are 2 other bodies that look after pastoral land, advise the government and make decisions and recommendations. One of them has been in existence for quite some time and makes an absolute mockery of the member for MacDonnell's suggestion that he wants a select committee to investigate all these weird and wonderful things that he dreams up when he has nothing better to do. I refer to the Rural Land Use Advisory Committee which was established by Cabinet in May 1986. It is interesting to look at the Rural Land Use Advisory Committee's terms of reference. It is to provide:

1. advice to the Minister for Lands and Housing on any matter which is referred to it by the minister, including proposals for future use of rural land, land use management and development proposals which relate to rural land and which are of concern or interest to industry or sectional groups, planning of regional rural land use, and any other matters related to rural lands which the minister may think fit; and
2. input from the industry and sectional groups to assist the Minister for Lands and Housing in policy review and formulation in respect of issues relating to rural land.

Mr Speaker, this committee has: considered suitable amendments to the Crown Lands Act in relation to the minister giving permission to clear large tracts of pastoral land; identified land available for alternative land use, including multiple land use; determined the extent of surveying of pastoral boundaries which will be required with freeholdings; dealt with finding out if the improvement of native pastures is being examined; investigated rating systems in equivalent situations in other parts of Australia to determine an equitable system for freehold pastoral properties; and dealt with submissions to be sought from mining councils on problems with freeholding pastoral properties. It goes on and on. That committee was established by Cabinet in May 1986. Obviously, members opposite had absolutely no idea of its existence.

Mr Speaker, another body has been established in the Northern Territory to deal with land matters and it reflects the government's recognition of its legal and administrative duties concerning the management of all land in the Territory. I refer to the Land Board. Perhaps the member for MacDonnell has not heard of that either. The Land Board is an administrative tribunal which advises the Minister for Lands and Housing on matters relating to the Crown Lands Act. In relation to leases, the board considers reports of pastoral inspectors, reports of soil conservation commissioners, direct evidence of lessees and managers, reports of the Conservation Commission, reports of the Department of Industries and Development and submissions from affected parties. Also, it carries out its own direct inspections.

We have 3 bodies working in the Northern Territory to ensure that the government's responsibilities are managed correctly. Nevertheless, we have this stupid matter of public importance which purports to say that no action is being taken by the government. In fact, it even suggests that the government is derelict in its duties. That is plainly ridiculous. Any sensible person can see that the members opposite, particularly the member for MacDonnell, simply do not know what they are talking about. The member for MacDonnell has admitted that he knows nothing about the management of land resources in the Northern Territory.

The member opposite spoke about the role and functions of the pastoral inspector and a code of conduct for pastoral inspection officers. What upsets the member for MacDonnell most is that the Chief Minister should have seen fit to ensure that procedures are in place for pastoral inspection which benefit all parties. I will read the code of conduct for pastoral officers.

This code proposes guidelines to ensure that all pastoral lessees in the Northern Territory are dealt with in a fair and impartial manner by pastoral officers from the Department of Lands. It embodies current practices and other matters which arise from discussions between the Minister for Lands and the Cattlemen's Association of the Northern Territory.

There are several types of inspections carried out by pastoral officers and these result in differing types of reports. Inspections are made for the following purposes: routine periodic inspection, inspection following application for subdivision, inspection following application for conditions of variation of lease, inspections arising from departmental recommendations for land to be added to a pastoral lease under section 10B of the Crown Lands Act, inspections arising from default action, inspections leading to evidence in Aboriginal land claim cases, inspection following application by the lessee for conversion to perpetual lease and inspections arising from directions given to the Land Board by the minister - one-off inspections which are usually of an ad hoc nature and arise from specific requests.

Regardless of the type of inspection, the following procedure is to be followed: advise the lessee or the lessee's manager in advance of both the expected date of inspection and its purpose. This notification is to be either by letter or by telegram and will confirm verbal arrangements made by telephone. On arrival on the lease, and wherever practicable, contact is to be made with the manager or owner and an interview is to be conducted prior to any inspection being carried out. At this interview, the manager/owner will be asked whether he wishes to accompany the pastoral officer during the inspection.

Note: where a lease is in default, the manager/owner may wish to avoid the officer seeing certain things. A joint inspection is not intended to restrict the movements of the pastoral officer on the lease and this intent should be conveyed to the manager/owner during the initial interview.

Following the completion of the inspection, the pastoral officer will discuss the results and findings of the inspection with the manager/owner. This, to date, included the officer discussing his intended recommendation and the actions that may or will follow and particularly those responses required by the pastoralist to default notices that may be sent. This definitely allays fears and reactions that default notices produce if they turn up out of the blue.

Mr Speaker, honourable members opposite have taken exception to this point and that highlights their absolute ignorance. If they have contrary information, it is wrong. Pastoral inspectors have always made a copy of their reports available and have always discuss the implications of a pending report with the owner/manager/lessee of the property. I will continue.

2 reports to be prepared: 1 factual and 1 in respect of recommendations. On completion of the factual report, a copy is to be sent to the lessee for comment within 14 days. For routine inspections, the recommendations of the report may be included. For all other inspections, where a decision is required by either the minister or his delegate or which would be subject to a recommendation from the Land Board to the minister, recommendations will be in the form of a separate memorandum and will not be sent to the pastoral lessee or his representatives. In cases where, for specific reasons, it is known the results of an inspection will be contentious, the manager or owner must be given the opportunity to be present during the inspection. Further, on no account, should the inspection proceed prior to personal contact being made. In such cases, it may be desirable for a senior officer of the department to accompany the pastoral officer and adequate written notice, say 2 months minimum, must be given.

Mr Speaker, I am aware of numerous files packed with movement requisitions for various senior officers of the Department of Lands to accompany pastoral inspectors over so many years past that it is plainly ridiculous to argue that this practice is contentious or indicates that the government has been in any way negligent in its duties.

Now I will return to my original point. This does not qualify as a matter of public importance when it is raised in the context in which the member for MacDonnell has raised it. In laying down his principles for a legal and administrative framework for the administration of land, not once did he address the issues. In fact, this is no more than a cheap, nasty, political trick that has done no more than waste the time of this Assembly. Mr Speaker, I put members opposite on notice again. I will consider a reference to the Standing Orders Committee to discuss matters of public importance in order to ensure that they are not used frivolously in this Assembly. Matters of definite public importance should be exactly that and not a whingeing forum for members opposite. They have the opportunity to raise such matters on general business days or during the adjournment debate each day in this Assembly. This government is not going to tolerate tripe like this which is made even worse when the member for MacDonnell, the member who has raised this matter of public importance, cannot even address the issues.

To suggest that the government has been negligent in the organisation of a framework for the administration of all public purpose land or pastoral land is plainly ridiculous. As a little lolly or carrot at the end of his speech, the member for MacDonnell had the audacity to suggest that a select committee was required. He thinks we need a select committee of this Assembly to look into his own outrageous statements. I have shown quite clearly that he is totally and utterly ignorant of the facts relating to the administration of land in the Northern Territory. Let me go back over it.

Pastoral inspection officers do a good job. They have a wide and varied role and they report adequately to government. We have a Rural Land Use Advisory Committee which was established in May 1986. I have touched on some of the issues it has dealt with in advising government and the department on matters of policy. We have the Land Board as well. I would like to hear members opposite tell me what exactly is the basis of this tripe they have raised. What better system of land administration do they propose? I would also like them to address the point that I have not raised in any great detail: the primary function of the Northern Territory Conservation Commission in matters of soil erosion, conservation and the environment, and the role played by the former Department of Primary Production in oversighting the management and effective control of disease as well as soil erosion matters on pastoral properties. The member for MacDonnell made no mention of those things, nor did he mention the 3 bodies already established by this government to ensure that land matters are dealt with properly, effectively and legally. It is obvious that the administration of land in the Northern Territory is beyond contention and such tripe as has been trotted out in this Assembly today will not be tolerated again.

Mr SMITH (Opposition Leader): Mr Speaker, the major problem with power-hungry little men who do not understand the principles of parliament is that they are always searching for ways to limit debate and to limit the possibility of raising matters of public importance. I want to put the minister on notice that, if he wants to make a reference to the Standing Orders Committee, he will have a mighty fight on his hands. Matters of public importance in this Assembly are one of the few opportunities that the opposition has to raise matters which are causing concern to the public of the Northern Territory, and we will fight very vigorously indeed on that principle.

I want to make one quick reference to the code of conduct because it is a point which demonstrates our concern with the limitations placed on pastoral inspectors by this new code. It relates to the last paragraph of the code, which reads as follows: 'In cases where, for specific reasons, it is known that the results of an inspection will be contentious, the owner or manager must be given the opportunity to be present during the inspection. Further, on no account should the inspection proceed prior to personal contact being made'. I will read that last sentence again: 'Further, on no account should the inspection proceed prior to personal contact being made'. That is the problem. We are all aware of cases where pastoral inspectors have been considerably inconvenienced by the refusal of the lessee or the manager of the property to turn up for an inspection that was arranged more than 2 months previously. That is one of the major concerns that the opposition has. That is one of the reasons we raised this discussion and it is an aspect of that code of conduct which needs to be changed. There are good things in the code of conduct, but it has been shown that unscrupulous lessees have been prepared to manipulate that last clause to defer considerably the time of inspection of their property, sometimes for 5 to 6 months. That is not good enough and it should be changed.

I want to speak specifically about something that is not recent, like a letter or memo dated last year, but a piece of legislation that, as far as I can ascertain, was introduced into the Assembly in 1958. It deals with the ability of people to control pastoral lands in the Northern Territory. The end result of this piece of legislation is that 1 man in the Northern Territory currently controls 44 000 km² of Territory pastoral land when, in theory, the Crown Lands Act restricts any 1 person's interest to 12 960 km² or, with the minister's approval, 20 000 km². Given that limitation, one might ask: how can that happen? The act provides that no single person can have a beneficial interest in more than 12 960 km² or, with the minister's permission, 20 000 km². Beneficial interest is defined as follows:

a person who holds or has a beneficial interest in pastoral land, jointly or in common with 1 or more other persons, is deemed to have a beneficial interest in an area of that land which bears the same proportion to the whole area as that person's undivided share in the lease or interest bears to the whole of that lease or interest.

Put simply, if a person has 25% of the shares of a leaseholding company, for the purposes of this legislation he is regarded as controlling 25% of the land.

Mr Speaker, this has only come to notice recently, because of the operations and activities of the Sherwin Pastoral Company. The Sherwin Pastoral Company is a public company, recently listed, which controls 9 cattle properties in the Northern Territory: Wallamunga, Burrundudu, Victoria River Downs, Creswell Downs, Anthony Lagoon, Eva Downs, Mungabroom, Munda Bore and Walhallow. The Sherwin Pastoral Company controls pastoral land totalling 44 086 km² in the Northern Territory.

Mr HATTON: A point of order, Mr Deputy Speaker! If the Leader of the Opposition is going to make accusations, I think he should be able to prove them. I would be prepared to dispute the specific allegations he is making. He is suggesting that there has been a breach of the law of the Northern Territory by that.

Mr Smith: That is not right.

Mr HATTON: I am sorry, Mr Deputy Speaker, but the law of the Northern Territory says that, under no circumstances, can any organisation have a beneficial interest in more than 20 000 km² of land, with or without ministerial approval. The Leader of the Opposition is suggesting a particular company has control of 44 000 km² of the Northern Territory. If the Leader of the Opposition makes that allegation, he had better be correct legally and he should prove that fact in the Assembly because it has been a matter of considerable contention in the Northern Territory.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: There is no point of order.

Mr SMITH: I am amazed by the ignorance of the Chief Minister.

Mr Hatton: Oh, indeed! Be careful!

Mr SMITH: First of all, I am not saying that there is any impropriety on the part of the Sherwin Pastoral Company. What it is doing is perfectly legal. But I am saying that the Sherwin Pastoral Company controls 44 086 km² of land. My reference for that is the Sherwin Pastoral Company prospectus, which was issued last year when the company was floated. Further, I am saying

that it is an unexpected consequence of the 1958 legislation, as the Chief Minister has so aptly demonstrated by his so-called point of order, and it is something that we ought to be aware of. We should be concerned about that, and we ought to make a judgment at some time about whether it is a good or bad thing. That is what I am saying, Mr Deputy Speaker. If the Chief Minister sat down and listened, he might learn a few more things about the Sherwin Pastoral Company and its operations in the Northern Territory that could be of interest to him.

Mr Hanrahan: Will you say all that outside the Assembly?

Mr SMITH: Of course.

Mr Hanrahan: Good, answer it.

Mr SMITH: My evidence for the facts I am giving is that they come from the Sherwin Pastoral Company prospectus - and it is one of the nicest that I have seen, I can tell you.

The situation is that Mr and Mrs Sherwin own 25% of the shares of the Sherwin Pastoral Company and, therefore, under the beneficial interest provisions of the Crown Lands Act, as set up in 1958, they are judged as controlling 25% of the company's land assets in the Northern Territory.

Mr Hatton: Shareholders have some rights too, don't they?

Mr SMITH: That is correct. Of course, in a very real sense, that is a legal nonsense. The reality is that Peter Sherwin controls those properties. It is he who determines the management practices. He is the linchpin in the company and that point is made very carefully in the prospectus. The prospectus says, and I quote: 'Sherwin has been a major influence in the development of the group and, as a consequence, the loss of his skills to the group would be likely to have a major impact on the group's operations, particularly in the short term'. The prospectus also contains an independent analysis of the Sherwin Pastoral Company by the Australian Agricultural Company, and it says: 'The continued presence of Mr Peter Sherwin will be an important factor governing future prospects'. To underline that point, the prospectus goes on to indicate, to satisfy potential shareholders, that Peter Sherwin's life has been insured by the Sherwin Pastoral Company for a sum of \$5m.

Mr Hatton: What has that got to do with land administration?

Mr Manzie: It is a public company.

Mr SMITH: Mr Deputy Speaker, it demonstrates clearly and precisely that Peter Sherwin controls the operations of the Sherwin Pastoral Company. In other words, Peter Sherwin controls 44 086 km² of Crown land in the Northern Territory.

Mr Dale: There is nothing unusual about that.

Mr SMITH: There is nothing unusual about that?

Mr Dale: Key man insurance, it is called. It is taken out quite often.

Mr SMITH: I will tell the minister 2 things that are unusual about it. First, Mr Sherwin is the only person in the Northern Territory in that

position and, secondly, it is news to the Chief Minister. That is what is different about it, and that is what is concerning too.

Mr Dale: Key man insurance is taken out by companies every day of the week.

Mr SMITH: Mr Deputy Speaker, obviously there were good reasons for the initial selection of the 12 960 km² and the 20 000 km² upper limits. Quite clearly, under the new management structure put in place by the Sherwin Pastoral Company, those good reasons just disappeared. That is a matter which we should be concerned about and that we should look at to see whether, in fact, the practices of such a large company are in the interests of the Northern Territory or not.

Let us have a look at Mr Sherwin's cattle practices for a moment. He has 1 of the 3 biggest cattle operations in Australia now. He has properties in Western Australia, the Northern Territory and Queensland. In the Northern Territory, he holds about 250 000 cattle and he turns off about 67 000 cattle per year. All those facts are contained in the prospectus. Almost all of the cattle turned off for slaughter by the Sherwin Pastoral Company go outside the Territory. The statistics show that two-thirds of all Territory cattle turned off for slaughter go to abattoirs outside the Northern Territory. The prospectus shows that, in 1986, Sherwin cattle were sent to markets at Broome, Derby, Wyndham, Katherine, Tennant Creek, Adelaide, Mt Isa, Townsville, Mackay, Bowen, Rockhampton, Brisbane, Beaudesert and Toowoomba. There are not too many Northern Territory abattoirs in that list.

In one sense, Mr Sherwin is conducting a very traditional, colonial, economic activity. Mr Sherwin has come to the Territory. He exploits our natural resources. He does not pay any rent, and almost all the value-added parts of his activities are carried out outside the Northern Territory. To put it another way, his cattle eat our grass, for which he pays no rent, and the work that results from the slaughter of those cattle is done outside the Northern Territory. What do we get out of it? A bit of payroll tax! We do not even get contracts for supplies and equipment for those 9 cattle properties. Because his operations are so big, he supplies most of his stuff centrally from Mt Isa where his administrative headquarters are.

Mr Speaker, on the subject of abattoirs, one of the great myths of the Mudginberri dispute was that, if we could get rid of the tally system, our meatworks would become more competitive. The great irony is that the vast majority of Territory cattlemen prefer to send their cattle to southern meatworks where the tally system operates.

Mr Hatton: Rubbish!

Mr SMITH: It is true, Mr Speaker. The figures are there. Two-thirds of the cattle slaughtered from Territory properties go outside the Territory to be slaughtered.

The Sherwins of this world exacerbate that problem because they are so big. They operate across state and Territory borders; they do not have a regional perspective; they have an Australia-wide perspective. It is a perspective which means that the peculiar interests of the Northern Territory are not an important matter of concern for them. They are much more difficult to control because of that, and yet we are thinking of giving them freehold title which further reduces our controls over them.

Mr Speaker, I want to conclude by saying that I got more out of this debate than I thought I would. I thought that the Chief Minister, the previous Minister for Lands, would have been aware that the Sherwin Pastoral Company was directly responsible for 44 086 km² of Territory land.

Mr Perron: It is a public company, isn't it?

Mr SMITH: It is a public company. I would have thought that the Chief Minister would have been aware of that. I would have thought that he would have known that, in fact, the Sherwin Pastoral Company controlled over twice the amount of land that the legislation allows 1 person to control. I would have thought that the Chief Minister, who showed such a personal interest in the development of land in his time as the Minister for Lands, would have been aware of those facts. It concerns me that he is not.

It is time that we reviewed that 1958 legislation and that we ascertained through a public debate whether it is in the interests of the Northern Territory for any 1 group or company to control that amount of Northern Territory land. The fact that the Chief Minister was not even aware of the basic facts makes that public debate even more urgent.

Mr HATTON (Chief Minister): Mr Speaker, I rise to speak in this debate more out of mirth than anything else. To describe this as being intelligible as a subject for a matter of public importance discussion stretches one's imagination. To regard it as a matter of definite public importance, particularly given the arguments presented by members opposite, stretches credulity to its absolute limits.

Mr Speaker, I will deal with the 20 minutes of waffle from the Leader of the Opposition simply by saying that I am aware of the details of the Sherwin operations and I have been aware of them considerably longer than has the Leader of the Opposition. The great difficulty I often have in this Assembly is in trying to understand the unintelligible garbage that comes from the mouth of the Leader of the Opposition when he is trying to make a point. Not only are we aware of the Sherwin matter, but it is the subject of some extensive investigation by the Department of Law and has been for some time. Whilst I was Minister for Lands, the matter of the beneficial interest of the Sherwins was checked. I might advise that legal opinions and our investigations show that Mr and Mrs Sherwin have beneficial interest in not more than 11 000 km² between them.

Mr Speaker, the law is the law. It is not the Leader of the Opposition's interpretation of the law that is relevant. It is what the law says and how it would be interpreted in the courts. It is not even an issue of propriety. It is an issue of what the law says and how people can use that law. I am aware that a number of those properties the Leader of the Opposition referred to do have a beneficial interest for members of the Sherwin family. I know there have been some recent moves in the formation of public companies. But, that is our advice in respect of 25% ownership. Until I can get legal advice to the contrary, I must rely on the advice of the Department of Law. If the impossible ever happened and the Leader of the Opposition found himself sitting on this side of the Assembly, he would find himself constrained to do the same thing.

Mr Speaker, let me turn now to this matter of public importance. I hope the Leader of the Opposition stays because he did try to put forward some credible arguments. Obviously, he is not prepared to stay behind to hear logic. He did not listen too closely to the Deputy Chief Minister who

outlined in detail some quite extensive administrative and legal arrangements that affect the administration of pastoral land in the Northern Territory. It was proposed that the Assembly should discuss 'the inability of the government to institute the legal and administrative arrangements necessary for the effective utilisation of the Northern Territory's pastoral land'.

In respect of that topic, the members opposite have put no arguments ...

Mrs Padgham-Purich: The ALP members opposite, please.

Mr HATTON: My apologies to the member for Koolpinyah. I do take that point. I will refine it even further. The member for MacDonnell and the Leader of the Opposition did not even address the subject of their own matter of public importance.

Mr Bell: Because your mate would not let us.

Mr HATTON: Did they address what is the legal framework that covers land administration in the Northern Territory? No, Mr Speaker. Did they deal with the administrative procedures that are in existence? No, except for 1 very logical and practical clause which was instituted to introduce fairness and to remove the potential for favouritism in the formation of a code of conduct. Any rational reading of the code of conduct shows quite clearly that it was intended to avoid the potential for individuals to play favourites and to ensure that, when somebody has his properties inspected, he knows that they are being inspected and has a chance to comment on the factual accuracy of the subsequent inspection report. Then, the government can quite comfortably rely on that report in any dealings that it may have. That is the purpose of the pastoral inspector's report, nothing more and nothing less.

Did they deal with the work that is being done by the Land Usage Advisory Council? No, Mr Speaker. The member for MacDonnell suggested his ultimate solution for improving land utilisation in the Northern Territory. He wants to set up a select committee on land utilisation. Isn't that brilliant? In this Assembly, there are some quite intelligent and experienced people, excellent politicians and local representatives, but, Mr Speaker, do any of them have the appropriate expertise to properly assess land utilisation and optimal land utilisation? What politician in this Assembly would do a better job than a committee of experts that is already doing the job and advising the minister responsible? What committee of this parliament would do a better job than the interdepartmental committee of government that has been working for 2 years on developing the optimum utilisation of land?

The member for MacDonnell says that the ultimate proof of whether land is being utilised properly or not is whether it is subject to public scrutiny. We stand in this Assembly, available for public scrutiny, to answer questions on issues of land utilisation. Did the members opposite ask any questions? No, Mr Speaker. They do not have the brains to ask any sensible questions. They would rather waste the Assembly's time and their own valuable time during question time running up dry gullies on nonsensical issues that were relevant 5 or 10 years ago. The member for MacDonnell's solution is classic Labor Party pap: when you have no other solution, form a committee. More importantly, if there is a committee already in existence, form a parliamentary committee. If that does not work, call for a royal commission. They simply want to find something to talk about in here.

I might advise that the Land Use Advisory Committee comprises representation from the mining industry, conservation interests, tourist

interests, pastoral, agricultural and horticultural interests and, I understand, Aboriginal interests. It advises the minister so that the government can make decisions. Quite considerable developments have occurred in planning for land utilisation as a consequence of that expertise being available to government. It is not some quasi-judicial Legislative Assembly committee of technical illiterates on the subject. We have recruited people who know what they are talking about to advise the minister and to work in conjunction with government technical experts to develop land utilisation properly.

The issue of whether there is any legislative deficiency in relation to land has not been addressed at all by members opposite, presumably because they accept that the Crown Lands Act and the multitude of other pieces of legislation dealing with land adequately cover the field. I believe that we can improve and streamline those processes. Already, this government is examining ways in which we can improve and facilitate the understanding of the law and the streamlining of the legal procedures better to deal with issues. We are working to improve what we have as part of improving and developing the productive base for the Northern Territory.

The Leader of the Opposition raised issues such as how much land should be under either direct or indirect control and whether the pastoral industry should be developed further to take in processing. Those are valid issues. If he picked up the pastoral industry plan that our party released during the election, he would have found all of those issues addressed there. In fact, it is probably where he got his ideas.

Let me say that we are already well advanced on those matters and, if the honourable member will exercise a little patience for a few weeks, the results of the pastoral industry study will be out. This study was commenced in 1985 and has been publicly known for some time. It has been completed and is now with the minister prior to release to the public and to the industry. Major seminars will be held later this year. They will be called AD 2000 and relate to the development of agriculture.

I see that the Leader of the Opposition has left the Assembly yet again. He does not want to learn anything. Members of the opposition make continuous blunders in here, yet they cannot be bothered staying to listen to arguments which would teach them something.

Mr Speaker, AD 2000 will deal with agricultural, horticultural and animal industry developments for the Northern Territory through to the year 2000. It will cover the issues of land utilisation, the further development of the industries I have named and the development of value-added industries related to them. We have been addressing these matters for a couple of years now. When the pastoral study and the other studies are released, and when this conference takes place with the people who will have to put their money up, we will begin to have some clear, practical directions rather than the nonsensical pap that we get from the opposition in the Assembly. The Leader of the Opposition raised issues that have already been dealt with. That is the simple response to everything he said.

To the member for MacDonnell and his fancy select committee, I say that it was a waste of time even bothering to put the resolution forward. We have a far more effective, multi-disciplinary approach to those issues at present. We have expert studies already under way in the field of land utilisation ...

Mr Bell: And they have been overridden by a minister who gets the weights put on him by the Cattlemen's Association.

Mr HATTON: Mr Speaker, I will respond to that interjection from the member for MacDonnell. I refute the allegation totally!

Mr Bell: Hang on, we showed it to you. Do you want to see the minutes again?

Mr HATTON: Mr Speaker, I refute that absolutely and totally.

When the time is right and the decks are cleared in this Assembly, both myself and the Attorney-General will take great pleasure in ramming those words down the throats of members opposite. Right now, I am constrained from defending myself and have been for some 2 months.

STATUTE LAW REVISION BILL
(Serial 19)

Bill presented and read a first time.

Mr MANZIE (Attorney-General): Mr Speaker, I move that the bill be now read a second time. In doing so, I foreshadow that I will be seeking the leave of the Assembly to suspend standing orders to enable its passage through all stages during these sittings.

The amendments proposed in the bill fall into 2 categories. First, there are changes found necessary as a result of the changes to the administrative arrangements recently put in place by the government. The other amendments update cross-references to various other acts required as a result of the repeal of the old Workers' Compensation Act and the commencement of the Work Health Act. The opportunity has also been taken to include 4 minor amendments to that latter act, 3 being cross-reference amendments and the fourth removing an otiose subsection.

As on previous occasions in recent times when a statute law revision bill has been introduced in this Assembly, I will be happy to make officers available to assist honourable members in their understanding of the changes proposed. Mr Speaker, I commend the bill.

Debate adjourned.

SUPREME COURT (RULES OF PROCEDURE) BILL
(Serial 22)

Bill presented and read a first time.

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

In its approach, this bill is one of the more unusual pieces of legislation which honourable members are likely to be asked to deal with in this Assembly. Despite its novelty, however, it is not unprecedented. The gist of the bill is to give the imprimatur of this Assembly to a set of Rules of the Supreme Court to be made by the judges. These will be tabled in the Assembly before the bill is debated during the June sittings, or the subsequent sittings if that is the wish of the judges and the legal profession. The bill anticipates those rules. It is necessary that the

imprimatur be given because the rules themselves will contain some elements of novelty which are not envisaged by the existing Supreme Court Act, under which rules of the court are generally made.

While the bill proposes to appropriately amend the Supreme Court Act, it can never be entirely guaranteed that there may not still be matters that would be beyond power and, for the sake of certainty and the proper conduct of the business of the court, it is important this should not be so. Honourable members may ask why it is that it cannot be ascertained in advance that the proposed rules will be within power in all respects. However, when they see the sheer volume and note the legal minutiae dealt with, they will appreciate what a daunting task this would be. Other jurisdictions faced with the same task have adopted the approach proposed in the bill which is modelled largely on a similar piece of legislation used as the vehicle through which to introduce the general rules of procedure of the Supreme Court of Victoria last year.

It is the intention of the judges that, ultimately, the complete rules of the court will be contained in 1 volume, with chapters dealing with the various aspects. However, only 2 chapters will be contained in the rules to be tabled, one dealing with the general procedure and the other with the appeal procedure. Other chapters to be added later by the normal rule-making procedure will include probate rules, cost rules and other miscellaneous rules including, possibly, admiralty rules. There has always been a certain similarity between the rules of court in the various jurisdictions of Australia, indeed to the extent that a copycat approach has been adopted in the past to give the copying jurisdiction the advantage of the accumulated, interpretative precedent in the copied jurisdiction, and the use of the odd textbook.

The standard aid in the past has been what has generally been known amongst lawyers as the 'white book' dealing with the rules and relevant decisions of a division of the English High Court. However, over the years, these precedents have become less relevant with the growth of indigenous practice, and several states have revised their rules recently. Also, new ideas have been engendered with the introduction of Federal Court Rules and rules for the Family Court. Ultimately, these changes have led to a reconsideration of the needs of our court.

Some years ago, the task of suggesting an appropriate set of revised rules was undertaken by the Law Reform Committee of the Northern Territory. The examination conducted by that body was detailed. It resulted in a recommendation to the judges that a set of rules be accepted, based largely on those of Victoria, with appropriate changes to meet local conditions. This has 2 immediate advantages, the first being that there is already an admirable textbook on the Victorian rules and, secondly, that the Victorian jurisdiction is sufficiently large to ensure that useful precedents are accumulated rapidly. During all stages of the preparation of the draft rules, local practitioners have been consulted, either through their professional society or directly. Final consultation is still proceeding and input is being accepted to the preparation of the rules that will be tabled.

Mr Speaker, I will now deal with some specific features of the bill. Clause 4 proposes the repeal of the relevant existing rules that are being replaced. Honourable members will see that existing order 64 is to be saved. This is the present order dealing with costs which is a matter to be dealt with at a later time.

Clause 6 contains the provision giving the legislative imprimatur to the new rules. Clause 7 provides that, where there is an inconsistency between the new rules and existing legislative provisions, the rules are to prevail. Part III recognises that there will have to be an interim period during which the rules can be adjusted to avoid internal inconsistency or inconsistency with the Supreme Court Act or any other act. The method proposed allows the judges, by means of special rules, to amend for that purpose, notwithstanding that they would not otherwise have the power, and for the Chief Justice to do so by practice directions which will expire if not confirmed within 6 months. In either case, it is proposed that the power may only be exercised within a 5-year period.

Part IV proposes substantive amendments to be made to the principal act. The rules themselves will do away with the prerogative writs of prohibition mandamus and certiorari, and replace them with a much simpler procedure to obtain, in appropriate cases, the remedies previously available by those writs. Proposed section 9(2)(B) reflects this fact. It should be emphasised, lest there be any doubt, that the old prerogative writ of habeas corpus still remains intact.

Proposed new section 9A abolishes the limiting distinction between jurisdiction in court and in Chambers while, at the same time, preserving the concomitant convenience. The rules will control the matter.

The amendment proposed by clause 13 gives a greater role for the Master under the supervision of the court. The limits on his jurisdiction will be largely controlled by the rules. In any case, this is a direction in which we have been moving steadily in recent times in an endeavour to remove some of the more routine burdens from the judges. The salient changes proposed in part IV are those which have been made in Victoria, and generally reflect modern trends in other jurisdictions. Mr Speaker, I commend the bill to the Assembly.

Debate adjourned.

CREDIT UNION AMENDMENT BILL
(Serial 15)

Continued from 29 April 1987.

Mr SMITH (Leader of the Opposition): Mr Speaker, this is a very simple amendment to effect 2 things: first, to put in place something which should have been there to start with and that is a registry of credit unions to enable credit unions to be registered and deregistered and, secondly, to acknowledge the fact that the Nhulunbuy Cooperative Credit Society no longer exists but has been incorporated, as I understand it, with the Public Service Credit Society.

Mr Speaker, the opposition supports the bill.

Mr PALMER (Karama): Mr Speaker, I will not spend too much time on this. Probably the most significant part of this bill is the validation of the merger of the Nhulunbuy Cooperative Credit Society with the Public Service Credit Society.

I have spoken previously about the Northern Territory Public Service Credit Society. It is one of my pet subjects. With its membership of 15 500 Territorians, I dare say it is the largest private organisation in the

Territory. It controls assets in excess of \$30m. This financial year, it will make loans in excess of \$16m to its members. It has current loans out in excess of \$25m and it controls \$29.5m worth of members' deposits.

Mr Speaker, turning to the merger of the Nhulunbuy Cooperative Credit Society with the Public Service Credit Society, membership of the credit society in Nhulunbuy has grown by 25% since the merger on 1 October, and it now has over 500 members in Nhulunbuy. The loan limit was increased by \$2000 to \$20 000 and office hours have been extended by 8½ hours each week. Some of the new services available to the residents of Nhulunbuy through this merger are insurance, personal cheque books, visa card facilities, term deposits and cash management accounts.

By way of protecting the interests of the members of the former Nhulunbuy Cooperative Credit Society, Mrs Eleanor Deakin, former Chairman of the Nhulunbuy Credit Cooperative Society has now been appointed an Associate Director of the Public Service Credit Society.

Mr Speaker, I will continue to advocate that the Northern Territory government, and its members maintain their support of our home-grown credit society. It has been in existence now for over 15 years. Its continued growth and very strong position give a fair indication of the faith that the public servants who initiated and basically support this credit society have in the Northern Territory. It gives a true reflection of the state of the Northern Territory economy in that there is confidence in it, and I am sure we will go ahead. Mr Speaker, I commend the bill to honourable members.

Mr COULTER (Treasurer): Mr Speaker, I thank honourable members for their contributions to the debate. Indeed, there is a place for credit societies and, as the member for Karama pointed out, the success of the Public Service Credit Society has been outstanding.

It may be of interest to honourable members that I have been discussing the future of the Public Service Credit Society with the board. The Chief Minister met with the board some 4 or 5 weeks ago to discuss some issues concerning the future viability of the Public Service Credit Society. We discussed also the options that may become available to it as things are continually changing in the banking and the insurance worlds and the financial services which are offered by a variety of organisations at the moment. The Public Service Credit Society is undergoing a state of change at the moment, and is involved in negotiations and discussions with the Territory Insurance Office in an attempt to provide it with additional funds to enable it to satisfy the many demands that are placed on it by the members of the Public Service Credit Society.

The validation clause for the incorporation of the Nhulunbuy Credit Cooperative Society is quite simple. Originally, a bill was introduced into the Assembly in November 1986. The new bill makes no change to the bill that was introduced at that time.

Motion agreed to; bill read a second time.

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

Motion agreed to; bill read a third time.

TRAFFIC AMENDMENT BILL
(Serial 5)

Continued from 29 April 1987.

Mr BELL (MacDonnell): Mr Speaker, the question that lies behind this raft of amendments to the Traffic Act is a contentious one and has provoked considerable interest in the media over the last few weeks. Without doubt, it is a matter of deep concern to all Territorians, and that is the form of control of drink driving that is necessary in order to help to reduce the horrific road toll.

Fortunately, this is one of those areas where there is considerable unanimity between the government's objectives and those of the opposition and we look forward to working with the government to the extent that legislative provisions will reduce the road toll. Certainly, we will be cooperating in that regard.

This bill was reintroduced in these sittings. It was on the Notice Paper during the sittings of November 1986. I do not have to hand my file copy of the second-reading speech made by the minister during those sittings, but I believe it was one of those speeches to which no change has been made.

Mr Finch: It was almost the same.

Mr BELL: Almost the same, I understand. I have compared the 2 bills that were before the Assembly and I notice that the only difference between them is the insertion of a clause 5 which places a requirement on, for example, P-plate drivers to submit to breath tests.

I note that the essential purpose of the bill is to ensure that drivers under 18 years of age or drivers on learners' permits or with provisional licences should not drive with any alcohol in their blood. We note that this is a much stricter condition than that which applies at the moment. I appreciate the government's gesture to let people know that we are serious about reducing the road toll. I note also that the bill removes the court's discretion to suspend a licence and also contains increased penalties and simplified administrative arrangements.

In his second-reading speech in November, the then minister said that drink-driving offences would be looked at further as part of a major review of the whole Traffic Act which is now nearing completion. I made inquiries of the minister just before these sittings commenced to find out whether this bill would go through during these sittings. I understand that the review is continuing and there will be further amendments to the Traffic Act. Mr Speaker, the opposition supports the bill.

DISTINGUISHED VISITOR
Mr Bill Jeffries

Mr SPEAKER: I draw the attention of honourable members to the presence in the gallery of Mr Bill Jeffries, a member of the New Zealand parliament. Mr Jeffries is the Under Secretary to the Minister for Transport and the Minister for Works and Development. On behalf of all honourable members, I welcome Mr Jeffries to the Northern Territory and hope that his stay is both pleasant and informative.

Members: Hear, hear!

Mr FIRMIN (Ludmilla): Mr Speaker, in speaking to the Traffic Amendment Bill today, I would just like to clarify a couple of points for the member opposite. Clause 5 requires persons who are normally subject to the zero alcohol provisions to submit to a breath analysis test where a police officer believes there is any alcohol present in the blood. I would draw the opposition's attention to the fact that we have decided to defer the full passage of this bill until the end of the June sittings.

Some years ago, I was Chairman of the Northern Territory Road Safety Council. Bearing in mind the success of the student driver scheme, it was suggested to the government that remote Territorians and apprentices were disadvantaged unless the driving age for all Territorians was lowered to 16 years of age. On investigation, it appeared that the proposal was worthy of support. The Road Safety Council supported it and the government introduced a reduced driving age soon afterwards. At the time of the introduction of the legislation, myself and members of the council and its staff spelt out clearly to potential 16-year-old drivers, and all drivers under 18 years of age, that alcohol was prohibited to them as citizens, by law, until they reached the age of 18 years. They were told that a breach of the law in respect of alcohol and driving would be viewed most seriously by police, courts and legislators. In the first few years after the passage of legislation in respect to 16-year-old drivers, their attitude seemed to be that the driver's licence was far too valuable to be lost by being involved with alcohol. Unfortunately, this view no longer seems to prevail and more and more teenagers are flaunting the law with sometimes disastrous effects.

The legislation before us today goes some distance towards addressing the overall problems of under-age drinking. It applies a cost penalty for offences and addresses the specific problem at the driving level. Through its penalty provisions, the legislation stresses to teenagers and all provisional licence holders that driving a vehicle carries a very heavy responsibility. The penalties for breaches relating to under-age drinking coupled with driving show that breaches of these laws are viewed quite seriously by the authorities.

The amendment provides for the blood alcohol reading to exceed 0.02% before an offence is committed. This takes into account any possible problems with medication which may incorporate small quantities of pharmaceutical alcohol. The maximum penalty for a breach of this provision is \$500 or 6 months imprisonment for first offenders and an automatic 3-month loss of licence. These penalties also apply to all provisional licence plate holders.

The bill provides also for an amendment to the regulatory offences section of the act in respect of traffic infringement notices. In some cases, the penalties under this section have been increased to mirror more accurately current values whilst simultaneously dispensing with some of the cumbersome requirements in the administration of the previous section which required the printing of all offences on the notice. This requirement is being replaced by the inscription of the offences on a prescribed form.

While I support the general thrust of the legislation, I have some reservations about the necessity to keep records of traffic infringements. This is laid down in clause 6(b) and I have asked the minister to have another look at it. He has agreed and that is why passage of the bill will be deferred until June. The original intent of traffic infringement notices was to give the police an administrative ability to deal simply and effectively with minor offences. The financial penalty was to indicate that these minor infringements related to an important aspect of driving a vehicle safely.

The whole purpose of the infringement notice was to create an environment where an offending driver felt that it was probably a fair cop and would not go to court to fight the issue. Infringements include: driving a vehicle on to the footpath, presumably to wash it on the nature strip; allowing parts of the body, such as an elbow, to protrude from a vehicle; and riding a pushbike at night time without lights. These are extremely minor offences, and I can see drivers or riders, who may have some expectation of a points system in the future, wishing to take these matters to a court of law to have them offset in any future deliberations about their ability to continue driving. If this starts to occur, the cost penalty and the additional administration and police man-hours lost will totally negate the intended benefits of the infringement notices.

Mr Speaker, with those reservations, I support the minister's attempt to remedy the deteriorating accident situation, and I commend the legislation to all members.

Mrs PADGHAM-PURICH (Koolpinyah): Mr Speaker, when I read through this bill to amend the Traffic Act, I had considerable trouble wading through the principal act and the Motor Vehicles Act. I believe that, if I have trouble wading through these 2 acts and the amendments, other people must have trouble too. It was the same with the old Crown Law Act. You needed to be more than a bush lawyer to work your way through that. I think the minister will agree with me that it is well past time for these 2 acts to be consolidated into one that is reasonably easy for the general public to read. However, today I heard the minister give notice of yet more amendments to the Motor Vehicles Act. I hope that, before too long, the minister will try to consolidate the amendments to these 2 acts so that they are easier to read.

Because there is a difficulty in fitting in previously passed amendments to this proposed legislation, the end result appears to be a badly-written bill. In my book, anything that is not easily understood is badly written. It is also rather confusing. It is full of obfuscation and, without putting too fine a point on it, it is all over the place like a dog's breakfast. I do not disagree at all with the main purpose of the amendments. In fact, I heartily agree with it. It sets out to discourage drink-driving and to lower the road toll. If the object is to discourage drink-driving, one either drinks and does not drive or one stays home to drink. One cannot do both and be a responsible citizen. If one drinks and goes out, one should take a taxi.

Mr Dondas: Or one could walk.

Mrs PADGHAM-PURICH: One could walk, but looking at some honourable members and their physiognomies, I do not think that very many of them are capable of walking very far.

Mr Speaker, I very rarely take taxis because I drive myself or one of my family drives me. Recently, we had friends from overseas staying with us who had occasion to catch a taxi out from town to our place. It was pretty unusual that there was only an hour to wait for the taxi and the taxi actually found our place. It is not really hard to find but it seems to be so for taxi drivers. The usual courtesies were extended by this taxi driver to the tourists. The dress and manners of the 2 girls indicated that they were not locals. The taxi driver did not get out of his taxi. Both girls had some luggage with them but he did not even offer to move it, but it could be said that he was a gentleman in the style of a Northern Territory taxi driver. He did press the button at the side of his seat which opened the boot. The girls had then to lift the luggage into the boot which he expected them to close.

However, he had something in his favour in that he could speak intelligible English.

I know taxi driving is a cutthroat business and I know there are some polite taxi drivers. As I said, I do not patronise taxis very often, but I have been told that our taxi drivers have a lot to learn from taxi drivers in other parts of Australia. Courtesy costs nothing and, if a taxi driver really were courteous, it would stick out like a dunny in a desert. It would be very obvious, Mr Speaker - before you ask me to withdraw that. If our taxi drivers were as courteous as those down south, everybody would patronise those drivers because word would get around very quickly.

Mr Speaker, a gentleman in the transport business has been reported in the newspaper as saying that he has a bus company and his drivers drive 6 days a week. If they are on duty 6 days a week, this legislation will practically make them teetotallers. I was a bit concerned about that because people must be allowed to have a few drinks now and then in order to let off a bit of steam. If these bus drivers cannot have a beer on their day off, things will be petty crook for them. I consulted medical opinion in the Department of Health and confirmed that 1 can of beer is broken down in the body in 1 hour. If one drinks 4 cans, that would take 4 hours. If a bus driver drinks moderately, he or she could still safely and legally drive buses. I am not a bleeding heart; however, I have many bus drivers in my electorate and I am looking after their interests.

The subject of cough medicine was raised. It is said that, if one drinks cough medicine, one will have a little alcohol in one's blood. I have it on good authority that one would have to drink a whole bottle of cough medicine to equal the alcohol in a can of beer. There is a very nice cough medicine called Benadryl, which is flavoured with wild cherry and is not unlike cherry brandy, but it would be pushing it to drink a whole bottle at one go.

I am very pleased to see that the driver accompanying an L-plate driver is covered by this legislation. On first reading, it appeared to me that the accompanying driver did not have any restrictions placed on him, even though he is in charge of the car.

Clause 6, traffic infringement notices, relates to section 36A(10) of the principal act. The inclusion of the word 'where' in subclause 6(b) seems to suggest that an either-or, or neither-nor situation exists, whichever way you like to take it. If one of these infringement notices has been attracted by reason of an action, it is not necessary for the offence to be listed on the paper passed over by the police. Could the honourable minister check this for me or tell me whether that word 'where' relates to an either-or situation or not?

As the member for MacDonnell said in relation to clause 7, penalties for offences, the licence will now be cancelled, not suspended, for infringements against the act with regard to drink-driving, which will mean that, when the licence is cancelled, the driver will have to go through the rigmarole of P-plates again, which might deter some people. It may encourage people to drink less when they intend to drive.

I would like to think that this legislation will have the effect that the minister intends it to, but I think it only goes part of the way to stopping the terrible road carnage resulting from drink-driving. I refer to those people whose licences have been suspended or cancelled, who still drive, who still get into trouble and who still kill people through having accidents on our roads.

Coupled with this legislation, I would suggest that either the minister or the Attorney-General look at increasing the penalties quite substantially for those people who cause accidents and serious trouble for other people on the roads after their licences have been cancelled or suspended. It is all very well to inhibit the freedoms of ordinary people in relation to drink-driving and, although I have no interest in drinking and driving myself, I am growing sick and tired philosophically of having my ordinary freedoms restricted when the people who offend against society, offend again and again, regardless of the restrictions placed on me. Mr Speaker, I must be polite here, but we are going about this the wrong way. I believe the person who offends against society has to feel the full weight of the law for his offence rather than restrictions being placed on the people who have not offended.

Mr Speaker, I support this legislation and hope it will fulfil the intention the honourable minister had in bringing it forward.

Mr SETTER (Jingili): Mr Speaker, in rising to address this bill to amend the Traffic Act, I want to spend a moment or 2 talking about the horrendous road toll that we have in the Northern Territory. Per capita, it is considerably higher than that in any state in Australia and there are a number of reasons for that. Whilst the amount of alcohol consumed in the Northern Territory has its effect, there are also many long, tedious and difficult roads such as bush roads, gravel roads with inverts and culverts and so on. Many causes contribute to this horrendous road toll, and the government has a responsibility to legislate as best it can to control and limit the road toll. Government can only legislate and law enforcement officers can only enforce that legislation.

There is a limit to how much government can do. Indeed, a considerable amount of the responsibility lies with the driver because he is the person behind the wheel. However, in many instances, accidents are not caused by drivers. For example, I heard of a case only a day or so ago where a chap walked out from behind a bush in front of an oncoming car. We have heard of instances where accidents have resulted from animals jumping across the road, from malfunction of vehicles, as well as the combination of alcohol, speed and our driving conditions.

Mr Speaker, the minister indicated that the Traffic Act and the Motor Vehicle Act are both under review and that, at some stage in the future, extensive amendments will be proposed to bring these acts up to date with today's conditions. It is very important that all our legislation should address the conditions of today, not the conditions of yesteryear. Society is continually in a state of flux and we need to update our legislation continually to address the needs of today.

Mr Speaker, I turn now to the provisions to apply to drink drivers. Section 8 of the principal act is amended to make it an offence to drive with an alcohol limit exceeding 0.02%. I am sure that the member for Koolpinyah had her lines crossed when she referred to inconvenience and difficulties affecting bus drivers as a result of these amendments. That is not the case at all because these amendments only refer to people who have not reached the age of 18 years, people who hold a learner's permit or people who are on a provisional licence which could be a person who has had his licence suspended. Those are the people who will be affected, not somebody who goes home, perhaps has a couple of drinks and then has to go out and drive in the morning. I am not talking about excessive drinking.

Mr Speaker, the introduction of this legislation will reduce the possibility of alcohol affecting the inexperienced driver. Driving is a skill, and it is not something that a person learns overnight. Apart from acquiring a knowledge of how to manipulate and handle a vehicle, a deal of experience must follow. It would be true to say that a person with some years of experience would be far more capable of handling a vehicle under any conditions, whether he had consumed alcohol or not, than somebody with a learner's permit or who is driving with a P-plate. That is a very important point.

The reason for establishing the 0.02% limit is so that, if and when these people are stopped by the police and asked to blow in the bag, at least, if they have had alcohol they will record a reading. There has been some comment about the alcoholic content of cough mixture and throat tablets and so on, but a person would need to overdose himself with those products before a reading showed at all. Rather than set a zero limit, the 0.02% limit has been set so that alcohol will register.

Clause 5 gives authority for the police to analyse the breath of people suspected of exceeding 0.02%. Under the act as it stands that authority does not exist, because there is no reference to a 0.02% limit.

Mr Speaker, let us turn now to the new provisions applying to increased penalties for traffic infringements. Licence suspension on conviction for drink-driving offences is mandatory. That is a complete change. Previously, suspension was imposed at the discretion of the magistrate. Also, a minimum suspension period must be set should that person be found guilty of a drink driving offence. Another interesting aspect is that the penalties provided for in the bill to be imposed where a relevant person exceeds 0.02% are exactly the same as those affecting anybody offending under the 0.08% provision. There is no variation there at all. There is no degree of guilt as far as that is concerned. Drink driving offenders will all pay the same penalty, and so they should.

Mr Speaker, other penalties will include a maximum fine of \$500 or 6 months in jail plus automatic loss of licence. Referring back to the minimum suspension time, it is interesting to note that apparently this position did exist prior to October 1984. Subsequent to that time, there was some doubt about the provisions of the act in relation to that particular matter and that provision was not enforced from the time that query arose.

Traffic infringement administrative provisions have been simplified and upgraded. For example, the offences are no longer printed on tickets. Now police will have to nominate the relevant offence on the ticket. I am not quite sure of the reason for that, but perhaps it is to save on printing costs and the minister might clarify that when he closes the debate. The level of penalties have been upgraded quite considerably in some cases and that is very fair and reasonable. As I said before, legislation needs to address the issues and needs of the day. The penalties were set in the principal act in 1977. Taking into consideration inflation and changes in the needs of the community, some people have been getting off fairly lightly over the last few years.

I come now to the point that was mentioned by the member for Ludmilla in respect of the recording of offences for future reference. I disagree with the honourable member. We have not discussed this matter in the party room but I will be taking it up with the minister because I believe it is a provision that will be of great assistance to the police and the magistrates.

The member for Ludmilla mentioned a number of minor offences like having a part of your body protruding from a motor vehicle, driving on the footpath and so on, but what he disregarded was that the person could have a long history of serious offences which are not considered each time that person comes before a magistrate. I am quite sure that any magistrate, considering the record of an offender, would take into consideration the severity and frequency of those offences. For example, a person who had been convicted on a number of occasions of dangerous driving would be given a heavier sentence than somebody who had parked his car on the footpath on 3 or 4 occasions. I think that the proposal should be viewed in that light.

It is not the intention of the government to introduce the system here but elsewhere in Australia a point score is maintained. Points accrue as a result of offences and accumulate until 9 or 10 have been collected and then that driver's licence is forfeited for a mandatory period. I repeat that that system is not being considered here, but it is an option that would be available at some point in the future.

Mr Speaker, in conclusion, the Traffic Act and the Motor Vehicle Act are both under review. It is necessary to keep these acts continually under review. I believe that the minister will be introducing legislation later this year to address both of those acts. The main purpose and motivation behind such legislation is to reduce the road toll which we have a bounden duty to do. We must do whatever we can to make sure that legislation is put into effect to protect drivers from themselves and others.

Mr SMITH (Opposition Leader): Mr Speaker, the member for MacDonnell has already indicated the opposition's support for this bill. We see it as an important further step in addressing the problem of the road toll in the Northern Territory.

For some reason that I do not understand, last week the Chief Minister criticised me over the opposition's approach to questions relating to the road toll. My comments at the time, in response to an article in the Sunday Territorian, were not directed towards what the government is contemplating in terms of future legislation, but to comments made by the Sunday Territorian. I expressed some concern at that stage because the Sunday Territorian appeared to advocate throwing people in jail and throwing away the key. I stand by my comments. The opposition supports what I understand to be the broad thrust of the government's proposals. I said at the time that it would be useful if the government could put forward its proposals in advance of presenting the legislation to this Assembly so that there would be adequate opportunity for the public to comment. It is a very important area, and people are concerned and do want the opportunity to comment on what they see as the appropriate steps to reduce the road toll.

In terms of the particular proposal we have before us, to reduce the blood alcohol limit to 0.02% for those under 18 and learner and probationary drivers, I think that is a great idea and I am pleased to support it. However, in concert with that, I think that we need to tackle the availability of alcohol in this Territory for people who are under the age of 18 years. Despite all the legislation that we have in place, we have a continuing problem with the availability of alcohol to those who are under 18. I am particularly concerned with the fact that licensed premises have still not been able to come to grips with the question of not supplying alcohol to people who are less than 18 years old.

One approach to the problem, particularly where it relates to motor vehicle drivers, is that it ought to be a requirement with this new handy licence that people who are obviously in their late teens who drive vehicles into drive-in liquor outlets or go in asking for beer should be asked to produce their licences. That should stop some of it.

The consequences of supplying alcohol to under-aged people can be quite horrific and I am sure that there is a direct correlation between alcohol consumption and road accidents. We all know that. I want to take the time of the Assembly to demonstrate other consequences and one particular incident that concerns me.

A 16-year-old girl is currently in the Royal Adelaide Hospital facing the prospect of spending the rest of her life as a paraplegic. That situation arose directly because of the access that she had to alcohol from a takeaway liquor outlet in the northern suburbs of Darwin. She walked in with a group of friends to the liquor outlet and purchased a bottle of rum. I have not seen the girl, but I am advised that she does not look 18 years old. On that particular night, she had come directly from work. She had a part-time job and she was dressed in a skirt, top and a pair of sneakers. After she purchased the bottle of rum, she and her friends went to the Casuarina beach area. Unfortunately, she fell over the cliff and broke her neck. She looks like paying a very high price indeed for what was, in one sense, her stupidity. In another sense, it is an indictment of our society and our laws that she and her friends were able to walk into licensed premises in the Northern Territory and purchase alcohol without any questions being asked. I guess that I am casting aspersions on the licensed hotel operator in this particular case, and I do accept that it is a difficult problem.

If we are serious about coming to grips with the road toll, particularly for those who are 16 and 17 years old, then we have to do more than say that drivers who are caught with blood alcohol levels in excess of 0.02% will cop it in the neck. We have to make it harder for them to obtain alcohol. We have also to make it harder for their friends, who may well be travelling in that same vehicle, to obtain alcohol by going to licensed premises. We can do that by coming up with ways of enforcing the existing laws. I do not have any magic answers. The Liquor Commission knows about the problem. I have been told that the Liquor Commission was informed on 2 or 3 occasions at least of this problem, because a group of kids were doing this sort of thing on a reasonably regular basis. I am advised that the Liquor Commission has taken no action, and that was a week or 10 days ago. I only mention that in passing because I want to check it out with the Liquor Commission, as I should do.

That poor girl has paid a very high price indeed. There are other kids who, in the past, have paid very high prices on our roads. It is time that, as a community, we addressed that problem and worked out ways of ensuring that our kids are not obtaining access to alcohol. I know it is very easy to say that the parents should control those kids and should know where they are. Fortunately, I do not have a teenage daughter yet; that is a joy that I will experience in 3 or 4 years time. However, I have heard so many stories about the difficulties of parents knowing where their teenage children are at a particular time, that I realise that it is not the answer to blame the parents because good parents are being caught in this situation from time to time.

As a community, we have an obligation to our kids, whether they be on the road or off the road, to make it as hard as possible for them to obtain access to alcohol. As part of this continued attention that we are paying to reducing the road toll, it is not simply a matter of hitting those kids hard

who abuse the alcohol, as we should, it is a matter of a more concerted approach to making it difficult for those kids to obtain access to alcohol in the first place. That involves putting more pressure on the licensed innkeepers of this and other towns in the Northern Territory to be more careful about whom they sell alcohol to. If we could do that, we would go a long way towards saving some future kids and their parents from paying a very high price indeed for some moments of stupidity.

Debate adjourned.

SUMMARY OFFENCES AMENDMENT BILL

(Serial 2)

FIREARMS AMENDMENT BILL

(Serial 3)

Continued from 29 April 1987.

Mr BELL (MacDonnell): Mr Speaker, the provisions of these cognate bills are various. In passing, I should note a second entry in this year's parliamentary competition organised by the Society for the Prevention of Injury to the English Language when, in introducing the bills, the honourable minister said: 'I have 2 cognate bills here which I think should be considered together'. I am prepared to take the Clerk's advice on this matter but I think that rates as a tautology. I got a grin there from a parliamentary draftsman. It is perhaps not in the same street as that from the Minister for Industries and Development but it is certainly a starter.

This legislation deals with 3 areas. The first amendment deals with section 43 of the Summary Offences Act in relation to offences involving the driving away of stock. Basically, the purpose of the section is to outlaw heli-duffing. I am not quite sure if the neologism 'heli-duffing' is original or not but I claim authorship. Other speakers in this debate may wish to contest that. Quite interestingly, heli-duffing is rendered illegal by declaring entry into the airspace above land as constituting entry upon that land for the purposes of this particular section of the Summary Offences Act. It should be pointed out that the application of this section is restricted to offences in connection with driving away stock. Of course, we could not run the risk of a 767 flying at 30 000 ft over Bond Springs being regarded as entering upon Bond Springs.

The second amendment removes the ministerial discretion to allow the offences specified in part VIII of the current act to apply only in proclaimed localities. This is effected by the repeal of the heading to part VIII which means that the provisions retained from that part become included in part VII. Until I did a little research, I was not aware of the existence of the class of offences that applied under part VIII of the Summary Offences Act. I went to the trouble of finding out which areas had been so proclaimed. Perhaps the Attorney-General, who has doubtless had rather more experience of enforcing offences under the Summary Offences Act than I, was abundantly aware of them. However, for a law-abiding layman such as myself, it was news. I appreciated the Department of Law passing across to me a schedule of the localities that have been so proclaimed.

In his second-reading speech, the minister said that these offences are mostly antiquated and do not justify police enforcement effort. I notice that one of the offences refers to playing musical instruments so as to annoy. I am quite sure that people who listen to me playing the piano would not regard that as an antiquated offence. This class of offences will apply throughout

the Territory and not just in the proclaimed locations. For example, I note that the proclamations have not kept up with the development of towns. Although Jabiru was so proclaimed in February 1982, the proclamations do not include Yulara. That would be 1 example where proclamation would be necessary and I see that it will be included.

The third amendment relates to clause 4 of the Summary Offences Amendment Bill and clause 2 of the Firearms Amendment Bill. It will transfer the law against discharging firearms in public from the Summary Offences Act to the Firearms Act. The result of this amendment will be that there will be some small change in the phraseology of the law. It is unclear exactly what effect this change will have. On my reading of it, the amended law will be stronger because the reference to a public place will be removed and the provisions of that section will apply more widely. I would appreciate further elucidation from the Attorney-General in that regard. In his second-reading speech, he said that it was preferable to have all modern firearm offences rationalised within one act. His second reason was rather more woolly. He said that the government had no wish to make illegal the shooting and hunting activities that law-abiding citizens and visitors to the Territory have engaged in for perhaps many years.

However, the effect of these amendments is to make the application of the offence against discharging firearms in a public place much wider. My recollection is that the current law restricts the definition of a 'public place' whereas the amendment will have the effect of making it a summary offence to fire a .22 rifle in the middle of the Simpson Desert. I would appreciate some elucidation from the Attorney-General in that regard.

Mr Speaker, with those reservations, I place on record that the opposition supports the bills.

Mr SETTER (Jingili): Mr Speaker, I rise to support the proposed amendments to the Summary Offences Act and the Firearms Act. It appears that, although these are cognate bills, each is the responsibility of a separate minister. I am not quite sure what negotiations took place between them, but it appears that the Attorney-General came up with the guernsey. I have read his second-reading speech. It was very interesting indeed.

Both bills refer to the pastoral industry and relate particularly to mustering by helicopter. As we are all aware, until the last decade or so, mustering was undertaken on horseback or perhaps even using camels. More recently, motorbikes and 4-wheel-drive vehicles have been used. However, nowadays most mustering is being carried out by helicopter. One assumes that this makes the exercise quicker and more economical. The guys conducting the muster can probably go home to the camp every night - back at the ranch, as they say - to have a nice warm bath and a couple of tinnies.

Mrs Padgham-Purich: Station, please. We are in Australia. None of this ranch business.

Mr SETTER: That is a fair point.

The proposed amendments concern lawful access to properties by means of a helicopter. When traditional methods were used in the old days, people involved in mustering travelled across the land and there was, therefore, no question about the legality or otherwise of lawful access. However, the use of a helicopter could certainly lead to some dispute. The bill aims to clarify such situations.

One amendment refers to section 43 of the Summary Offences Act which allows for a stock owner to muster his stock on another's property. This has always been his right provided that 2 to 7 days notice is given to the owner of that property prior to accessing it to remove the stock. It is a type of gentlemen's agreement between adjacent property owners based on the understanding that stock wander from one property to the other in the vastness of the great outback. Many of these properties are not fenced, so it is quite understandable that this can happen. It is also common practice at mustering time for property owners to go on to other properties, having given the required notice, to carry out the muster. Stock are identified by way of a brand or an ear tag and that has been the traditional method of identifying beasts for a couple of centuries now. Of course, the odd bit of poddy-dodging goes on but rumour has it that a brand or ear mark makes it pretty difficult. How that brand can be identified from a helicopter is perhaps something that has to be sorted out at a future date.

Clause 2 of the bill refers to section 43 of the Summary Offences Act. It says: 'Entry on land shall be taken to include entry into the airspace above land'. Whilst I can appreciate that a helicopter would have to hover just a few metres above the ground in order to muster stock, I wondered whether or not there was to be a height limit set below which the helicopter could operate. Without such a limit, any aircraft could be seen to be trespassing upon the land of that particular property. When I read section 43 of the Summary Offences Act, the matter became clear. It states that the purpose of entering on the land must be to drive off stock. I was pleased about that clarification because without it I might have had to speak to the Attorney-General to see if we could enforce some height restriction.

Amendments to section 8 of the Summary Offences Act require consequential amendment to the Firearms Act. These amendments abolish outdated offences, let me quote the minister. This is quite quaint. In the Hansard of 29 April 1987, he referred to 2 examples: 'Conveying slops, nightsoil etc in the street between certain hours and covering and securing entrances to cellars and coal holes'. I do not know how many coal holes we have around the Northern Territory these days, but it appears that that could well have been part of some old South Australian legislation. I am pleased to see that those provisions are being repealed because I doubt very much whether anybody these days conveys slops or nightsoil around the streets between certain hours. That is an excellent move.

Section 75(1)(a) is the 1 exception; it is not being repealed. It concerns discharge of a firearm in a public place, near a public place or from a vehicle in a public place. I totally agree with all the provisions of that section. However, I would like to recommend to the minister that he include another provision which would make it an offence to discharge a firearm from a moving vehicle on an open road.

Mr Dale: That is a public place.

Mr SETTER: If that is the case, I stand corrected. It does concern me, when I drive along open roads, to see signs which have been shot at by irresponsible people. They roar along the road and decide to have a bit of fun: bang, bang! What they do not realise or do not care about is that some poor devil around the corner or in a house hidden behind the trees might be on the receiving end of those shots. Many high-powered rifles that are available these days have a range of several kilometres and such mishaps are likely. I would recommend that the minister determine whether that is an offence and, if it is not, make it one.

I support the move to rationalise all firearm offences under 1 act so that legislation does not overlap. I served on a committee in the previous Assembly which examined this particular matter. I know there are many instances where legislation overlaps.

I turn now to whether or not this legislation restricts hunters in the open. There are many shooters and hunters around the Northern Territory and they are quite a strong force in Darwin. I know that they are quite concerned about the restrictions that could be placed on their activities by the introduction of legislation such as this. I understand that the government has no intention at all of restricting the access of these people to areas which are normally set aside for that purpose. I believe this is a further example of the government's commitment to the continuing revision of its legislation and I support the amendments.

Mrs PADGHAM-PURICH (Koolpinyah): Mr Speaker, the speakers who have preceded me have made many of the points that I would have made in relation to this legislation. I will not repeat what has been said, but I would like to raise a matter which points to the difference between land owned by non-Aboriginals and land owned by Aboriginals under the Aboriginal Land Rights Act.

I have no objection to entry into the airspace above land being taken to mean entry upon the land itself for the obvious reasons stated in the minister's second-reading speech and expanded on by honourable members who preceded me. Helicopter mustering from one property to another, with the time within which notice has to be given to the owner of the adjoining property - not less than 2 and not more than 7 days - in reality applies only to whitefellers' land: one whitefeller going onto another whitefeller's land.

If your land adjoins land held under the Aboriginal Land Rights Act and you have the misfortune of having some of your stock go on to that property, this legislation could not apply to it. If my memory serves me correctly, the Aboriginal Land Rights Act requires that notice be given to the traditional owners who then make a decision on whether they will allow you on the land. I believe that decision has to be relayed to the relevant land council for consideration. I do not know whether the land council can veto or vary the traditional owners' decision. However, the decision of the land council is conveyed to the traditional owners and, eventually, the adjoining landowners are informed of the decision. The time limits for notification stipulated in this legislation would become a complete nonsense because, in reality, it would take something like 6 months.

I have in mind a similar situation that arose in relation to the taking of gravel from the side of the road to repair the road from the Arnhem Highway to the East Alligator River. Engineers of the Department of Transport and Works wanted to take gravel from the side of the road to repair the pavement of the road. The whole exercise took 6 to 9 months. The traditional owners had to be notified and they had to discuss it with the land council. In that particular case, I believe the decision was also discussed in Canberra. I do not know whether the decision relating to getting one's stock off Aboriginal land would have to go to Canberra, but nothing would surprise me these days.

Mr Speaker, a couple of Chief Ministers ago, this Assembly intended introducing legislation to even out the situation regarding the holding of land by Aboriginals and non-Aboriginals in respect of the Fences Act, the Stock Diseases Act and the Bushfires Act. In the normal course of events, all of those acts allow a landowner with good reason to go onto another person's

property to put out a bushfire or to repair fences. However, that can occur only if both properties are held by non-Aboriginals. If one property is held by Aboriginals, the Aboriginal Land Rights Act puts the kybosh on any freedom of movement between the 2 properties.

I had reservations when I first read the minister's second-reading speech and the legislation because I was concerned that this would inhibit aircraft from flying over land for other reasons. However, the Summary Offences Act refers specifically to the mustering of stock. But, I have another worry connected with this very matter. I hope that this legislation, by including the airspace above land as part of the land itself, is not the thin edge of the wedge for that dear little pommy chap, Professor Ovington, to restrict movement over Kakadu National Park. As all honourable members know, he floated a kite or red herring last year about forbidding the entry of aircraft over Kakadu National Park at lower than a couple of thousand feet. That would have been perfectly ridiculous because it would have meant that there would be land in the Territory, owned by the Commonwealth government, over which we could not even fly on normal business. Certainly, tourists would not have been able to take advantage of the few beauties that there are in Kakadu National Park. I indicate to the minister that I hope this is not the thin edge of the wedge for Professor Ovington.

I agree that antique legislative provisions must be repealed and that is what this legislation sets out to do. Quite reasonably, the sections concerning firearms in the Summary Offences Act will be transferred to the Firearms Act. I also agree with the statements in the minister's second-reading speech about not wanting to restrict legitimate shooters and hunters in the Northern Territory. However, the safety of the general public also has to be protected. I believe it will be protected provided the offenders are caught in the act of shooting in a way which is likely to endanger, annoy or frighten a person or the public.

Mr Speaker, in this context, I would like to refer to an incident which happened last year. Whilst innocently mowing his nature strip, a man was shot fatally by a person who, at the time, was under psychiatric treatment. Again, I ask the Attorney-General to see if something can be done to prevent the holding of shooters' licences and firearms registration by those people who are in a very unstable frame of mind whether they seek voluntary treatment or whether they are seeking mandatory treatment as ordered by a doctor. We have heard of many nut cases in the Northern Territory, especially in the Top End, shooting people. Unfortunately, it is usually members of their own families and close neighbours who are the victims. If persons are known to be unhinged and seek medical treatment, the disease should be regarded as a notifiable disease to the extent that any firearms are taken from them and they are unable to obtain a licence until they are declared to be well and truly normal again.

Mr Speaker, I support the legislation and hope that it has the effect that the honourable minister intends.

Mr EDE (Stuart): Mr Speaker, I would like to speak very briefly in this debate. I have read the minister's second-reading speech and he did not indicate that there was anything contentious in the amendments relating to firearms. My original intention was to take him at his word. However, as a matter of record, I would like to put a question to him. He would know that there is a reservation with respect to pastoral properties etc that allows people with a traditional relationship with the land to hunt on that land. This has been held in the courts to include the use of firearms. I would like him to assure us that that can continue.

Mr MANZIE (Attorney-General): Mr Speaker, I would like to take the opportunity of assuring all honourable members that the amendment to the Firearms Act regarding the discharge of a firearm certainly will not inhibit where firearms are discharged. It makes it an offence for somebody to discharge a firearm in a manner or in a position that is liable to endanger, annoy or frighten. Reference to public places, which could have caused problems in relation to pastoral properties and Crown land, will not apply. It will make it easier for people to hunt but it will make it far easier to charge people who use firearms improperly.

The member for Koolpinyah had some problems regarding the mustering provisions. She was not quite right when she said it relates to whites only. Aboriginal pastoral properties will still have to follow the same requirements as pastoral properties owned and operated by Europeans. It is an extension of a long-standing requirement that notice must be given to an adjoining landowner when a person is mustering his stock from that landowner's property. Nowadays, the helicopter is used as a tool instead of the horse or the 4-wheel-drive. It is appropriate that the provision be extended to cover that requirement.

The proclamation provisions were becoming a bit antiquated. The member for MacDonnell talked about Jabiru being proclaimed in February but that no mention had been made of Yulara. I cannot find any mention of Nhulunbuy. Obviously, the provision was ripe for removal. Most of the offences were of a minor or insignificant nature. We are examining it to see if there are any offences that should be transferred to a more appropriate act. At present, I think the only reference was to 'discharging a firearm in a proclaimed locality' and that has now been rectified by placing it in the Firearms Act.

Mr Speaker, I thank honourable members for their comments.

Mr Hatton: What about reservations?

Mr MANZIE: It is no longer an offence for a firearm to be discharged in a public place under the definition of a 'public place' in the Summary Offences Act. Open reservations or pastoral property could be deemed to be public places because they are open to and used by the public. The public could be a select group of people who exclude other people. Under this provision, however, it is not an offence to discharge a firearm unless it is causing danger or annoying or likely to endanger or frighten, or has been discharged in a manner that is likely to cause those things. The amendment has, therefore, removed any reference to the location of the firearm being discharged. The actual operation of the firearm has been made the criterion. This will certainly not affect people who want to hunt in the traditional manner unless they want to hunt one another. Then it becomes an offence.

Motion agreed to; bill read a second time.

Mr MANZIE (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.

TRESPASS BILL
(Serial 8)

Continued from 29 April 1987.

Mr BELL (MacDonnell): Mr Speaker, the opposition has some concerns about this bill. In his second-reading speech, the Attorney-General said that the purpose of the bill was to enact in 1 piece of legislation the law regarding criminal trespass. Quite frankly, this is not the case, because the law has been changed in various respects. Basically, what has happened is that the current trespass provisions in the Crown Lands Act and the Summary Offences Act are to be repealed and quite separate trespass provisions have been placed in this particular bill. I am interested in the government's reasons for doing this and I am interested in how it compares with practice in other states. I am concerned about this bill for various reasons and I hope these matters will become clear.

The situation at the moment is that there are different trespass offences for enclosed premises as opposed to trespass on open country, regardless of the form of tenure. With respect to the open areas of land under the Crown Lands Act, an officer can make a complaint if a person is in unlawful occupation of any Crown land, including reserved or dedicated lands but not including any leased lands or lands occupied under licence or agreement. Currently, that section refers to stock reserves or mining reserves. Section 118(2) obliges the court to make an order to remove the person subject to certain conditions.

Section 118(3) allows a lessee or his manager to apply to the court in the same way as an officer can under section 118(1), while section 119 provides a penalty for anyone who unlawfully occupies any Crown land. With the repeal of the Summary Offences Act provisions, section 57(1)(n) made it an offence to be on certain premises without a lawful excuse and section 91(a) specified an offence for trespassing on prohibited land of the Territory or premises of the Territory. That is the current situation.

According to this bill, Crown land as defined does not include leased Crown land. My reading of the current situation is that section 118(3) applies to any Crown land, including leased Crown land, because section 118(3) says 'a lessee or his manager or a licensee of any land from the Crown or a person occupying Crown lands under an agreement may in like manner make a complaint against any person in unlawful occupation of any part of the land included in the lease or licence or agreement and the like proceedings shall thereupon be had except that the land shall not be taken possession of on behalf of the Crown'. Thus, section 118(3) currently applies to leased lands.

In the bill before us, we note that clause 6 covers the basic offence of trespass on prohibited land. Clause 5 covers the other basic offence of trespass on enclosed premises. The definition of 'prohibited land' includes Crown Land, land occupied by the Territory or Commonwealth, and land occupied by a statutory corporation. The definition of 'Crown land' covers 'all Crown land, including reserved or dedicated land, other than Crown land which has been licensed or is occupied under a licence or an agreement'. My reading of the bill is that the trespass law is weaker in that respect than it was before.

A second point of concern is that the penalties have been increased by about 1000%. Under section 91A of the Summary Offences Act at the moment, the penalty is \$200, whereas the penalty under the bill will be \$2000. Bearing in mind that section 91A was inserted only in 1983, that represents a draconian increase. I would appreciate the minister's comments on that. It strikes me as a little over the odds.

The opposition notes with some concern that further penalties have been introduced. I would appreciate some justification for this from the Attorney-General. These further penalties are outlined in clause 7 which covers trespass after direction to leave and clause 8 which refers to trespass after a warning to stay off. It seems to me that these particular clauses are considerably tougher than the present trespass law. I would appreciate some justification from the minister as to why these new offences and penalties have been created. To highlight my point about the very tough nature of these provisions, clause 9 makes it very easy to give a direction or warning and that direction or warning has a very long effect because it applies for 12 months. If somebody says, 'Listen fella, stay away from here' and that particular person happens to come back 11 months and 28 days later, having had a lapse of memory, he is guilty of an offence, the penalty for which is a \$2000 fine.

Mr Dale: A great reminder.

Mr BELL: I hear the honourable member for Wanguri, and I appreciate his attachment to the Auntie Jack principle: you bash 'em first and ask questions later.

Mr Dale: Its prevention.

Mr BELL: Certainly, if they are knocked to the floor, they cannot offend, can they? We see a fairly extraordinary attitude to law enforcement in the member for Wanguri at times. It is nice to see that he is getting better again.

I refer the Attorney-General to clause 8(4): 'A person who, being a person who has been warned under this section to stay off any place, unlawfully trespasses on that place within 1 year after the giving of the warning, commits an offence'. I reckon that is tough.

A further point we wish to make is that the definition of 'enclosed premises' under this bill is completely different from that contained in section 57(1)(n) which is to be repealed and which I accept is a rather outmoded definition. That is included in the bill because the current section of the Summary Offences Act refers to trespass on any 'dwelling, lands, warehouse, shop, office, coachhouse, garage, stable, dressingroom, training room, clubhouse, tent, outhouse or any other building, structure or erection or any enclosed yard, garden or area'. Whereas the definition of 'enclosed premises' under the bill refers to a 'building or structure, whether permanent or temporary, and whether fixed or capable of being moved, a dwelling, any part of an enclosed yard, garden or area, or a vehicle, including a caravan, vessel, aircraft or hovercraft'.

I would be interested to hear from the Attorney-General what sort of thinking went into the changes to the definition of 'premises' for the purpose of trespass, and how this relates to legislation elsewhere around the country.

A further point I wish to make is that the section 118 allows provision for a judicial procedure so that subsections 118(1) and 118(2) provide for application to a court in the case of somebody unlawfully occupying a particular premises but, with reference to clauses 7, 8, 9 and 10, no applications have to be made in that way in respect of the areas currently covered by the Crown Lands Act. To that extent too, the law has been changed.

I can envisage circumstances where people may camp on Crown land. For example, they may be Aboriginal people who are exercising a section 24 right to live in the vicinity of natural waters and so on where they have been able to use their powers to demonstrate to a lessee that they have a right under the Crown Lands Act to live by natural waters under that reservation. In fact, their situation is strengthened by this bill because the bill expressly removes any reference to lease of land, and that is interesting. I wonder if the government actually intended that to be the case. However, I can imagine people living on those areas of Crown land that are specified by this bill, Crown land 'including reserved or dedicated land other than Crown land which is being leased or is occupied under a licence or an agreement'. That could apply to fringe-dwelling Aboriginal groups, for example, or itinerant campers or whatever. Tourists who pull up and camp overnight on the outskirts of a town on Crown land. I presume that provision would apply in that particular case, and there the provisions are far tougher than they are at the moment.

I wish to draw the Attorney-General's attention to the evidentiary provisions in clause 12, which allow a person to aver trespass on the part of a second person on the basis of a statement on oath. The clause provides that that statement on oath is to be regarded as sufficient evidence until the contrary is proved. That represents a reverse of the onus of proof. I would have thought, Mr Speaker, that the onus should have been on the complainant to show that the person so accused actually did trespass, and that the onus should not be reversed in that way.

I trust that the Attorney-General will respond to these criticisms I have made of the bill. I think there are some real concerns here, unlike the legislation we have discussed previously. I trust that he will respond to my comments appropriately.

Mr DALE (Wanguri): Mr Speaker, speaking as the member for Wanguri, I will explain a little of the history behind this bill. It was conceived as a consequence of a transient camp on Rocklands Drive near the Royal Darwin Hospital. A number of people living in that transient camp were harassing people who lived in houses along Rocklands Drive. To take up the point that the honourable member for MacDonnell made earlier, I am far from wishing to inflict any injury on those people who were going into the yards, urinating on people's front doorsteps, sleeping in boats, cars etc on the premises of these various houses, where people could do nothing about that behaviour. The police could do nothing about it because any offence relating to being on premises needs to be 'unlawfully on premises'. The person must have had the intent to commit or have already committed some offence on those premises before the police or the occupier could do anything but simply ask the persons to remove themselves. They could come back 10 minutes later and continue to commit the inconveniences they were committing as far as the people who lived in those places were concerned. Once again, it was the old cry of, 'Does an offence have to take place before the police can take some action?'

As a result of that situation, this bill was conceived. It is directed at that person who, for whatever reason, through ignorance or whatever, stumbles into yards or believes that it is his right to wander into private premises, to use the taps there to have a bath, to urinate on doorsteps, to look through flywire screens which might wake someone up who will see a face at the window that rather terrorises them. After many months of frustration for the police, finally a very young girl was molested in her bed. The father of that particular young girl got out of bed and, perhaps we could say, administered a little justice of his own. As a consequence, it was deemed that something ought to be done to put in place some legislation whereby the authorities

could take some action prior to any serious assault or offence being committed at a house or on the people who live in that house. That is how this bill was conceived.

Mr POOLE (Araluen): Mr Speaker, I welcome this bill as I am sure most Territorians will. Many of my constituents have problems with trespassers and the law to date has certainly been a bit confusing. Many provisions are contained in a number of acts such as the Summary Offences Act and the Crown Lands Act but, with the passing of this bill, trespass on Crown land will obviously be dealt with the same way as trespass on private property.

Mr Speaker, as you well know, Alice Springs residents have had problems for many months with strangers wandering into backyards or onto properties late at night. Also, groups of drinkers have started setting up semi-permanent camps in public park areas, creating noise and garbage problems. In my own electorate, all the schools suffer because broken glass and empty tins and flagons have been left by itinerant drinkers on grassy areas where children play during the day. This bill should help the police to move people on and partly solve this problem. Of course, I acknowledge the total problem will not be solved without addressing the drinking problem. This is not to say that all trespass problems relate to drinking or to any one section of our community.

This bill will help police contain vandalism on both private and public property and it will deter people from wandering around looking for empty premises or houses to break into. With regard to Territory government buildings or properties operated by the public service or statutory authorities, it will give the authorities the right to request unwanted visitors to leave or vacate premises. This in itself should help to control demonstrators or squatters.

In Araluen, residents have been annoyed by illegal campers on Crown land and areas opposite Lovegrove Drive and Larapinta Drive. Residents have had to put up with visual pollution and garbage strewn around the countryside. The campers had no running water or toilets and no facilities for getting water for cooking. This in turn created a health hazard.

I note that, under clause 7, a trespasser only commits an offence if he stays after being requested to leave, and I think that is reasonable. On face value, this bill could possibly contain the multitude of young motorcyclists who periodically annoy all and sundry by roaring up and down on vacant Crown land that surrounds the township of Alice Springs. These motorcyclists have become a major problem to the more elderly in our community and to shift workers who try to sleep during the day, particularly on the weekends.

I note that clause 13 creates a defence to cover those who find themselves trespassing whilst pursuing game or hunting, and this again is sensible. I am sure that the bill will go a long way towards curing some of the problems caused by trespassers in the Northern Territory. I commend the bill to honourable members.

Mr EDE (Stuart): Mr Speaker, my question relates to the Crown land provisions and the definition of 'Crown land' as it applies in the legislation. Most of this has been covered by the member for MacDonnell, but I would like a clear statement concerning people who are living on stock routes at present, which they may believe they have a right to and which the government may believe they do not have a right to do. There could be a situation where people are staying on a stock route for the purpose of

establishing their right to an excision. Alternatively, they may have a land claim over the area and this may or may not be agreed to by the government.

Mr Hatton: That does not come within the definition of 'trespass'.

Mr EDE: In response to the interjection by the Chief Minister, I ask this question because 'Crown land' as defined includes 'all Crown land, including reserved or dedicated land, other than Crown land which has been leased or is occupied under a licence or an agreement'. It may be that the Crown may be deeming itself to be the lawful occupier of that land. I think that this area is contentious and should not be dealt with under a provision such as this whereby the Crown can tell the police to move the people on. I think some of the old legal process should be retained in that instance so that people have a chance to establish before the courts whether or not they have a prima facie right to occupancy of that land in pursuit of one of the purposes I outlined. I would like that point to be covered in the minister's reply, Mr Speaker.

Mr SETTER (Jingili): Mr Speaker, I will address this matter very briefly, but there are a couple of points that I would like to comment on.

The member for MacDonnell referred to clause 8(4) which refers to a person trespassing on private property being warned to stay off that property and committing an offence by returning within 12 months. I have no problem with that at all and I support it. If a person is on private property or Crown property and is warned to stay off, that person is obviously there with some foul intent. If that is the case, the person has no right to return and should be made to stay off those premises. You cannot warn a person to stay off the premises and then, half an hour later, let him have access to it again. That would be ridiculous.

I would also like to support the comments made by the member for Wanguri when he referred to the reasons why he was instrumental in having these provisions introduced. On a number of occasions, people in my electorate have complained to me, particularly people with Housing Commission properties on the lots behind them, that occupants of those properties regularly trespass in the course of visiting the local shopping centre. Instead of doing what everybody else does and walking up the street, around the corner and down the road to the shopping centre, they jump the back fence, wander straight through somebody's property and out through the front gate. That is just not on. In our society, you just do not do that on another person's property unless you have sought and gained their permission. In my electorate, this has happened repeatedly. I have been to the police and the Housing Commission and received the same response: 'Sorry, but there is nothing we can do about it'. They speak to the offending people and counsel them but, if they do it again, nothing can be done. I even know of 1 resident who deliberately planted a whole row of bougainvillea bushes along the back fence so that when the plants grow anybody who tries this will be in for a pretty thorny journey.

The Trespass Bill collates into 1 act various provisions of other acts. It repeals sections of other acts, including sections 57(1)(n) and 91A of the Summary Offences Act and sections 118 and 119 of the Crown Land Act. It is very important to note that, in spite of repealing provisions in other acts, it also protects the trespass provisions under the Tenancy Act. That is significant because that is 1 act where the trespass provisions are very important and should stay in place.

Various clauses of the bill provide for the mechanics of implementing the trespass legislation. I will not go through every one of them but I will give

a couple of examples. Unauthorised trespass on land is a fairly basic issue. Unauthorised trespass on enclosed premises, trespass after direction to leave, and trespass after warning to stay off are all very important provisions. It is interesting to note also that the provisions of this bill apply equally to Crown land and private land or property. It is good to see all of those trespass provisions encompassed in the 1 bill because administrators and law officers have had a problem trying to sort through the various legislation and define and decide which particular legislation applies or suits a particular situation or an offence.

Mr Speaker, with those few words, I will close my remarks, but would like to indicate that I support the bill.

Mr MANZIE (Attorney-General): Mr Deputy Speaker, in closing the debate, I would like to take up on a few matters that were brought to my attention by the members for MacDonnell and Stuart. It is a shame that neither member is in the Assembly. It seems that they decided they did not want to hear the answers to their questions. However, I suppose they can read them in Hansard.

The member for MacDonnell was interested because he could find no mention of leasehold land. The definitions in the bill are pretty specific and cover Crown land, enclosed premises, prohibited land and a 'place which includes enclosed premises and land that includes prohibited land and Crown Land'. The word 'place' really covers everything.

I think 1 thing should be made quite clear. The member for MacDonnell said there were some tough provisions in this bill. Indeed, there are some tough provisions in the bill. It is intended to contain tough provisions. The member for Wanguri explained what brought the bill about. It was conceived because of a situation where people were trespassing on private property and into the enclosed yards of people's homes. They were sleeping there, urinating there and generally making a nuisance of themselves, and there was no provision for their removal.

Mr Deputy Speaker, I speak from first-hand knowledge because, many years ago, when people trespassed on private property, it was a civil matter and police did not have the power to take any action. They could stand by while the lawful occupier removed the trespasser. Quite often, a violent confrontation ensued, nobody was satisfied and, 5 minutes later, the same thing would recur. The object of this bill is to enable the police to take action when people behave in an antisocial manner and trespass on private property, on government land or whatever.

I would like to make another point very clear. The member for MacDonnell pointed out that clause 8 makes it an offence for a person who has trespassed and been warned off, to come back within a specified period of time, and that the maximum penalty is \$2000. Mr Speaker, the person trespassing is warned off, is given a direction to go and, if he returns, he commits an offence. The member says that is tough. It is tough, but I would like to ask him what his views are on the provisions of the Aboriginal Land Rights Act which makes it an offence - without any prior warning - for people to enter Aboriginal land without permission, and stay there? The penalty for that is \$1000. I believe that he is aware of that and I would like to know how his reaction to that particular provision of the Land Rights Act equates with his reaction to the provisions in this bill where a person is warned and, if he then returns, he is in trouble. Under the Land Rights Act, if he enters on the land he commits the offence. There is no second chance.

Both the member for Stuart and the member for MacDonnell seemed very concerned that this act would be used somehow to remove people who camp on Crown land in the wide open spaces or on stock routes or whatever. I would like to make it quite clear that, even at the moment, anyone who camps on a stock route and has no right to be there can be removed. This bill adds nothing to that. The whole intention of this legislation is to prevent people trespassing in private yards, on government property, on enclosed property or Crown property and creating problems. It gives the ability for the police to act.

It is incumbent upon honourable members to read clause 13 of the bill, which sets out defences to a charge of committing an offence. Some of those defences are that the defendant did not see, and could not reasonably be assumed to have seen, notices posted on any land or that the trespass was not wilful and was committed while hunting or in the pursuit of game. Concerning the provision that a person shall not re-enter premises for a period of 12 months if he has been warned not to, there must be an intent to commit the offence. If there was an accidental trespass after a period of 11 months and 20 days, which was the scenario the honourable member painted, and there was no intent to commit the offence of trespass, no offence would be committed. That is a basic principle of law that most people understand.

To sum up, the intention of the bill is to enable action to be taken regarding behaviour which is not acceptable in our society, and it will give the police the ability to carry out the action that will bring that behaviour to an end. The provisions it contains concerning trespass are no different from those in the Aboriginal Land Rights Act. Mr Deputy Speaker, I commend the bill to honourable members.

Motion agreed to; bill read a second time.

Mr MANZIE (Attorney-General)(by leave): Mr Deputy Speaker, I move that the bill be now read a third time.

Motion agreed to; bill read a third time.

ADJOURNMENT

Mr HATTON (Chief Minister): Mr Deputy Speaker, I move that the Assembly do now adjourn.

Mr Deputy Speaker, there is a small matter I would like to deal with tonight in this debate. It arises out of one of the most misrepresentative, reprehensible and disgraceful press releases that I have had the unfortunate duty to read. It emanated from the Leader of the Opposition today. Mr Deputy Speaker, I lay quite clear claim to have been misrepresented by the Leader of the Opposition.

I must admit that I have been disappointed many times during these sittings by the performances of the honourable members opposite, particularly those of the Leader of the Opposition. However, my disappointment turned to disgust today when I read a press statement issued this morning by the Leader of the Opposition. His statement not only grossly misrepresented events which occurred in this Assembly, but sought deliberately and maliciously to bring into disrepute all members on this side of the Assembly. The Leader of the Opposition accused myself and every other member on this side of the Assembly, every member of the CLP and, by implication, the majority of Territorians who voted for the CLP at the last election, of being racists. He deliberately and

maliciously misrepresented what I had to say in this place about the breaking of parliamentary convention by the member for Arafura in his maiden speech.

Mr Smith: That is nonsense and you know it.

Mr HATTON: He sought to make the cheapest kind of political capital by crying 'racist'. Like the little shepherd boy in the fairy story, the Leader of the Opposition has cried 'wolf' too many times to be taken seriously. However, I recommend that he read and reread what I had to say in the debate on the Address-in-Reply. While doing so, he should reflect on his responsibility to maintain certain standards of honesty when commenting publicly about the proceedings of this Assembly.

Although I am extremely reluctant to give any further currency to the ill-considered statements of the Leader of the Opposition, one part of the press statement cannot be allowed to go undefended. He said: 'It is not too hard to see the motivation of the CLP, which has its social and economic roots in the exploitation of Aboriginal land and Aboriginal labour'. As well as being a total fabrication, that statement is a cheap denigration of the very real attempts of my government and my party to meet adequately the complex and demanding needs of the 25% of the Territory's population who are Aboriginal. Mr Deputy Speaker, the CLP government represents the interests of all Territorians, Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal alike, and, in doing so, it expends a great deal of its resources on services to remote and disadvantaged Aboriginal communities.

Finally, Mr Deputy Speaker, I wish to condemn the Leader of the Opposition for having compounded his misrepresentation of the facts in his press statement by ensuring that the statement was circulated as widely as possible. I do not have a complete list of the media organisations to which the statement was sent ...

Mr Smith: I will give it to you.

Mr HATTON: ... but I am advised that it included the News Limited Bureau in the Canberra parliamentary press gallery. It appeared that the Leader of the Opposition was not content merely to drag the Northern Territory parliament into the gutter within the borders of the NT, but that he set out to ensure that the Territory was viewed in as dim a light as possible outside our borders as well. Honourable members will be aware that this is not the first time the Labor Party in the Northern Territory has betrayed the best interests of Territorians in this way.

For instance, during the recent election campaign, the Leader of the Opposition made it his personal duty to denigrate the financial position of the Northern Territory to every interstate journalist he could find. I understand that journalists were hiding out all over town and those poor unsuspecting souls who were slow off the mark were led gloomily up the stairs to the honourable member's office to be instructed in full, boring detail about our supposed plight. I am also informed that they fell asleep in droves.

Let me say very clearly in this Assembly that the member for Arafura and the member for Arnhem are properly and fully elected members of this Assembly. They take their place in this Assembly as equals. They are entitled equally to express their views in this Assembly and they are equally entitled to be criticised in this Assembly. If this Assembly is going to degenerate to the point where, every time a member criticises either the member for Arafura or

the member for Arnhem, he is accused of being racist, this Assembly is in a very poor state. I have respect for those gentlemen sitting in those seats. They are big enough to stand up to criticism, just like any other member of this Assembly. I do not think it will hurt them or us if we legitimately criticise the comments they make. They may not agree with our criticisms and they have every right to come back and criticise us. I have no objection to that. But, to call that process of debate and criticism racism, will bring us into disrepute.

I am not going to patronise anybody in this Assembly and I am amazed that the Leader of the Opposition would even contemplate allowing debates in this Assembly to be affected by such foul-mouthed language in the media. I regard the term 'racist' as foul-mouthed abuse. I object violently to that term being used in reference to myself and I would like to see some evidence, any evidence, that I have ever shown any racist tendencies. I would deny such charges vehemently and I would argue vehemently against anyone who expresses racist views, and that includes members on my side of the Assembly. I stand on my record, publicly and privately, on that particular issue and any form of discrimination.

I am not going to stand here undefended in the face of the nonsense that is being spread in the media by the Leader of the Opposition simply because he has failed miserably in this Assembly to make any impact at all in any debate or to raise any topic of relevance. He is up to the cheapjack trick of running up the old flag of racism. I am not going to wear it and neither is anyone on this side of the Assembly. We will argue and debate issues that affect Territory Aboriginals or any other section of the community and we have to be able to do that openly and freely without coarse language being used, publicly or privately. The Leader of the Opposition should debate the facts, not hide behind dirty epithets.

I would expect the member for Arnhem and the member for Arafura to feel ashamed that somebody on their side of the parliament would stoop so low as to use that sort of nonsensical denigration and undermine the efforts that are being made to try to build bridges between the Northern Territory government and the Aboriginal community. I can appreciate that the Leader of the Opposition might not like that. He might like to drive wedges between us, but we will keep working to build bridges to reach the Aboriginal community. We will keep working to service the needs of the Aboriginal community. Yes, we will continue to work to let the Aboriginal community feel that the Northern Territory government is their government as well and that they are part of the Northern Territory mainstream.

I welcomed the comments of the member for Arnhem in his speech in the debate on the Address-in-Reply when he supported that move, as did the member for MacDonnell. They both welcomed and supported the move in that direction. That is not to suggest that we will not have significant differences in philosophy or policy or emphasis, but the principle was supported by both the member for Arnhem and the member for MacDonnell. No one can accuse me of being of the same political viewpoint as the member for MacDonnell, but at least we have some sense of a common ideal in the goal of bringing the community of the Northern Territory together.

The Leader of the Opposition is continuing to try to drive wedges between parties in this community and it is this sort of nonsense that has caused the racial tension in this Northern Territory of ours. He ought to start accepting his responsibilities to this Assembly and stop this cheapjack nonsense or hire a new press secretary.

Mr COLLINS (Sadadeen): Mr Speaker, questions were asked again this morning about lockers for the Sadadeen Secondary College. The minister indicated that he thought they had arrived but, unfortunately, they have not. I do appreciate his chasing the matter up for me but my check with the school indicated that the lockers still have not appeared on the scene but that they should arrive at the end of next week. These lockers are just for the matriculation students and are the ones I mentioned the other day when I raised a question which related to matters within the responsibilities of 2 ministers. I was directed to the Treasurer who finally got around to the locker issue in the last little bit of his reply. I would say to him that I definitely desire him to talk with the Minister for Education to see if he can find a few extra dollars so that the Year 11 students of that school can have lockers. I would just like to put that on the record. I would hate it to be said that I did not ask him to do it and I think that he would appreciate that I want him to do it anyway. It is on the record now: please consult with him.

Mr Coulter: What did you think of the Alice Springs Cup?

Mr COLLINS: I thought the Alice Springs Youth Centre May Day sports were excellent, because I ran them myself. Young people are much more interesting to me than nags are.

Mrs Padgham-Purich: There is nothing wrong with horses.

Mr COLLINS: That is true, but they are not my particular preference. I hope the Chief Minister will not see it as too discriminatory if I say that I prefer young people to horses.

Mr Hatton: I can understand that.

Mr COLLINS: Thank you.

Another question that I would like to put to the Minister for Education relates to the Sadadeen Secondary College. Back in February, he responded very quickly when I asked him to look at some problems that had arisen at the school. These problems were brought to my attention by a mother who rang up and said that her daughter had spent a very miserable couple of nights with migraine headaches through spending most of the school day in a newly-enclosed room which had no natural lighting. Others were making similar complaints. This child was quite violently ill throughout the night and her mother was obviously and justifiably very concerned. I appreciate the minister's action in sending his officers down to check the matter. The main cause of that problem was rectified. It related to a continuing problem which had occurred with the air-conditioning system which had not been installed correctly. I appreciate the efforts of some local contractors who sorted out the problem. I believe the minister's adviser reported that a couple of the rooms could have been greatly improved simply by being painted. It is a grey block building which has been improved by a considerable amount of painting, although some areas remain to be done. There are some rooms in which the only natural light has to turn a right-angled corner and reflect off a grey brick wall. Of course, grey brick is a very poor reflector. I understand that it has been recommended that the room be painted so that more light will be reflected and conditions for students will be improved.

In relation to the 2 enclosed rooms in which the air-conditioning was improved, I believe it was recommended that skylights be installed with diffusers so that a bright spot did not move across the room as the sun moved

across the sky making it unbearable for the student underneath. The third recommendation was for sunscreen coating on the windows of the computer rooms. I ask the minister to determine what has happened in response to the recommendations and whether he can find the money for those improvements to be made. I raise this matter now because, unless you are the Leader of the Opposition, you are fairly lucky to be able to ask more than 1 question during question time.

This morning, I asked a question about fruit-fly in Alice Springs. Eradication of fruit-fly can be a pretty costly matter. I look forward to the minister's reply and would ask that he seek public cooperation on this matter. I am sure that people who grow fruit which is affected by fruit-fly would be prepared to cooperate. If all people take action at the same time, we will have a chance of solving the problem. I ask the minister to examine what advice can be given to local people and, more importantly, to commercial growers of certain fruits which could be affected. I am thinking of Ti Tree, Pine Hill and the area to the south of Alice Springs which could become important for the cultivation of dates.

I would like an answer from the Chief Minister regarding the Darwin casino. I do commend him for having disposed of the Alice Springs casino. I have not heard anything of late of what is happening to the Darwin casino but I am sure the community at large would appreciate some information.

The main matter I wanted to raise tonight relates to a video called 'African National Congress - VIP's of Violence'. It gave a rather different view of the situation in South Africa to that one normally sees in the media. The video involved many people from South Africa whose names are familiar to us - Winnie and Nelson Mandela, Chief Buthelezi, the Zulu chief, former members of the ANC and members of the South African Communist Party. One statement which really struck home with me was that 'people who dance on the burnt corpses of necklace victims have nothing to offer South Africa'. The video showed people being necklaced.

The whole tenor of the video was anti-apartheid. However, the ANC's role is not a matter of simply being anti-apartheid. The ANC does not represent the vast majority of black people in South Africa. If it is the accepted mouthpiece for the black African people, why is it that black people are necklacing black people? The necklacing is designed to break down any semblance of order in the black townships. The people whom they necklace are the police and other officers who try to keep law, order and control in the villages. That demonstrates that the ANC does not control the hearts and minds of the people. It is trying to win them by the worst possible methods.

The video showed the hypocrisy by taking film clips of people like Mrs Mandela saying to western journalists that the ANC had never advocated violence. It then showed film clips of the same lady talking to the ANC people and saying: 'With our matches and with our necklaces, we will liberate this country'. There is another film by the Willesee program interviewing a very gentle Mrs Mandela. She said that their theories had nothing to do with violence. Mr Willesee was presenting her to the Australian people as the wife of a man who would be Prime Minister of South Africa if that country had free elections.

President Reagan made comments in this video. However, what persuaded me more than anything else was the appearance of an elder statesman of the Labor Party, Hon Kim Beazley Snr. I am sure our Clerk, Mr Smith, would know the gentleman very well. I have only met him once. I do not believe that that

man would have been so foolish as to have just lent his name to that video because he comments very sensibly and raises some very important questions about the situation in South Africa. He said that he had studied the country for a long time. I was impressed with that gentleman when he came to Alice Springs High School as Minister for Education in the 1970s. He lent a great deal of credibility to this video. I did not know the other people nearly as well.

I have the video in Darwin and I showed it to some friends last night. One of them intends to approach Channel 8 to see whether it is of suitable quality to transmit on that channel. I hope that it will be shown even if the quality is not perfect. It is important that people should see it. It is horrifying to see people being necklaced - hands tied behind their backs, tyres around their bodies, doused in kerosene and petrol and set on fire - and people coming in from all sides and kicking at them. It is not pretty but it is a very interesting and thought-provoking video.

It also gave me considerable hope for South Africa. There were former communists and former members of the ANC who were putting their necks right on the line by appearing in the film. People who had been members of the South African Communist Party for 10 years were clearly saying what the game plan was. It is pretty sad and sorry. It is similar to Hitler using his secret police to instil fear in people. That is not the sort of world we want.

I was heartened by the number of moderate leaders who oppose apartheid very strongly but who, like Chief Buthelezi, who commands something like 6 million men, say that they want to negotiate a solution. A union leader, a lady who had been a member of the ANC, said that things had been improving in South Africa from the 1970s into the 1980s and then the ANC started pushing this violence. Obviously, it does not want to see South Africa solve its problems in a peaceful way. It does not suit its game plan and people are expendable.

If honourable members would like to see this video, I would be very happy to make it available. Actually, it was mentioned in the NT News and the basic story was outlined. However, it was given a funny headline involving something to do with music. It did not register with me and I nearly missed the article. The little subheading, with the words 'Oliver Tambo' caught my attention. The article was about this video. To me it looked as if the media was enjoying some fun and games, as if it did not really want to print that sort of thing but had sought to appease those people who have this point of view. A headline was then designed that would not attract anybody. I wrote to the NT News and asked that the article be reprinted with a more striking headline so that people would actually read it. It was very thought-provoking material; I recommend it to honourable members.

Mrs PADGHAM-PURICH (Koolpinyah): Mr Speaker, notwithstanding energetic efforts on my part both yesterday morning and this morning, I was unable to ask a question of the Minister for Education so I will have to air my views on a particular subject now.

There is a serious lack in the educational opportunities for the children attending Taminmin High School. I refer to the facilities available to the children who attend there and for those who want to take up mathematics subjects. Last year, there were difficulties at the high school regarding the teaching of mathematics. The first children in Year 12 graduated from Taminmin High School last year. There had been no previous Year 12 class at that school from whom they could gain experience as they were the

frontrunners. It was unfortunate because, from Year 11, they were put in the incorrect stream of mathematics and suffered certain other deficiencies in their teaching, with the consequence that several children failed at the end of the year who otherwise would not have failed

This year again, there are certain deficiencies in the allotment of teachers to the Taminmin High School. The first associated happening was the unfortunate sickness of 1 of the maths teachers. There are only 2 maths teachers at Taminmin High School. This has placed a great load on the other teachers and that is working to the gross detriment of the children. This does not affect the children in one year only; the children in Years 9 to 12 are all affected by insufficient teachers of mathematics. Staff in the office of the Minister for Education have promised me that they are doing their best to alleviate the situation, but nothing has eventuated in the form of another maths teacher. There is no maths teacher for the children in Year 9, but I understand that one of the physical education teachers, who also has competence in mathematics, is teaching the children in Year 9.

The other mathematics teacher engaged at Taminmin High School is doing her best with Year 10, but she had a full program instructing the students she was teaching, and to take on the work of another teacher as well is stretching her physical capabilities quite a bit. Year 11 children are being taught as best as can be arranged by a science teacher, who also has competence in mathematics, but that leaves the Year 12 students who are not receiving the education they should in this subject through temporary part-time maths instruction. It is the Year 12 students who will finish at the high school this year and the subjects that are offered to them and taught to them this year, or that are not taught to them this year, are very important and could determine which courses of education they follow after they finish at Taminmin or whether they will have to return and repeat subjects.

Mr Speaker, I believe the children in the Darwin rural area have the same rights to an education as children in other parts of the Northern Territory. It appears that this is just another example of the people in the rural area being at a disadvantage and having to work extra hard for every little thing that they want. We are not asking for the world; all we ask is common or garden justice for our children.

There is another matter that has been brought to my attention from time to time by constituents and I have conveyed their views to the relevant people. As several views have been put to me on this same subject recently, I believe now is the time to air the subject. I am talking about the inability of people to buy liquor from supermarkets and similar outlets before 12 noon. The gentleman who brought this to my attention recently is a man who is very active in the greyhound world. He has some complaints.

Mr Coulter: A CLP election promise.

Mrs PADGHAM-PURICH: That is just by the way. They are a whole lot of hot air in most cases. I am telling you the facts.

Mr Speaker, when people go camping, they usually start their trips reasonably early in the morning, at about 9 am or 10 am at the latest. They pack the car with camping gear at home and call into the supermarket for last minute purchases, some fruit or batteries and some ice, and many people want to collect a couple of cartons of grog as well, but they cannot unless they wait until midday. That was brought home to me very recently ...

Mr Coulter: They can sit in a pub for 2 hours and wait.

Mrs PADGHAM-PURICH: That is a very facile remark which does not warrant comment.

Recently, Cyclone Kay visited the area! Luckily for the people of Darwin, it did not amount to a serious cyclone but, nevertheless, warnings went out from time to time suggesting that people go home and not be on the streets. People went to supermarkets if they were a bit low on certain items. They bought tinned food and batteries for torches and other necessities and, looking at the situation realistically, some would have bought a carton or a couple of bottles of grog. Although I was speaking against drink driving earlier in connection with a piece of proposed legislation, I am not a wowser and I believe that people are entitled to a few drinks if they want them.

Mr Coulter: You will have it delivered with the milkman and bread the way you are going.

Mrs PADGHAM-PURICH: These people wanted to do the right thing. They wanted to get off the roads and get home, but they also wanted to wait for a carton at the supermarket. Again, they could not do what was most advisable and get off the roads early, so they were disadvantaged again.

Mr Deputy Speaker, as part of my previous electorate is now in his electorate, the member for Palmerston should be aware that people in the rural area do not make trips to the shops at Palmerston or Darwin for every little thing they want: 1 trip has to do for everything because of the cost of running a vehicle and the price of petrol or diesel for the vehicle.

Mr Perron: I thought you brewed your own out there.

Mr Coulter: Haven't you got a still going?

Mr Collins: Jungle juice!

Mrs PADGHAM-PURICH: There are a couple out there.

Mr Deputy Speaker, with a burgeoning horticultural industry growing in the overall area, I believe a help to primary industry would stem from allowing the supermarkets to open their liquor outlets a little earlier because the horticulturists ...

Mr Dondas: If they aren't drinking, they can plant a lot more gear.

Mr Coulter: But we want straight rows planted!

Mrs PADGHAM-PURICH: There are horticulturists in the outer areas of the rural area at Darwin River, Lambells Lagoon, the outer areas of Humpty Doo, Berry Springs, Acacia Hills and Noonamah, and these are a long way from town. It takes an hour to drive into Darwin and an hour to drive back. If they are taking produce to market, these people usually set off to market early in the morning ...

Mr Coulter: Why?

Mrs PADGHAM-PURICH: Why, he asks! To get their produce to market in good condition!

These people set off to take their produce to the markets and they want to make the 1 trip for everything, including purchasing any grog they want. But, if they want to buy grog from a supermarket, which usually has reasonable prices, they have to wait until after midday. Again, Mr Deputy Speaker, my constituents are disadvantaged. The last chap who put to me this view about opening the supermarkets early said that, fair is fair, if they are to open an hour earlier in the morning, it could be good if they closed an hour earlier in the evening. That would take the people off the roads that hour earlier. They would get their beer and go home, and they would not be driving home under the influence.

Another subject of grave importance in the rural area came to my attention last Friday. It concerns a water release policy in respect of the Darwin River Dam. There was a meeting in the rural area last year which attracted a considerable number of people from the Darwin River Dam area. They came to hear engineers from the Department of Transport and Works. Probably the department had the best of intentions but the wrong people were sent. I do not believe they put the right message across but I had not heard anything since until I was told that the outlet valves from the dam had been closed, resulting in stagnant pools in the river bed which were breeding places for mosquitoes.

Prior to February 1986, there was no planning for a water release policy from the Darwin River Dam. The valves were always open. After February 1986, it was decided that a definite water release policy should be put in action. I believe that this year's release policy states that there will be a release of 9 litres per second in May, 22 litres per second in June, 13 litres per second in July and 2 litres per second in August. I believe that that is rather silly, to put it mildly. The engineers of the Department of Transport and Works engineers are working strictly in accordance with natural needs for water. They are only considering the gum trees and the lizards when they let out water at this rather unusual rate of 9, 22, 13 and 2 litres per second. It would be much more sensible and advantageous to people who take water from the Darwin River if the average of these figures was used and 11 litres per second was let out continuously in each month. People who take water from the river would then know what they could expect from the water release policy.

Many of the people downstream from the dam take their water from waterholes in the river. If they know there will be a continuous release, even if it is rather a restricted release, they will know exactly where they stand. Currently, about 20 to 30 people take water from the Darwin River downstream from the dam, but I am also thinking of all the other blocks which have a river frontage. I believe their future has to be considered as well.

Mr Coulter: Have you made that submission to the Water Authority?

Mrs PADGHAM-PURICH: I have told it of my views in no uncertain terms.

I believe that the bottom line in this water release policy is that the people in the rural area can go hang while the people in town will be looked after. It might be said that that is okay because there are more people in town and there are not many people in the rural area taking water from the river. However, I will have honourable members know that the land around the Darwin River is one of the most fertile areas in the rural area. If these people are taking water from the river, it is not only for domestic purposes but also for horticultural purposes. These people should not be disadvantaged, because they are contributing to the development of the Northern Territory in no uncertain terms. This policy of the Water Authority

should be reviewed because it is not realistic in terms of usage of the water from the Darwin River and it is to the detriment of some of my constituents, especially the horticultural producers.

Mr TIPILOURA (Arafura): Mr Speaker, I would like to take this opportunity to make a stand for myself in the face of remarks made by the Chief Minister.

The member for Arnhem and I are not here on behalf of ourselves. We are here because we have been elected to represent the people of our electorates. I want all honourable members to know that we are not here for nothing. We are here to speak for our constituents. I issued a press release this morning. I would like to read it out for the benefit of all members and the media. My maiden speech provoked a pathetic outburst from the Chief Minister.

Member for Arafura, Mr Stan Tipiloura, today ridiculed a personal attack on him by the Chief Minister, Mr Hatton. Mr Tipiloura said Mr Hatton's attack on his maiden speech in the Legislative Assembly was an attempt to work off Country Liberal Party unhappiness at a substantial loss in the seat of Arafura during the election. Mr Hatton publicly claimed victory in the seat during the campaign.

Mr HATTON: A point of order, Mr Speaker! It is against standing orders to use members' names in this Assembly.

Mr SPEAKER: There is no point of order. The honourable member is quoting from a written document.

Mr Hatton: My apologies, Mr Speaker.

Mr TIPILOURA: I will continue:

Mr Hatton publicly claimed victory in the seat during the campaign. Mr Tipiloura said: 'He came unstuck'.

Mr Tipiloura said Mr Hatton's criticism of his maiden speech as 'controversial' demonstrated that he had no understanding of matters highly relevant for the people of Arafura and to the people of the Northern Territory as a whole. 'Mr Hatton has failed to understand that the election of a conservative federal government would mean the loss of Aboriginal medical services, legal aid and special systems for education', Mr Tipiloura said. 'All of these matters are of deep concern in my electorate and I could not have raised a more relevant issue in my maiden speech. In fact, my Address-in-Reply speech considered a subject which has occupied hundreds of hours of debate in the Assembly in recent times, initiated by the government itself'.

Mr Tipiloura said the attack on his speech was a pathetic nonsense. Careful reading of the speech would discover that it was a considered analysis of proposed policies of direct relevance to Arafura constituents. Mr Tipiloura said that in his introduction to the parliament he had had an eye-opener. 'In the past, the Chief Minister and other ministers of government have always been eager to come to Bathurst Island to visit the council, to smile, to wave and to glad-hand everybody', Mr Tipiloura said. 'This has now turned into a vicious and constant attack on Aboriginal people and I will not forget it'.

Mr EDE (Stuart): Mr Speaker, tonight I wish to look at the Borroloola Community Government Scheme. I am doing this advisedly tonight because the scheme was tabled yesterday in the Assembly. Some honourable members will know that that gives us 12 sitting days to decide whether we are going to disallow the scheme or not. Unfortunately, it will be rather difficult to give any real consideration to that point because the elections are to be held tomorrow. We have to put the council in the farcical situation of possibly having its scheme disallowed some months after its election because we will not be deciding on the scheme until some time in June or August. I intend to use tonight's adjournment debate to go quickly through the provisions of the scheme which I believe will create some problems for the community as it intends to operate.

My first point relates to section 10. I am putting this into Hansard because the minister is not here. I am sorry, Mr Speaker, the Treasurer is now the responsible minister, and he is here. It is hard to keep up with all the changes.

Mr Coulter: That is okay. The Leader of the Opposition does not know which minister is which either.

Mr EDE: I have worked out that it is you. I have also worked out that there is a fair bit of dispute about that amongst the various ministers.

If the minister looks at section 10, he will see that it refers to the meetings of the council. There is no provision for the setting of the first meeting after an election and so it becomes extremely difficult to work out when the council will first meet to start the process of ...

Mr Coulter: It will be 21 May.

Mr EDE: That may be the date nominated by the minister but, under the scheme, there is no provision for the setting of the first meeting after an election.

My next point relates to subsection 10(3) which concerns special meetings of the council. It requires only 6 people to give notice that they wish to have a special meeting and the council must have that meeting. That seems fairly arduous to me, particularly when one considers that those 6 people do not even have to be enrolled to vote in the area. Under the provisions relating to special meetings, there are no specifications about what sort of matters should be debated at such a meeting. People may specify what they wish to discuss at a special meeting but there is no provision that that matter has to be discussed. There could be a dispute between 6 people, who were not enrolled voters of the council, and they could continuously call the council together to discuss something they wanted it to discuss. The council could turn around and refuse to debate it, and the whole thing would be farcical.

There is a very strange section which provides that, if an elected member decides he does not want to go to a meeting, he can send somebody else along in his place. Honourable members may think that that is an excellent provision which we could have a look at in the Assembly, but it is strange. It is even stranger when the deputy does not even have to be enrolled to vote. Also, there is no statement as to whether special meetings have the full powers of ordinary meetings and whether, for example, they can set the time and place for the next ordinary meeting.

When we go on to section 10(8) we find that, if a member is absent for 3 consecutive meetings for reasons which the council does not accept as satisfactory, the clerk declares him to be no longer a member. It appears that there is not even a provision that there has to be an absolute majority of the council. In fact, 7 members could be there and 4 of them could declare the other 3 to be no longer members of the council.

There is a provision for the establishment of ward committees which can be very useful mechanisms especially in a town like Borroloola. The problem is that their establishment does not require an absolute majority of the council and, once established, there is no provision for them to be disbanded. It could happen that a quorum of 6 could decide they wished to set up a ward committee. They could delegate the powers and functions of the community government to that ward committee. This could be done with a majority of 4 in the quorum of 6. However, at the next meeting of the full council, the 4 could be a minority of all 10 members present. They could be running the group in a particular ward while the council is left powerless and has no ability to wind up the ward committee.

Section 16, eligibility to vote, contains a major inconsistency. For a person to be able to enrol to vote, he has to have 'ordinarily resided in the community government area for not less than 3 months immediately before the closure of the rolls'. There is a problem about what 'ordinarily resided' means. It is made more awkward by the fact that subsection 8(2) does not refer to being ordinarily resident, but uses the expression 'live ordinarily' which may have a different meaning at law. It says that the person must have ordinarily resided there for not less than 3 months immediately before the close of the rolls. That is rather a difficult concept. How can the clerk satisfy himself before the close of the rolls, that the person was ordinarily resident for 3 months before the close of the rolls? He will not know, until the close of the rolls, that the person was actually there. He cannot put anybody on a week before the closure of the rolls because he may leave town the next day. There is a legal conundrum there which, quite possibly, may make this whole scheme farcical.

Mr Palmer: Read it. I have just started reading it now.

Mr EDE: Mr Deputy Speaker, the member for Karama is criticising what I am saying about this and then says that he has only just started to read it. I suggest that he reads it a bit more carefully before he makes inane interjections.

Section 22 indicates that, if nominations do not exceed 2, the 2 will be declared elected. All the wards have 2 members. If only 1 person nominates, I presume there will have to be a by-election.

Subsection 24(2) is very strange. I will read it out because the member for Karama, who appears to find no problems with this, may be able to tell me whether it is good drafting or not: 'The clerk shall ensure that there is, inside the polling place, 1 or more booths separated from but opening into the polling place and having no other opening'. I would ask him to dwell on that for a bit and maybe he will be able to explain what it means. I know what they are trying to get at but, legally, it is quite meaningless.

Regarding scrutineers, it says: 'Each person may, by notice in writing, appoint 1 person as a scrutineer'. It does not say when the person is to be nominated, how the person is to be nominated or to whom the person is to be nominated. That there is to be only 1 scrutineer is rather strange in that

there is the possibility of mobile polling booths operating during the week. A provision whereby only 1 person could act as scrutineer at any one time but under which a number of people could actually be appointed would be a better system.

In the voting procedure laid down in subsection 32(4), a decision has been taken to use a 'first 2 past the post' system. An 'X' is to be placed on the ballot paper in the boxes opposite the names of 2 candidates. I believe that voting should be optional preferential because we are creating more and more confusion by having different forms of voting in different types of elections. We have 1 system for community government, another for Legislative Assembly and House of Representatives elections and another for Senate elections.

My next point relates to subsection 34(6), the postal ballot papers. During the hours of polling, the envelope is placed unopened in a ballot box in use at the election. The envelope shall be opened and the vote counted. There is no provision for what is done from the time of receipt of the postal ballot paper until the time of polling. It would be better to have a provision whereby a ballot box was utilised to hold the votes before the poll commenced.

Under section 35, the attempt to reconcile the number of votes in the poll with the number of people who have been crossed out on the electoral roll simply will not work. I would ask the minister to have his officials examine that because it does not take into account the votes of people who have voted by postal ballot. Subsection 35(4) is rather difficult to follow because it says that a person can vote for 1 candidate but he may not vote for more than 2. If a person were to indicate his voice by placing 1, 2, 3 and 4 on the ballot paper in the way that is used for our own elections, that vote could be invalid.

Subsection 36(3) states that the clerk will arrange for lots to be drawn if there is an equality of votes between 2 or more candidates. There is no provision for notification for a time for that to take place nor for scrutineers to be present.

Section 38 relates to the recount provisions. Basically, it will not work if there is a recount because, immediately after the initial count, all of the ballot papers have to be placed in a sealed package and remain unopened for 6 months. That would make it rather difficult for a person to conduct a recount.

Section 41 states that, if there is no quorum for 2 consecutive meetings of the council, the clerk constitutes the council and an election is held at a later date. The problem with this is that the only method of actually stating the time and place of the following meeting is at a meeting. If there is no quorum at that meeting, those present cannot set the date for a following meeting. In that case, the whole council lapses and the clerk takes over. At that stage, I presume the government will look at the Borroloola Community Government Scheme and the other community government schemes that have been drafted. Perhaps it will then start to take this form of government a bit more seriously and work properly through the schemes before they are in place to ensure they will actually function.

Mr McCARTHY (Victoria River); Mr Deputy Speaker, there are a couple of matters that I would like to raise this evening that will be of interest to a number of people here. I wish to refer to horticultural land, a commodity that is pretty scarce in the Top End at present. On the outskirts of Darwin,

a fairly large area of land will be auctioned this weekend. It is part of the Berrimah Research Farm and I know that it is a very attractive area. It is an area that many people notice as they drive past because it provides a very clear green-belt division between Darwin and Palmerston.

When I raised the possibility earlier of using that land for horticulture, it was suggested that it was a clapped-out area that was no longer suitable. I raised the matter with some senior people from the Horticulturists Association and they told me that they could grow anything anywhere. They would be delighted to have land such as the land that is currently part of the Berrimah Research Farm. In some places in the Top End, horticulturists are growing produce on what was originally gravel ridges. Provided they can supply water and put in the nutrients, they can produce what they require.

One of the important needs of horticulturists is to have land close to the markets and close to transport. The land in question is probably the best located that we could come up with for that purpose. It is right beside the airport and the highway and shipping is close by. Another aspect is its proximity to the research farm for on-site extension services. There is no doubt that the way to go is to have the research done on the individual properties of farmers. That would provide an ease of service because the research facility is right next door and it is very close to Darwin so it would not involve much travelling to get out to a research facility.

The other aspect, of course, is that it will maintain a green belt division between Darwin and Palmerston and that is something that would please many people. We can build warehouses and factories on all sorts of land but there is not a great deal of land left for horticulture in areas that are suitable. We could kill 2 birds with the 1 stone by maintaining that land for horticulture which would provide the green belt and satisfy a number of needs. Of course, it may be too late to take this up. As I said, it is coming up for auction on 10 May ...

Mr Firmin: It is being withdrawn.

Mr McCARTHY: It is being withdrawn! Well, that is very pleasing to hear. I was not aware of that. In that case, I hope that it will be made available for horticultural use. It is a very good use for it, and will gain considerable support from growers around the Top End and elsewhere. There is extensive interest currently in the Northern Territory in horticulture.

In recent times, some very large growers from Bowen in Queensland were up here looking at the Northern Territory and were very excited about the prospects here. The prospects in Bowen are decreasing. The number of farmers who were operating multi-million dollar enterprises in horticulture were operating out of anything up to 4 to 6 small blocks of land spread over an area of perhaps a 40 km radius. Having to move machinery around to these small blocks to be able to grow a crop here and a crop there was very difficult. They saw a possibility of land availability here which would enable them to get away from the pests that they have in those other places. Those same people could bring their markets with them. They are big operators and have ready markets which they would bring with them. These people were looking at land in the Mataranka area. If we could make land available to them near Darwin also, it would be a great thing. I wanted to raise that. It is a matter that interests me considerably.

Another matter I want to speak about was raised by the member for Koolpinyah late last week and that is the TERAS, the Top End Rural Area

Schools sporting functions that are held throughout the year at various venues and cater for rural area and bush schools, mainly from my electorate. Of the present 18 schools involved, 9 are from the electorate of Victoria River. I am very much aware of the activities at the TERAS carnivals because, for the last 3 years, I have been the patron of the group.

Mr Coulter: And a good patron too.

Mr McCARTHY: Yes, I believe I have been.

As a matter of interest, this has been the program this year: in March, we had the TERAS basketball at the Marrara stadium; in April, the Northern Territory basketball at Batchelor, in which TERAS took part and ran the show, but that was not an actual TERAS carnival; and we had the Australian Rules football and netball at Fred's Pass on 9 April, which was the carnival that the member for Koolpinyah referred to. Unfortunately, I could not be there on that day because a new school was opening at Palumpa in my electorate and that was a commitment that I had had for some time. I wanted to be there, because I have had a continuing involvement with the Palumpa community for a long time. The TERAS organisers understood that. Hopefully, now that Palumpa has a school of its own, it will become a part of the TERAS carnival. I am sure it will, because they are a very committed group down there.

There was hockey at Berry Springs on 29 April. During May, we have the NT Aussie Rules carnival, and netball at Gardens Oval and Palmerston, NT hockey in Darwin, in which TERAS takes part, and NT Rugby, League at Darwin and Jabiru. The girls' soccer takes place at the end of June; softball at Belyuen in August; and the cross-country and track and field in Batchelor in mid-August, and that is the major event of the year for the Top End Rural Area Schools, and an event that I attend faithfully even at the risk of getting myself into strife with other people. I like to be there for that particular carnival. It is a great couple of days. They start off with the cross-country and have the track and field events the following day. Schools from all over the place travel to Batchelor, stay overnight and take part in that carnival. There is a cross-country fun run at Berry Springs in late August. There is the cricket exchange at Gray School in September, the NT track and field in Tennant Creek, in which TERAS takes part, and the cricket and softball in Alice Springs. Then we have the mixed soccer at Middle Point in October.

Little schools like Middle Point and Tipperary become very much involved in these carnivals, Mr Deputy Speaker. And this is a new one on me. I was not aware of this game until the last AGM of TERAS; it is call Newcombe Ball. I still have not seen a game. I do not know whether any members here have. I had never heard of Newcombe Ball before so perhaps somebody can enlighten me about it. I was not game to show my ignorance at the AGM. I attended the AGM of TERAS on 22 March. Representatives from all the schools that are involved were at Batchelor on that day.

Mr Deputy Speaker, I am very much aware of the need for these sorts of carnivals for bush schools, having taught for some years at Bathurst Island and been very much involved with the bringing in of school groups to Darwin to participate in sporting activities. I know just what it meant to those kids. Of course, the member for Arafura was a part of those sporting teams in his rather more athletic days. I remember the honourable member when he was about 6" across the chest, and he certainly has developed from there. In 1985, we went down to Port Keats. All the schools went through to Port Keats for a softball carnival from memory. There had been heavy rain on the

road and there were buses and vehicles transporting those 18 schools to Port Keats. They have not been game to try it again, but I think they will probably be enticed some time in the future. They usually have swimming at Jabiru, and they do attempt to get all the small schools involved even if, at times, they join together to form 1 group within the organisation to get involved in each of these activities.

The Belyuen community has provided magnificent trophies made of wood for the track and field events carnival in Batchelor. They were made within the community at Belyuen and they could not be matched by any trophy maker in the country. I have never seen more magnificent trophies than those that were donated by Belyuen and are presented by a representative of Belyuen every year. I have had the honour of presenting trophies for the TERAS athletic carnival over the last few years and I hope that I will be invited to do it again this year. I strongly support all of the schools that are involved. Those schools do not come only from the Victoria River electorate. They come from Palmerston - from Gray and Driver - from Jabiru in the electorate of Arafura, and from the electorate of Koolpinyah. That is about as far afield as they go but they represent quite a large area of the Top End. It is a great organisation and I give it my support and hope that it goes on to bigger and better things in the future.

I mentioned that I was at Palumpa on 9 April, a day when netball and Aussie Rules were being played at Fred's Pass Reserve. I was at Palumpa for the opening of their new school. The Palumpa community comprises about 120 people who moved out from Port Keats, Wadeye, some years ago and set up a cattle station at Palumpa. I think I would be on pretty safe ground in saying that it is the best Aboriginal cattle station in the Northern Territory. It is the best run, probably has the best land and certainly has a great commitment from the people there. In recent times, they have begun to develop a community and have just obtained a school and a teacher's residence. The school was built by the community, with support from Catholic Missions, and a substantial portion of the funding that was made available came from the Northern Territory government. Of course, the teacher is provided by the Northern Territory government. The school is a masonry building. It is of a better standard than I have ever seen in the first school on any community previously and it was built at a cost of about \$60 000. It consists of a classroom, toilets, showers and so on. It has verandahs all around and it is a credit to the community for that cost. Having been very much involved in building in remote communities over the years, I am convinced that, had that gone out to tender, it would have cost anything from 2 to 3 times more than that, depending on who was brought in to do it.

Mr Deputy Speaker, it is commitment like the Palumpa community has shown, along with a few other communities that I could name, that offers some hope that communities can really pull themselves up from nothing. Palumpa has been nothing. It has been a community which had very few facilities. It is now obtaining those facilities through the drive of its people. While there is some support from outside organisations, it is not great. It is good to see those people fighting for their requirements and putting in a fairly substantial part of the cost themselves.

Another community which deserves a mention this evening is the community of Yarralin. Like Palumpa, it is an emerging community of about 120 people. It is not clearly funded under the new Grants Commission Scheme and that is a matter that needs to be taken up by the minister responsible for local government. We need to provide for communities which, through no fault of their own, have been left in some uncertainty about how they will be funded in

future years. Previously, they were picked up by the Department of Community Development under schemes other than TMPU or Grants Commission moneys. They will need some consideration and, as I said in my Address-in-Reply speech, there are probably other communities like them around the Territory. I trust that they will not be forgotten.

Mr SMITH (Opposition Leader): Mr Speaker, I want to start where the member for Arafura finished. I want to read out the last part of his press release again. 'Mr Tipiloura said that his introduction to parliament had been an eye-opener':

'In the past the Chief Minister and other government ministers have always been eager to come to Bathurst Island to visit the council, to smile and wave and glad-hand everybody', Mr Tipiloura said. 'This has now turned into a vicious and consistent attack on Aboriginal people and I will not forget it'.

Mr Speaker, unfortunately the member for Arafura has had the roughest introduction into this Assembly of any person who has become a member since I have been in here. He has been subjected to consistent abuse from the government benches during the last 5 days, from the Chief Minister down. It has been an eye-opener indeed for the member for Arafura. It has been a lesson that he will never forget and a lesson that I am sure he will take back to his electorate to tell the community what this government really is like.

Mr Speaker, if you want an example of what this government is really like, you need look no further than the response of the Chief Minister yesterday to the remarks of the member for Arafura. Yesterday, in his maiden speech, the member for Arafura spent most of his time dissecting the policy of the federal Liberal Party on Aboriginal affairs.

Mr Hatton: That was what was wrong with it.

Mr SMITH: That is what was right with it. If there is any one issue that should be worrying people in the electorate of Arafura - and let us not forget that it is basically an Aboriginal electorate - it is the federal Liberal Party's policy on Aboriginal affairs. If a Liberal government is ever elected federally, that policy has the potential to do more damage to Aboriginal interests in the Northern Territory than any other that I could imagine. Certainly, it would do more damage than any policy that this government, try as hard as it does, could inflict on Aboriginal people living in the electorate of Arafura and in other areas throughout the Northern Territory.

The Chief Minister may well disagree with that assessment and I do not object if he does so, but to say that the member for Arafura did not address issues that have been before this Assembly and to say that he was talking about irrelevant matters is to fail to understand the real issues in the electorate of the member for Arafura. Racism is an attitude of mind. On that basis alone, the comments of the Chief Minister yesterday can be given no other label. He quite clearly did not see or accept, because of his own blinkered European-based vision, the key issues of concern to the member for Arafura. These are the key issues he so rightly expressed yesterday on behalf of his constituents in the seat of Arafura.

Mr Speaker, I commend the member for Arafura on his maiden speech and for the excellent way in which he put up with the constant barrage of abuse he received from the Chief Minister and the Minister for Health and Community Services. The latter asked who his speech writer was. He has never asked me.

He has never asked any other member of this Assembly who their speech writer was. He has never accused other members of this Assembly of having words put into their mouths by their speech writers. But, because the member for Arafura happens to be black and because the member for Wanguri does not accept that black people can operate in this Assembly, he made those statements.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! I request the honourable member to withdraw that last statement.

Mr SMITH: I am sorry, Mr Deputy Speaker. Could you tell me which statement you want me to withdraw?

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Your reference to the member for Wanguri and his alleged abhorrence of black people operating in this Assembly.

Mr SMITH: Mr Deputy Speaker, I defer to your wisdom and I unreservedly withdraw that comment.

We then come to the remarks made by the member for Jingili last night. He is another member who casts aspersions on Aboriginal people. He does not accept that Aboriginal people are capable of making their own decisions and have the right to employ advisers to help them, whether they be white, black or any other colour. The problem is that there are not enough black people who can be employed as advisers in Australia at present. That, in itself, is an indictment of the system that has operated in Australia for the last 150 years. I certainly look forward to the day when members of this parliament can pick well-qualified, competent black people to go on our staff as advisers. Unfortunately, we do not seem to have reached that situation yet.

The member for Jingili compounded his crime by accusing Aboriginal groups of becoming more political because of some comments I made in Mt Isa. What I said in Mt Isa was that Aboriginal people were very skilful political operators, that they had decided that they wanted to be inside the political process rather than outside it, and that that was a good thing and something which we should be encouraging. I see nothing wrong in that. I see it as very positive that Aboriginal people should be invited to join political parties, whether they be the ALP or the CLP. I hope they do and when they do, as they have done in our party, you will find that they are very shrewd political operators indeed. There is certainly nothing that I or my white colleagues can teach Aboriginal members of the Labor Party about how to operate politically. They are very good political operators indeed and that is the point. We on this side of the Assembly can accept Aboriginal people as individuals with skills and capacities and weaknesses and strengths whereas people on the other side of the Assembly see them in stereotyped form. They are not prepared to get beyond the stereotype, the image that they have had of Aborigines over a 30 or 40-year period, and to treat them as people. That is why we will continue to get the majority of Aboriginal support in Northern Territory elections and that is why the government opposite will not until it realises that very basic lesson.

Mr Speaker, I want to change the subject rather dramatically at this stage and talk about the CLP candidate for the House of Representatives. We have been subject in this sittings to a number of comments on the Labor Party candidate and it is time that the people of the Northern Territory became more aware of some of the attributes of the Country Liberal Party candidate.

Firstly, I am advised that one of the claims to fame of the CLP-endorsed candidate for the House of Representatives, Mr Peter Paroulakis, is that he was one of the Northern Territory's first members of the H.R. Nicholls Society. That would concern me if I were a member of the CLP. Its endorsed candidate is a member of the H.R. Nicholls Society. Prominent people in the Liberal Party, including John Howard and other luminaries, have disowned the ratbag policies of the H.R. Nicholls Society. We all know that that society has a very simplistic approach indeed to the industrial life of this country. Following the Robe River experience, we all know that those simplistic solutions to the industrial needs of this country do not work. I am shocked and, indeed, horrified that the CLP could pre-select somebody who, on his own admission, was a member of the H.R. Nicholls Society until at least a year ago and who obviously has very simplistic ideas on how to handle industrial relations in the Northern Territory.

Now that he is the endorsed CLP candidate for the Northern Territory, I want to suggest to Mr Peter Paroulakis that he should resign his position as Greek Consul in the Northern Territory. The Greek community in the Northern Territory plays a very valuable role and is highly regarded for the contribution it has made to the development of the Territory, particularly Darwin. Its members are highly political in their own way. They are very good at manipulating governments - and I mean that in a positive sense - in order to obtain money for their own worthwhile projects. They have always kept out of the active political arena, however, and I know that there is an enormous amount of concern and unrest at the fact that Mr Paroulakis has not as yet resigned his position as Greek Consul in the Northern Territory. That is a view shared by many of the Greek people whom I know. He has placed the office of Greek Consul in an impossible position and, whilst he is there, he has enormous potential to do political damage to the Greek community in the Northern Territory. The best thing that he can do is to resign from that position as quickly as possible so that the Greek government can appoint someone else who does not have the obvious political ambitions of Mr Peter Paroulakis.

In passing, I would say that I find it a bit difficult to understand how Mr Paroulakis could continue to carry on in a position where he is supposed to be representing a socialist government of the Republic of Greece when, quite obviously, he has very different ideas on what is the appropriate political philosophy in Australia. For those reasons, I would urge Mr Peter Paroulakis to resign his position in the Greek community as quickly as possible.

Mr SETTER (Jingili): Mr Speaker, I want to begin my remarks this evening by taking up a couple of points made by the Leader of the Opposition. I note that he is about to disappear from the Assembly. He is not prepared to stay and listen to what I have to say to him. He criticised remarks that I made last night regarding Aboriginal people and what I referred to as their 'politicisation'. I draw his attention to page 105 of the Unrevised Hansard of last evening. I quite clearly said: 'I do not have a problem with political party branches in Aboriginal communities at all, but I do have a problem with the deliberate manipulation of the Aboriginal movement by any political party'.

What I was saying last night was that the Labor Party, through white advisers, most of them left-wing Marxists, have been infiltrating and manipulating the Aboriginal movement for some decades now. We have seen the results in the last few days with Mansell and his cohorts. That is what I was saying. I do not have a problem with Aboriginal people, their land councils or whoever having white advisers or anybody else for that matter. I would not

have a problem with any white organisation having an Aboriginal or a black adviser or advisers. That does not concern me one bit, provided they honestly, conscientiously and apolitically do the job they were employed to do, and that is to provide the advice in whatever sphere.

That is not what is happening. What has happened is that those left-wing Marxist people have infiltrated the Aboriginal movement and used their position to push their political point of view. What I was saying had nothing to do with white people being employed as advisers in an apolitical sense.

While I have the opportunity, I would like to clarify a remark that I made last night which was queried by a member of the opposition. I said last night that Ms Pat O'Shane is currently the head of the New South Wales Department of Aboriginal Affairs.

Mr Bell: Wrong!

Mr SETTER: If the member for MacDonnell would stop interjecting, he would hear that I was about to correct that remark. I said last night that I would check the point. On the advice that I have received today, Ms O'Shane is the ex-Permanent Head of the Aboriginal Affairs Department in New South Wales. She held that position. She is now a magistrate in the local courts in New South Wales.

Mr Smith: That is what I told you.

Mr SETTER: That is right, and I took your point last night if you care to refer to the Hansard.

Last night, I was referring to Ms O'Shane's political activities and the way that she had been using her position to further, once again, her political aims. I wanted to clarify those points before I moved on to the subject that I intend to address this evening.

I want to talk about May Day. We all know about May Day. It is the international day for working people throughout the world. In fact, I was quite taken a couple of days ago when I obtained a copy of a little document called 'The Workers' Voice'. I understand it is a newsletter put out by the ACOANT. This particular copy was dated 22 April and it said:

May Day is International Labour Day. It is celebrated in every country in the world where workers are organised. It has survived and grown over the years because it is also a national day of working-class action, protest and celebration.

That is fine. It went on to say:

There shall be organised a great international demonstration at a fixed date, so that, on some agreed day, in every country, in every town, the workers shall call upon the state for legal reduction of the working day to 8 hours.

This was quoting something that was written back in 1889.

In view of the fact that a similar demonstration has been decided upon by the American Federation of Labour for 1 May 1890, this date is adopted for the international demonstration.

In other words, as far back as 1889, it was agreed that, internationally, 1 May would be known as May Day. Since then, 1 May has been a day on which workers march, demonstrate and support other workers in the world. That is fine. I totally support that and have no problem with that whatsoever.

It went on to say: 'Darwin May Day 1987, Friday 1 May. The march through the city commenced from the Miscellaneous Workers' Building, Wood Street, ending with a rally in Raintree Park'. That is exactly what happened. There was a workers' march at lunch-time on Friday 1 May. Indeed, I saw the member for MacDonnell and several of his colleagues participating in the rally. They marched and congregated in Raintree Park where there were speeches. That sort of thing happens every May Day. That is fine; I do not have a problem with it at all. It is quite obvious from this document that 1 May is the workers' day - the day when they celebrate May Day.

Mr Bell: You have said that 5 times.

Mr SETTER: I am just trying to get the point through to you because I realise that you are a little slow on some of these things.

Mr Bell: I was there, fair go.

Mr SETTER: Accepting that, why was the Monday of that weekend granted as a public holiday? One would have assumed that the public holiday would be on the Friday which is when the workers were to march. I have no problem at all with the public holiday being granted on the day of the march, on 1 May. May Day is such a sacred day to the workers of the world that one would assume that they would want to celebrate their workers' day on the day on which it falls, 1 May, every year. I am pleased to hear that you agree with me.

The point I am making is that, to workers, May Day is similar to Anzac Day. It is a sacred day. Anzac Day is celebrated in this country on the day on which it falls. If it happens to fall on a Saturday or a Sunday, then that is when it is celebrated. If it happens to fall on a Saturday or a Sunday, there is no holiday on the Monday or on the Friday. I recommend that May Day should be celebrated on 1 May. If it happens to fall on a Saturday or Sunday, then that is when it should be celebrated and there should be no extra public holiday. I do not see any reason why there should be an extra holiday to celebrate the sacred workers' day when it falls on a weekend.

Mr Dondas: It is still 24 hours out of private enterprise.

Mr SETTER: What is the difference of 24 hours out of private enterprise? Every public holiday is an enormous cost to private enterprise and to the community because who bears the brunt of that?

Mr Dondas: Private enterprise.

Mr SETTER: The employer. Absolutely right: private enterprise bears the brunt of that.

Mr Bell: 50% of the workers in the Northern Territory are employed from the public purse.

Mr Dondas: That is not true; you are wrong.

Mr Bell: Well, the figures might be out of date.

Mr SETTER: And who pays? The public pays because the cost is passed on down the line and that is 1 of the problems in this country. We have so many public holidays that we are flat out finding any working days. It is all an added cost in this country and we cannot afford it. I am saying that we should celebrate May Day on the day on which it falls.

Mr Dondas: Your figures are 10 years out of date.

Mr Bell: What are the figures now?

Mr Dondas: I'll tell you later.

Mr Bell: I don't reckon you know, Nick.

Mr Dondas: 56 000 in the work force.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The honourable members for Casuarina and MacDonnell will cease their cross-Chamber comment and let the honourable member for Jingili be heard in silence.

Mr SETTER: The other thing that concerns me about the celebration of this particular May Day, given that the march was held on the Friday, was that there were some other celebrations over the weekend. I note here from a leaflet distributed by the NT Trades and Labor Council: 'May Day Rage 87 the Warrumpi Band, Mangrove Jack and the Geckos' - I assume they are bands - 'Sunday 3 May, 8 pm ... at the Civic Centre Courtyard'. That is wonderful, and I hope everybody had a great time, but I was a little concerned to note on the bottom, 'Presented in association with the NT Arts Council'. I really do not know a great amount about the NT Arts Council but I ...

Mr Bell: It is a socialist front.

Mr SETTER: Those are your words, they are not mine.

I suspect it may well be funded by the Northern Territory government, at least in part. I intend to check that out to find out whether that is true. I question how or why a Trades and Labour Council Union concert should be presented in association with the NT Arts Council. I intend to make it my business to find out because I do not believe that the Northern Territory Arts Council should become involved in union activities along those lines. I think it has a far more fruitful role to play.

There is 1 other matter that I would like to mention in the few minutes I have left to me, and that is a function I attended last Saturday evening. I refer to the Casuarina Secondary College debutante ball. It was the first debutante ball conducted by that college. It was held at the Marrara Sports Complex and was attended by several hundred parents and students of the college. Mr Speaker, you will recall, of course, that that establishment became a secondary college quite recently. There were about 30-odd debutantes and their partners, and the girls and the fellows looked very impressive indeed. I believe that that has set a tremendous precedent for the future. I am aware that, this Saturday night, a debutante ball is to be held at Darwin High School. Education, particularly in Years 11 and 12, is really coming of age in the Northern Territory, when both of those schools can conduct debutante balls and attract such strong attendance with so many young people participating. It is a very encouraging sign for the future.

I would like to compliment Mrs Elaine Ryan who organised the activity on Saturday evening and I would like to make special mention of a local college band called EZZC. It is made up of half a dozen young people. The equipment belongs to the school. They have a limited repertoire but they played some wonderful tunes and made a considerable contribution to the interest of the evening.

Mr POOLE (Araluen): Mr Speaker, I would like to make some remarks about a letter that was published in last Friday's Centralian Advocate and on comments that were made in the Assembly last Thursday by the member for MacDonnell. Apparently, I offended the sensitivities of the honourable member and, Mr Speaker, let me tell you this caused me to have a very long and sleepless weekend. But, on Monday morning, the penny really dropped when I read Hansard and realised that the member for MacDonnell did not make any attempt to understand what I had said to the media.

Mr Speaker, I have no control over the emphasis the media places on remarks or press releases. The fact is that, out of a press release of some 57 lines, the writer took some 5 lines, and I quote:

There seemed to be a totally different attitude in the various Northern Territory centres with regard to sentencing. Last week, it was reported in the NT News that magistrates were having a blitz on drunken drivers. But, in Alice Springs in recent times, out of 36 DUI cases, 11 drivers suffered no loss of licences after being found guilty.

Mr Speaker, this was taken, and I believe mistakenly so, as a major attack on the judiciary and resulted in an article on the front page of the Centralian Advocate. In that press release, I covered such matters as car theft, burglary, vandalism, public drunkenness, unprovoked assault and other crimes of violence. The major point of issuing the press release was to highlight the cost of maintaining law and order, to the community, by the community. Mr Speaker, as taxpayers, we often pay excessive rates to insurance companies for car insurance and glass insurance.

The number of claims related to shop window breakages is tremendous in Alice Springs. One store alone has made a claim a month for 3 years, at \$500 a claim. Since the mall reconstruction commenced in Alice Springs, the insurance industry has processed more than \$12 000 in claims. The insurance industry is fed up with settling these claims and is starting to consider refusing to insure shop windows in the main streets of Alice Springs.

The member for MacDonnell criticised me for making remarks about drunken Aborigines around Araluen in my newspaper advertisement. I have no intention of hanging my head in shame because of those remarks. The drunks, whether they are Aborigines or whites, are a major source of problems in Alice Springs. Alice Springs is a tourist town and the tourists and residents should not have to put up with the violence and foul language that is a common part of our lives in the Alice.

I think that every resident in Alice Springs knows of someone who has had their car stolen or damaged, their house broken into or subjected to some form of vandalism. I understand some major crimes of violence have occurred in Alice Springs over the past 3 months and they have not been reported in the press because the police fear retribution. I called the police last week to assist a number of Aboriginal women, some of whom were carrying very young babies and were holding young children by the hand. They were being harassed

by 2 young whites who were inciting 2 large German shepherd dogs to attack these people. I offered these people some protection until the police arrived. I mention this solely to illustrate that law breakers in Alice Springs are certainly not only Aborigines. In fact, I understand that the majority of house-breaking in Alice Springs seems to be committed by white youths or students.

The member for MacDonnell suggested that I favoured a percentage system for law breakers in magistrates court, but let me clearly state that all I was doing was drawing attention to what I perceived as an excessive use of a magistrate's discretionary powers. Personally, I believe in discretionary powers for magistrates because I understand that only they have full knowledge of all the facts, and I accept their right to sentence accordingly. But, in 1 week, 11 out of 15 drivers found guilty, did not suffer loss of licence. I find that peculiar and I think my position is supported by this Assembly removing the right of magistrates, in 1984, to issue special licences because those special licences had become the norm. I believe the penalty of losing your licence and the discretionary power that magistrates have at the moment is also becoming the norm in Alice Springs.

I rebut the member for MacDonnell's insinuation that I was rebuked by the Attorney-General. I know that he at least respects the right of elected members to comment publicly on matters of public concern. I did not want to enter into a public debate with a magistrate, but I found that it was necessary, because the magistrate commented publicly from the bench and implied that I had no right to question what I saw as a matter of public concern. This magistrate then somehow tied my wife's application for a liquor licence to serve beer and wine with a substantial meal in her restaurant business into the comments that I had made about sentencing policies. The same magistrate implied in his comments in the Children's Court the day before that my wife would somehow contribute to juvenile delinquency in Alice Springs.

I believe this was grossly unfair to my family. My wife started a restaurant business in Alice Springs which was always designed to have a limited licence. It was to be an operation that took over from a well-established restaurant, Papa Luigi's, which was licensed. That restaurant was demolished to build Ford Plaza. Papa Luigi intended to operate the new restaurant but, for whatever reason, he chose not to. At the last moment, and at considerable expense, my wife took up the option to establish this new outlet. What connection her application last August or September, later withdrawn, had with sentencing policies in the Alice Springs Magistrates Court is completely beyond me. I believe this was a gross misuse of the bench.

Getting back to law and order, we pay for security in supermarkets, we pay for security at sporting and public venues, we pay for security at the hospital to protect doctors and nurses, we pay to floodlight Alice Springs sporting ovals to stop under-age drinking, we pay to floodlight the hospital carpark because so many cars are stolen or damaged. In fact, 1 car is stolen each day in the Northern Territory. I congratulate the police for recovering so many. Apparently they recovered over 300 last year.

I believe that the social problems we suffer in Alice Springs and other parts of the Territory and, for that matter, in most parts of Australia, relate to this parliament and other parliaments throughout the country. These problems are results of over-emphasising freedom and individual civil rights, which the members of the opposition are so fond of promoting, rather than

concentrating on matters of responsibility and abiding by the law. To correct these problems in the short term, more and more thorough law enforcement is needed and is demanded by the community. In the long term, I believe it is our duty as a government to try to educate everyone, be they black or white, to become responsible and law-abiding. To do this, many members of our community would be prepared to give up some of our rights and freedoms, most of which we never need or use. Most of us have nothing to hide, yet we have incredible rights to privacy.

As every politician knows - and you yourself, Mr Speaker, know this well - almost every house in Alice Springs has a dog. Many of us are kept awake half the night because of dogs barking. They are not kept because we are a town of dog lovers. In fact, they are a nuisance. They foul the footpaths and gardens, they tip over rubbish bins, they chase children and motorcyclists and they harass the postman but, in Alice Springs, they also keep strangers off your property. What we suffer to maintain some semblance of law and order is ridiculous.

As a politician, I have been criticised by a member of the public in a letter to the editor of the Centralian Advocate. I believe this person is a legal adviser to the Aboriginal Sacred Sites Protection Authority. I was accused of highlighting the problems and not offering or working towards solutions. I know the opposition will try to depict me as some sort of closet racist, but the problems will never be fixed unless we address them in this Assembly. If alcohol and Aboriginal drinking are major problems or drunken drivers or juvenile housebreakers or car stealers or murderers are causing problems - and we have a murder every 6 weeks in Alice Springs - these matters must be addressed here. The community is concerned and I am concerned and I have asked my parliamentary wing to look at these problems. Where alcohol is concerned, I believe we should examine the buyers, the sellers and the laws. I believe we should support the police and, in the short term, have more thorough policing of our community.

Mr PERRON (Industries and Development): Mr Speaker, I rise to say a few words about the Leader of the Opposition's press release. The Chief Minister made a few comments about it this afternoon. I have now had the opportunity to read the press release and to read the comments made by the Chief Minister in the adjournment this afternoon. I can only express regret at the actions of the Leader of the Opposition. It has been a gross overreaction and I am sure it was designed, and may indeed even have been successful, to secure a headline in the press somewhere around the traps. Sadly, as was pointed out by the Chief Minister, this particular press release was channelled very deliberately right into the heart of the Australia media system down in Canberra. That is not an action that is taken with all press releases but, on this occasion, it was certainly designed to obtain maximum exploitation of the issue on the national scene.

I think that it is unfortunate because of the Chief Minister we have at present. I recall the former Leader of the Opposition, who was not afraid of speaking his mind at almost any time, saying in his speech when he retired from this Assembly not very long ago, that he felt that the new Chief Minister appeared to share concerns about Aboriginal issues and that that was a good thing for the Territory. I guess many people would have missed that comment but it was one which I remembered because it was a striking reflection by the then Leader of the Opposition, and a man who had often been very critical about the Northern Territory government and its stance on so many Aboriginal issues. He was saying that the Chief Minister of the day seemed to have a different approach. Indeed, he does have a different approach.

The same Chief Minister was praised from some quarters during the recent Territory election because he did not take the obvious opportunities to raise Aboriginal issues as major parts of the election campaign. That is to his credit. He certainly had the option of raising them. His deliberate policy was not to raise them. He wanted the election fought on other issues, as indeed it was.

In his Address-in-Reply speech during the course of these sittings, the speech which gave rise to the Leader of the Opposition's preposterous press release, in fact the Chief Minister thanked the member for MacDonnell for his positive contribution. He used phrases like 'working towards resolving interracial tensions'. He also thanked the member for Arnhem who, as we all know, happens to be an Aboriginal, for adding his voice to resolving interracial tensions. He thanked the member for Arnhem, who happens to be an Aboriginal, for adding his voice to a cooperative approach in the future between government and others as far as Aboriginal issues are concerned. That is not surprising. It is part of the mould of the new Chief Minister that he would thank members of the opposition for being particularly sensitive and offering constructive comment during the Address-in-Reply debate.

What was it that suddenly made the Chief Minister say such awful things about the member for Arafura? A number of us have been in this Assembly for a long time. Fairly personal attacks and fairly vicious attacks have occurred from time to time. Most of us have borne the brunt of or have delivered such attacks from time to time. However, the words used by the Chief Minister about the member for Arafura were mild by any measure. The Chief Minister said that he was particularly 'disappointed' in the statements made by the member for Arafura. It was his view that the member had 'failed badly' in his maiden speech and that it was rather a 'pathetic' speech. Those are the strongest words that members will find in the couple of paragraphs that contain the comments the Chief Minister made about the member for Arafura. The words are 'disappointed,' 'failed badly' and a rather 'pathetic' speech. If honourable members in this Assembly think that is a vicious attack, obviously they are having themselves on because we know what vicious attacks are like.

It seems that the Chief Minister's crime in the eyes of the Leader of the Opposition was that he was critical of an Aboriginal. Let us hope that we have not reached the point in this Assembly or, indeed, in the Territory where one can be critical of a white man but one cannot be critical of a black one. That is racism. I urge honourable members to read the press release because it really is a preposterous distortion of circumstance in this Assembly. Among other things, he said: 'But when Mr Tipiloura employs an assistant, he is mercilessly attacked by the ministerial rat pack'. It sounds as though we all have black leather jackets and chains in our hands and we meet this fellow out the back of the Assembly during the luncheon adjournment.

That is the sort of material which the Leader of the Opposition wants appearing in newspapers throughout Australia, referring to the way parliamentarians have behaved in this Assembly over the last 48 hours when all these events transpired. I am very disappointed that that press release was issued. I hope that it has not received very much coverage because of the unfounded damage that it could do.

I am sure that honourable members will agree that the Leader of the Opposition has overreacted grossly. He probably can blame it on his press secretary, whoever that is, who probably drew it up for him, thrust it under his nose and he foolishly approved its release. It is a particularly damaging

document, especially so because its comments are unfounded. The Leader of the Opposition really ought to withdraw it at some stage in the near future.

Mr BELL (MacDonnell): Mr Speaker, in this evening's adjournment debate, I want particularly to address the question of the auction of various properties from Finnis River Station. Finnis River Station has previously been the subject of debate in this Assembly because of various Northern Territory Development Corporation loans made to the previous owners. Honourable members will have seen advertisements such as this one from an August edition of the Northern Territory News when the station was subdivided into 369 lots.

Mr Speaker, I paid relatively little attention to that advertisement at first. However, I became rather interested in the subdivision and the auction of those particular blocks when I noticed an article by a zealous journalist from the NT News headed, 'Dondas Reveals Secret NT Deal', on Saturday 6 December. The article said: 'Lands Minister, Mr Nick Dondas, has revealed embarrassing details of a secret property deal in which the Territory government could have squandered more than \$60 000'.

Being a conscientious shadow minister for lands, I duly wrote to the minister seeking a briefing on those particular issues. I assumed that there was some logical explanation. Because the member for Casuarina is such a direct fellow, I assumed that I would be referred, as I usually am in such matters, to a member of the staff in the Department of Lands and I would be provided with some adequate explanation of what appeared to be quite a sensational story that the Northern Territory government had lost or wasted several tens of thousands of taxpayers' dollars over this deal.

It is very fortunate that I duly found out. I went along to the minister's office and, instead of receiving my usual briefing from members of the department who had been involved in this purchase and receiving some adequate explanation, I received a briefing from the minister himself. On the one hand, I appreciated this personal treatment, but I must admit that I had scarcely expected it, the minister being a busy man. I will be quite frank. After I had listened to what the minister had to say, I had the feeling that the staff in the Department of Lands had said: 'Listen Nick, you organised it. You fix it'. Mr Speaker, I will explain that conclusion to you.

Block H was bought by Mr J. Anictomatis on 3 September 1986 for a sum of \$575 000. On 12 November, just over 2 months later, the Northern Territory Development Land Corporation paid \$635 000 for the block. The difference of \$60 000 was accounted for in this way: stamp duty was \$23 000; sundry charges of penalty interest, legal costs, loan establishment fees, stamp duty on mortgage and the interest cost on the deposit amounted to about \$16 000; and there were agent's fees of \$20 000.

I have raised this matter with various real estate agents with whom I am acquainted in my capacity as shadow minister for Lands and Housing. They raised their eyebrows at the arrangement whereby the Minister for Lands, who tells me was acting on a Cabinet decision, went along personally to Mr Anictomatis, who is an agent with T.C. Waters Pepper, and was brought into act on the government's behalf in what was quite clearly a deal that was somewhat less than patent. If the government wishes to go into the market to buy a particular block of land, I want to know what sort of arrangements the department normally makes to carry out the purchase of land. I would like the minister to tell me, or the member for Casuarina can do so if he wants to. The government is selling land left, right and centre and I am surprised that it has any money left to purchase land on this basis. I would also like to know why it was purchased, but I will come to that in a moment.

My first question is: on what basis did the government acquire the services of Mr Anictomatis? Apparently, there was some negotiation between the government and Mr Anictomatis after he had bought the block. He was going to subdivide it, and there was a certain amount of toing and froing because there was a possibility that Mr Anictomatis would buy the coastal strip of Block H. I was told that the Valuer-General's valuation of Block H, at the time I received the briefing on this matter in January, was \$675 000 and that really the government had done a good deal. That certainly was not the view of a number of other people. I went away and thought about what the minister had told me and I rang up his office and asked some questions. I gave a copy of the questions to his office and I want to put them on record because, instead of answering them in the direct fashion that he had answered previous questions I put to him, he told me that I would have to put them on notice: 'Stop writing to my staff. You are ringing up every day. I am not going to answer them'. I thought perhaps the minister was protesting a little more than was justifiable under the circumstances. I have not received answers to the questions.

The minister said that the government bought the block for buffalo development. I would like to know on what basis the minister decided that Block H was required for buffalo development. I must admit, Mr Speaker, I am not acquainted with the government's involvement in all primary industries. I take a particular interest in the pastoral industry because there are a large number of pastoral leases in my electorate but I do not know a great deal about buffalo development. I would like to know exactly how Block H fitted into a government plan in this regard because that was the ostensible reason why it bought Block H.

My second question was: 'On what basis did the minister commission T.C. Waters Pepper to buy Block H on its behalf?' At this stage, the arrangements between the minister, Mr Anictomatis and T.C. Waters Pepper appear to be highly irregular and many people in the real estate industry heartily concur with my suspicions in that regard and appreciate the efforts that I am making to get to the bottom of it.

My third question was: 'What offers did the minister make to the receiver for Block H prior to the auction on 3 September 1986?' I am aware that, just prior to the auction, there was considerable toing and froing between the minister and the auctioneer, Mr Southwell. I am quite prepared to accept, in respect of this question, that the minister may say that those were confidential negotiations between the government and the receiver. I would still be very interested to know.

My fourth question was: 'When was the Valuer-General's valuation of either part or all of Block H sought?' That is a crucial question. Did the government seek the Valuer-General's valuation of Block H before it instructed Mr Anictomatis to buy the block from it, or while Mr Anictomatis owned it, or did it obtain a Valuer-General's valuation only after it bought it some 8 or 9 weeks later?'

My fifth question related to the Valuer-General's valuations. What were they? Was only 1 obtained or were several obtained? When were they obtained?

Mr Hanrahan: We bought only 1 block, Neil.

Mr BELL: I will pick up the interjection from the Minister for Lands and Housing. He may not have been briefed on this particular matter. There were negotiations between Mr Anictomatis and the then Minister for Lands as to

whether or not the block would be subdivided and about valuations for parts thereof. Whether these were notional valuations or whether valuations were obtained from the Valuer-General, I do not know. However, I want to know and the people out there want to know too.

My sixth question was: 'Will the minister reveal, on a confidential basis or otherwise, the correspondence relating to the negotiations between himself and T.C. Waters Pepper in relation to the subdivision of Block H?' I do not believe there is any formal correspondence in existence. If the minister can show it to me and it is able to be verified that the correspondence has not been dummed up for the occasion, I am prepared to accept that. But, I strongly suspect that no formal approach was made to T.C. Waters Pepper and Co.

I have 1 final question, Mr Speaker. There are all sorts of rumours going around about the relationship between the former Minister for Lands and Mr John Anictomatis, and I want an assurance about any financial relationship between the Minister for Lands and Mr Anictomatis. I want a categorical assurance from the present Minister for Lands and Housing, and his predecessor, that there was no financial relationship.

Motion agreed to; the Assembly adjourned.

Mr Speaker Vale took the Chair at 10 am.

PETITION
Tertiary Book Allowance

Mr SMITH (Opposition Leader): Mr Speaker, I present a petition from 361 citizens of Darwin praying that the Legislative Assembly reconsider the decision to abolish the tertiary book allowance. The petition bears the Clerk's certificate that it conforms with the requirements of standing orders. I move that the petition be read.

Motion agreed to; petition read.

To the Speaker and members of the Northern Territory Legislative Assembly, the humble petition of the undersigned citizens of Darwin respectively sheweth their concern at the decision of the Northern Territory government to abolish the tertiary book allowance of \$375. Your petitioners humbly submit that the abolition of this allowance will place a great burden on many tertiary students. Your petitioners humbly pray that the Legislative Assembly reconsider the decision to abolish the tertiary book allowance, and your petitioners, as in duty bound, will ever pray.

ADDRESS-IN-REPLY

Mr SPEAKER: Honourable members, I advise you that I will present the Address-in-Reply to His Honour the Administrator at 4.30 pm today. I invite all honourable members to accompany me to Government House following the adjournment of the Assembly.

SPECIAL ADJOURNMENT

Mr HANRAHAN (Leader of Government Business): Mr Speaker, I move that the Assembly, at its rising, adjourn until 10 am on Tuesday 2 June 1987 or such other time or date set by Mr Speaker pursuant to sessional order.

Motion agreed to.

ADMINISTRATIVE ARRANGEMENTS

Mr HATTON (Chief Minister): Mr Speaker, as honourable members will be aware, as a result of an unfortunate incident last week, I found myself in the position last Friday of becoming Minister for Labour and Administrative Services. I advised the Assembly on Tuesday of this week that I would be announcing the new Minister for Labour and Administrative Services during this week's sittings. I can advise the Assembly that the member for Victoria River will be appointed as Minister of Labour and Administrative Services. That will occur tomorrow and, as a consequence, I understand the honourable member will be resigning from a number of parliamentary committees. Honourable members will be aware that he is also the Chairman of Committees of this Assembly and I understand that he will be resigning from that position. This afternoon, we will put the necessary resolutions before this Assembly to have those vacancies filled so that we can proceed without in any way interrupting important committees, such as the Public Accounts Committee, and resolve the issue of the new Chairman of Committees.

Mr SPEAKER: I advise honourable members that the Assembly will proceed to appoint a new Chairman of Committees at 2.30 pm this afternoon.

MATTER OF PUBLIC IMPORTANCE
Northern Territory Public Service

Mr SPEAKER: Honourable members, I have received the following letter from the Deputy Leader of the Opposition:

Dear Mr Speaker,

Pursuant to standing order 94, I propose for discussion this morning, as a matter of public importance, the following matter: the government's inability to ensure the effective and efficient operation of the Northern Territory public service.

Yours sincerely,
Brian Ede,
Member for Stuart.

Is the proposed discussion supported? It is supported.

Mr EDE (Stuart): Mr Speaker, one of the amazing aspects of these sittings has been the almost complete lack of any policy statements from ministers. One area which I thought would have been the subject of a statement at the beginning of this session is that of the changes in the public service itself. The Chief Minister has talked in the press at some length about what he was doing and why he was doing it. We have all heard the rumours that some of the changes are not working out so well and that there are disputes between ministers and so on.

Ministers seem to have decided to use answers to questions in question time to discuss matters which should have been covered in ministerial statements to allow the Assembly to debate them. Instead of some 15 or 16 ministerial statements, as we normally would have had by this stage under previous Chief Ministers, we have had 1. It was most unfortunate that it did not concern the public service, because there is a complete confusion out there about what the current situation is.

There has been much talk since the election of this current government of the revamping and restructuring of the public service. We have had press releases, statements from ministers and notices in the gazette. However, nothing new has been said for, in the Northern Territory, the restructuring of the public service has become a panacea for government ineptitude. Each new style of administration is described as making the public service more efficient, leaner, meaner, more effective and providing a better service for the public under the guise of cost-effective reform. When we consider the state of the public service in the Northern Territory, we find that nothing could be further from the truth. The trend continues. There will be no problem in reducing the number of public servants. The problem will be to stop the exodus. If we do not, all we will have left will be the fat cats at the top and more houses for sale in the newspaper.

There are many sayings which gain currency at particular times but perhaps the one that is best known in the Northern Territory Public Service is a quotation from that famous son of the Roman Imperial court, Petronius. He wrote, in the year AD 66:

We trained hard, but it seemed that every time we were beginning to form a team we would be reorganised. I was to learn later in life that we tend to meet every situation by reorganising, and a wonderful

method it can be for the illusion of progress while producing confusion, inefficiency and demoralisation.

Petronius could not have known the Northern Territory Public Service in AD 66, although one could be forgiven for thinking that he did. We have reorganisation after reorganisation and restructure after restructure. Every time people start getting things right, there is yet another reorganisation. As Petronius said, it is all done to create the illusion of progress while its effect is confusion, inefficiency and demoralisation.

Immediately after self-government, we began with the Westminster model under the erstwhile Chief Minister, now the honourable member for the Northern Territory who, as the member for Sadadeen said earlier, seems to have gone to Queensland droving. Unfortunately, his Westminster style was brought into disrepute by his habit of engaging in political cronyism.

We went on to the corporate style of government with the new age thinking of the former Chief Minister, the member for Barkly. We did not even have time to grasp the details of his big picture when along came the mega-departments of the current administration.

I fail to see how all this perpetual motion has increased anything except dissatisfaction on the part of both public servants and the community. Time and again over the years, this Assembly has been told that changes in the public service will lead to a more efficient public service. But how do we measure the goal we are pursuing, that elusive efficiency? We have never been told how, at the end of the day, we can sit back as a parliament and assess the correctness or otherwise of these tinkering of our ministers. The reason we have not been told and can never be told is that these measurements do not exist.

The goal of making the public service more efficient is an illusion. The public service is an efficient body consisting, on the whole, of hard-working men and women. The only problem might be that they are exhausted from changing direction. They are constantly being told that they are not efficient, and that to be efficient they have to be reorganised or restructured. Maybe we could measure this efficiency by the number of removal trucks that are used to relocate desks and equipment, and by the number of name changes departments experience. If that were the test, the public service could be judged to be very efficient, because people are constantly being moved around. But, if we use any objective, managerial tool to try to determine the veracity or otherwise of the government's view, we cannot reach that judgment.

The other truth about restructuring is that it allows the people at the bottom of the pyramid to be removed. Every restructure and reorganisation of the public service leads to the cutting out of positions at the lower levels. One of the best examples is the Northern Territory Housing Commission. It is famous for its reorganisations. It has had 1 reorganisation a year for about the past 5 years, and every 1 of those reorganisations has led to the movement of people backwards and forwards, across corridors, up and down stairs from floor to floor and into divisions that have had their names changed. But, at the end of the day, these changes have not led to a more efficient delivery of services. They have led to a reduction in positions below the A6 and A7 classifications while people at the top have been reclassified to higher grades.

To focus on a particular group of Housing Commission employees which has been reorganised several times over a number of years, let us look at the gardeners. This is a small group of employees who have won the Housing Commission much credit and a number of prizes for their work. In the final wash-up, they lost their jobs. They were at the bottom of the pecking order and were able to be discarded as a result of the government's way of thinking. It required the union concerned, the Federated Miscellaneous Workers Union, to threaten and cajole the department into coming up with some answers. First, the department said that the gardeners would not be affected, then it said they might be, then that they would be, and then that they would not be. Needless to say, the need to be seen to be reorganising was more important than the gardeners.

That raises the issue of consultation. In answer to a question from the member for Karama last week, the Chief Minister trumpeted about his commitment to consultation with trade unions. Mr Speaker, let us consider the track record of consultation of the Northern Territory Country Liberal Party government. I might explain to the Chief Minister that consultation is not making a decision and then telling the people affected what that decision is.

The Chief Minister's track record of consultation while he has been a minister invites some scrutiny. We are all aware that, when the member for Barkly was the Chief Minister, he introduced the now notorious legislation to amend the Public Service Act. This removed control of the public service from the Public Service Commissioner, the person who held the statutory power, and put it in the hands of the ministers. This act effectively passed control of the administration of the public service and the statutory authorities into the hands of the ministers. Existing checks and balances were swept away, and provision was made in some areas for intervention by the government at any level in administration. The impact of that notorious legislation is that the Chief Minister now controls directly the transfer from office of any departmental head or the chairman or the director of any prescribed authority, without right of appeal. The power is in the hands of 1 minister. The position is such that, in the 2 areas recognised to be of greatest significance within any public service, the audit of accountability and the avoidance of discrimination, the commissioner's powers may be assumed at any time by the minister, can be used capriciously and can conflict with the spirit of the legislation.

Mr Speaker, you will recall that the Chief Minister was, at that time, a government minister. This is the man who is so committed to consultation, who trumpets this virtue in this place and elsewhere. During that debate, he sat in this Assembly, opposite me, and did nothing to raise any concerns about this nefarious piece of legislation. He sat there and voted for it. He voted to ram the amendment through the Assembly. He then voted to recommit it because the then Chief Minister stuffed it up and, having done that, voted for it again.

This question of the style and approach to the public service is really predicated on one very simple fact: the Country Liberal Party government of the Northern Territory has an inherent dislike and unfounded distrust of the public service, which often appears to amount to an obsession. Ample evidence of this is to be found in attitudes at conferences, contents of public speeches and so on, and the total lack of real consultation. There is also a veneration of older management styles derived from the army model of top-down commander systems, which fit uncomfortably with more modern styles of consultative management.

This paranoia about the public service, this view that it is really lazy and conspiring against the government, is nonsensical. It is based on myths and ideas, not valid experience or knowledge. All we need to do is cite another example of the callousness of this government in these matters, and that is a comment made by the Minister for Health and Community Services. At the time he was the Minister for Correctional Services, before yet another department came and went. During a dispute last year about mentally-ill people being incarcerated in jail, he said that police and prison officers should expect to be thumped in the line of their duty. What a callous and bovine statement! This man, who walks around saying that he is a friend of the public service, was saying that as far as he was concerned, prison officers could well get thumped in the line of their duty.

The government's mania for privatisation is another point that bears examination. This government is involved in a fire sale now in relation to land to help balance the books. Its rush to privatisation is on the same parallel. It has been systematically dismantling large parts of the public service and selling them off or giving them away to its friends and allies in the private sector. In doing so, the government is losing expertise - expertise which is sadly needed. We have had the sale of government laboratories to Amdel and a major winding-down of government road building as the work has been given to private contractors. We have had the giving away of management training to Total Management, with substantial subsidy and assets. All of this has been based on the premise that the private sector can do it more efficiently. What that means is that the private sector may do the job more cheaply, probably at the cost of a reduction in the level of service. In the case of Total Management, it was definitely cheaper. One course that was free previously is now costing departments \$900 a head.

I will cite another example. Mr Speaker, you will recall that, when the mooring basin was constructed and the new bypass road was built, it all looked very pretty and efficient until the first time heavy rain fell. Potholes appeared that a car could disappear into. We had the unedifying sight of the company that built the road setting its employees to work in the pouring rain at 4.30 in the afternoon, filling in potholes in a road that they had just built. Compare that to the construction of Lee Point Road, carried out by Department of Transport and Works day labourers. It experienced none of those problems. The road stood up very well to the heavy rains that came just after construction. There are dozens of similar examples.

Another result of privatisation has been to deprive young people of apprenticeships. We find that there are no building apprenticeships in the Northern Territory Public Service, because the public service is giving away all its building trades work. There is a reduction in the areas of mechanical engineering, automotive services and so on. The numbers of apprenticeships in those areas has been very substantially reduced also. Unfortunately, the private sector is not taking up apprentices in the numbers it should. Most of the people in the private sector are small contractors who are simply not in a position to employ apprentices even if they wanted to. Not only are young people up here finding it difficult to get apprenticeships, we are losing skilled tradespeople as well.

Mr Speaker, I would like the government to produce some detailed costings to show whether, as a result of its actions in privatising a variety of functions, the people of the Northern Territory are, first, getting a better deal and, secondly, getting a more efficient and cost-effective deal. I challenge the ministers involved in those privatisation exercises to produce those figures. They have never done so in the past because they cannot.

I turn now to the situation of industrial relations in the public service. On 29 April this year, the late unlamented Minister for Labour and Administrative Services, the member for Port Darwin said, in his contribution to the debate on the Address-in-Reply: 'Good industrial relations are imperative, particularly in relation to line management'. The then minister and this government know no more about good industrial relations than they do about being able to fly under their own motion. Let us look at their record, which is one of confrontation. It started with the former Chief Minister, the then member for Jingili, continued under the member for Barkly and is carried on under the current Chief Minister. In relation to the question of public service air fares, Territory allowances, housing loan interest rates for public servants and, more recently, redundancy and restructuring under this latest bright idea, there was no consultation. The government simply moved in, made a decision, and then told the unions and the workers that they had to cop it. Is there any doubt that public servants doubt election assurances that there will be no sackings?

We find that, in relation to housing, the government broke agreements it had with employees concerning their housing interest rates. We found that over air fares and Territory allowances, the government misled the trade unions, at first promising to consider things but then changing its mind and trying to delay the hearing of the case. Clearly, that was done as a punishment and was aimed at trying to destabilise the trade union concerned. It has not done that. It has caused distrust of promises and shown the petulance of members of the government towards such issues. There is no concern about abiding by proper wage-fixing principles or for the salary levels of public servants, except those at the top. Further, because unionists fought for their rights, the government turned around and removed their payroll deduction facilities.

The current Chief Minister said, when he came into power, that he was going to reduce the numbers in the public service and he was going to do that through natural attrition. He told us the other day that he had done that. He had wiped out 400 positions or was trying to. He has also said that there would be no forced retrenchments in the public service. However, the opposition is aware that the Public Service Commissioner's office is considering a paper which points out that, as a result of this reorganisation, there will be some 400 to 500 people in excess and that most of these people should be offered early retirement to get them out of the public service. Those positions were in the Department of Health and Community Services alone. That is a considerable loss of resources to the Northern Territory Public Service.

Mr Hatton: What if they are excess to requirements? Do you say we should spend the money anyway?

Mr EDE: In response to that interjection, the problem is that people have been taken away from the areas which provide services so that we end up with more people at the top and fewer at the bottom.

The problem with all this toing and froing is not just with the workings of the public service but also with trying to keep track of functions and responsibilities. The Work Health Authority is under its fourth minister since its inception. No one at all now seems to be responsible for federal affairs. The Offices of Women's Affairs and Equal Employment Opportunity must be feeling like pass the parcel. Some areas are causing immense concern both for government employees and community alike. The fate of local government, particularly community government, is far from clear. The regulation of

dangerous goods and mine safety is in limbo. It seems to be in the Department of Labour and Administrative Services, but it may well turn up in the Department of Mines and Energy. One appalling and damning feature of this latest shuffle is that Aboriginal matters have been deliberately eradicated.

Mr HARRIS (Port Darwin): Mr Speaker, once again the opposition has made a pathetic effort in relation to a matter of public importance. The matter of public importance should really be the government's very positive relationship with the Northern Territory Public Service. The government has been acting responsibly to improve the efficient operation of the NTPS.

The member for Stuart mentioned the complete lack of statements in this Legislative Assembly in relation to the administrative changes. I might say to him that he has been able to ask questions in relation to those particular issues. There has been only 1 question put in relation to administrative changes. The opportunity is always available for members of the opposition to ask questions in relation to any matter that is of concern to them. They talk about rumour and innuendo. We hear them once again: knock, knock, knock. They talk about administrative changes in the past. Why don't they come into the present?

The Chief Minister has combined many areas which needed to be together. The changes are directed at making the whole public service more efficient. The opposition is commenting now, before waiting to see whether or not these new arrangements will work. These changes have not been minor ones as have been made in the past. Major changes have been undertaken in order to try and be sensible in the approach to many areas. There is, for example, the matter of duplication. Is the member for Stuart saying that there should be, for example, 3 grants-in-aid programs for health, community development and youth, sport and recreation? Is bringing all those areas together irresponsible? Is it a waste of the taxpayer's money? Those are the sorts of issues that have been addressed through these administrative arrangements and if the opposition gives it a time to work, it will find that it will work very well indeed and will cease duplication of services.

Mr Ede: This is the third rearrangement since this Chief Minister came to office.

Mr HARRIS: You are talking about history again.

The Chief Minister of the Northern Territory has outlined very clearly, as other ministers did in the Address-in-Reply debate, plans for the various departments. The opposition says it has not been told about the changes and no statements have been made about the changes. Ministers have spoken to the Address-in-Reply, have made the changes clear and have set out what the Northern Territory government is doing. If members have not been satisfied with the details outlined in the ministers' speeches, they have every right to ask questions, but they have been lacking in that department.

The opposition talks about CLP myths and ideas and knocks the exercise of trying to hand over particular government services to the private sector. What is the matter with that? We have finite resources. There are some public sector services which can be handled by the private sector: radiology, pathology, ophthalmology and schooling. Is it right that the Northern Territory government spends millions and millions of the taxpayers' dollars in providing services that can also be provided by the public sector? The 2 sectors should be working together to make sure that the best possible services are provided for the people of the Territory.

The member for Stuart spoke about industrial relations. We are not denying that this area is vital. Again, he went back into history and referred to changes which he said were unreasonable. Action on public service housing loans was not designed to deny people anything. It was reasonable that such action occurred at that time, and I do not believe there would be any public servant who would deny that, if they really looked into their own hearts. It is a beautiful situation when the opposition puts forward a housing policy which is in direct contravention of the Commonwealth States Housing Agreement. All we are doing in the Northern Territory is to make sure that our policies work.

I am quite sure that the member for Stuart is not aware of the enormous task that we have embarked on and it should be spelt out for him. The departments themselves have been reduced in number from 17 to 12, and that is a massive reduction. There have been huge changes in relation to the personnel in those departments. In fact, 1 in 3 public servants is now in the Department of Health and Community Services. That relates to about 5000 public servants. To expect that those changes could happen overnight or that no problems would occur is totally unrealistic. Apart from the personnel aspect, there is the matter of relocation and office accommodation. It is a massive task. I believe that there are many people who deserve thanks for the way in which they have approached this matter, because it is my understanding that the changes are proceeding very smoothly indeed.

The member for Stuart's electorate does not really have similar problems in relation to office accommodation. When I was the Minister for Labour and Administrative Services, I inspected all of the offices. Obviously, the member for Stuart is not aware that there is a problem in relation to departments being of different sizes. Whilst some departments hoped to move very quickly after the administrative changes were announced, they soon found that there were difficulties in making those changes without the necessary coordination and cooperation.

To ensure that the changes occurred efficiently, the Chief Minister set out procedures that were to be followed. Changes were referred to a coordinating committee and, if further changes were to occur, these were referred to the Minister for Labour and Administrative Services. That was the procedure that the Chief Minister put in place to ensure that the changes would be made in a responsible and sensible manner.

I cannot think of anybody, apart from the members of the opposition, who does not consider that the changes that have been announced are not reasonable and sensible. Many of the departments have taken the opportunity to locate in proximity to one another. Is it sensible to have the Liquor Commission at one end of town and the Racing and Gaming Commission at the other? The government has addressed such matters. The opposition is trying to beat up a storm about the public service. There has been a great deal of effort by the government and many public servants have supported the way in which the government has gone about making changes. I am talking about things that are happening today - not about history and the past. The matter of grants-in-aid, for example, has been rationalised. Previously, there were grants-in-aid in the Department of Health as well as in the Departments of Community Development and Youth, Sport, Recreation and Ethnic Affairs. It is sensible and reasonable that those grants-in-aid be brought together.

There are sections that were running efficiently before the changes. I do not deny that, and one can appreciate that there are jealousies within departments. However, you find that those people have accepted the changes

that are being implemented. I believe that, in the long term, these changes will prove to be most efficient and will streamline the government and make it work much better than in the past. In saying that, I am not decrying the efforts of public servants. The structure has not been there to enable the service to work as efficiently as possible.

The member for Stuart commented about retrenchments and 400 jobs being lost. Those are rumours that will cause problems in the community and in the public service. The government is aware of the problems involved in change. It is aware that some departments will have people excess to their requirements. That does not mean that those people will be chucked out on the street. That is what the opposition is saying and it is totally incorrect. It should stand condemned for it.

When I was Minister for Education, the opposition beat up a big story about Kormilda and Yirara Colleges. It said that we intended to sell Yirara. Again, we see the opposition showing its true colours. Not only do members opposite knock, knock, knock what we are trying to do in a positive fashion to get the Territory up and running; they spread rumours that they know will create concern in some quarters.

In my Address-in-Reply speech, I made it clear that a special task force would be developed which would cater for people who were excess to the requirements of a specific department and would have them working effectively and efficiently examining issues of concern to the government, such as statehood or the railway. Those people will be working to ensure that those matters are addressed in a responsible manner.

We heard comments about the Work Health Authority. We have created a good system in the Territory which will satisfy the worker and place the emphasis on rehabilitation. Isn't it reasonable to include the Industrial Safety Division in the Work Health Authority? That is a sensible move.

I made it very clear, in answer to a question from the member for Nhulunbuy, there were some areas that needed to be looked at in more detail. The member for Stuart acknowledges the enormous cost of moving offices and personnel from 1 department to the other. He should examine his ideas more carefully. If he examines the problems thoroughly, he will appreciate that certain sections are suited to certain departments. The government has taken pains to ensure that the changes that it has made are ones that will last. We do not want to be in a position where we are moving officers every second day.

The matter of public importance that has been raised today is a complete nonsense. In fact, all the matters of public importance that have been raised over the last few days have been suspect and relate merely to matters of history. The members opposite have introduced nothing positive. Members opposite have been talking about the way in which the federal government has been supporting their efforts to obtain funding for Aborigines. What a load of nonsense! They have not got the message; they have been sold a pup.

The efforts of this government to ensure that funds and resources are used effectively for the people of the Territory cannot be questioned. When members opposite raise matters of public importance, they should be positive and not merely create rumours and stir up trouble in the community. When they raise matters of public importance, they should indeed be matters of definite public importance that require discussion in this Assembly. I believe that the government is doing everything possible to ensure the effective and efficient operation of the Northern Territory Public Service.

CHAIRMAN OF COMMITTEES

Mr SPEAKER: Honourable members, I advise that I have received the following letter from the honourable member for Victoria River resigning his position as Chairman of committee. 'Dear Mr Speaker, I hereby tender my resignation from the position of Chairman Committees of the Legislative Assembly'. Honourable members, it is now necessary for the Assembly to appoint a member to be Chairman of Committees.

Mr HATTON (Chief Minister): Mr Speaker, I propose to the Assembly for its Chairman of Committees the member for Casuarina, Mr Dondas, and move that the member for Casuarina be appointed Chairman of Committees of this Assembly.

Mr HANRAHAN (Leader of Government Business): Mr Speaker, I second the motion.

Mr DONDAS (Casuarina): Mr Speaker, I accept the nomination.

Mr SPEAKER: Are there any further nominations? There being no further nominations, the time for nominations has expired. I declare the member for Casuarina appointed as Chairman of Committees of this Assembly.

Members: Hear, hear!

MEMBERSHIP OF COMMITTEES

Mr SPEAKER: Honourable members, I have received the following letter from the member for Victoria River:

Dear Mr Speaker, I hereby request that I be discharged from further attendance on the following committees: Subordinate Legislation and Tabled Papers, the Environment and the Public Accounts Committee.

Yours sincerely,
T.R. McCarthy,
Member for Victoria River.

Mr HANRAHAN (Leader of Government Business)(by leave): Mr Speaker, I move that the member for Victoria River be discharged from further attendance on the Subordinate Legislation and Tabled Papers Committee, the Sessional Committee on the Environment and the Public Accounts Committee, and that members be appointed to those committees as follows: Subordinate Legislation and Tabled Papers Committee - Mr Poole; Sessional Committee on the Environment - Mr Dondas; and Public Accounts Committee - Mr Harris.

Motion agreed to.

MATTER OF PUBLIC IMPORTANCE Northern Territory Public Service

Continued from page 479.

Mr TIPILOURA (Arafura): Mr Speaker, I would like to take the opportunity to make some comments on the matter of public importance raised by the member for Stuart. I am concerned about the problems that Aboriginal people will have because the government is about to cut back services to the communities. Reducing local government support services is the easiest way to hurt the progress of people in my electorate.

Mr Speaker, let me give you some background. Before self-government, Aboriginal communities were funded by the federal Department of Aboriginal Affairs. That function was transferred to the Department of Community Development in 1978. Communities became incorporated bodies and their funding, program approvals and operational matters were under the care and watchful eyes of that department. We developed tremendous teamwork, working together. In recent years, Aboriginal incorporated bodies have become true local governments under the Local Government Act. Where I live in the Tiwi Islands, all 3 councils have taken this progressive and responsible step. Other communities are also now taking this important step forward.

Since self-government, Aboriginal communities have worked hard to become part of the white Australian government structure under the Local Government Act. We have accepted our responsibilities as citizens. It worries me greatly to hear of rumours, and I hope they are only rumours, that the Aboriginal Field Services Division of the Department of Community Development is likely to undergo tremendous changes following the Chief Minister's recent rearrangement of the structure of various government departments. No Aboriginal communities have been advised officially of the new departmental structure. If true, this action is wrong and unfair and a backward step in Aboriginal community development. We hear that the DCD Aboriginal Field Services Division is now part of Treasury and Local Government and is likely to be allocated new and different duties. The word 'Aboriginal' is to disappear from the local government structure.

If, in fact, this has happened or is to happen, the government is uncaring in wanting us to stand on our own feet yet not helping us to learn to do so. It seems to be a popular idea today that the Aboriginal people should run their own communities and manage their own community services. How can we do that when we do not have what the mainland councils have? I refer to a lack of qualified town clerks, qualified engineers, qualified accountants, bookkeepers, town planners and other skilled personnel. Our work force and councillors have not been educated to European standards. The educational levels of European personnel are miles ahead of ours.

We cannot be expected to stand alone, because we simply do not have the expertise and knowledge in our communities to do so. This is where the Aboriginal Field Services Division of DCD has been so helpful and achieved so much for us in a short period of time. They have been expert advisers and a guiding light to us in self-management. They have shown us how to frame budgets and have helped us obtain European staff who have specialised knowledge which we do not have. They required accounts and reports from us and showed us how to prepare them. They have looked into our wants and needs from other government departments and taught us how to prepare submissions. They even saved us considerable time and worry in terms of whether we would be successful or not in our applications. They provided regular - at least monthly - inspection of our communities and they looked at all activities in respect of office management, accounts and record keeping as well as field work programs and other community services.

The greatest service which the Field Services Division gave us was praise for our good performances and criticism of our poor performances. The officers and staff of the Aboriginal Field Services Division have been a professional 'staff', for want of a better word, because they have guided, advised and taught us as to the rights and wrongs of managing a developing community. This is just what the professional and qualified staff of the European mainland councils do. It is a necessary service for us, because we do not have, and can neither afford nor obtain professional, qualified staff.

This is because we are still in a learning phase of gradually working towards European educational standards. Perhaps we need government advice, skilled management and guidance.

We sincerely ask that the Aboriginal Field Services Division of DCD not only be retained but strengthened. We believe that our dealings with all government departments should first go through the Field Services Division. Its officers are and have been our professional advisers, caring teachers and constructive critics, when needed. If we lose them or are to lose their independent and professional supervision, then back will go the clock and all that the Aboriginal communities have so far achieved in their development since self-government.

I hear that the government plans to bulk bill communities for electricity and water. Does it plan to do this to the municipal councils like Darwin City Council? Should we receive bills from the government Departments of Education and Health, which provide services in our communities? If the essential services program is split up between departments, and the welfare field service and the remote areas units are split up, that will be completely contradictory to the Chief Minister's stated aim, which is to bring together services and coordinate activities in departments.

If the Chief Minister wants to know what Aboriginal people want, he can consult with them or form the partnership he has talked about. Maybe the CLP government is just testing out the federal opposition's idea of burying Aboriginal Affairs. Who, in the CLP government, is responsible for working with the federal department of Aboriginal Affairs? Where are the 65 people who have been working with us in the Department of Community Development going to go? Have they been sacked? I hope not.

We remember the CLP election video that was shown to us in Aboriginal communities all over the Territory. We remember its long list of promises about capital works and services. The video said, and I quote: 'You will be able to help the CLP government keep doing this work for your community if you vote for your CLP candidate'. What will happen if we did not vote for the CLP? Will the government keep its election promises? If it disbands sections of the former Department of Community Development, who will make the essential services possible? We can only think that we are being punished.

Mr HATTON (Chief Minister): Mr Speaker, I want to address a few of the issues that have been raised in this debate. Yet again, the time of this Assembly is being wasted on a nonsensical so-called matter of public importance.

I might say that the member for Arafura has raised an issue that is clearly one of genuine concern and, in this particular debate he has performed far more creditably than his deputy leader. At least, he raised something positive and current, whereas his deputy leader was only able to talk about things that happened years ago and which have absolutely no relevance to today's circumstances.

The Deputy Leader of the Opposition does not believe in using question time or even writing a letter or checking statistics. He alleged that, for some reason, apprenticeship numbers may be dropping off in the Northern Territory because the Northern Territory government is not now directly employing many people in the manual trades. I happen to have the relevant figures as of 31 March this year and he may find them of interest. I hope he listens carefully because they quite clearly give the lie to the preposterous

nonsense he was promoting in his address. These figures go back 2 years. They do not have to go back very far to show clearly the growth in the total number of apprentices across the board. As of March this year, there were 1325 people in apprenticeships. This number includes 93 persons awaiting approval for apprenticeships. That compares with 1313 to March 1986 and 1275 to March 1985. Quite clearly, that consistent growth rate is exactly the opposite of ...

Mr Ede: What is this growth rate? You quoted figures for 2 years.

Mr HATTON: Mr Speaker, I do not want to go back for years and years. The point is quite clear: the number of people in apprenticeships in the Northern Territory is growing. Even the member for Stuart should be able to grasp that simple point. The fact is that he presented nothing of any relevance at all to this discussion of a so-called matter of public importance.

The member for Arafura did, however, raise an issue. I might say that we have engaged in the most significant and dramatic restructuring of government since self-government. There have been areas, such as those outlined by the member for Arafura, where the implementation of the policies has taken a while. I have been very conscious of the fact that there are a number of employees - some 10 or 20 people - particularly in the areas referred to by the honourable member, in respect of whom some final decisions have yet to be taken. Let me assure the member for Arafura that it is the intention of our government not only to maintain the services that have been provided to the Aboriginal communities but to strengthen and build on those services. We are moving to establish specialist activity units in the Department of Industries and Development, the Department of Mines and Energy, the Office of Local Government, Treasury - right across the spectrum of government - specifically to look at each departmental function in relation to the needs of the Aboriginal community. In fact, we are spreading and deepening the government's concentration on the specific needs of Aboriginal communities in the departments that have expertise in those particular fields, rather than creating a structure along the lines of the federal Department of Aboriginal Affairs. It is a deliberate objective to move away from a DAA-type structure.

Mr Speaker, I have a note here. Of course, the Office of Local Government is now attached to the Treasury and the Office of Local Government will provide local government-type services to the community government councils. All local government functions which operated in the former Department of Community Development will continue to operate through the Office of Local Government. There will be other Aboriginal Field Service staff who will continue to work for the Department of Health and Community Services, providing the community service support systems which it is the function of that department to supply to both Aboriginal communities and others. I have units in my department that will be working specifically on the needs of the Aboriginal communities and the Aboriginal population in general. There will be an upgrading of the role, because it is known and recognised that, because of the way the federal government operates, it is necessary to have a focal coordinating point located within the Department of the Chief Minister.

The honourable member can take heart from the fact that increased emphasis and importance will be placed on the coordination of provision of services to Aboriginal communities. This will be carried out through the Department of the Chief Minister and the Coordinator-General, with the actual delivery of services being carried out through the specific departmental areas that have those particular responsibilities. I should add that the Aboriginal Video Unit, which was part of the Department of Community Development, will be

attached to the Protocol Unit of the Department of the Chief Minister also as that communication is linked to that area.

Mr Speaker, following the Coordination Committee's meeting yesterday, I finalised those details this morning. Later, I will be happy to go through the processes and give the honourable member more detail to assist him to advise his electorate on how the new administrative arrangements will work in relation to his constituents.

Mr Speaker, I do not wish to waste the time of the Assembly. I have dealt with what I believe was the only issue of moment raised in this debate. The member for Stuart brought up nothing of any moment. Except for the concern with understanding how the services to Aborigines will be effected, the honourable members opposite presented no substantial criticism of the administrative arrangements that have been put into place. Quite clearly, they flow directly from the plans and programs that we brought before the community during the election campaign. They focus the directions and organisational structure of the government so as to reflect the principles which we outlined at that time.

Mr Ede: Tell me where mine safety is going.

Mr HATTON: The member for Stuart really should be very careful when opening his mouth in this Assembly because every time he does so he moves from the left foot to the right foot. He changes feet every 5 minutes. He makes a big play about restructuring, as if there is something wrong with restructuring and reorganising the public service.

We have reduced the number of departments from 17 to 12. That is a fundamental and important restructuring and focusing, as the debate on the Address-in-Reply showed quite clearly. I would have thought members opposite would have stood up and praised the Northern Territory government for doing that. I say that for a very good reason. I have here the Labor Party's public service policy released by its parliamentary leader, Terry Smith, on 22 January 1987. I turn to the first page and towards the bottom it says: 'to ensure that the NTPS becomes the engine room for development, a Territory Labor government will reduce the number of departments and authorities to reduce operational costs'.

Mr Smith: Of course.

Mr HATTON: We have done that and I look forward to the praise and congratulations of the honourable members opposite and to watching them try to claim credit somehow for having thought up the idea of reducing the size of the public service.

Mr Ede: We are used to you picking up our ideas; you do it all the time.

Mr HATTON: Members opposite are doing nothing more than wasting the time of this Assembly. This is the fifth so-called matter of definite public importance that has been brought before this Assembly so far. There have only been 6 sitting days and only 1 MPI can be raised on any 1 day. Day 1 was inappropriate because it was dedicated, basically, to the formalities of opening parliament. The opposition has raised 5 really riveting topics, and I will not bore members by listing them. Let me advise honourable members that 9 is the highest number of matters of definite public importance ever brought before this Assembly in a full year. That was the number last year. There were 7 in 1983, 5 in 1981, 5 in 1982, 5 in 1984, 4 in 1985, 9 in 1986 and 5 already in the first 6 days of sittings of this Assembly.

Quite clearly, members opposite have decided that they want to make MPIs a normal part of the daily business in this Assembly. Quite clearly, this perverts the purpose of discussions of matters of public importance. From a political point of view, I hope they keep it up, although it does waste the time of the Assembly. They are beaten to death every time they open their mouths on a so-called MPI. They have not won a point in the first fortnight in the life of this Assembly. The further they follow their present strategy, the more they will devalue the currency of the MPI, because I can assure members opposite that the people in the press gallery simply go to sleep every time they hear an MPI has been introduced. They vanish outside, they go and have a cup of coffee, they do anything to get away from the boring discussions emanating from members opposite.

Yet again in discussing this particular MPI, we heard members opposite criticising the government for doing what they said they would do if they got into government. More importantly, in spite of the purpose and direction that has gone into this administrative rearrangement and the clear logic of the new organisational structure, the opposition did not criticise one of the new administrative arrangements. Not one. We could have used that wasted time productively. However, I can at least say that the debate has been productive politically by demonstrating the total incompetence of the members opposite. That is why they got such a lousy vote. They cannot think of anything logical to raise or discuss. I suppose there is a very good reason for that because we have usually fixed up the problem before they get around even to thinking of it. The more they do that, the more they allow us to demonstrate the efficiency and effectiveness of the Northern Territory government under the CLP.

STAMP DUTY AMENDMENT BILL
(Serial 16)

Bill presented and read a first time.

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

The purpose of this bill is to substitute a stamp duty for charges made previously for lodging appeal documents in the Federal Court and to place a ceiling on the duty to be paid in respect of hiring arrangements. This bill amends the Stamp Duty Act to include a duty of \$150 in the charging schedule, which is in substitution for lodgment fees in civil matters previously charged by the Federal Court. Appeals lodged formerly in the Federal Court came under the jurisdiction of the Northern Territory Supreme Court on 1 March 1986. Notice of Appeal in criminal matters will be exempt from the duty. The exemption is to have effect from the date on which the Supreme Court commenced its extended jurisdiction. This will avoid the possible unintended imposition of duty on such documents and validate existing administrative arrangements.

Mr Speaker, the bill also amends the Stamp Duty Act to impose a limit on the amount of duty that can be charged on a single hiring arrangement.

Debate adjourned.

STOCK ROUTES and TRAVELLING STOCK AMENDMENT BILL
(Serial 23)

Bill presented and read a first time.

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

In 1982, the waybill system for travelling stock replaced the permit system at the request of the pastoral industry and has been effective in respect of the purposes for which it was originally designed. However, officers of the Departments of Law and of Industries and Development consider that the provisions contained in sections 18 and 21(1) of the act do not set out adequately the requirements for the distribution of the original waybills and copies issued for stock consigned. Nor is there currently a provision for a penalty for non-compliance of a stock owner to issue a waybill.

The proposed amendment to section 21 of the act simply clarifies the requirement for the distribution of the waybill and its copies. Clause 3 of the bill provides for the insertion of a new section 66 in the Stock Routes and Travelling Stock Act to provide that: 'A person who contravenes or fails to comply with a provision of this act in respect of which no penalty, other than this section, is provided, is guilty of a regulatory offence'. The effect of designating an offence as a regulatory offence is that in prosecution for committing the offence it is not necessary to prove intention.

Mr Speaker, I commend the bill to honourable members.

Debate adjourned.

STOCK DISEASES AMENDMENT BILL (Serial 24)

Bill presented and read a first time.

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

As honourable members will appreciate, it is essential for the protection of the pastoral industry in the Northern Territory that a mechanism is available to prohibit and or restrict the importation of stock suspected of carrying a disease or of originating from a declared disease area, especially if the suspect disease is of an exotic nature. They are the worst kind, Mr Speaker. Section 23 of the Stock Diseases Act allows the minister to apply such provisions for disease control purposes.

There is also a need to provide for a system to allow normal purchase transactions by pastoralists wishing to import breeder stock into the Northern Territory. The permit system currently authorised under section 24 of the act is completely outdated and, in practice, has been in disuse for some years as it is administratively cumbersome and time-consuming. I would expect an MPI on that at any time now. The proposed amendment, namely the substitution of an interstate health certificate for the permit now prescribed, will ratify the practice that has been accepted and is operating in all the states. The interstate health certificate, which is completed and certified by qualified personnel in the state of origin of the purchase, simplifies the whole operation of import in these circumstances.

Under the provisions contained in existing subsection 48(d) of the act, tail tagging of stock for disease control purposes is not clearly defined and the proposed amendment will remove what is perceived as an anomaly. As honourable members should be aware, tail tagging of stock under movement is very important to the Brucellosis and Tuberculosis Eradication Campaign. The

abattoir trace-back system, which depends on the system of identification, is a major tool in the fight to free Australia of disease in livestock. The Northern Territory government, as are its counterparts in the states, is totally committed to disease control in livestock and must provide the most effective legislation to maintain this commitment.

The bill also provides for an upgrading of the penalty for offences against the regulations to an amount of \$1000, which is comparable to the penalty structures in force in the southern states.

Mr Speaker, I commend the bill to honourable members.

Debate adjourned.

COMPANIES (TRUSTEES and PERSONAL REPRESENTATIVES)
AMENDMENT BILL
(Serial 21)

Bill presented and read a first time.

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

This bill does not involve any change in policy and simply makes machinery amendments to the Companies (Trustees and Personal Representatives) Act. I consider it appropriate that the bill pass all stages at these sittings. Until the legislation is enacted, a company incorporated in a state or the Australian Capital Territory cannot be authorised to act as a trustee company in the Territory. In fact, 1 such company applied for authorisation in November 1986 and has indicated it will open a branch office in the Territory as soon as it obtains authorisation. I am sure honourable members will agree that the Territory ought to be seen to be encouraging companies to expand into the Northern Territory.

As a consequence of the application of the National Companies and Securities Scheme legislation to the Territory, a company incorporated in a state or the Australian Capital Territory is now 'a recognised company' under the Companies (Northern Territory) Code rather than 'a foreign company' under the Territory's old Companies Act. Therefore, the bill omits the reference to a 'foreign company' in the Companies (Trustees and Personal Representatives) Act and substitutes a reference to 'a recognised company'. This machinery amendment is necessary before a company incorporated in a state or the Australian Capital Territory can be authorised to act as a trustee company in the Territory.

The second machinery amendment to be made by the bill is to omit a reference to the position of Registrar of Companies under the old Companies Act and substitute a reference to the Commissioner for Corporate Affairs, a position established in 1986 under the Companies Administration Act which was part of the National Companies and Securities Scheme legislation. Mr Speaker, I commend the bill to honourable members.

Debate adjourned.

PLANNING AMENDMENT BILL
(Serial 20)

Bill presented and read a first time.

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

The purpose of this bill is to correct an error and an omission, both of which are technicalities, that have been detected recently in the Planning Act. The first amendment is achieved by clause 3 of the bill, which addresses a problem concerning the definition of 'consent authority' for the purpose of subdividing land outside planning areas. The definition of 'consent authority' in relation to subdivisions in the Planning Act is unclear. The act gives the minister power to act as the consent authority for subdivision of freehold land outside planning areas and areas covered by planning instruments.

Recently, it has become necessary and expedient to place land use controls on certain land outside planning areas to ensure orderly and proper development. Examples are the Highways Control Plan, the Borroloola Town Plan, the Alice Springs Rural Area Plan and various Aboriginal control plans. Similar arrangements have been anticipated for new coastal management plans prepared as a result of the Northern Territory coastal management policy.

The problem has arisen that, where the minister was the consent authority for subdivision, when a planning instrument was gazetted, he was, by virtue of the definition, no longer able to act as consent authority for subdivision - although he had land use control. As there has been no Planning Authority appointed to act as consent authority for subdivisions in these cases, the present situation is that subdivision applications within areas under these plans can no longer be lawfully determined under the Planning Act. This is clearly not the intention as, in particular instances, such as the Highways Control Plan which controls development on all major Territory highways, it is desirable to have the minister as consent authority for both development and subdivision control. Therefore, an amendment is required to change the definition so that the minister can act as consent authority for subdivisions in relation to areas where planning instruments apply outside planning areas.

Additionally, as a result of the problem arising out of the definition of 'consent authority', the minister and his delegates are believed to have been acting unintentionally beyond power by determining applications in those categories. Clause 5 of the bill has been drafted to validate all instruments issued today for subdivisions outside a planning area.

The second amendment is addressed by clause 4 of the bill, and concerns the advertising of draft planning instruments when they are placed on public exhibition. Section 47(2) of the Planning Act of 1979 stated that notices in the NT Gazette and a newspaper, relating to a draft planning instrument, shall be published during the exhibition of the instruments. Section 47(2) was later amended in 1983 with the effect that the words 'during the period of exhibition of the instrument' were omitted.

Until recently, the authority was still following the 1979 intention until advised its actions might be in error. In order to resolve any uncertainty of when advertisements should occur that relate to the statutory exhibition of draft planning instruments, the proposed amendments to section 47 make it quite clear that the 1979 intentions of the Planning Act are to be followed; that is, advertisements shall occur during the period of an exhibition. In fact, the matter of exhibitions is further clarified by the proposed new subsection 47(1A) which will cause an exhibition period to be commenced by the first of the 2 mandatory newspaper advertisements.

Mr Speaker, I commend the bill to honourable members.

Debate adjourned.

SUSPENSION OF STANDING ORDERS

Mr COULTER (Treasurer): Mr Speaker, I move that so much of standing orders be suspended as would prevent 4 bills, namely, the Power and Water Authority Bill (Serial 25), the Electricity Commission Amendment Bill (Serial 26), the Water Supply and Sewerage Amendment Bill (Serial 27), and the Public Service Amendment Bill (Serial 28), from (a) being presented and read a first time together, and 1 motion being put in regard to respectively the second readings, the committee's report stage and the third reading of the bills together, and (b) the consideration of the bills separately in the committee of the whole.

Motion agreed to.

POWER AND WATER AUTHORITY BILL
(Serial 25)
ELECTRICITY COMMISSION AMENDMENT BILL
(Serial 26)
WATER SUPPLY AND SEWERAGE AMENDMENT BILL
(Serial 27)
PUBLIC SERVICE AMENDMENT BILL
(Serial 28)

Bills presented and read a first time.

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

Mr Speaker, these bills represent a significant step in implementing one of the major initiatives announced by the Chief Minister on 19 March this year. Honourable members will recall that, as part of the new administrative arrangements, the Chief Minister announced that the government utilities, NTEC and the Water Authority, would be brought together under 1 minister, 1 board and 1 chairman. At the time, the Chief Minister stated that this initiative would achieve better coordination in the delivery of services, allow more efficient performance of common functions, such as meter reading and billing, and help in establishing both the water and power areas of government on a sound commercial footing. The bills before the Assembly will ensure that these objectives are achieved.

The Power and Water Authority Bill represents basic legislation establishing the authority. It provides for the establishment of a board and the authority's functions and powers. I draw attention to the bill's provisions, which emphasise that the authority is to be guided by commercial principles. The authority will assume a leading role in progressing the opportunity for commercial development of Northern Territory gas. It is intended that the authority be responsible in this way for encouraging the utilisation of gas. This will provide an opportunity for a detailed look at the relative competitive advantages of electricity or gas options to power stations provided by those in the development field, such as mining companies.

Honourable members should also note that the authority's functions will extend to the purchase and sale of gas. The bills are important in that they give the community and the authority's employees a clear idea of the authority's future direction.

The amendments to the Public Service Act are particularly important in view of the Chief Minister's undertaking that no public servant will lose his or her job through recent administrative changes. The government has considered various options for staffing the authority. It has resolved that, in addition to the absorption of all employees under the former NTEC structure, all staff of the Northern Territory Water Authority, at the date of the commencement of this legislation, should also become part of this authority. The employees, who are members of the Northern Territory Public Service, can choose to stay within the public service and not join the authority or to be transferred with all current rights preserved. There will be a period of detachment for employees, who will be on leave without pay from their public service positions, for a period of 2 years if they do not elect to become members of the authority straightaway. On expiration of the 2-year period, they will be able to elect whether they wish to stay with the authority or return to the NTPS.

There will emerge a need for the rationalisation of management and administrative services to provide a common core of support for the authority. In a broad sense, one could see 3 elements to the organisation: an entity whose orientation is towards the electricity and power industries, a group whose specialisation is in the water industry, and a service group which provides a whole range of administrative support to the other 2.

In an industrial relations sense, we will draw on the experience of the previous Northern Territory Electricity Commission in recognising industry orientation for the professional and technical personnel of the authority. However, all personnel will work towards a common commercial environment for the authority in the longer term. It will be necessary for the authority to be aware of recent advances in technology and to assist with training at all levels. There will be a need to ensure the development of management skills in industries which in the past have had an orientation to professional and technical skills. In particular, we will need to identify the capability amongst our management for marketing, commercial, and entrepreneurial techniques as well as skills in customer education, economic, financial and legal areas.

This points to a comprehensive approach for identification, assessment, distribution and management techniques for Territory water and natural gas resources as a whole. At the workplace, there will be a need for the training of technical and operational staff to keep up with both technological change and new management techniques.

A primary focus of the activities of the new authority will be to bring about better management of our resources. The bill sets down some principles for the practice of methods to bring about greater commercialisation of activities. There are a host of issues generally but, for the water industry in particular, it is important to commence examination of pricing, borrowing and financing policies. The vexed question of how to provide adequate resources for replacement of assets is likely to achieve a more prominent focus by the board of the authority than capital outlays. I do not discard the need for a fundamental re-examination of financing and recovery policies. It will be important, across the authority as a whole and for each of its entities, to work towards more appropriate accounting procedures and costing methods which will enable the government to identify areas of cross-subsidisation.

It may be of interest to draw on the experience of a Senate Select Committee on Statutory Authority Financing which expressed its conclusions in a report of September 1983. The report states:

Until the real, as distinct from the historical, costs and rates of return are known, the accountability of authorities to parliament is incomplete.

In order to determine the allocation of resources among authorities on a rational basis, it is obviously necessary to know the comparable real rates of return on assets employed among these authorities. If these rates are unknown, it will not be possible to know whether available resources are being allocated to areas earning high or low or even negative rates of return.

The committee recommended:

- (1) that current asset valuation should be prepared for all authorities and disclosed in each annual report and that these valuations be updated each year;
- (2) that the real rates of return before interest be shown using replacement cost depreciation;
- (3) that public service obligations be fully disclosed and that authorities state how much these obligations cost over and above what would have been the case on a strictly commercial basis;
- (4) that if such costs cannot be calculated, the authority should fully explain why this is impossible; and
- (5) that where the real rates of return are either persistently low or very low (say around 2%), the authority publish details of how revenue would need to be adjusted to achieve, say, a 4% (or some other specified) real rate of return.

Whilst these comments of the committee refer only to the question of the real rates of return on assets, they do serve as an appropriate benchmark for the posture which the authority should observe in an overall sense as soon as possible.

Whilst substantial progress has been made for the area of electricity, it would be fair to say that the basic mechanisms needed to move towards an appropriate accounting position for a commercial entity do not exist in the case of the Water Authority. A combination of all elements of the water functions and the plans which already exist to eliminate those deficiencies should place the authority in better standing in the years ahead.

In moving towards the user-pays principle, it will be necessary for the authority to establish: (a) that resources are allocated as efficiently as possible; (b) that the demand for power and water is maintained at realistic levels; and (c) that cross-subsidies within and between consumer groups are minimised.

Sound financial management and improved reporting measures should emerge for this Assembly, the public and the authority itself as well as identifying areas for financial constraints. I wish to concentrate the joint efforts of the authority to improve relationships with the users of electricity and water. Although one may argue that there are advantages in greater utilisation of resources to encourage greater revenue for the authority, there are equally convincing arguments that customers of the products should be economical in their use of water and electricity. In the case of electricity

costs, users have already suffered from the policies the federal government in reneging on its obligations to provide an adequate subsidy as agreed at self-government.

Policies will be directed to saving of water by everybody in the community to help avoid the high costs of either expanding or augmenting water supplies throughout the Territory. There may be an opportunity to speed up payments from consumers and it may be proper to provide concessions where this occurs.

I propose to introduce a hot line within the authority which will enable members of the public to communicate on the host of issues which are arising in the community. It is evident to me that people need more information, particularly about water and electricity costs. I look forward to the early establishment of the board, which can draw on expertise within the community in giving effect to the initiatives that I have outlined.

Honourable members will appreciate that the bills before this Assembly will need to be supplemented by further legislation in the near future which will address residual, consequential amendments. I commend the bills to honourable members.

Debate adjourned.

MOTOR VEHICLES AMENDMENT BILL (Serial 4)

Bill presented and read a first time.

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

This bill is essentially the same as I introduced in the last session of the previous Assembly which lapsed when the Assembly was prorogued. The bill incorporates a number of small but important amendments to the Motor Vehicles Act.

Firstly, it provides a mechanism to allow the owner of a hire car to use his licence as security for a loan. Primarily, the registrar's role will be to record the lender's interest in a licence and to maintain that record until advised that the interest has ceased. The detailed requirements will be contained in the regulations. Some changes have been made to the original bill following consultation with the taxi and finance industries. The main differences are: to recognise a wider range of financial interest in the licence, to allow sale of a suspended licence, to ensure the registrar is able to inform the lender if he believes the licence could be at risk, and to require the lender's agreement to the transfer of a licence in which the lender has an interest.

In the NT, there is no tie between the status of a vehicle and the status of an owner, in terms of residency, nor is there a clear direction as to when a driver must change to a Northern Territory licence. The rule that has been applied to a driver's licence is to require persons to change to an NT licence once they are employed or reside in the Territory. The current requirement for a vehicle is that NT registration be taken out before it has been continuously in the Territory for 3 months or that an exemption be sought from the registrar under section 8A.

Mr Speaker, this bill clarifies the requirements for new residents to the Territory concerning the period within which they must change their driver's licence and registration. They must do both within 3 months of arrival. Genuine visitors, staying more than 3 months, will be able to obtain an exemption from this requirement for both registration and licence. Vehicles brought into the Territory by interstate operators to perform specific tasks for a limited period - such as some contracts at Tindal require - will still be eligible to seek exemption and to retain their interstate registration while in the Territory for more than 3 months. Residents purchasing a vehicle interstate will have 28 days in which to change that vehicle to NT registration after it arrives in the Territory. Similarly, local companies operating vehicles in the Territory will have 28 days in which to transfer their vehicles to NT registration or to obtain an exemption from the registrar. For example, this will apply to companies which bring hire or drive vehicles, registered elsewhere, into the Territory for use during our peak tourist period. Hopefully, these measures will reduce the number of interstate registered vehicles based permanently in the Territory. These contribute nothing to Territory revenue or to the TIO's Motor Accident Compensation Scheme and, by avoiding inspection, they pose additional risks on the road.

Under the present act, the government has no power to charge a fee for inspection of defective vehicles, to remove a defect label, or for the issue of a permit to allow vehicles of excessive dimensions to use our roads. Inspection of public vehicles, which is necessary other than on registration, cannot be charged for currently. This bill gives power for these types of charges to be levied. It is intended that the fees levied will reflect the cost of the services provided.

This bill will also relax some of the more onerous requirements on persons applying for a driving instructor's licence. For instance, a licence to drive a motor car will no longer be a prerequisite to obtaining an instructor's licence for motorcycles, providing a motorcycle licence is held. It will also allow the registrar discretion to accept an application from a person who has not held a licence continuously for the past 3 years, where he is satisfied that the person has the equivalent experience with vehicles of that class. The current act leaves no discretion on these aspects, and leads to complaints of inflexibility.

The bill makes specific provision for classes of licence within the bus category. Regulations commenced on 11 December 1986 and the change proposed here will avoid any doubts that the registrar may issue grades of omnibus licence as agreed nationally by the Australian Transport Advisory Council, which comprises federal, state and Territory Ministers of Transport.

A further minor amendment removes an anomaly created when licences for 16-year-olds were introduced. Another problem is that the interpretation of the act as it stands could imply that a truck driver who has his licence removed by the court for 3 months would have to wait a further 12 months before his licence could be re-issued. This interpretation was certainly not intended by the government at the time the bill was passed.

As I said at the beginning, amendments to this bill are fairly minor, but they are important to those affected by them.

Mr Speaker, I commend the bill.

Debate adjourned.

SUSPENSION OF STANDING ORDERS

Mr MANZIE (Attorney-General): Mr Speaker, I move that so much of standing orders be suspended as would prevent the Companies (Trustees and Personal Representatives) Amendment Bill (Serial 21) passing through all stages at these sittings.

Motion agreed to.

COMPANIES (TRUSTEES AND PERSONAL REPRESENTATIVES) AMENDMENT BILL (Serial 21)

Continued from page 487.

Mr BELL (MacDonnell): Mr Speaker, I understand the circumstances under which the government is forced to seek urgency for this particular bill and I appreciated the extensive briefing that I was able to receive from the Department of Law with respect to it. Let me say that I know considerably more about trustee companies since the briefing than I knew beforehand. Not only do I know more about trustee companies but I have made a personal resolution to change my current intestate status.

For the benefit of honourable members, the circumstances under which this bill comes before us concern changes in the categories of companies, consequent upon the Territory's subscription to the National Companies and Securities Scheme. The wording of section 8 of the Companies (Trustees and Personal Representatives) Act implies 2 classes of companies: Territory companies and foreign companies. I am sure that the xenophobia we frequently associate with government deliberations in this Assembly has absolutely nothing to do with that bipartite distinction. It is now to be replaced by a tripartite distinction under which there will be 3 sorts of companies: Territory companies, recognised companies and foreign companies. The amendment introduces the reference to recognised companies.

I appreciate the circumstances under which the government requires the urgent passage of this bill, because there is a company which is neither a Territory company nor a foreign company under the act's current wording. The amendment is necessary so that this particular company can be registered as a trustee company in the Northern Territory. To a layman in legal matters, provisions such as these are dry as dust, but it is probably worth while pointing out in the context of a second-reading speech that this one relates to personal wills, which are very important to most of us. I believe that 3 trustee companies are registered currently in the Territory under the act, with this fourth in the pipeline.

People may choose to use a trustee company, the family solicitor, a friend or relation, or the public trustee as their executor. In case the speeches and deliberations in this Assembly ever see the light of day, I think it is probably worth placing on record that, whether they be princes or paupers, people should make out a will. Within my own electorate, where there is a relatively low level of literacy, I frequently come across circumstances where people are not aware of testamentary arrangements and possibilities, and it is important for those administrative processes to be effected as smoothly as possible. Even for people of modest means, a will is of considerable importance. With that little bit of advice, Mr Deputy Speaker, I take pleasure in advising the Assembly that the opposition supports both the bill and the requirement for urgency that the government seeks.

Mr MANZIE (Attorney-General): Mr Deputy Speaker, I would like to record my thanks to the honourable shadow spokesman on legal affairs for his cooperation in the processing of this bill.

Motion agreed to; bill read a second time.

Mr MANZIE (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.

SUSPENSION OF STANDING ORDERS

Mr MANZIE (Attorney-General): Mr Deputy Speaker, I move that so much of standing orders be suspended as would prevent the Statute Law Revision Bill 1987 (Serial 19) passing through all stages at these sittings.

Motion agreed to.

STATUTE LAW REVISION BILL (Serial 19)

Continued from 6 May 1987.

Mr BELL (MacDonnell): Mr Deputy Speaker, the opposition supports the particular requirements in this Statute Law Revision Bill. Like most Statute Law Revisions Bills that come before this Assembly, it is a real dog's breakfast.

Perhaps it is worth placing on record the reason the government sought urgency for its passage. I am not sure whether the minister did that in his second-reading speech or not, but I believe the chief reason is that the departmental reorganisations required it. Honourable members will note, in their copy of the schedules to the bill, that the phrases to be omitted are basically the names of departments and positions that are no longer applicable: for example, the Department of Health has been taken over by the Department of Health and Community Services. By and large, such phrases have been supplanted by the phrase 'the department primarily responsible under the minister for the administration of this act'. The opposition has no problem with legislation being tidied up in that way.

Throughout the schedule, there are similar requirements. Not all of them are to do with the departmental reorganisation, but I appreciate the briefing I was able to receive from Parliamentary Counsel. Having explained the circumstances of each of the amendments to my colleagues, I am happy to report that we support them, particularly the amendments to the Work Health Act which are essentially to tidy up provisions, as is appropriate in a statute law revision bill. There are amendments that tidy up particular legislation.

With those few comments, Mr Deputy Speaker, I am happy to report that the opposition supports the bill.

Mr MANZIE (Attorney-General): Mr Deputy Speaker, again I would like to thank the shadow spokesman for matters of law for his cooperation in regard to the passage of this bill. The bill responds to changes consequent on the administrative arrangements that have been made recently, the repeal of the Workers' Compensation Act and the commencement of the Work Health Act. I would like to record my thanks to the honourable member.

Motion agreed to; bill read a second time.

Mr MANZIE (Attorney-General)(by leave): Mr Deputy Speaker, I move that the bill be now read a third time.

Motion agreed to; bill read a third time.

ADJOURNMENT

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

Mr Deputy Speaker, tonight I would like to compliment the honourable Leader of the Opposition for once again proving to all and sundry that he suffers from foot and mouth disease. In this Assembly last night, true to his past and present form, he gave a very liberal spray in a burst against the CLP-endorsed candidate Mr Peter Paroulakis. In fact, the Leader of the Opposition chose to attack Mr Paroulakis purely on the basis, I might add, that the ALP's endorsed candidate, centralian Warren Snowden, had at various times during these sittings come under attack from the Chief Minister for his prominent left-wing views and his avid undermining of the Northern Territory government's position in Canberra and other places. If one compares the views of Mr Paroulakis and Mr Snowden, there is no doubt in my mind as to the choice the Northern Territory people would make and that choice will possibly be made in the not-too-distant future. Without offering any proof of his facts, stating only that he had been advised - he had heard a rumour or received a telephone call while he was half asleep ...

Mr Smith: First hand information.

Mr HANRAHAN: No, you said that later on.

The Leader of the Opposition condemned Mr Paroulakis, saying that he is a member of the H.R. Nicholls Society, and was one of the original members of that society in the Northern Territory. Mr Deputy Speaker, a simple telephone call to Mr Paroulakis shows that to be an absolute mistruth.

Next, after telling us that he had been advised of this in a place unknown by persons unknown, the Leader of the Opposition went on to say: 'I am shocked and, indeed, horrified that the CLP could preselect somebody who, on his own admission, was a member of the H.R. Nicholls Society'. It was not a bad sort of extension by the Leader of the Opposition. He went from being advised somewhere, place and persons unknown, to 'on his own admission'.

I am sure Mr Paroulakis can defend himself, and I believe he has put out a statement today doing just that. However, once again we have seen the Leader of the Opposition taking some little detail he has heard somewhere and blowing it up. If he was advised about that, he should do something about his advisers, because the performance of himself and his party during these sittings has been nothing short of woeful.

Mr Deputy Speaker, I will pick up the 1 serious point in what the Leader of the Opposition had to say last night and, regardless of how the Leader of the Opposition wishes to address the matter in the future, in my view, he has slighted the Greek community greatly. He said that the appointment of Mr Paroulakis as honorary Greek Consul in the Northern Territory community is something that just should not continue. In fact, in the view of the Leader of the Opposition, Mr Paroulakis stands condemned because he is a CLP

candidate and chooses to remain as honorary Greek Consul. Let me assure the Leader of the Opposition that I am aware of immense support for Mr Paroulakis to continue as Greek Consul.

Mr Smith: Yes?

Mr HANRAHAN: Yes, Mr Deputy Speaker, immense support. In fact, I have accompanied Mr Paroulakis to several social functions here in Darwin and seen his popularity at first hand. What concerns me is that the Leader of the Opposition can choose to denigrate a person who is very popular in the Northern Territory, particularly in his own community, without one skerrick of proof and, in the same breath, say to this Assembly that the Greek community does not want Mr Paroulakis to continue as the honorary Greek Consul.

Mr Smith: I am not sure that I said that.

Mr HANRAHAN: Mr Deputy Speaker, that in itself is an untruth. Mr Paroulakis is an honest man and a man who is very much aware of his responsibilities to the Greek community and he has had ...

Mr Smith: Is he going to resign?

Mr HANRAHAN: ... several discussions with representatives of the Greek government in Canberra as to his position, and as to whether he should continue as honorary Greek Consul representing the Greek community in Darwin, while he is an elected member. He has been assured by those in high places that it is quite correct and approval has been granted. Mr Peter Paroulakis will be journeying to Canberra within the next 2 weeks and will spend his stay in Canberra with the Greek Ambassador. That should put beyond dispute the standing of Mr Paroulakis, not only in the Darwin community generally but more particularly in the Greek community.

The Leader of the Opposition said that Mr Paroulakis virtually stands condemned by remaining as Greek Consul because this will politicise the position and the Greek community does not get involved in politics. That is a woeful statement because Mr Paroulakis has proved his popularity and has consulted the Greek Ambassador on the propriety of his actions.

Mr Smith: Because he is not in politics. You can do better than this.

Mr HANRAHAN: I think the Leader of the Opposition is taking a great deal for granted because he suggested last night that Mr Paroulakis' continued appointment as honorary Greek Consul would open up great wounds of division in the Greek community. Any community has members with varying political views and, if the Leader of the Opposition does not seek to politicise the issue, he has condemned himself by raising it in this Assembly in the first place. I notice a bemused and puzzled look on the Leader of the Opposition's face. I can only direct him to last night's Hansard. He was one of the first speakers in the adjournment debate ...

Mr Smith: I was one of the last!

Mr HANRAHAN: ... and I am sure he will see the context of what I am saying.

The other issue that I wish to raise in tonight's adjournment debate is something on which I have issued a press release today. The historic agreement concerning the wilderness lodge at Kings Canyon west of Alice

Springs has finally been signed for an amount of approximately \$12m. It took place in 3 cities: Darwin, Alice Springs and Melbourne. I treat the signing of the lease as something of special importance because of several factors attached to it.

First and foremost, it is evidence of the success of the Northern Territory government's far-sighted vision in establishing the catalyst for the development of tourism in the Territory, and I mention such elements as the Yulara Tourist Village and the Sheraton Hotels, because we are seeing very rapid development by private enterprise of these sorts of facilities throughout the Territory. As I mentioned in the Address-in-Reply debate, we have over 60 developments in the planning stages or about to commence development, conservatively estimated at a value of around \$300m.

Mr Deputy Speaker, this \$12m project has no underwriting or support from the Northern Territory government. Of course, the government has responsibility for the provision of water and for part of a service road within the park boundaries. However, the development stands on its own and, hopefully, the first phases will come on stream early next year. In addition, the 2 main companies with shareholdings in the venture represent the interests of Bill King, who is known to the tourist industry not only in the Territory but Australia-wide and, more particularly, Aboriginal interests through the Central Land Council. I think that will be very important in the future of the development of the resort. Territorians are well aware of the responsible attitude shown by this government in developing the resort at Kings Canyon because we were not under any obligation to enter into the negotiations.

The ongoing management of the park will be by a majority of the Aboriginal people involved. There are 3 living areas within the park and the orientation of the park will depend largely on the Aboriginal experience. It will be something new for visitors to central Australia. We have been prepared to bend over backwards to encourage these Aboriginal people and to assist them in becoming shareholders in this project. I am very pleased and proud to say that the agreements have been signed and we expect the first stages of the resort to be coming on stream for the latter part of next year's tourist season. I look forward to many other developments involving Aboriginal people in future years and to seeing them investing funds and managing facilities because, unquestionably, one of the biggest elements in the future of the Territory tourist industry will be the successful involvement of Aboriginal people.

Mr BELL (MacDonnell): Mr Speaker, there are a couple of matters I wish to address in the adjournment debate. Before I go on to them I will just pick up a couple of comments made by the member for Flynn in respect of the candidature for the House of Representatives. I wish to place on public record how desperately important this matter is. We now seem to have Paul Who? representing us in Canberra, because we have not heard of or seen him for some time. For a chap who took the job on the loudly-proclaimed basis that it was the most important political job in the Northern Territory, we have seen and heard precious little of him in the time since he departed for Queensland.

The comments of the member for Flynn have to be seen in the partisan context in which they were offered. I do not intend making any further comment except to suggest that there was an element of absolute absurdity in what he had to say. The Northern Territory requires good representation in Canberra and I believe that that will be offered by successful Labor candidates after the next federal election, whenever that may be. In the same

way as the Labor representatives in this Assembly provide backbone against the quivering jelly of the government, I believe that the Territory's interest will be best represented in Canberra by the successful candidature of Labor nominees.

Mr Hatton: Which factions will they belong to?

Mr BELL: I pick up the interjection from the Chief Minister and his gormless reference to factions within the Labor party, the socialist left, the centre left, centre unity and so on. They are hardly unique to the Labor Party.

Mr Hatton: They sure are. There is no socialist left on our side of politics.

Mr BELL: People who live in glass houses should not throw stones. It is about time the Chief Minister told us not only what faction he belongs to, but which party he belongs to. Is he actually a Liberal member or is he a National Party member?

Mr Hatton: CLP.

Mr BELL: He tells me he is a member of the CLP, but the fact of the matter is he darts off to Canberra every week. One week he goes to a Liberal Party meeting and the next he goes to a National Party meeting.

Mr Hatton: That is right.

Mr BELL: What about faction meetings?

Mr Hatton: They did not invite me to the Labor Party meeting.

Mr BELL: Does he line up with Ian McPhee and the Wets or does he line up with Johnny Howard and the Dries?

Mr Hanrahan: Who got him going anyway? We want to go home early.

Mr BELL: I appreciate that the Deputy Chief Minister finds this risible. He probably has not quite caught up with the national debate over factions in the Liberal Party. He probably thinks that John Elliot plays for Carlton.

Mr Hanrahan: I'm a Collingwood man. Don't insult me!

Mr BELL: However, this is not the subject I wish to address in this evening's adjournment debate. I wish to hark back to a couple of questions I have asked of the government during these sittings. They were both perspicacious questions. One was answered relatively directly, if shamefacedly, and the other was answered obliquely, at best, and equally shamefacedly.

The one that was answered directly was my question this morning about the government's representation on the Ayers Rock Board of Management. I offer my congratulations to the Deputy Chief Minister on his nomination. I also offer my congratulations to the Chief Minister because I believe that, at last, we have a government in place in the Northern Territory that takes these issues seriously and decides not to seek partisan political advantage from questions of Aboriginal traditional ownership and Aboriginal participation in the tourist industry. The Deputy Chief Minister discussed the King's Canyon

development today and my fulsome regards for the government's efforts there are already on the record of this Assembly. I place them on record again with respect to the appointment of the member for Flynn to the Ayers Rock Board of Management.

The deliberations of the board of management are particularly difficult. I venture to say that, at times, they are even more taxing than the deliberations of this parliament. Fortunately, the deliberations of this parliament are always conducted in English, my first language. For the most part, the deliberations of the Ayers Rock Board of Management are conducted in Pitjantjatjara, which is not my first language. Keeping track of the debates and the issues that come before the board of management requires a considerable effort of concentration.

In passing, I should mention that 1 of the key issues that has been taxing the board has been: what activities are appropriate within the national park? Certain sections of the media have decided to highlight areas where there have been difficulties. A recent example was the Superwalk, which was subsequently approved.

Mr Speaker, you will recall the publicity that has been given to various difficulties with filming at Ayers Rock over the last few years. Much of that publicity was manufactured by the then Chief Minister, Hon Paul Everingham. I point out the good offices in this regard of the member for Araluen in his former position of Chairman of the Tourist Commission. I recall a particular occasion when the member for Araluen bent over backwards to ensure that film crews and the community at Ayers Rock were able to work together. Such cooperation was frequently frustrated by the negative attitudes that emanated from Northern Territory government administrations at that time.

I offer my congratulations to the Chief Minister on his nomination of the Deputy Chief Minister to the board of management. I appreciate this change of heart. Far be it from me to make political mileage out of that. I think it is a great day for the Territory that the Territory government is taking up its position on the board of management. I am sure it augurs well for Ayers Rock and for the people who visit it and for the Territory in general.

A far more contentious issue is the question of nuclear waste facilities and their placement in the Territory. Yesterday morning, I asked the Chief Minister a question about nuclear waste disposal facilities. I referred him to the rambling speculations of the member for Karama and reports emanating ...

Mr Hatton: You didn't ask me.

Mr BELL: In fact, the question was directed to the honourable but absent Minister for Mines and Energy who, with characteristic mindless energy, devoted himself to avoiding it. The report emanating from his department seems to site a possible nuclear waste facility bordering on my electorate and that of the member for Stuart. We put our heads together over the idea, and we do not reckon there are too many votes in it. The politics of nuclear energy are multifarious. Whereas the people who write editorials in the NT News concentrate solely on development, digging holes in the ground and getting rid of the stuff as quickly as possible from Australia, I appreciate the concern the government has in starting to take the overall nuclear energy cycle into consideration.

Many people, including the government, have adopted a mindless attitude to nuclear energy around the world and the part that the Northern Territory plays in it. They adopt the absolutely mindless attitude that, once we have identified the resource and once we have identified a market for it, we dig it up and sell it as quickly as possible, and the devil take the hindmost. The day and age when people on 1 side of the world could carry out some economic activity without being aware of its ramifications elsewhere around the world went out with the pedal radio. I mean that literally, Mr Speaker. Once people can communicate with each other instantaneously, it is not possible to look at any social issue in the Territory or elsewhere in any other than an international context. Nowhere is that more clearly seen than in the case of the nuclear energy industry.

Mr Speaker, I suggest that the debate has moved on a bit if we have the Minister for Mines and Energy at least conceding that we cannot consider mining uranium without considering, in the same breath, the disposal of nuclear waste. That is an advance. I really do not regard the meanderings from the member for Karama and the response from the Minister for Mines and Energy as particularly constructive contributions to the debate, but I concede that they have moved on somewhat.

However, I remind the Chief Minister and the Minister for Mines and Energy about the backflip that they have had to do in respect of the mooted toxic waste facility in the member for Barkly's electorate. I will not deal with the backflip the member for Barkly has had to do on the subject.

Mr Hatton: It was more of a corkscrew.

Mr Hanrahan: It was incredible. I thought it was a triple, double, back somersault.

Mr BELL: I suggest it scarcely behoves the Deputy Chief Minister or his boss to interject because, along with their Minister for Mines and Energy, they were very actively trying to persuade the citizenry of Tennant Creek that the best thing for Tennant Creek was a toxic waste facility.

Mr Hatton: Get your facts right.

Mr Hanrahan: Wrong again.

Mr BELL: I hear the interjections but, at about this time last year or a bit later, we had the minister telling the people of Tennant Creek that they had nothing to worry about because there was nothing wrong with a toxic waste facility. Two weeks later, as smooth as silk, the Chief Minister said that, if the people of Tennant Creek did not want a toxic waste facility, they did not have to have it. That is pretty close to a 180° turn. If it is not 180°, at least it is 150° or 160°.

Mr Hatton: It would be if you got the first part right.

Mr BELL: Mr Speaker, if this question of nuclear waste disposal facilities is to be introduced into the public debate in the Northern Territory, it should be done in a slightly more meaningful way than that undertaken by the member for Karama. My question yesterday was not answered by the Minister for Mines and Energy. I did not hear any government members leaping up in the adjournment debate and saying: 'Yes! We will have it in my electorate'. They still have their chance.

Mr HARRIS (Port Darwin): Mr Deputy Speaker, I would like to touch on 2 matters today. The first issue should be a major concern to the Australian people and the second is an electorate matter which is of concern to me.

The issue which relates to the national scene is the Australia Card. Those 3 words represent the federal Labor government's answer to tax evasion and social welfare fraud. So strong have political feelings run on that 3-word issue, that it threatened supply and almost precipitated a general election. But the moment passed, and the Australia Card faded from the country's headlines, leaving the majority of Australians none the wiser. How many of them knew what the fuss was all about? How many of them understood politicians' claims that the card would endanger every citizen's privacy? When was the whole complicated subject unravelled and explained in terms that everyone could understand? Never!

The Australia Card has now returned to the headlines. It lurks as a very real threat to the liberty of this country's citizens, and I am surprised that more has not been said about it because the federal Labor government has assured us that, when it goes to the polls, it will use the Australia Card as a major election issue. When that time comes it will be vitally important that every single person understands its implications because, if it ever becomes a fact of Australian life, every single person will be affected by it.

Since we live in the age of the plastic identity card, very few of us would object to carrying another card around. The federal government's proposed card would carry your name, your signature and identification number, and the card's expiry date. Your personal information would be accessible to 3 agencies: the Health Insurance Commission, which would operate the program and use the Australia card for Medicare purposes; the Australian Taxation Office, which would use the card for taxation purposes; and the Department of Social Security, which would use the card for benefit purposes. The federal government insists that only basic identifying information would be transferred between the Australia Card register and any 1 of these 3 agencies. That sounds harmless enough, particularly when the government adds that there will be no requirement to carry the Australia Card.

Why, then, the outraged claims that this would be the beginning of a Big Brother era? Time and again the federal government has insisted that a watchdog body, the Data Protection Agency, would ensure that there would be no infringement of civil liberties. I quote from the Hon Paul Keating's statement of 14 November 1986: 'The Data Protection Agency will also administer privacy safeguards in relation to the protection of personal information contained in computer banks'. But the Australian Computer Society disagrees, economists disagree, bank managers disagree, and leader writers of the country's most reputable newspapers disagree. They disagree not only on the question of civil liberties, but with the basic assumption that the Australia Card would save this country billions of dollars now lost through tax evasion and social welfare fraud while costing initially \$33.5m. The most likely scenario is that the Australia Card will cost \$3000m over 10 years. It will involve employing at least 2150 public servants and additional payroll tax to the tune of some \$51m. And for what purpose?

The 1970s are behind us. That decade of riotous rorts and massive tax evasion is a thing of the past. The resultant judicial machinery is in place to capture any big league tax evaders. So why are we throwing money away on a dubious new system? Why not use the \$127m involved to employ smart tax lawyers to catch any evaders? Frank Costigan himself has said that an Australia Card would have done little to inhibit the organised crime he

investigated. There are reports that, even now, organised crime is establishing false names in government records to ensure that those names can be used for Australia Cards.

The federal government claims, and I quote from its original submission, that: 'Evidence has shown that fraud against the welfare system is perpetrated through the adoption of false identities or through the misreporting of financial and other circumstances'. In fact, Mr Speaker, the social welfare fraud rate is reckoned at less than 0.5% of the total welfare bill. The department itself admits that most fraud is the result of overpayment, not false identity.

How would the cash economy be affected if the Australia Card were put in place? Does anyone in Australia really believe that gardeners, handymen and fruit pickers would accept that they could no longer be paid in cash? Of course not. The whole concept is badly conceived and, I believe, unworkable.

Of course there are dole bludgers out there in the community. We all know that, and it is infuriating to know that we are working hard and paying taxes to support them. But it would be even more infuriating to know that we were paying even more taxes to support a system like the Australia Card, which would create nothing more productive than another bureaucracy. In terms of preventing tax evasion and social welfare fraud, the Australia Card would be a monumental waste of money, one which was originally opposed by 5 federal government ministers and many Labor backbenchers.

Even more distressing than the money-wasting aspects of this card are its likely effects on individual privacy and civil liberties. Paul Keating has assured us repeatedly that there will be no requirement to carry the Australia Card around, but let me now refer to paragraph 24 of the summary of the government's submission on the Australia Card, which proposes that the card be mandatory. It is to be mandatory for financial transactions, including: making overseas remittances, engaging in real estate transactions, holding safety deposit boxes and company shares, and identification of investors in futures transactions. It would be mandatory for employment purposes, for obtaining Commonwealth benefits, allowances, pensions, subsidies or other income support. It would be mandatory for obtaining an Australian passport or registering for unemployment with the CES. The card would be used to assist with identification of illegal immigrants and, I quote, 'statistical and epidemiological purposes'. Ask yourself how it would be used to further the science of epidemics, Mr Speaker. We are not told.

The federal government informs us that we would not be forced to carry the Australia Card but, and this must be the understatement of the century, 'some individuals may choose to carry their card, at most times, as a matter of convenience'. This is in circumstances where the Labor government would make it virtually impossible for us to sneeze without the card. Yes, we might find it a matter of convenience. But what would happen if we refused? Let me quote from paragraph 25 of the submission. 'Persons who do not produce an Australia Card or a number would, according to the circumstances, either be prohibited from undertaking the financial transaction, be taxed at the highest marginal rate, be denied access to the benefits or entitlements or service, or be subject to other sanctions as appropriate'. Other sanctions as appropriate. Does that phrase send a shiver down your spine, Mr Speaker? It does mine.

Paul Keating claims that his Data Protection Agency would safeguard our privacy. How can he make such a claim? The potential for abuse of the

Australia Card is enormous and the federal government's insistence on introducing it becomes even more dangerously lunatic when it is realised that even that government doubts the card's validity. I take my final quotation from paragraph 31 of the government's submission on the Australia Card: 'Because of the shortcomings in the quality and the availability of data and the inherent problems in assessing projects over many years into the future, the cost-benefit results should not be interpreted in too precise a fashion'. Why not? How dare the federal government attempt to impose this money-wasting, Big Brother system on the people of Australia!

On 24 October 1986, the National Assembly of Tanzania passed a bill making it compulsory for all residents of Tanzania to carry an identity card. I refer honourable members to 'The Parliamentarian' of January 1987, particularly parliamentary reports in that particular edition. These refer to identity cards and state that, on 24 October, the National Assembly passed a bill for the registration and identification of persons resident in Tanzania. Carrying the card would be voluntary, but officials could arrest those who did not comply with the law. Does that sinister gobbledegook, Mr Speaker, remind you of some Canberra-inspired legislation? You do not have to carry the card but, if you do not, you will be arrested. In Tanzania, MPs protested about the violation of human rights and the danger of turning the country into a police state, but the bill was passed. Does Australia want to become another Tanzania? I think that is an issue that needs to be debated in this Assembly. It is a major concern to people who have approached me on the matter.

Mr Speaker, the other issue that I wish to refer to briefly is a concern that I have about the activities of people who are occupying a building at the end of Mitchell Street. That premises is just opposite the University College of the Northern Territory. There is a shop underneath. Above, the premises are operated by COLIE, the Coalition of Low Income Earners. I have received a number of complaints in relation to the behaviour of people there and the language that emanates from those premises. It is a major concern, Mr Speaker. The students at the college are being abused. Many women attend the University College and it is not right that anyone be put through a tirade of abusive language when he or she comes across to the shop to obtain some refreshments.

The shop is frequented also by many people who live in that particular area. I can recall its history as, no doubt, can the Chief Minister. As the member for Port Darwin, I gave support to the establishment of a facility which would help those people who were finding it difficult to obtain accommodation. I was aware at the time that, if the place was not properly controlled, it would cause concern to my constituents. I accept that the facility was originally intended to house people who were unemployed or experiencing difficulties. The understanding was that those people would continue to try to obtain housing. I think all members would support such a facility being available. The problem is that, unless such places are controlled, there are major problems.

Such problems make it very difficult for the government to set up facilities to help people in need of help. I will always support government action along those lines, but I must say that the activities being carried out at that place at present leave much to be desired. I hope that the management of COLIE ensures that the place is controlled because such places are needed and are supported. Unless the management picks up, I will be taking this matter further.

Mrs PADGHAM-PURICH (Koolpinyah): Mr Speaker, this afternoon I would like to take to task the Chief Minister and other ministers who have confidence in sporting administration. The Chief Minister often extols the virtues of participation in sport. He has told us that he is interested in swimming and, indeed, he is an excellent swimmer. He plays rugby and other sports. The Minister for Health and Community Services has extolled the virtues of sport also as have previous ministers holding areas in portfolio.

Mr Speaker, despite the empty words from the Chief Minister and those ministers regarding the wish of the Northern Territory government to support sporting ventures and sporting groups in the Northern Territory, this appears to apply to all areas except the Darwin rural area. I have in mind particularly the Humpty Doo Golf Club.

Mr Coulter: Oh, come on! What do you know about the Humpty Doo Golf Club?

Mrs PADGHAM-PURICH: The Chief Minister has said many times that there is no distinction in the way people in different localities are treated by the Northern Territory government. Again, I will say that the people that belong to the Humpty Doo Golf Club have not been treated in the same way as have members of a neighbouring golf club and other golf clubs in the Northern Territory.

The Chief Minister has stressed, as have ministers who have held the Youth, Sport and Recreation portfolio, the importance of sport and recreation in people's lives. Clearly, this applies to everybody except the people in the rural area who want to play golf at the Humpty Doo Golf Club. The Chief Minister has said in various speeches that people of all ages who play sport will receive help or consideration from his government. Obviously, this applies to other parts of the Northern Territory, but it does not apply to the rural area and the people who want to play golf at the Humpty Doo Golf Club. The Chief Minister extolled the virtues of community self-help when he spoke in the Address-in-Reply debate. His remarks were directed, it seems, to every part of the Territory except the rural area where the people play golf at what was known as the Humpty Doo Golf Club and is now the Litchfield Golf Club.

I will elaborate a little further. The golf club in the rural area has been operating for 3 years and, during that time, has been actively supported by its members who play golf regularly every weekend. It started out on a privately-owned 5-acre block at Humpty Doo. It is not some little fly-by-night affair. It has reciprocal rights of play with the Darwin Golf Club, the Jabiru Golf Club and the Palmerston Golf Club.

Last year, the members of this club applied to the Minister for Youth, Sport and Recreation for a grant. They did not request a definite amount; they would have been happy with anything that they received. I have to be fair, Mr Deputy Speaker. They received 160 acres of Crown land, which had previously been sand-mined, to convert into a golf course, under certain conditions. I believe they have the propensity to convert this into a Crown lease perpetual in 3 years' time, provided certain development is undertaken. Despite the fact that no money was granted to the club by the Northern Territory government, the club has purchased 2 demountables at a value of about \$7200. It cost \$1400 to transport them from Jabiru to the block. The club has held numerous working bees and members have even started to play on the new course at Humpty Doo.

Mr Deputy Speaker, the club was incorporated in 1986 and, when the application was made for a grant, it had 150 financial members. Now we come to the comparison with a neighbouring golf club, the Palmerston Golf Club, and all will be revealed to the member for Palmerston.

Mr Coulter: I happen to know the patron of it.

Mrs PADGHAM-PURICH: Yes, I am coming to that too. A fine fellow in Palmerston, isn't he?

Mr Deputy Speaker, this is the information I have about the Palmerston Golf Club and, if I am wrong its patron, the Treasurer, can tell me. I believe the building and grounds were developed originally by Kerns, a development company which had something to do with the development of Palmerston. A lessee was put into the golf club and it was his job to run it, and to look after the grounds and machinery and so on. The Palmerston Golf Club was run privately before 1 January 1987, and has been incorporated only since that date. I believe it has about 200 members.

The 2 clubs are, therefore, comparable. Membership is roughly the same. Palmerston Golf Club was incorporated about 6 months after the rural area golf club, but it started out with everything that was needed: a clubhouse, greens and everything else. I understand the Palmerston Golf Club is already on a Crown lease in perpetuity. When the Humpty Doo Golf Club applied for a sports grant, it asked for no definite amount. As I said, anything would have been welcomed. However, the Minister for Community Development said that he could not give money to the rural club because the government was committed to helping the Palmerston Golf Club.

Now, Mr Deputy Speaker, if that is not pork-barrelling at its cynical worst, I do not know what is. It is quite obvious that all this happened before the last election in the Northern Territory. It is also quite obvious that the CLP government was a wee bit worried about the seat in Berrimah, which became the seat of Palmerston. So pork-barrelling was the result. Mr Deputy Speaker, I understand ...

Mr Coulter: You used to do a fair bit of it in Koolpinyah once.

Mrs PADGHAM-PURICH: Mr Deputy Speaker, I understand \$120 000 was given to the Palmerston Golf Club to pay out the lessee, who was then in charge of the club, and to repay the Commonwealth Bank. It was planned to give the Palmerston Golf Club \$20 000, of which \$12 400 has been paid already for immediate remedial work on the greens. If the club has not already received it, it is planned that it will receive \$15 000 for a greenkeeper and maintenance in 1986-87. In 1987-88, it is planned that a sum of \$30 000 will be given to the Palmerston Golf Club for administrative expenses and to pay the greenkeeper's salary and maintenance costs. The club hopes to be self-supporting in 2 to 3 years.

Mr Deputy Speaker, I ask you to compare the circumstances of those 2 golf clubs.

Mr Coulter: One is in your electorate and one is in mine.

Mrs PADGHAM-PURICH: As the Treasurer has said, 1 is obviously in his electorate and 1 is obviously in mine. That is quite right. But it is also quite true that 1 is in an electorate that the CLP was very worried about before the last election. It did its darnedest - and I must say it was successful to get its candidate in.

That is not the end of the pork-barrelling in the Palmerston electorate. Before the last election, the Treasurer mentioned that the government would build a private hospital in Palmerston, with 20 beds, including a 24-hour primary care unit, an x-ray machine and paramedical support. I am not going to comment on the private hospital, the primary health care unit or the x-ray facility, but I am going to comment briefly on the paramedical support that he was promising to the people of Palmerston. As some members know, I have a relative employed by St John Ambulance, but this information was not given to me by her. It was given to me officially by a St John Ambulance officer.

Mr Deputy Speaker, when one talks of paramedical support one synonymously speaks of St John Ambulance. There is no other organisation in the Northern Territory whose staff is as highly trained in paramedical support and services as those of the St John Ambulance Brigade. For those honourable members who do not know what paramedical support is and what it entails, I will briefly repeat the information that was given to me.

Paramedical training is undertaken by certain select St John Ambulance officers who receive special training in advanced life support techniques and associated patient management. A paramedic is a person with those skills; it is not some trendy term applied to intensive health care. It also entails training in cardiac massage, electric stimulation and intubation, all of which apply particularly to heart patients. It involves 3 weeks of solid theory work, 3 weeks experience in a hospital and 3 months road supervision. St John workers are the only people who do this. There are 2 paramedic cars in the Darwin area. One is a basic station wagon which has been extensively outfitted at a cost of between \$30 000 and \$40 000. If you consider that the cost of a cardiac monitor alone is \$9000, you can see where the money has been spent.

If the Treasurer wants a special paramedical unit in Palmerston, I think he is looking at very extravagant sort of health care. I have been told that the 2 paramedic cars in Darwin are sufficient for the Darwin area. There is not necessarily a 24-hour service. There is a crew of 8 which operates ambulance services on paid duty from 6 am to 6 pm. After 6 pm the volunteers take over. During the day time, there is always a paramedic in the crew and this person has general training also. I am not saying that there is not a paramedic on duty between the hours of 6 pm and 6 am. My information is that 1 of the volunteers has also trained and is quite an experienced paramedic. That shows that somebody is putting the interest of the community before their own self-interest.

Mr Coulter: And where are they stationed? In Casuarina or somewhere. They will be a lot of help to the people of Berry Springs.

Mrs PADGHAM-PURICH: For the Treasurer's information, if there is a need for an ambulance to go to Palmerston, there is a quick response. If paramedic care is necessary, the patient is transported in and met by the paramedics on the way into the hospital. All St John supervisors and senior staff have paramedic training, although there is not a specific unit to deal with paramedical problems. There is no continuous call for paramedic services from St John, but that organisation provides highly-skilled and second-to-none service of which we are proud.

The Treasurer and member for Palmerston said that he will provide paramedical support in Palmerston. Is he going to set up a new paramedical unit or is he going to give St John an enormous grant to set it up? It takes more than peanuts to set up such a unit; it takes a great deal of money.

Before spending money, you have to find out whether the services already available are sufficient or whether change is necessary. I would like the member to tell me the exact nature of these paramedical services that he is promising to Palmerston. I am not against paramedical groups and I believe St John provides an excellent service which is second to none. I want to know where the money is to come from. We know the member for Palmerston is the Treasurer and I ask him where the money is to come from.

Mr Coulter: It is a private hospital. Do you understand what a private hospital is?

Mrs PADGHAM-PURICH: I know what a private hospital is and we are going to talk about that later.

Mr SPEAKER: Honourable members, I will be grateful for the cooperation of the Assembly in concluding the adjournment debate at approximately 4.40 pm. Since I informed honourable members earlier, I have been advised that His Honour the Administrator will now receive me for the presentation of the Address-in-Reply at 5.00pm. We are due at His Honour's Residence at Government House in a few minutes and interjections will delay that.

Mrs PADGHAM-PURICH: Mr Speaker, in response to your call, I will complete my remarks.

Mr SPEAKER: Honourable members, as I previously advised the Assembly, I will present the Address-in-Reply to His Honour the Administrator at Government House this afternoon. His Honour will now be able to receive me at 5 pm and I invite honourable members to accompany me. The sitting of the Assembly is suspended until the ringing of the bells.

Sitting suspended.

Mr Speaker Vale resumed the Chair.

ADDRESS-IN-REPLY

Mr SPEAKER: Honourable members, I have to inform the Assembly that this day, accompanied by honourable members, I waited on His Honour the Administrator and presented to him the Address-in-Reply to the speech by His Honour on the occasion of the opening of the Assembly, which was agreed to on 5 May. His Honour was pleased to make the following reply:

Mr Speaker,

Thank you for your Address-in-Reply which you have presented to me. It will afford me pleasure to convey to Her Most Gracious Majesty the Queen, the message of loyalty of the Legislative Assembly of the Northern Territory of Australia to which the address gives expression.

Eric Eugene Johnston,
Administrator

ADJOURNMENT

Mr SMITH (Opposition Leader): Mr Speaker, I rise tonight to pay a brief tribute to a former member of this Assembly, the former member for Arafura, Mr Bob Collins.

I was fortunate enough to spend 5 years in this Assembly with the former member for Arafura. I say 'fortunate' because, in my view and I would expect in the view of most objective members, he has been the outstanding parliamentarian of recent Northern Territory parliamentary history. He has left an indelible mark on this Assembly and the number of things that he managed to do in the Assembly that will live in people's memories and contribute to the folklore of this Assembly is quite amazing.

For example, very early in his parliamentary career, he ran a 1½ hour debate on 1 particular matter spread over 6 consecutive adjournments. When the government, in its wisdom, gave him an unlimited opportunity to talk on land rights, he spoke for 4½ hours. I detected that he drew breath at least twice during that period.

There is no doubt that his contribution to this Assembly has been outstanding. He had an instinctive feel for parliament, both for the rougher side, where there is no doubt that he excelled and, more importantly, for the Westminster system and the parliamentary tradition. He played a considerable role in furthering that tradition in this Assembly. He was a very zealous protector of the Westminster tradition. He worked very hard in this Assembly to ensure that we followed the Westminster system - of course, upgraded and modified to reflect the times and place in which we live. On very many occasions, by the force of his personality and the strength of his arguments, he dominated the debate in the Assembly.

Mr Speaker, I think it is fair to say that the Assembly is much poorer for his absence. Of course, he has the opportunity to go on to bigger and better things, to take on the big fish in the big pool down there in that cold southern capital. I have no doubt that, unlike certain other ex-members who have attempted to make the transition and failed, he will make the transition because he has those instinctive parliamentary abilities that will enable him not only to survive but to flourish in the Senate.

I am sure that we will look forward to his contributions in the Senate. Many people who have witnessed his performance in this Assembly will make a point of going to the Senate when they are in Canberra to see him deliver what on most occasions are his quite outstanding theatrical and solid parliamentary performances. That parliament's gain will be our loss. The hour is late and I do not want to hold the Assembly up any longer, but it is important that we recognise, in a bipartisan fashion, the parting from this Assembly of an outstanding parliamentarian. In my view, Bob Collins is in the first rank.

Mr HATTON (Chief Minister): Mr Speaker, I would like to take the opportunity to join with the Leader of the Opposition in paying due tribute to Bob Collins in a totally bipartisan way.

I must pay tribute to the entertainment that Bob Collins gave me during the course of the 3 years that I was in the Assembly with him. The Leader of the Opposition berated me yesterday for my criticism of a maiden speech. I seem to remember his predecessor being somewhat less than kind with members on this side of the Assembly in respect of maiden speeches. I might say that I happened to be on the receiving end for a couple of my speeches. I remember him once baiting me for 2 days to speak on a particular topic. When I got up to speak, he left the Chamber saying, 'What the hell did I talk him into talking about this for?'

Bob Collins is one of those rare people who can speak very eloquently for very long periods of time. You think you have heard a most brilliant speech

but when you sit down to read what he said, there is nothing there. I have often said that the art of an orator is being able to say nothing over a long period of time and make it sound brilliant, and in that sense Bob Collins quite clearly is a superb orator.

Bob is a man with a fine sense of the parliament and he has a fine instinct for how to use it. He did not always do this according to the strict traditions of the last century but he was able to dress it up so that it appeared that way. I must say that I was always entertained by his presence in the Chamber and his inability to keep himself out of any debate on any subject, whether he knew anything about it or not, and to make a significant contribution, at least in terms of words.

The Leader of the Opposition referred to a couple of long speeches. I seem to remember our making the mistake on 2 occasions in the last 3 years of giving Mr Collins the right to speak beyond the normal allotted time. On both occasions, we ended up having very late nights. One of those occasions was in a debate over Mudginberri and another concerned the Lindy Chamberlain matter. He took quite an emotional interest in both.

On this side of the Assembly, we will miss him. I am sure our colleagues will look forward to his presence in Canberra, if he makes it. He will probably get a better chance to speak in the Senate than he would in the House of Representatives. Getting the Speaker's nod in those Chambers is a bit more competitive than it is here and we will look forward with interest to developments there. I am sure that, unlike the person he succeeded in nomination for the Senate, Bob Collins will at least stand up for the Northern Territory. That is more than can be said for the current Labor Senator or other previous Labor party members who have appeared in that federal Chamber.

Mr Speaker, in respect of the member for Koolpinyah and her discussions about sport, I am very proud of my participation in sport. I can advise her that I still play the odd game of rugby. Not very well, of course, but I still enjoy playing occasionally. I find it amazing that she should complain in relation to the Humpty Doo Golf Club. When I was Minister for Lands, a free grant of 168 acres of land was made to that club. Obviously, we do take a lot of interest in the rural area and have provided considerable support for the golf club in the rural area.

Mrs Padgham-Purich: Palmerston got \$100 000 plus a golf club.

Mr HATTON: Mr Speaker, the development of the golf course at Palmerston is a very good example of the benefits of using private enterprise for subdivisional development. As part of that subdivisional development, a golf course became available for the community in Palmerston. That is an object lesson in what can be done to develop facilities using the private enterprise approach. Perhaps the member for Koolpinyah would be interested in considering a program of allowing 1 acre or 0.25 acre subdivisions to be able to pay for a golf course.

Mrs Padgham-Purich: You know that is ridiculous. Don't even mention it.

Mr HATTON: Mr Speaker, we would even be prepared to allow a development similar to the Desert Springs Golf Course in Alice Springs - which is a beautiful golf course - or the Northlakes development. Both of those were developed as a consequence of housing development. There are many ways that communities can assist themselves to generate the money to afford to build golf courses. I am sure the honourable member will take that on board and

give very careful consideration to it as a means of providing finances to develop a first-class golf course in the rural area in a way that will not overly tax the very limited resources of the Northern Territory Treasury in what will be very difficult times for government.

I would remind honourable members that, between now and the next time we sit, we should start to get some picture of what sort of price Australia and the Northern Territory will be paying for the nonsensical economic policies, particularly in its early years, of the Hawke-Keating government. During the last Assembly, in a number of debates on economic matters, I alerted members to the difficulties that Australia would face as a result of the failure of the federal government, in 1984, 1985 and 1986, to address the developing economic difficulties of Australia. It has refused to do that; in economic matters, it lives in some dream world of its own making. Australia is being forced to face the harsh realities of the economic world and economic laws which are basically immutable.

Unfortunately, because the federal government allowed its spending spree to continue for so long, the price that Australia will have to pay will be far more severe than would have been the case had the warnings been heeded when they were clearly evident in 1984. We would be significantly better off now had we addressed the problems then. I recognise that the continuing Fraser years of deficit budgeting certainly were equally as bad for Australia, but at least every Commonwealth budget from federation to 1981-82 had a net surplus. A deficit developed from 1982 onwards, and it is true that a Fraser government was in power in the first of those years.

Honourable members will be aware that, at that time, the Fraser government was working very hard to take its medicine and reduce expenditure. That certainly made it unpopular with the community, an unpopularity that was mercilessly exploited by the dream factory of the Hawke-Keating trilogy that was supposed to save the world. It was mathematically illogical to suggest that it would solve the problems and it certainly has not. The price Australia is about to pay is a direct consequence of trying to pump out that nonsensical mathematical formula which could only have been funded by increased foreign borrowings.

I stand by what I have stated in the Assembly on this matter since 1984. I am not saying anything new, Mr Speaker. What I am saying to members opposite is that we now have the obvious end result of those policies and Australia will have to pay a heavy price. Even the federal Labor government is now saying that Australians must cut their standard of living. Mr Speaker, we have 1 thing going for us in the Northern Territory with this government. We can at least hold our heads up and say that we have never operated on a deficit budget. Even the federal government recognises that one of the major problems Australia faces is the pressure of interest rates caused by government borrowing to finance its deficits. We do not have any deficits to finance. When funding has been cut, we have cut our expenditure to live within our means. We will continue to live within our means.

Mr Leo: This is arrant nonsense.

Mr HATTON: The member for Nhulunbuy should sit down and listen rather than letting his mouth rave on. He should learn the adage that you cannot keep your ears and your mouth open at the same time.

Mr Leo: It would not matter what you kept open, it would still make no sense.

Mr HATTON: I can honestly tell the member opposite that at least I can stand in this Assembly in the knowledge that I have been consistent in my statements on economic matters. This is consistent with what I have been saying since I walked into this Assembly. The statements that I made in 1984 in respect of the national economy are vindicated now. Those statements were laughed at by members opposite, who were pumping out their nonsensical propaganda in the hype years of Hawke mania.

The time has come for their chickens to come home to roost. The truth is that Labor has been breaking this country because it would not accept the economic realities of life. Because of what it should have done in 1983, 1984, 1985, and 1986, Australians will have to start paying the price for those crazy policies.

Mr EDE (Stuart): Mr Speaker, I rise first to congratulate the negotiators who put together the package of amendments to the Land Rights Act. I welcome those amendments. I wish to make the point that, in agreeing to those amendments, Aboriginal people, through the land councils, have dropped some of the hard-won rights that they took many years to achieve. They gave up some of those rights in the hope that land rights would drop off the political agenda, in the hope that they would be seen once again as making a very real contribution to race relations in the Northern Territory, and in the hope that there would be an end to the continual black-bashing which, unfortunately, has been part of the media campaign against land rights.

I would like to take the opportunity tonight to talk about the veto - this terrible bogymen that has been portrayed as being the one and only reason why mining has not gone ahead. Any discussion regarding the veto in the Northern Territory must first address the Aboriginal experience of development. Development, whether of towns, mines, cattle properties or tourist facilities was, until the advent of the Land Rights Act, disadvantageous to the Aboriginal people who were affected. There were some benefits, such as low-standard government services and some employment, but these by no means offset the extreme disadvantage of loss of culture, loss of land, loss of identity and loss of economic base. The overriding community good, at that stage, meant that Aboriginal needs were subjugated to non-Aboriginal views on the assumption that what was good for white Australians would eventually be good for Aboriginals, even if it obviously was not in the short term.

In formulating our policy, we have rejected the view that all development will always be bad for all Aboriginals. We in the Labor party do not see Aboriginals going back to some pristine pre-contact stage. We see a community development process whereby they can find a new balance within which they can develop. The problem with development projects in the past was that Aboriginal people had no effective means of ensuring that their interests would not be disregarded or swamped in the process.

Mr Speaker, the so-called veto provisions of the Northern Territory Act ensure that Aboriginal people are involved in working out conditions upon which development can go ahead on their lands. The strong demands for its retention would indicate that Aboriginal people see it as a satisfactory framework within which they can negotiate to allow non-Aboriginals the right to set up developments on their land. It gives them what can be termed a degree of comfort and confidence to proceed as equals in negotiations.

Recent history has shown the difficulties developers have if they are faced with overwhelming local opposition. I am not talking only about overwhelming Aboriginal opposition. I am referring also to events like those

which took place in Tennant Creek recently, where we saw that it became impossible, even for this government, to proceed with a toxic waste disposal unit because of overwhelming local opposition. We believe that a system which ensures that residents are happy with developments proceeding works towards the encouragement of development.

The question which is constantly raised is: 'Why are there so many exploration licence applications outstanding?' In a minute, I will give the true story on that. We have heard the throwaway line that only 1 ELA has been granted since the Land Rights Act came into force in 1977. Firstly, that completely disregards the freeze on ELAs. That freeze, for which no recommendation had been made to the minister, meant that a large area - about half of the claimable area of land - was not available to miners until March 1983. The veto can hardly be blamed for the problems relating to the area over that period.

There are many reasons why exploration and mining have not gone ahead as rapidly as some in the Northern Territory would have liked. Many miners who make exploration licence applications do not proceed for a variety of reasons. Some of these people are referred to in the mining industry as 'real estate agents'. Another inhibiting factor has been the recent world depression, which has caused many miners to use their available funds in lower cost activities. It was better to avoid wildcatting or basic prospecting in that time. It was best to stick to the most highly prospective areas or to put resources into an actual mine rather than prospecting. Companies which are about to make a call on shareholders like to show a lot of activity, and ELAs are sometimes used to indicate that. They can also be used to cut out opposition companies for a period and that has happened recently with a number of the ELAs down in my area and up here.

Mr Palmer: Tell us how the decision-making process is relevant to applications which have not been approved.

Mr EDE: Hang on. You will get yours.

ELAs can be used politically to fight provisions of the Land Rights Act. There is a growing body of evidence that there were people who were quite prepared to negotiate before there was an element of doubt about the continuation of the veto but who decided, when they saw that it might not continue, not to proceed for the time being.

Delays were also caused by the time taken by the NT government in formulating its laws on mining royalties. Initial proposals of a 36% profit-based royalty came down to 18% and those are being continually negotiated. As I said, many of the miners preferred to break off negotiations and wait for a more favourable political climate. In my area, a major company, which had negotiated a gold mine agreement previously and stated publicly how happy it was with it, turned around and said that it did not want to negotiate on the same terms and conditions as before. The company's view was that it had a gold mine and a cash flow, so it could afford to wait on the possibility of the veto being dropped.

In the Northern Land Council's area, the veto has not been the major stopper on development. The problem has been the lack of anthropological data to identify the traditional owners. The Arnhem Land area was included in schedule 1 under the act and the traditional owners were not listed during any claim process. That work had to be done whether or not there was a veto. People had to know whom they were negotiating with. It was not possible

simply to say: 'We are negotiating but we do not know whom we are negotiating with'. Whether or not there was a veto, this problem would have existed over all that area of Arnhem Land.

The veto is, in effect, a guarantee of equality for the traditional owners in their dealings with miners. It gives the traditional owners pride, self-esteem and skills which they are starting to use in other areas of negotiation such as with governments, pastoralists, non-government staff and so on. I do not say that there is nothing that can be done to improve the land councils' response time and to hasten the negotiating process. However, it is completely unfair to argue that, because you have a problem with the administration of a land council, some of the rights of the traditional owners should be removed or, as in the case of the federal opposition's policy, all of the rights of the traditional owners should be removed. If you have an administrative problem, you attack the administrative problem. You do not change the act and say that somehow that is going to solve the problem because, after you have taken away the people's rights, the administrative problem remains. If you have an administrative problem in the land councils, have a look at it.

I wish to comment on the claim that only 1 ELA has been granted, because I am hoping the Minister for Mines and Energy will read this debate and will realise that some of his figures are wrong. The total number of ELAs on Aboriginal land which have been processed is 235. It is interesting to note that 41, some of which go back many years, are still sitting on the minister's desk, because he has not given the approval to negotiate. That has never been clearly explained by the minister. In 6 cases, the applicants pulled out. They said they were not going any further. That leaves a total of 188. Of those, 24 have been rejected through the application of the veto. That leaves 164. I will come back to that figure to compare it with the numbers of mining approvals.

In considering the 235 ELAs, you have to take the traditional owner identification program into account. It has been a massive job. It is not one that the land councils have adequate funding for. They have to try to stretch limited resources to get the process completed. They have, however, completed the identification process over 140 ELAs, leaving some 95 which are still in process. These are expected to be complete by the dry season of 1988. In 75 cases, no company proposals have been achieved and in 51 cases the traditional owners have said, 'We want mining. We are quite happy for mining to go ahead in our area'. For 11 of those 51, no proposals have been received by the land council. They cannot proceed. People are coming in and saying, 'What about the mining?', but the land council says it cannot do anything because the companies have not made a proposal.

There are 17 cases where agreements have been reached, and there are a further 23 where negotiations are in process. Because, in those instances, the people have said, 'Yes, basically we want it', many are quite close to finalisation. If we add together the cases where there have been no company proposals and those which have been achieved to date, we find that the number where proposals have been received by the Northern Land Council but not acted upon is in fact 30. I would prefer it if the whole 80 were being processed through the system, but the land councils are short of resources. They have told the companies that they will attempt to process the applications as soon as they possibly can. The number of outstanding ELAs, to repeat the figure, is 30. Those are the ones for which we can possibly criticise the land council or, hopefully, which we can assist it to process. That figure of 30 contrasts with the 41 instances where the minister has not given his consent.

The Northern Territory minister should be answering for those and saying why he has not permitted those mining companies to talk to the land council to get negotiations going.

Now that these amendments are on their way through, I would like the Northern Territory government to make a resolution to be positive for a change, to support the process and try to make it work. It is time that the land rights debate moved on and we got past the continual argument about the veto and on to other important matters, like the quality of life out in the communities.

In the remaining time available to me, I would like to touch briefly on the matter of excisions and to point out that there are 120 people who have given notification of interest in obtaining excisions on pastoral properties. From what I have been able to work out so far, this government has been able to organise only 16 excisions.

Mr McCARTHY (Victoria River): Mr Deputy Speaker, I too would like to say a few words concerning the former member for Arafura. Of course, the Leader of the Opposition has to build a relationship with the former Leader of the Opposition, now that the latter is likely to enter the Senate. That follows his efforts to remove him from this Assembly.

Back in 1984, my maiden speech in this Assembly was interrupted by the then Leader of the Opposition, Bob Collins. He felt that I was being controversial and he called a point of order and he went through all the process that entails. As a consequence, I was rather amused the other day to see the concern of the present Leader of the Opposition when the present member for Arafura was criticised after his maiden speech for making controversial statements.

I have known the former Leader of the Opposition for a long time. I knew him long before he entered this Assembly. In fact, I was probably 1 of the first people he told, in a state of some surprise I think, that he had been asked to stand for parliament as the member for Arafura. He came to see me and my wife and told us that he had been asked to stand as the Labor representative for that seat. We encouraged him. In those days, Bob was a much shyer man than he is now and he was rather surprised that he had been sought out for that position. The results of his few years here have indicated that it was probably a good choice for the opposition, because there is no doubt at all that he was the best they had.

Mr Deputy Speaker, I turn now to events of the last few days which culminated in the Chief Minister's announcement today that he has appointed me as the Minister for Labour and Administrative Services. I will come to grips with that title as time goes on. I guess if I was able to put an 'A' in front of the other 3 capital letters in the title, I could say 'ALAS'. I will just have to remember that it is 'LAS' and I will be right.

I suppose that some people might respond now if I were to say, 'Call me Hacker'. That is only in jest because 'Hacker' is ruled by his public service and I do not believe that is likely to happen in my case. I know the people I will be working with and I have a great deal of respect for them. I know that we can and will have a very good working relationship. I will not be sworn in until tomorrow so, at this stage, I am the member for Victoria River.

Mr Finch: The humble member.

Mr McCARTHY: The humble member for Victoria River. It has been said that the portfolio that I am to take up has no relevance for the electorate of Victoria River and that, of course, is tripe. Every portfolio in this government has relevance in every electorate. Every electorate has close to equal numbers of voters and those people are drawn from all walks of life. Many are involved in the public service, private enterprise employment and in training. Some have work-related accidents and will use the Work Health Authority. In that light, the people of Victoria River are no different from people in Darwin, Alice Springs or any other part of the Territory. There is no doubt at all that this portfolio, along with every other portfolio in this government, has relevance in the electorate of Victoria River.

It has been said that my vision does not extend beyond the boundaries of the electorate of Victoria River. I can assure you, Mr Deputy Speaker, that it does and I will certainly be showing as much interest in the rest of the Territory as I do in my own electorate. Of course, my electorate is a very special place to me and I will still be spending as much time as I can out there, catering to the needs of the people who put me into this Assembly. I am looking forward very much to getting involved in the portfolio duties that I have been offered, and which I accepted with alacrity. I have no doubt that I will be able to make a contribution to the government of the Northern Territory in that role.

Of course, I will need a few days to come to grips with the complexity of the job. It is a fairly complex one. It is not concerned with cattle, reserves or national parks. It is not comprised of dollars, water, power or any of those things. It is made up of people: the public service, the Work Health Authority and the training areas, all of which involve people very closely. People are one of my great interests in life, probably the major interest. I have done my bit in making sure that we have a few more people in the Northern Territory.

The electorate of Victoria River is very large and, as such, takes a lot of time and effort to service. It has interests that are perhaps a little different to those in Darwin or Alice Springs or wherever. However, all my constituents will get my best efforts, even though being back in the ministry will mean that I will not spend the same amount of time out there as I have in the past. During the period in which I was the Minister for Primary Production and Conservation, I could not spend as much time in the electorate as previously, but I still got out to everything that I possibly could, and I will do that. Of course, Mr Deputy Speaker, it is not easy to balance a ministry with a large electorate which comprises a fifth of the Northern Territory. I have never experienced it, but I am sure that it would be much easier if I had a small electorate in the city. Victoria River is not like that; it has about 30 schools, the same number of health centres, 63 cattle stations, 14 or 15 communities and a number of outstations, all requiring my support and my interest. I have to take that into account and I have to balance my responsibilities.

Mr Deputy Speaker, I have the support of my electorate as was borne out in the recent election. I have the support of my family. It is really good to know that I have the support of my party, that I have the support of my Chief Minister and his confidence, and I look forward to contributing, not only in this Assembly, but in the government as the Minister for Labour and Administrative Services.

Mr Deputy Speaker, I really am very sincere in saying that I think this particular portfolio is one that impinges on every part of government. It is

responsible for the people who work in every department. I will do my utmost to see that the recent changes that took place in the Northern Territory administration are brought to their fulfilment with the least possible hassle and with the greatest possible haste.

Mr LEO (Nhulunbuy): Mr Deputy Speaker, I am pleased that the member for Victoria River has so much support from so many people. I hope it does not extend to a truss. I assume that he does not need that at the moment.

I have received a letter from John Connell and Associates who made some comment on the adjournment speech that I made last Thursday and which was reported in the NT News on Friday 1 May. John Connell and Associates have assured me, amongst other things, of their reliability as construction engineers for various projects, amongst which is Crab Claw Island.

It is probably difficult for any politician under any circumstance to admit that he or she has erred. However, I must say to this Assembly, Mr Deputy Speaker, and it is unfortunate that the member for Casuarina is not here to hear me, that I did err in not contacting the proprietor of Crab Claw Island prior to delivering my speech in the Assembly last Thursday evening. Events overtook me. I must thank the proprietor, who has made contact with me. I intend to go to Crab Claw Island tomorrow morning and see the facility which is being constructed there and, I hope, talk to the workers. I take no pleasure in saying this, Mr Deputy Speaker but, indeed, I did err. If some redress is required, you may be sure and this Assembly may be sure, that I will supply that redress.

Having said that, I would like to place on record my thanks to the former member for Arafura. He served this Legislative Assembly for some 10 years and there was no way of knowing at the last sittings of this Legislative Assembly that an election would prevent his being here at these sittings.

I believe his contribution to public life in the Northern Territory, and his steadfast refusal not to shirk what he perceived as his public responsibilities, contributed greatly to this Assembly. Bob Collins is a man for whom I have great personal regard. His courage in the face of great adversity and his stance in relation to the Lindy Chamberlain matter and other matters should be an example to all honourable members. He has confronted matters of great public and media controversy and adversity created by other politicians within this Assembly. I hope I have learned something from him. I believe that I have. His absence from this Assembly is a sad personal loss for me.

Having said that, Mr Deputy Speaker, I will turn to a matter of equal distress to me. It concerns constituents of mine and I am afraid I did not finish my remarks on it last week. Constituents of mine, the Gove Open Men's Basketball Team and the Gove Under-18 Men's Basketball Team came over here for a Northern Territory championship. They booked into an establishment here. They paid their room fees, some \$1900. When the teams' manager reached his room, he was asked to go to the reception area and was told by the receptionist, accompanied by the proprietor, that the teams would be required to pay an extra \$100 a room because the bulk of the group was Aboriginal. The ensuing farce that was related to me does not bear relating to this Assembly. It does not bear the contemplation of this Assembly. The simple reality is, though, that my constituents were asked to pay a deposit on accommodation in Darwin because they had black hides. That is the guts of the matter: they had black hides and they were asked to pay \$100 on top of what other residents in that accommodation would be expected to pay.

I am sure that all members of this Assembly are aware of what has transpired since then. I hope that the Human Rights Commission can resolve this matter amicably. I hope that this type of incident is never repeated in the Northern Territory, an incident in which people were asked to pay an extra \$100 per room for accommodation because of the colour of their skin, because they were Aboriginal people - the original inhabitants of this Northern Territory.

For all the criticism that is levelled at it, if the federal government never achieves anything else, at least it has set up a forum in which this infringement of human dignity can be addressed. If the Human Rights Commission achieves nothing else in Australia or the Northern Territory's history, if it can in some way redress this gross indignity perpetrated on a fine cross-section of my constituency, it will indeed be worth whatever federal money has been put into it.

Motioned agreed to; the Assembly adjourned.

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