

NORTHERN TERRITORY OF AUSTRALIA

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

First Assembly

Parliamentary Record

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PART I

THE DEBATES

Tuesday 12 August 1975

ELECTION OF SPEAKER

The CLERK: I have to inform the Assembly that Mr Speaker on Wednesday 16 July resigned his office by writing under his hand delivered to the Administrator, and that on the same day Mr T. A. O'Brien, the Acting Administrator, pursuant to the powers vested in him by Section 4PB of the Northern Territory Administration Act appointed Mr J. L. S. MacFarlane to exercise the powers and perform the functions of the Speaker in the interim period. I lay on the table a copy of the instrument delivered by Mr Kilgariff and the instrument of appointment of Mr MacFarlane.

The appointment of Mr Kilgariff having ceased with this meeting of the Assembly, it is now the duty of the Assembly to elect a member to be Speaker. Are there any nominations?

Dr LETTS: I move that Mr J. L. S. MacFarlane, the honourable member for Elsey, do take the chair as Speaker of this House.

Mr KILGARIFF: I have the honour to second the motion.

Mr MacFARLANE: I accept the nomination.

The CLERK: Are there any further nominations? There being no further nominations, I declare Mr J. L. S. MacFarlane, the honourable member for Elsey, elected to be Speaker of this Assembly.

Mr MacFARLANE: I wish to express my grateful thanks for the high honour the Assembly has been pleased to confer on me.

Dr LETTS: Mr Speaker, I am pleased to have the opportunity to make the first speech in this Assembly with you in the Chair. My speech is simply one of congratulations to you on obtaining the highest office that the Assembly can bestow. I pass those congratulations to you on behalf of my colleagues in this house and I do so with mixed feelings, realising that we are losing one of our most forceful members from the floor on this side. Your contributions in the past in debate, particularly at adjournment time, have stamped you as a person of no mean influence on behalf of your electorate and this Assembly. However, our loss in that respect will be the Assembly's gain because, with the independence of spirit which you have demonstrated in the past and your capacity for determined

and fair judgment, I am certain that you will be an admirable choice for the Chair of this Assembly.

Mr WITHNALL: Mr Speaker, may I add my congratulations to those expressed by the honourable member for Victoria River and express an opinion that I am sure that you will grace the Chair as well as any other occupant of the Chair during the history of the Assembly or of the Legislative Council. We have seen you in your capacity as Chairman of Committees and I am sure that your experience in that office will lead you to execute the duties of Speaker with fairness and with wisdom. May I only add this, that I trust your elevation to this high office will not deprive me of your occasional company at breakfast.

Mrs LAWRIE: Mr Speaker, I rise to offer my congratulations. Having been a member of this Assembly when you served as Chairman of Committees, I am pleased that you are now Speaker and will follow the tradition set by previous Speakers, the member for Alice Springs, Mr Greator, Mr Chan, of the fairness of the Chair never having been in doubt. I congratulate you on your elevation.

Mr KILGARIFF: Mr Speaker, this is the first time in this Assembly that I have been able to address the Speaker. I congratulate you on your appointment, sir. You have had long experience in this Legislative Assembly and years before in the Legislative Council. For some considerable time now you have been Chairman of Committees; in that position you have gained much experience and I, like other members of this Assembly, look forward to being on the floor under your leadership. I would also like to take this opportunity to commend to you the staff of the Assembly whom you will find will be extremely loyal and helpful to you.

Mr TUXWORTH: Mr Speaker, I rise to congratulate you on behalf of the younger members of this Assembly who have been recently elected and on behalf of the country members of the Assembly. The new members of the Assembly did not know you before we were elected—or the majority of us did not—but in the last nine months we have come to know you very well. We hold you in the highest esteem and we find that you would be a most fitting person to occupy the Chair of the House. I would just like to mention that it is a point of special recognition that a person from a country electorate such as yours, a small one, has been able to be elevated to this

position. It gives confidence to people in all country areas to see this sort of thing happen. I congratulate you.

ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN OF COMMITTEES

Mr SPEAKER: Following my transfer to the office of Speaker, there is a vacancy in the office of Chairman of Committees and it is the duty of this Assembly to now elect a new Chairman of Committees. May I have nominations?

Dr LETTS: Mr Speaker, I nominate Mr J. M. Robertson, the member for Gillen, for the office of Chairman of Committees.

Mr KILGARIFF: I second the nomination.

Mr ROBERTSON: I accept the nomination.

Mr SPEAKER: Are there any further nominations?

There being no further nominations I declare Mr J. M. Robertson, the honourable member for Gillen, elected as Chairman of Committees.

Dr LETTS: I rise again briefly to offer my congratulations and the congratulations of my colleagues to Mr Robertson on his election to this position. It is somewhat unusual to find a young member in his first term gaining the confidence of a legislature in a position of considerable importance such as Chairman of Committees. However, we do know that Mr Robertson has had the opportunity to act in this position on a number of occasions during the past six months and has demonstrated undoubtedly a flair for the work and I am confident that in his permanent occupancy of the position that this quality will be further demonstrated and will continue.

Mr WITHNALL: I offer my congratulations to the honourable member on his election to this office. As the honourable member for Victoria River has already said, we have seen Mr Robertson in operation in the Chair on the occasions when the Chairman of Committees has not been available, and his carrying out of that job on those occasions has been quite noteworthy. I think perhaps anyone elected to the office of Chairman of Committees in this Chamber had better look forward to a fairly difficult time because most of the hard work and indeed, most of the dirty work, goes on in Committee.

Miss ANDREW: I rise in support of the previous speakers. I offer my congratulations

to the honourable member for Gillen. His performance since 2 January at a time of total disaster both within the Assembly and without when he took over the position of Chairman of Committees was quite commendable. The rest of us who were elected only in the previous October were perhaps still floundering with the standing orders of this Assembly and most of the books recording those standing orders had been lost. I think that the honourable member for Gillen's youth is perhaps reflective of this Assembly. There are a number of us who are around his age group and I think it is vital that we are represented in some position of the Assembly itself. I congratulate him and wish him well.

Mr KILGARIFF: I too would like to congratulate the honourable member for Gillen on being appointed Chairman of Committees. As the previous Speaker, it was my pleasure to appoint him as Deputy Chairman and in that period, after he was appointed Deputy Chairman he proved his worth. In this short period, he has become a very able Chairman and I have no doubt that in the future the honourable member for Gillen will prove a very worthwhile Chairman.

Mrs LAWRIE: I rise to offer my congratulations to the new Chairman of Committees and wish him well in what will probably be a difficult task during debates.

Mr SPEAKER: I would like to associate myself with the sentiments expressed by honourable members.

Mr ROBERTSON: Mr Speaker, thank you for your closing words. I thank all honourable members for the confidence shown in me in electing me to this position. I am indeed honoured by it and to some extent humbled. I am quite sure that with the very able assistance of Mr Clerk and with your guidance, Mr Speaker, I will be able to conduct the committee stages in a manner which befits this House, in a manner of impartiality and fairness. I hold no great fear for the warnings given by the honourable members for Nightcliff and Port Darwin. However, I regard myself as somewhat cautioned by them. I thank honourable members.

MOTION

Report of Select Committee on Stabilisation of Land Prices

Mr WITHNALL: I present the report of the select committee appointed to enquire into the matter of securing the stabilisation of

land prices and I move that the report be noted.

Debate adjourned.

STATEMENT

Executive Responsibilities

Dr LETTS (by leave): It is my duty to officially inform the Assembly that Mr P. A. Everingham resigned his portfolio recently and that I have designated Mr B. F. Kilgariff as Executive Member for Finance and Law. With his long experience in this legislature and in other aspects of public administration in the Territory, I have every confidence that Mr Kilgariff will make a success of the portfolio. I would also like to thank the honourable member for Jingili for his valuable contribution to the Executive between November last and July this year.

I realise that these changes have been public knowledge for some time but as the executive positions are related to the standing orders of this Assembly, I wish to make that formal announcement here. We as an Assembly are still awaiting advice of the replacement appointment to fill the vacancy on the Administrator's Council created by the resignation of the honourable member for Jingili.

I wish also to advise honourable members that I communicated to the Minister for Northern Australia, Dr Rex Patterson, last week my intention to resign from the Darwin Reconstruction Commission at the earliest opportunity. The letter of resignation is now on its way to the Governor-General. It is hoped that it will be received and take effect during the current sittings so that the Assembly can make the appropriate replacement.

As I accepted nomination from this Assembly, some explanation should be given to the Assembly for my course of action. The nomination was originally to the interim commission before the act was passed and my membership continued on through the early formative days of the statutory body. As an elected representative on the commission, my aim was to secure a better balance in the composition of the Commission, more protection for the rights of people whose interest in the city had been affected by the cyclone, and the establishment of policies and plans which would be in the best public interest. I believe that the records will show that I had some success in these matters notwithstanding shortcomings which may be evident and the long

uphill battle the Commission still has before it. I don't intend to explore at this junction the question of the shortcomings—these may, it appears, now be the subject of a more detailed analysis by this Assembly.

Increasingly in recent weeks, I have realised that the demands of the work of the Commission were coming into conflict with other executive responsibilities to the Territory in general and this Assembly in particular. I refer, by way of example, to the constant follow-up work in the matter of constitutional development and the Joint Parliamentary Committee's report, to the critical problems of our primary industries to which more time and effort must be given, and to the work of the Australian Constitutional Convention which is of vital importance to the long term future of the Territory. Within the past 2 weeks a meeting of that Convention's Standing Committee fell in Sydney on the same day as a meeting of the Reconstruction Commission in Darwin and reluctantly I was unable to attend the latter event. I shall return to the areas of executive responsibility in a few moments.

The decision to tender my resignation from the Reconstruction Commission was not taken lightly, but after a lot of thought and with the realisation that this Assembly can provide alternative representation well qualified to continue the difficult, worrying and important work of the commission. We have such a person in the Executive Member for Community Development whose portfolio is most closely involved with this statutory body. He combines quality with energy in his work and he has already provided invaluable assistance as my official deputy under the act. Any appointment of an Executive Member to the commission at present would add greatly to his or her work load and it is anticipated that some changes in particular duties within the portfolio would be necessary. These would have to be considered in relation to areas of executive responsibility which have emerged in recent weeks as requiring for the time being greater inputs of effort than others. To be more specific, activity in the field of environment, education and land use generally are intensifying at this time. This is a critical period for the Northern Territory in many ways and, while cyclone-ravaged Darwin has dominated the scene and been uppermost in most minds, other things demand attention and whatever support this Assembly can give.

The state of our economic industries is a cause for major concern. I realise that the plight of the pastoral industry is much graver than is generally appreciated by the non-rural public and some ministers. What was considered to be an unusually serious recession out of which the beef producers would struggle after 12 months or so has now assumed the proportions of a national disaster. Pastoral unemployment is rife and will worsen. Meatworks will be forced to close and go into receivership in many cases. Producers are unable to pay debts. There is serious talk, even in government official circles, of organised shooting of cattle in some areas including the Northern Territory in order to limit overstocking, and talk of assisting people to get off their properties, to give them up and so on. The reference of this problem to the Industries Assistance Commission is unlikely to significantly change the pattern. The time has come for all groups concerned, producers, abattoir interests, unions and people with political responsibilities, to jointly analyse all and any means of stemming the tide of depression in the beef industry and insisting on governmental action in the national interest.

Although it is not in my specific area of responsibility, I should also mention that the Territory's mining, fishing, and other natural resource based industries are undergoing very serious trials and tribulations of special concern to the Executive Members who are in touch with them. If ever there was a time for the Australian Government to heed local voices, Territory voices, in these matters it is now. But when one looks at the matter of constitutional development for the Territory, feelings of anxiety and frustration understandably arise, not only in the minds of members of the Assembly but in the minds of the many Territorians who share the desire for a greater say in their own destiny irrespective of their politics. I am particularly concerned in this matter as my portfolio includes responsibilities for constitutional development. I also remind members that the Australian Labor Party Northern Territory Executive has recently expressed interest in seeing constitutional development take place and that talks have been held between our executive and their executive on the basis of common ground and common interest in this area. Some progress has been made. Executive members have become actively involved with government departments, statutory bodies and community groups, not only in

relation to legislative requirements but in the formulation of policy and in limited areas of administrative action. I hope that these members will have the opportunity to report to the Assembly in more detail on the work that they are individually doing.

In fairness to the government, and in particular the Minister for Northern Australia, I should say that some new ground has been broken. The Assembly Executive should shortly have the assistance of administrative staff. We have been assisted with the provision of office space and equipment and a co-operative and helpful attitude has been evident from the Minister and senior departmental staff. Particularly worthy of mention is the fact that with the support of Dr Patterson and the cooperation of federal and state ministers several executive members have recently attended Commonwealth or state minister's councils as observers and this is very useful progress in the field of constitutional recognition for the Territory. But some vital decisions are too slow in emerging. Until we have received the government's attitude and decision on the Joint Parliamentary Committee's report, until proper machinery for implementing that report is set up and until further amendments to the Northern Territory (Administration) Act are made, the constitutional vessel of a fully elected Assembly created last year will have a hollow ring.

On the other side of the ledger, it is painfully necessary for me to report that the government is relentlessly, even desperately, pursuing its erosive legislative policies of making laws for the Northern Territory without any consultation outside its own departments with the people of the Territory or their elected representatives. The introduction into the Australian Parliament of Aboriginal land legislation and legislation covering Aboriginal associations is imminent and, despite several requests, I have been unable to secure copies of drafts of this legislation for information and for public reaction. Whilst Aboriginal people will be most directly affected, I believe that all Territory people have a deep interest and a right to know about the detailed content of these laws in advance of their passage in Canberra.

I also know that the Attorney-General has a long list of other legislation to be made in that other place for our good and that we, like children, will have to swallow it, castor oil fashion, no matter what practical effects it will have on our system. The effects of earlier

legislation handled in this bulldozer way and without consultation can already be seen. The National Parks and Wildlife Act of some 10 months ago is a sorry example. Following the commencement of that legislation, the Northern Territory Reserves Board has been white-anted; it is proposed to declare parks under the act which have no real claim to be national but which are of considerable Territory significance; and the local wildlife service is in a state at the moment of complete confusion. No mention has been made by the Australian Government or the Minister of what is to happen to Territory legislation or whether the views of the Joint Committee on sharing these responsibilities and transferring these responsibilities are to be taken into account in any way. But what we do know is that a new army of senior public servants, already some 25 strong and mostly second division classifications, is being recruited in Canberra to duplicate by remote control what should be done here, presumably to administer our wildlife under an act which lays down no guidelines or principles in this field.

I dwell somewhat on these matters because of my executive responsibilities in the field of constitutional development and my realisation of the implications of this type of legislation being made in the Australian Parliament on our future hopes and aspirations here. I believe it will be necessary to redouble our efforts to combat this insufferable white-anting of our democratic rights and that, in transferring responsibilities relating to the operation of the Darwin Reconstruction Commission to other hands, I will be much better able to contribute to the Territory cause in other important directions. I remind honourable members that together with Mr Alan Reiber, the permanent head of the Department of Housing and Construction, I am the only original member left at this date on the commission. The many changes in commissioners have not helped maintain continuity in its operations but there is no doubt in my mind that I have to devote more attention to the other matters that I have referred to and the sooner the substitution can be made and the Commission settle down to something like its permanent composition the better, assuming it is going to go on for its statutory period.

I hope to provide the Assembly and the public with details of any consequential changes in the executive portfolios during the course of the current sittings.

MOTION

Statement on Executive Responsibilities

Mr KILGARIFF: I move that the statement be noted.

I believe that this statement is one of importance to the Legislative Assembly and to the people of the Northern Territory. It is a statement of the state of affairs in the Northern Territory today and I think that it is quite timely that the Majority Leader should be able to indicate to the Assembly and to the people of the Territory the major things of concern to him today.

The Majority Leader has indicated that, having resigned as Speaker of this Assembly, I have taken up the position of Finance and Law. I would like to say that I take up this position with considerable regret because it has meant that the previous Executive Member for Finance and Law, Mr Paul Everingham, is no longer in this position. In those months as Executive Member for Finance and Law, when this executive responsibility was being developed from nothing to what from is now, the work that he achieved has a great deal to do with what is happening today. I say with regret that he has decided to step down from this portfolio. This report is an indication to the people of the Territory of what has been going on in these last few months, what is happening now and what will happen in the future. It is my pleasure to be able to return to the floor of the House to once more participate in the affairs of the Assembly. In doing so, I commend the executive for the work that they have done until now.

Coming in as a new executive member, I can appreciate the trials and tribulations that the executive have had over the last few months. There have been many criticisms of the Assembly and the executive. While one admits freely that they are newly elected members and completely raw to the job, what they have achieved in these last few months is a record of which they can be proud. They have started a new ball game; they have come into a situation where there have been no ground rules. In fact, there has been no equipment and they have had to begin from the ground roots. At the moment they do not know where they are going because there are many decisions to be made by Government before future action can be taken.

As the Honourable Majority Leader has said, there have been developments in recognition of the executive over the last few months and particularly in the last few weeks. Other executive members will outline their responsibilities and what has been achieved. The Honourable Majority Leader has referred to the fact that the Commonwealth and states are recognising the Northern Territory executive; it is a breakthrough that these members now go to state ministers' conferences as full members.

With regard to finance and law, discussions with Dr Patterson were initiated by the honourable Mr Everingham and later taken up by the Majority Leader and myself. These related to the Member for Finance and Law being able to participate within government departments in matters of finance, estimates and so on. He made arrangements within his department that I should be allowed to go into the departments. This has been going on for some weeks now and I have had full co-operation from the officers in that particular branch. We have had discussions on finance and procedures with the result that next Wednesday in this Assembly I will be responsible for tabling the Northern Territory Budget which will be made public the night before. This will be in much more detail for the benefit of the Assembly and for the people of the Territory.

The Ministers for Health and Aboriginal Affairs have indicated that they are prepared to associate themselves with the move. We have not yet heard from the Minister for Education nor from the Minister for Police and Customs. Overall, with this new move which is being carried out now, people in the Territory might be given first hand information of what is going to happen in the Northern Territory in this financial year.

Other matters that have been conducted by this portfolio under the previous member included participation in the Darwin Trust Fund. Mr Everingham was one of the main people who drew up the original structure of the Darwin Trust Fund. This portfolio has also been involved in the Small Business Loan Section and the Legislative Assembly is still represented on that Board. In the period since the Small Business Loan Section has been in being, there have been a total of 359 applications for an amount of \$7,762,595. To date, \$5,000,000 has been put aside for these loans. It is anticipated that at the end of this year the

Committee will receive no further applications because the funds will be exhausted and businesses in the area will have had time to make application for assistance.

One other matter that has been of concern to the Executive Member for Finance and Law was slow payment of accounts by the Government. There was considerable publicity given to this matter some months ago and many of those problems have been ironed out. It has been a very difficult period but, in some departments, this matter has been rectified to quite a degree. At the moment, I am discussing with the Department of Housing and Construction a means of overcoming the slow payment of accounts in areas such as Darwin, Katherine and Alice Springs. Hopefully, with the co-operation of the department, these matters will be rectified.

There have been many matters going on in regard to law and order. I do not think I need to say much more about that. We are concerned that law and order in the Northern Territory should be built up to a satisfactory standard. I say once again that if this growth restriction of 1½ per cent in the public service is applied to the Police Force then we will not have a satisfactory standard. If this restriction is carried out, it will certainly restrict the building up of those isolated one man police stations to two man posts. When it comes to public safety and the safety of the police force, it is ridiculous that this restriction should be carried out and enforced.

There is much legislation to be reviewed and I will make one point which gives me some concern. I refer to a bill that was passed in February—the Motor Vehicle Bill relating to third party insurance where the nominal insurer would be responsible for third party claims in the event of an insurance company collapsing. This was introduced by Mr Everingham yet it has not yet been assented to. I think that this is detrimental to the people of the Territory. There is every reason why government must recognise the principle that the people of the Northern Territory must have some safeguard. If the government is not going to assent to this bill, it must come forward with some other scheme to safeguard the people who have applied for insurance. I would hope that, in the near future, we will see action from the government departments responsible in this area.

Industrial affairs has been a part of this portfolio. It is a most interesting responsibility, particularly in the Darwin community, because there is awareness in the work force, the unions, the employees, the employers that better relations should develop. I commend the formation some weeks ago of the Industrial Relations Society. Its aims will be to organise and foster discussion, research, education and publications in the field of industrial relations. The unions, management, the public service, professionals and academics are participating in this organisation. This society will be affiliated with the Australian body and will bring about better relations in industry in the Northern Territory. As the member responsible in this Assembly for industrial affairs, I give it my full support. Indeed, I have been fortunate that they have appointed me as chairman. I commend the Majority Leader for his report because it is an indication to the people of what is going on. Further, I support fully his decision to resign from the Darwin Reconstruction Commission. As I indicated some time ago, I was rather concerned at the Majority Leader's work load. There had been some criticism of him for inaction but, as I said then and I repeat, since the Majority Leader has been in office, he has endeavoured to build up a structure of executive responsibility and the foundations of a new government in the Northern Territory. He has done this with one secretary and no staff, because the staff positions have yet to be created and filled. He has had a very arduous job over these last few months. It has been my opinion that, because of the workload and the responsibility he has to the executive and to the legislature, he should step down from the DRC and he has now indicated that he will do this. He has indicated that the Member for Community Development will fill this post and I believe that he will fill the post very well and carry on the work that has been done in these last few months.

Mr TUXWORTH: I rise to support the motion. In doing so, I would like to point out that earlier criticism by the public of the operations of the executive in my particular case may have been justified because I do not have any areas of responsibility that are controversial or areas that are continually in the press so that the public could thereby get an impression of what I was doing. I would like to take this opportunity of presenting to the

House and the public a resumé of the activities that I have been involved in and the particular areas of responsibility that I have.

Shortly after Cyclone Tracy, it was pointed out to me that the fishing potential of the Northern Territory had been cut in two, that there had been great losses of capital by the fishing industry and the fishermen. Many men had lost their opportunity to continue their employment in the fishing industry. As a result of this, I made an approach to the Chief Inspector of Fisheries to get an idea of just what state the industry was in, how his department was situated, and how it intended to deploy its inspectors to control the operation of fishing in the Northern Territory. I have had nothing but complete co-operation from the Fisheries Section in any matter that I have brought before them, and they advised me only too willingly that, although the operation had been moved to Gove as a matter of physical necessity, they do intend to deploy inspectors in the Darwin area and the other coastal areas and to maintain the surveillance that they had pre-cyclone. They went on to point out that they had had re-establishment problems of their own; they had lost their leader and it would be some time before they actually got into full operation. Subsequent to this I received a delegation from the fishing men themselves. They indicated they had problems of re-establishing and also had problems of selling their product in Darwin even at the price of 75c a pound. Evidence that was supplied to me by another member of this Assembly seems to suggest that poaching was in full swing and that there were indeed illegal operations thriving in the Darwin area and selling fish throughout the Territory that was not perhaps quite wholesome.

Other problems that were raised were in the area of shortage of capital. Many men had lost their boats and their buildings and had no method of getting back into business. There are no processing facilities available to fishermen and we have no wharf facilities for fishermen to operate from. We have no recognised health standards for the inspection of fish. We have no marketing expertise in the Northern Territory by which we may dispose of our surplus fish. We have a diminished home market that is consuming about 25% of the pre-cyclone quantities. We have an apparent upsurge in poaching activity. We have a lack of organised fishing areas. All these problems are compounded by the fact that

the industry itself is fragmented and disorganised. The Chief Inspector of Fisheries further confirmed my fears about the depression in the industry when he said that there was a need for stronger legislative backing in some areas of existing ordinances and that perhaps we have a need for new ordinances altogether to cater for areas that are not protected. There was an obvious lack of leadership within the industry and there was a great need for some decisions of a local and political nature to be made by some person so that the industry could have a look at itself. It could then be rationalised and become more profitable and stable in the future.

As a result of these talks, I went back to the department and we had further discussions on the problem. The departments involved in these discussions were the Northern Development Department before the amalgamation, the Health Department, the Port Authority, the Fisheries Branch here, the Fisheries Departments in 4 states and there was communication again with the fishermen in an effort to try to propose some solution to the problems facing the industry.

I was quite encouraged by the attitude of some of the local fishermen who are prepared to set their organisation on an industrial footing and as a result of this I chaired a meeting of interested fishermen 6 weeks ago. We have 70 registered fishermen still left in the Territory and at that meeting we posed to them solutions that they might consider as a method of overcoming their industry's problems. The essential part of these solutions was that they formed themselves into an industry organisation in the form of a co-operative or a marketing organisation so that they could help themselves and help protect themselves. The attitude towards the proposal was in my opinion most responsible and I feel that something will come of it. We have a further meeting with north Australian fishermen this week and I will be providing details to them, supplied by the various state departments and compiled with local expertise and knowledge by our own Fisheries Branch, of co-ops, fishing licences, fishing grounds, health standards, processing facilities, marketing details, etc., that would all be necessary information for any fishing industry here to get on its feet.

There is no doubt that fishermen are the greatest bunch of individualists that I have come across and, although their industry is depressed and they themselves are in a depressed state, I will persevere with the

groundwork that I have begun in this area because I believe that their industry will survive and it will grow and it will make a very sound contribution to the development of the Northern Territory in the long term.

The fishing industry is not the only one in turmoil. The mining industry may perhaps eclipse the fishing industry in problems but the most serious problem we have confronting us is that the Northern Territory has become the graveyard for the mining industry in Australia in the last 18 months. I have found it very frustrating and most unfortunate that I was in this position without any executive responsibility. I have been unable to help or forestall such things as the closure of Frances Creek, the closure of the Peko smelter, the mothballing of the Palm Valley gasfield and oil operation and the subsequent possibility that an oil refinery will not be established in Alice Springs. I have seen the delay in the development of the McArthur River project which involves silver, lead and zinc and an enormous pilot programme that Mount Isa Mines had going on there to try and perfect a method of extracting the silver, lead and zinc. I have further witnessed the attempted nationalisation of the uranium province in Arnhem Land, surpassed only by the complete destruction or disappearance of our exploration industry which was formerly heavily involved in exploration for oil, gas and minerals in the Northern Territory. I have gone to great lengths to confer with the Chamber of Mines and their members as individuals at every opportunity. I regard my liaison with the Mines Branch as close and I take particular care to speak and confer with any organisation involved in the mining industry where I feel that I can be of support despite the fact that that support is only moral. It is most important that anybody in the industry be made aware of the majority party's attitude towards the industry, and I will take every effort and opportunity to instill confidence and to give our moral support to proposed mining developments.

The Federal Department of Minerals and Energy has not acknowledged the status of this Assembly but I am pleased to say that, despite this, local departmental advice is always forthcoming and encouraging. I do feel that I have achieved one thing as a result of my communications with the Minister, Mr Connor: I have always been able to get a reply and the reply is—"Don't call me, I'll call you". But there are industry heads and stock

exchange leaders in this country who don't receive a reply of any nature whatsoever from the Minister for Minerals and Energy. We have been recognised in that sense.

My colleagues, the member for Millner and the Executive Member for Education and myself recently completed a tour of Arnhem Land and made a close examination of the uranium province in its relationship to national parks, river systems and Aboriginal reserves. We took particular note of the financial contribution that each of these individual projects would make to the Northern Territory in the long term and also the possible environmental problems that would be encountered as mining operations developed. It would be foolish for us to say that there will be no repercussions from any development in Arnhem Land. History has proven that wherever man goes he leaves a mess of some sort behind him, whether it is beer cans or contaminated creeks. I have always endeavoured to promote the policy of the majority party and encourage mining in conjunction with environmental protection at every opportunity and have always stressed that under no circumstances will we support the rejection of a mining project so that total preservation of the environment may take precedence and this is something that some sections, and very minute sections, of our community would suggest that we do. In conjunction with the member for Fannie Bay, I have studied the future method of development of mining residential areas and the method of providing local government type services to these communities—who should pay what expenses and how they should be operated. It is my understanding that the honourable member will shortly release a statement of the majority party's attitude in this field and it will probably be one of the most important statements to be made on local government in many years.

It is my intention to introduce into this Assembly revision of the Mining Ordinance and Regulations as proposed in the Morley Report. The Morley Report was commissioned by the mining industry in the Northern Territory in conjunction with the Mines Branch and its sole purpose is to bring the safety and operational requirements into line with the standards enforced in other states and indeed other countries, such as Canada and South Africa, which 2 countries would perhaps be world leaders in the mining field. The new ordinance and regulations will enable the enforcement of laws that have not

previously been covered in our legislation because of the advancement of technology and one such area would be environmental control on uranium production and uranium extraction. Needless to say, uranium has not been given a great deal of attention in the last 5 or 6 years, but legislation must be brought down to control the miners and prevent any environmental destruction. Preparation of this legislation has been going on for some time. I have no doubt that the bills will be welcomed by management and labour alike because it is in the interest of both parties to have many areas defined more clearly than they are at the moment.

The tourist industry in the Northern Territory has experienced several difficult seasons but there is no doubt in my mind that in the long term tourism is going to be one of our most stable industries and should receive the support of this Assembly at every opportunity. The majority party has had preliminary discussions with the Minister for Northern Australia and he has agreed that this function should be transferred to the new executive as soon as possible, particularly in the light of the fact that it is non-political and that it would be in the best interests of the Territory to have it transferred. In consideration of this, I have asked my own party for legislation amendments to be prepared to cater for this transfer. A department officer is currently preparing for me a management structure and budget proposal so that I may submit to the tourist industry in the Northern Territory a proposal for the method of operating any new tourist function under the local executive. This will probably be presented at a meeting of the Darwin Tourist Promotion Association next week and work will continue quietly on it until the Minister has given the green light.

I have involved myself wherever possible in attending and addressing regional tourist promotion associations and in some cases Chambers of Commerce that handle the affairs of tourist promotion in certain communities. It has been difficult for me to establish a contact with the Bureau and the Northern Territory Government Tourist Board. I hope that liaison in this area will improve and I can assure you, Mr Speaker, that I will be working to improve it.

Earlier this year, I had the pleasure of convening a meeting of bus operators in Melbourne, the first time the bus operators coming into the Northern Territory had ever sat

down around a table together. The purpose of the meeting was to try and form them into a body that could be represented by one spokesman so that the organisation could send their spokesman to Darwin to speak with government officials and try and have the permit system eased so that bus operators who had committed themselves to tours in Darwin over a 12 month period before the cyclone could in fact carry out these tours. The meeting was quite successful and it resulted in a further meeting with "Supremo" McHenry and bus operators from Melbourne who came to Darwin for this event. We did ultimately see a slight relaxation in the laws controlling the entry of people into the cyclone disaster area.

Tourism in the Northern Territory is very closely associated with the Reserves Board in the sense that the Reserves Board controls the area that the tourists like to see. In the past, there has not been a great deal of communication between these two bodies and it is my intention that a close liaison should be established as soon as possible because it is in the interests of both parties that they know what each other is doing. Later this month, I will be attending a meeting of state and federal ministers of tourism in Adelaide as an observer. I am hopeful that my representations to this body will enable any future Northern Territory representative to be admitted as a fully fledged member of the council. The admission of the Northern Territory to this conference has been assisted by the Minister for Northern Australia, Dr Patterson, and I acknowledge his assistance with gratitude; he has been most helpful in this instance.

Forestry operations are continuing in the Northern Territory although on a reduced scale. Since last Christmas, forestry activities have been somewhat changed. The 400 hectare annual planting program which was divided between Gunn Point and Melville Island has been transferred completely to Melville Island in order to take some of the work load off Darwin based staff. The forestry section of the Department have been appointed principal agents for the Darwin Reconstruction Commission in all landscape design and development projects associated with the reconstruction of Darwin. The Gunn Point Prison Farm was located on the forest reserve to provide worthwhile work in forestry activities for prisoners. This is a continuing function even though no actual planting operations will be undertaken this year.

The major forest areas in the Northern Territory are located within Aboriginal lands and since the Aboriginal Land Rights Commission there have been some uncertainties regarding the future of forestry on these lands and the conservation and protection of the forest resources. There are some difficulties which can be foreseen through the terms of the present draft bill for Aboriginal lands in the Northern Territory. The forest resources of the Territory, if placed in the form of private ownership by Aboriginals, will be in some jeopardy which parallels the destruction of private forests in other parts of Australia. The original recommendations of the Land Rights Commission were that forests within Aboriginal lands should be leased to the forestry authority at a nominal rental and that any development within these forests should provide opportunities for Aboriginal employment and enterprise. Everybody in this Assembly will appreciate that it will be increasingly difficult to get people to carry out forestry operations and planting programs when the people who are doing the work are in full knowledge that the whole thing could be a complete disaster and be destroyed from want of upkeep and care.

The activities of the Water Resources Branch have come under pressure in the Northern Territory as a result of the cyclone. The assessment, development and control of the Territory's water resources is the job of the Water Resources Branch which is operating under difficult conditions in Darwin as its former offices have not yet become available since the cyclone yet it is carrying out all its normal functions. The great majority of its staff returned to work after the cyclone; a number were sent to work from the Alice Springs office; a full time presence has been established in Gove and Katherine and a small number engaged in computing work are temporarily located in Canberra. Because of the continued shortage of established positions, concentration has been given to work of the highest priority. While the Northern Territory is relatively undeveloped, it has a considerable proportion of the nation's surface water resources. The Top End has considerable potential for water resource development subject to viability of projects making use of water. In the central part of the Territory, ground water is the main source and constant efforts are necessary to ensure its proper development to match the needs of the people. Work is in progress on projects aimed

at improving the current water supply and ensuring adequate reserves for the future of a large number of localities. These include Papunya, Warrabri, Tennant Creek, Alice Springs, Katherine, Pine Creek, Darwin and the uranium province.

Monitoring of the water supply and quality at Northern Territory communities is continuing and pollution studies in particular localities are being undertaken. An intensive study is continuing of possible effects on natural water systems of mining activities is planned and operated to cause the least practical harmful effect on the environment. This will be a continuing project for many years and a project which I feel will have the support of every member of this Assembly and in fact the support of every Territorian.

The demand for advice and assistance to land holders under the Water Supplies Development Ordinance continues. Most of this relates to bore locations and development but some interest is being shown in surface water supplies. A large part of the Water Resources Branch activity relates to the collection and interpretation of data on water resources. This includes the operation of a comprehensive stream gauging and rainfall recording network, data from which is used in flood prediction and investigation of water supply for domestic, pastoral, agricultural and industrial use. Regional studies, such as the Daly River and the McArthur River regions, will continue as a matter of course. Another activity of the branch through its laboratory services is the operation of an air monitoring network and assay and geochemical services of the Mines Branch.

In addition to this, I have been advised by the Minister, Dr Patterson, who has again been co-operative that I have his leave to attend the state and federal ministers' conference on water conservation to be held in Western Australia later this year. The meeting had earlier been set to be held on 17 July but because various state ministers involved were unable to attend on that date it had been put back.

In concluding, I would just like to endorse the remarks of the Deputy Leader in saying that I too am glad to see the Majority Leader off the Darwin Reconstruction Commission because the members of the Executive look forward to working with him more closely as a result of the time that he will now have available.

Mr TAMBLING: It is very timely that we are considering the constitutional development of the Northern Territory, the various aspects of what is happening in our community, the relationships between the various statutory authorities such as the Darwin Reconstruction Commission, the Federal Cabinet and the Federal Minister's operations in the Northern Territory, and our own Executive performance this year. I have taken the assumption that the Joint Parliamentary Committee report will be endorsed and in many areas I have acted in anticipation that most of the recommendations in clauses 70a and 70b will be carried out. Likewise, where the Executive responsibility for housing, urban land, town planning, recreation and culture, and local government has indicated that it will be my responsibility to administer these particular areas, I have wherever possible endeavoured to involve myself within the constraints that are imposed on us in being as effective as I could in each of those particular situations. I have the oversight of some 24 ordinances operating in the Northern Territory at this time, some 22 statutory authorities and miscellaneous boards and it is necessary that I have a strict and constant contact with some 5 administrative branches of the Department of Northern Australia and some 4 Federal Ministers who have an influence in the Territory in the areas in which I have an Executive responsibility.

The development of a parliamentary executive in the Northern Territory is a completely new system in that we have to find our feet and develop as we go and I believe that the performance to date has been very creditable, particularly when you look at it in the light of the dreadful and shocking office facilities that we have had to operate under and, for example, the fact that my secretary commenced duty today. We have not had the opportunity to operate with the resources and the scope of assistance that we would have liked and this has meant extremely personal demands on all members of the Executive. Similarly, the Administrator's Council has maintained a very high level of performance this year in that it has acted as an executive council would in a state. Many of the outstanding matters which were quite lengthy in their considerations when we took over have been cleared from the agenda papers of the Administrator's Council and are now finding their way through performance as they should. I have recently established a personal

contact with the ALP spokesman—so-called, seeing that he has no parliamentary representation. I don't envisage that this is going to be a continuing close, brotherly type arrangement. I am sure that he is going to come out soon with some big hammers and start hitting me over the head and starting to look closely and critically at the legislation that I will bring before this House. So far this year, I have brought 6 ordinances before this Assembly for consideration.

In the aftermath of Cyclone Tracy, I believe that all members of this Assembly took very strong and prominent roles of leadership throughout the Northern Territory and it was essential and timely that they did so because there was not available within the former bureaucratic public service similar qualities of leadership. I believe that the community accepted these areas of responsibility and they increased their involvements with it. If I can be a little more specific in areas where I have had a close arrangement of this nature, I will point to involvement with the various resident action groups that sprang up spontaneously and necessarily throughout the community, the interstate survivors clubs, the conferences that were conducted in all state capitals. I think you would find that an executive member of this Assembly made a point of attending. Similarly with the interim citizens' council advisory body when it was necessary to start being public and critical. The leadership of this Assembly was very prominent in that area. There was the formation of the Darwin Disaster Welfare Council to look at the social issues and the performance of various groups in sociological areas—I have had a very close working relationship with the Executive Director there, as have several other members.

In looking through a list of voluntary agencies and community organisations, I stopped the other day when I got to 45 groups that have again reactivated in the Darwin Community and I believe that it was my responsibility to be very close and to be very influential in helping those particular groups become operational. In fact, I would say with a great majority of that 45 I have had a very close working arrangement this year. Similarly, to ensure that the vital fabric of this community is continued, I have made a point of keeping a strong liaison with groups such as the Master Builders Association and the various commercial organisations of the town.

I won't speak for long on Darwin reconstruction because I believe in the next few

days we are going to have ample opportunity to appraise particular organisations but I would like to say that our involvement in this area has been a very time consuming and often frustrating exercise. I think, when the historians get down to it and they finally get access to minutes of the various meetings of the interim commission and the commission, they will see that the elected representatives of this community have always been the prophets of what the community wanted; they have spear-headed the attacks for change but they have often been thwarted for some particular reason by the in-fighting, be it at an Australian Government level or be it just a bureaucratic red tape lack of performance.

One of the areas where I participated with the Majority Leader and the member for Port Darwin earlier this year was at the Australian Senate when it was necessary to look at the way in which the Darwin Reconstruction Act was being framed and I'm sure that if people take a close look at the Hansards of both this House and the Senate they will see that many of the problems that we are often alluding to today were brought out by the three of us at that time. I believe we achieved good results in that we did get a number of amendments made to the Darwin Reconstruction Act and to the way in which the DRC was to have some form of participation in this community. The weight of planning objections and submissions was very onerous for months because of the way in which these proposals were prepared and I believe that it was the executive responsibility that I had to perform in making sure that at least 1200 objections finally did come forward and I believe more than three-quarters of them were subsequently recognised. The Department of Housing and Construction has and had a very strong role to play in the remaking of this community. It has the resources of fine professional people. I believe that even the sociologists' reports of the early months of this year, when we look at them in hindsight, gave many of the forecasts. In particular Dr Zula Nittim in her early visits to Darwin this year foresaw many of the problems with the structures that were brought about.

In the area of housing I have been able to develop a very close and good relationship with the Northern Territory Housing Commission. This commission has already accepted the recommendations of the Joint Parliamentary Committee report and has

established and is very keen to keep going a relationship with this executive and with constitutional development because the Housing Commission in the Northern Territory is charged with providing housing for people of limited means. When you look at the composition of that particular population and you look at their housing requirements and the costs of housing for the Northern Territory, it is very obvious that the Northern Territory Housing Commission has a very vital and full role to play. It is to be hoped that through party policy in the term of this Assembly we will be able to propose forms for a single housing authority utilizing the Northern Territory Housing Commission. The executive officers of that commission have all looked to us for leadership and I believe they have got it.

Other areas where we will propose legislation will be in the areas of strata titles, building societies and housing co-operatives. These are already in the drafting stages and early discussions. The housing co-operatives have often sprung up—I'm aware of three—in the Darwin community in recent months as the need arises. I have had a hand in helping these groups formulate their early constitutions and let us hope they will be compatible with what we can propose through legislation in time.

During the days of the emergency, a special committee was formulated called the "Accommodation Co-ordination Committee" to advise on the priorities of housing for both the public sector and the private sector. My membership and the membership of the member for Stuart Park on that particular committee I believe has played a very strong role in ensuring that community housing and temporary housing accommodation needs have been stressed and brought out. Also on that particular committee are representatives of government departments, the Housing Commission, the city corporation and various unions. The policy of that committee has many times influenced the Department although it has not always had the executive authority to see the performance carried out; the red tape has often tended to over-ride many of its decisions but nevertheless it has been a very demanding but a very effective committee.

I am particularly concerned in the area of Aboriginal housing throughout the Northern Territory. I have recently made visits to Yirrkala, Hooker Creek and Wave Hill where

I have been able to observe at first hand the particular types of housing that have sprung up. And at this stage it is purely a Department of Aboriginal Affairs policy. Those communities do not have a legislative framework within which to operate or to work very effectively and, whilst I'm aware that the Minister for Aboriginal Affairs recently indicated that he may introduce in the Federal Parliament legislation to look at Aboriginal housing, he has not even bothered to talk here yet; he has not consulted the Northern Territory part of the Aboriginal community nor the Executive of this House where such legislation should take place.

In June of this year, I was invited by the Queensland Minister for Housing to attend the State Housing Ministers Conference in Brisbane. This again was a political milestone in that it was the first time political representation had been established on such an important body at such an important level. At that particular conference, the Northern Territory Housing Commission was admitted to membership of the Research Advisory Committee to the Australian Housing Research Council, again an important link and, I think, an important precedent looking to the future. At that conference, I was able to establish contacts with the Federal Minister for Housing and with the state ministers for housing. I am hopeful of obtaining membership to an indicative working party on housing that has been created by the Federal Minister for Housing.

In the fields of urban land and town planning, despite the activity of the Darwin Reconstruction Commission for the close environs of the Darwin area and all the frustrations and extra workload that it has brought, I have been able to maintain a very close relationship with the Department of Northern Australia's town planning officers and we have had a number of discussions with regard to continuing policies for other urban centres throughout the Northern Territory. The Nimmo report has been tabled in this Assembly and I have issued drafting instructions in an endeavour to implement those recommendations as soon as possible. The rural land areas out of Darwin have been subject to planning proposals for some time. You will recall that the 32 square mile acquisition took place some time ago and was the subject of extensive debate in the former Legislative Council. It has been essential to keep a very close eye on the development of

consultant's reports in that particular area and, as the Majority Leader's deputy, I did attend a number of Darwin Reconstruction Commission sub-committee meetings for this purpose and I believe that in the very close future a rural land area policy will be determined.

Aboriginal land claims are another area that has suddenly come to a degree of prominence that we had not anticipated so quickly. Before the implementation of federal legislation to implement recommendations of the Woodward Report, an Interim Land Commissioner has been appointed to look at the claims of Aborigines throughout the Northern Territory and you will be aware through the press of a number of these claims having already been heard. We gave an early document to that interim commission on principles that we saw essential for urban land claim areas and at the moment it will be important to continue with these as they now extend into pastoral, rural and reserve areas throughout the Northern Territory. Again, it has been unfortunate that there hasn't been a great deal of consultation.

The Department of Northern Australia has also been concerned for some time about the zoning provisions of the current Town Planning Ordinance. I am conducting a number of detailed discussions at the moment with them in an endeavour to modify and to bring those proposals into a better form, if not perhaps a complete re-write of the Town Planning Ordinance. Also related to the urban land issue has been the Select Committee on Land Price Stabilisation where, fortunately, the Australian Senate has referred to us for consideration the bill that was proposed in the Federal Parliament. That report has been tabled in this House today.

In the area of local government, many members will be aware that I had a previous background involvement in local government and I have kept up those close contacts. In Darwin, local government has been faced with extreme difficulties and problems in the extent of carrying out its full normal municipal function. However, I think they have now jumped the hurdles. I think they can see the way to returning to a full influence and a full execution of the role that they should play. In fact, in the last few days, I have had some five requests for legislative consideration forwarded to me by the Darwin city council. I have made a number of visits to Alice Springs and on each occasion have met with the

Mayor and the Town Clerk. Katherine and Tennant Creek were in 1974 looking forward to offers of local government at appropriate levels, at appropriate timetables, at appropriate budgets. The happenings of this year have perhaps delayed some of those implementations, but I see no reason why we should not continue to press for early introduction of full local government in both communities. The Katherine situation has the advantage of perhaps linking with a rural type shire and perhaps that may be the best way. We have a number of discussions with members of that board looking to the future. As mentioned by the Executive Member for Resource Development, he and I and members of the Tennant Creek Town Management Board and the Department of Northern Australia's Local Government Branch recently undertook a tour through the mining shires of central Queensland. This gave us the opportunity to look closely at the provisions and the types of legislation that may be necessary to implement local government on a shire type basis for Tennant Creek where we can set up appropriate systems to ensure that the mines and developers in those areas contribute fully to local government and the way in which they should be implemented.

The recreational and cultural groups in this community always go on doing their job because they are detached from any official forms of red tape. The Museums and Art Galleries Board, the Arts Council, the Brown's Mart community arts project, the various youth groups in Alice Springs, Tennant Creek and Katherine, and other community organisations like this, have kept me fully informed of all of their operational programs, their effective projects and their particular problems. Wherever possible, I have attempted to act as their intermediary with, I believe, very good results.

It is very obvious that the Northern Territory is going to go through an even faster period of change in the next six months. Not only is it having to struggle with weather problems, seasonal problems and with reconstruction activity, but it is also now going to progress to a much greater degree of autonomy through political and constitutional developments. I endorse the remarks of the previous speakers. I believe that it is timely that we have noted the comments of the Majority Leader and the efforts that he is taking and, whilst it has been indicated that I may be nominated for membership of the

Darwin Reconstruction Commission, I perhaps look at that with very mixed feelings, but I will certainly endeavour to bring to bear in that group extreme pressures representing what this community wants. I believe that the area of the Darwin reconstruction activity will be fully compatible with those responsibilities that I am currently answerable to you for.

Miss ANDREW: In rising to support the motion, I would like to say a few words on executive responsibilities in general and my own portfolio in particular. I feel that the history of executive positions in the Territory has been one of creation and development of the respective portfolios, initially situations of ombudsman-like activity. Steps have been taken both individually and collectively towards initiation and implementation of policy which will lead to the development of this Northern Territory in spite of the lack of encouragement, in fact ignorance in some cases, by many federal ministers and bodies of our existence. The executive positions, while receiving a high level of support from the people of the Northern Territory, have had to develop relations with various departments which have not always been receptive. During my days and nights in the Evacuation Centre immediately after the cyclone, I developed valuable relationships with members of various departments, particularly education, and the experiences of that period have provided an excellent communications base in my dealings with these people. I would like to take this opportunity to thank the people within the departments with which I most come in contact for their assistance and support.

The problems of my portfolio in its every aspect are the problems of a multicultural, multilingual, geographically isolated and geographically dispersed society. This is particularly embodied in education: the problem of children coming to the Territory from many states and overseas; the problem of centres self-contained and isolated from each other; the problem of accommodation both in terms of schools and in terms of housing teachers; the problems of isolated children whether they be on settlements, stations or in general camping areas with limited mail facilities or any form of communication; the problems of Canberra control with Big Daddy constantly looking over the shoulder endeavouring to provide a system for people 2000 miles away. All these problems were enlarged and accentuated by cyclone Tracy

and are wound up in terms of the most outdated pieces of legislation, the Education Ordinance and the Schools Committee Ordinance. The close liaison which I have enjoyed with the Education Department has resulted in some developments towards the remedying of these problems. A large degree of regionalisation has occurred, partly accelerated by cyclone Tracy, with definite responsibilities being centred in Alice Springs, and a recognition of differences in culture between Aboriginal and white settlements in the formulation and operation of the semester system. Children are now taught while they are in the settlements and during the months while they are going out into the bush areas the teachers, as well as the children, enjoy a vacation.

The provision of housing officers, whilst it is at this stage rather miniscule in the overall problem of accommodation, has shown some signs of alleviation of this area. For example, under certain regulations, flats have been rented and maintained over the long school holiday period, providing a continuing source of accommodation for teachers.

In the field of teacher recruitment, I have spoken at length with the Schools Commission and with the Minister for Education outlining the areas where I think the Territory must update itself in gaining teachers to man its schools. A certain contractual basis would entice people to areas where communications and accommodation are particularly appalling. Secondly, an updated public relations type recruitment program must be considered and implemented in the near future to cover the problem of shortage of school teachers.

New schools in the terms of Tennant Creek East and the proposed Saderdeen High School—I have had close consultation with the Department in these areas. Along with the member for Alice Springs, we presented a written submission to the Public Works Committee hearing in Alice Springs on the Saderdeen High School proposal, applauding the idea and encouraging them to build the school as soon as possible. Other submissions, one covering education of children in isolated areas, will be presented to the Senate Committee on Education, Science and the Arts. I hope to present some time in October a second submission to a Select Committee on Specific Learning Difficulties. The involvement of the Assembly in education at the level of presentation of submissions is vital because it is one body that can, hopefully,

speak for the Territory. So many submissions, in my experience, are presented strictly from regional centres.

The Education Ordinance, whilst an outdated piece of legislation, would have to remain so for a time until greater Territory control can be organised in that area. However, the Schools Committee's Ordinance is apparently undergoing a thorough overhauling. I have sent papers and had discussions with most school committees around the Territory and I eagerly await their responses to my proposals for a much more realistic ordinance on the subject of school councils.

After discussion with the Minister for Education earlier this year, a meeting was held to set up an Advisory Council on Education in the Northern Territory. This is the first progress towards the establishment of a people's say in Territory education. A second aim of this body is to integrate the education program within the Territory ranging from pre-school through primary, secondary to the embryonic tertiary institutions which we have. The meeting was a great success and the resolutions are currently with the Minister. These resolutions advise him that it is the wish of the people in the Territory for a committee of 15 people interested in education, receivers of the educative product or producers of it, to form a committee to advise the Minister on policy making and planning of education in this area. I think that this is perhaps the greatest achievement in the Northern Territory field of education that has been achieved. Up till now, the constant problem of distant landlords overseeing an area which they know very little about or in some cases have very little interest in has been disastrous. I commend the Department of Education and the Minister on the formation of this committee. As the executive member responsible for education, I hope that I will be deeply involved in its progress towards a commission of education.

On the subject of rent and price control, the Price Control Ordinance has remained idle for a large number of years and, indeed, was only implemented in 1972. It has created problems such as South Australia encountered around the late forties. Inflation and the lack of freight subsidy have increased prices even more drastically since the implementation of this particular body. I am not about to be involved in an argument on protection versus free trade, however, I think that there are

definite areas within this legislation which need review. Since last October, I have endeavoured to consult as many people as possible on the subject of the review of this legislation. Scheduling of building materials and other items have occurred since last October, however, in spite of this a review of all items scheduled will be forthcoming. I would like to foreshadow that at this sitting I will be presenting legislation for a tribunal of review with complete authority and much greater accessibility than the Administrator's Council has had in the past and I hope that this will bring a direct involvement of both business people and consumers.

In terms of rent, I have been involved since last October in a series of deputations from various areas of the community. Inadequacies that stunt the development of real estate exist in this legislation. They too need review.

I would like to commend the people from the water, electricity and sewerage services on their performance immediately following cyclone Tracy. Whilst my involvement with them has been limited because of their direct involvement with Housing and Construction and so coming under the responsibility of the transport portfolio, I have been involved at a consumer level in terms of charges for water and electricity and the alleviation of some problems since the cyclone. I reiterate a warning I issued some weeks ago of the danger of the electricity wiring in Darwin at the moment. The deaths that have occurred in recent weeks are a result of total lack of understanding and consideration by several selfish people in the community and I hope that it won't occur again. We must all take care and I do again commend these people on the job they have done.

Consumer protection legislation is totally inadequate for the protection of the public. They have no real power and are desperately in need of the new legislation which has long since been promised by the government. This legislation, I hope will be forthcoming before the end of the year. However, I commend the council on the excellent work that they have done in protection against bad services and prices with the restrictions they have had placed on them legislatively. In spite of The Trade Practices Act and Northern Territory Ordinances covering various areas of their field, these people have in many cases intercepted very bad treatment of the consumer. I have been very closely involved with them and worked very well with the secretary.

The Land and Business Agents Ordinance which was passed last year is perhaps a good example of the problems of the lack of staff which this executive suffers. It is bulky legislation and, with no staff, no regulations can be made nor can any of the discrepancies be removed. We are similarly endeavouring to review this with alternatives in mind and we hope to give the legislation some status and credence. However, there is the problem of staff.

In the field of libraries, I have had fairly close liaison, especially down the track, with the people actually involved in the day to day operation. I find the conditions appalling and the complete lack of resources is an insult to the Territory—perhaps another example of Canberra control. Libraries are a field laid down for very early transfer to the Territory and I hope this will be forthcoming. I recently presented a submission to a Select Committee on Libraries urging immediate greater mobility and greater resources, urging them to use facilities such as schools which we have available, urging them to provide information centres which will entice people to use the libraries and so give them a community involvement. Finally I asked them to consider the people in the outback areas; perhaps air mobiles could be used. This could only be achieved by Northern Territory control and dispersal. Only yesterday I spoke to Dr Patterson and Mr O'Brien again urging them to take immediate action to remedy this disastrous library system.

Almost immediately after the election, a controversial piece of legislation, the National Parks and Wildlife Bill, went through the House of Representatives. This has been touched on by Dr Letts in his statement and I support his remarks. At the time, much lobbying by the executive went on at the Canberra level. This was followed by a survey, after the passing of the act, on the various parks in the Northern Territory. At all times, we had complete co-operation with the Department of Northern Australia. When the take-over of several parks—Kakadu, Katherine Gorge, Finke Gorge and Simpson's Gap—were advertised in the Gazette, on behalf of the majority party of the Assembly. I sent a submission opposing the take-over. I opposed Kakadu on the grounds of Aboriginal lands contained therein and the unreasonable and ridiculous boundaries. Katherine Gorge, Finke Gorge and Simpson's Gap are strictly areas of local significance. Under the United

Nations definition, they do not qualify as national parks. They are not unique and have some Aboriginal significance. These must wait until other legislation is passed in Canberra in terms of the Aborigines before any definite resolution can be made. The Reserves Board have my sympathy. They have been co-operative in their dealings in spite of their own internal problems as a result of this bill. I reiterate what Dr Letts said on the subject of the low morale and lack of understanding which they are receiving. This area has large constitutional development implications and will be very time consuming in the months to come.

After Cyclone Tracy, I was fairly heavily involved in the formulation of the environmental policy and the presentation of submissions in town planning. This involved a high degree of interaction with various people who, although not organised at the organisation level, were organised at the individual level around Darwin. Although the now to be adopted plans do not show a great degree of change, much of the work was accepted at the initial plan stage. Earlier this year Ranger released their environmental impact statement on their uranium reserves. After long discussions with Ranger and recently a visit to the mining area with the members for Millner and Barkly, I remain convinced that conservation can exist hand in hand with production and development. Mining is essential for the development of the Territory. Public opinion and general conservation concern has to safeguard the environment. This leads on to a plea to the government in Canberra to distinguish land uses of that particular area whether it be for parks, mining or other uses.

In Darwin since the cyclone, the litter situation has become disgusting. Immediately after, I find it is understandable but more recently, with the extensive clean up program organised by both government and voluntary organisations, people's tendency to continue after the pattern that they have been operating on since Christmas is simply appalling. There is totally inadequate enforcement in spite of the pleas of voluntary organisations and individuals. During this sitting, I will be extending the Litter Ordinance in an attempt to alleviate this problem.

Since last October, we have been reviewing the ittybitty environmental protection legislation covered by such ordinances as the Prevention of Pollution by Oil in Waters

Ordinance, Police and Police Offences Ordinance etc. Environmental protection legislation exists in other states and it is collective for protection against all pollution. It is not simply a nuisance and it is combining and stratifying all legislation on the subject. Noise, water, litter, gas etc are all considered and a good example is the Tasmanian legislation. We aim for the protection of the environment, for the control of pollution and the co-ordination of activities.

Last week in spite of the MMA strike I managed to get myself to Perth and attended the Australian Environmental Council. The Northern Territory contingent of two, the other being a member of the Department of Northern Australia, was very well received. Such subjects as a review of nuclear warships, litter tax, uranium, Concord and the interaction of the environmental impact statements between states and the federal government were discussed. In spite of several state/federal disputes, joint assessments were made, for example, over the wood chip and mineral export issue. This particular conference was both educational and vital to the development of the Territory in the total acceptance which we received.

I think the cries of the Territory could well be those of the mid 18th century American settlers "No taxation without representation". The doubts cast on our ability to run our affairs or even know our own minds are insulting. Slowly the recognition of the executive of this Assembly is being manifested. I trust this recognition will be of a more tangible nature in the ensuing weeks. I support the motion and applaud the decision taken by the member for Victoria River in resigning from his position as Legislative Assembly representative on the DRC. The time infringement this position has imposed has been immense. Because of the increasing demands by his other responsibilities, I feel his decision is both for the good of the Assembly and the executive. I wish his successor well.

Mr POLLOCK: We have heard a great deal about constitutional development and the Joint Parliamentary Committee Report and what is laid down in the report for early transfer to the Northern Territory executive. We have to face these facts fairly and squarely. At the moment, nothing has been transferred to this executive basically for executive responsibility. As the previous speaker has mentioned, we more or less play the part of an ombudsman between this

Assembly and those various government departments which we have liaison with through our portfolios and the public.

In my particular portfolio of social affairs, it has been remarked that I do not have one matter of controversy. They only cover the subjects of Aboriginal Affairs, public health, liquor, licensing, lottery and gaming, social welfare, prisons, censorship and so forth. In each of these fields, I have been able to obtain with various government departments a very good working relationship and, although I don't have any particular executive responsibility directly, I have been able to get a very good understanding with these departments, in particular the Department of Health which is a national body. That particular department is preparing a working paper, which is expected to be available in the next few weeks, on the establishment of the Northern Territory health commission. This document is eagerly awaited and arises from the health enquiry of a couple of years ago under the former Legislative Council. The Health Department does have an extensive legislative program which it desires to get to this Assembly in the coming couple of years. There is a great variety of legislation designed to bring health matters more in line with Australian standards. There is some feeling that the health area in the last few years has been slightly neglected by the former Council but we are hoping that, with the establishment of the health commission and the liaison which we are building up at the moment, the problem will be overcome.

Aboriginal affairs is an area of which the government has endeavoured to take complete control. In many respects, there has not been a great amount of liaison between that department and myself even though I have personally involved myself in quite a number of areas involving Aborigines. I have at least been recognised in my position by being invited to Wattie Creek next weekend for the transfer of the title deeds to the Gurindji people by the Prime Minister.

I have also been to Gove on two occasions to discuss with the Aboriginal people the subject of persons living on the mineral leases at Nabalco being able to move relatively freely into the Arnhem Land Reserve. I believe that these conferences between myself, the local member and the Aboriginal people will be quite fruitful even though they are quite protracted to the layman.

With reference to liquor and licensing, the former Legislative Council received a report on the liquor situation and we are waiting to produce for this Assembly a considerable amount of legislation for the establishment of a liquor commission and a general review of the liquor and licensing situation in the Northern Territory. However, the lack of staff is the principal problem in providing this legislation. Unfortunately, in the Northern Territory, we have a rather limited number of persons with expertise in preparing legislation and the time to be able to do the necessary research. Many matters of an urgent nature are sitting waiting at the moment. The executive member for Finance and Law is supporting me in my endeavour to get this legislation before this Assembly as quickly as possible.

One area in which I have had considerable negotiations since becoming the executive member for Social Affairs is in relation to our prisons. I have inspected all prison facilities in the Northern Territory since taking up my portfolio. I have been appointed to the Correctional Services Facilities Committee which has been recently established to inquire into what facilities are required, particularly following the cyclone in Darwin. The situation is quite serious. I was invited by the Administrator onto the interview board for the appointment of a director of correctional services. Even though this matter has been quite protracted, I am hopeful that an appointment will be made shortly and this will allow correctional services to move more in line with what the modern thinking people of today expect. It will also result in a considerable review of the Prisons Ordinance and Regulations.

The departments that I have been working with have been quite helpful. I am ready and willing and, I hope, able to get on with the job that will come across the table when constitutional development and the recommendations of the Joint Parliamentary Committee Report are accepted. Then we will be able to get on with the job and move forward with the Northern Territory.

Mr RYAN: Last, but I can assure you not least, I would like to support the resignation of the Majority Leader from the Reconstruction Commission. I feel that, as a Majority Leader, he has been compromised on many occasions to prevent him from commenting in the way that he would like to. It has also cut into the time that he has available for his other jobs as the executive leader. I feel that,

as a result of this, the Legislative Assembly will be able to contribute more towards the criticising and the direction of the Darwin Reconstruction Commission. I would like to also support the replacement of the Majority Leader on the Reconstruction Commission by the executive member for Community Development. I am sure he has been a great help to the Majority Leader and will continue to see that the needs and thoughts of the community will be represented on that body.

With regard to the executive powers, the situation is frustrating for the executive members to achieve their aims when they aren't able to exert any authority. It is more of an ombudsman type situation. I guess we have to put up with this until such time as the government decides to give us some powers but I would like to say again that it is very frustrating not to be able to give answers to questions, and not to be able to give directions to people to do what we as an elected body feel should be done. Like everything, I guess it takes time and I am prepared to wait for a certain amount of time and then I will have a lot to say if the executive powers put forward by the Joint Parliamentary Committee are not forthcoming.

In my particular area of transport and secondary industry, I have attempted to liaise with all the people concerned with the transport industry in the Northern Territory. It is a very important part of the development of the Northern Territory. We have been able to work with the Department of Northern Australia Transport and Planning branch who have been most co-operative in supplying us with information and most co-operative with regard to pending government legislation which is the result of discussion between that particular department and myself. They are willing to listen to our points of view and to amend the draft legislation where we insist that it should be amended. This points towards the formation of executive powers where members of the Department of Northern Australia will be transferring across to the Northern Territory Public Service.

In addition, I have been in contact with state transport ministers and the federal minister concerning problems with roads into the Northern Territory. I am afraid that I can't say that I have been successful in my attempts to get some clarification of the situation regarding the roads into the Northern Territory. We are reasonably fortunate that our roads are not too bad but the approach roads

to the Northern Territory leave a lot to be desired and, with the discussions that I have had with the Minister of Transport in Queensland and in South Australia, it does not appear that we can look to a particularly short term solution to this problem of access to the Northern Territory. However, we are making contact with these people and I am putting the point of the Northern Territory Legislative Assembly that we need access to the Northern Territory.

I visited all the major centres in the Northern Territory and have spoken to citizens of these towns with regard to transport problems. Recently, the Minister for the Northern Territory has been most co-operative in allowing executive members to attend ministers' conferences between the federal and state ministers. I was able to attend the Australian Transport Advisory Council Conference in Adelaide. As an observer, I found that the meeting itself did not come up with a lot of answers for the Northern Territory. However, the important fact is that, in attending these conferences, we meet ministers from other states and we get a chance to talk to the Minister for Transport who is yet to visit the Northern Territory. In the discussions, while we don't get particularly satisfactory answers to our problems, if we get the chance to put the arguments forward often enough, we may eventually get some sort of benefit from this. As regards the state ministers, there is not a lot of knowledge of the situation in the Northern Territory; they are not particularly aware of what happens up here. I am sure that, with executive members attending these conferences and explaining to the state ministers the sort of problems we have up here, we will further our move towards some sort of executive power status because they are particularly sympathetic when we talk to them.

At the ATAC Conference, we were able to put a motion which was supported unanimously by the state ministers that the Executive Member for Transport from the Northern Territory would be able to present papers to ATAC. This is important because the only representation we have on ATAC at the moment is the Department of Northern Australia. While we do not argue with a lot of the points that they make, there may be occasions when we do not agree or when we feel that something else should be mentioned. As a result of that support, we are able now to present to the Australian Transport Advisory Council papers to indicate the feelings of the

people of the Northern Territory and I think that this is a significant move in our steps towards executive power.

I presented to the Parliamentary Works Committee a submission giving the priorities as the major group saw them on the upgrading of the Stuart and Barkly Highways. It is important that we show solidarity when it comes to Public Works Committee hearings. This certainly gives the people on the committee an idea that we do have executive members and an interesting side issue was that one of the senators on the committee in questioning my evidence asked me for certain information and I advised her that I could not supply that information. Her answer was "Couldn't you get your department to get this information for you?" I was able to advise her that I don't have a department. This is an indication of the ignorance of the situation in the Northern Territory.

With regard to legislation on transport, control of roads, motor vehicles, traffic and ports, I have been keeping close liaison with the transport planning department. While a lot of the legislation is sponsored by them, it is only after a certain amount of discussion with me.

Commercial affairs is an area which does not involve a lot of legislation. I have kept in liaison with employer groups to try to find out what their problems are and to assist wherever possible. I advise them that I am available to attend discussions which may assist me to become more aware of their problems. It is my opinion that, without good solid industry in this town which is so overruled by the public sector, we cannot hope to achieve any sort of future prosperity. There will be a time when we will have to start production ourselves and, without a solid private sector, this cannot be achieved.

The branch of the Department of Northern Australia concerned with commercial affairs has been most cooperative. We have two completely new bills: one will be the Constructional Safety Bill and the other will be the Electrical Contractors Licensing Bill which will ensure that electrical contractors have the necessary expertise to carry out the type of operation that they are involved in. I am waiting for the transfer of the Machinery Ordinance from the Mines Branch to the Commercial Affairs Branch so that urgent updating of that particular ordinance can be carried out. I have had discussions with the

unions on this particular matter and we agree that there are areas of this ordinance which have to be upgraded.

The fire service is something in which I have attempted to become involved as much as possible. While realising that we do not have control, I liaise with the Chief Fire Officer and I have been involved in the Meeve Report which has not been acted upon and, in my opinion, can't very well be acted upon until such time as we are given some sort of power.

I have recently been given the responsibility for statements on Works. This is not particularly difficult as Works is the Department of Housing and Construction in the Northern Territory. Because of my association on the transport side, this is not a difficult situation and I will be able to liaise with the Department of Housing and Construction in any areas concerning the works situation.

I no longer have the industrial relations portfolio. It is only several weeks since it has been given to my colleague the executive member for Finance and Law. While a lot of people don't agree with what I did with regard to industrial relations, I must point out that the actions I took and the statements I made were based on what I thought best for the Northern Territory and I will continue to make statements on what I think is best for the Northern Territory because that is why I have been elected. I do not intend to be overruled by minority groups in any way, shape or form. I will continue to make statements on what I feel is important for the Northern Territory.

In the aftermath of the cyclone, I was the Legislative Assembly representative on the Disaster Committee. I was able to see at close hand the operations of the committee and it is fair to say that, under the circumstances, the people of Darwin performed well in the first few weeks after the disaster. I am still a representative, with the honourable member for Ludmilla, on the Disaster Committee and there will be an "Operation Warmup" towards the end of October to test our facilities once again to see if we could survive the same type of disaster.

I fully support the Majority Leader's resignation from the Reconstruction Commission and I feel that this can only result in the Legislative Assembly being able to apply to the Reconstruction Commission more pressure to

turn to turn this body into what it is supposed to be.

Mrs LAWRIE: The statement of the Majority Leader was relevant, informative and it has been used as a vehicle by the executive members to impress us, to give us a fascinating insight into their competence or incompetence, into their expertise or their ineptitude and into their communication with the people of Darwin and the Assembly or with their complete lack of dialogue. I shall demonstrate later that it varies greatly from executive member to executive member.

To get back to the Majority Leader's statement which I think should have prime importance in a debate of this kind, we see that he is officially informing the Assembly that the member for Jingili is resigning his portfolio and the member for Alice Springs is to assume the responsibility for Finance and Law. Let me say that I regret that the member for Jingili has seen fit to remove himself from the arena. I welcome, however, the member for Alice Springs' entry into the legislative process in gradual detail. I am only sorry that both of these people can't be a member of the executive at the one time. There is no proscription in that but it would simply mean that another member would have to resign. I make no apology in saying that, if we had to have resignations at an early stage from the executive, I am sorry that it had to be the member for Jingili. In my opinion, only a few members of the executive have really shown, since October, that they intend to work in their area of responsibility and that they can communicate with the people of the Northern Territory in a two way effort and say what they are attempting to do and show how they are attempting to do it and invite meaningful representation from Northern Territory people.

The Majority Leader is one of those people. Obviously, his workload is excessive. Because of this, I accept his resignation from the Darwin Reconstruction Commission and I think that it can only be of benefit because now he can devote that portion of the time he was devoting to the DRC to other areas which have been sadly neglected because of the lack of interest or inability of other executive members. Another person who has earned my confidence has been the executive member for Community Development although on many issues I have no intention of ever agreeing with what he says or the way he says it. However, I give him full marks because he is

out working in the community stirring up informed opinion, presenting it and being prepared to talk to other members of this Assembly who may not necessarily agree with him about what he is doing. It is a courtesy which is not often extended by executive members. Perhaps that is their prerogative and they certainly have a majority in this House. However, if they forge their own sweet ways without taking cognizance of local opinion, having been in the Territory in some cases a short time and not having travelled around, they are going to isolate themselves from the people they purport to represent and that would be most unfortunate. As far as it is unfortunate for them, I could not care less but, if it becomes unfortunate for the Territory, I do care most deeply.

I have spoken of my admiration for the way in which the Majority Leader and the executive member for Fannie Bay carried out their allotted tasks. Until his retirement, the honourable member for Finance and Law also exhibited an intense interest in his portfolio and an ability to disseminate this interest and to speak clearly and plainly and tell the people what he was doing and why.

In welcoming the honourable member for Alice Springs as an executive member, I would say that of all the members of the Country Liberal Party, with the possible exception of the Majority Leader, with whom I have had contact and discussion over the past 4 years, the greatest discussion would have been with the member for Alice Springs. That of course does not make him any better for it; it might make him worse, he might have been subject to some of my wicked ways. But the outstanding attribute of the member for Alice Springs is that even when he is disagreeing violently, he will listen, talk, communicate, argue, put his point of view and travel around the Territory to talk to the people. He does not sit in a castle saying "I am an executive member" or "Aren't I wonderful?", as we have had exhibited in these incredible speeches today. The honourable member for Alice Springs will get off his backside and get out amongst the people and actually achieve something. As I have said, I am only sorry that both the member for Alice Springs and the member for Jingili are not both on the Executive.

The Majority Leader talked about his decision to tender his resignation from the commission and spoke of the need for another Assembly representative. I hope that the

Assembly, through its representative, will take a much closer part in the activities of the Darwin Reconstruction Commission. The honourable member for Port Darwin and myself have asked many questions, not only at this sitting but at other sittings pertaining to the operation of that commission and it was rarely that we were able to get direct answers. They have to be referred to the commission. I don't regard this particularly as the fault of the Majority Leader; he has simply had far too much on his plate, especially with an inexperienced executive having to back him. For the future, whoever represents this Assembly on the commission has to understand that he is an Assembly representative, not the Country Liberal Party representative, not a person on the commission who is not required to report back to this Assembly. At the last sittings of this Assembly, I challenged the commission to show why its agenda items were not publicly displayed. Perhaps, Mr Speaker, in view of motions which are to be presented I should save further debate for a following day but, in acknowledging the tremendous work the Majority Leader has put into the commission and accepting his resignation, I do commend to honourable members my past comments. Whoever goes onto that commission is going to have a hell of a job and is going to be called to task by this Assembly—at least by myself and other sympathetic members if not by the Assembly as a whole—and will have to report most fully on what is happening in that incredible place, the DRC if it is permitted to continue.

The Majority Leader spoke of other areas of concern, the beef industry, primary industry, secondary industry; there would not be one person in the Territory who does not share his concern of the plight of industry generally. It is a pity, Mr Speaker, that you can't occupy two positions, one as Speaker of this Assembly and another on the Executive where you should have been from the beginning, dealing with primary industry and the problems facing this Territory. Primary production is not a field in which I have great expertise but, having lived here for many years and having travelled extensively through the outback and having many friends engaged in the primary industry right throughout this Territory, I have refused to be considered simply a Darwin based person. I am devastated at what faces primary industry in the coming few years. The honourable Majority Leader clearly is going to have to devote a

tremendous amount of time to this. I am only sorry Mr Speaker that he won't have your expertise to draw on.

I want to turn to some of the remarks made in the course of this debate by executive members. The Majority Leader spoke of his concern for wildlife and conservation. It is probably of interest to the Assembly and the people of the Territory that at a recent visit to Canberra, when both the member for Victoria River and myself were there, we obtained an interview with the present Minister for Conservation and Environment Mr Berinson. It is my opinion that to have contact in the company of the Majority Leader with this Minister was of benefit to the Territory and most particularly to the cause of sensible environment protection within the Northern Territory. I don't feel I can possibly speak on behalf of the Majority Leader, but from my assessment it was productive, informative and an indication of better things to come.

The Executive Member for Resource Development spoke of mining in Arnhem Land. I believe I am not being unfair when I précis his remarks as "Quick, let's have mining in Arnhem Land". Neither the Executive Member for Resource Development nor the honourable member with responsibility for the environment bothered to qualify it. Did they mean all mining in the Top End? That certainly was what one would gather listening to both of them. There was no qualification, no delineation of areas, simply, "We have a resource there, let us mine it". There was no concern at all for any other aspects, any other land use, any other potential which might be upset. This is not going to be an anti-mining crusade by me. Mining is a vital industry but if ever I get up and say "Mining in toto must be permitted", I hope it is the last speech I ever make. That is a most illogical one-sided view and one which I had never expected to hear expressed again in this Assembly. I hope that the Executive Member for Resource Development will qualify and amplify his remark or else say straightout what I believe he implied in his speech, that all mining should go ahead regardless.

Most members of this Assembly, at least those who have lived here a while, would understand that in the top end of the Northern Territory uranium mining presents special problems and those problems are either mitigated or enhanced depending on the area which one is talking about. I don't believe

that it would be proper for me to name companies at this point—I may in future—or to name areas. Suffice it to say that some mining can probably go ahead with a minimal disturbance to the environment but I am not yet satisfied that that minimal disturbance can be as closely controlled as we would hope. I will also state unequivocally that certain other mining in the Top End must never be allowed to go ahead, that the land is so fragile and the results would be so dreadful that to consider mining certain parts is reprehensible but, as I have tried to point out, simply to say "mine" or "not mine" in the Top End is simplistic. One has to define, if one has executive responsibility, the level of mining and the areas. I am surprised that the member with responsibility for environment did not make that distinction. It is perhaps understandable from a person engaged in resource development, naturally he is slanted towards that aim, but then resources also include tourism and other heritage factors.

The member for Fannie Bay made some reference to the magnificent leadership given by the Assembly following Tracy. What a lot of rot! If ever a place faded into the background, it was the Northern Territory Legislative Assembly, hand in hand with the Corporation of the City of Darwin, and that was most unfortunate. There were only a handful of Assembly members who actually went through the cyclone. I think there were 4 of us; there might have been 5. The others returned as soon as they could and we all did what we could, but no member of the Assembly—for God's sake!—did one bit more than any other Darwin person. I don't believe the Assembly showed the way and took control. Unhappily, it wasn't within their province to assume control, I wonder what would have happened if it had been? There was control, firstly, by the local bureaucracy, who did a pretty good job, seeing the place was an absolute disaster area in a literal sense and everything was catastrophic. They were closely followed by control by Major-General Stretton who worked under intense pressure until he got out. We then had a sitting of this Assembly when I believe the Assembly gave away its democratic rights in accepting the legislation put before it, meekly swallowing whatever the bureaucracy put up. We suffered for 6 months under that legislation—not simply the Assembly but the people of the Territory and that was the fault of the majority party. I will not listen without replying

to statements that the Assembly was heroic and magnificent. What a lot of rot! We were no better and no worse than any one else.

Mr Withnall: We might have been a bit worse!

Mrs LAWRIE: We might have been a bit worse.

The honourable member also interested me when he, as a sort of throwaway line, mentioned that it was Country Liberal Party policy to have a single housing authority. A single housing authority, as the member for Alice Springs would know, is something about which I have been trying to get some information for the past four years and so has he. I commend to the Executive Member for Community Development and Housing the thought that, having incorporated that little throwaway line in a recital of how great the executive members are, he could amplify it, come down to tints and tell this Assembly just what is the policy of the Country Liberal Party, how it is to be implemented, how it will affect low income earners, specialist groups and the proposed transfer of public servants from the Commonwealth Public Service to a Northern Territory Public Service because the unions are going to be vitally interested. I doubt if the honourable member would have made such a statement without some backing, and I can assure him that I am eagerly awaiting a detailed statement of the policy on housing.

The Executive Member for Consumer Affairs spoke of deficiencies in consumer legislation. I guess anyone who sat through the debates in the old Legislative Council must have uttered hollow laughter with me. Tom Bell set up a committee to enquire into consumer protection some three years ago. It was a joint party committee; it devoted a tremendous amount of time to the subject and produced a most commendable report. I respectfully suggest that the honourable member having that area of responsibility read the report and look back with the aid of the librarian and other committee members at the material which that committee considered and presented in its report. She would save herself and some persons working on her behalf a hell of a lot of work. Consumer affairs has been well-researched. The basis of legislation was prepared in the old Council and full marks to Tom Bell for the tremendous amount of effort he put into it.

The executive member having responsibility for prisons spoke of his appointment to Correctional Services Committee. That's great. All we need in the prison system is another blasted committee. I wish him well on it. I am aware of the committee's existence.

Mr Pollock: You are on it too.

Mrs LAWRIE: No, I am not on it. I would like to know just how many committees have been established for the purpose of considering what is necessary in a prison system. I will give him one thing: there has been a cyclone and Fannie Bay to all intents and purposes blew away. But I also commend to the Executive Member for Social Affairs the thought that he can save his committee a hell of a lot of work. Just ask the Librarian and the Clerk, whose staff are ready, willing and able to assist, for all the reports of the various committees since 1938—would you believe it?—when a report was put in that we needed a new jail. He will save the present committee a lot of work. I advise him to talk to the member having executive responsibility for Finance and Law who travelled around Australia with me as a member of the committee chaired by Mr Justice Ward, the member for Ludmilla as he was then, inquiring into the problems facing people in the prison system in the Northern Territory.

He also mentioned that he had been invited to sit on the selection panel for a Controller of Prisons. I will give the honourable member, if he wants it, a copy of the debates which took place in this Chamber on the rapid turnover in the merry-go-round of various controllers. He has my best wishes, Mr Speaker, in hoping that a controller be appointed soon, and that that controller will be the best man for the job. For God's sake let him get on with it because it is years now since we have had a controller.

He also mentioned, in another of those glorious throwaway lines by the executive members, a parole board. It is great to hear about the parole board too. The legislation for that was passed approximately three years ago. There have been questions asked at just about every sitting and in private: "Where is the parole board? Has the Administrator's Council considered it?" The honourable member for Victoria River will know full well that I am going to get to my feet and ask him that tomorrow morning. I have asked it at every session so far. Why stop now? The legislation went through three years ago so let us not

assume that, because we have the honourable member for MacDonnell sitting in the chair, all of a sudden the Territory, thanks to him, has a parole board. If it is ever established, it will be because of the instigation and forethought shown by members of the old Council who continue as members of this Assembly.

Mr Withnall: No thanks to him.

Mrs LAWRIE: To get back to my original comment, I thank the Majority Leader for this report on the state of nation. I think that it is probably a worthwhile exercise to have one at the beginning of every sitting, a resumé of what is going on. If it is going to be used by all the executive members to stand up and say what a wonderful job they have done, then I suppose that we will all fall asleep when the Majority Leader sits down. His report has relevance, it is to the point, and I have made it clear that some members of his executive have earned my respect for the way in which they work. I will continue to offer my close co-operation and any undertaking I give to them will be honoured but I believe the people of the Territory as a whole should have faith in their executive, even though I readily acknowledge the powers which have not been thrust upon them. Remember that the people of the Territory are paying a fairly large amount of money for these executive members. I think that before I can join in their mutual plaudits, I must ask them to produce a little more work and a little less talk.

Mr WITHNALL: When I heard this morning from the honourable member for Victoria River that he proposed to resign as a member of the Darwin Reconstruction Commission, it would be trite to say that I was glad. I had wondered why he had taken the job in the first place because it seemed to me that being a member of this Assembly and being a member of the Darwin Reconstruction Commission were two jobs that simply would not mix. More particularly did I think that, being a Majority Leader responsible for policy, so far as there is any policy in the Northern Territory, he could not mix with a Reconstruction Commission created by a Commonwealth act and dominated by the Commonwealth Public Service and the Commonwealth Government itself. Therefore I express my pleasure at his announcement that he would resign. I do not express my pleasure, however, at this moment that he thinks that the honourable member for Fannie Bay ought to be appointed instead. The criticism I

have just delivered against the appointment of the honourable member for Victoria River is just as effective a criticism if it is directed in respect of the honourable member for Fannie Bay. I do not see that any member of this Assembly should align himself by appointment to the Darwin Reconstruction Commission, particularly since I understand that the Commission has indicated and insisted that nothing that goes on at any meeting of the commission shall be disclosed to any member of the public. That seems to me to be quite ridiculous. That it is a fact seems also to be borne out by the fact that the honourable member for Victoria River has never reported to this Assembly or in public at any place, so far as I know, what has happened at the Darwin Reconstruction Commission. It seems to be a secret society and the honourable member for Victoria River seems to have gone along with that secrecy and has not been prepared to make any public statement about the decisions of the commission but has left any statements to the chairman of the commission itself. I for one disagree with that entirely. There are many things about the Darwin Reconstruction Commission that I disagree with, but I certainly disagree with the proposition that it should be a secret society.

I suggest, Mr Speaker, that it is quite improper for any member of this Assembly, whether he be an executive member or not, but especially if he be an executive member, to be a member of the Darwin Reconstruction Commission. No member of this Assembly was elected for this purpose and no member of this Assembly can possibly work and serve 2 masters. Members of the Assembly have certain objectives set out and they are not the same objectives as those of the Darwin Reconstruction Commission. Consequently, if you become a member of that commission and remain a member of this Assembly, then you are trying to serve 2 masters and it is a piece of nonsense to expect that you can. I think that, although the honourable member for Victoria River has not said so, this realisation may possibly have been 1 of the motives behind his resignation. I would think, that being the case, he is being a little unfair to wish upon the member for Fannie Bay the same sort of problems, the same sort of difficulties and the same sort of criticism that he is likely to get, at least from the opposition in this Assembly.

The Majority Leader announced the appointment of Mr Kilgariff as the Deputy

Leader and the executive member responsible for finance and law. I wish him well. I wish him well because he has a job which has to do about nothing. In point of fact, that is the whole story of the executive. The state to which executive authority has got in the Northern Territory today is much ado about nothing. At this stage, in spite of all sorts of assurances from the Minister and the Prime Minister and the Joint Committee, we have got exactly nowhere. I listened quite carefully to the Majority Leader to find out whether he had in fact got anywhere with the transfer of executive power but I find that he had no such statement to make. He did not even have any statement to make about any negotiations. Let's face it, when we talk about executive members, we are dealing with people who are trying to nibble at the edges of executive power of the Northern Territory and not succeeding at all because they have no executive power.

Statements made by executive members that they have been able to achieve this and achieve that don't represent any achievement at all. They represent only the fact that the Commonwealth Public Service is being gracious enough to talk to them, no more than that. When you look at the Urens and the Endebyes and the Whitlams of this world and listen to them, you know that they are dedicated to ensure, not only that there will be no regional government in the Northern Territory but also that the states themselves will be phased out of power and authority. Where are we likely to get? Against this background of lack of authority, lack of function, lack of a job to do, I found the speeches of the executive members to be a little false. I rather thought they were endeavouring to make good what they had done or what they had not been able to do in order to justify their position. It reminds me of Little Jack Horner who sat in a corner eating his Christmas pie because they are sitting in a corner in which there is no authority available to them and where the best they can do is to eat the humble pie of the Commonwealth Public Service. This afternoon and this morning, they put in their thumb and they pulled out a plum and said "what a good boy am I". That's what it is all about: people talking about what they have tried to do, people talking about what they would like to do, but people who cannot possibly justify what they have done because they have not had authority to take one single decision. They have not had authority to tell

one single person to do something or not to do something and I suggest that this will continue. This is the attitude that the Commonwealth Government insists upon and will insist upon. By making these remarks I am not criticising any individual member for this lack of effort; I am criticising the fact that we have 7 executive members who just simply don't have the jobs to do.

Mr Ryan: We present legislation.

Mr WITHNALL: I would agree with the honourable member for Nightcliff that some of them could not do the job anyhow but my chief criticism is against the fact that they simply don't have a job to do and that it is a sort of circus to ask them to get up and say what they have done. I don't know the answer; I don't know what I can do to achieve any result. It seems the Commonwealth Government is hellbent on a course which will leave the Northern Territory a sort of legislative playground for the Endebyes and the Urens of this world, a playground in which they can exercise all their socialist tendencies which they can't exercise anywhere else because they don't have legislative authority. It seems that nobody in the Northern Territory is going to be able to say in the future what should be done from day to day, but some person in Canberra will issue an instruction, perhaps months after it ought to be done, perhaps after it's much too late for it to be done at all, as to what will be done in the Northern Territory. I can only do what I am doing now and cry "For God's sake let us try to stop this sort of thing. For God's sake let us try and get it across to somebody at some time that we do have some concern for our own affairs, that we are capable of looking after them, that we don't need a member for any electorate in Victoria or Tasmania or Queensland or Western Australia to look after us. We want some sort of local autonomy here!"

I was the chairman of a select committee in 1958 which produced the first report on constitutional development in the Northern Territory. I said that the greatest single objective was the creation of a local executive. Although subsequent committees have seen fit to think that the legislative authority was more important, and a fully elected legislature was much more to be desired, I have never changed my opinion. Many years from 1958, we are still without any local executive authority. I would be glad to hear, not the sort of speeches that I have heard today, but a

speech from some executive member of this Assembly, if I can use that curious term, saying that he had been to see a minister of the Crown and put a proposition about the sort of authority we want here. I would have liked to have heard a statement that there was some sort of consultation with the Commonwealth Government, not just statements such as: "We would like to co-operate with the public service; we have done this for the public service". It seems to me that that sort of action only firms the attitude of the public service and the Government. If you are going to get power, get out and get it; don't sit down and wait for it.

Dr LETTS: I had not intended to speak on this debate that my earlier statement be noted but I think that I should say a couple of words, more by way of personal explanation than anything else, on the reference that the honourable member for Port Darwin made to what he suggested was a ruling of the Reconstruction Commission in some way binding the commissioners to refrain from speaking in public on the affairs of the commission. I say two things at this stage. The matter of pronouncements and statements from the commission has been discussed in the commission and some members had the view that perhaps only the chairman of the commission could make a statement relating to commission affairs. I have never subscribed to that ruling and I have made it quite clear in the commission that I am not willing to be bound by it for the very reason that I knew that I was going to be asked questions. I knew that matters would arise from time to time which it would be expected and proper for me to comment on.

The honourable member went further and suggested that I have never reported to the Assembly or the public on the affairs of the commission. I don't quite know where he has been for the last eight months but if he does cast his mind back, he will perhaps recall that the reversal of the original Town Plan for Darwin and the decision that rebuilding would take place in all suburbs and that the northern suburbs would not be excluded was made on a resolution, put forward by me and seconded by the mayor. That was public knowledge at the time as a result of a statement by myself and the mayor, even though it didn't get a great deal of prominence in the media. He may recall also that, on the occasion of the resignation of Sir Leslie Thiess, I made a statement which broadly

covered some of the ills and problems of the commission at that time. He must have been absent from the Chamber on the occasions when I have given what I was pleased to call an account of my stewardship in the commission. While the act gives the Assembly the power to appoint a member to the commission, it does not provide for any accountability for that member back to this Assembly. I have done my best to do what I think the members of the public and this Assembly would want in giving whatever information I could. Finally, as far as making information public is concerned, I know that the members of the media are aware that the admission of the media to part of commission meetings is largely the result of my activities to get that done. There are other examples that I could give.

Concerning his suggestion about the difficulties of an Assembly member also being on the commission, especially if he happens to be an executive member, I can't agree with the honourable member for Port Darwin. I realise that there is no compulsion under the act for this Assembly to appoint a member to be a representative on the commission. However, from my knowledge of the commission affairs, I believe that it is very important that this should still be the case. Some of the reasons that I put forward for that are that the commission, including some members who have no knowledge of Northern Territory affairs and virtually no knowledge of the existence of this legislature, from time to time attempt to do things under the act, by way of regulation or by way of notice, which would cut clean across the proper responsibilities of this body. Unless there is somebody there who has close knowledge of the legislation and the operation of this legislature, these things might improperly slip through.

The question of the replies to questions would be made much more difficult. They may be far from perfect now but if somebody outside this Assembly was responsible for giving the information to interested members, I think everybody would agree that it would be much more difficult. If it was somebody other than an executive member, there would be complications in providing information which members so eagerly seek. It is quite probable that from time to time this Assembly will be called upon to provide legislature requirements to amend Northern Territory ordinances or regulations to meet genuine needs that do arise from the operation of the

commission. If that is so, it is much more convenient to promulgate that legislation by having an executive member who is in charge of that area of legislation.

Finally, it would be the height of absurdity, and contrary to the very principles that I know that the honourable member for Port Darwin believes in, to say that we should appoint somebody who is not an elected member of the Territory. There are too many appointed people associated with this commission now. At least, if we had somebody from this Assembly, he will be an elected person and not an appointed person to add to some of the flaws which may be in the composition of the commission.

Mr KILGARRIFF: We have had a discussion to outline the state of affairs in the Northern Territory today. I believe the information presented has been genuine but, in some areas, it has not been accepted as such. There are one or two remarks that I would like to make. First, I would like to lend my weight to refute the suggestion that the Majority Leader has resigned because he cannot work under two masters. This is definitely not the situation. It has been clearly indicated that he resigned because of his workload and there is nothing else to it but that.

While the Majority Leader has been on the Darwin Reconstruction Committee, he has not operated in a secret way. I don't know, but perhaps he might have made public statements outside this Assembly. Certainly, within the Legislative Assembly, he has answered questions that relate to the Darwin Reconstruction Commission. In answering those questions, he has made public any information that he has. I don't think that we can say that his membership on the Darwin Reconstruction Commission has not been to the advantage of the Assembly or the people.

The honourable member for Port Darwin has said, and quite rightly so, that for many years he and others have been endeavouring to bring about constitutional change in the Northern Territory. I suppose that he has contributed as much as anyone else in this particular field and one of the targets has been a local executive. The local executive has been belittled this afternoon. Let us look at the situation and let us be fair under the present circumstances. The honourable members did not come in here to say that their little plums come popping out of a pudding or anything like that. They have come in to say fairly and

squarely what their situation is today and they have indicated the problems that they are experiencing. The point that the honourable member for Port Darwin has put up is legitimate to the extent that the executive members have not got executive responsibilities as a state minister has. The state minister has the executive responsibility for looking after a department. He has told us to go out and get them. The situation is that we have gone out and we are going out to get it, but we are in this interim period. We have gone to the Minister. There have been many discussions with Dr Patterson and it is through him that many of the recommendations that have been made in the Northern Territory report have been followed up.

Mr Withnall: Tell us about those meetings and those recommendations.

Mr KILGARRIFF: On several occasions, the honourable Majority Leader and myself have discussed the Northern Territory report and we have pressed for various things to be done. He has done these things. Before you go into an instant executive, some things have to happen. There has to be the setting up of an executive staff to back up responsibility. There has to be changes and legislative action has to be taken by the Australian Government. What has happened up to date? Through the representations of the Majority Leader, the Minister for the Northern Territory has agreed that certain things should be done to set up local executive staff. Advertisements have been placed throughout Australia and a large number of applications were received—over 200. There have been many interviews and recommendations are ready for them to be appointed. It is back into the Australian Government's hands now; it is back into the Minister's hands for the creation of these positions.

Mr Withnall: Forget about staff. We are talking about work and function. You must have the work before you have the staff.

Mr KILGARRIFF: There has to be this interim period of change over. I would be most happy if the honourable member would indicate during this meeting what further action can be taken.

Mr Withnall: You haven't told me what you have done yet.

Mr KILGARRIFF: There have been discussions with the Minister, the Minister has gone back to Government and the

Government has indicated that a committee is being set up.

Mr Withnall: Another committee!

Mr KILGARIFF: It is my understanding that in this next short period, if it already hasn't happened, recommendations will go to Cabinet about the Northern Territory report. I'm all for going out and getting them, but, in this particular instance, it is back in the Australian Government's hands. I fail to see what more action can be taken because this is in the corner of the Australian Government.

Mr Withnall: Give me the job.

Mr KILGARIFF: The executive members have been treated quite harshly but they are executive members in this interim period. When responsibility comes, the executive will be in a position, because of a smooth transitional period, of accepting that responsibility. In this interim period, these executive members are shaping up and preparing for responsibility in accepting the responsibility of a state like minister. Now in the meantime—

Mr Withnall: They can't accept the responsibility. They haven't got power to do anything; there is no responsibility without authority.

Mr KILGARIFF: What are the executive members doing now? They have the responsibility of overseeing the various items of legislation, liaising with government departments, liaising with Australian Government ministers so that the laws of the Territory come into this Legislative Assembly from the various authorities. This is one of their responsibilities. At the same time, in this interim period, they are taking the viewpoint of the Northern Territory to various Australian state ministers' conferences. Surely this must be of some advantage. We have many statutory authorities in the Northern Territory and the executive members are liaising with them. Don't let us belittle the genuine preparation for a changeover into a fully fledged executive. Don't let us water it down and say that it is a poor effort.

Mrs Lawrie: It is a poor effort.

Mr KILGARIFF: Let us recognise that it is a genuine effort in preparing for this further executive responsibility.

Mr Withnall: Let us not boast about it either!

Mr KILGARIFF: It is not a matter of boasting about it. It has been said in public

and in the press that the Legislative Assembly was not communicating and this is a genuine effort to let the people of the Northern Territory understand what was going on and what the executive members are endeavouring to do. I do not believe that when an executive member who spoke today used the first person "I" that could be taken as boasting; it is just a personal indication of what he is endeavouring to do.

I noted the concern of the member for Nightcliff, particularly when she was speaking of the select committee that she participated in concerning consumer affairs. She was making a comment on the honourable member for Education and Consumer Affairs' statement. The consumer affairs report has not been lost and, some two weeks ago, action was commenced to read much of the select committee report.

Mrs Lawrie: That wasn't mentioned was it? There was not credit given where it was due.

Mr KILGARIFF: This select committee report has now been referred to the honourable member for Education and Consumer Affairs.

Mrs Lawrie: You never mentioned it; credit where credit is due.

Mr KILGARIFF: I'm sorry. I have misunderstood the interjection. All I was saying was that this particular report on consumer affairs has not been lost. It has been referred to executive members and, hopefully, this and many other reports will be processed. I believe that legislation—seeing that I was on the committee too—is one of the most modern pieces of legislation on consumer affairs in Australia. The best of state legislation has been put into this. What happened was that the Government, seeing that this was excellent legislation, did not agree with it because it would mean the creation of a statutory body and they preferred it to go into a Commonwealth Department.

I do not think that there is much more that I can say on the matter. Don't let us belittle what is being done in this interim period and don't let us lose sight of the fact that two things have to happen: first, the Australian Government has to give the authority for the executive staff.

Mr Withnall: Don't worry about the executive staff until they have a job to do.

Mr KILGARRIFF: Hand in hand with this, I hope the Cabinet will give us authority to take over those various functions that have been indicated in the Northern Territory report.

Motion agreed to.

MOTION

Report of Select Committee on Stabilisation of Land Prices

Dr LETTS: I move that, notwithstanding the motion, "that the report of the select committee on the stabilisation of land prices be noted", was not moved by an executive member, the motion be considered as government business.

Motion agreed to.

MOTION

Inquiry—Lottery and Gaming Ordinance

Mr POLLOCK: I move that this Assembly, pursuant to section 4A of the Inquiries Ordinance, resolves that a board of inquiry or a person be appointed to inquire into, report on and make recommendations concerning all aspects of the administration and operation of the Lottery and Gaming Ordinance and, in particular:

- (1) the adequacy of the Lottery and Gaming Ordinance and related legislation and the administration of that legislation;
- (2) the needs of the racing industry in the Territory and the extent of assistance that is or could be provided under the legislation;
- (3) the conditions and controls under which the present off-course betting operates;
- (4) whether the present off-course betting system should be replaced by a totalisator system and the revenue potential of a totalisator system as against the present off-course betting system or that system paying a turnover tax; the relative benefits of each system to the racing industry and to the public;
- (5) whether the present tax per betting ticket is adequate and the desirability of its replacement with a turnover tax;
- (6) the uses and distribution of revenue raised under the legislation.

Dissatisfaction with the Lottery and Gaming Ordinance has been constant over the last fifteen years or so. The ordinance has been amended time after time to attempt to

achieve a more comprehensive and effective system. Unfortunately, this has resulted in a most complex piece of legislation and no one would claim that it provides the best or most efficient piece of administration. A large share of the administration of the ordinance is rested in the police and it is questionable whether police activity should be diverted to this field to the extent required. The Administrator and the Administrator's Council are also involved and it is often doubtful that the matters referred to either body merit that reference. Controversy over betting systems has raged for a number of years. The present system is for off-course betting shops, and that system has many supporters. There are also strong proponents of a totalisator system. A select committee of the Legislative Council examined this problem in 1971 but it was not able to give any firm opinion or direction.

The amount of revenue that can be or should be raised from gambling should be examined. At present, there is a five cents per ticket tax. There has been strong argument for a turnover tax to relate the tax to the size of the bet. Against this is the potential revenue raising abilities of a totalisator agency system. For the Assembly to make the best decision in this matter, we need better information. With respect, I do not believe that the Assembly has the ability or experience in gathering that information.

Again, there is the question of the distribution of revenue raised under the ordinance. The present requirement is for the fixed 65% distribution to the racing industry and 35% distribution to charities. Both aspects of the distribution are laudable but we must now consider seriously the use of revenues raised in the Territory. Revenues flow from the racing industry and reasonable support is desirable but should the revenues from this source be devoted to the extent of 65% to that industry or should some money go to other necessary Territory purposes? Should 35% go as a matter of course to charity or can it possibly be spent in other ways that lessen the need for charity?

I have only posed some of the difficulties and questions raised by the ordinance and its present administration. I do not consider the answers to the questions that I have raised are ones that members of the Assembly are best suited to find. I consider that the whole position needs examination by a person or body of persons with expert knowledge in this field

and the best way to get the use of that knowledge and experience is by the appointment of an inquiry under the Inquiries Ordinance. I move this motion in the sincere belief that, when the Assembly has an expert report on this matter, we will be able to sponsor legislation that will make for a more efficient control of gaming in the Northern Territory with the optimum return to the Territory of revenue and the most efficient use of the revenues. The inquiry will also fulfil an election pledge of this side of the House.

Debate adjourned.

ADJOURNMENT DEBATE

Dr LETTS: I move that the Assembly do now adjourn.

Mrs LAWRIE: I draw the attention of the House to a reply that I received to question No. 476 addressed to Dr Letts. The question was: "Does the Darwin Reconstruction Commission as a whole consider all tenders received or does it delegate this responsibility to a tender committee?" I received a reply to that part of the question but, unfortunately, the reply to that part is the only reply I have received and I shall now read it:

The Darwin Reconstruction Commission as a whole considers and approves all tenders and commitments in excess of one million dollars. For projects below one million dollars, certain officers within the commission are granted delegation to commit works following detailed reports on tenders received from commission agents. The agency for over 90% of such recommendations is the Department of Housing and Construction.

That is all very interesting but I would like to read out the rest of the question which has not been answered: "If the responsibility is delegated, who comprise the tender committee and who is the chairman? Are members of the tender committee able to nominate deputies to sit on that committee in their absence and, if so, on how many occasions have deputies sat on the committee and who were the deputies, for whom did they deputise, and what position was occupied by each deputy in or in relation to the Darwin Reconstruction Committee? Who is the deputy chairman of the committee and on how many occasions has he occupied the chair because of the absence of the chairman?"

The honourable Majority Leader would be one of the people who has stood in this place

time and time again and fulminated against the paucity of answers to legitimate questions. Not for one minute, do I think that the Majority Leader would willingly submit such a stupid answer to a quite detailed, considered and relevant question asked on notice. The answer is completely inadequate. All it says is that, for tenders under one million dollars, "certain officers within the commission are granted delegation to commit works". My question was most specific. If there is a delegation, to whom is it given? Are deputies of that delegation allowed to sit? Who chairs these meetings in the absence of the chairman of the commission; who sits on such a committee discussing tenders? No answer. I asked, "Have deputies ever sat and, if so, for whom were they deputising and who was chairing the tender discussion at which they were present?" No answer.

We have heard a lot of words this afternoon about open government, ha ha! about the Darwin Reconstruction Commission, about accountability, ha ha! I advise the House and the honourable member that tomorrow morning at question time I will repeat the question on notice, tying it also to questions I asked him without notice this morning and which he guaranteed to try and obtain information as to which members of the commission consider tenders, whether deputies have sat in that position and, if so, which deputies and of whom. And most importantly, who was in the chair when they first sat. This is legitimate information. There is no question of any confidence being breached. The public have a right to know and I as an elected representative of a proportion of the public have the right to question the activities of the commission properly and specifically. This is what I have done, Mr Speaker. The answer has not been forthcoming even when the question has been on notice with plenty of time for the couple of questions to be answered. I understand the answer very well; the answer is that "We will keep the information to ourselves; it is not your business".

I repeat for the benefit for the Majority Leader that for projects above a million dollars, the commission sits as a whole. I still want to know if deputies are included in that. As for projects below one million: "Certain officers in the commission are granted delegation to commit works following detailed reports on tenders received from the commission's agents". What officers? How do

they exercise this delegation? Has the commission taken the proper interest when the contracts are being let, even when tenders are being let for less than one million dollars? Or have they given staff members the right to commit taxpayers' money simply because it is below the level of one million dollars?

I will recall tomorrow morning at question time my question of this morning in respect of which the Majority Leader gave an assurance publicly that he would do all he could to obtain the answer in the shortest possible time. I will refer again to the ridiculous answer that I have received, one which never in a thousand years would I have expected the Majority Leader to try and justify because, of all people present, he more than any one else has had most to say about the way the bureaucracy would not give answers to elected members when he was the leader of the Country-Liberal Party and sitting where the honourable member for Port Darwin sits now. I ask him to hold true to his principles and answer my proper questions.

Mr KENTISH: Listening to the report from the Executive Member for Community Development this morning, I heard him mention the Aboriginal land claims in the Northern Territory. He did mention that this was a thing about which he could get no information or very little information. This matter is vital to all the people in the Northern Territory, not just the Aboriginal people and the part-Aboriginal people and the part-part-Aboriginal people. It affects the whole of the Northern Territory yet we cannot get the right information on this subject. It has been either a law or a rule that has applied for a lifetime in the Territory, that every application for land in the Territory—and I think it would apply in Australia—is advertised and made public in *Gazettes*. Here we find a departure from the time-honoured requirement of people applying for land in the Northern Territory. Claims are made—the last I heard there were 58 but it could be well up towards 70 now—without those claims being advertised or publicised except a very short while before each hearing. It has been a requirement that all applications throughout the Northern Territory are published many weeks in advance of the case being heard.

We have a shroud of secrecy surrounding these claims in the top end of the Northern Territory. We wonder what there is hidden. Nothing is being heard or publicised about them. In fact, it is rather a peculiar thing that

the government which is behind this, a year or two ago had a lot to say about the open government they would give to the people of Australia, when nothing would be hidden that was of any moment to the people. This is a thing of vital importance to the people of the Northern Territory and they seem to have moved away from their dedication to open government. In fact, what has been happening in the Northern Territory for some time past has been rather the reverse of open government, so much the reverse in fact that one of the things that is causing an exodus from the Northern Territory is the uncertainty concerning future government decisions. We are not getting the vital information. As a member of the Legislative Assembly, I have never had such reams of press statements. It is magnificent. I have basketsful of them about everything that you would like to imagine, but there is nothing in them; there is no real information there at all. Very seldom do I see anything I did not read in the newspaper a few days or a week before. You cannot find out about things the people want to know at all. We have this matter of the hidden land claims of the top end of the Northern Territory.

We wonder who is making these claims because the latest thing in the Territory is that everyone who can identify or wishes to call himself an Aboriginal becomes an Aboriginal. I have not claimed "Aboriginality" myself yet but there it is. This used not to apply but this definition has now come to us and it could apply to a full-blood Aboriginal or a part-Aboriginal or a part-part-Aboriginal or a part-part-part-Aboriginal. We do not know where it would end, but anyone in those categories which I have mentioned could claim land.

The Woodward Report defines very clearly that in the reserved areas, which are one fifth of the Northern Territory approximately, the claims for Aboriginal land would be confined almost entirely, if not entirely, to traditional owners who would almost always be Aboriginal people. We have no information about these claims in the top end. Where are they? Are they in Aboriginal reserves or are they a general application for all the free crown land in the top end of the Northern Territory? Where are they? Who is making these claims and what sort of land is involved? We do not know any of these things. The people of the Northern Territory and the Legislative Assembly should have more information

about this situation because land is vital to people of the Northern Territory.

We have seen in the past that the great Queen from over the seas in a moment of generosity created a great block of freehold grants from Darwin to Adelaide River—Queen Victoria's freehold land grants. This caused stagnation and difficulty with land in the Northern Territory for a hundred years or more. There was no obligation to develop or do anything with this land; there were no taxes to pay. I have some misgivings that somewhere along the line we may be heading for another of these Queen Victoria situations which could cause another hundred years or more of utter stagnation in the Northern Territory. Like the honourable member for Port Darwin, I have not any confidence in the wisdom and foresight of the Whitlams, the Enderbys, the Urens and Bryants and the people who come to the Territory to show us how to do things up here and to hide from us the truth about what is going on.

Mr KILGARIFF: Since December 25 when Tracy visited Darwin, there have been a hundred and one newspaper articles and very many reports on the overall damage caused by Tracy and the experiences of the people have also been documented. What I would like to do this afternoon is to put in Hansard an expression of my esteem for the Northern Territory Legislative Assembly staff because there is no record in Hansard of what happened to the Assembly and to the staff or of the work that the staff carried out in those two weeks. As the honourable member for Nightcliff said today, all people in Darwin did a tremendous job and it would be very difficult to pick out one person from another, but I would like to speak briefly on the situation as I saw it as a mark of personal esteem for the staff when I was the Speaker for a brief few months.

My notes read: "At the time of the cyclone, the thirteen positions on the Legislative Assembly establishment were occupied with three of the staff on leave. The Clerk was in Guatemala, one stenographer was in Fiji, and the clerk Hansard was on local leave. Most of the staff reported to the Acting Clerk immediately after Christmas Day. One who had reported also announced his intention of going to Mount Isa for the remainder of the Christmas leave period but was unable to return; a permit was obtained in January and he returned to duty. All other staff in Darwin returned to work on 30 December." I arrived

in Darwin after the cyclone. I came up to see what had happened to the Assembly and what had happened to the staff. I arrived on Boxing Day to find that the whole of the staff that were in Darwin had reported to the Deputy Clerk, Mr Thompson, to indicate that they were alive. The Assembly was practically destroyed. The building was practically unroofed; the ceiling was down; the offices were destroyed; the trees were blown down; the printing section was completely demolished with the debris having blown completely across the grounds; the breezeway and all those buildings on the sea side were in a very poor condition; the members' offices on the southern side were demolished; the lounge was unroofed and the ceiling was blown in; the members' offices in the "black hole" was in a very poor condition. This whole complex was in a very poor condition.

As soon as the ABC was functioning again, a call was put out to the staff and every staff member in Darwin came to work on Sunday the thirtieth. They came to work, many of them injured, many of them in poor condition and I wish it to be placed on record that the whole staff turned out to assist in doing some recovery work on the Assembly when they could well have been at home looking after their own problems. The men were asked to turn up, but not only did the men turn up but the ladies asked if they could come too and they did. Throughout that whole period until the date of the first emergency meeting on 3 January, the staff disregarded their own personal affairs, disregarded their home conditions and toiled here to get the Assembly into some sort of condition sufficient for an emergency meeting on the third. That work continued and we had a third meeting on 7 January. That was when the Clerk arrived back from Guatemala. He had been in the jungles of Guatemala. He asked whether he should come back; I requested that he return and forthwith he travelled many thousands of miles to come back and assist the Assembly. Over the ensuing period when the staff of many government departments in Darwin went down from 100% down to 50%, 40%, 30%, the staff of the Legislative Assembly remained in full force and there was not anyone missing other than a person who had been on leave.

The staff, like most people, suffered extreme home damage. With two exceptions, all houses occupied by the staff suffered major damage. Three were totally destroyed, five

were uninhabitable and urgent work had to be done on the remainder to make them at least liveable to some degree during the wet.

In my few months as Speaker, I have found it an experience to work with the Legislative Assembly staff and the least I can do now, at last being in a position to speak on the floor, is to indicate my esteem for the manner in which they carried out their duties.

Mr POLLOCK: My first subject concerns the previous Speaker, the member for Alice Springs, Mr Kilgariff. I feel that this is something perhaps which has been overlooked to a degree today in that we have not actually recognised the great amount of work that he has put into his short term as Speaker of the Assembly and the great drive that he put into it right from the day that he was elected, right through the crisis period over Christmas and up until a couple of weeks ago when he stood down from the speakership to accept the deputy leadership of the parliamentary party. I don't think that I need say more other than to record my personal appreciation of the work he has done and the advice that he was able to give me as a new member which I am sure that he gave all other new members and which gave them the confidence to move forward in their new positions.

The other matter I wanted to speak about briefly was raised this morning in question time and yesterday in the press in relation to police uniforms. I found the reply from the Commissioner of Police quite remarkable because, in all my experience with the force in the last ten years, it would be the first occasion when the uniforms for the coming year had actually been in Darwin or likely to be distributed on time. The police uniform entitlement comes on the first of January each year and in my long experience it has been in the latter half of the year that uniforms have actually turned up. To distribute 1975 uniforms on 24 December last year for this year was quite an achievement on past records. However, the situation is that police generally this year, in particular in the southern division, have not received their uniform entitlement. Recruits have been given piecemeal uniforms; I don't think any of them have received a full issue; they have been given a couple of shirts and a couple of pairs of strides to go on with.

In the southern division, it is generally accepted that on 1 May, owing to the climatic conditions—and this year we have had many

mornings with temperatures under 10 degrees for long periods—they wear a winter uniform. Not one winter uniform has been issued in the southern half of the Territory and that has absolutely nothing to do with what uniforms might have been here in Darwin on 24 December last year. It is now almost time to go back into summer uniforms in the southern region and not one winter uniform has been issued. As has been mentioned, during the recent visit of the Governor-General to Alice Springs and Central Australia, members for the sake of uniformity wore summer trousers and winter coats. I was approached by a couple of members one night to ask if I had a couple of spare coats or trousers that I might be able to lend them to help them along. In fact, at Ayers Rock the Acting Administrator congratulated the members of the Police Force on their new look uniform. He did not know that it was a compromise of summer and winter dress and he was considerably embarrassed when he found out.

Yesterday, we saw in the press that there would be a slight modification. My understanding of the new uniform is that it is a drastic change, a change from top to bottom almost—colour, style and everything else. I only hope that the Commissioner does rattle along these people who are supposed to be supplying these uniforms and get on with providing members of the Police Force with what they are justly entitled to and the public expect to see them wearing.

It is absolutely disgraceful when members of the Police Force have not got uniforms and have to go to work in plain clothes. They find themselves in all sorts of embarrassing positions as a consequence. Other members, because they have one part of the uniform or another, have to compromise in some other way to combat the freezing conditions. They have to wear jumpers, pullovers, anything they can get hold of. As it was remarked, some of them are referred to as "Dad's Army".

Mr TUNGUTALUM: I would like to add to what the honourable member for Arnhem has said about the Northern Land Council. The Northern Land Council has claimed approximately 60 to 70 pieces of land and I personally don't have any information about where they are, who is making the claim and what type of land tenure has been applied for. Members probably know that there is somebody who is really behind this and telling the real Aboriginal people to claim more land in

parts of Darwin. The Northern Land Council is probably claiming approximately 10 blocks of land around the Darwin area from here to Adelaide River. I am not positive but it could be that figure. One of the persons who is pushing this matter is not an Aboriginal; he is half-Indonesian and half-New Zealander. He was not born in Australia; he is not an Australian but he is calling himself an Aboriginal and he is pushing the real Aboriginal people to claim more land. Somebody ought to stop these types of people. One of them is a white bloke and he ought to be stopped. He is a European and he is a communist, and he is turning these people into communists.

The Northern Land Council is claiming more land and they probably don't know what they are going to do with the 60 or 70 plots of land. There could be 20 or 30. Some could be on Aboriginal reserves. I was on that Northern Land Council once and I wasn't really interested. There was always somebody behind pushing and telling. The Northern Land Council ought to give more thought to what land they are going to claim.

Mr VALE: I would like to raise a matter of concern to all residents of Alice Springs and indeed the larger area of Central Australia. I refer to the present position in that we have no private general medical practitioners in Central Australia. The only private GP is presently on a well-deserved 6 weeks leave.

I suggest that the Private Medical Practitioners Association and the medical authorities in the Northern Territory get together and publicise the Alice Springs plight and advertise for private doctors. The housing authorities may also be able, or required, to assist in the provision of accommodation and surgery facilities on a short term basis.

Alice Springs, with a permanent population of around 15,000 people and up to 1,500 visitors per week, cannot afford to be without private doctors. These remarks are in no way critical of the hospital medical staff who are overworked, underpaid and performing a service above and beyond the normal call of duty. The cost to industry, to employers, to employees and housewives in having to wait up to 5 hours in the outpatients clinic in the Alice Springs Hospital could be overcome if these facilities were upgraded, but the community would immediately benefit if at least one more private doctor was encouraged to set up private facilities in Alice Springs.

Dr LETTS: I refer to the remarks of the honourable member for Nightcliff in relation to a question she asked on notice and an answer which I passed to her by hand today in order to make sure that she got it as quickly as possible. I looked at the answer before she received it. I had to look twice to see quite what it meant and I believe that she has probably, through shortness of time, misconstrued the meaning or failed to examine it closely enough to understand what it does mean.

The fact is that the first question she asked is impossible to answer in the form in which she asked it. She asked: "Does the Darwin Reconstruction Commission as a whole consider tenders received or does it delegate this responsibility to a tender committee?" There are 2 questions there and the answer to the first one is no. The answer to the second one is also no. It is impossible to answer the question in the terms she has used. The truth is somewhere in between and this is what the commission is attempting to do in spelling out in descriptive terms what happens. As I understand the answer it says this: The Darwin Reconstruction Commission as a whole considers and approves all tenders and commitments in excess of \$1m. That is to say, the commission as a whole, on matters over \$1m sits virtually as a tender board for the final approval. The answer continues: If a project be below \$1m, certain officers within the commission are granted delegation to commit work.

That is to say, they are authorising officers or officers responsible for signing a committal document following detailed reports on tenders received from Reconstruction Commission agents. The agency for over 90% of such recommendations is the Department of Housing and Construction. What the answer means to me is that for 90% of the items that come up below \$1m the matter are referred to the Department of Housing and Construction under the act as an agent of the commission and the Department of Housing and Construction reports back to the authorising officer on what its evaluation of the various tenders or options is. As everybody knows, the Department of Housing and Construction, as do all government agencies of this type, has its own built-in tender board and tender system. What we are saying is that the Department of Housing and Construction, after examining the proposals, after having processed them through its tender system and having arrived at a result which is completely

in accord with Commonwealth audit and departmental practices, comes up with the information and a recommendation to the authorising officer.

I think that the honourable member for Nightcliff has not looked at this closely enough and has not understood what the answers say. She has gone off a bit half-cocked. The only gap in the information that I can really find is that when I look back again the other 10% of the work to be committed, there is no clear indication on what happens in relation to that 10%. I will endeavour to clarify that situation but I think I have satisfactorily answered the rest of the question.

Mr BALLANTYNE: I rise to say a few words about my electorate and also to add to what the Executive Member for Social Affairs said about past speaker Mr Kilgariff who is now Deputy Leader and also Executive Member for Finance and Law. He played the role of Speaker perfectly in my book. He was always helpful, particularly to the younger members, and for that I give him thanks.

In my electorate we are having a few problems. Since cyclone Tracy there have been a lot of hardships suffered there particularly from recent strikes and lack of some specialist treatment at the hospital. Although we have a very good flying doctor service, we have not got the specialists that we need.

There is a lack of a regular mail service. Although there are regular air flights, for some reason, we never get the mail on time. We might have to go back to Cobb and Co. and get more regular service with the mail. There is a lack of fresh fruit and vegetables and such things as fresh milk; things like this are at times lacking in the town. Most of the people there use powdered milk these days.

The people in Gove do not complain too much but they are probably the most isolated people in the Territory and they are the third largest population in the Territory. I can talk about freight charges through the shipping agents. The community is being charged for high air fares and there is the inconvenience to overseas travellers caused by the lack of aircraft facilities through Darwin from companies like Qantas, British Airlines and so on. This has all been brought about by the cyclone but that is a thing of the past now.

Moreover, there is the cost of sending children to southern schools—air fares during holiday periods. The educational standard there does not go beyond Grade II which is equal to

Leaving Standard. Therefore parents are forced to send their children south when they reach that standard, but there is no help given to them. Quite recently, we lost 6 very keen men in the organisation of Nabalco because of that very thing. The people had to leave so that they could take their children down south to educate them because it was going to cost too much otherwise.

Two new wings are being built at the Nhulunbuy Area School. These extensions will provide open class rooms and library facilities. I had a look at the building recently and I think it is being built around the wrong way. The entrance is to the side of the school instead of facing in towards the centre of the core of the building and they have the facilities for the air conditioning system in the front of the area. Anyone with an eye at all could see that they have built the service facility in the front instead of at the back. They have also built a great stairway down through the centre of the library. This takes up about one square of the library which is very small for the size of the school. In recommendations recently on libraries, you will find that that has been under-catered for.

The main concern to me and the parents of Nhulunbuy at the moment is the complete lack of interest of the Education Department in beautifying the school's grounds. Because of the lack of interest by the Department, the school grounds and the oval have deteriorated so much over the last 18 months that it is getting back to the bare soil. There is no grass there and it makes it very difficult for children to play in these areas. I have spoken to the Education Department about it but there seems to be a lack of finance. There is no consideration for any maintenance scheme, no maintenance scheme has been drawn up or implemented so that these things can be looked after. It is no good building a school unless you have some facilities there to keep it in good working order.

On the oval they have a sprinkler system but when they started to build the new extensions for some reason or other they cut through the piping and destroyed all the sprinklers. All you get out of the people is: "We are going to do away with that because it never worked properly in the first place". That is a complete and utter distortion of the truth because I have seen that sprinkler system working very adequately. It was an automatic system and it kept the grass growing in the dry season. Over the last 18 months the

whole of the grounds have deteriorated, the trees lack water and it is just getting back to nearly bare ground. They have started to water the quadrangle and the sections on the outside of the school by borrowing the equipment from the Nhulunbuy Corporation who have nothing to do with the school. This is purely a government responsibility but it has become such a problem that the teachers have taken it upon themselves to do the watering. I estimate, from some knowledge I have of these things, that to topdress that whole oval, replant seed and get the sprinkler system working again would cost something from \$6,000 to \$8,000. They will have to find the pipes, they have lost them all now, but a proper ground maintenance procedure could easily be implemented. However, it appears there is just no money to do the work. This sort of thing is not only happening to us, it is throughout the whole of the Territory and perhaps it might even get as far as some of the main states.

The pre-school at Gove is overcrowded now. It is bursting at the seams; there is not enough space and mothers are waiting anxiously to get their young children into pre-school. What does the Education Department do? They get Nabalco to bring in a demountable unit, what you call a "crib room" in the mining industry, they mount it, line it all up, connect it up to electricity—all free. The Education Department have been asked to put a couple of steps to the entrance, to connect up the water supply and paint the interior. They say there is no money to do the job. I even said that, if they could get the paint, I would do it myself. They have not even come around to supply any paint. Nabalco installed this out of the goodness of their heart but there has been nothing done to it since it was first put there some 2 months ago.

If we can't get these things done now, after the budget next week, are we going to get them done next year? We will have no money to do it.

Mr Kentish: Parents' participation.

Mr BALLANTYNE: Parents participation—I think that is a very good thing. Recently they spent some \$5,000 on the pre-school. It was a very good effort by the parents of the town. They bought all the equipment for this new pre-school demountable.

I have had problems in my electorate with permits to enter Arnhem Land. It has always

been of great concern to people. We have had a few problems with regard to going to one particular area because, as the member for Tiwi just said a minute ago, someone has told these people that it is their land and they can stop people from going through it. Certainly we agree in principle with the Woodward Report but every week that goes by there seem to be new areas established. I would like to know in black and white where these areas are, what they are and where they appear in the Woodward Report. I don't think anyone knows quite frankly.

I believe too that most of the permit system trouble is brought about by the local Social Welfare Ordinance which in the early days applied to the Nabalco land lease there and I agree with some part of that. We have another process to go through when we go into Gove, particularly the mines area. This is the third biggest town in the Territory and we have to have a medical clearance to go into the area. I believe that this was brought about, not only by the Social Welfare Ordinance, but also because it is classified as a suspect malaria area. There are certain mosquitoes in this area that could cause an epidemic of malaria. I was once pulled out of my bed very early in the morning and asked to go to the doctor to have a blood test because they thought that one of the members of the Nabalco staff had malaria. Because I was living in the same area, I had to have blood tests. It turned out we were both clear.

I would like to know about these statistics that they take, particularly this medical check. I think you first get the certificate or the piece of paper on the aircraft and you have to sign it. Every time I return there, I have to tell them that I don't need it because I have just been checked over last week; it is only for people coming from outside Australia. You can fly from Darwin down to Alice or any other place in Australia and you don't have to have this sort of thing.

The reason I am leading up to the query on this check is that we have a very capable Assistant Director of Health over there in Nhulunbuy. He has a complete hand in the function of the flying doctor service and he has also a complete control of the eradication of mosquitoes in that area, and this has been going on for some time. He is a very capable man and I am sure he would be keeping his eye on this thing. That is why I query this special medical check that you have to have going in and out of Nhulunbuy. I have full

faith in the ability of the medical staff; we have Medibank now and we have one of the best-equipped hospitals in the Territory, probably one of the most modern hospitals in the Territory. We haven't the full services but we have most things needed for that type of area. There is also a very good health program for the Aboriginals in that area. Therefore I put forward this particular bug of mine about having to have a medical check or clearance before going into the town.

I would like to speak now about the new police boat which was recently brought into Darwin. I believe that before the Darwin disaster, the Government ordered some 5 or 6 or even more police boats to be allocated to certain areas in the Northern Territory. We are one of the biggest towns in the Territory and we have one of the best harbours in the Territory and we haven't got a police boat . . .

Mr Robertson: Neither have we.

Mr BALLANTYNE: The honourable member for Gillen says they haven't one either. I put it to this Assembly that there should be something done about that. I asked a question about it and they said that it wasn't in the budget so I am a bit afraid what is going to happen after the next budget—we'll be lucky to get a row boat. If the police want a boat to go out after someone in the Arafura Sea, they have to borrow a boat. It is quite on the cards that the borrowed boat could have a faulty engine. It could be a major catastrophe if police go out in this faulty boat; they may have more problems than the people who are lost. Quite often people have been stranded overnight on small islands. We have a full record at the police station, if anyone likes to have a look at it, of all the rescues with all the times and dates. One of the first things the Government ought to do is to look at supplying boats to these areas.

Mr STEELE: I would like to say a few words on the effects of some acts of parliament on the Darwin public, the Darwin Reconstruction Act in particular. Section 54 gives me a bit of concern: "For the purposes of the determination of compensation under the Lands Acquisition Act 1955-1973 in respect of the acquisition, by compulsory process, of land in the Darwin area during the prescribed period, the value of the land at the date of acquisition shall be deemed to be not less than the amount that would have been the value of the land on 23 December 1974, if

the improvements on the land on the last-mentioned date had been the same as, and in the same condition as, the improvements on the land at the date of acquisition". I don't know how many lawyers there are in Darwin who can interpret that.

Mr Robertson: Lawyers don't read Yiddish.

Mr STEELE: No, maybe they don't read Hebrew either. It does seem that over a passage of time, with the continual delay as a result of the surge-line policy—I don't think there is a surge-line policy—in about a year from now they will be trying to apply this section of the act to those poor people who are still waiting in the surge area to do something about a house that is either half-up or half-down. These acts of parliament are determined in other places away from here and affect our lives. Senator Cavanagh has said: "Most members of the Legislative Assembly do not live in Darwin; the majority live outside Darwin. The Leader of the Legislative Assembly lives at Victoria River which is 20 miles from Darwin; he is the representative on the Commission". Even though the Senator thinks that Victoria River is 20 miles from Darwin, I think it is probably right that the Majority Leader is the representative on the Commission.

One of the things that worries me is the valuation aspect of this particular problem. We have people being offered \$28,500 for a pre-valued block which was \$32,500. I have had some information today that Services and Property have offered \$8,500 for a block and a \$1,000 for what was left of the house. The owners objected to that and said it was not good enough. Somebody came back—I don't know who the heck it was—and offered \$10,500 for the block and \$1,000 for the house. An independent valuation has shown that the \$1,000 they were offering for the house was \$4,400 short of the mark. I don't know what people think about that. I think it is absolutely ridiculous. People are not going to do much good with this sort of treatment.

Referring to the matter of co-operation from public servants in the town, I have written a couple of letters on matters such as this to a particular Assistant Secretary without receiving a reply. I know the Executive has no voice and its teeth are very blunt, but I think that it is getting to the stage where we might have to try a little bit harder and make these fellows face up to their responsibilities or get

some answers from the Commonwealth, if they call it that these days.

I did run into a small problem in the last couple of weeks about the transfer of small parks to the DRC. The DRC threw their hands up in the air and said, "We don't know what you are talking about", but according to the Town Clerk the aldermen have it all worked out: "We are going to give these 8 or 10 parks to the DRC". I could not quite work that one out so I sent a telegram to the Mayor and the Town Clerk. It was very thoughtful of

him to write back to let me know what is going on. He said that none of the parks mentioned was in Ludmilla so I had a look at the map and there were Gilbert Street, Worgan Street and Parsons Street—all in the Ludmilla electorate. I don't know how long he has been in Darwin. This power we are talking about just can't come soon enough because really there are some people here who really need a fair sort of a boot in the backside.

Motion agreed to; the Assembly adjourned.

Wednesday 13 August 1975

REPORT

Darwin "Drunks" 1975

Mr POLLOCK: I present a report entitled "Darwin 'Drunks' 1975" by Dr Gerald Milner. I move that the report be noted and ask leave to continue my remarks at a later date.

Leave granted.

Debate adjourned.

NURSING BILL

(Serial 48)

Bill presented and read a first time.

Mr POLLOCK: I move that the bill be now read a second time.

This Bill has three main functions: the first is to increase the membership of the Registration Board; the second is to provide for a new category to be known as "mothercraft nurse"; and the third is to provide for psychiatric and mental deficiency nurses in lieu of the existing classification of mental nurse. The opportunity has also been taken to make some changes in definitions and to replace the word "training" where appropriate with a more suitable term. The proposed amendment to section 5 of the principal ordinance provides for a new board consisting of 6 persons, 4 of whom are nurses. Three members of the board are to be selected by the Administrator's Council from designated classes of persons. The other three members are officers of the Department of Health.

The proposed composition of the board ensures that nurses' views will be paramount. The two non-nurse members, the Director of Health and the Medical Superintendent Darwin Hospital, are persons with a special interest and responsibility in regard to nurses in the Northern Territory—the Director because of his overall responsibility for health services and the Medical Superintendent because of his responsibility as officer in charge of the major hospital and major school of nursing in the Northern Territory. Nurses in the Northern Territory will have a direct representation on the board in the person of a nominee of the Royal Australian Nursing Federation. Members of the profession will thus be able to raise any matters they wish with the board through their federation member.

The proposed amendment to section 15A of the principal ordinance and the provision of a new section 15D provides for the enrolment of mothercraft nurses. Mothercraft nurses are persons trained to care for babies and children and to provide assistance and guidance to mothers on the care and raising of healthy babies and children. It is not a hospital category and should not be confused with that of a child welfare nurse. A child welfare nurse is a senior category specialising in the care of sick babies and children. Mothercraft nurses could play an important role in child care centres and in assisting with the weighing, recording and advising mothers at infant clinics. The department has advised me that it is not intended to set up a training school for mothercraft nurses at this stage although the new health complex being constructed at the Casuarina Hospital will have all the facilities needed should a school be required later. Training in this field is available outside the Northern Territory. These new provisions in the ordinance will enable persons with suitable qualifications to be enrolled in the Northern Territory.

It is proposed to replace the category of "mental nurse" with two new categories: "mental deficiency nurse" and "psychiatric nurse". The term "mental nurse" was used to designate persons qualified to assist the mentally ill. It is not now considered to be a suitable nor useful title for these persons. Nurses now have available courses of study in the care of mentally retarded patients and of the psychiatric patient. Qualifications in one field do not mean that a person is skilled in the care of other types of patients. It is considered necessary now to indicate the particular qualification the nurse has rather than to use a general term such as "mental nurse". The Department of Health does not intend to establish schools of nursing in these fields at present.

The opportunity has been taken to tidy up the definitions in section 4 of the principal ordinance and to replace the term "course of training", "certificate of training" and "training school" in respect of registrable grades with more appropriate terms. Members of the profession consider that training should indicate gaining proficiency procedures. Where there is a considerable academic content in the course, terms such as "course of studies", "certificate of education" and "school of nursing" are regarded by the profession as being more appropriate.

There do not appear to be any objections to using terms such as these and they are preferred by the profession. As it is preferred by the profession, it is recommended that the proposed changes be agreed to.

The opportunity has been taken also to extend the director's powers in section 10 of the principal ordinance. As the ordinance stands, a midwife can be ordered to cease practice where this action appears necessary to prevent the spread of disease. The director, in the interest of public health, should have the power to order any person covered by the ordinance to cease practising if he believes this will prevent the spread of disease. There are no good reasons why the provision should be restricted to midwives. The amendment proposed therefore would extend the director's powers to cover all persons registered or enrolled under the ordinance. This particular section is being further considered as it is considered that the powers that are provided by the proposed amendment may usurp the powers of the board.

The proposals put forward in this bill originated with the Nurses Board of the Northern Territory and are supported by the Department of Health. The department has discussed the proposed new composition of the board with the Royal Australian Nursing Federation and I am advised that the federation raised no objection to the proposal and has agreed to nominate a member if requested. The enlarged board will give the nursing profession the representation which it should have on a body so important to the profession and the proposal merits the full support of the Assembly. The provision for enrolment of mothercraft nurses is included to enable recognition of persons who have gained the particular qualifications and who wish employment in the Northern Territory. It also makes more feasible the requirement of enrolment in this field of persons wishing to operate establishments concerned with the care of infants and babies should the Assembly so wish at a later stage.

The introduction of the new categories of registration in the field of mental deficiency nursing and psychiatric nursing is a recognition of the need for specialised qualifications. As the profession's understanding of the diverse problems of different groups of mentally ill persons has grown, so the need for special qualifications has become apparent. The term "Director of Health" has been substituted for that of "Chief Medical Officer".

Both terms refer to the same person so the change will have no effect on the operation of the ordinance. The use of "Director of Health" has administrative advantages and will be used in future in other legislation. In this regard, I foreshadow an amendment to correct a drafting oversight in the bill which left the term "Chief Medical Officer" in section 21 of the principal ordinance. The proposals put forward are in the interests of the nursing profession and have the support of that profession.

Debate adjourned.

EXPLOSIVES BILL

(Serial 46)

Bill presented and read a first time.

Mr RYAN: I move that the bill be now read a second time.

This bill deals with 2 matters relating to powers of delegation and penalties. Earlier this year, amendments to the Explosives Regulations were made to require a person to have a licence for the purchase or possession of explosives. These amendments were expressed to be limited to an area within 40 kilometres of the Darwin Post Office in order to meet the urgency situation arising out of the cyclone Tracy. Section 46 of the Explosives Ordinance was also amended in 1975 to ensure that the above mentioned amendments to the regulations were within power. The amendments to the regulations came into force on 14 April 1975. In the short time since that date, these provisions have proved effective in controlling and recording those persons who have purchased or possessed explosives in the Darwin area.

Up until that time, there was virtually no control over the purchase or possession of explosives and a number of incidents occurred where explosives had been misused or had been neglected and the authorities were not even aware that the persons responsible had possession of the explosives. It is consequently desired to extend these licensing provisions to the remainder of the Territory. At present, many of the problems are being encountered by the misuse of explosives in areas outside the 40 kilometre radius of the Darwin Post Office. For this reason, amendments to the Explosive Regulations have been prepared to extend the requirement for an explosives purchase and possession licence to the whole of the Northern Territory.

When the original bill to amend the Explosives Ordinance was brought to me by the government earlier this year, there was a suggestion that that amendment should refer to the whole of the Northern Territory. At that time, I made it clear to the department concerned that I felt it would not be appropriate to present a bill at that time which covered the whole of the Northern Territory but indicated that I thought that the cyclone disaster area should be suitably covered. The government department agreed that they would only present the bill covering that area. Subsequently, we had discussions and I visited Tennant Creek which is the major user of explosives in the Northern Territory.

It is not considered that there should be any exemptions to the licensing provisions. Where a person has a lawful use for explosives, he should not have any difficulty in obtaining a licence to purchase or possess them. If a person is unable to obtain a licence or a renewal of a licence or where his licence is cancelled, the person may require that the matter be referred for review to the Administrator under sections 11 and 12 of the ordinance.

What about people who require explosives only in a very minor way, for instance, farmers who wish to do a small amount of dynamiting? Will they be required to obtain a shot firer's licence? Up to now, they were able to purchase small amounts of explosives, sign a book and go away and blast. Under section 107 of the regulations, all people setting off explosives must have a shot firer's licence but, because of the looseness of the purchase of explosives, this wasn't enforced. I had discussions with the department concerned on this particular point and they have advised me that they will treat cases for setting off small amounts of explosives as they see them. When a person comes in to get a permit to buy the explosives, he will speak to the chief inspector who will then decide whether that person has the knowledge to competently set off the explosives. He will not necessarily have to sit for the shot firer's licence and the department is currently preparing changes and amendments to regulations to allow two types of licences—one for the small operator who is only going to do some blasting on his property and the normal shot firer's licence which is necessary for anybody undertaking massive explosions.

Some administrative difficulties could be encountered in extending these licences to the whole of the Territory in that, under section

11 of the ordinance, only the chief inspector can grant, renew and transfer licences. The chief inspector is based in Darwin and is on occasions absent from the Territory. It is desirable that provision be made for the chief inspector to delegate his powers under section 11 to any person, subject to the making of a report by the delegate to the chief inspector within seven days. The existing penalty of \$200 in the ordinance and regulations is considered inadequate for a breach of the licensing provisions having regard to the danger that can arise from the misuse of the explosives. It is considered that the general penalty should be increased to a more realistic figure of \$1000. The bill seeks to amend the ordinance accordingly and a corresponding amendment to the regulations has also been prepared.

The amendments to the ordinance contained in this bill will come into force on a date to be fixed in the *Government Gazette*. The amendment to the regulations have a similar provision and it is intended that, should the Assembly pass this measure, both amendments will be brought into operation at the same time. It has also been noted that, with the extension of the controls under the ordinance relating to purchase and possession of explosives, police powers under the ordinance were not extended to take note of the offences under these provisions. I foreshadow amendments to the bill to give the police adequate powers under the ordinance to seize explosives and prosecute offenders instead of having to act through an inspector. I expect to have copies of the proposed amendments distributed during the course of this sittings.

Debate adjourned.

LITTER BILL

(Serial 45)

Bill presented and read a first time.

Miss ANDREW: I move that the bill be now read a second time.

At the Australian Environmental Council meeting last week, it was stated that 5% of all pollution was litter and that 30% of litter was cans. I think these figures are hardly applicable to the Territory in that almost 90% of our pollution would arise from litter. This has become particularly disturbing to many residents of Alice Springs, Darwin and the closely settled areas. I would draw honourable members' attention to a drive from here

to the airport and the amount of litter that is lying on the Stuart Highway.

The original Litter Ordinance had no application within a municipality, leasehold or freehold land. This was amended in 1973 to empower the Administrator in Council to extend the application of the ordinance to public places within leased land or a municipality on the request of the lessee or the council of that municipality. As expressed in an ordinance, the extended application would apply only to specified public places within the lease or the municipality and no mention has been made of freehold land. Consideration has been given by municipalities to the application of the ordinance and the purpose of this bill is to enable the provisions of the Litter Ordinance to be extended to apply over the whole or a specified part of a municipality or freehold land area in accordance with a request from the council of a municipality or a lessee and also to make similar provisions in respect of freehold land on request from the owner of that land.

The ordinance also made provision for employees of the Reserve Board and the Port Authority to be officers for the purpose of that ordinance. As provision is made for the extension of the application of the ordinance to a municipality, it is obviously necessary to have municipal employees also as officers. This bill does this by an amendment to the definition of "officer" to include municipal employees.

The bill will enable the provisions of the ordinance to be extended to apply to all or part of the municipality, leasehold or freehold land in accordance with the request from that municipality or concerned landholder. It will also make employees of concerned municipalities officers for the purpose of the enforcement of the ordinance. Let us hope that this is a start in the cleaning up of the litter problem in the Territory.

Debate adjourned.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT BILL (Serial 44).

Bill presented and read a first time.

Mr TAMBLING: I move that the bill be now read a second time.

The intention of this bill is to provide a means to enable an appropriate municipal rate to be determined by local government authorities for sporting bodies and community organisations which hold special purpose leases. Honourable members will be

aware of many instances within their electorates where the imposition of full municipal rates could cause considerable embarrassment and embarrassment burden to otherwise very effective and necessary agencies. Organisations connected with recreational activities, cultural pursuits, educational, social welfare and child facilities would all be accommodated by these provisions. The legislation does not attempt to dictate the rates in each or any instance but rather vests the responsibility for such action with the local government authority. I am confident that the policy subsequently determined by aldermen will be tailored for the specific requirements of each municipality. The particular needs of individual organisations will be assessed in the light of their activities, the extent of the public sharing the facilities and their capacity to meet financial obligations.

To provide specific illustrations, I would like to refer to familiar cases from within my own Fannie Bay electorate. The Darwin Bowls Club is a social and recreational facility and its last annual rate was \$908. The Darwin Sailing Club, a well known social, recreational, sporting and tourist facility, was last charged \$469. The Waratah Sports Club, a social and sporting complex with extensive public use of the sporting facilities, was rated at \$802. The RAOB Stokes Street facility, which is a lodge and a hall providing extensive public use, was rated at \$200. If the Darwin City Corporation was to exercise the discretion provided by this bill, then I am sure that it would carefully consider the striking of a special and different rate for each of these associations in light of their needs, financial ability, value and service to the community.

The idea incorporated in this legislation was promoted by the Majority Leader as a member of the former Legislative Council in 1974. I understand that at that time Darwin and Alice Springs City Corporations favoured its introduction. Similarly, I have recently sought views from both councils as well as the Katherine and Tennant Creek Town Management Boards who are considering local government offers at this time.

Debate adjourned.

MOTION

Stabilisation of Land Prices Bill—Select Committee Report

Mr WITHNALL: In presenting this report, I have very little to say. I think that the report

speaks for itself and I commend the text to honourable members. Members will recall that this select committee was appointed following a reference by the Senate of the bill. The Senate refused to pass the bill until the matter had been considered at the local level. Unfortunately, the terms in which the bill was referred by the Senate and the terms in which the matter was referred to the select committee related to the Commonwealth bill and to providing legislation which would be complementary to the Lands Acquisition Act. Unfortunately, the committee came to the conclusion that no local ordinance could possibly affect the operation of a Commonwealth act. In order to examine the position quite fully, the committee went a little beyond its terms of reference or interpreted those terms of reference rather broadly. We did examine the question of other forms of legislation which may achieve the purpose which the Commonwealth wanted and which the Commonwealth apparently were unable to get through the Senate.

The Northern Territory Land Prices Stabilisation Bill does not attempt to stabilise the price of land. It is only a device to ensure that the Commonwealth would pay a little less for land than it otherwise would have done. It is a device to freeze the sale of land pending a Commonwealth decision that it may or may not be acquired. It is true, as it is pointed out in the report, that by putting out a blanket order under the ordinance, the Commonwealth could in fact freeze the price of land and freeze all dealings in land over, say, a 40 km radius of each of the principal cities and towns in the Northern Territory and that would effectively control prices and effectively bring transactions in land to a halt. Although this is possible under the bill, it is not designed for that purpose, but it is an operation of the bill which should be borne in mind.

The committee advertised in the local press and invited members of the public to give evidence on the subject matter. However, no member of the public did attend before the committee or give any indication of a wish to do so. We did receive certain submissions but 2 submissions were received too late to be considered by the committee because the committee's task was such that it would have been discourteous to the people in the Senate who had referred the bill to us.

I trust the committee has discharged its task with sufficient attention to detail so that the members of the Senate will feel satisfied with

the action that they took and happy to adopt the proposals contained in the report. The Senate has done us a great honour in regarding our participation in this piece of legislation as being essential. I personally commend the Senate for the stand that it took and I trust that it will continue to act as a guardian of the local welfare and of the legislative making authority which has been placed in this Assembly.

It is refreshing to find a body which is proposing to block the Commonwealth attitude which today seems to be that the ministers and departments in the Commonwealth Public Service regard the Northern Territory as a local legislative playground where they can exercise all their fancy theories about social laws which they cannot exercise through the federal legislature. I don't think one can condemn too strongly the attitude of a government which, on the one hand, sets up this Assembly and gives it a full legislative role and, at the same time, invades the very field that it has marked out for the Assembly by legislating itself on those subjects according to its own whim or according to the whim of the department or the whim of a minister of the department.

So long as the Senate is there and so long as it has a control, I trust that the members of the Senate will have at the fore-front of their minds, when they receive legislation affecting the Northern Territory only, that they will block that legislation and refer it to this Assembly for consideration and comment or report. I commend the report and the conclusions reached in it. I trust that when members have had time to consider the report, the detail of having it presented to the Senate in reply to their reference can be hammered out and the appropriate motion put.

Dr LETTS: I support the report tabled yesterday by the honourable member for Port Darwin in his capacity as chairman of our select committee. I would like to commend him for the amount of work which he has put into this report. I thank him for taking on the job of chairman and, with his vast experience in land matters and his interest in this field, we couldn't have done better. He has worked longer than any other member of the committee in producing this report but I am sure it has our collective support.

We have an obligation to react quickly to the Senate's move in referring this bill back to us. This is what we are attempting to do at the

moment. The report was tabled on the first day possible of the sittings and is now being debated on the first occasion possible. I would like to think that the Assembly can establish its reaction as quickly as possible as a matter of courtesy and as an indication of our genuine appreciation of the Senate's action.

What the Senate said was more or less in 3 parts. It said that it was opposed to the bill. Secondly it asked that the bill be referred back to the Northern Territory Legislative Assembly with a request to see how we thought land prices might be stabilised. The third part of its motion was a request that any lands acquisition proposals which might be included in legislation to be considered by the Assembly should protect the rights of private land owners and occupiers and be on just terms. The way I read the third point is that they definitely had in mind that, if there was a need to stabilise land prices through legislation, that legislation would be considered in this Assembly. I think that is quite a reasonable reading of the terms of that motion and our report confirms the Senate's dislike of the original bill.

The report provides information on the trend in land prices in the Northern Territory based on a contact with people who are dealing in the land from day to day so that members of this Assembly may assist to the extent that the situation is serious or in need of attention legislatively. I had a look at some possible modification of the Australian Government bill and decided that was in the "too hard" basket or ultra vires. It then had a look at the kind of approach that was used in South Australia where land price control legislation was adopted several years ago and it came to the conclusion that the land legislation enforced in South Australia has not really done the job that somebody in the beginning probably hoped it would do and that that kind of legislation in turn is not really suitable for the Territory scene. It finally went back to an examination of the kind of legislation which was drawn up by agreement between the Commonwealth and the state of Victoria in order to take care of land price escalation in the Albury/Wodonga situation which was designed for future urban use. It was most undesirable to see speculation from people who had knowledge that this land was to be used for urban purposes. The report suggests that this legislation, which in part has been the archetype of the legislation before the Federal Parliament, might be looked at

again, particularly in terms of the time limits which were set in the Victorian Act and which were much much shorter, more reasonable and practicable and less severe on the private land owner than the terms that were in the original act before the Federal Parliament.

The part of the report that I would advert to if we did have a Northern Territory land acquisition ordinance based on the Victorian approach is section 21. We say there: "It is not part of the committee's function to provide the terms of the draft legislation but we do indicate that any land acquisition bill should make acquisition dependent upon initiating action by the local executive member responsible to the Legislative Assembly. Upon acquisition, the land should vest in the Commonwealth. The Land Price Stabilisation Ordinance should provide that initiating action under the ordinance should be in the power of the same executive member who is named in the Land Acquisition Ordinance". The point is also made that such an ordinance used in conjunction with the federal Land Acquisition Act would, if there is a need, take care of the area. What is said in section 21 of this report is wholly consistent with the report of the Joint Parliamentary Committee on the Northern Territory to which I now wish to draw members' attention.

You will recall that in section 70 of the Joint Parliamentary Committee's Report the views principally of the Department of the Northern Territory were given in paragraphs 70(a), 70(b), 70(c) and 70(d). These were functions which they thought were suitable for immediate transfer, transfer after some further negotiation or for sharing of responsibilities between the Australian Government and the Northern Territory Executive.

The Department of Northern Australia included urban land in their 70(c) area and urban development in their 70(d) area. They saw urban land and urban development as suitable functions to be shared between the Australian Government and the Territory Assembly. I wish to point out that the Joint Committee in examining that proposition went a long way further than the Department of Northern Australia have gone. They looked at several of these supposedly shared functions like roads, payroll tax and urban land. They say on page 47 of their report: "The above proposed divisions highlighted the complexity of the urban land function. Because of this, the committee believes that the sharing of such functions would not be in the

interests of the Territory and it would be preferable for them to rest with one authority. On balance, the committee favours the transfer of all these functions to the Territory Executive and that recommendation is repeated in paragraph 75". Paragraph 75(b): "The transfer of functions of local significance on the passage of the necessary legislation in the Australian Parliament and the resolutions of the arrangements for the public service plus payroll tax and urban land"

The Joint Parliamentary Committee set up by both houses of the Australian Parliament, set up with all parties of the Australian Parliament represented and with a majority of the present Government side represented has clearly recommended that urban land and urban land development should come over to this Assembly. Apart from that, the Department of Northern Australia, whilst its recommendations didn't go that far, proposed a sharing of the functions. The kind of proposition which has been put forward by our select committee isn't a greedy one; it points out that, with the local ordinance under local administration and the operation of the Lands Acquisition Act, we would have the sharing of control in this kind of operation and that any land that was acquired would pass back to the Commonwealth. These are all important matters which should be recorded in the debate. I have no doubt that some of the senators who are interested will look at our views in the matter and, together with the report and the views reported on this debate, will have a way of assessing the amount of care, thought and success we have had in trying to provide solutions to these problems.

Mr TAMBLING: I would also like to join with the Majority Leader in thanking the chairman of the committee for the role that he has played in co-ordinating the work of the committee and the community submissions that have been made. It is unfortunate that our timetable would not permit us to conduct a more extensive series of negotiations with interested parties in the community, but I believe we have reached those sectors that are vitally interested. Over the recent history of the Northern Territory, there are many instances where land administration has not been adequately carried out or sensibly attended to. I believe that the thrust of legislation that was proposed through the Federal Parliament was abhorrent to any form of real consultation with the area which is closely

affected, the Northern Territory community. The Senate action in referring this bill to us was a constitutional milestone and one that we welcome. Let us hope that, if there is any continuance of this unsatisfactory arrangement of pushing federal legislation in areas that are not subject to their control, the Senate will again take similar action. The submissions of the real estate groups and the valuers have been very worthwhile and I would like to thank them.

Mr EVERINGHAM: I rise to support the report as a member of the select committee. I would like to draw to members' attention that there could be a sinister motive behind this bill that is certainly not borne out by its title. The sinister purpose that may be behind the bill is that investigation areas could be declared, pursuant to this bill if it became law, which would have the effect of freezing all land within a radius of forty miles from urban areas throughout the Territory. It is the view of at least one valuer that it could be used to freeze the development and sale of almost all land in the Territory. This particular matter is referred to on page 5 of the report although the select committee chose to believe that some such sinister motive could not be imputed to a government which has the well-being of the whole community as at least its public motive for being in office. The effect of the bill has been mainly considered in relation to the Darwin area but, if it came into effect, it could have an injurious effect on the other urban areas of the Territory. In Alice Springs, the town areas could be frozen, dealings in the land there could become very difficult and any person interested in purchasing land there would be warned off by the effect of a declaration of an investigation area under the terms of this legislation. Pastoral leases could be affected; any land could come under the operation of this bill.

As a result of the paid publicity that was given to this select committee, the total amount of public reaction was two letters from private citizens received late. This would indicate that the public does not seem to consider that there is any need for land price stabilisation in the Territory. This is backed up by discussions that the Valuer General had with the committee. The Valuer General and his superior, Mr Howard, came to the committee at the committee's request. I must confess that the Valuer General and Mr Howard couldn't have been more helpful. The Valuer General indicated that the annual rise in land

prices in the Territory over the last year or two had been around an average of 10% and he also agreed that this figure was well below the increase in the consumer price index for basic consumer commodities for the same period.

I can see no need for this bill for the Territory; I do not think land prices need stabilising. What I think the Territory needs is a developmental plan for areas around urban centres so that these areas can be developed systematically and more land become available both by private subdivision and government subdivision. Cater for demand and you will stabilise the prices.

I would also like to thank the honourable member for Port Darwin for the considerable work he put into this report.

Mr KILGARIFF: I stand briefly to support the remarks of the previous 3 speakers. With the pressure to send it back to the Senate, we haven't really had sufficient time to study the effects of the report. Listening to the 3 speakers this morning, I was filled with concern. There is an alarming trend developing now where a centralist government in Canberra is bringing before the Houses of Parliament legislation which should properly be introduced into the Legislative Assembly of the Northern Territory. We have persisted in this argument over the years and we had quite a reasonable understanding with the previous government that legislation that related wholly to the Territory should be introduced by that government into the Legislative Assembly. There is a tacit agreement which was carried out for years. Since then, we have seen this trend developing where legislation is being introduced into the Federal House and the people of the Northern Territory have not had a say in the matter at all. If the people of the Northern Territory have a say, it is through their elected representatives in this House.

It fills me with concern when I look at a statement that the Attorney-General made to a District and Country Court Justices Conference in Canberra in June this year. He was developing the centralist attitude and, as the Honourable Majority Leader has indicated, there is other legislation coming from the Federal House which should more properly be instituted here. This is not the end of a situation; we are going to get more of it. Thank goodness we have the Senate which for the first time has taken a stand in relation to a bill that vitally concerns the Territory. I commend

them for their action and I hope they will refer other such legislation to us in future.

The other speakers made very pertinent remarks regarding this proposed legislation and what particularly alarmed me were the remarks of the honourable member for Jingili concerning the effects it could have on the whole of the Northern Territory. He has said that he could not believe that such a body as the Federal Parliament could have such a sinister motive. I am sure he was joking. The possibility that this bill could cause an overall land freeze is alarming. The Northern Territory has had extreme land shortage and land problems for years.

We have seen some of the effects already. The honourable member for Social Affairs indicated a land freeze in the farming area of Alice Springs. That has brought that area to a complete stop; it has frustrated the people and the people in that particular area are so browned off that they would like to move out. This has been going on because of a type of land freeze, because the government will not say what it intends to do. If land freezing is to apply to the rest of the Territory, then that will be a good way of frustrating development in the Northern Territory. The development of the Territory depends on people being able to get land at the right place and at the right price. It has been indicated in the reports that have been brought before this select committee that the price of land is not exorbitant in the Northern Territory. If this is correct, let us say to the Senate that there is no place for this legislation in the Northern Territory today.

Debate adjourned.

MOTION

Inquiry—Lottery and Gaming Ordinance

Mr WITHNALL: Generally speaking I have not had any objections to any of the inquiries which have been proposed in the past by the Legislative Council or the Legislative Assembly, but I have to be a little critical of the terms in which this motion is made. First, it proposes that a person be appointed to inquire into, report on and make recommendations concerning all aspects of the administration and operation of the Lottery and Gaming Ordinance. It goes on to list six matters which, except for the first one, are concerned almost entirely with the parts of the legislation relating to betting and racing. I do not know that there is any public disquiet

concerning the operation of this ordinance as far as lotteries are concerned; I do not know that there is any need for an inquiry into any aspect of legislation except the matter of racing, the system of betting on racing and the destination of any tax which is placed on racing. I would urge the honourable member to reconsider the terms of the motion and not to give the person making the inquiry a very large task when the only real object can be expressed much more succinctly and with an avoidance of the very general terms in which the motion is cast.

Honourable members will probably be surprised to know that the provisions of this ordinance relating to betting were drafted by me many years ago between 5 o'clock in the afternoon and half past four the next morning and presented in the Legislative Council at 10 o'clock the following day. Consequently, as all work which is performed in a hurry like that must be, it is full of errors and some amendment has been necessary from time to time to overcome the paucity of the drafting. I think that there are probably sections there which still need some attention and so consideration of those features might very well be justified.

When we come to consider the terms of the proposed inquiry, it is surprising to find that the request for this report, in effect, is an abdication of the decision as to whether or not legislation should be introduced by this Assembly. Paragraph 4 proposes that the inquirer should consider whether the present off-course betting system should be replaced. That is not a decision for an expert but a decision for a legislative body. It is not proper nor desirable that the legislative decision about what sort of legislation should be introduced should be abdicated as the honourable member proposes in paragraphs 4, 5 and 6. If an inquiry is to be had at all, surely it should be directed to the functioning of the system, any malpractices, any difficulties and any injustices which are actually occurring. From the report, members of this Assembly can make up their minds whether there should be a totalisator system, whether the present tax per betting ticket is adequate and whether it should be replaced with a turn-over tax. These decisions must be made here and it is not right to ask someone to investigate and then recommend to this Assembly what sort of law we ought to introduce. It is a political decision and it must remain so.

The general question as to whether or not there should be a totalisator system or whether the betting tax system should be introduced has been argued backwards and forwards for the last 6 or 7 years at least. There has been a good deal of passion expressed and a good deal of heat engendered by the advocates for the one and the other. Not being a racing man, I can take a more detached view of it than many persons. I personally have come to the conclusion, and I have expressed this opinion quite frequently in the Legislative Council, that the present system, having regard to the extent of the racing industry in the Northern Territory, is the better system to adopt. That is a personal political opinion and I don't want to be told by somebody who may be a rabid totalisator man or a rabid betting ticket man that this is an opinion we should not have in this Assembly. We will not tie ourselves down and I will request the honourable member to have this motion adjourned so that we can be more specific and not abdicate the legislative function of this Assembly.

Mr EVERINGHAM: I rise to support the motion and to commend the executive member for Social Affairs for at last getting around to proposing such an inquiry which has long been needed in the Territory. In answer to some of the comments of the honourable member for Port Darwin, if those sections of the ordinance which deal with the approval and running of lotteries are satisfactory, and I am not sure that they are, perhaps the commissioner could well recommend that the ordinance as it now stands be broken up into two parts and that there be a special ordinance relating to racing and betting. While the two areas may be superficially related, I think they are ill-mated as they presently stand.

As for the comments of the honourable member on point 4 of the proposed terms of inquiry, it is my view that this Assembly is not abdicating its responsibilities in asking for a recommendation of this nature. Why are we proposing to seek out these experts? It is because we don't know the answers ourselves, Mr Speaker. We are asking for recommendations and it is not incumbent on us to accept any or all of the recommendations. Furthermore, one would imagine that the commissioner would have to put in support for his recommendations. Therefore, I say that argument of the honourable member for Port

Darwin on this point is, as he so often says himself, a piece of nonsense.

Passing on to the terms themselves, the first point concerns the adequacy of the ordinance as it stands. It is totally inadequate as it stands; it is complex and cumbersome and leaves out many factors that may well have been brought into more modern legislation in relation to racing and the administration of lotteries. The racing industry sorely needs assistance in many areas. These are too numerous to give as it presently stands; the industry is an orphan which the executive arm of government is using to milk a little bit of money out of to absolve itself of some responsibility for fishing out some funds from time to time for charitable bodies. For instance, in the Territory, is there any really properly qualified stipendiary steward who visits all the racing clubs? Is there any properly constituted or experienced steward who goes to all meetings as there is in Queensland and, for all I know, elsewhere? They have what they call a roving steward appointed by the Queensland Turf Club and he attends all the country meetings and gets out to places like Camooweal and sees that the hanky panky is kept to a minimum.

Point 3 relates to the conditions and controls under which the present off-course betting system operates. The off-course system could be improved in many ways. One of the first and most obvious is that the betting shops could tone up their appearance quite considerably and make themselves a more attractive place for punters to go to. Of course, it may be that they are on side with the race clubs in making their premises equally unattractive to punters but this is a problem that the race clubs face with more excuse than the betting shops because the race clubs are generally short of funds.

As to the replacement of the existing system by a totalisator system, I am against that but that, as my learned colleague from Port Darwin says, is a personal political opinion. It is simply based on my view that, in the Territory, we have quite a number of betting shops on which pressure could be brought to bear to improve their accommodation and conditions of betting. They employ a good number of people and it is quite a viable system. It could be squeezed and milked in the way that governments want to squeeze and milk the racing industry and as much could be got out of it as out of the TAB system. A TAB system would probably have three shops in Darwin

as against maybe fifteen or twenty that exist now and they would employ a proportionately fewer number of people. The permanent staff of the TAB would be semi civil service people; it would be something like the Housing Commission. I am all for the continuance of the present setup but under more stringent control.

I don't think that the present betting tax is high enough. If executive power comes to the Legislative Assembly, the Territory must face the fact that it will have to pay its way and, by the lights of the southern states, the revenue presently being obtained from gambling in the Territory is insufficient. At present, revenue goes back to the clubs and the charities and the money going back to clubs must be spent on improvements on the club's premises. This is quite worthwhile but I think that, if we make more money out of racing and gambling, then some of it should go to the government spending perhaps on roads and other facilities and not just the surplus or a fixed percentage of the funds.

Mr DONDAS: I rise to support the motion for a proposed inquiry. This is a topic that has been discussed for many years with no final result. There are pros and cons and all kinds of problems connected with the particular setup that we have. The record of the Eleventh Council show that there have been at least 12 different amending bills to this particular ordinance. It is now time for this Assembly to instigate a professional inquiry into the operation of the Lottery and Gaming Ordinance in the Northern Territory. The subject of TAB and off-course bookmaking comes up and seems to go in a continual circle with no final stopping place.

The racing industry is going through hard times because of Cyclone Tracy. Prior to that, there was a question whether the racing clubs were organising themselves in a proper manner with the funds they received from the Betting Control Board. They could also be included in the inquiry to find out whether they are running their shows properly or not and whether the 40 or so thousand dollars they are getting from the Betting Control Board is being put to proper use. The facilities at the race course are gradually improving and the improvement has become very apparent in the last couple of years because the funds they have received from the Betting Control Board has allowed them to improve their facilities. With further moneys from the

Betting Control Board, I am quite sure their improvements will go on in leaps and bounds.

The question of a totalisator system has been pushed around for the last 4 or 5 years. In the last Council in 1971, Mr Brennan, Mr Ward and yourself, Mr Speaker, conducted an inquiry into the operation of the totalisator and whether a tote system would work here in Darwin. I have spoken to several bookmakers. From the apparent facts, according to them, a totalisator system would not work here. I am not going to cover this ground again because I think we should leave it to an inquiry.

I would like to take up a remark made by the honourable member for Jingili that the conditions of our betting shops up here are a little bit scruffy. I would ask the honourable member next time he goes south to see what a totalisator office looks like in those southern capitals. I feel that our betting shops up here are well kept. Early in the day, they are nice and clean but towards the end of the day, with a lot of litter floating around, they do look a bit untidy. Being a former bookmaker myself, I know that the bookmaker endeavours to give the punting public a service which a totalisator system doesn't do. I am not going to go into the pros and cons of the totalisator system. I don't think it is my duty; it is the duty of an inquiry.

My own opinion is that a turnover tax would cripple the betting industry here. I don't think that any bookmaker would mind if the betting tax was increased but a turnover tax becomes a problem. For example, somebody could ring up from down south and want 2,000 to 500 each way on Joe Blow in the fourth race. At the moment, he issues one betting ticket costing five cents or maybe ten cents. If we are looking at turnover tax at 2½%, it would make his operating expenses far more expensive and, in the long run, would put him out of business.

The uses and distribution of revenue raised under the legislation should be the final decision of the Administrator's Council but that council should obtain expert advice from maybe the racing club, from the betting shops and bookmakers in general as to where these funds are going. As far as the 35% charity is concerned, I think that should be left to the complete discretion of the Administrator's Council.

Mr TUXWORTH: I rise to support the motion. It is rather unique that I rise to support an inquiry because it was one of my predecessors, Mr Purkiss, a very highly esteemed member of this House in its early days, who presented and had passed by this Council a similar bill on 5 occasions and was refused assent. A bill was eventually drafted by Mr Withnall which was permitted by the government of the day to take force in the Territory. The activities in Tennant Creek that led up to introduction of the legislation are quite interesting. We had a SP operation which was not legal but then it wasn't illegal in that the government was not prepared to enforce the illegality of it. We had certain police officers who were alleged to be benefitting from the system and the accusation at the time was that the officers concerned would go to the bookmaker and put £10 on the winner of the last race early in the afternoon which was a very equitable system from the point of view of the man placing the bet.

The point that I would like to pursue is that the lottery and gaming and the racing industry is like any other industry. It has become highly specialised and it has various problems that are unique to every state in which it operates. The sole purpose of this inquiry is to try to select somebody who has expertise in this field to present a more searching and a more revealing report than we as individual members could do. The administration of the Lottery and Gaming Ordinance is of interest because the administration of our lottery system is carried out by an officer of the police force who advises people in various towns in the Territory whether they can run a lottery or not. We recently had a situation in Tennant Creek where an organisation was refused permission to run a lottery because the town couldn't stand it. We had already had 3 similar lotteries in the past 12 months and it just wasn't possible. However, people running sweepstakes and lotteries in other centres in the Northern Territory were selling their tickets hand over fist in our town. Art unions run from New South Wales and Victoria are constantly peddling their wares in the Territory and it would be an unusual week if boxholders in the Tennant Creek area didn't get a book of tickets in some art union or lottery from a southern operation.

The fact that this happens also brings into question the type of lotteries people are running interstate and that our own constituents are being subjected to. There are many tickets

that are never sold and it would be interesting to know how the various organisations running the lotteries account for the tickets that are never returned. We in the Territory have to account for every ticket that we sell in a lottery but there is no requirement for anybody selling tickets from outside to do that.

There are other games of chance available to the public such as Ins and Outs and Crown and Anchor. This could possibly raise the question that there is room in the Northern Territory for a casino type operation. Whether the Territory is prepared or ready for such an operation is one thing but I do believe that the possibility should be looked at. We would be doing ourselves a service to look at it whether we adopt it or not.

Another interesting point is the fact that we are running a racing industry in the Northern Territory that would involve some 40 race clubs in the metropolitan and country areas. We have 40 or 50 licensed bookmakers turning over millions of dollars a year yet we have no legitimate method of tabulating the turnover and the operations of any of these clubs or bookmakers or anyone else in the industry. The whole industry appears to be run at the moment by a part-time board that has a part-time executive officer. I don't know of any other business handling this sort of money or involving this sort of operation that would operate on a part-time basis. This too is another area that any investigation could look at.

The arguments for and against SP and totalisator will never cease to be bandied around but the whole object of a totalisator in any state is to collect for the people a percentage of the lottery money that is being spent. It is nothing more than a method of collecting tax. I am a firm believer in governments getting their share of the cake whether it be minerals or a corner of the racecourse dollar by taxation and get out of the messy business of trying to collect it themselves by operating the business themselves. We have a tax of 5c on Northern Territory betting tickets and this would seem to be a most satisfactory arrangement for the punter and the bookmaker. During our local government tour in Queensland, we came across a shire president who was also a town bookmaker. He pointed out the fact that he paid 5% turnover tax to the government. I firmly believe that this is one area that should be investigated and I am pleased to see that it will be.

The last point that I would like to comment on is the distribution of funds both to charity and to industry. There are no firm guidelines for the distribution of funds other than that the funds be given to a charitable organisation. The definition of a "charitable organisation" has become a contentious matter and it has involved reams of paperwork between the Administrator's Council and the Attorney-General. We have a situation where St Vincent de Paul is a charitable organisation and thus entitled to funds from the Betting Control Board but a service club such as Lions or Apex is not entitled to them. This sort of inequity should be investigated and spelt out quite clearly by any investigation. We again come to the question of what is a fair thing for the industry to receive in relation to return from any SP operations or totalisator operation and in what manner the money should be spent. From my very limited and short experience in this area in the last 6 months, there are certain things that I wouldn't care to disclose now but I feel should be investigated and defined clearly by a recommendation from the committee and made public in this House.

Mr BALLANTYNE: I support the motion for a number of reasons. In Nhulunbuy we have a betting shop and there are quite a few problems there, particularly in communications. This is the sort of thing an inquiry might be able to resolve by devising some clearer method of giving people a service.

Betting shops generally don't have the beautification around them to give more pleasant surroundings. I don't think this is the type of place that should be made like a social club; it is purely a public place where people go to lodge their bets. As for the totalisator system, there could well be a reason at the present stage for us to look at it further. I believe there was an inquiry some few years ago by the old Legislative Council which probably has a lot of merit but then again none of those people are with the industry. They haven't got the full facilities put before them to show them certain aspects of it. I would give warning to the Executive Member for Social Affairs that, if an inquiry is set up, we must get the correct people to form the inquiry because we might be given false information and we might not get any further than our learned friend from Port Darwin in regard to his early drafting of this present ordinance. I have no doubt that he spent a lot of time on it and went into great detail, but there

are always some mistakes to be made. Perhaps we can look at that one and bring it more up to date with the present functions of gaming and lotteries in the Territory.

Our learned friend from Barkly spoke earlier in regard to lotteries in the country areas. He told us that one of the officers of the police force said that they could not have any more lotteries; there were 2 or 3 being run there already. These are the sorts of things that seem to happen in places like Nhulunbuy too, where 2 or 3 lotteries are given sanction and, if someone else wants to run a lottery, he has no hope in the world; he is told that there is already enough for the number of people living there.

Those are the sorts of things I envisage you would have to look at. I ask the honourable member for MacDonnell, if he is given the opportunity to put this inquiry through, to give deep consideration to the type of people who will be on it.

Mr KILGARIFF: I support the proposal for an inquiry into the Lottery and Gaming Ordinance. Although, when one looks at the actual terms of reference, there could be some difficulty but I will discuss that a little later. The reason I support the inquiry is that for the first time one can really say, disregarding the effect of the previous select committee, that this is really an open inquiry into the events and the requirements of betting in the Northern Territory. It will be an open inquiry because, under the Inquiries Ordinance, the motion passed in this Assembly is then referred to the Administrator's Council which will appoint a person or persons to conduct the inquiry. It is very desirable now that there should be an open inquiry because the person or persons appointed will go into the community and allow the people in the community to indicate what their ideas are and what they consider they should have. After all, it is for the people to say what they should have for the Northern Territory.

If gambling were looked upon as an industry, it would probably represent, if not the biggest industry, one of the biggest industries in the Territory. The flow of cash through the various facilities for gambling in the Northern Territory is immense and runs into many millions of dollars. As a result, over the years there have been very many interested people. There are the people who make their living out of gambling and, naturally, they want to put over their own viewpoint. Then there is

the outlook of the person who gambles in the hope of making some money; he would like to get the best result as far as he is concerned as a gambler.

It goes further than gambling on horses. We are considering all forms of gambling. The honourable member for Port Darwin says that he drafted the legislation in somewhat of a hurry but even so I think it was a fair effort to get the situation rolling. Since then, many people have dabbled in amending this legislation, and I have probably been one of the biggest culprits. Over the years, at the request of various organisations and the Northern Territory Betting Board, I have introduced many amendments in an effort to do certain things. I and other people in the former Council have endeavoured to bring about some reasonable compromise and improvement in the laws relating to lotteries.

On the betting court side, I have introduced legislation that endeavoured to give teeth to the Northern Territory Betting Board because the Betting Board, in its previous structure, was rather toothless. It got to the extent that it was often embarrassed by the various situations that it found itself in—for instance, disputes over bets, licensing of shops, registration of bookmakers and so on. Over the years we have brought in amendments to the terms of racing and the terms of betting but this has all been a piecemeal movement.

We have had in the community and in the Legislative Assembly, people who have had very strong views on whether there should be bookmakers or whether there should be TAB. The honourable member for Elsey introduced the Racing Control Bill in 1970 which, after considerable debate, was put twice to the committee. This select committee was not particularly successful, with all due respect to the people on it, because their individual attitudes were such that they were unable to come forward with strong recommendations on which they all agreed. There was dissent on a particular clause regarding the possibility of establishing a totalisator agency.

This matter, therefore, continued from confusion to confusion with different people and organisations endeavouring to bring about a better system. Last year, in an effort to overcome this problem, a group started to look at possible legislation to do away with the Lottery and Gaming Ordinance and to do away with the Betting Board as it is today. Legislation was considered for establishing in the

Northern Territory a racing commission. It was very involved legislation which originated from interstate but it was legislation to set up a controlling body responsible for racing, TAB, on-course betting, terms of racing, the control of riders, the registration of riders. It went past that into the control of lotteries and so on. Perhaps if there had been time for this sort of complex drafting, members of the Legislative Council may have established a racing commission. Nothing has been lost by that because now we have an inquiry and I believe that this inquiry will look at legislation from interstate that has been envisaged for a racing commission.

It would be natural to take the administration of a racing commission ordinance out of the hands of the police. When we had an inquiry into the police in the Northern Territory, a paper was tabled indicating the extraneous duties that the Territory police were called upon to carry out but which their opposites interstate did not have to carry out. This would be taken out of the hands of the police and I believe it is a request of the police that they be relieved of this sort of administration. Looking at the terms of the inquiry, one sees that there is very wide sphere of expertise required. The first term of reference, the adequacies of the Lottery and Gaming Ordinance, the second, the needs of the racing industry in the Territory and possibly the fourth, whether the present off-course betting systems should be replaced by a totalisator system, could be handled by one person if he had a particular knowledge. However, the fifth term, whether the present tax per betting ticket is adequate, is a completely different kettle of fish and has nothing to do with the requirements of racing and gambling. Really it is a matter of principle which perhaps should be decided by this Assembly. I do not think that a person who is going to inquire into those first terms of reference would necessarily be an expert on that. Number six is "the uses and distribution of revenue raised under the legislation". Once again, I imagine that eventually it will be the Assembly which will indicate what its preference will be. At present all the money goes into charity or through the Betting Board to the various race clubs but I envisage that in the future it will go into government funds. When I say government funds, I am referring to the day—and I hope it will not be in the too distant future—when the Northern Territory will have a Treasury and certain taxes will be raised in

the Northern Territory; it is this sort of thing that I see going into the Treasury of the Northern Territory to assist in expenditure on Territory projects. Therefore, in this particular regard perhaps I am looking not at a one person to carry out the inquiry but perhaps a panel of people who, with their various experience and expertise, can carry out the terms of reference as laid down. There has been a lot of comment in the community over the last 2 or 3 years and it has strengthened considerably in the last 6 months. People have asked what this Assembly is going to do or what that party is going to do or what that party isn't going to do. The point that I am making now is that it is high time for the whole matter to be aired. The Country Liberal Party group has indicated that it is their intention to make it an open inquiry and I support it fully.

Mrs LAWRIE: I believe, like the honourable member for Port Darwin, that the inquiry is too wide and not specific enough. I would have preferred, if honourable members felt there was a need for an inquiry into the lotteries part of the ordinance that it be handled separately. It is one thing to set up an inquiry, another to appoint people with expertise in this field and yet another to get them to have public hearings, collate information, make their own observations and present their report in a relatively short space of time to this Assembly. I say "relatively" because sufficient time must be given to inquire into what is in fact 2 complex subjects. One is the administration of off-course betting in whatever form; that in itself requires a specific expertise and I think that it is unfortunate and unfair to have bundled it in with a complete inquiry not only into lottery and gaming but into the administration of the ordinance. It should have been a subject of a separate inquiry. The public, when giving evidence, would then have known exactly on what subject and on what line they should direct their evidence, and the report would have been tabled faster because the commissioners conducting the inquiry would have had more specific terms of reference.

I support the idea of the second part of the inquiry at the earliest possible opportunity. It may be that the results will be inconclusive, that the status quo will remain and in 12 months or 2 years time we will seek a further inquiry. That would not be wasted money. Times change, social attitudes change very quickly when it comes to horse racing and

gambling, especially when a majority party is looking at a way of raising revenue.

Some of the remarks of the members who have spoken have been quite illuminating. Two people at least have said that for the transfer of executive powers the Northern Territory will have to start paying its own way and the people will have to pay more because of the transfer of executive powers. I wonder whether that was missed in the general debate? I certainly didn't miss it and I will be watching for the printed version of *Hansard*. I believe that that information should be given to the public quite widely. Perhaps the members who said that did not mean it. If so, they had better make their attitude clear because I certainly picked it up and I intend to see that the people of the Northern Territory who are going to pay for this transfer will know exactly what they are letting themselves in for. It would be unfortunate if the only cow which was to be milked was the racing industry. I have a fear at the moment that it is the obvious target for milking and it may be milked to excess. But that is something which should be debated when the report is presented and when the majority party make it clear to what extent they will milk the cow. I do serve notice that that is one aspect I will be watching. I don't want to see the racing industry squeezed dry to try to finance the Territory with no other obvious revenue.

Mr Kilgariff: There is no suggestion of squeezing the racing industry dry.

Mrs LAWRIE: I am glad the Executive Member for Finance and Law has made that statement, but other people said quite plainly that, with executive responsibility, the Territory people were going to have to pay more. As I have said, their remarks will be picked up and disseminated as widely as possible.

I commend to the sponsor of this motion an adjournment with a view to narrowing the terms of reference and perhaps introducing another motion for a specific inquiry on the first paragraph. It will prolong what is going to be a lengthy report and it will confuse the public. Bear in mind that they will approach the inquiry wanting to give evidence on the specific aspect of off-course betting or the control of racing but, because of the terms of reference, they are liable to be questioned on all aspects under consideration. They can decline and I would assume that the commissioner conducting the inquiry would not

pursue a line of questioning of a witness who felt incompetent to reply.

In supporting the motion as it stands, because of the value of the second part of the inquiry, I would suggest that serious consideration be given to splitting it into two parts. The reports will be more easily understood, the work of the commissioners will be more direct, the public will have a far clearer idea as to the nature and extent of the inquiry, and people who may wish to give lengthy evidence as regards the racing industry and who may have a complete lack of interest in the operation of lotteries and vice versa will find it far easier to present short, succinct and intelligent submissions to the people conducting the inquiry. For those reasons, I will be forced to support the motion as it stands, but I think it is far too broad. The debate should be adjourned and I give an indication that I would support a second inquiry into the lottery and gaming aspects. Don't lump them into one; you are going to throw out the baby with the bathwater; it would be far too difficult to make sense in the general public's eyes for such a broad inquiry.

Dr LETTS: I move that the debate be adjourned.

I do this so that the Executive Member for Social Affairs and myself and other interested people can have a look overnight at the remarks made by the honourable members for Port Darwin, Nightcliff and others to see whether there is some improvement in wording which would make this motion any better.

Debate adjourned.

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

Mr RYAN (by leave): The honourable member for Nightcliff asked about food stored in the proposed shelters should there be another cyclone. I have been in touch with the disaster organisation and they have informed me that, as of last Friday, all the food had been removed from the shelters and had been placed in a central warehouse where it is being examined by an inspector from the Department of Health who is checking on its quality. He is removing damaged boxes which will be more closely examined. On Friday of this week a further examination will be made, checking on the shelf-life of those items which may be doubtful. They will be replaced if necessary and the stores will then be redistributed to the respective shelters and should

not require any attention until after the cyclone season.

The honourable member for Gillen asked about the Mataranka fire service situation. The Acting Chief Fire Officer has advised me that Mataranka does in fact have a trailer-pump. It has a volunteer service as do many isolated areas. The training the volunteers get is from the Officer in Charge at Katherine on a monthly basis. At the same time, he checks the serviceability of the trailer-pump. The comment was made that the locals are not necessarily available for the drill. There appears to be some lack of interest by the local residents in their own well-being in this regard. It would appear that the effort has been made to make certain facilities available but it relies upon a certain amount of self-help from the residents of Mataranka.

Miss ANDREW (by leave): In answer to a question about the longest period that has transpired between the application being lodged and fair rent determination being made, I am advised by the Price Controller that the period is 27 weeks. The average period is 8 to 10 weeks. The longest period as of today that an existing application has been received and a fair rent has been determined is 23 weeks. I add that since the introduction of modified processing procedures some 6 weeks ago, the average processing period of normal and uncomplicated fair rent applications has been reduced by half.

Mr TAMBLING (by leave): The honourable member for Gillen asked me this morning about the calling of tenders for housing in Katherine. I am informed that tenders were re-advertised on 7 August and will close on 9 September and that a wider field of contractors is anticipated. This action was necessary as the lowest tenderer withdrew and the Department of Northern Australia subsequently reviewed the tender and had found it necessary to recall.

DINGO DESTRUCTION BILL

(Serial 39)

Mr POLLOCK: I support the bill. It will greatly simplify matters in relation to the destruction of dingo scalps which are conveyed to police stations, particularly in the outback areas. The existing problems were outlined by the sponsor of the bill in his second reading speech and I can assure the House that the problems which he states are factual, and that the provisions of the bill provide an adequate

safeguard against malpractices. I am sure that when the auditors check through the books they will come across any malfunction. Dingo scalps are not the most pleasant things to have hanging around and the quicker they are disposed of the better.

Motion agreed to; Bill read a second time.

Bill passed the remaining stages without further debate.

HOUSING BILL

(Serial 40)

Mrs LAWRIE: I rise to indicate broad support for this bill. The first part of importance is in part 3 relating to section 13B of the principal ordinance. Following the destruction of Cyclone Tracy, a lot of people who normally would not have considered offering their Housing Commission homes which they had purchased for sale, have been put in a position where they wish to sell their house and leave Darwin for many and varied reasons. At the moment, if they have not held title to the house or have not purchased the house for a period of 5 years or more they could not hope, in offering it back to the commission, to get the true value of the dwelling. Normally I would stand and talk loud and long against the people who could be regarded as speculating but, in this particular instance, the people are suffering unjustly for an anomaly in the ordinance and I am prepared to support a provision whereby, if they want to offer their home back to the commission, they can get a fair market value for it.

In the bill, section 13B will be amended to read that they can receive "an amount for which, in the opinion of the commission, the dwelling, and the right to the lease of the land on which the dwelling is situated could be sold if offered for sale by private treaty". That seems to be restrictive. It is restricted to an offer that the Housing Commission makes and feels is reasonable. I believe that if the vendor of a house thinks the offer is unreasonably low, he should have the right of appeal to another authority. I have discussed this with the sponsor of the bill and there is an amendment being drafted to enable an avenue of appeal to people who feel that the commission is not offering a market value comparable to a private sale. If that amendment is forthcoming, I would certainly support the provisions of that part of the legislation.

Section 15 relates to the responsibilities for maintaining the dwelling and I have had a good look at that. It will always be a contentious issue. It has been contentious in the past and arguments have arisen between tenants and the commission on vacating the dwelling. This part of the legislation will not assist in clearing up that particular argument but I think the present provision, while not departing radically from the provision already in the ordinance, is reasonable. Tenants may wish to do what many of my tenants have done and tenants in electorates for which I do not happen to be the member; when they vacate a dwelling, they ask me to come through it and inspect it before handing it back to the commission so that if the commission decides to argue whether the vacating tenant should be liable for making good some damage they can ask my opinion. It is a dangerous practice perhaps to put this onus on me but, as an elected member, I have always complied and have in many cases been able to set people's minds at rest. Perhaps the knowledge that the local member has inspected the dwelling has at times influenced commission inspectors. In fact most of the people I have helped in this way have lived outside my electorate. I do not oppose section 15.

The amendment to section 26 (3) of the principal ordinance is also fairly reasonable. It does allow the commission to take into account various forms of hardship, especially a person who can be considered homeless. Such a broad area of discretion may suffice. It may be that the commission should have further powers to decide at its discretion whether an emergency exists and a person should receive priority housing. I remember that the sponsor of the bill recognised that and I believe he is sympathetic towards the commission having fairly wide discretion because one never knows from day to day what kind of emergency may arise and under what circumstances people may desperately need an emergency allocation.

The final part of this bill amends section 33E of the ordinance which gives the commission power to undertake the construction of dwellings on behalf of approved persons. At present, it is limited to "an individual, partnership, company, co-operative, trading society or an association engaged in commercial or industrial business activities or activities of defence significance". The bill proposes to widen that provision so that the Housing Commission can undertake building

for any approved person. As all members are fully familiar with the ordinance, they will of course have read the definition of approved persons. I had some lengthy discussions with the sponsor about this because I have long resisted giving the Housing Commission the power to build for private people on private land. I believe that the commission's primary role is for low cost accommodation, especially for the socially disadvantaged groups in our community—and let no one think they do not exist because they are a significant proportion of the Northern Territory population. In reading the list of approved persons and relating it to present circumstances, I think that the proposed widening of the persons or institutions for whom the Housing Commission can build is fair and reasonable.

I support the various provisions of this bill with the one proviso that an amendment is necessary to clause 3 to allow the vendors a further option if they do not consider the offer of the Housing Commission to be a reasonable one.

Mr WITHNALL: I propose to address myself to the bill in detail only so far as clauses 3 and 4 are concerned. The general principle of the bill is acceptable but, like the honourable member for Nightcliff, I do not think that the opinion of the commission ought to be without appeal. Too often we find that bodies like the Housing Commission act upon information which is obtained perhaps by some fairly lowly officer in the commission and, in the net result, bias and prejudice has crept in so that the opinion of the commission is formed upon information which is neither fair nor just. Like the honourable member for Nightcliff, I think that to say that the opinion of the commission is to be final is not to be approved. Some sort of appeal is necessary.

Unlike the honourable member for Nightcliff, I am quite unhappy with clause 4 and the new provision proposed for section 15. Section 15 makes the tenant of a dwelling responsible for maintenance with only one exception. First of all, it makes him responsible for maintenance of the dwelling and a state of repair that, again in the opinion of the commission, without any checks—and quite frequently that means the opinion of some fairly lowly officer—the house was in when the person became the tenant. Again, the opinion of the commission is something that no man can query apparently; the opinion of the commission is going to be the final arbiter and it does not matter whether it is formed upon a

false basis of fact or not. If the commission says it was not in that condition then it was not in that condition. Some consideration ought to be given to the question of some reference. If we had an ombudsman it could be the ombudsman, but somebody ought to oversee the justice and the appropriateness of the opinion of the commission.

I have another objection to clause 15. The only exception is "fair wear and tear". I do not know whether a cyclone could be said to be fair wear and tear. I don't think it can be. I think that the words "storm" and "tempest" and "fire", and probably "flood" in some places like Mataranka and Katherine would apply. The proposed new section is far too onerous upon the tenant because, if this section had been enforced before the cyclone in December, every Housing Commission tenant would have been liable to put the dwelling back into its former state. Some consideration must be given to including more exceptions from the section than fair wear and tear.

Mr EVERINGHAM: I rise to commend the Executive Member for the Community Development as sponsor of the bill and the government on the introduction of this legislation which I think is long overdue. I do have a couple of small reservations about some parts of it but I think that, in the circumstances, it is an extremely good attempt to remedy situations that were long overdue for rectification.

The amendment to section 13B, even if passed in its present form, will be an immense improvement on the situation as it stands today. This section 13B has been the cause of a lot of heartache and stress and not only to people affected by the cyclone in Darwin. For instance, when I was practising in Alice Springs, there were some people who came to the town and agreed to purchase a commission dwelling and have been there for perhaps two years or so. In Alice Springs women often find that life becomes mentally intolerable and there were an appreciable number of women who just felt—women especially, I am not saying that it didn't happen to men—that they had to get out of the place. But they had committed themselves to these purchase agreements and there was no way that they could hope to recover anything like the value of the improvements that they may have ill-advisedly put into the dwelling. Even though clause 3 as it stands is rather arbitrary, it can be nothing but an

improvement on the previous position. My suggestion would be that, if there were any disagreement with the opinion of the commission as to the market value, a sworn valuation could be obtained from a member of the Commonwealth Institute of Valuers. That would save the expense of any appeal provision which might lead to litigation. Both the commission and the tenant would have to be bound under the amendment to accept the sworn valuation by a member of the institute.

As to clause 4 of the amending bill, in my own electorate, there are a considerable number of Housing Commission properties and I have noticed that, by and large, they are probably the best looked-after group of residences in the electorate. In fact, in the suburb of Jingili itself, the Housing Commission properties are now in much better shape than, for instance, government housing and because of the existence of all these houses there in good order and repair the suburb looks something like it once did. The tenants accept their responsibilities quite readily and I don't think that this amendment would impose any great hardship on most genuine tenants. The suggestion of the honourable member for Port Darwin that perhaps an ombudsman could determine the state of repair of the dwelling and its equipment at the time the tenant took up occupation is in my view a not terribly practical one.

Mr Withnall: I didn't say that at all.

Mr EVERINGHAM: You can make a personal explanation.

Mr Withnall: I certainly will.

Mr EVERINGHAM: I concede that it was merely a suggestion on the part of the honourable member and what I would suggest is that the commission have the tenant sign some sort of statement, at the time that the tenant takes up occupation, as to the condition of the dwelling and its equipment. I don't think then that there could be any argument later. It may perhaps be necessary for some amendment to achieve that. I agree entirely with the honourable member in his comments in relation to the necessary and consequential follow-on to fair wear and tear. I am quite heart and soul behind the amendment of section 26(3) because it is not only persons who are displaced by eviction who need emergency housing. Clause 6 marks an important step forward particularly in the situation faced by people in Darwin today. The Housing Commission can let large contracts and thereby I hope achieve

a lower price than the person just letting a contract or obtaining a price for one house. People will be able to approach the Commission and ask it to add their house as it were or accept a design being built by the Commission and add it to the contract. I support the bill.

Mr DONDAS: I support the bill in principle. The honourable members for Port Darwin, Jingili and Nightcliff have covered the shortcomings of the bill.

Section 13 of the principal ordinance has been covered by the members and my comment concerning it is that a right for an appeal should be in there and that also it would be fair to expect a reasonable price to be obtained and paid for the land. With regard to section 15, the tenant responsibility, the clause states that the commission shall be responsible for the maintenance of its dwellings. It also allows the commission to put the onus of expense onto any tenant who causes any damage or neglect to its dwellings. I think that is fair because it should help reduce the cost of maintenance being recovered from other tenants who have nothing to do with that particular house, and it would make other tenants more careful whilst they were living in a tenancy home.

Section 26 (3) of the principal ordinance deals with priority allocations. An eligible person is defined as a person of limited means. The commission may, in letting a dwelling, give preference to an eligible person who is unsuitably housed. I think that is quite good. He might be in some dire circumstances in regard to accommodation and, if he comes under that section, they will give him some priority allocation.

The amendment to Section 33E would extend the powers of the commission to act as an agent on behalf of statutory authorities and government instrumentalities which is very important at this time in the Territory. I commend the bill.

Mr ROBERTSON: I support the bill. The government through its executive member here are to be commended upon this piece of legislation. I agree and disagree with the honourable members for Nightcliff and Port Darwin in relation to clause 3. I agree with the honourable member for Nightcliff that perhaps it could be looked at. Just touching very briefly on the honourable member for Port Darwin's concern about clause 15, I

doubt really that there is a great deal of legitimate concern to be held there. I doubt that the commission would be capricious in this type of thing. If it was, in order to extract the money that it claims it would be eligible to, it would have to take court proceedings. Immediately it took court proceedings, the person who was being sued could appeal to the action in the normal manner and the court would judge it upon its merits. It would not be sufficient at law, in my opinion, for the commission merely to say the ordinance says "in our opinion", therefore the court would have to rule in favour of the commission. I don't think that would be the case at all. After all, every time any of us are booked for speeding, it is merely in the opinion of the policeman in the normal event that he thinks we are exceeding the speed limit of 35 miles per hour and then the court determines it. I would think that if the court upheld the decision of the commission, then if we have any faith in the law as it is, I think that the commission would have been right.

Mr Withnall: Then this makes it absolute.

Mr ROBERTSON: I don't consider that it makes it absolute at all. However, I would imagine that, if it makes the honourable member for Port Darwin a little more happy, the Executive Member for Community Development will look into it.

Touching very briefly on the overall bill, I think that it gets to what the Housing Commission really is all about: the provision of housing for preferably the lower-income earners and at the most economic rent possible. This bill will assist in the provision of a low cost housing and, by preventing the flow-on of rentals resulting from any form of major damage done by an existing tenant to other tenants, I think that the bill is definitely heading in the right direction. It is assisting the commission to do what I consider is the essence of the commission's charter.

Regarding eligible persons, I am quite sure that the Housing Commission in the past has been somewhat in a quandary over this. From my own personal experience, they must have on repeated occasions found themselves ultra vires to the existing ordinance in that they are, on my understanding, making emergency allocations when really they are bending the rules a little bit. This amendment clears up that difficulty which the commission must have been faced with on numerous occasions.

The first major section of the bill amends section 13B of the principal ordinance and removes what has obviously been an anomaly. The difference in the price realised by a person selling back to the commission, depending on location of the block, its geographic location as well as its street location, could be anything from \$2,000 to \$6,000. The way local government ratings are going at the moment, in the next year or so, it may well be more just on the UCV of the land.

In general, I certainly commend the bill and the thoughts behind it. I am quite sure that the honourable members on this side will be willing to look at any reasonable amendments in the committee stage.

Mr KILGARIFF: This is a very humane bill. It is an endeavour to improve various situations which will reflect on tenants of the Housing Commission. Over the years, there have been quite a lot of difficulties and endeavours have been made to amend them from time to time. I think that this bill is certainly on the right track. I have no doubt that the Executive Member for Community Development would heed the advice in reference to clause 3. In these days, it is a natural thing that when there is a controversy there is an arbitrator and I would think that there would be no problem if in a situation such as could arise under clause 3 there would be an arrangement where an arbitrator would be called in. This has been indicated by many people. Of course, it is in the hands of the Executive Member for Community Development and I understand that he is considering that situation.

Clause 4 has always been a difficult one and I think it will always be difficult. I think that it is an endeavour to tie down the responsibility of maintenance of a dwelling and this has been an extremely hard job over the years. You have people who have absolutely wrecked dwellings to the extent of hundreds and in some cases thousands of dollars. In many cases, this is reflected in the economic rent because it is not the tenant who has paid but it has been the tenants overall who have had to pay this large maintenance bill. This is an endeavour to tie down a tenant to a situation where he should be responsible for excess maintenance. But, as I said before, it is one of these difficult situations that I don't think will ever be overcome. I go along with this particular clause but, at the same time, there has to be a lot of give and take because really there is no answer. It is a humane bill

and I am sure that the Housing Commission by and large would endeavour to make a fair assessment.

I commend clause 5 too. This is a reasonable clause relating to the powers of the commission to let dwellings. This is where a person who has been displaced from a dwelling place by process of law is substituted by an eligible person. This should streamline the effort and I congratulate the honourable member for bringing the bill forward.

Mr TAMBLING: In reply, I am pleased to take note of comments by all honourable members with regard to this bill and to note that the principles proposed in the legislation are being accepted in broad terms. I have taken particular note of the suggestions of both the honourable member for Nightcliff and the honourable member for Port Darwin with respect to clauses 3 and 5. I have already had amendments drafted to both clauses.

With regard to the issues raised by the honourable member for Port Darwin on clause 4, it is interesting to note the performance of the commission in this particular area. Whilst the honourable member for Nightcliff has had on occasion a number of instances where she has felt the need to accompany people to establish their rights and their property inspection requirements, I am sure that commission officers and other people in this community have had to do so from time to time. The commission itself has already incorporated the concern expressed by the honourable member for Port Darwin in the tenancy agreements, both in those agreements that existed prior to the cyclone and those that have been arranged since the cyclone, in so much that under one of the sections which relate to maintenance, reasonable wear and tear as determined by the commission, and damage by fire, storm and tempest, flood or earthquake is excepted. I will arrange for amendments to be prepared and presented in the committee stages to incorporate these concerns.

Motion agreed to; bill read a second time.

Committee stage to be taken later.

PORTS BILL (Serial 42)

Mr PERRON: I support the bill. It is intended to provide protection against some arbitrary decisions made by the Port Superintendent and the Harbourmaster. My only complaint about the bill is that it does not go

far enough in as much as members of the public should be able to appeal against any arbitrary decision made by the Port Authority. Some of the areas which this bill relates to are the issue, suspension or cancellation of pilots' licences and pilots' exemption certificates, the suspension or alteration of bylaws relating to the sorting, stacking, storage and delivery of cargo. Under the Small Craft Bylaws, decisions which may be appealed against under this bill are: instructions or orders which relate to certain equipment which is to be carried in a boat or the number of persons which may be safely carried in a boat, the refusal to grant permits to hold boat races or other water sports, the granting or cancellation of a licence to drive a speed boat or ski boat. Other areas covered by this appeal proposal are the granting of a licence to ply for hire for the carriage of goods or persons, the registration of certain small craft and also the issue of boatman certificates to persons proving that they are competent to handle a boat.

I have been closely associated with the Port Authority for a number of years and have dealt directly with many of the licences, permits and authorities which I have mentioned. The appeal provisions provided by this bill are desirable and I hope that at some future date the Assembly can look at extending the appeal provisions to the Ports Ordinance itself.

Motion agreed to; bill read a second time.

Clause 3 amended in committee.

Bill passed the remaining stages without debate.

MOTION

Brucellosis and Tuberculosis—Industries Assistance Commission Report.

Mr TUXWORTH: I support the motion of the Majority Leader that this report be noted. It has been inferred in several quarters that the continuation of the brucellosis and tuberculosis eradication campaign is nothing but a sop to put money in the pockets of certain farmers. I cannot stress too strongly from the point of view of the majority party and many people in a wide cross section of this country that the total eradication of brucellosis and tuberculosis from Australia is going to do nothing but good for the whole country because the sooner the country becomes clean of it so will our stature rise in world export markets. We have seen in the past what the Americans can do and what

other large markets can do in an effort to suppress imports; they raise all sorts of barriers and the first thing they pick on is people with disease in their country.

There is one other minor problem which concerns the cattlemen in my particular area. It is a mechanical problem that has to be sorted out by the Industries Assistance Commission. It is simply one of payment. The present proposal by the commission is that station owners be paid at the farm gate on a per head basis for compensation for any cattle that are destroyed as a result of having these two diseases. The point was raised about a relatively disease-free area where a conscientious cattleman has gone to a lot of trouble to try to clean his herd. He would be exposed to the cost of mustering his herd and the cost of mustering a herd is the same on one property as the other but he may perhaps find one or two reactors, whereas a cattleman in another area who has not been quite as careful about the control of the disease could actually make a lot of money on the deal. He is exposed to the same costs of the muster and he could turn out hundreds of cattle that he is paid for on a per head basis at the farm gate. They felt that the situation was not quite fair and, provided the Industries Assistance Commission was prepared to look at this portion of the thing, it would meet with wholehearted support everywhere.

Mr VALE: Having discussed the Industries Assistance Commission report with the Central Pastoral Association and other pastoralists in Central Australia, there are several comments I wish to make concerning the report and the proposal to eradicate both brucellosis and tuberculosis. While there is an obvious need to eradicate these diseases to protect overseas markets—and indeed it should be noted that several years ago pastoralists were told that unless brucellosis and TB were eradicated then overseas markets would disappear—today these overseas markets have been eradicated but the diseases have not.

The incidence of brucellosis is relatively low in Central Australia—less than 2% in a total of 92 stations and even lower for TB, less than 1%. Pastoralists in Central Australia would normally assist in a program of eradication but because of the low incidence rate of these diseases in the Centre their financial ability to participate in the program during the present economic climate is open to question. Consideration should be given for some

financial assistance to defray the cost of full musters on properties affected by either of the diseases if the program is to be implemented. The recommendation in the report that 75% of a predetermined market rate be paid on a farm gate basis is commendable.

The report also indicates that in 1973 there were 74 confirmed cases of human infection by brucellosis. Those mainly affected were vets, farmers and abattoir workers. It was estimated that the cost of medication, plus the loss of salary and wages, was around \$100,000 in 1973. In what is under normal circumstances a multi-million dollar industry, this figure alone would not justify the full scale eradication program. Notwithstanding these comments, I would suggest that the entire eradication program be held back, at least until cattle prices improve and the industry has recovered from the severe recession which it is now in. In principle, I support the scheme.

Motion agreed to.

ADJOURNMENT DEBATE

Dr LETTS: I move that the Assembly do now adjourn.

The honourable member for Nightcliff asked me a question this morning in these terms: "Is the principal architect of the Darwin Reconstruction Commission a consultant or a full time staff member employed under public service conditions of service? Who appointed the principal architect and under what authority?" The answer that I have been provided with is that there is no position of principal architect of the commission. I know that the commission does use the services of senior architects and in view of the answer I must conclude, as I presume she must conclude, that such people would be used on a consultant or fee basis and not employed under public service conditions of service.

Mrs LAWRIE: I allude to the questions I have asked of the Executive Member for Finance and Law concerning motor vehicles roaring up and down our beaches—and that is not an exaggeration. Some years ago, I introduced legislation which was passed, assented to, but never properly implemented in my view, banning motor vehicles, including motor bikes, on prescribed beaches. Casuarina beach is one such beach. The Administrator in Council most properly saw fit to effectively, in the legislative sense, ban motor

vehicles from racing up and down on Casuarina beach but recently motor traffic on the beach has increased to a point where it resembles Smith Street on a Friday night. It is possibly moving into the Bourke Street, Melbourne class. I am aware that the honourable member, although new to his executive position, has approached the Police Commissioner and he most courteously gave me an answer today which was totally unsatisfactory and not conducive of peace in the minds of the community. I advise the honourable member that I am in receipt of numerous complaints, probably more complaints than he would receive, about motor vehicles and motor bikes tearing up and down Casuarina beach. He has advised that apparently no specific instructions have been given by the Police Commissioner to members of the police force to enforce the legislative provision. We have come to a most interesting situation.

Perhaps I should make a few suggestions which I hope the honourable member for Finance and Law will put to the Police Commissioner. The suggestions are that next weekend, on Saturday and Sunday, a policeman be stationed on Casuarina beach, complete with notebook and several pencils, to take the number plates of every motor vehicle attempting to use that beach, to warn them that such traffic is prohibited and to say that that is the first and only warning. I would hope that due publicity would be given to this in the paper. I also think it would be within the Police Commissioner's ambit to make an advertisement saying that there will be a police blitz on people using the beaches for purposes of motor vehicle traffic. I further suggest that the following weekend the same policeman with several of his brothers be stationed at the beach and that every person attempting to use the beach for the said wrong purpose be immediately booked and brought to court and that these patrols—it only takes 2 policemen—be continued for the next 3 or 4 months with due publicity. I think the problem would then disappear.

To give weight to my argument and to give the Police Commissioner some food for thought, I offer the following little vignette of Northern Territory life. Approximately 4 weeks ago, a constituent of mine who was on Casuarina beach somewhat to his dismay saw motor bikes roaring up and down and very sensibly took steps to protect himself. He did not exactly climb a tree but I guess he felt like

it. He was pretty disgruntled and he was even more surprised to see 2 motor cycle policemen tearing up and down the beach, passing the other bikes, demonstrating that they has bigger, better and faster bikes and taking no steps at all to apprehend the illegal users of the beach. He continued on his merry way even more disgruntled. He walked to the end of Casuarina beach, turned around and started walking back and there, in a group in the sand at the far end of Casuarina beach, were 4 nudists sitting down and talking to each other, apparently causing annoyance to no-one, and guess who was there booking them? You are right, the police; not the motor bike police but policemen who had come from a patrol car which was parked at the back of the beach in the sand dune area. There we had members of the police force booking nudists; certainly they were not obeying the present law because a declared beach is not yet a reality but they caused no harm to anybody. If they had offended anyone at least it did not take the form of danger to life and limb. No child was in danger of being maimed or killed by these 4 nudists, but they were being booked while a completely irresponsible raggle taggle gypsy mob on motor bikes tore up and down the beach being outsmarted and beaten only by the motor cycle police.

Mr Speaker, it is not funny. Very soon some little kid will be killed on Casuarina beach, and then watch the honourable member for MacDonnell and the honourable member for Millner who seem to think it is funny, then hear them say bring back the lash and hang the bastards that killed the kid. Let's get something done before a child has to die.

When I introduced the legislation, with the exception I think of one member who disagreed, I got general approval and support for the idea that you ought to be able to take your kids to one place in peace and not be frightened of them being killed by motor vehicles. It should be beaches. Consequently the legislation went through with a large majority. The Administrator in Council very properly implemented the spirit of the legislation in declaring Casuarina beach but what have we got now? The Police Commissioner worries about the road toll; it is going to be a pretty sorry report when he has to start quoting statistics on the beach toll.

I thank the Executive Member for Finance and Law for the prompt answers to the questions which I have received through him. I

indicate that I consider the answers totally unsatisfactory. My dissatisfaction is not with him; it is with the Commissioner of Police who is responsible for the direction of the Northern Territory Police Force. I have indicated my disgust with whoever is setting the priorities for the local police force. I do not agree with the law being flouted, which is why I introduced the legislation to permit nudity in certain areas, but I am surprised that, in policing the present legislation regarding obscenity, the Commissioner has not seen fit to police equally the present legislation regarding motor vehicle traffic on beaches which in my opinion has a far greater priority. I hope we do not have to wait until some kid is killed.

Mr EVERINGHAM: Firstly I would like to mention a matter of some concern to me which was brought to my notice by a constituent. Although it was of concern, what subsequently transpired was of even greater concern. This constituent made application according to him—and I have to accept what he says because there has been no rebuttal from the authorities—for the connection of an electricity supply on one of those poles with the fuse boxes attached as long ago as 26 June. On Thursday last he came to me because he had been told by the appropriate authorities, I assume the Department of Housing and Construction, that there were no more poles and no more boxes and that he would have to get it done himself and, "Bad luck mate; we're sorry but we have lost your application". I duly sent a telex to the Department of Housing and Construction last Thursday because I believe the written word is often better than the spoken, and telexes go immediately, unlike letters these days. As I had no acknowledgement even of the telex by Friday afternoon, I sent another one asking for an acknowledgement. As of yesterday afternoon, I still had not heard. I sent another today saying that if I did not get some acknowledgement from the Department of Housing and Construction today I would send copies of all the telexes to the appropriate Minister. I want to know why government departments can't have the courtesy to answer what is obviously an urgent communication with at least a reasonable degree of urgency. They have telex machines and they use them for sending great spiels to all their offices around the country from Canberra to Melbourne and here and there. In my opinion, they often use them wastefully, where letters would just as well do the job. Why can't they

reply to a member of the Legislative Assembly with some promptness?

Another matter is causing me a little bit of concern and that is what could be the indirect cost to the Northern Territory of constitutional development. I personally am entirely in favour of a reasonable degree of responsibility for local functions being delegated to the Executive of this Assembly, but a sinister aspect seems to be becoming evident in that the Australian Public Service seem to be taking advantage of the situation. Perhaps that is not quite correct, various departments of the public service appear to be taking advantage of the situation to enlarge their strength on the basis that in handing over some of their powers to a local bunch of hill-billies they apparently have to keep an eye on them after these powers have been given. At the moment, the executive members of this Assembly have absolutely no executive powers whatsoever and yet already a constitutional development section has been specially set up in the Department of Northern Australia and has quite a substantial staff. I am fairly sure that other departments will be setting up bodies to liaise with the various executive members in this Assembly. What the Australian Public Service, or perhaps the power-brokers of the top of these departments are trying to do is to make a big mystery out of government. They are giving, if the recommendations of the Joint Parliamentary Committee are carried out in full tomorrow, to the executive of this Assembly a bunch of powers that numerous shire councils in Queensland exercise, and not much more. Yet they are trying to make this big mystery out of government when it is a relatively small thing that they are giving away. They are trying to build up their numbers, waste the taxpayers' money, and generally take advantage of an opportunity which would appear to any outsider to be one where they should be pulling their horns in and not replacing staff who are taken over by the up and coming Northern Territory Public Service. I understand positions are being created in Brisbane and there is no mention that these people will ever be coming to Darwin, and so we may not even see the people who are being appointed to look over our shoulder when we get this fine bunch of powers that include the Tourist Bureau, the Housing Commission, road and drainage works, the Fire Brigade and a few other thing—magnificent powers that we can't

be trusted to exercise all on our little lonesome.

When these powers are being transferred, they will be transferred to people who are responsible to an elected body. The elected body represents the people of the Northern Territory as a whole and that is the only body the executive members should be responsible to. They should not have civil servants from the Australian Public Service looking over their shoulder except perhaps the Commonwealth Auditor's people; they will have them anyway and that is good enough supervision without creating all these other little mushroom branches that they have set up, and they will be aiming to set up more.

The reason I say this is that the people of the Territory will sooner or later find out what is going on. They will smell a rat. They will see more public servants instead of fewer. They will ask what good is constitutional development to us. They will say it is costing us two public servants now where one did previously even though he was from Canberra. They will begin to reject constitutional development and this is why this Assembly must watch very carefully what is going on and must not let the Australian Government departments and their power-brokers and . . .

Mr Kilgariff: Mugs.

Mr EVERINGHAM: No, I won't call them mugs, Bernie, they are smarter than that. They can achieve success from adversity, these blokes.

We must watch this situation very carefully; we must endeavour to extract undertakings at all possible times from departments with which the Executive is dealing in the handover of powers so that there will not be duplication. After all, we are all Australian taxpayers.

The whole idea of constitutional development, as I understand it, is that local administration will be more efficient and more successful because the people who are administering the Territory will be living in the Territory and they won't have to learn the job when they come up here from south, and then, after 2 years, go somewhere else and some other guy comes up and spends another year learning the job and so on. That is the way I want to see it. If they are going to spread like an epidemic again, I am afraid the public and the taxpayers particularly are not going to like it very much at all.

Miss ANDREW: I rise because I am totally disgusted with the situation of libraries in the Northern Territory. It has always been bad, but at the moment it is just absolutely appalling. A lot of people in Darwin have lost many of their possessions and included in those were books; if the books did not blow away, they were probably so saturated that they were unreadable. If you happen to be looking for a book, and you are relying on public services in Darwin at the moment, you would have more chance of finding a pork chop in a synagogue.

This disgusting situation exists not only in Darwin; it applies similarly to Alice Springs, Katherine and Tenant Creek. In this month's Library Journal, there is a long article describing the discrepancies and inadequacies of the Northern Territory library system. From what I have heard about the article, although I have not yet read it, I am embarrassed to belong to the Territory, the situation is so disgusting.

I would just like to lay on record some of the inadequacies that do appear. Firstly, resources—pre-cyclone we did have 70,000 books available to the people of Darwin. Now you would be lucky to find 20,000 and over 2,000 of these are sitting in a back cupboard because there is nobody to catalogue them. The rest of them blew away. Recently, the Department of Northern Australia announced that the Nightcliff Library would be open. What they did not announce was that there would be a total of 6,000 books. Consider the population of the northern suburbs. There are 6,000 books and 5,000 of those are children's books, and the only librarian in Darwin today was not able to tell me whether or not I would be able to find 1,000 books suitable for adult reading in the Nightcliff library if I went out there now. She was not certain because a lot of those 1,000 books have had considerable water damage. There are some magazines but we have less than 40,000 books and magazines available for the people of Darwin. What if you do not like books or magazines? Where are the cassettes, the tapes, the films, the slides, pictures, records? You might prefer to listen. Perhaps you can't read small type. Where are the books in large print? They are just not there.

Secondly, the operation—if by chance you happen to want a librarian in the Northern Territory, where do you ring? Not the library; you phone the Local Government Branch of the Department of Northern Australia and

there, hidden away in the bowels of this branch, you spot a librarian. What is she doing? Administrative work. The rest of them are warming their toes by Canberra heaters.

The staff who are running what little resources there are in the library building, in the poor accommodation that they suffer, are to be complimented. The remarkable amount of work that these people have done, especially in Darwin and especially since the cyclone, is laudable. However, they have their limitations. They simply don't have the specialisation involved in library training. Consequently, the books sit in the back room. Any other incidental cataloguing goes by the board. The libraries are simply running and operating if the books happen to be in good condition and happen to be catalogued and happen to be sitting in the right place on the shelf.

How many people who have come to Darwin—and there are a considerable number of them since the cyclone—even know where the library is? Has it been publicised in a 1 centimetre by 1 centimetre advertisement in the local paper? If they do happen to want to take out a book, as from 30 June, and presumably those who came before that had a permit so they were given special treatment, you had to produce a Northern Territory driver's licence or some official document acceptable by the library in order to take a book away. Is this discouraging our population to read? Is this making the already appalling conditions that we are living under in any way improved?

Thirdly, the service—if you happen to live in the country, you rely on mail and since mail problems have arisen that means you may not have any mail unless you like to drive up to 6 miles. What do we have for country borrowers? A country lending service. I compliment the people who have been operating this service because, with the inadequacies of the mail system, they have been doing remarkably well. What can you borrow? A certain selection of books. You don't even have the scope of what few books are available. When you are sitting out on a station or in a mining camp at night, you might like to listen to a cassette or a record. You might like to look at a film and you might like to have a different one every fourth day. But no, all you can do is get some books every so often when somebody gets the mail. Is this catering for the people in the Territory?

I am not going to discuss what I think should be done to libraries in the future. I have recently presented a submission to a select committee on libraries, outlining that I thought the Northern Territory library service should be a Territory-wide service, providing adequate resources at regular intervals to all people. What I am talking about is the situation as it exists now and as it could be remedied. In spite of telegrams to Dr Patterson, the Minister concerned, there is simply no action. Why not, if the Darwin libraries are so inadequate? Nobody seems to know when or where the new building is going to be built because it is resting with our friends in the Darwin Reconstruction Commission. Why not buy an old bus and put some books in it. Why not drive it out to the northern suburbs, or even around the inner suburbs, to let people who are sitting in their houses and don't happen to have public transport have some access to what little is available? Canberra, in its generosity, has lent us 6000 books. I hope honourable members are not overwhelmed by this touching generosity. Why can't they get some more? From what I have seen of the libraries in Canberra, they are over-stocked.

In view of this lack of facilities, hollow promises for 1978, 1979, which means presumably the 1980s, just don't ring very well with me. I want some action on libraries so that Joe Citizen can walk in and get himself a book, cassette, a tape, some pictures or some records.

Mr TUXWORTH: I raise a matter of concern to myself and my electorate. This matter is to do with Aboriginal housing. We were told in 1972, when this enlightened government came to power, that the 200 years of suppression and degradation that our Aborigines have been exposed to were about to end and they would henceforth be established in suitable housing and accommodation. At the time in the town we were just taking over an Aboriginal hostel that had been left as a personal donation by a woman who had lived in the Territory for many years. The Department of Aboriginal Affairs was quickly got out of the business of administration and into the business of advising and advised the Minister that an Aboriginal housing association should be set up in Tennant Creek to look after the housing facilities of the Aboriginal people.

This has led to the establishment of the Warramunga Pabulu Housing Association

which has been going now for 2 years and has expended the princely sum of \$150,000. We have one brick building three-quarters finished and another steel-framed building 10% complete. To add to the injury of all this, we have also been advised that the Aboriginal hostel, which was bequeathed to the Aboriginal people and is now under the control of the Warramunga Pabulu Housing Association, can't be used because it is full of building material. As if this was not enough, to add insult to injury, we find that the Department of Aboriginal Affairs is neither interested nor able to help and, further to that, efforts to have established on the outskirts of the town, where we have some 120 or 130 fringe dwellers living in pure wurlie-type conditions, small watertight shacks for these people so that they can be covered during the wet have been fruitless. The Aborigines themselves have taken the initiative and have gone down to the dump and collected timber, iron and wire and have started to create their own shanty town. Five dwellings have sprung up in the last couple of months.

The gentleman running the housing association is deeply concerned at what is going on and is frustrated continually by the departmental balls-ups and bureaucrats that he has to contend with. His contribution is to come along behind and try to build toilets and washing facilities for the people and perhaps lay a water pipe where that is possible. In an effort to try to alleviate this, we invited one federal minister, Cavanagh, twice to the town to have a look at the situation. He declined both invitations but saw fit to come in late one night and make his presence known after he had arrived and in circumstances that no one could see him and explain the situation to him. We have now another minister who has gone to the trouble of coming in the absence of anybody who is interested in the whole situation. He will be there today or tomorrow to inspect, what I don't know, and be advised by whom I don't know. It would be a very interesting exercise to see the buck being passed.

I felt our local town conditions were bad enough, but a recent trip around the Barkly Tablelands brought to my notice conditions that were supposed to have been eliminated in the 1900s. Aborigines are living in housing that was erected in the late 1930s. There has been no maintenance or hygiene carried out on it and the proprietors now say they are not prepared to spend any more money because

every time they do anything for these people it is regarded as a natural right and then they are asked to do twice as much. These people say that the Aborigines get a pension; they get medical facilities; they get education—it is all handed to them. Aborigines in town are handed accommodation so if the department wants them to have accommodation out here, let them build it. I can't say that I am entirely antagonistic towards the station owners' attitude. However, we find the Aborigines are keen to have housing on the stations and improve their lot, and that is something in itself. This situation has again been aggravated by the bureaucracy. The Department of Aboriginal Affairs advises me that nothing can be done to help these people until the station makes a grant of land to a housing association or to the department because Treasury is not prepared to spend money on Aboriginal housing on someone else's land.

If we in the Northern Territory stand by and watch this situation deteriorate at the rate it is deteriorating, we will finish up with a black camp and a white camp and all the terror that goes with them. It is time that there was a full investigation into the functions of all the Aboriginal housing associations from the South Australian border through to the islands and, where some have been inefficient and ineffective and incapable of supplying housing while the consultants that operate them rip it off, the cleaners should be put through them and the ones that are doing a commendable job given a great deal more support than they are at the moment.

Some time ago, I raised the problem of Aborigines living in outback areas receiving social security cheques whether they need them or not. The amount of money paid to people in some areas for their contribution to the nation is quite outstanding. I have been advised by the folk at Renner Springs that we currently have 30 people collecting social security cheques. Plenty of them are able-bodied young men who should be working but, because they choose to live in Renner Springs and because there is no work there, they are paid a cheque. They lie around the roadhouse all day, buy a flagon and go out into the bush and get whacked. I was hopeful that after the initial revelations that came out about the misuse of social security money someone in the department would have had the brains to realise the damage and the destruction that they are causing to the people.

Don't worry about the property and the taxpayers, they are destroying people with this madness, and it is time that somebody, and particularly us because we are the elected people, stood up and made representations about it.

Two days ago, we received a reply from the Commissioner of Police concerning police uniforms in the southern end of the Territory. While I accept his explanation for the late arrival of uniforms and the destruction of others, I was most interested to read of the new uniform and I am most anxious to know whether this uniform will be the uniform currently worn by the Commonwealth Police. If that is all it is, and it is just another move to take from this Territory the police establishment that was begun here in the 1880s and has built up a tremendous reputation as an individual unit, then the whole thing is a total disaster and it should be scrapped.

Mr BALLANTYNE: I rise to bring to the attention of this Assembly a particular circular that I have from an insurance company addressed to policy holders for storm and/or tempest cover. It informs policy holders that the company is giving advance notice of a decision they have made which may affect the policy holder's insurance from the next renewal date. It says that all insurers have found it necessary to review the availability of storm and/or tempest cover in certain cyclone regions.

We are now able to offer continuation of cover against storm and/or tempest damage if your dwelling is constructed with either of the following cyclone protective features:

- (1) In conformity with the new Darwin Building Code or alternatively with the following basic features:
 - (a) Roofs to be securely fastened with storm screws and cyclone washers or external storm battens, and in addition to have cyclone rods fitted from roof to floor.
 - (b) Walls to be adequately braced in non brick or concrete and to have protective cladding over fibro surfaces.
 - (c) Piers to be adequately bolted down, particularly at the corners and diagonally braced at each end and

- (d) to be set in concrete in the platform beneath the building.

It then goes on to say that if the dwelling is constructed in either of the above ways a continuation of the cover against the storm or tempest damage can be arranged when the policy falls due for renewal. The reason I am bringing this to the attention of the Assembly is that I feel there are going to be a lot of problems here in Darwin, particularly as it states that it is going to be to the Darwin Building Code which applies within a 40 kilometre radius. That means that, if you live one metre outside, you can have storm and tempest cover, but if you live on the other side of the boundary you cannot. There are a tremendous number of houses in this town which were not built to cyclone proof standards but which stood up to that cyclone. What is going to happen to those people? They have to prove to the insurance company that they have security bolts on the roof and they have to have all these external storm battens and all the other contingencies they have put down here. They have only named those things; they have not said what the strength of the bolts are or the type of washers and screws; they have not laid that down yet they are using that as an alternative.

I have had a look at the Darwin Building Code and to the average person it reads like a technical nightmare. There are a lot of things in there which are very adequate, very well phrased and very well thought up, but they refer to a lot of Australian standards and they do not even give you a copy. You have to buy all the standards to make sure that you are building according to the code.

I would like to draw this circular to the attention of policy holders here in Darwin, and not only Darwin—it says cyclone regions but they have not named those regions. It is about time they got an overall policy for all areas. There are a lot of areas on the west coast, along the east coast, the Top End, right through from Darwin right over to East Arnhem Land, right down to Groote Eylandt and right across to Cape York. It is about time they really told people how they can insure, on what basis, without going to all this ballyhoo simply because we happen to live in a cyclone region which was damaged by a cyclone on 24 December 1974.

Mr DONDAS: My concern is brought about by the number of complaints that I have received from prison officers living in my

electorate with regard to what is going on at Fannie Bay Gaol. This morning I asked the Executive Member for Social Affairs: "When will the Fannie Bay Gaol have a fence around it?" His reply was that in many respects he would hope never. There are no arrangements to erect a fence around the Fannie Bay Gaol at the moment and the situation of the prisoners has been one of considerable concern. It has been of concern that no firm decision has been made as to what is going to happen. We have seen several press reports on the matter in the last couple of weeks and in one the Attorney-General advocated the reconstruction of a fence around the Fannie Bay Prison. The honourable member had not been able to gain any advice about any move for the reconstruction of a fence around the prison and in many respects he hoped that they would not be able to use the site much longer at all. I agree with him on that particular subject.

During the week, I sent a telegram to Mr Frank Dwyer, the First Assistant Secretary of the Department of Northern Australia, with a request for some information about the gaol. His reply was: "Reference your telex about Fannie Bay Gaol and information you have regarding dismantling. The position is that no decision has been made regarding the immediate closing down of Fannie Bay. In fact I had discussions last week with government officials and the Prison Officers Association regarding short term measures to improve the security at Fannie Bay pending the final report on the new gaol. In examining this matter we were very conscious of the inconvenience to remand prisoners as well as the necessity to have some security section for Darwin prisoners. Signed E. F. Dwyer".

I am assuming, but I could be wrong, that the Executive Member for Social Affairs, like the rest of the authorities, is happy in putting off this decision regarding the emergency that the gaol is now facing. The Fannie Bay Gaol in the next decade will be almost 100 years old; it is now an historical site and it should as soon as possible be replaced. However, it is now not possible and will not be possible until such time as funds are available to build a new gaol elsewhere. I wonder what happened to the \$4m promised in 1969 for a new gaol?

I shall now endeavour to inform honourable members of some of the problems that they are facing at the gaol and some of the happenings. A prisoner escaped from the farm and worked in Darwin for four days. He

drove an Australian Government vehicle to Alice Springs. He was sentenced in Alice Springs for driving under the influence of drink; the authorities did not charge him with illegal use of the vehicle because a transport section employee probably would have been dismissed. The Controller of Prisons then needed a prisoner to do some concrete work at the Gunn Point Farm and asked the prisoner in Alice Springs if he would come back to Darwin to do it. The prisoner advised that he would provided he was taken back to Darwin before his release date. The prisoner was taken back to Darwin but in a matter of a few days he broke out in boils and he could not carry out the work at the farm. He was then employed in the cookhouse until the end of his sentence.

The Darwin Gaol does not have a Director of Correctional Services to control the overall prison services. The Superintendent is acting, the Deputy Superintendent is acting, and the Chief Prison Officer is acting. In fact at the present time there is only one appointed senior prison officer performing senior prison officer duties. It is just like the Darwin Reconstruction Commission—everybody is acting and there is nobody permanent.

There is no means of holding a prisoner in separate confinement at Gunn Point Prison Farm; they are all on the loose and cannot be put in a locked enclosure. A prisoner who had been sent to the farm for the second time for a driving offence, the first one was because he had killed somebody, is now permitted by the Controller immediately to drive around in an Australian Government vehicle at the prison farm.

There is no money available for staff training for prison officers. All prisoners held at the Darwin Gaol during the day time are incarcerated in the police station watch house at night. The remand prisoners are not separated. The poor blokes are not getting any sleep and we feel for them. The remand prisoners are being held at the Darwin gaol during the day time in an exercise yard measuring 15 feet by 21 feet. Sometimes there are 15 or 20 prisoners. There has been no move yet made to resurrect the Darwin Gaol and with the wet season coming on and maybe the remand prisoners being kept out at the Gunn Point Prison Farm, the wet could cut them off and they would be out there for ever. Nine prisoners have escaped from the Darwin Gaol since the cyclone. The judges from the Northern Territory Supreme Court

have commented that a fence of some description should be placed around the Fannie Bay Gaol.

There are still no uniforms. They will not be getting any new uniforms for another 3 to 6 months. The watchhouse facilities are such that it must be impossible for a prisoner to sleep because of drunks coming in and out all night, being discharged and received by the police. The prisoners are being shuttled to and from the watch house and gaol by bus. Prisoners and their visitors are in full view of the public and tourist buses are stopping on the main road and taking photographs of the prisoners and officers working around the gaol. The room used for medical treatment will be of no value in the wet because the roof is unserviceable. There is no running water in the room for use of the doctor and sister. What would happen to a prisoner if he had something seriously happen and there were no facilities up there? There are two female matrons employed at the gaol although there have been no female prisoners since shortly after the cyclone. There is little or no work for them to do.

Once again I ask where the \$4m for the new gaol went. I bring this point out because of my concern and because some other honourable members may like to know what is going on. In the event of any trouble arising from prisoners escaping because of the lack of security at the Gunn Point Prison Farm, at least we have tried our best to give a warning and request the authorities to make a firm decision about some temporary accommodation at the Fannie Bay Gaol. It is not my intention to insist that the Fannie Bay Gaol stay there for ever. My contention is that it is the only place for the time being that can be used on a temporary basis without incurring too much public expense.

Mr ROBERTSON: I asked a question, with a series of sub-questions, of the Executive Member for Education and Consumer Affairs yesterday morning and she answered the questions this afternoon. The question related to the delays which have been occurring in the office of the Controller of Rents. It is quite fascinating to look back on the speeches made in Hansard when this legislation was slammed through the previous Legislative Council in what can only be described as undue haste.

It is interesting to look at the attitude of the government at that time through its official

members. You Mr Speaker, will recall the things that were said but new members of this Assembly who were not involved in the old Council will not so I propose using Hansard to some extent. In relation to the administrative problems which were understood could arise, the sponsor of the bill, the honourable Mr Terrell, said: "If legislation is needed there should be no hindrance upon the passage of that legislation simply because there are going to be administrative problems with it. I believe that any administrative problems that may occur in the implementation of this legislation will be overcome. It is the duty of the government to ensure that they are and they will be overcome".

Looking further at some of the promises made at that time, on page 328 of this particular Hansard, Mr Terrell said during the committee stage: "I indicated in the second-reading debate that the administration of this legislation will be catered for; that is the responsibility of the government. We are not prepared to bind ourselves to 28 days as has been proposed by the honourable member for Victoria River. A more reasonable period would be 60 days, bearing in mind that there are various appeal periods and so forth included in this period". It will be noted that that 60 days between the time of lodgement and the determination being made in fact allows for appeal periods. In other words the process of determination I would assume from that should take far less than the 60 days, but I am unaware from the legislation that the actual appeal period has anything to do with the delay between the time of making application and the determination being made.

It continues at great length, in fact ad nauseam. We again get back to the question of 60 days on page 330 where Mr Terrell said: "Should a future legislature bring in amendments along the lines indicating perhaps 60 days, which we would regard as being a more reasonable period, I don't think that the government would oppose it". So again we are getting back to the 60 day period.

That, briefly, is an indication of the intentions and the promises at the government at the time the legislation was introduced and inflicted upon the people of the Northern Territory. What then is the true position? In answer to my first question, which was "What is the longest period that has transpired between an application being made and a termination being made", the answer was 27

weeks, not 60 days which is 2 months. The average period taken, according to the information provided, is 8 to 10 weeks and that of course is near enough to the 60 days. The longest period that he has an application which is currently pending is 23 weeks. Of course I would not know what this one refers to; it could be an extremely complex premises.

I would like to inform the House that I am involved in a very small way in the business of being a landlord and I think that the House is entitled to know that. My partner and I made an application ourselves of the Rent Controller. We made the application exactly 4 months ago and we still do not have a determination. What is meant by 8 to 10 weeks as being the average period is a matter of conjecture. It is my fault that I never pinned it down accurately enough. If it is taken to mean that this average period represents the average of periods taken, then at the risk of making like I am acting in the Coward's Castle, I would say that this house is being misled. That is utterly, on my information, impossible. We have a situation where the longest is 23 weeks. The information I have just obtained from a real estate firm in Alice Springs is that they have the longest one, one that has just been determined—the application was lodged on 9 January. At the beginning, admittedly there may have been problems with the legislation but I don't believe that these things should be brought into operation until the people have a decent go and until the fair thing can be done. At the beginning of the operation of this legislation, this real estate firm informed me that they had a total of 30 applications which took 9 months to reach determination. If the average period is 8 to 10 weeks and the average is taken to mean the average of all applications, there must be an awful lot that the rent controller has been doing overnight to drag it back to anything like that period. I understand from the information provided by the Executive Member for Education and Consumer Services that some new system has now been incorporated that will halve the time. All I can say is thank God. I hope that promise has a little more validity and that we can take a little more credence of that promise than the promises that were made in the previous Legislative Council by official members.

Another aspect in relation to rent control which concerns me is the stifling of further building by the private sector in the rent field. I don't think that anyone would question that the development of new flat complexes by

private people is now virtually naught. Great claims were made by the Government, and anyone can read that in Hansard, that they did not believe that it would have any effect on the development of flats in the private sector. The facts of the matter are that architects have virtually no plans for flats on the drawing board at all at the moment. Ever since the date that this legislation became law, there has been nothing. Why would this be? People are still building ordinary houses so the normal building problems are not that prohibitive. Building materials are a little more expensive but I don't think that that is the cause of the private investor completely shying away from what is and should be a normal, legitimate business enterprise at a time when housing is desperately needed. There are certain categories of people who can't get into Commission homes. There must be an ever increasing roll off the production line of private housing and flat accommodation but this is not occurring. Why should this be when we have an obvious demand? The demand is clearly there; go to any real estate agent and ask him what his waiting list is like. In Alice Springs, the average waiting period would be in the order of 3 months. Since the demand is there, there should be an incentive to provide for the demand. I wonder why that isn't occurring? Could it possibly have anything to do with rent control? If we read Hansard and again go on the promises of the government, surely this can't be the case? I personally dispute that view. I think that it is precisely the case.

I have investigated some instances in Alice Springs. We have a street called George Crescent in which there are some older style and quite inferior warehouses used for light industrial operations. In Kidman Street, we have some new ones. Honourable members will find it rather hard to believe that when an application for a determination of rent on the new one, which cost some \$65,000, was made the reason given for pegging the rent of that new place at the same rent of the old place probably worth \$6,000 was that the person could get exactly the same thing as he was getting in the new one by going down to George Crescent and using the old one. The difference is some \$54,000 in value yet the sole parameter, notwithstanding section 20 of the Landlord and Tenant Control of Rents Ordinance, from which the rent controller appears to be basing his determinations is on comparable rents.

I sat in the Rent Controller's office some four months ago and that is precisely what he told me. I tried to persuade him in light of the information and the judgment given by the review board constituted by a magistrate in Alice Springs. I explained to him the reasons given for that judgment and I had the leave of the magistrate to do it. I tried to get across to him what effect this policy was having upon the private sector and the provision for the people who require rental accommodation be it industrial, commercial or residential. I got absolutely nowhere. He said, "That is my policy, full stop. I'm not interested in section 20". He actually used those words, "I'm not interested in section 20. That is the way it is going to be done". Indeed, that is the way it is being done. The net result is a complete collapse of this section of the private sector.

There is also a discussion at length in Hansard in relation to commercial premises. I am quite sure that the policy of this House would be to remove that particular section from the ordinance. Of course, we realise from the arbitrary and dictatorial statements by the Minister for the Northern Territory that that would not be assented to. Whether or not this House should regard that as being a reason why it should not introduce legislation is a matter for the executive and for the party at a later date. It is absolutely wrong that there should be this sort of interference in what is nothing more than a normal, commercial business transaction. If it is insisted that interference should remain there, then it should be kept to an absolute minimum to merely prevent what might be termed the ridiculous. We should not have the situation that occurred in an arcade in Alice Springs where, because of an overhaul of a new arcade by different types of airconditioning and the removal of a wall the rent went up by some \$45 per week. It took 9 months for the determination. What is the situation for the poor old tenant? He must continue by law to pay the same fee that he had been paying previously and 9 months later, he gets a bill for \$3,700 back rent simply because it took 9 months for the determination to be made.

If A owns a shop and B wants to rent, can anyone tell me why a government should interfere in this proposition. I am A and I go to B and say, "Can I rent your premises; I want to sell clothing?" B says, "Yes, it is available and the rent is \$90 a week". I do my business sums and it seems to me that I can only pay \$80 but by negotiation we reach a

figure of \$85 and we want to enter into an agreement for that purpose. I want to secure the premises for a long term so I am willing to have it reviewed on a basis of retail price or cost price index or whatever. That is a perfectly normal, legitimate, business transaction. By what right should a government interfere in that? Indeed, there is probably some merit in reasonable control of residential accommodation. I myself am in this business to a very minor extent and I have no objection to it at all. However, why can't it be done quickly so that people know where they are? I am prepared to accept the assurances of the controller of rents that, by some magical system, he is going to halve the time. Indeed, I trust he will.

Mr KILGARIFF: I note the honourable member for Nightcliff's concern at the answer that I gave her today that there had been no persons charged for driving vehicles along the Darwin beach and that, at present, there are only intermittent patrols. I join with her in her concern that the matter is not being policed and it is my intention to take the matter up further with the Commissioner of Police. I will also indicate to him the honourable member's suggestion that the beach should be policed, particularly on weekends. There is a law in the Northern Territory which states that vehicles, including motor-bikes, will not be driven on certain beaches and one of those beaches is Casuarina. It is also my contention that, if a law is passed in the Legislative Assembly, then no-one has the authority to say whether he will administer that law or not. If it is a law for the Territory, it has to be policed. If it is not fair or cannot be properly supervised, then it should be taken from the books.

The honourable member for Jingili has indicated his concern that, with the development of constitutional changes, there could be a duplication of public servants. And he has indicated his concern that there is a build-up of staff in the Constitutional Development Section of the Department of Northern Australia. Certainly, when one looks at the possibility of constitutional change and the development of the Northern Territory Public Service to take over state-like responsibilities now being administered by the Australian Government service, there should be a cross over from one authority to the other. There should be an increase in the Northern Territory Public Service but there should also be a decrease in the Australian Public Service as responsibilities are accepted and placed in the Northern Territory. I would hope that we would see fewer public servants here.

The matter of the Constitutional Development Section is in the hands of the Australian Government and that is highly undesirable. In fact, I do not think that a proper explanation can be given for it. Why is there this immense build-up in a section that will be the liaison point between Government and the Legislative Assembly? We shall have to wait on that issue. Let us make the point that, in the actual functions of government in the Northern Territory, there should not and will not be an increase in public servants.

The honourable member for Gillen has indicated his concern at rent control. This matter was discussed at length in the Legislative Council and the numbers game was there. By means of the numbers game, rent control has brought in for the commercial section. There was a government bloc aided by other people. It is my contention that matters such as this should be reviewed by this Assembly.

Motion agreed to; the Assembly adjourned.

Thursday, 14 August 1975
PRICES REGULATION BILL
(Serial 49)

Bill presented and read a first time.

Miss ANDREW: I move that the bill be now read a second time.

Since its implementation in 1972, the inadequacies of the Price Control Ordinance with its rather clumsy and ineffective appeals provision has become increasingly apparent. These provisions allow for review only when reference is made by the Administrator in Council to the Price Controller. Any review of this decision is made by the Price Controller himself who brought it down in the first place. The change of price can be stood over by the Administrator in Council but no other measures are available. That is, a decision can either be accepted in toto or it can be revoked. Expense and lack of public awareness or the ludicrous situation of the decision maker being the only person with power to change the decision after the review have in the past deterred both retailers and consumers from making representations for a review of the determination.

With the current high rate of inflation, recent sharp increases in freight rates, spiralling wages and rapidly rising prices have been a matter of major concern to the public. Similarly, retailers having to suffer the burden of these factors are distressed by what they feel to be the dictates of the Price Controller against which they have little recourse. Since my election last October, considerable public pressure has been applied to myself and several of my colleagues to make changes to the Price Control Ordinance, especially for the provision of a recourse or a second opinion. This bill aims to provide that by the establishment of an independent tribunal which, on request, will review the Price Controller's determination and be empowered to amend, vary or revoke such a determination. In our initial review of this legislation, we looked at a membership of 5 which would include an accountant. However, we decided to change this to 3 as being a fair and unbiased representation.

The Chairman, who would be a chief magistrate or his representative, will determine procedures. Although they will not be bound by the rules of evidence, the tribunal may inform itself of any measures which it considers appropriate. The key note will be a

lack of formality. The chairman will decide in the case of a tied vote otherwise the majority standing of the tribunal of three will rule. The chairman too will need to determine questions of law.

The other two members will be appointed by the Administrator in Council. One of them will be a consumer in the Northern Territory and the other a representative of retail interests in the Northern Territory. These appointments will be for 3 years and they will have the same protection as a justice of the High Court as will witnesses and their representatives etc.

In 24D(1): "Any person may apply for review by an order of the Price Controller in writing, setting out the grounds of application within 1 month's date of the gazettal of that order. The Price Controller will deliver this application to the chairman of the tribunal." The Price Controller is merely an intermediary vehicle. He receives the application and then conveys it to the chairman of the tribunal. If the chairman is satisfied that the application is not frivolous, he fixes a date for a hearing no later than 28 days after the expiry of the period for making application. This means that no longer will we have interminable periods after the date of a price control gazettal. Applications and grounds must be gazetted and include the date of the hearing no later than 14 days before the hearing takes place.

The people present at the hearing will be the applicant or his representative—this is particularly important in the case of small retailers or a single consumer who is able to have a representative at the hearing—the Price Controller and any person who applies to the tribunal to be joined as a party. These hearings will be public unless the tribunal is satisfied that the confidential nature of the evidence necessitates closed doors. In this case, a whole or part of the hearing will be in private and there will be a restriction of publication of the evidence or there will be disclosure of the evidence or documents to some or all parties to the application.

This tribunal may summons witnesses and demand evidence under oath. The tribunal may exercise all powers and discretion is conferred on the Price Controller. They may affirm the order under review, vary it or set it aside by substituting or remitting it back to the Price Controller for consideration with their recommendations and directions. The

tribunal shall give reasons and the Price Controller should publish the decision in the Gazette with these reasons. The decision of the tribunal will be deemed as a decision of the Price Controller and the tribunal is bound by secrecy. The penalty for refusal to answer questions, refusal to appear or contempt of the tribunal is \$1,000 or 3 months.

The presentation of this bill follows some general discussion of principle in the community and a general public pressure. I intend to circulate this legislation to unions, chambers and other interested organisations and members of the public. I hope to follow this up with discussions with as many of these groups as I can manage. I similarly trust that honourable members will discuss the bill in their electorates and their ideas and comments on the proposal will be welcomed.

Mr TUXWORTH: I rise to speak on this bill. This may seem premature but this matter has been receiving a lot of attention in my electorate by various sectors of the business community and consumers. The points I would like to raise are not points of principle relating to the necessity for price control in our community. There are points that I would like to query in relation to the way the legislation has been drafted and the meaning of some of the phraseology.

In 24(3) the legislation says, "The Administrator in Council may terminate the appointment of a member of the tribunal for inability, inefficiency, misbehaviour or physical or mental incapacity". That statement is a little ambiguous and could do with a little more explanation. The Administrator may terminate the appointment for "inability". Inability to understand the meaning of the legislation, inability to understand the point of view of either party, inability to attend the meeting, inability in what regard? He may terminate an appointment for "inefficiency". Inefficiency in what regard? His own personal inefficiency? His inefficiency to understand or comprehend the point of view of each party in the dispute or his inefficiency in handling down what the chairman may regard as satisfactory answers to any question? His appointment may be terminated for "misbehaviour". Misbehaviour of what nature? Does he lounge around at hearings? Is it social misbehaviour? Is it a professional misbehaviour? What sort of misbehaviour? It does not say. I feel that this section could be abused by any person at any level because the Administrator

can sack anybody for any reason from the tribunal. The sacking need not necessarily be because of the man's incapacity to do the job which should be the main consideration. He could use any one of these excuses.

It also says that his appointment may be terminated because of his "physical or mental incapacity". Who would be the judge of the man's mental or physical incapacity, the Administrator, the chairman, other members of the tribunal? What degree of mental and physical incapacity? Does the fact that the man is deaf mean that he may be removed from the tribunal for that reason when he still has the other areas of perception?

Proposed section 24C says that the chairman and members of the tribunal "shall be paid in respect of the hearing of the tribunal such fees and allowances as are prescribed." I do not disagree with the proposal of paying people who perform these sort of duties but it does raise the question: "Would the functions that are going to be carried out by this tribunal be closer to full-time than part-time?" It has been suggested that the chairman be the Chief Magistrate or his delegate and these would be full-time public servants. In this case, could consideration be given to the full-time appointment of the other 2 members of the tribunal?

In 24D(1): "An application under subsection (1) to the tribunal shall be in writing addressed to the controller." I acknowledge the fact that the application has to be sent to someone but we have the situation where a man has set a price on an item and the controller has rejected the price and set another one. Surely it would not be equitable for the person who originally set the price to send his appeal back to the controller? Perhaps it would be more equitable if that appeal was sent to the Chief Magistrate in the first instance. Sending it back to the controller would give the controller another bite at the cherry after having read the man's appeal.

"An appeal shall be lodged with the controller within a month". In normal business circles one month might be a rather long time in which to lodge an appeal and perhaps a reconsideration to a shorter period could be given to speed up the whole process. In subsection (3) it says, "the controller shall forthwith deliver it to the chairman". Forthwith, when? We have already had instances where submissions have been in the hands of the controller for a period of six months. Would

this be repeated? There is also reference in subsection (3) that "the controller shall forthwith deliver it to the chairman who shall, if he is satisfied that the application is not frivolous, cause a date for the hearing of the application to be fixed for a date not later than 28 days after the expiry of the period for the making of the application." What is frivolity and who decides it? Again, a period of 28 days may be a little long and carry the process to extreme length when it may not be necessary.

Proposed section 24E states: "The parties to an application before the tribunal are the persons who applied for the review, the controller and any person who applies to the tribunal to be joined as a party." Is it absolutely necessary for the person making the application to be present at the tribunal? Surely a legal representation would be sufficient. I would commend paragraph (c) which says that the tribunal may admit any other person who would be assisting a party to the claim.

I would also like to commend proposed section 24H. Hearings will be held in public. It has been a criticism by various sections of the community that hearings before the price controller are carried out behind closed doors. If we have reason to believe that a price is too high and we feel that the price structure should be looked into, surely it is not unreasonable that the hearings should be in public. It may even help to break down the antagonism between sections of the community whereby the consumer section often feels that it has been hard done by. If it is admitted to what is available to the controller, the consumer section may not feel as aggrieved as it often does.

Proposed section 24L(5) says: "A decision of the controller as varied by the tribunal, or a decision made by the tribunal in substitution for the decision of the controller, shall, for all purposes (other than the purposes of applications to the tribunal for a review) be deemed to be a decision of the controller and, unless the tribunal otherwise orders, has effect, or shall be deemed to have effect, on or from the date on which notice of that decision is published in the Gazette." We have a situation where a man's actual variation handed down by the tribunal or the refusal of the variation cannot take effect until after the tribunal has heard the evidence and decided whether the claim is valid and that the price can be increased. If we look at rent control where you can backdate the increase, that is a different

situation. Under the present proposal, a man could be exposed for 2 or 3 months to having his price kept down to the original level. At the end of the period, it could be justified and the tribunal would then allow him to put the price up. In the meantime, he has incurred losses. There is no possibility of retrospectivity and I feel that this is one thing that could be looked at.

Under section 24N we have a penalty of \$1,000 for the failure of the witness to attend a hearing. That is a lot of money for a man to be penalised for failure to attend. I would agree that there are worse penalties than that in the world. But the maximum penalty a man gets for peddling drugs is \$800 and if you do not turn up for a tribunal you go for a grand, and I cannot see the equity in that. Again we have a penalty of \$1,000 for refusal to answer questions and again, as has already been pointed out by interjectors, it is a matter of priorities and if members feel it is worth \$1,000 to penalise a man for having failed to answer a question then that is a matter for their own conscience but I cannot see the seriousness of it.

Section 24Q covers contempt of the tribunal. I would agree that there are grounds for a person being held in contempt of this particular tribunal but \$1,000 for insulting a member of the tribunal in relation to the exercise of his powers is perhaps a little bit severe.

Under 24S we have the provision of fees for witnesses and I agree wholeheartedly with this proposal.

Debate adjourned.

CROWN LANDS BILL

(Serial 9)

Bill presented and read a first time.

Dr LETTS: I move that the bill be now read a second time.

This bill is presented and moved on behalf of the Australian Government and the second reading speech I am now about to give is from notes prepared by the Government or the Government's advisers for my purposes on this occasion. I may make a few remarks of my own at the conclusion of the Government's second reading speech.

The necessity for this legislation arises out of the Australian Government program of placing temporary units of accommodation in the form of transportable units and caravans

on crown land for hiring to members of the public. Crown Law advice has been received to the effect that any written grant or permission to use crown land for such residential purposes would be inconsistent with the provisions of section 6 of the Crown Lands Ordinance. In order to allow the accommodation program to proceed, some legislative change is therefore necessary. The bill proposes the insertion of a new section 110A in the principal ordinance. This section will allow the Administrator to grant a licence to occupy crown land for temporary residential purposes. The licence and the hire of any unit of accommodation may be upon such terms and conditions as the Administrator determines and specifies in the agreement.

Because some people have been allowed to occupy accommodation units on crown land without any form of written agreement, in order to provide them with some accommodation as soon as possible, a provision has been inserted in the bill whereby the Administrator can require those people to sign an agreement under the bill. This will give them legal tenure and will also subject them to the normal contractual provisions, including liability to pay a reasonable hiring fee. The hiring fee will vary according to the type of accommodation provided. It is not intended to charge any fee for the use of crown land other than in respect of outgoings such as normally attach to the land. That, I take it, is water, garbage and electricity. That is the end of the second reading notes provided by the government advisers for this bill.

I must inform honourable members that in the covering letter that came to me with the draft bill there was a request from the government that I treat this matter in the Assembly as a matter of urgency, presumably in the hope of having it passed during this session. It was for that reason that I distributed the bill as soon as it was available on Tuesday last so that members would have it in their hands prior to the second reading speech being given. However, I have not myself had a full opportunity to examine all the ramifications of the bill as yet. I do know that one other member has indicated to me, having seen it over the last 48 hours or so, that at least one amendment will be almost certainly proposed with the object probably of restricting its application to the Darwin area. There may well be other amendments which honourable members would seek or explanations which they require and I would only say at this stage

that I will be guided very much by the attitude of members of this Assembly as to whether there is any chance of treating this bill as a matter of urgency, bearing in mind that, this is the first opportunity the public will have had of knowing what the content of the bill is and voicing their comments through their elected representatives. I believe, even though the matter may be urgent, that if the Government does require me to give some certification of urgency in this Assembly they must do things with considerably more notice. This is a situation which they must obviously have been aware of for a considerable time and I must be critical of the short notice which has been given to us. I ask the government departments and officers, if they wish this Assembly to be co-operative, to be themselves much more co-operative in the future.

Debate adjourned.

MOTION

Stabilization of Land Prices Bill—Select Committee Report

Dr LETTS: I seek leave to move an amendment to the motion which would have the effect of taking action in relation to referring this motion of the Senate.

Leave granted.

Dr LETTS: I move that at the end of the motion the following words be added: "and that it be commended to the Australian Senate as a considered opinion and legislative proposal of this Assembly".

The use of the words "and legislative proposal of this Assembly" will enable the executive member concerned, in conjunction with the honourable member for Port Darwin, to start processes towards drafting the type of legislation which was mentioned in the report so that we will have something available when the transfer of executive powers takes place.

Mrs LAWRIE: I support the amendment. I wish to place on record my belief that some form of land price stabilization is necessary. I think it was a proper procedure of the Senate to refer such legislation to this House as it is directly affecting the people of the Northern Territory and their views should be made known to their elected representatives. It is the view of a significant number of people in this Territory, and not only in my electorate, that the price of land should be stabilised. I agree with honourable members who have made the point that one of the greatest

reasons for escalation of land prices is the withholding of sufficient amounts of land for residential purposes. I agree with that assessment and I would advise the Majority Leader that I hope he or the appropriate executive member will make a major statement in this Assembly as to the Country Liberal Party's policy on urban land, as to the desirability of implementation of some of the reports, recommendations, whether they favour leasehold land in urban areas or freehold land, and under what circumstances titles should be converted. I advise the Majority Leader that I have been approached in this matter by people who do not necessarily support the Country-Liberal Party asking me to put the view that such a major policy statement is overdue and that the general public residing in urban areas regard almost as a right the ability to either lease or otherwise occupy residential land at a fair, equitable price, bearing in mind that the Northern Territory is still trying to stabilise its population.

It is my opinion that land for residential purposes right throughout Australia should be more readily available at a much lower cost than people are facing in all urban centres, whether they be growth centres or established urban communities. It is also my opinion that in an area like the Northern Territory, still wanting to stabilise its population, extra effort should be made to see that any agent or person subdividing land does not make an unreasonable or excess profit, and this includes the Crown. The subdivision of land in urban areas has been a bone of contention for years. Land prices have been artificially forced up and I put the blame largely at the feet of successive Australian governments. Withholding land from the markets has meant that young couples wanting to establish in the Territory have faced a formidable task.

Having made those remarks, I will support the motion but I do wish to place on record that a significant number of people regard stabilisation of land prices as a priority and so do I.

Mr KILGARIFF: I support the amendment and take this opportunity to say that if there has been any exploitation of land in the Northern Territory, it has been through the policy of the government.

Mrs Lawrie: Successive governments.

Mr KILGARIFF: It may be successive governments, Mr Speaker, but I am talking of

the present situation with the rapidly developing population of the Northern Territory and a tremendous demand for urban land. There would not have to be any stabilisation of prices if the government would release sufficient land. As it is now, the people of the Territory not only have to pay the price of subdividing that piece of land that they are bidding for at auction, but they are also paying the government a premium above it, and that is that amount which they pay above the reserve price. This is profiteering and we have said so on numerous occasions.

There is a very clear answer: if we are to have land at a proper price for the people of the Northern Territory then let us have sufficient land put on the market so that people do not have to compete against each other. It is a disaster to see the people of the Northern Territory pitted against each other at auctions. The government has called for land stabilisation and the answer is back in their corner: put sufficient land on the market.

Amendment agreed to.

Motion, as amended, agreed to; report noted.

MOTION

Inquiry—Lottery and Gaming Ordinance

Dr LETTS: The honourable member for Port Darwin said yesterday that he was not aware of any great public feeling or representation which might lead to the necessity for an enquiry or a review of the lottery and gaming situation by this Assembly. He also admitted at the same time that he does not move very much in the circles of racing and betting and allied activity. The honourable member for Port Darwin, as I know him, whilst a worthy fellow, is certainly well out of the mainstream when it comes to punting and racing and things of this nature, as he may have demonstrated on various occasions in this legislature.

I am interested in racing in the Northern Territory and I give active patronage to a number of country race clubs as well as to the metropolitan club here in Darwin. There are continual representations made to me on this matter. Some of the representations from racing bodies and from punters, some of whom never go to a race course, come straight out and say it is time we had TAB. I have letters on file and I have had hundreds of representations to this effect. There are others who take the view that it is time we re-examined the situation. Would we be better off under

TAB or would we be better off under some kind of revision or improvement of the off-course betting system as it now stands? I can assure the honourable member for Port Darwin that there is a good deal of public interest and a good deal of agitation amongst a fairly broad section of this community on this subject. Lottery and gambling off-course is one of the areas of local interest.

Going back to my favourite book, the Joint Parliamentary Committee's Report on the Northern Territory, lotteries and gaming is one of the areas of interest which is considered to be a local matter for early or immediate transfer to this Assembly and, in the hope that the way will be cleared for recommendations to be implemented in the near future, I believe it is time that we mounted an investigation which will give us a framework on which to build a legislation policy and the actual legislative documents that we will need when we take full control of this sphere of operation, bearing in mind that not only will it be an area for our legislative supervision and control but it will be one of the areas from which local revenue is derived. The honourable member for Nightcliff did not mention this and I am not afraid to say that, in the event of local executive power being transferred to the Northern Territory, we will have to look at the ways and means of raising internal revenue commensurate with our brothers in the rest of Australia. We have all said—and I think the honourable member for Nightcliff has joined in when we were discussing things like health needs in the Northern Territory—if they give us a say in the administration of this area, we will go along with a review of the matter. We will definitely have to play our part in revenue raising and this is one of the early channels that will be open to us.

I listened to the remarks of the members for Nightcliff and Port Darwin that perhaps we should have had 2 inquiries. Actually there are 3 main areas in the ordinance, one dealing with the various forms of racing. I do not think it would be very difficult for the inquirer to look at the kind of legislation which is working most effectively in other places. In Victoria, there is a very successful and modern system of control of racing, betting and gambling. I do not think it would take very much for him to be able to recommend to this Assembly whether or not we should split off the racing segment in a separate piece of legislation and administration. I do not see

that this would be making the task impossible for him at all.

As far as the point raised by the honourable member for Port Darwin that we are abdicating our responsibility in terms of reference 4, I do not subscribe to that at all. All the inquirer will be doing is making recommendations as to what in his view the proper course of action should be. It will still be up to this Assembly to make the final decision. I think that the enquiry is now due; it is a very worthwhile exercise in relation to our hopes and aspirations into local executive power. I support the motion as it stands.

Mr POLLOCK: I would like to cover a few points which have been raised. It has been advocated that perhaps there should be two separate inquiries. This side of the House does not accept that proposal and we have no intention of amending the motion to provide for 2 inquiries. We feel that one board could quite adequately cover the job. It will probably mean that the board will be made up of several persons, each of them perhaps concentrating on one particular aspect or having particular knowledge in one aspect of the lottery and gaming situation. We hope that we will receive a report with recommendations of what the people of the Northern Territory really want.

It was mentioned too that people who come to give evidence on one particular aspect might be required to give evidence on a whole variety of matters which do not particularly concern them. I do not think that would be particularly different to any other enquiry or court case. The board will have sufficient common sense not to question a witness on something that he knows absolutely nothing about.

I do not accept that the Assembly is abdicating its function as was suggested by the member for Port Darwin. As much as anybody else in the House, he would know that the wording of the motion is quite consistent with normal practice. The terms of the motion provide for an inquiry on the broadest possible scope covering all aspects of the present Lottery and Gaming Ordinance. Its various aspects range from the 20 cent raffle right through to racing and betting. I am sure that every aspect of lottery and gaming, whether it be poker machines, casinos, state lotteries, TAB, will be considered by the inquiry.

I would just like to make one point quite clear: I personally am not advocating TAB. I

have quite an open mind on the subject. This side of the House is not advocating the introduction of TAB. What we want is the best thing for the people. The inquiry will bring back to the House recommendations based on what the people really need and what is best for the Northern Territory.

Motion agreed to.

LICENSING BILL

(Serial 41)

Mr WITHNALL: I find that clauses 3 and 4 of the bill seem to be somewhat deficient. Clause 3 authorises the insertion of a new section 1A containing 3 paragraphs and paragraph (c) reads: "If there is an annual sittings of the court during the period of that suspension, the licensee shall upon the resumption of the business be liable to pay the licensing fee he would have been obliged to pay had his business not been suspended, had he sold no liquor during the period of suspension and had the licence been renewed at those sittings". There is a drafting error because obviously a person whose licence is suspended and who is deemed to be unlicensed for the purposes of section 134(1) cannot sell liquor. It is unnecessary to provide that he is liable to pay the licensing fee that he would have been obliged to pay had he sold no liquor during the period of suspension. If he had sold liquor, it would be an offence against the ordinance.

I give notice that in the committee stage, I propose to amend clauses 3 and 4 by omitting the 3 subparagraphs and merely providing that he would have to pay the licensing fee he would have been obliged to pay had his licence been renewed at the last sitting.

Mr POLLOCK: The points that have been made by the member for Port Darwin concerning clauses 3 and 4 are accepted.

Motion agreed to; bill read a second time.

In Committee:

Clauses 1 and 2 agreed to.

Clause 3:

Mr WITHNALL: I move that clause 3 be amended by omitting from proposed new section 46(IA) (c) all words after the words "obliged to pay" and substituting "had his licence been renewed at those sittings".

Amendment agreed to.

Clause 3, as amended, agreed to.

Clause 4:

Mr WITHNALL: I move that clause 4 be amended by omitting from proposed new section 94(2) (c) all words after "obliged to pay" and substituting "had his licence been renewed at those sittings".

Amendment agreed to.

Clause 4, as amended, agreed to.

Title agreed to.

Bill passed the remaining stages without debate.

HOUSING BILL

(Serial 40)

In Committee:

Clauses 1 and 2 agreed to.

Clause 3:

Mr TAMBLING: I move an amendment scheduled as 49.1.

Both the members for Port Darwin and Nightcliff pointed out the necessity to allow a form of objection where the original assessment of the purchase price is not considered by the vendor to be adequate. This particular amendment allows the Valuer-General's assessment, where sought in the event of an appeal, to be taken as the appropriate assessment.

Mrs LAWRIE: I rise to indicate support for the amendment which is precisely along the lines of what I felt to be necessary in the public interest. I hope that the honourable member will pursue the assent to this legislation as a large number of people in Darwin are presently disadvantaged.

Amendment agreed to.

Clause 3, as amended, agreed to.

Clause 4:

Mr TAMBLING: I move an amendment scheduled as 49.2.

This amendment will incorporate the request of the member for Port Darwin that fire, storm and tempest, flood and earthquake damage be excluded. As I mentioned yesterday, this is current Housing Commission policy and is written into their tenancy agreements. However, I take the point that it is necessary and appropriate to introduce it into the ordinance.

The point was raised that perhaps the Commission is given some discretion by the words "in the opinion of the Commission". It

must be recognised that, under the recommendations of the Joint Parliamentary Committee Report, the Northern Territory Housing Commission will hopefully be one of the first bodies to pass to executive control in the Northern Territory. I feel that, once that happens, there will be an immediate appellant situation in that the executive member will become in effect the minister. He will then be answerable electorally for such matters. I am hopeful that, once the Joint Parliamentary Committee Report is endorsed and incorporated, we will be able to provide such facilities through executive members having authority in these areas.

Amendment agreed to.

Clause 4, as amended, agreed to.

Clauses 5 and 6 agreed to.

Title agreed to.

Bill passed the remaining stages without debate.

NURSING BILL

(Serial 48)

Mr EVERINGHAM: I support this bill. It seems to be attempting to update and recognise categories of nursing qualifications that have evolved over the years. One might hope that the Northern Territory is about to see some progress in better staffing of its hospitals and medical institutions. I would like to pay tribute to the body of women and men who have over the years carried on the traditions of the profession of nursing in the Northern Territory. During the cyclone we saw many nurses who stuck to their post with considerable discomfort and inconvenience to themselves. My observations of the profession in the Northern Territory have been that they have been upholding the traditions established by Florence Nightingale in the highest degree.

Proposed new section 10(1) may possibly call for some amendment. It appears to me that although obviously these nurses should be covered by the provisions of the Workmen's Compensation Ordinance, some provision for compensation over and above or outside that ordinance may be required if a nurse is removed or suspended from duty because of contraction of a contagious disease through contact with persons suffering from that disease. I commend this to the proposer of the bill.

Passing to clause 16 which deals with the registration of psychiatric nurses, it perhaps presages the establishment I would hope of a psychiatric institution in the Northern Territory on a basis where it is not just a little cell within either the Darwin or Alice Springs Hospitals and where people can be given comprehensive treatment under the overall supervision of medical practitioners skilled in that area and also with closer and more detailed supervision by trained psychiatric nurses. I look forward with hope to the establishment of this institution within the foreseeable future: I am sure that something in this line must follow any review of the Mental Defectives Ordinance and I understand there is a review of this ordinance going on at the moment.

Mr Kilgariff: Going on and going on.

Mr EVERINGHAM: Yes, it has been going on but we hope that perhaps something may arise in the next 12 months to give some hope to those people who suffer from psychiatric disorders in the Territory. A lot of people are not permanently suffering from these psychiatric disorders; they have recurrences of them from time to time, and it is terrible that they have to be separated from their families and sent south for treatment. I am pleased to see that we are creating a category of registration of psychiatric nurses.

Clause 20 caters for the registration of mothercraft nurses. I must commend the mothercraft service that has existed in the Territory ever since I have been here. I can list a personal experience where my youngest child was being examined regularly by a mothercraft nurse—the mothers take the children along every few months—and this mothercraft nurse picked up something which had been overlooked by the paediatrician and that was that the bones in the child's skull were knitting together a lot more quickly than they should have. I have nothing but the highest praise for the mothercraft nursing service in the Territory and my wife has always been very pleased with the type of care and service that you get there. Perhaps there is a bit more scope for its expansion, particularly in visits to outback and remote areas. Generally speaking, the child health centres, although they have limitations in staff and accommodation, have coped very well and I have nothing but the highest praise for the nurses who operate them. I support the bill.

Debate adjourned.

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

Dr LETTS: Mr Speaker, I seek leave to answer several questions without notice concerning the Darwin Reconstruction Commission.

Leave granted.

Dr LETTS: The honourable member for Nightcliff asked whether Crooks Mitchell and Peacock had been involved in the tenders discussed when Messrs Wardlaw and Rodda were in attendance at the Reconstruction Commission meetings. I have received an answer from the commission. I do not say that my understanding of this answer is perfect but I will give as I have it. The answer is: "Yes, at the time when Messrs Wardlaw and Rodda were in attendance in no official capacity and when both Messrs Till and Reiher were sitting as commissioners, tenders were discussed in which Crooks Mitchell Peacock Stewart Pty Ltd had been involved in design works".

The next question is again from the honourable member for Nightcliff: "When senior positions on the commission staff are filled with full time permanent occupants are such persons directed to sever all connections with private enterprise firms?" The answer given by the commission is no.

The next question is from the honourable member for Port Darwin: "How many journeys in and out of Darwin have been made by the staff of the DRC and the consultants to the DRC in the last two months?" This answer is in handwriting and it is a photostat copy so I will have to do the best I can with it: "There have been 70 staff journeys and 49 consultants journeys made in the last two months. Included in the staff numbers are journeys made by commission members and officers of other government authorities".

There is another question from the honourable member for Nightcliff: "Will Dr Letts table the terms and conditions of engagement of consultants to the commission?" The answer is: "A number of consultants have been engaged by the commission with varying hourly rates depending on their qualifications and expertise. Each of the commission's consultants are engaged in accordance with the relevant professional organisation's formulae. A copy of the standard agreement for engagement of consultants is attached".

I seek leave to table this copy of the standard agreement for engagement of consultants.

Leave granted; paper tabled.

Finally, the honourable member for Nightcliff asked me: "What are the names of the consultant architects engaged by the commission who advised the commission on the 4 major housing contract tenders?" The answer here is fairly lengthy but I should read it right through:

The commission used the Department of Housing and Construction as its agent in the calling of tenders for the major housing contracts. Twenty-six tenders were received from which the commission, at a commission meeting, selected 7 contractors. These 7 contractors were interviewed in detail by the department and this resulted in a report being presented to the commission by the department. This report was then considered by the commission at a commission meeting which made a decision to offer contracts to 4 firms. The commission's representative at most of the discussions carried out by the department was Robert Lloyd who was seconded from Gutteridge Haskins & Davies to the commission. The firm was not connected with the tenders submitted by the 7 selected firms. Mr Jos Agius of Agius McNally and Holmwood was seconded to the commission during this period and provided a technical opinion on the designs. However, as that firm had assisted in the preparation of the architectural documents of one of the seven firms, Mr Agius did not take part in the detailed negotiations carried out with the 7 firms.

QUESTION WITHOUT NOTICE

Mrs LAWRIE (by leave): I direct a question without notice to the Majority Leader. In consideration of the technical opinion on the designs of the final 7 firms given by Mr Jos Agius of Agius McNally and Holmwood, was the commission informed that the architectural designs for one of the eventual winners of the contract were done by Agius McNally and Holmwood?

Dr LETTS: I cannot speak for all commission members but I can speak for myself and I think I can also speak for the member representing the Darwin City Corporation at that time, the Mayor of the Corporation of the City of Darwin. At no time did either of us have any knowledge that people giving

advice to the commission on design or contract work had any participation in the preparation of any material that had been submitted as part of a contract or tender offer.

MOTION

Proposed Address to Senate and House of Representatives—Darwin Reconstruction Commission

Mr WITHNALL: I move that the following address be presented to the Senate and the House of Representatives in the Australian Parliament:

The Legislative Assembly for the Northern Territory presents its compliments to the respective Houses of the Australian Parliament and requests that a direction be given to the Joint Committee on the Northern Territory to inquire into and report on all aspects of the Darwin Reconstruction Act and its administration with particular reference to:

1. The published objectives of the commission and the level of achievement.
2. Whether undue accent has been given to planning and sociological investigations by the commission.
3. Any evidence of wasteful expenditure by the commission.
4. Whether the actions of the commission in regard to home building have resulted in many people defying the law with the object of providing themselves with shelter before the coming wet season.
5. Whether the chairman of the commission can effectively carry out his duties while at the same time holding a full time position in Canberra.
6. Whether the reconstruction of Darwin could have been carried out just as effectively by the Department of Housing and Construction and the Northern Territory Housing Commission.

Mr Speaker, some few days after Christmas Day 1974, the Prime Minister of Australia visited Darwin. He was here very briefly to be sure, but he visited Darwin to make himself personally acquainted with the damage that had been occasioned. Shortly after that, he made a statement that a commission for the reconstruction of Darwin would be formed and that the commission could get on with the job immediately and without delay. The people of Darwin welcomed that statement

and expected that, from that decision and from the commission that the Commonwealth Government as a result of that decision would appoint, there would flow some sort of plan for the reconstruction of Darwin, some sort of action to make sure that the immediate effects of the cyclone were repaired and that the people who were in Darwin would not have to suffer again from the misery they were suffering at the time the Prime Minister made his visit. On that day, if I remember rightly, it was raining and people living, or perhaps huddling, under houses were in almost complete despair. Many, of course, were immediately evacuated but many stayed.

From that day until today, there has been very little done and the Darwin Reconstruction Commission which has emerged from that decision and that statement is what I describe, not with passion but I hope with some exactitude, as that lunatic asylum over there. If I make any comments this afternoon about the commission and its administration, I want to make it clear that I do know 4 members of the Commission personally: Mr Alan O'Brien, the honourable member for Victoria River, the Mayor of Darwin and Mr Martyn Finger. I am personally satisfied, and I make no other statement, that they have done the job so far as they were permitted to do it. My criticisms this afternoon are not directed personally at them and, indeed, with respect to at least Mr Finger, I know that he has worked very hard to achieve something but unfortunately in the circumstances in which the commission exists he has been unable to achieve it.

I say this afternoon that the commission is indicted on 5 counts. I propose now to state them shortly. First of all, they are indicted because they have failed to make any progress in the rehabilitation of Darwin beyond the building of some houses for the Commonwealth. The second charge in the indictment is that they have been responsible for a town planning nightmare which has succeeded in driving many people from Darwin and which has succeeded in causing many people who own properties in Darwin to suffer considerable financial loss. The third charge in the indictment is that they have produced a completely obstructive building manual which has resulted in enormous delay. The fourth charge is that they have done nothing to ensure that the people who are left in Darwin, or who have come back, have any protection for the next wet season. The fifth charge is

that they are the subject of such rumours relating to corruption and malpractice that some investigation is obviously necessary. I come to deal with those matters in the order in which I have stated them.

The Darwin Reconstruction Commission has failed to make any significant progress towards the reconstruction of Darwin. Question No. 393 which I asked the honourable member for Victoria River asked how many buildings the commission had erected, repaired or demolished. The answer supplied last week was that the Darwin Reconstruction Commission, through its agents, is in the process of constructing 1,300 new houses. This morning, I asked the honourable member who the houses were being constructed for. The honourable member said they were all for the public sector. There is no person in Darwin who is not a public servant or perhaps a Housing Commission tenant—I do not quite know what he meant by “public sector”—who is likely to get any benefit at all from any of those 1,300 houses. I asked him how many houses had been repaired. The answer was that 20 houses are being repaired for evaluation of economics and building techniques. In other words, it is a small experiment. I asked him how many houses had been demolished. The answer was, so far as the demolition was concerned, that none had been demolished but the further answer was that 70 houses are being restored, and apparently being restored for the Commonwealth alone.

There is the work as of last week. That is the work that has been done. That is the advance that has been made by the Reconstruction Commission in about 7½ months or more. That is the only building they have undertaken and, of course, that through consultant architects, consultant engineers and other building firms. In point of fact, the Commission has called for tenders and let contracts for the building of 1,300 houses, the repair of 20 and the restoration of 70. I do not know what the difference between “repair” and “restoration” is. On 14 August, we are about 6 weeks away from the wet season and the private sector—if I can use the expression used by the honourable member in reverse—has had no assistance in the actual reconstruction of Darwin. The only assistance that it has had perhaps is the provision—the recent provision and very recent provision—of some sets of plans for houses. That is all. There has been a structural engineer available to advise

people. I think also, but I am not sure of this, that architectural advice could have been obtained. That is all. There is no way in which you can go to the commission and say, “I want to build my house, who is a good builder, do you know anything about the people who are here?” There is no stock-pile of materials which the commission might very well have brought in to overcome shortages and difficulties that are always experienced in Darwin, particularly in the wet season. There is nothing. That is the complete extent of the work done—1,300 houses for the Commonwealth and 90 houses to be restored or repaired for the Commonwealth.

I wonder, if the Prime Minister had been asked when he made that statement in January, what he would have expected to have been done by the middle of August, what he would have said? I think his ambition would have gone far beyond the achievement. I think he thought as we thought, that by the end of the dry season we would be somewhere near, not rehabilitation completely, but somewhere near a little bit of comfortable living over the coming wet season. It is too late now; the wet is nearly on us and there is nothing done and, frankly, from the picture that presents itself today, it is unlikely that anything will be done before the wet and people will suffer the same misery this wet season as they suffered the last.

The second charge in my indictment relates to town planning. I blame the Department of Urban and Regional Development and, in the early part at least, the now defunct Cities Commission for much of the nightmare that we have endured about town planning. The Darwin Reconstruction Commission, once it started to do anything, did not start to help people; it immediately started to find out ways of saying what they might not do. A plan was produced and a further plan was produced but still no plan has been adopted. These tentative plans have been bandied around so much that many people could not do anything with their block of land because they did not quite know what was going to be allowed.

The town planning nightmare, of course, included the particular nightmare of location of the surge line. Eventually that was abandoned. But it was abandoned with such a bad grace that everybody whose premises are within this hypothetical surge line must have suffered tremendous loss in property value and tremendous loss also in the nature of the

living that they can have in that area. They are going to be unable to obtain finance to rebuild because the churlish decision of the commission was: "We will let them live there but we will not help them". The churlish nature of the decision resulted in their being unable to get finance or any help at all from any public institution and, of course, once that was said, they could not get it from a private institution either. There we are. This dirty decision—and I call it a dirty decision deliberately—was: "We will not enforce the surge line but we will damn well see you will not get anywhere either!"

This is a piece of absolute rubbish. If they were satisfied that the surge line was to be enforced, they should have enforced it. If they were satisfied it should be repealed, why do they say that they are not going to enforce the surge line, but they will see that people do not get anywhere? They will see that the people who have been objecting to their brilliant idea about a surpline will get nowhere. I understand that we are now drawing new surge lines. They will be drawn elsewhere now; some places which used to be in the old surge line are going to be on another surge line and some places which were in the first surge line are not going to be in it. Thus, more people will be affected. I believe this decision is only crawling around beneath the desks, but it will come out into the open and expose itself eventually.

Town planning took up so much of the commission's time and was conducted in such an inept fashion that nothing else could be done and nothing else could be undertaken until somebody had made a decision about what sort of town planning we were going to have yet we still do not have a town plan. The town plan which has been circulated and approved by the Darwin Reconstruction Commission is wandering around on somebody's desk in Canberra; it is not a town plan until the Minister approves it and he has not approved anything yet. After all that agony, we still really do not know what we can do, where we can live, what sort of buildings we can build and in what sort of places.

The third charge in the indictment relates to the incredible building manual. I have spoken on this subject and I do not intend to repeat myself. I have looked at the new building manual, this slimmer looking volume and, without going into it at this stage, I can say that it contains just as many absurdities as the

first one. What I do object to about the controls which are proposed by the Darwin Reconstruction Commission on building is that they insist upon an engineer's certificate accompanying every set of plans. I know a number of people in Darwin who have been waiting for up to 20 weeks. I spoke only last week to a person who had waited 17 weeks for a structural engineer to set up the plans for a house that he proposed to build, and he was told last week: "We are pretty busy with the Darwin Reconstruction Commission's work: we do not know when we are ever going to get around to yours." After that, he has to get the plans to an architect for specifications and the completion of the plans. These inquiries revealed that, if he waited until all these things were done, he might be waiting for another 3 or 4 months and, in the long run, it would cost him about \$2,000 just to get plans before he starts thinking about building. If anybody in any other capital city in Australia was told that it would cost him \$2,000 to get the plans to build a house, I think he would probably laugh. That is what it will cost you here in Darwin today for plans to build a house.

It is a completely ridiculous over-reaction. The standards which are being set up are for fortresses and not for houses and the requirement for the structural engineer's certificate to be given is only I think a piece of bump for the boys who are structural engineers. They are so busy and they are making so much money that even the Treasurer is happy about it. The person I spoke about has gone to Adelaide and many people are going to say, "I cannot possibly live in Darwin if I have to pay \$2,000 for plans for the house and then pay \$42 or \$45,000 to build an ordinary little house on top of that". This has already happened in many cases and it will certainly happen to a much greater extent in the future.

Why do we need a structural engineer to certify the plans? I saw the Chairman of the Darwin Reconstruction Commission about 3 or 4 weeks ago and I raised this subject with him. I said, "Do you understand that, because of the delays and the cost of obtaining a structural engineer's certificate, many people are taking no notice of the provisions of the Darwin Reconstruction Act and are building without approval? This is a defiance of the law which you must do something about". His extraordinary answer was, "We will not stop them". I felt like saying, "What in the

hell are you here for, if you are going to control building and you have put out all these elaborate instructions and you will not stop people who are disobeying them?" It is Alice in Wonderland, isn't it? It is a complete Alice in Wonderland situation, but it does the structural engineers a lot of good. Following that conversation, I wrote to the Darwin Reconstruction Commission and raised these issues; the letter was also published in the Northern Territory News. I received an answer that they would certainly not dispense with the structural engineer's certificate, but they would see what they could do to assist people to obtain those certificates in another way. The letter was phrased in the most vague terms and contained no real indication that the commission was prepared to do much at all.

The fourth charge in the indictment is that one of the paramount tasks of the commission surely was to make some provision for the protection of people in the coming wet season. Some caravans and demountables have been brought in for the public sector; the private sector has to look after itself. To some extent one can understand that in the provision of caravans and demountables. But they are not tied down yet. I find to my astonishment that tying down caravans and demountables in the way the commission wants it done involves putting about 10 holes down to about 8 feet, filling those holes with steel and concrete and tying the caravan and the demountable down in that way. I am quite reliably informed that the cost of it is likely to be \$1,800, about as much as it costs for a small caravan. And this is for temporary accommodation. For God's sake, it is going to be there for a year or 18 months and it can be done quite safely and quite securely for about \$220. The elaborate standards set by the commission as a result of this over-reaction to cyclones requires something like \$1,800. How absurd can you get to talk about putting up temporary accommodation costing \$12,000 and \$1,800 to hold it down.

If you look at the record of the commission, you will find they have done nothing at all to protect the people of Darwin for the wet season. The demountables are for the public sector not for the private sector. Indeed, if I went down and tried to get a demountable today from the Reconstruction Commission on hire or on lease, I would not have a hope. What they have done could very well have been done by the Department of Works and

Housing with its existing organisation and without the tremendous expense that this little result has cost. There is a one of Aesop's fables which talks about a mountain going into labour and producing a mouse and I think that the mountain of the Darwin Reconstruction Commission has produced a pretty small mouse.

The fifth charge in my indictment relates to the incredible over-structure that the commission has created. We thought, rightly or wrongly, that, when the Prime Minister talked about creating a commission, he was going to create something that was going to cut through Treasury procedures, cut through red tape and get on with the job quickly—a small effective organisation. What have we got? We have a large ineffective organisation which is costing untold millions per year. It will be almost impossible to work out how much this great incubus is costing. There are 3 or 4 area managers, consultants; there are public servants by the yard sent from Canberra to Darwin merely for the purpose of building up the Darwin Reconstruction staff with people who do not know the country and who are not really concerned with the reconstruction of Darwin at all because, so far as they are concerned, it is a foreign place.

I am reliably informed that everyone who comes to the Darwin Reconstruction Commission is entitled, as a right, to a fare for himself and his wife and children every month. If that is not the case, it can be denied but I am informed that that may be true. I asked the honourable member for Victoria River how many fares outside the Northern Territory or journeys outside the Northern Territory had been approved by the commission in the last 2 months and he said 120. Thus 2 people are going south and back every day from the Darwin Reconstruction Commission. I think I can tell you why. It is to protect their travelling allowance. If they are members of the public service, after 21 days, their travelling allowance goes on to a weekly rate and not a daily one. If they go back to Canberra after 21 days or back to wherever they came from, then the daily rate starts again. It must cost about \$500 to go to Sydney or Canberra and the taxpayer is going to pay that. They go back to Canberra so that when they come back again they will be on a daily rate of travelling allowance which used to be 2½ times the weekly rate. Nice and cosy, isn't it?

There are some rumours of corruption and malpractice abroad about the commission

and I want to say that I am talking about them as rumours only. I have been supplied with some names of people who are prepared to make statements about it; I have been supplied with the names of persons who are supposed to have been concerned but I do not propose to use them or disclose them because I think it is entirely improper to disclose names like that under privilege. However, I think I should bring to notice some of the statements that have been made to me. There are many statements made about the consultants of the commission and the fact that those consultants are apparently receiving a salary from the commission and are also salaried members of a firm of which they are members while they are here. The honourable member for Nightcliff has given this matter much more consideration than I have and I am sure that she will be able to deal with it much more effectively than I would.

The rumours are around that there is an Auditor-General's report about malpractices in the commission. I have had one certain report which relates to the screwing-down of roofs. Only this week, a builder informed me that he had been approached by a member of the Darwin Reconstruction Commission, at least a person using a vehicle from that commission, asking whether or not this particular place was the place where he had to screw down the roof. He was told that it was not but the builder said: "Why don't you hop up and give me a price to screw down this roof?" The person, apparently an employer of the commission, did so and gave a price of \$295. The price was accepted, and the roof was screwed down and out of the 2,000 screws used, 400 missed the purlins altogether—but that is not relevant to the remarks I have to make. But 2,000 screws were used and those screws cost 24 cents each to a builder. The screws cost \$480 and the job was done for \$295 and 4 men were employed on it for a day. Those facts were reported to me. If they are true, some sort of nonsense is going on isn't there?

I have said enough to show that there is a very real need for what the public service would call an "in-depth" investigation of the actions of the commission and the extent to which their efforts have been wasted, the extent to which they have wasted public money. There is a very real need for somebody to say immediately that some other system will have to be found immediately for helping Darwin. The Darwin Reconstruction Commission is a complete and utter failure. It

does not deserve to exist any more and I have another motion on the notice paper proposing that it be abolished. I am very certainly behind that motion but if this Assembly is prepared to agree that the Joint Committee carry out an in-depth investigation into all aspects of the commission's activities, I am prepared for the time being at least to suspend any suggestion that it be abolished. I am not proposing to abandon the other motion which is on the paper, but I am proposing that, if this commission does agree to a public investigation on what it has done and what it has not done and what it ought to have done, then I might take a different attitude with respect to the other motion.

Mr TAMBLING: I move that the motion be amended by omitting all words after "that" and substituting:

in view of the failure of the Darwin Reconstruction Commission—

- (a) to reach a satisfactory level of achievement in the reconstruction of Darwin;
- (b) to take into account public views and communicate its policies and activities to the public;
- (c) to rebuild or assist in rebuilding private accommodation in the Darwin area; and
- (d) to have sufficient regard for the danger and personal discomfort which faces many Darwin people in the coming wet season,

this Assembly, on behalf of the people of the Territory, expresses its lack of confidence in the commission as it is at present established and operating and calls on the Minister for Northern Australia and the Australian Government to:

1. announce immediately their policies on the role of the Australian Government in redeveloping the public and private sectors of the Darwin community;

2. direct the commission to concentrate on construction action, to reduce planning activities to a necessary minimum, and to obviate delays in obtaining building approvals;

3. direct the commission to use the existing Northern Territory construction agencies, particularly the Department of Housing and Construction and the Housing Commission for reconstruction purposes;

4. appoint and direct the commission to appoint, permanently, as a matter of urgency, senior officers including the General Manager, and to resolve a suitable organisational structure (consistent with the above guidelines) giving preference to people with local experience and knowledge;

5. review the appointment of Chairman with the aim of ensuring he will reside in the Territory;

6. direct the Chairman to act consistently with policies laid down by the commission and the Minister and to avoid trends that duplicate rather than co-ordinate and complement existing services and agencies;

7. review the manner of nomination and appointment of the Darwin Citizens Council to obtain better and more democratic representation from the community on this body;

8. carry out their obligations in relation to the surrender, acquisition, exchange and assembly of land and prompt payment of compensation therefor;

9. direct the commission to reduce wasteful expenditure particularly in the excessive and wasteful use of consultants;

10. institute an inquiry and make a public report on the financial systems and controls of the commission and on any conflicts of interest which have arisen where consultants have been involved in making decisions in relation to the supply of goods and services.

And the Assembly considers that unless there is a marked and tangible improvement in the performance of the commission by the end of 1975, the Government should take steps to repeal the Darwin Reconstruction Act and support the Assembly in creating a more suitable reconstruction authority under Territory law.

In moving the amendment, I do not mean in any way to take away from the comments made by the member for Port Darwin in relation to his motion, but rather to improve his presentation. I was rather disappointed in the wording and the way in which it had been phrased. This is probably just a technical view point because if I had presented any motion of this nature before this Assembly, the member for Port Darwin with his usual attention to

detail, legal refinements and fine implications would have chewed me up and spat me on the wall. I found the actual motion inconsistent and with a number of subjective evaluations. I believe it is poorly drafted and constructed and it had conflicting implications as did his other motion which is on notice. I also found that the way in which the motion was presented perhaps showed a lack of understanding of the relationships between the commission, the Cabinet, the Minister, the DRC management, the public service bureaucracies and the requirements of this community.

I also disagree with the stance to refer to the Joint Parliamentary Committee at this time and the delay we would then experience. The Federal Parliament is about to go into a budget session and it would be some time well into the wet and the Christmas recess before we could get an adequate hearing. Therefore the protracted delay would not be suitable to the need for quick action. The intention of the amendment is to provide a concise identification of the inadequacies of the DRC, many of which the member has already outlined, and a statement of action proposals to rectify the problems.

The crux of the problem at this time in Darwin is ineffective management of 3 things: resources, manpower and money. Added to that, there is an extreme failure by the government and by the commission to recognise the uniqueness of the task in front of them. This is an existing community with an existing social framework; it is not a growth centre, a new town or an expansion program or an experiment to be played around with. There are tremendously insensitive and remote decision-making points of view coming out all over the place. I am sure that members of the former Legislative Council can almost transpose the actions that have been taken here right back into the 1950's and the struggle that has just taken 20 years to come through. This insensitivity and remoteness is on all levels; it is at the Cabinet level; it is at the chairman level and those out of town commissioners that fly in so infrequently; and it is also at the level of those co-opted staff members and consultants that constantly flit around the edge of the picture. The job is reconstruction; it is not remodelling, replanning or changing. Just look at the functions in the Act, and this is what they haven't bothered to remind themselves of. In section

6(d) one of its functions is “to provide and arrange, co-ordinate and control the provision of works facilities and public utilities in the Darwin area”. I emphasise that “to arrange, co-ordinate and control” is not to get involved in areas that it shouldn’t be involved in.

Looking at the historical perspective of the Darwin Reconstruction Commission, through all its history it has been fraught with difficulty. I believe that it was ill conceived in that huddle of ministers in early January. It was not a conception of an action plan, but rather the philosophy of urban planning seemed to be the over-riding emphasis. The Cities Commission and DURD were the first to sweep it into action. While all the other important departments were carrying out essential emergency and physical jobs, DURD and the Cities Commission people were flitting around the edges making new policies for us. The interim commission was comprised of a totally conservative public service dominated membership. The Letts and Brennan composition on that Reconstruction Commission were frustrated completely and deliberately many times and I am sure that those of you who recall the press of those days will remember that. There was a completely incompetent and insensitive administrative support to Sir Leslie Thiess who had the experience and the building capacity but he was not backed up.

Somewhere along this picture too, there was the mysterious interdepartmental committee that nobody could ever unearth or find out about and I am informed that perhaps one of its briefs might have been that it should look at the many aspects of the future role, the rate of growth, the size of Darwin, which would be affected by policies and actions of the Australian Government and which would fall outside the responsibilities of the Commission. What was the membership of that IDC? The membership was the Department of Northern Australia, the Department of Urban and Regional Development, the Treasury, the Public Service Board and the Department of Defence. I think that it was generally agreed that they would co-opt other bodies from time to time such as Minerals and Energy, Environment and Conservation, Postmaster General’s Department and Aboriginal Affairs. Where the heck was the Department of Housing and Construction? It was left out in the cold yet that body was the

backbone of this town and its construction for years and years.

When you look back at the early Interim Commission, those people that had access to documentation will be aware of the reams of documentation that were presented by the Department of Housing and Construction—booklets inches thick. They had project teams of professionals who were sensitive but got pushed down into the barrel and were constantly thwarted. Looking at a document of early resettlement options yesterday, I found a report by a consultant for the Department of Housing and Construction, Dr Zula Nittim, and she fully outlined in the early days of February the problems that would come out—the housing, the population and the information problems. They were there and they were correct. Similarly, the Northern Territory Housing Commission proposals of 24 February and 10 March documented fully the scope and capacity of what they could do and how they could perform. What happened? They were ignored.

Mr Withnall: They were not allowed to do it.

Mr TAMBLING: The exclusion of the press by the public service members in those days also created barriers whereby the information could not come out. What about the Interim Citizens Council? The Interim Commission did appoint one and that was quite effective along with the activities of the resident action groups that spontaneously emerged in the community and played such a vital and necessary role. They had the fine leadership of Ian Barker QC. He was a thorn in their sides; he constantly annoyed them and brought out problems. What did they do? They edged him and pushed him and frustrated him all the way along.

Then we come to the period of the Darwin Reconstruction Act and the manner of its introduction and the attention it got by Parliament. They attempted to bulldoze it through in one day making copies available to the Opposition and to this House on the very day of its introduction and I think several members in the Federal Parliament got it the afternoon before. The community responded at that time vitally and said that it wanted to participate. I refer to a telegram of the Majority Leader on the day of its introduction. He raised the following issues that needed attention: land use, planning, finance, legislation,

deputy commissioners, general manager, estimates, expenditure, Citizens Advisory Council, subcommittees, consultants, regulations, suspension of Northern Territory legislation. He went on to say that, as ministers have limitations of time available for personal participation in such decisions, the danger is that decisions will be made by the public service with the commission being merely a cypher in the operation and a sop to appease public opinion. That was identified on 11 February. Luckily, the Senate did defer the bill for 1 week and, the following week, the Majority Leader, the member for Port Darwin and myself went down to work with those senators who were prepared to back our case and put the amendments that we requested to that Reconstruction Act. We got half of them through and many were very worthwhile.

Consider some of the promises that were put up in those early days. In introducing the bill Dr Patterson said, "The Darwin Reconstruction Commission must be a forceful body which may need to vary some of the present and normal arrangements operating in the City of Darwin and its environs. Further, the provision reflects the Government's intentions that the Commission should be a temporary body only and that, as soon as possible, the normal arrangements and features of government in the Northern Territory be resumed. Further, the Australian Government departments and all public authorities carrying on operations in the Darwin area will assist the commission in carrying out its functions so far as is reasonably practicable". Elsewhere in that speech, he said "I would expect that the Department of Housing and Construction would play an important role in this construction field".

A day later the first warnings came. Did we read them at that time? The Minister for Urban and Regional Development, Mr Uren, said: "In the ordinary course of events, legislation relating to the establishment of growth centres or the setting up of such organisations as the Darwin Reconstruction Commission would be my responsibility as the Minister for Urban and Regional Development. However, because of the special circumstances in Darwin and also in recognition of the special interests and responsibilities of the Minister for the Northern Territory, we in Cabinet considered that the proposed Darwin Reconstruction Commission should be responsible to the Minister for Northern Territory". A little bit further on: "The social consequences

of cyclone Tracy had been foremost in the minds of all those people from my ministry and elsewhere in the Government who have been involved in the immediate task of rebuilding the city". A little bit further on: "The Minister for the Northern Territory will consult with me as is appropriate on all these matters". A bit further on: "We need in Darwin a single planning development body with the necessary authority to co-ordinate and plan in a rational and coherent way". We had the promises from Dr Patterson but we certainly had a warning also from Uren at that very early stage.

Think back to the actual time scale of what has happened through the various months since the beginning of the year. In January, the Cities Commission was engaged to plan and the first report came out. That was the one that said "Nothing North of Bagot; we will look only at the city".

Mrs Lawrie: I remember that one.

Mr TAMBLING: In January, they said: "We will put the electricity and the postal and telegraph services underground". They also said: "The public are invited to surrender private leases". That is still a major problem. In February, the redevelopment throughout the city and northern suburbs was accepted on the motion of the Majority Leader and the Mayor. Behind the scenes, the surge bogey was raised and the first building code was accepted in principle. They gave a little bit away; the Housing Commission waterproofed some houses and got the okay to repair a few, but nothing like what was asked for. In February, they established a housing register. Has anybody heard anything about it; does it exist? It was to identify all the particular housing needs and individual requirements. Where is it?

We moved to a permanent commission in early March. What happened at the first meeting? Sir Leslie Thiess, who had been frustrated, had to resign. We also got a replacement of the DURD secretary with one of his junior officers as a commissioner. The Minister's home finance scheme emerges and the Cities Commission second planning report goes on exhibition. Finally, in March, an okay is given to the Building Board to issue permits where it is not inconsistent with this radical plan. Five months ago, the new chairman took office and what happened? We got a utilisation of the NCDC and the Cities Commission personnel, technically pending

adequate staff resources. They are still here five months later.

Mrs Lawrie: Part of the time they are here.

Mr TAMBLING: A few capital works projects were reinstated. In mid-April, the planning objections closed and were reviewed. Twelve hundred objections were lodged and some 90 per cent of them were adopted. That just shows the inadequacy of the first reports. In mid-April the building code was confirmed and, at that time, there was a survey to find out what sort of response people in the community wanted for their rebuilding programs. Of those surveyed, 90 per cent indicated that they wanted to rebuild and 50 per cent requested DRC help. That was mid-April.

In May, the contract for thirteen hundred public service houses was let, the amended town plan was finally adopted and the primary and secondary surge zones were classified.

Mrs Lawrie: For the first time.

Mr TAMBLING: The printing of the building manual was finally finished and it was slightly revised.

Then, we don't see any more action until towards the end of June when the surge policy was reached after consultation with members of this Assembly, members of the City Corporation and the Citizens' Council. We heard waffles of a five year financial plan. Does anybody know about the guarantees or the considerations of the Government to the five year planning?

Move forward to the end of July and early August and what else comes out? The Housing Commission was finally given the go ahead for a substantial programme. Some house repairs were given the okay in the Government sector and standard plans and specifications are available for private home owners, but those standard home plans are traditional Government houses, not modified as people like them and made them and lived in them. If you want a M7 or a D3 you can go over there and they will run you one off and charge you the cost for printing it. Big deal!

We have the situation where emergency shelters are now being provided at cost to the private sector and we finally got another hundred houses from the Department of Housing and Construction on day labour. Big deal! We heard of a core unit proposal—one of these

temporary demountables stuck up on the top of a deck. One hundred were ordered.

Perhaps I might be being a little bit kind but I do think that, in the last few weeks, with the activity that has been going on in the media, the Reconstruction Commission might be getting the message. Perhaps the Minister is waving a stick and a few things are starting to happen because there are a few new relationships and we are finding out some of the home truths such as have come out in this week's Assembly meeting.

Just review some of those major policy decisions. What are the minor achievements? I'll give them credit for a few minor achievements. You can get a five thousand dollar temporary repair permit without too much trouble; the national estate has finally got approval to do some restorations and work in that area; a contractor's village is under way with some facilities in the northern suburbs; we can get some plans and specifications for standard homes; there is currently a clean-up campaign thanks to the City Corporation; there are emergency shelters; there are a number of experimental repair and construction programs; and there is a home advisory service if you would like to go and talk to the sweet young ladies; they made it a principle to underground electricity in the interim commission days; and we have a town plan of sorts which ironically is identical with the one we had last December.

What of the proposed real achievements that are claimed? I'll give them two real achievements: there are 2 contracts for housing, for 1,300 and 100 and the Housing Commission has been given a go-ahead in their area. Look at some of the others; the reinstatement of the capital works projects with the departments. Fine, but what would have been done anyway by this time? They cut a lot off contracts because the cyclone knocked them about and they can't be reinstated for some time. The permanent and temporary repairs to Government owned houses: what would have happened had there not been a DRC? The repairs would have all happened anyway. The caravans and the demountables: 1,200 caravans, 450 demountables and another 100 core units recently, all ordered by the Department of Northern Australia on ministers' instructions before hand over to the DRC for implementation. At least, they are now doing a little bit of office work in this regard. What about the future? What more

have we heard about temporary accommodation and this important need? The Housing Commission job is important but what, despite the DRC, would have happened with the Housing Commission? What would their construction program have been like this year without a cyclone? I would argue that it would have been just as good.

That brings me to the failures. That brings me to the major points that I consider are most disturbing. The Citizens' Council was well intended, but it did not really work, because it was just another one of Mr Uren's Czechoslovakian dreams.

Mrs Lawrie: Why Czechoslovakian?

Mr TAMBLING: That type of country, I am being political there.

Another failure is the tidal surge, the time wasted and the mucking around in that particular area, the active discouragement of development and protection measures in the tidal surge area.

Land acquisition and control, compensation, finance—that is a Government policy and I shift the blame in that one to the Australian Government. Consider what Mr Uren said back on 4 March in his planning document. He said: "I believe a positive yet sensitive and selective policy of land assembly by government would enable reconstruction in a rational, efficient and economic way. Such a process would be in the best interests of Darwin people, including those owners of land who wish to live there. It could begin immediately, with specific invitations to absentee landholders to negotiate the voluntary sale of private blocks." That was on 4 March.

Other failures are the problem of not having a satisfactory working arrangement with the Department of Housing and Construction and the poor utilisation of the Northern Territory Housing Commission's capacity, the organisational structure that has not been finalised—no appointment of a general manager and staff. The General Manager's position was first advertised by Sir Leslie Thiess in late January. Surely they could have seconded an efficient public servant if they did not like the applications that came in? There are men of capability right throughout the public service who could have been seconded to that job.

What about services to privately-owned caravans and assistance for repairs to privately owned houses? Uren again on 4 March said: "I also support the suggestion in the report that the Reconstruction Commission canvass all possible options in relation to assistance to privately owned buildings". There has been no adequate assistance to provide safety provisions for caravans in the private sector. Again, perhaps this is a government responsibility and not a commission one in that it has to go to Treasury and there have to be referrals all the way.

The rural area planning has already been referred to today in question time, the fact that decisions have been made but not finalised. Engineers advice and services to facilitate Building Board approvals have been commented on by the member for Port Darwin. Back in early February, it was raised publicly and I think there were press statements on this which alluded to financial assistance to the private sector to meet additional building costs to individuals from the imposition of new standards. Where is that financial assistance? It has not been forthcoming. And what about the future programming of budget estimates etc.?

One of the most vital areas of failure that the commission has reflected has been its lack of communication and accessibility to Mr John Citizen. We have heard lots of talk about a community newspaper but there has been no dialogue, no communication. The press and the media have been treated with awe and deliberate avoidance by the commission and the Chairman. There has been no meaningful exchange. How often have we been frustrated by conflicting and often premature press statements issued and leaked before actual policy is determined?

The Australian Government, and I think this is the tenor of my amendment, must bear the major responsibility. We must not confuse the excellent emergency and rescue operations or the social and welfare provisions after the cyclone with the reconstruction. The Australian Government's effort in that area was marvellous. It was of tremendous aid to this community. But let us not keep waffling and confusing it with reconstruction. The Australian Government has not shown consistent policies. The ministers have failed to reach agreements and stick to them on the way in which they will look at policy for Darwin, administration for Darwin, and the way in which they will treat it. The Australian

Government must recognise that the issues in Darwin are major sociological, emotional and personal issues and they must get down to the task of recognising this and not stand at arm's length.

The Chairman of the Reconstruction Commission is highly competent. He is a man of extreme ability but I believe Uren put blinkers on him and he has a one-sense direction. His family should be living here; they should be living in the middle of Wanguri; they should be participating in the life of this place. Then he would know what this town was all about. Whilst we have no general manager or permanent staff, there is a lack of executive leadership and it is so important to have a Chairman permanently residing here.

The member for Port Darwin has already mentioned the need for financial accountability because of issues that have been raised publicly and in this House in recent days. The commission itself must strengthen its own role, must become autonomous and look at itself.

It is a very disappointing to have to debate issues of this kind in a place like this so long after the disaster, when the Australian Government has obviously had good intent but the system has not supported that intent. We must continue to look critically at this Reconstruction Commission and I suggest that my amendment, by bringing the issues to the attention of the Australian Government and demanding urgent action, is what is currently required by us as a responsible action.

Members: Hear, hear!

Mrs LAWRIE: Under Standing Orders, I have to address myself to both the amendment and the motion. Let me first declare that I think the amendment as opposed to the motion is insufficient. The reason for my saying this is certain facts have been dragged to light in the Assembly and certain statements will be made which I believe will reveal that there is a lot more to be known about the operations of the Reconstruction Commission. The honourable member for Port Darwin has proposed that the Joint Parliamentary Committee on the Northern Territory be reconvened to study this specific question. When I gave evidence to that committee at their last hearing, one of the committee members asked me if I thought the committee should continue in existence following presentation of their report. I said no, under no circumstances, but I agreed that it should be reconvened if any

specific matter should be brought to its attention. This is such a specific matter. Unless there is some form of inquiry, people will not feel free to come forward to present certain facts which they may have and which in the public interest should be disclosed. Because of that, I prefer the original motion to the amendment.

I will now address myself to the substance of both the motion and the amendment which concerns the activities of the Reconstruction Commission since its inception. Like other honourable members, my first impression, when hearing the proposals to set up a reconstruction commission, was that it would be a small expert body, able to immediately move into the securing of building material and extra design work necessary to assist the citizens of this town to physically rehabilitate themselves in the shortest possible time and at least possible expense to themselves and, most importantly, to the taxpayer. What we have seen instead is what I described in a previous speech at the last sitting of this House as an octopus reaching its tentacles into every fabric of our life in the Northern Territory. I am aware that it affects other centres, not just Darwin. I would add to my description, unhappily, that it appears to be a leech living on the life blood of the community, which is money, simple money. Materials themselves boil down to a matter of money. Some months ago, I said that the commission was enriching itself and impoverishing the people of Darwin, and that the taxpayers down south unfortunately were paying for it. It would appear the words I spoke then have been proven correct. We have heard press reports of the enormous fees being paid to people acting in consultancy positions, \$1,500 per week in one case, plus air fares to and from Darwin. I will not say these are given at will or whim but at least every 4 weeks and, in a large number of cases, every 3 weeks. I may have accepted that, in the early days, consultants were necessary pending the recruitment of permanent staff but to see them there 8 months later, acting in these positions, accepting these fees, flying in and out of Darwin like birds on the wing—and realising that the taxpayers are paying for this and not for the physical reconstruction of Darwin—is absolutely horrific and it should cease tomorrow.

Let us look at the achievements of the Reconstruction Commission. So far, they have called tenders for houses—hardly a significant act when other departments have

been doing it for years. They have brought forward a new building code but I wonder how many people realise that before Christmas the Department of Housing and Construction itself was reviewing the building code more or less along the lines of the provisions of the latest one but without the Draconian overtones. The DRC has obtained demountables and caravans. I have said before, and I will say it again, that could have been done by any competent clerk on 7 January. All that was necessary was to know that finance would be available. The commission has established a bureaucratic structure which does not allow access to the people, which does not hold itself answerable to the people, which operates in isolation, and which treats local Darwin people as a bunch of hicks, rarely to be spoken to and then only on sufferance.

Their planning has been catastrophic. The first Darwin town plan altered approximately 80% of the Nightcliff electorate. It was in those circumstances that the Nightcliff Residents Action group was established. Those Nightcliff residents left in Darwin and those who were down south and were able to see a copy of the proposed plans were aghast and would have literally manned the barricades to prevent the plan being implemented. As the honourable member for Fannie Bay said, the upshot was the second Darwin town plan which altered perhaps 55% of my electorate and I think broadly over all. Again, there was tremendous public disquiet. The people of Darwin had suffered a tragic loss, not only personal injuries and death in the family but, in a large number of cases, destruction of their homes. We are not so far removed from our ancestors, our cave is a very precious thing and man's territorial imperative is acknowledged as one of the most fundamental feelings we have, coming only after the need for love and the instinct to survive. These people, with the third basic need threatened, in many cases became completely demoralised. All they had left was some kind of interest in their land and the remnants of their home. Because of the tremendous destruction, they were drawn closer to it, an affinity with land which was very deeply felt and broadly demonstrated. But in the first Darwin town plan only 20% were left happy; and in the second Darwin town plan only about 45% were still left with their own interest in the land.

The third Darwin town plan which we are led to believe is awaiting the Minister's consideration is, as has been said, broadly the old Darwin town plan and it has taken 8 blasted months to reassure people that their third desire in order of survival, the interest in their home, will be protected unless, of course, they happen to live in the so-called surge area. It has taken 8 months for people to be reassured. Meanwhile many of them have left and others have felt so insecure that they refuse to believe that Darwin urban areas can offer security of land tenure.

The surge area is deserving of special comment because the actions of the commission have been most reprehensible. They have been almost underhand and definitely unfair. They have given a completely wrong impression; they have almost perhaps deliberately misled the public. First of all, there was a declared surge area. There was an outcry about that and people were then told the surge area was to be scrapped and they could stay with full knowledge of the facts and the dangers they may or may not face on their own land. As honourable members are well aware, in the next breath they were told they could stay there if they happened to have a healthy bank balance because no help would be forthcoming and it was recommended that the Australian Government not extend to them any assistance in the rehabilitation of their home. Surely that was an iniquitous act. I agree with the honourable member for Port Darwin, if the commission, notwithstanding any local feeling, decided that the surge area would remain its policy, it should have stated so and not left these people in limbo. They are allowed to remain but they cannot afford to rebuild. Now we have added a second iniquitous rock on their shoulders. Some of them have said, "All right I am stuck. I would have liked to have stayed on this block but I am being pushed out. Can I please have another block under this so-called swap block plan where I will build my next house". "Oh yes, in maybe two years time you can have that block". What the hell do they do in the intervening two years, live in extremely poor circumstances, unable to provide even adequate shelter? A lot of them do not have the \$5,000 cash limit to which they can build. They cannot get another block of land to start building on that and these are Darwin residents. I think one of the greatest failures of the Commission is that particular wickedness.

There has been mention of the expenditure of the commission and I have been particularly critical of it. I think it is time the commission ceased employing consultants, flying men up to stay at the Travelodge for 3 weeks at a time and flying them out again. I point out that, if one is on travelling allowance, after the third week and in the fourth and coming weeks, one has to produce receipts and claim reimbursement for one's travelling expenses, but not up until the magical third week. What do we find coincidentally? Every third week, we have an exodus of people on travelling allowance who then return and start again, never having to produce receipts, being well housed and using money improperly because that money should be building houses and not flying dozens of people in and out of this city.

It has been put to me that, besides the consultants operating this racket—and I believe it is a racket—other people in the commission are in a similar position. It has been put to me that there is a person in the commission employed as a clerk whose wife is employed in the commission as a typist and both of them fly in and out to Canberra and back. It must be nice for them to have a holiday every 3 weeks. If the country could afford it, I would say, "If you can get it good luck to you." But my whole point is that the country cannot afford it. Money is finite. Budget restrictions are going to be applied and the physical building of houses is going under because we are funding people flitting in and out of the Territory.

I have asked specific questions throughout this meeting of the Assembly and I appreciate the answers given by the Majority Leader who has gone to no end of trouble to try to answer my questions in the shortest possible time. Many of my questions have related to the use of consultants and the possible conflict of interest. It took some detailed questioning to elicit the fact that the Acting Deputy General Manager and the Chief Planner were not appointed by the commission but were appointed by the Chairman, Mr Tony Powell, using his delegated authority. I say unequivocally that that delegation should be revoked. It has come out under questioning that one of these gentlemen is a director and the other is a member of the firm Crooks Mitchell Peacock and Stewart. Fair enough, anyone can be member of a private firm, but they are engaged within the commission hierarchy. One of the gentlemen who is a director

of that private firm is the deputy of the representative of the Department of Urban and Regional Development. In answer to a question the Majority Leader gave the following answer: "At the time when Messrs Wardlaw and Rodda"—Mr Rodda is the deputy of Housing and Construction—"were in attendance in no official capacity and when both Messrs Till and Reiher were sitting as commissioners, tenders were discussed in which Crooks Mitchell Peacock and Stewart Pty Ltd had been involved in design work". I say that there is a definite conflict of interest. Everything might have been conducted with the utmost propriety but it is not shown to have been conducted in that way. How could an answer say that Messrs Wardlaw and Rodda were in attendance in no official capacity? If they were not there in an official capacity, they would have been kicked out because these meetings are closed. They must have attended in some official capacity, and for one of the persons in attendance to be a principal of a firm whose work was being discussed is not proper. I do not believe it is proper. I am not saying the gentlemen concerned deliberately acted improperly but I say that for the affairs of the commission to be conducted in this way is definitely improper, and I deplore the fact that the Chairman of the Reconstruction Commission, who had appointed the people and who knew of their interest, allowed it to take place. I put the blame squarely on the Chairman's shoulders. These people were appointed by him and he allowed a gentleman to be present when work done by his own firm was being discussed. I repeat that I am not accusing Mr Wardlaw of being deliberately improper, but I am saying that it was most definitely an improper procedure and the Chairman of the Reconstruction Commission should be called to account for this improper procedure as he was the one who knew it was going on.

We then go on to another series of questions I asked about the employment of architects. We see that various architects and consultants are engaged by the commission. We see a reply to a question given to me this afternoon that 26 tenders were received regarding housing from which the commission selected 7 contractors. They were interviewed in detail by the department and this resulted in a report being presented to the commission by the department. I would assume it would be the Department of Housing and Construction.

The report was then considered by the commission at a meeting and a decision was made to offer a contract to 4 of those 7 firms. A technical opinion on the designs was offered by a person employed by the Darwin Reconstruction Commission, a Mr Jos Agius, but the chairman did not make known to the other members of the commission in consideration of his technical report that, for one of the firms tendering, the designs had been carried out by Agius McNally and Holmwood. This means that the person was reporting on his own designs. Surely the very least that should have happened is that the commissioners should have been appraised of that fact. It is a fact that the firm who prepared the designs received one of the contracts.

I am in a most difficult position. I do not wish to charge individuals of acting improperly but this is an extreme case of impropriety. Again, I will lay the blame on the chairman of the commission but I believe that the person preparing the report should have made it his own responsibility to acquaint the commissioners that his firm had assisted in the preparation of one set of documents under consideration. In fact, I do not think he should have been employed by the commission. If his firm was tendering, do not let him be an employee of the commission at the same time and, for God's sake, do not let him submit a report and "a technical opinion on the design". He was giving an opinion on all of the designs when he had been engaged by one of the firms to prepare a set of designs.

I am extremely upset at this instance. I have been to the Institute of Architects and I have received from them their code of professional conduct which I asked leave to have incorporated in Hansard.

Leave granted.

ROYAL AUSTRALIAN INSTITUTE OF ARCHITECTS

CODE OF PROFESSIONAL CONDUCT

1. ALL MEMBERS OF THE ROYAL AUSTRALIAN INSTITUTE OF ARCHITECTS ARE GOVERNED BY THE ARTICLES OF ASSOCIATION, BY-LAWS AND CODES OF THE INSTITUTE

This code indicates the standard of conduct to which members of this Institute or partnerships or corporations having partners or directors who are members of this Institute must adhere.

Wherever the words 'partnership' or 'corporation' are used in this Code they are defined as partnerships or corporations offering architectural services either solely or in combination with other services, and having partners or directors who are members of this Institute.

Any member whose conduct is contrary to this Code, or to those standards of rules established by the Council from time to time, shall be liable to disciplinary action as provided in the Articles of Association.

Where members of the Institute practise as partnerships or corporations, it is their responsibility to ensure that the partnership or corporation complies with this Code.

Any transgression of this Code by any partner or director in such a practice shall be deemed to be a transgression by the partnership or corporation.

Any transgression of this Code by any partnership or corporation shall be deemed to be a transgression by the individual member or members of the Institute who are partners or directors in the partnership or corporation.

Cases of unprofessional conduct not covered by specific provisions of this Code shall be dealt with by the Council having regard to the particular circumstances of the case.

It is the duty of every member to report any apparent breach of this Code for investigation in accordance with the provisions of the Articles of Association.

2. RESPONSIBILITIES OF ALL MEMBERS

2.1 To the public:

2.11 To ensure that their professional actions do not conflict with their general responsibility to contribute to the quality of the environment.

2.12 To be of constructive service in civic affairs and to apply their skill to the creative, responsible and economic development of their community.

2.2 To clients and employers:

2.21 To provide professional services of a high standard.

2.22 To inform their clients or employers of the existence or likelihood of any conflict between the interest of themselves, their partnership or corporation or, where applicable, any personal conflict of interest related to their association with the partnership or corporation, and that of their clients or employers.

2.23 To act with fairness and impartiality when administering a building contract or when arbitrating a dispute.

2.3. To the Institute and fellow members:

2.31 To maintain a high standard of integrity.

2.32 To promote the advancement of architecture.

2.33 To conduct themselves in a manner which is not derogatory to their professional character, nor likely to lessen the confidence of the public in the Institute or the profession nor bring them into disrepute.

2.34 To compete fairly with other members, partnerships and corporations.

2.35 To observe and uphold the Institute's Conditions of Engagement, and Scale of Charges.

2.36 Not to supplant or attempt to supplant another member, partnership or corporation.

2.37 On being instructed to proceed with professional work to enquire whether another member, partnership or corporation was previously engaged in connection with the work and if advised in the affirmative to notify such member, partnership or corporation in writing.

2.38 To comply with the Institute's rules and code for architectural competitions and not to compete in or act as assessor for an architectural competition unless it has been approved by the Institute.

2.4 When working in other countries:

2.41 To observe the requirements of codes of conduct applicable to the place where they are working.

2.42 To behave in a proper professional manner if no code of professional conduct for architects exists in the country concerned, though the specific details of this Code may not apply.

3. RULES REGARDING PUBLICITY

Members or partnerships or corporations shall not advertise their professional services nor shall they allow their names to be included in advertisements or to be used for publicity purposes subject to the following exceptions all of which are permissible in an unostentatious form—

3.11 Advertisements including the name of a member or partnership or corporation may be published in connection with the calling of tenders, staff requirements and similar matters.

3.12 A notice of change of address may be published on three occasions and correspondents may be informed once by post.

3.13 Their names may show outside their office and on buildings under construction and completed for which they are the architects provided the lettering does not exceed three inches in height.

3.14 They may allow their names to be associated with illustrations and descriptions of their work in the press or other public media but they shall not give or accept any consideration for such appearances.

3.15 They may allow their names to appear in advertisements inserted in the press by suppliers or manufacturers of materials used in a building they have designed, provided their name is included in an unostentatious manner and that they do not accept any consideration for its use.

3.16 They may allow their names to appear in brochures prepared by clients for the purpose of advertising or promoting projects for which they have been commissioned provided that all reference to the architect makes clear the true nature and extent of the service provided. The architect's photograph may not appear in such promotional material.

Mrs LAWRIE: I feel that it is only right and proper that the profession be protected by pointing out that under this code of professional conduct they say, "Responsibilities of all members to clients and employers is to provide professional services of a high standard and to inform their clients or employers of the existence of or likelihood of any conflict between the interest of themselves, their partnership or corporation or, where applicable, any personal conflict of interest related to their association with the partnership or corporation and that of their client or employers." It would appear that, considering the answer given to me by the member for Victoria River, that ethic was not honoured.

Paragraph 2.34 of the code states that they should compete fairly with other members, partnerships and corporations. Was it fair competition to have a member of a firm who provided documents giving details on those

documents and on those of rival firms? I leave it for honourable members to decide. I think that the institute should be advised. I would like a report next week from the honourable Majority Leader, if he is our representative on the commission, as to whether or not the commission considers its conduct to be ethical. If he doesn't feel that such a report should be given, I would like to know what action the commission intends taking. Again, it is with the utmost reluctance that I make these statements here. However, these complaints have come to me officially. It doesn't matter whether I know the person concerned or not. If it was someone I had known since childhood and these allegations could be substantiated, as I believe they have been, I would air them where they should be aired in what I hope has been a proper manner.

I am most upset at the way the commissioners have been kept in the dark about the affiliations that staff members of the commission have had with private firms. Surely it is the perfect example of why consultancy must cease and the permanent staff members become a reality. I believe I have established that there are conflicts of interest.

I believe the actions of the commission regarding the physical rebuilding of Darwin, the actions of the commission in putting planning ahead of people, has destroyed the incentive of a large number of Darwin people. It has provoked defiance of the law. People throughout Darwin without permits are spending a hell of a lot more than \$5,000 in repairing their houses and who can blame them? Would any responsible parent want to see their kids getting wet through the next wet season. Would any person want to get wet in the next wet season or would he get up and continue nailing on the roof putting up walls and saying, "To hell with the DRC, I'm going to be dry?"

I am on their side. I think that is a responsible attitude if they have been so fooled around by the commission that they can't get proper approval to go ahead and rebuild. There is another reason for the commission destroying their incentive. It has been a big brother exercise; it has been an exercise of, "We know what is best for you and without our approval you will not lift a little finger." This is not what the Australian way of life is all about. Of course, there had to be a revised building code because the previous one was found to be inadequate. People should have been assisted with low cost finance to

strengthen their homes so as not to be a danger to their neighbours. They should have been assisted with finance and with materials but not told all the time "We will come in and oversee it; without us you are powerless".

I defy the DRC in money terms to prove the relevance and worth of their area advisers. I believe these people too are consultants on high consultants' fees. I advise the honourable Majority Leader or the member for Fannie Bay that the next question I am going to put is how many members of the public consulted these people in various areas and for how long? I guarantee London to a brick each member here has had many more queries from his electorate and has spent a lot more work on their behalf than these area advisors. It might have been a good idea but advice could have been given by a competent clerk on permanent staff and not a consultant on an inflated level. The Auditor-General's report may well prove that they are grossly overpaid for the job they are doing—not perhaps for the job they would like to do, but the job that they are actually doing.

I ask the Majority Leader if he will attempt to have tabled in this House a copy of the Auditor-General's report when that is presented to Parliament. It gives me some pleasure to know that the Auditor-General's report goes directly to Parliament. It can't be lost in the Minister's office; it can't be sat on. I don't agree that Treasury regulations shouldn't apply because this is the perfect example of the protection Treasury regulations do give if there is any thought of misuse of public money.

In its present constitution, the commission has been a dismal failure. It is necessary for some expertise to be added to the present Housing and Construction Department and Department of Northern Australia; we need some high level of assistance, building material and labour. The supply of labour is something which apparently the Reconstruction Commission have ignored. I will support a retention of some kind of small cell to do this and to report directly to the elected people of the Territory. I don't support the present peculiar situation. I believe the Commission has acted improperly; I believe the Chairman of the Commission is especially culpable in that he has made appointments without proper consultation with his commissioners and has not made information available to his commissioners which was their right to hear. The commissioners have

been forced to become members of the mushroom club. I can't spell it out because it is unparliamentary but I think everyone understands exactly what I am alleging.

In conclusion, I wish the Assembly representative on the Reconstruction Commission well next week and I don't envy him.

Mr RYAN: I support the amendment and the remarks made by the previous 2 speakers. When the DRC came into being, it was certainly not something that I looked forward to. I did not believe that it was really necessary. Its main purpose was as an arm of the federal government and it kept the people of the NT out of any control of the body. Since then, we have seen all types of infighting by the federal departments in trying to get control of this body. The Department of Northern Australia has their minister in charge and trying to establish the DRC on a reasonable basis in the way it was supposed to be established as has been pointed out quite strongly by the member for Community Development. We have the Department of Urban and Regional Development which needs no position on the Darwin Reconstruction Commission and it and its minister should exit as soon as possible. The Department of Housing and Construction has attempted to become more involved but has been the victim of both the Department of Northern Australia and the Department of Urban and Regional Development in as much as they have attempted to squeeze the Department of Housing and Construction out. This has brought about a lack of any sort of reasonable decision from Cabinet.

In referring to the amendment, I deal directly with the item 3 which says, "direct the commission to use the existing Northern Territory construction agencies, particularly the Department of Housing and Construction and the Housing Commission for reconstruction purposes". It is interesting to note that the capacity of the Department of Housing and Construction to build houses last year was one thousand. These were built in Darwin last year at a cost of approximately \$30,000 per house giving us an expenditure of around \$30m. Taking into account that the department would have suffered certain setbacks because of the cyclone, it would be unreasonable to expect that this figure could have been reached again. However, it is my contention that the Department of Housing and Construction, having had the expertise and the personnel to build 1000 houses last

year, would have been the most appropriate body to supply the expertise to build houses for us this year. They are going to be used by the DRC only after the DRC has gone to the trouble of getting the sort of personnel that the Department of Housing and Construction already had. There has been gross duplication in my opinion. The sooner the DRC is trimmed back to a small advisory body or co-ordinating body, the better it will be.

The Department of Housing and Construction is an operating department. They have been building houses, buildings, roads and, in fact, they built most of the Northern Territory. About a week or so ago, Mr Uren, the Minister for Urban and Regional Development, was interviewed on our local ABC. The interviewer argued that the Department of Housing and Construction should be utilised more fully. Mr Uren said, "Yes, but they built the houses which all blew away in the cyclone". I do not think there is any doubt about that. They may not have built them but they supervised the building of them. I would also like to point out that there were a lot of houses built in Darwin by private firms and private individuals to many different designs and these blew away too. I think they blew away because nobody expected the devastation or the force we were subjected to during the cyclone. Mr Uren has only seen fit to point the finger at the Department of Housing and Construction to enable his department to get more action in the area of the development and rebuilding of Darwin.

The DRC certainly has not demonstrated to me any special ability to produce houses any more quickly than the Department of Housing and Construction. In fact, it is going much more slowly. I would like to see the Department of Housing and Construction take a much more forceful and forward role in the reconstruction of Darwin and the Department of Urban and Regional Development can go back to Canberra and finish constructing that town which I believe many people are not particularly happy with anyway.

Another item which was mentioned briefly by the member for Community Development concerned the cleaning up. Initial cleaning up was done by the Department of Housing and Construction assisted by the Navy and the Army. The co-ordinating was done by the Department of Housing and Construction. They are now on the second phase of cleaning up the city and, hopefully, this job will be done

before the next cyclone season. With the cyclone season coming, there is to be an exercise "Warm-up" in October to test our capabilities should there be another disaster. Certainly one of the areas of concern would be the debris which is still scattered around the town.

Once again, I support the amendment and I hope that the Minister for Northern Australia can put pressure on the DRC to make itself more the type of body that was first envisaged when it was brought into being.

Miss ANDREW: Speaking to the amendment and in view of the failure of the Darwin Reconstruction Commission, I would like to concentrate for a moment on paragraphs (b) and (d) of this amendment. The DRC was brought into existence for the purpose of rebuilding Darwin, not to replan the city but to rebuild it. I would have expected the first move would have been a familiarisation program with the local people and with the atmosphere of the city. To give credit where credit is due, Sir Leslie Thiess at least attempted this but he removed himself because of outside pressure which he found intolerable. Current members of the commission, these fly-by-nights who mysteriously pop on areoplanes and disappear into the wild blue yonder, obviously do not. I have never seen some of them. Some could count truly local acquaintances they have on one hand. Whilst I acknowledge that engineering and basic managerial principles are needed for such a commission, these must be accompanied by a sympathy with those who have and will continue to have their lives interwoven with the city. The staff unfortunately seem to follow the example of the commission, and, wherever I have seen them socially, hunt in packs, again with little social or professional interaction with the locals.

I admit that the Northern Territory, with a population of less than 100,000 at the moment, does not have the professional expertise necessary to fill all the positions needed for an organisation such as the DRC, but I think at least some could have been catered for. At least let the necessary input that have arrived here associate with the locals. How do we find out about these mysterious people who hide in the upstairs halls of Big Al's restaurant? The one press officer has my sympathy in his endeavours to either justify what is done or to find out enough action to relay to a most concerned public. I believe that the DRC has a

gentleman responsible for government relations and external relations. He too has my sympathy because both seem to be in a rather appalling state at the moment. There are project officers to the area managers, appointed with an eye to community relations and I do not think they can expect a bonus for a job well done by Christmas. This band of acting officers, in spite of the good work of several of these gentlemen, seem to be failing.

For the first 7 months, a group of people who lived in my electorate and who had taken the initiative to outlay capital in the form of flats in Darwin sat amongst their ruins waiting for a decision. They belong to that happy band of people who were told they were in a buffer zone and they were sitting there waiting for an adequate payout and, failing that, setting about to repair their blocks. Finally on 31 July the godsent decision was handed down—"Sorry we do not have money to effect the payout". This came after a considerable period of no income. These people suffered more than considerable financial hardship. What happens to the privately owned houses? First there is the incredible cost, plus the need for a degree in business administration to follow the necessary procedures before you can even start building your house. It is turning people away in their hordes. They could have built long ago. A lot of them could have cleared their block and started construction by using local building companies last January; I know that I certainly could. Then temporary accommodation was brought in—God save the DRC! But look at it and look at the conditions for people who are not eligible for this temporary accommodation and who are too poor to buy any of their own. Once the permit system was lifted, they wanted to be united and so they should. They had faith, but little of this faith is being justified. We are told that the Patris, for what it is worth, is leaving in November, just before the wet. What happens to its happy occupants? Are they to sail away?

I was out on my block in Wagaman last week and I cast my eye around that particular suburb. If a 30 mile an hour wind had developed not only would I have been in jeopardy but so would most of my neighbours who were doing similar duties to mine on their blocks. What about the fire hazard? We have not got to the wet yet and we have not got anything to put out fires other than an over-taxed fire brigade that still exists. I was

advised by a member of the Darwin Reconstruction Commission that any work not completed by mid-September on the subdivisions of Anula Wulagi will be taken over by Housing and Construction as part of a clean-up campaign with a date set for finish at 1 October. That should have been finished on 1 April.

I believe Trower Road was delivered of a delightful community centre. It is in the electorate of Casuarina and it is going to provide a centre for people living in that area. Already we have Essington House which it seems, in spite of the political hoo-ha, will probably be turned into a facility for community use and at least three schools in the immediate vicinity, all of which would take very little preparation, all of which even without that preparation have more than adequate rooms to be used for such a purpose. Why are these schools lying idle? Why could not the DRC use them as community centres? They are there for ever. In five years time this delightful little demountable is going to run away and the people who have been encouraged to go there are going to find themselves without anywhere to go. These schools have provided lounges for these people who are living in the discomfort which is referred to in paragraph (d), with perhaps a television, billiard rooms, and the use of the libraries as an escape from the wretched conditions some of them face.

The Darwin Community College it seems is not going to have a separate grant this year. The site is still undetermined and here we are in the middle of August. Will it stay? It is partly in the primary surgeline and partly in the secondary surgeline. It might be going over to MacMillans road. It might be going to a lot of places. The college council has been endeavouring to find out. The council fears that the DRC will ignore it and bulldoze its ideas. Those ideas were the very crux of the establishment of the college. Similarly the college council suspects the DRC competency to provide for the functioning of this college in 1976. Can we tolerate a situation where a body such as the Darwin Community College has fear of such a body as the DRC? Should this attitude prevail? Rebuild, do not impose; the DRC must be directed as the hub of the project, co-ordinating and complementing the resources of local bodies both government and private, both individual, departmental and organisational. I think the DRC would do well to remember—and the Government

would do well to remember in giving it directions—that a hub has a very small turning circle and it takes twice, three times, four times as long in getting there. If we see the Darwin Reconstruction Commission as the hub of the wheel with the spokes such as Housing and Construction, local organisations, and private individuals, we might make it. But the DRC must well remember that it cannot become the tyre. In conclusion, I call upon the Australian Government to take notice of this amendment and the motion with special reference to points 2, 3, 6, 8 and 9. I support the amendment.

Mr EVERINGHAM: We have been asked by the honourable members for Port Darwin and Nightcliff to support a motion calling for an inquiry into the activities of the Darwin Reconstruction Commission, such inquiry to be conducted by the Joint Parliamentary Committee on Constitutional Development for the Northern Territory. With great respect, Mr Speaker, the Joint Parliamentary Committee is not the body to do the job. Were an inquiry needed, it would have to be an inquiry conducted with all speed. The wet season is just about on us. Can we afford the delays that will be incurred by appointing a body such as the Joint Parliamentary Committee which must assemble its seven or eight members from right round Australia, which will be interrupted by the coming budget session and which will probably have to be present in Canberra for most of August and probably well into September? The honourable member for Port Darwin himself told us that the wet season is only six weeks away. Can we afford the time to ask the Joint Parliamentary Committee to come, in its usual leisurely fashion, and conduct an inquiry into the activities of the DRC? No, we cannot because it has not got the expertise. If there is to be an inquiry at all, the inquiry must be conducted by a person or persons sufficiently possessed of such expertise that they can unravel the tangle that undoubtedly the paper work and affairs of the Darwin Reconstruction Commission are in. For that reason, I reject the motion of the honourable member for Port Darwin and I support the amendment proposed by the Executive Member for Community Development which gives the Darwin Reconstruction Commission notice to pull up its socks and tells the Australian Government to kick it in the pants and tell it to get on with the business of rebuilding Darwin which is what it is there for.

I do not deny that the honourable members opposite made out some good grounds in support of the motion. Certainly a lot of what they said is true, but we just cannot afford the time. The unsatisfactory level of achievement referred to in the amendment speaks for itself. Where are the houses after 8 months? There are none. Only some private individuals in this city through the use of a lot of their own initiative have got their houses into shape again. The efforts of the Darwin Reconstruction Commission have been wasted and frittered away in useless planning activities. The Darwin Reconstruction Commission has frittered away public money and frittered away the careers of good men that have come up here in some instances and had their morale shattered. It has shattered the morale almost of the people of Darwin—certainly many of them.

Look at paragraph (c) of the amendment: "to rebuild or assist in rebuilding private accommodation in the Darwin area". Only persons who have used their own initiative have got things done. The Darwin Reconstruction Commission has simply been a Darwin "obstruction commission" for the private sector. Their Draconian building code—to pinch the word from the honourable member for Nightcliff, although I had it written there before, I assure her—and the changing town plan have done nothing. They have spread confusion and disaster. I thought of the cyclone as a complete disaster. I had never seen anything like Darwin in my life, and I have seen Townsville and, before I was 7, I had lived through 3 cyclones. But I think the greatest disaster has been what has come after.

Paragraph (d) refers to the danger and personal discomfort which faces many Darwin people in the coming wet season. You just have to look around Fannie Bay and the northern suburbs. It has been popular here this week to allude to nursery rhymes and little Jack Horners pulling out plums, and I say, "When the wind blows the cradle will rock." And by God! when the wind blows in this wet season there will be a bit more than cradles rocking—there will be iron and bits and pieces flying off a lot of these temporary structures which have only been put up because people could not get building approval to get going a lot earlier.

Point 2 of the amendment seeks to direct the commission to concentrate on construction action and reduce planning to a necessary

minimum. I ask whether a reconstruction commission—and I speak only of the actual board of commissioners themselves this time, although their advisers probably fall into the same category—would men having had long experience in business and commerce bring in a plan incorporating the surge areas and buffer zones that were incorporated in the original plan without really giving any thought to the interested bystander, to the consequential effect on people's properties and lives? These are concepts they have now substantially repealed. Obviously most of the consequences were not even apparent to the commission members themselves. I would like to hope that planning levels will now die down.

Surely architects or draughtmen's plans will be sufficient for the Building Board without the necessity for getting structural engineers drawings and certificate. This is the big move that I would like to see the commission make: reduce the technical detail, cut through the red tape, use the knife that it has but which it has not wielded so far. In relation to building approvals, I think that a big staff should be put into the Building Board so that, both in processing plans for approval and in supervising builders activities on the site, there would be only a minimal delay. I have heard the view expressed that the previous code under which the Territory operated would have been quite sufficient but for the lack of supervision of actual construction. I do not know about this, I cannot speak as an expert, but it has been told to me by the men in the game.

We come to the appointment of senior officers, including the General Manager, and one asks oneself why the right people have not come forward to apply for these lucrative positions. They have not come forward because they know the unbusinesslike and frustrating ways of the public service. They know that they will be involved with the public service because the Reconstruction Commission has a majority of public service commissioners. They know that Sir Leslie Thiess was forced out of the Reconstruction Commission at the beginning. What top man in Civil and Civic or A. B. Jennings would want to spend his days in the in-fighting of the Darwin Reconstruction Commission? What must be done is that the commission must be revamped to get more business and commercial expertise into management. As I see it, the Australian Government departments need

only 1 representative on the Commission as eventual financial control is in the hands of the Minister.

We have heard about wasteful expenditure and I think it is hard to disprove any of the statements made by the honourable members for Port Darwin and Nightcliff and the honourable member for Fannie Bay, the Executive Member for Community Development.

My final theme in supporting the amendment is to ask the Reconstruction Commission to get itself onto a business-like basis. Forget about sociology, get blokes into the commission who may have once held a hammer or carried a hod. Get someone in there who wears brown boots, Mr Speaker; that is what I would like to see.

Mr PERRON: I open my remarks on the amendment by quoting the Minister for Northern Australia when speaking to the second reading of the Darwin Reconstruction Act. The honourable member stated, "Honourable members are assured of the Government's intention to re-establish the city. We will proceed with rebuilding as we have done with recovery". I can assure the Minister and the Government that the rebuilding is not proceeding as recovery did. The people of Darwin are in a quandary, waiting for tangible evidence that the city will be as it was and their lives returned to normal. No doubt all honourable members have heard of those residents who have left Darwin, fed up with the confusion and uncertainty. At some future time when there is order and faith restored and we can plot our lives with certainty, hopefully we will see these people return.

The communications and public relations of the Reconstruction Commission are shameful. Ask any man in the street what the commission is actually doing and the chances are that he will not know, even if he works in Block 8. Ask the same man what the DRC should be doing and he will probably give you a rough list of things which should be done, but it appears are not being done. An example of the confusion which we are let into by the DRC is the announcement several weeks ago that it will assist caravan dwellers by connecting sewerage pipes and fixing toilets, showers and tying down caravans before the wet season. Many people made application for this assistance and were stalled with varying excuses. In answer to a question in this House yesterday, we learn that the extent

of assistance to be given to caravan dwellers is a free booklet on how to do the job. What are we to believe when promises are made and broken? The Commission press announcements should be regular and accurate, and not filled with "the commission is studying" or "the commission is examining" or "the commission is looking at a proposal to do this or that". We want answers and guidance in black and white.

I have written 4 letters to the Reconstruction Commission myself over the past 3 or 4 months and I have received a reply to only 1. I did not even receive an acknowledgement for the others and I have it on good authority that that situation exists with many people, businesses and Government departments in Darwin.

The commission engaged planners and consultants who put us all through the ropes in one way or the other, with the radical new town plan. In some aspects the plan was excellent, in others it was much less than excellent. Either way, the whole dream would have been astronomically expensive and, worse, it cost the private sector several months of invaluable dry season time to prepare for the coming wet. On the pretext of alluding to objectors, the plan was modified to leave Darwin almost as it is today with few exceptions. I believe that the cost of the original proposals may have had more to do with the changes than the objections lodged. At a meeting of the Town Planning Board many months ago, I moved a motion that the board offer its expertise and local experience to the commission when planning aspects were being considered. Nothing more was heard on the subject. Perhaps the commission did not want any outsiders looking in, especially as we were all local people.

The commission has failed in more than one important aspect of its duties, but I would like to point to the swop-block situation. In most areas of Darwin, there are residents who cannot get a permit to rebuild because their blocks are affected in some way by the proposed Town Plan, which I believe has still not been signed into legality by the Minister. These people have not been offered another block of land to build on, as promised by the Minister, because the machinery has not been formulated to handle the legal transfer of titles and the adjustment of land values. The excuse, although probably real, is not much consolation to someone who has insurance money to rebuild yet has to sit around waiting

for the bureaucratic machine to work out its problems while he pays \$60 or \$80 a week rent and watches building prices spiral upwards. Some residents, however, are not affected by the swop-block situation; they merely want to get paid for their land and get out—straight, non-contested, voluntary acquisition. Even some of these people are frustrated. Many are told that the money will be available possibly by November—11 months after the cyclone, and payment at last December's valuation as well. Others will have to wait even longer. I have been advised that non-residential land or land which is not zoned for future residential use will not be acquired at this stage.

The Reconstruction Commission's Building Advisory service was, until recently, next to useless. I have approached the staff of the Advisory Service regularly for several months. I had reams of questions to ask about building my own house, but answers were few and far between. I did manage to pick up, over a period of time, 4 roneoed sheets of general information which were of some little help. Of late, the honourable member for Port Darwin advised us that there has been an engineer and architect available for consultation and some plans are available free to members of the public who wish to live in a government-designed house. This is too little and much too late.

As a home owner who has just been through the maze of trying to rebuild a house, I have some idea of what is involved. First, one has to get a block clearance through the Building Board and the DRC to check that his block does not conflict with the new town plan which has no legality as yet. Then, you have to chase an engineer which, at the moment, would take you anything up to 20 weeks before he would be interested in looking at your ideas. Then, you have to get yourself an architect after the engineer has finished and this could take you another 20 weeks at this stage. After you have been pushing your architect with daily phone calls for many weeks, you have to go back to the engineer to get him to approve what the architect has put down and issue a structural certificate for it. After all this has gone on for many months, you then run along to the Building Board with your plans and engineer's certificates. Fortunately, it appears that the Building Board is not a big hold up in the process; there is approximately a 2 to 3 weeks delay which perhaps is not too unreasonable.

After you get your plans returned from the Building Board you have to get yourself a builder and it will not be easy to find one today who is even prepared to give you a quote, let alone do the job. They are just too busy. At least that proves that someone is getting some work done and it is a good sign. If you want to wait 10 to 15 weeks, you will then be able to get quotes and then you have to go through the rigmarole of applying for a loan which also takes a few weeks of sorting through the paper work.

I hate to think what the situation will be like by Christmas. It appears that there will probably be something like a year's delay from deciding to go and find your engineer to actually have someone put up a couple of pieces of timber on your land. The activities and performance of the DRC leave much to be desired and the motion and amendment are a genuine attempt to bring some rationality to the situation.

Debate adjourned.

ADJOURNMENT DEBATE

Dr LETTS: I move that the Assembly do now adjourn.

Since the new Assembly was created, I do not believe that I have spoken in an adjournment debate on behalf of my electorate. This is because there have been so many other things to talk about but I feel that, on this particular occasion, I should say a couple of words. On Saturday, a ceremony will take place at Wattie Creek for the handing over of a lease to the Gurindji Aboriginals, a lease which was formerly part of the Wave Hill pastoral lease. There is a great deal I could say about this particular occasion, its significance and history, but I do not intend to do that. It is apparently regarded by the Australian Government as a most significant and historical occasion and I understand the Prime Minister will be coming to initiate the ceremony. It is because of his intended visit that I speak tonight.

Whilst I think that it is an important occurrence, I hope that, while the Prime Minister is in Wave Hill area, he will have a look at something else. I hope that he will have a look at the state of the hospital and the conditions under which the nursing sisters are living at Wave Hill and have been living for a long time. This VIP occasion at Wattie Creek will cost tens, possible hundreds of thousands of dollars. As far as I know there are 3 aircraft

participating—two VIP aircraft and a chartered DC3 out of Darwin. There are dozens of people going. While they are there, patting one another on the back and shaking hands of our Aboriginal brethren and no doubt drinking a few refreshments afterwards, for a fraction of the price which this exercise is costing, something could be done about the lamentable and disgraceful accommodation and facilities under which the nursing sisters live and work at Wave Hill and which the Aboriginal people have to tolerate.

I know that the Director of Health for the Northern Territory and the Director General of Health believe that the conditions there are the worst for any outback sisters in the Northern Territory and that probably means the worst for any outback sisters in Australia. I described them in the old Legislative Council, some 2 years ago, and they have not improved since then. The new clinic and the new quarters which were due for completion 2½ years ago are still uncompleted. The contractors went bust and nothing has been done by day labour or any other means in the last 12 months to rectify the situation. There are two buildings half completed, one of which was extensively damaged during last wet season because of lack of roof cover and it will be further damaged this wet season unless something is done. It is not good enough for the Health Department or any authority concerned to tell me that the contractor went bust and they have difficulty in getting contractors. Two and half years after the completion date is too damn long, and I would not blame those nursing sisters, who live in a caravan without air-conditioning under a bush shelter and have to share the toilets and the showers with the patients in the clinic, if they pulled out and nobody went back to service the area. The only thing that keeps them there is their dedication to humanity their dedication to the Aboriginal people and their determination not to leave them in the lurch. I just hope that the Prime Minister and the other Ministers visiting there on Saturday will have a damn good look at that situation and say, "If we take a tenth of what we spent today on this ceremony we would have this situation corrected in 6 months."

Mr VALE: After listening to this afternoon's speeches, you would wonder if the whole of the Northern Territory should not be classified as a disaster area. I would like to speak for a few minutes on the present desperate financial plight of pastoralists in

central Australia. The Majority Leader on Tuesday indicated that serious thought is now being given to organised shooting of cattle. In view of yesterday's report that Cabinet would not approve any freight assistance for Northern Territory cattlemen, I would suggest that the time for supervised and compensated cattle shooting in central Australia is now here. In an area which is now carrying 376,000 head of cattle, when the safe number is regarded as 280,000—and by June next year it is estimated that 450,000 head of cattle will be in the area—it is obvious that pastoralists in central Australia are over-stocked and that this over-stocking will, if summer rains fail, create severe damage to the environment.

I have stations in my electorate which are shut down and operating on a caretaker basis because of the lack of financial returns to pastoralists and in fact there have been a number of cases where station owners have had to send money after their cattle to pay the remainder of the freight bill. I firmly believe that, if the summer rains fail, if the Government refuses to assist or supervise the compensated shooting, then central Australia will quickly return to the dust-bowl conditions of the early 1960's. This time, however, the dust-bowl could well be accompanied by a massive walk-out of pastoralists. It is not beyond possibility that by early next year over half the 90 properties in central Australia will become ghost stations. I urge the Government to act now to avert this crisis. By utilising officers of the AIB, a percentage of each herd could be shot and compensation paid, similar to those prices mentioned in the IAC Report on Eradication of Brucellosis and TB. I suggest that pastoralist organisations, government officers and other interested groups meet at an early date to study the best and most satisfactory method of implementing these and other ideas to assist the industry.

Mr KILGARIFF: An honourable member has asked the number of applications received and the number approved by the Home Finance Trustee. For the 6% concessional loan 213 firm applications were received and of these 33 have been approved. Under the original Home Finance Scheme, they have received 10 applications in Darwin and environs and 3 from outside of Darwin. The whole 13 have been approved.

I have also been advised by the Deputy Secretary today that funds are now available for the provision of an eight foot security fence to be constructed at Fannie Bay Gaol.

This follows representations by judges, magistrates, prison officers, members of the Legislative Assembly and local citizens. The cost will be approximately \$15,000. Demountable buildings to save high construction costs and also to avoid any construction of a permanent nature will be provided for the administrative, interviewing and medical area. A cook-house will be provided and also a private area for visitors. Electrical and plumbing work will also be done.

It is now some time since an inspection was made of the gaol by Mr Ware, who was to make representations regarding the new gaol. To date, I understand this report has not come to pass. In view of the comments that have been expressed and the fact that the people in the gaol themselves have been open to public view, these temporary measures are being brought in. As the Deputy Administrator has indicated, these are temporary measures until the site of the new gaol is confirmed and work is carried out.

On Monday, it is my intention to go to Hooker Creek. That will be a couple of days after this ceremony where a certain plum is going to be pulled out of a pie—I think that is the expression that is “in” in this Assembly this week. My purpose for going to Hooker Creek and other areas is to accompany the Senior Magistrate and the Director of Law because it is the intention of the Attorney-General's Department to start developing Magistrates' Courts in isolated areas of the Territory. Next week, the court will be going to Hooker Creek and to other areas. This will meet the criticism that has been often voiced in the last few months. I will make a further announcement next week as to where further courts will be held.

This will meet the criticism that has often been expressed about Hooker Creek. People have been charged in Hooker Creek for various offences, gaoled overnight, allowed out on bail the following day and then, at some future date, they have to find their way to Katherine to appear before the court there. They may be found not guilty and released and then have to find their way back to Hooker Creek. In many instances, instead of going back to Hooker Creek, they get into trouble in town by getting on the grog or pinching a car. This arrangement is a step forward.

I support the Majority Leader's remarks regarding the poor condition of the nurses

quarters at Hooker Creek. The Prime Minister is going to give the people the deeds of their own country. As a momento of his visit, he could do something for those people who serve and look after the people out there. These people give service above self. They must be given some quarters so that they can live in reasonably satisfactory conditions.

Mr KENTISH: I would like to make some remarks about conditions in the electorate of Arnhem. Some of these conditions obviously apply throughout the Territory as we can read in the press. When Senator Cavanagh became the Minister for Aboriginal Affairs, it was not long before he had a trip around and declared that Aboriginal Affairs were a disaster in the Northern Territory. Presumably, this was placed to the credit or discredit of Gordon Bryant, the previous Minister and the public may have assumed that the position has altered or improved somewhat. The position has not improved. I notice that the press has left; they are not interested in hearing these sort of things presumably. The position has not improved; in fact, the quagmire has deepened and become broader and smellier.

I have recently visited places in my electorate. I visited a place where there are 11 white school teachers and 2 Aboriginal assistant school teachers. During the week that I was there, out of an enrolment of 250 children, the average attendance was 7 or 8 a day. A good deal of building was being done on improvements and teacher accommodation but the children have gone. I did not recommend the self determination program; in fact, people like myself are never asked an opinion on these things. The self determination program has reached into the school and in that week 8 children attended and most of those were staff children. Thus, huge expenditure is being provided for the schools in the Territory but there seems to be no liaison between the people providing education facilities and the people who are organising the sort of discipline and the necessary structure to see that the children receive an education. There is something very much amiss here. Outside reserves, education is compulsory. If it is decided that it is a worthy thing to spend many millions of dollars to see that Aboriginal children get a good education, surely it should be compulsory to see that they also have the same advantage as white children in the Territory. If it is not thought that this should be so, we should be consistent and declare that school attendance will be a matter of self

determination throughout the whole of the Territory. Let us be consistent about these things.

There has been great provision of money in all manner of departments in the Aboriginal welfare system. I visited a place recently that has a sawmill worth a quarter of million dollars. It is a beautifully set up sawmill but it has not worked for a year or more; no one is interested in working it. Forestry seems to have come to a standstill in some areas of the electorate. You cannot get a team to work stock on places that have cattle; they cannot raise a team to muster stock. Industry and work seems to have almost ceased in some of these areas. You might ask, "How do the people live?" I know how they live in one place because every month there is a \$6,000 handout for pensions. If an old gentleman qualifies for a pension, then a young woman qualifies for a pension to look after him and the children qualify for a pension because they belong to the young woman and so it goes on. I suppose we have much the same thing in Darwin where we had 350 unemployed a little while ago but none of them wanted work. None of them were allowed to starve which means they were also on a type of a pension. It is a disastrous thing for the country, whether it be in Darwin or in the Aboriginal reserves, that industry, work and effort cease because there is no need to work anymore. The handout system that the missionaries used to be abused for propagating is now proliferated a hundred times by the Federal Government. If there was a disaster in these areas when Gordon Bryant was minister, the disaster is many times multiplied now.

In some places, building has ceased. One place normally has a team of 30 Aboriginals helping qualified white carpenters in their Housing Association work. When I was there, they could only muster 10. The others did not need to work because there was too much money about. It was not necessary to work and they were lying around mainly getting over drinking bouts. I would note that, in my colleague's electorate, things are going much better with regard to building. By some strange manner, they have apparently evaded the group of consultants and are managing their own building affairs. They also have some control over liquor and this is a help. Unfortunately, the problem is deepening by the week in some places and a complete race of handout, mendicant people are being bred and perpetuated by the Federal Government.

Drinking and violence is continuous. We see that there are many calls for police stations by members of this chamber. I have been requesting police stations for various places. There is an idea that, once you get a police station, violence associated with drinking will be overcome. This is not the case. Maningrida has had a police station and 2 policemen for years. A few weeks back, I attended there and the magistrate, the Aboriginal magistrate and Dr Coombs were there at the time. They had just had 3 days of sittings but they had not finished all the cases; the magistrate would have to come back again in a week or two. Only one of those cases in the three days was not associated with drunkenness and violence or breaking and entering.

Buildings are suffering badly. When mum and the kids see dad coming home drunk from the "Happy Club" about eleven or twelve o'clock at night, they remember what happened last night or last week and they shut all the doors and windows but this does not deter dad. He gets an iron bar and he gets in just the same. The houses are suffering; you can see the marks on doors, windows and walls. It has to be seen to be believed. While the Housing Association is flat out building beautiful new homes, the drunks are bashing up the older ones. Naturally, they would be aggrieved at being locked out at night but, when they do finally batter their way in with a bit of iron pipe, mum and the kids have got to go out of a window on the other side and spend the night in the bush to survive. They

know how to handle liquor in these places. While the men fight it out on the beach or around the buildings, the women and children go bush.

In yesterday's paper the third and latest Minister for Aboriginal Affairs, Mr Les Johnson, mentioned that Aboriginals should be educated in how to drink. This happened of course. Once the ban was lifted back in 1965, small education programmes began but the net result was that they were not being educated on how to handle alcohol but trained to drink. They were being trained to drink and they did it very well. Some of the best alcoholics in Darwin have turned out from someone's training program. I think the Minister has something to learn about educating Aboriginals on how to use alcohol; he might find that he will be training a fresh batch of alcoholics. This does not mean that I am opposed to education in these things. I would very much like to see that temperance lessons or better still total abstinence lessons are incorporated in all school programs, not only in Aboriginal settlements but right throughout the Territory. The need is there. When I was a boy in Queensland, there were temperance lessons but, for some reason, they have been dropped. If ever there was the need for it, it is now. I would suggest to the Minister for Aboriginal Affairs that, rather than starting a training program, he should start temperance or total abstinence lessons for school children and adolescents wherever he can.

Motion agreed to; the Assembly adjourned.

Wednesday 20 August 1975
MOTOR VEHICLES BILL
(Serial 43)

Bill presented and read a first time.

Mr RYAN: I move that the bill be now read a second time.

The bill seeks to amend the Motor Vehicles Ordinance as follows: section 7 will allow a simpler procedure for the appointment of some officers under the ordinance; section 10A will provide exemptions for certain persons from the P plate provisions during the course of their duties; section 11A will provide discretionary powers for the registrar to impose restrictions on driving licences issued to handicapped persons; section 13 will make provision in the ordinance for an inspector who is not a public servant to charge a specified fee for the registration check on a motor vehicle—the fee is specified in item 13 of the second schedule; section 50A(7) will remove conflict between that section and section 52(5); sections 57(9) and 58 will provide that third party policies issued in contravention of the provisions of the ordinance remain in force; and section 102(2) will provide discretionary powers to the registrar to refuse, cancel or suspend a driving licence for various reasons. Other amendments in the bill relate to changes made necessary as a result of metric conversion. In general, the amendments proposed are straight forward and are largely intended to remove deficiencies in the legislation as it now stands. I will now speak in more detail to the amendments proposed.

Section 7 of the ordinance currently provides that officers required to perform functions under the ordinance be appointed by the Administrator. Other than for the registrar, the balance of appointments are largely automatic and, it is considered, ought to be made by the registrar, particularly in that frequently staff changes require appointments to be made speedily. Amended subsection (2) of section 7 transfers these powers to the registrar. Appointment of the registrar is still vested in the Administrator. Since there may be cases where revocation of an appointment may involve questions of real or natural justice involving the appointee, it is considered that the power to revoke such an appointment should remain with the Administrator. New subsection (3) provides for this. New subsection (4) follows upon the pattern of subsection 2 in that it gives further powers to the

registrar to determine such functions of the registrar as will be given to a deputy registrar. There is provision, however, for the Administrator to give directions to the registrar in this regard. As for the other new subsections, the introduction of this provision is seen as an expeditious measure.

Section 10A of the principal ordinance requires provisional licensees to display P plates and observe other restrictions. The addition of new subsection (6) exempts police officers, ambulance drivers and drivers of firefighting vehicles from the provisions of subsections (3) and (4) whilst in the course of their duty. The principal restriction affecting these persons is that which limits them to a speed of 80 kilometres per hour. This is likely to impose severe limitations in the performance of their various duties and the need to display P plates could present organisational difficulties in any emergency situation. The exemptions sought are in keeping with the principles of those already granted to police, ambulance drivers and firefighting vehicle drivers from observance of certain ordinance provisions. The amendments are not without precedent in other states which operate a provisional probationary licence scheme. The members of these forces would still be required to have P plates on their own personal vehicles.

In speaking to clause 5, I would like to include clause 13 which is related. The ordinance currently provides no power for the Registrar of Motor Vehicles to grant drivers' licences with restrictions. That he should have this discretion is desirable in two important areas: for handicapped persons where restriction by way of class of vehicle or special fittings is warranted and for those already under a restriction for an offence in another state, and where it is desirable to continue that restriction in the Northern Territory. Opinions received from Crown Law officers confirm that in these areas the only alternative currently open to the registrar is either to issue an unrestricted licence or no licence at all. It is obvious that neither alternative is satisfactory and the proposed amendments to add section 11A and the new paragraph (b) of section 102(2) are seen as a means of obviating this anomalous situation.

In clause 6, the addition of subsection (2) to section 13 makes provision within the principal ordinance for an inspector who is not a public servant to charge a fee for his services in checking vehicles for registration purposes.

The fee has been set at \$6.00 and is included in the second schedule. I propose that the fee setting be also included in the regulations so that the changing of the fee from time to time will not necessitate legislation. The fee for this regular service is currently prescribed in the Motor Vehicle Ordinance regulations and is set at \$1.25. This figure is totally inadequate in the present circumstances, and in consequence this increase is proposed. Its inclusion in the principal ordinance is seen as desirable in lieu of its current position.

In clauses 7, 8 and 9, the amendments to section 23(1)(a), 35(1)(d) and 44(1) are in keeping with new terminology as a result of the metric changeover.

At present an anomaly exists in the application of section 52(5) and 50A(7). The first mentioned section provides a 15-day period of grace after the expiry date of a third party policy; the second section allows no such period. This opinion was confirmed by the Crown Law officers. This means that the third party policy obtained direct from any authorised insurer attracts this 15 day period of grace whereas a policy obtained through a Motor Vehicles Registration office does not. The 15-day period has been a provision of the ordinance since its commencement in September 1953 and should be retained. The amendment proposed therefore to section 50A(7) by clause 10 is consistent with this.

A further anomaly in the area of protection of the insured appears if the authorised insurer acts in contravention of section 58 but in ignorance of any administrative process. The amendments proposed in clauses 11 and 12 to section 57(9) and 58 clarify the responsibility that the insurer has for the insured.

The amendment to section 138(i) in clause 14 is necessary because of metric conversion. The amendments to the first schedule in clause 15 are also necessary because of metric conversion. The amendments in clause 16 are because of metric conversion. However, because the suggested changes are not the exact metric equivalents of their imperial counterparts, some explanation is necessary. The rates given will alter to some minor extent for current registration charges. Simply put, a person who owns a motor vehicle under 32 cwt will pay the same as now for his registration, whereas a vehicle over this weight will cost a little more, depending on how much heavier it is than 32 cwt. This means that,

except for the heavier type of American vehicles, the ordinary sedan car will cost a small amount more. As an example, a motor lorry in the 1,625 kilogram to 3,225 kilogram range will pay 37 cents more, and one in the range 3,250 kilogram to 4,000 kilograms \$1.04 more. The difference is so marginal that it needs no readjustment.

Clause 16(5) gives effect to the amendment to section 13 under clause 6.

The amendments in clause 17 are consistent with metric conversions with the exception of item (2); 8 feet does not convert exactly to 2.5 metres but, as the width of vehicles is in the Traffic Ordinance, section 23(1), given as 8 feet 2½ inches (2.5 metres), this amendment is consistent. Actually, the fourth schedule should have been amended from 8 feet to 8 feet 2½ inches at the same time as the Traffic Ordinance in 1973.

I foreshadow an amendment which deals with section 51 A of the ordinance. Unless you are an authorised insurer in the Northern Territory, you cannot take business for insurance or third party or comprehensive. However, many people in the Northern Territory, companies in particular, do insure outside the Northern Territory. The Crown Law Office has advised that all should be notified that it is against the law in their opinion to accept insurance from a person who owns a motor vehicle in the Northern Territory if one is not an authorised insurer. The amendment seeks to clarify the situation where, if a person cannot get insurance in the Northern Territory from an authorised insurer, or he feels he has just cause to take out insurance with a company not an authorised insurer, he may, in accordance with the approval of the registrar, do his insurance through a company not an authorised insurer in the Northern Territory. This is not an attempt to break down the business the local authorised insurers have. Local companies should be given the right to have first bite of the cherry; however, there have been some instances where the authorised insurers have refused to insure companies' vehicles and this has put them in a situation under our law that they can't go outside of the Northern Territory. With the proposed amendment, they will be able to approach the registrar who, if the evidence is sufficient, will be able to grant them permission to seek insurance outside of the Northern Territory.

Debate adjourned.

FEDERAL BUDGET PAPERS 1975-76

Mr KILGARIFF: Mr Speaker, I seek leave to table papers and make a statement relating to the Budget.

Leave granted.

Mr KILGARIFF: I table various documents in relation to the Budget.

**NORTHERN TERRITORY
LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY BUDGET
SPEECH 1975-76**

Mr KILGARIFF: Mr Speaker, I am pleased to present for the first time in this now fully elected Legislative Assembly details of the 1975-76 Budget brought down by the Australian Treasurer in the House of Representatives last night as it affects the Northern Territory. At the outset, I wish to make it clear that, although as the Executive Member for Finance and Law I was an observer of the decision making process in the formative stages of the bids from the Department of Northern Australia, I present details on behalf of the Australian Government as prepared by officers of that government in the Northern Territory.

I now table the Treasury white papers for the 1975-76 budget. Honourable Members have been given papers relating to the provisions made for the Department of Northern Australia. A summary covering the whole range of government expenditure by all departments in the Northern Territory is now tabled.

The budget has been framed within the context of a national economy subjected to exceptional strain and, although the overall strategy has been one of a year of restraint, the provisions made for the Northern Territory have been consistent with the determination of the government to continue a policy of according high priority to the social welfare and economic advancement of the Territory.

The main areas of interest to honourable members in the white papers will be the appropriation bills number 1 and number 2, the budget speech by the honourable Treasurer, payments to the states, the civil works program and the estimates of receipts and summary of estimated expenditure for the year ending 30 June 1976.

I would draw the attention of members to the estimate of receipts where at page 18 are found the actual receipts 1974-75 and the estimated revenues to be derived in the

Northern Territory during 1975-76 by the Department of Northern Australia.

On page 12, under the heading of "taxation", will be seen the estimated receipts in respect of stamp duties in the Northern Territory.

Details of the proposed expenditures on the operational costs of running government departments may be found in appropriation bill number 1.

Aboriginal Affairs	Division 120
Attorney-General's	Division 172
Police and Customs	Division 485
Education	Division 272
Health	Division 330
Housing and Construction	Division 345
Northern Australia	Division 455
Services and Property	Division 570
Transport	Division 655
Darwin Reconstruction	

Commission	Division 460
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Expenditure for capital works and services is provided under appropriation bill number 2.

One of the papers I have made available to honourable members is a table which gives details of the amounts provided in the civil works program for each centre in the Northern Territory in the various developmental categories, sponsored by the Department of Northern Australia, with a comparison of the value of the works programme in 1974-75.

I am sure that honourable members will find all of these papers informative and of assistance in the ensuing debate.

It should be noted that the expenditure figures for the first time reflect the merger of the former departments of Northern Development and the Northern Territory. Whilst the administrative costs of the relatively small Department of Northern Development have not contributed significantly to the running costs of the Department of Northern Australia, I would draw the attention of honourable members to the budget paper number 4 where on page 34 are shown the payments to the states as special appropriations and on page 17 the interest and repayment of grants now under the control of the Department of Northern Australia.

The stated objectives of the government are the continued emphasis on initiatives in the fields of education, health, social welfare, urban improvements and economic development. This brings me now to the budget itself and the impact on the Northern Territory.

ASSISTANCE TO INDUSTRY

The Australian Government has provided support to the primary industries of the Northern Territory by the provision of \$6.2m for the operation of the Resources Development Division of the Department of Northern Australia including an amount of \$507,000 for continuation of the bovine tuberculosis and brucellosis eradication campaign.

In addition, \$966,000 has been provided for assistance through the Primary Producers Board of which \$600,000 is for carry on finance, \$130,000 for rural reconstruction and \$236,000 for other loans. A coastal shipping subsidy of \$48,000, balance of flood relief payments of \$14,000 of a total of \$179,000, and assistance under the water supply development ordinance of \$55,000 has also been provided. Honourable members will note that assistance by way of a loan was provided to Katherine Meatworks of \$1,400,000 in 1974-75.

LOANS AND GRANTS TO ORGANISATIONS

The government has again supported the activities of community groups this financial year to the extent of \$485,000 for the YMCA, YWCA, and other young people's centres, and loans to church organisations for the continuing development of accommodation centres for young working people.

Contributions have also been made to show societies and for the development, upkeep and operation of public recreation reserves under the control of the trustees throughout the Territory.

ASSISTANCE TO LOCAL GOVERNMENT AUTHORITIES

\$996,000 has been made available under the operational votes for assistance to the Corporation of the City of Darwin and the Corporation of the Municipality of Alice Springs, made up as follows:

	\$
Operational subsidy—Darwin	290,000
Capital subsidy—Darwin	225,000
Operational subsidy—Alice Springs	215,000
Setting up grants—Alice Springs	195,000
Capital Subsidies—Alice Springs	51,000
Municipal Depot—Alice Springs	20,000

The Australian Government has also provided an amount of \$100,000 for payment in lieu of general rates (including street lighting) in respect of government staff residences; a reduction from expenditure in 1974-75 for obvious reasons. Assistance has also been provided for the construction of roads, footpaths and drainage works—Darwin \$350,000, Alice Springs \$1,039,000, a total of \$1,389,000.

The overall total is \$2,485,000.

BOARDS

The programs envisaged by the various boards for development, maintenance and operation have attracted a total appropriation of \$2.6m made up of:

	\$	\$
NT Museums and Art Galleries Board		
operational expenditure		350,000
NT Reserves Board		
capital expenditure	880,000	
operational expenditure	625,000	
less estimated revenue	210,000	1,295,000
NT Betting Control Board		
payments to racing clubs/charities	292,000	
operational expenditure	7,000	299,000
NT Tourist Board		
operational expenditure		625,000
NT Advisory boards details are:		
Land Board and Land and Valuation Tribunal	5,000	
Town management boards (Katherine and Tennant Creek)	2,400	
Building Board	4,500	
Town Planning Board	4,500	
Consumers' Protection Council	7,000	
Workers' Compensation Tribunal	3,600	

	\$	\$
Primary Producers Board	5,000	
Plumbers and Drainers' Board	2,000	
Soil Conservation Committee	5,000	
NT Architects' Board	1,500	
Hospital advisory boards	5,000	
Other boards—		
Veterinary Surgeons' Registration Board		
Electricians' Registration Board	1,500	47,000
Place Names Committee		

SOCIAL WELFARE

A total of \$1,171,000 has been made available this year for general welfare services under the control of the Social and Commercial Affairs Division of the Department of Northern Australia against an actual expenditure in 1974-75 of \$894,415. This will provide for the maintenance of state wards and other children, assistance to missions for the care of children and the care of those people in necessitous circumstances.

Honourable members will note that provision has been made in the civil works program for the construction of juvenile training and care centres in Darwin and Alice Springs.

CYCLONE RELIEF

Up to 30 June a total of \$74,737,182 has been expended on Darwin relief and rehabilitation following in the wake of Cyclone Tracy. Among the papers I have tabled is a breakdown of the various components which reflect the contribution of all departments concerned.

Specific provision under the Department of Northern Australia in 1975-76 allows for a continuation of the program as follows:—

	\$
Evacuation of population	369,500
repatriation	200,000
hire of "Patris"	1,952,300
provision of consumable stores other than food	75,500
storage of personal effects	125,000
reimburse costs NT Port Authority	1,176,000
postage and telephone concessions	650,000

	\$
provision of emergency food supply	60,000
	<u>4,608,300</u>

CAPITAL WORKS AND SERVICES

	\$
Darwin business relief scheme	2,250,000
purchase of caravans	4,700,000
	<u>6,960,000</u>
Total relief:	<u>11,558,300</u>

DARWIN RECONSTRUCTION COMMISSION

The Darwin Reconstruction Act 1975 was assented to on 28 February 1975. Until that time an interim commission operated, the administrative expenses of which were \$32,326. Provision was then made for the balance of 1974-75 for the operations of the commission:

	\$
Administrative expenses	200,000
Capital works and services	1,000,000

The Darwin Reconstruction Commission is directly responsible to the Minister for Northern Australia for all projects in relation to the reconstruction of Darwin with the exception of those required for autonomous government authorities.

In more specific terms the commission has assumed financial responsibility as from 1 July 1975 for:

- (a) All reinstated and new works of client departments within the Darwin area which, up to date, were under the control of the Department of Housing and Construction in the civil works programs.

- (b) All reconstruction projects committed prior to 1 July 1975 plus any new reconstruction works.
- (c) Payments to contractors of claims made in respect of contracts cancelled as a result of Cyclone Tracy and not appropriated.
- (d) All reconstruction and new works for the Department of Defence though funds for these works will be separately appropriated.

The appropriations in 1975-76 to achieve these objectives are:

	\$
Administrative expenses	2,432,000
Capital works and services	
—general	97,800,000
—defence	1,900,000
Total	102,132,000

The figures are:

	Works in progress	Program	Expenditure
	\$	\$	\$
Department of Northern Australia (outside of Darwin)	21,780,859	45,879,859	19,140,000
Darwin Reconstruction Commission (works sponsored by Department of Northern Australia)	113,447,873	82,410,000	22,494,000
	135,228,732	128,289,859	41,634,000
All departments	263,059,797	59,449,000	53,680,000
Darwin Reconstruction Commission (works sponsored by all departments)	185,951,099	136,204,000	97,800,000
Total	449,010,896	195,653,000	151,480,000

HOME FINANCE TRUSTEE

The Australian Government has approved of a financial scheme for assistance to home owners in rebuilding or repairing cyclone damaged residences in Darwin. The maximum amount of each loan will be tied to the contract rate by the Darwin Reconstruction Commission for a 3 bedroom home. The amount will be adjusted by other factors (e.g. insurance equity, compensation payments) resulting in the average loan being about \$30,000. Interest rate will be 6%.

The home loans scheme for other categories of persons is still available for all centres in the Northern Territory to a maximum of \$12,000 at 8¼% interest. \$4,000,000 has been provided in 1975-76 for these purposes.

THE CIVIL WORKS PROGRAM

The Darwin Reconstruction Commission is responsible for civil works within the area of 40km around Darwin. Projects outside this area are, as in previous years, the responsibility of the various departments concerned. Details may be seen in the Treasury white paper number 5 "Civil Works Program 1975-76".

I have had prepared for quick reference of honourable members two papers, one of which deals with the projects sponsored by the Department of Northern Australia and the other which provides a summary of all departments.

NORTHERN TERRITORY HOUSING COMMISSION

The funding arrangements for the Commission, in respect of assistance grants, have been brought into line with the assistance currently given to the states under the States' Grants (Housing) Act 1971.

This involves the following:

(1) Basic grant.

The commission will continue to obtain its finance by way of an annual budgetary appropriation but it will pay interest at the long term bond rate with no 1% concession as in the past.

Receive a non-repayable annual grant to compensate for the loss of concessional interest equal to 1/30 of the difference between amortising the

principal and interest over 53 years at the long term bond rate and the former concessional rate.

(2) Rent rebate grant.

A separate non-repayable annual grant will be paid to the commission to enable it to operate a system of rental rebate to assist "needy" tenants. The criteria for tenants' eligibility will be in accordance with the formula suggested by the commission and based on that in the 1945 Commonwealth states housing agreement.

The estimate for 1975-76 includes:

	\$	\$
Basic grant	111,000	
Rent rebate	149,700	260,700

and is based on a proposed cash flow for existing and new contracts.

CONSTRUCTION PROGRAM

The Northern Territory Housing Commission provides housing for rental to persons of limited means who are not adequately

Work in progress (1974-75)

		\$
Darwin		
Work previous to 24-12-74 (some of which covered by contractors' insurance)	189 units	2,942,000
Work since 24-12-74	53 units	1,573,000
	242 units	4,515,000
Alice Springs	158 units	1,434,000
Tennant Creek	20 units	372,000
Katherine	5 units	129,000
Total work in progress		6,450,000
1975-76 programme		
Darwin	151 units	4,650,000
Katherine	14 units	360,000
Tennant Creek	29 units	742,000
Alice Springs	49 units	1,615,000
Total new programme		7,367,000
Total programme		13,817,000
Less contractors' insurance		817,000
Cash 1975-76		13,000,000

housed and who are not officers of the government or Northern Territory Public Service. The commission may also sell houses to tenants.

The commission's functions were broadened in 1968 to permit construction of housing for rental or sale to approved industrial enterprises and/or their employees.

From 1972-73 finance for the commission's operations were advanced by the government in a similar way to the advances made available by the government for housing in the states, i.e., attracting interest at the long term bond rate and repayable over 53 years.

There were 1,644 rental units in Darwin on 24 December 1974. Next day, 337 had been totally destroyed and 763 houses and 170 flats were partially damaged but repairable. 319 units under construction had also been wrecked.

The commission is now undertaking a program of construction and rebuilding with the concurrence of the Darwin Reconstruction Commission and the government as follows:

DARWIN RECONSTRUCTION COMMISSION

The housing programme for the DRC is:

1974-75—Under construction

Type of housing	Number of units	Cost \$
Relocatable units	541	7,562,242
Modular housing units	100	1,600,000
Flats	117	1,529,259
Reconstruct damaged houses	70	2,263,470
New houses	1130	57,982,093
Total		<u>70,937,064</u>

1975-76—New works

Detached houses and flats	1500	60,000,000
Relocatable units	500	7,500,000
Reconstruct damaged houses	400	10,000,000
Total		<u>77,500,000</u>
Total works under construction		70,937,064
Total new works		<u>77,500,000</u>
		<u>148,437,064</u>

Locations	Houses	Flats	Cost \$
Tennant Creek	30	40	1,403,513
Elliott	1		51,892
Katherine	7		13,841
Murganella	2		29,901
Nhulunbuy	19		6,438
Alyangula	3		132,119
	<u>192</u>	<u>108</u>	<u>4,678,572</u>

I will check the figures for Katherine and Nhulunbuy.

1975-76—New programme

		\$
Katherine	40 houses	1,925,000
Tennant Creek	20 houses	945,000
Alice Springs	100 houses	3,280,000
	20 single flats	345,000
	24 town houses	1,050,000

		\$
Alyangula	4 houses, 4 flats	440,000
All centres	Improvements to houses	50,000
Total Programme		8,035,000

THE REPAIRS AND MAINTENANCE PROGRAMME

The Stuart and Barkly Highways second three-year improvement and maintenance proposal for a total estimated cost of \$34.6m was subjected recently to examination by the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Public Works. Pending their report for acceptance by the Australian Parliament, arrangements are being made to request that the first year operation be admitted to programmes as a supplementary item at \$8.55m with cash expenditure \$2.1m.

A total of \$26.6m has been provided in 1975-76 for repairs and maintenance works under the control of the Department of Northern Australia for government buildings, roadworks and the operation of public utilities (i.e. water, electricity and sewerage services).

A summary of this programme has been tabled.

RECEIPTS

The Department of Northern Australia expects to receive from Northern Territory sources receipts in the amount of \$19.3m in 1975-76. In addition, it is expected the stamp duties will raise \$500,000 in revenue.

This compares with an overall total of \$225.9m that it is expected to cost the Department of Northern Australia in operational, capital works and services, furniture and fittings, repairs and maintenance and the civil works programs.

In preparing the Budget, the Australian Government has continued to maintain the financial impetus of its policies of social reform and progress in the Northern Territory. A massive injection of funds to honour the declared intention of the government to relieve, rehabilitate and rebuild Darwin has been made over the past six months and will continue into the next twelve.

There is a continued programme of advancement in health, education, aboriginal affairs, social development, urban improvements and outback roadworks. In this regard, it is worth noting that the government

has provided in 1975-76 allocations for growth centres in southern areas of

Albury-Wodonga	\$38.6m
Bathurst-Orange	\$28.5m
South-west sector of Sydney	\$67.1m

whereas a total of \$151.5m has been provided for development works in the Northern Territory, including \$97.8m for the Darwin growth centre.

The level of government finance appropriated on behalf of the Northern Territory continues to rise, even in the face of economic strain and this the year of restraint, as clearly indicated by the fact that in 1974-75 the total appropriation for the Northern Territory was a record \$267.5m which has been surpassed in 1975-76 by a total of \$438.9m.

I present the Budget as related to the Northern Territory to honourable members. In closing my remarks, I indicate that I have tabled today statements from Aboriginal Affairs, Health and Education which I think that members will find helpful in studying the effects of the Budget on the Northern Territory for this financial year. I give my thanks to the departmental officers who have assisted in the preparation of the Budget for the Legislative Assembly. This is a new system that is operating now. As has been indicated by the Majority Leader, in discussions with Dr Rex Patterson, it was said that in future the Legislative Assembly would be brought into budget discussions. These have taken place as far as the Assembly is concerned in the last few weeks. I will make at some future time my remarks as member for Alice Springs.

MOTION

Budget Statement

Dr LETTS (by leave): I move that the statement made by the Executive Member for Finance and Law be noted.

My remarks this morning are directed towards the Northern Territory sector of the budget as outlined by the Executive Member for Finance and Law. I would like to thank

him for presenting the statement and for the time and effort which I know that he has put into it in recent days. I would also like to add my thanks concerning the departmental officers who have assisted in the preparation of the papers and who attended the Assembly last night and today to provide explanations to individual parts of the papers and the statements.

I would like to further make clear the degree of involvement of the Assembly Executive in the arrangement and planning of our financial affairs for the coming financial year of 1975-76. I believe that it is somewhat exaggerated to say that our Executive Member for Finance and Law was an observer in the decision making process in the formulative stages of the budget. As I understand the position, it would be a valid criticism to say that, for most of our lives since last November, we have had little encouragement to participate in the estimates and budget exercises. The former Executive Member for Finance and Law made overtures to departmental officers late last year in the hope of becoming involved in the estimates but was met with reluctance and he was not permitted to participate in the early discussions. It was only in the last few weeks that, following approaches to the Minister who proved very co-operative, the honourable member for Alice Springs in his new role as Executive Member for Finance and Law was allowed to sit in on the very final stages of last minute adjustments. He has carried out these limited duties responsibly and at no stage has he discussed with me or any other member confidential information relating to this Budget. I certainly hope that, as he has indicated in his statement, things will be different this year and that our Executive Member for Finance and Law will sit in on the very earliest stages, when the calls go out to the branches of the Department of Northern Australia in September-October this year and that when the information starts to come back from them well before Christmas, he will be invited, having established that we can behave in a responsible fashion, to take part in the formation of next year's estimates from the beginning. In that case, we may be able to have some greater influence on certain priorities.

I recognise that members received some of these papers late last night and some of them only this morning and have had a very limited

time to study them and make comment. However, we will endeavour at this stage to pick up some of the more obvious matters. Other matters as they come to light in the future will be dealt with in adjournment debate or however is appropriate.

The departmental propaganda on the budget has taken the line that the Territory has done comparatively well and things could have been a lot worse when one looks at other places. That may be true and I have no doubt that Dr Patterson, who has a genuine interest in northern development, has fought hard and well in the Cabinet room on our behalf. I think that the share that we have gained reflects this. The back pages of the honourable member's statement, making comparisons between other growth centres and the Territory is fairly impressive, although some of the figures in the statement are perhaps a little complicated and hard to sort out as to exactly what they mean. Let us realise that, in accepting the dire economic situation in Australia generally and accepting that we may not have suffered as much as some other areas, there are still serious shortcomings in this budget as far as the Northern Territory is concerned, and I believe that it is our job in this Assembly to constructively bring these out and mention them. Possibly, when it comes to a review of the Budget later this year, the departmental officers concerned will take these on board and see if they can be adjusted or corrected.

In some cases, the amounts voted for particular items will be completely inadequate to meet known commitments and more money will simply have to be provided for them. In other cases, the cuts which have occurred will have adverse effects on the Territory's future development. For members of this Assembly who are having their first budget, I would like to explain that budgets are not always what they seem, apparent gains can be illusory rather than real and can turn out to be losses and I have at least one example of this. Of course you are not told this; it is a sort of a game in which you have to work out the true facts for yourself.

Let me turn to my areas of executive responsibility and look first at the matter of constitutional development and related expenditures. I am somewhat concerned to see that the establishment figure for the Northern Territory Public Service remains exactly the same, at 178 head, in 1975-76 as it was in 1974-75. No account whatever has been

taken of the kind of development envisaged in the Joint Parliamentary Committee's report and there is no allowance for the 19 executive staff members which I am supposedly in the final stages of recruiting. It may be argued that we do not need any more staff in the Northern Territory Public Service because a number of them will come by secondment from the Australian Public Service. But that is not necessarily true of these 19 staff positions which, with the Minister's approval, I have advertised and which I have interviewed people for. I am at the final stages of recruiting and I am still waiting for the creation of those positions finally and formally so that I can say to the people who have applied in good faith, "Would you accept such and such a position?" I now find that there is no financial provision whatever for those 19 positions in our budget or any extension of the growth of the Northern Territory Public Service. The excuse that many of them may be seconded and that there will not be any changes in the overall figures is not good enough. I say that this was an oversight in the estimates by the departments concerned who did not take this need into account and, if our Executive Member for Finance and Law had been involved in the estimates discussion, I believe that we would have had some provision sufficient for our recognised needs, for the expansion of the Northern Territory Public Service which will have to take place, even to a limited degree, if any progress is to be made on the Joint Parliamentary Committee's report.

By contrast, we find that the staff of the Department of Northern Australia in Canberra will grow from 111 to 130 officers and, according to the explanatory note, only one of these officers will come from the former Department of Northern Development. Admittedly, some of the actual figures given may be transfers from up here but if that is so it only helps to confirm some of the fears that honourable members here have expressed in the past, that there is going to be a growth in the senior administrative staff in Canberra at the expense of the delegated authority in the decision-making process of the department in the Northern Territory.

Mrs Lawrie: Hear, hear!

Dr LETTS: That figure gives me cause for concern, particularly when it is matched against our own poor lamentable Northern Territory Public Service figure. I see that a growth is allowed in the Department of

Northern Australia's Constitutional Development Division from the present 2 officers to 4 officers so I doubt that we can expect much creative activity from that particular unit during the course of the coming year. I wouldn't mind if those extra positions were being created here in the Territory for the implementation of the Joint Committee's report.

Looking at the Legislative Assembly vote, with which questions of constitutional development and Assembly operations is connected, I find an allowance for public inquiries of \$1,000. The Lottery and Gaming Ordinance inquiry which we have just approved will cost many times this figure, possibly \$15,000 to \$20,000. That makes no allowance for any other inquiries which this Assembly may see fit to set up in 1975-76. I know that it will probably be argued by the advisers that this is a notional figure; we find quite a few notional figures here, but it is notional at \$1,000 when the real requirement for the coming financial year for this Assembly may be something closer to \$50,000 and when the time comes that money has to be found by somebody.

Turning now to the area of primary industries, the expenditure on primary industries is an example of an apparent gain which on closer examination turns out to be a net loss when compared with last year's figures. The Animal Industry and Agriculture Branch will receive \$2,072,000, compared with an expenditure of \$1,713,000 last year and an appropriation last year of \$1,890,000. This indicates that the vote this year over the expenditure last year would be an increase of some \$358,000. However, on the next pages the fine print tells us that fuels, freight costs and stock food, which were formerly a stock item not included in this vote, will now be charged against the operational vote of the branch at \$84,000. The document is honest, if you have the time and take the trouble, and know where to look to find the answers. It also tells us that there will be increases in vehicle hire charges, air charter and wages which will amount to a further \$230,000. When you add these figures together and make some allowance for other hidden cost rises, you find that the branch will in fact be worse off financially than it was last year.

On top of this, I find that a large part of their vote is devoted to the brucellosis and TB eradication scheme with over half a million dollars being set aside for that purpose. I

think the industry would say, and I would agree with them, that it is unreal to set a target as high as that for the brucellosis and TB eradication scheme in the present economic climate of the industry. I just do not see how the government, in spite of whatever national schemes have been approved, can force pastoralists to go out and spend money which they haven't got to muster cattle for the purpose of this scheme. I will not be surprised if a considerable amount of that particular section of the vote will be returned to Treasury at the end of the financial year. On the other hand, I learn on the grapevine that the travelling vote for the Animal Industry and Agricultural Branch has been seriously slashed. This will have the effect that field officers who should be out helping the industry, whether they are engaged in research or extension work, who should be out working at the grass-roots level trying to help the industry come through this difficult time, will be confined to their offices. They will become chair-based scientists. That is not the right way to budget for the branch in the Territory; that is getting priorities in the wrong places. It would have been better to take \$100,000 or \$150,000 off that TB and brucellosis eradication vote and put it back into the travelling allowance where it would have done much more immediate good. An addition could have been made later on if the other scheme warranted it.

The effect of these things will be not only to slow down important experimental, developmental and extension programs, but it will result in further degeneration of the morale of key staff. I think the same thing is true of other operational field branches and service branches in the Northern Territory. This has been their plight and their story for many years, and it is going to be worse in 1975-76 than it has been in recent years.

I would also remind members, although it is not my particular area of executive responsibility, of the cuts which have taken place in the bushfire control vote which was reduced from \$155,000 to \$67,000 from last year to this year. Most of the cut comes in relation to the control of wild fires. In fairness, I should say that it is indicated in the budget papers that this item is one of those items where they put down \$30,000 or something as a notional item. The point is that you know and I know, Mr Speaker, that that is not going to be sufficient, particularly in the present seasonal and economic situation. A great deal of the Territory is very heavily grassed and

covered with vegetation. Wild fires in the pastoral areas this year will turn the already critical problems into absolute disasters. If large areas of the Northern Territory are burnt out in places which are already overstocked—the honourable member for Stuart gave us figures on the Alice Springs district the other day which showed us that it was considerably in excess of its normal stocking capacity—pastoralists will be placed in an impossible position and there is no doubt that there will be stock shot whether they have government approval or assistance to do it or not; they will have to be shot. I think that it was imprudent and unwise to reduce by something like two-thirds the vote for bushfire control in this coming year. I predict that the amount will be grossly inadequate.

Still in the area of primary production, the Primary Producers' Board has been given \$600,000 to allocate to producers for carry-on finance in the pastoral industry. I would like to know the amount which the PP board estimated as necessary to discharge its responsibilities in the light of its knowledge of the industry generally and of individual cases. I would guess that the amount provided would be half or less than half of the need estimated by those officers of the Primary Producers' Board. Again, I am sure that it will prove to be entirely inadequate and a substantial amount of money, something probably in the order of half a million dollars, will have to be found from somewhere to meet the promises and undertakings of the government to the industry in the Northern Territory.

Turning now to an area in which I am interested, the Forestry Fisheries Wildlife and National Parks Branch of the Department of Northern Australia, their operational vote appears to have benefited from a substantial increase of some \$460,000. Again, we find that the increase is more illusory than real. We find a transferred book entry for parks and gardens expenses to the tune of \$260,000. It is part of this apparent increase; a vote which was provided somewhere else in previous times is now transferred into this branch's vote so there is \$260,000 of the \$460,000 immediately down the drain. We find that there are increased vehicle and hire and repair charges which will reduce the gain further with other hidden costs and escalation of wages. There is no doubt that this important branch—and in an area where the Australian Government is supposed to be showing and has announced that it is showing

increased interest—will be lucky if in real terms it breaks even with the previous year's figures. I believe it will be in real terms less than the previous year's figures and that no progress will be made in most of the important directions.

In view of my past association with the Darwin Reconstruction Commission, I should make some comment in relation to a couple of the items dealing with that body. One sees various figures quoted in parts of the total vote and it is pretty hard to get what really is the total amount that goes to the DRC program this year. I heard the Treasurer last night say \$99.7 million and this morning we have another figure of a bit over \$100m, but it is somewhere about the \$100 million mark. That figure can only be properly evaluated in the light of the total cost of doing the job, the total cost of the 5-year program. I can't remember exactly what that is but, if it is \$800,000,000 say, we must see the 1975-76 budget of the DRC in relation to that. One would think that the second year of operation of the DRC which is what we are talking about, would be the peak year of performance. We wouldn't expect to see the 5-year program divided into 5 equal segments. We would expect to see the main emphasis of the reconstruction program coming in the first and second years, to get the place back to normal quickly, and perhaps some tailing off thereafter. Although I am very appreciative of the work which the government has done in many phases relating to the Darwin disaster, I feel that there should have probably been a higher emphasis and a higher expenditure allowed in this coming year of the program.

There is a particular matter that I would like to advert to, and that is contained in Appropriation Bill No. 2. It is part of the Department of Regional and Urban Development vote related to the Darwin reconstruction scheme. It is on page 28 of Appropriation Bill No. 2, Item 8, Division 975, Darwin Cyclone Reconstruction, 0.1 Compensation for surrendered leases. The figure for 1975-76 is given as \$2m and the appropriation for 1974-75 is given as \$1m, a total of \$3m. This matter has been touched on before in this Assembly. This amount of \$2m in the coming year is hopelessly inadequate to fulfil the promises which the government has made. The money is virtually already spent. It is enough to cover perhaps 80 or 90 acquisition operations out of something like 1600 sites. The Reconstruction

Commission, acting as an agent of the government in the early post-cyclone days was wondering and worrying about where it was going to get land for building. They carried out surveys and they made it known in various ways that anybody who wanted to surrender should come forward and make their wish known, and the government would be happy to have this land so that they could assemble it in a logical way and commence construction. Some 1600 people have done this and now we find that instead of something like \$20m which ought to have been provided in 1975-76 in order that these promises could be fulfilled, we have \$2m which is virtually already spent and there are going to be over a thousand people sitting around twiddling their thumbs waiting to know whether they can get another block or whether they can go to another place to re-establish their lives. They will be waiting for the government to find some money to undertake compensation for these blocks which they were asked to make offers of surrender on. That is grossly unfair; it is a breach of faith and it is a matter which the honourable Mr Uren needs to look at again and keep battling on. I am sure that the Minister for Northern Australia will help him on that particular one.

If I can turn from the general to the particular, I would just like to touch on an area of the Budget which applies to my electorate. My concern is with the appropriation in connection with the town of Batchelor, the town which is not a town. \$57,800 has been provided for Batchelor operations. Admittedly, this does compare favourably with the \$30,900 which has been allocated for the maintenance of country toilet blocks but it is quite inadequate to do the job which it is supposed to do. Batchelor is often proudly held up by residents of the Territory and by senior public servants as an oasis and a good example of town planning, but it does have many problems. A lot of the buildings are old and in drastic need of maintenance. There is a new mess going up for the Education Village; work has already started on that. There is a new School of Linguistics about to be built there, and my information is that the water supply will not be enough for the contractor, let alone for the people who are going to be associated with these projects once they are established. There is water rationing in the town right throughout the week even now. The sewerage system is inadequate and many of the older houses are in need of urgent

minor repairs and maintenance. The amount provided is completely inadequate and Batchelor will be falling down around our ears in the next 12 months unless some greater attention is given to the problems than this Budget indicates.

Finally, I have some misgivings about the new phenomenon we find in the presentation of these papers of mixing the former Department of Northern Development's items in with the Northern Territory items. We find the Kimberley Research Station vote and a contribution to the international sugar agreement on the same page as Frances Creek and an inquiry into freehold land. If this trend continues, we will find considerable confusion and it is possible that it could even lead to evasion in some cases, which will make it more difficult to dissect out the Territory's financial affairs from those of the rest of Northern Australia. I believe that these items should be presented separately. I leave it to my colleagues to comment on other particular areas of interest which their overnight research has brought to light.

Mr TUXWORTH: I would like to join the Majority Leader in expressing my appreciation to the various department officials who helped us assess the Budget and correlate the respective information to our own electorates and our own particular areas of interest within the Assembly. I shall briefly outline the expenditure and the involvement of the various departments that I have an interest in. I feel that many of the government activities in this Territory carried out over the years have done a lot of good work. They have spent millions of dollars of taxpayers' money and, in many cases, they have generally not been recognised for the contribution they have made or the manner in which they have made it. I would like to record the activities of various departments in which I have an interest and explain from the point of view of the Assembly just what effect they will have on the public, how they will help the public and the amount of money involved.

The Water Resources appropriation this year will be \$1,775,000. We have an overall increase of \$296,000 in expenditure and, taking into consideration increases in wages, inflation etc., it might be regarded as a mark-time figure in which we do not gain ground and we do not lose ground. However, the department is very active. It is involved in underground and surface water measurement in the Northern Territory, the development

and improvement of water supplies on properties for pastoralists and agriculturalists and it is also involved in investigations into the main Ord River storage system. The estimate of \$1,775,000 allows for a general increase in activity throughout the branch with particular emphasis on ground water where a revised work program allows for a continuous operation during the year. Investigation by officers into stream pollution in Arnhem Land, and particularly the Arnhem Land uranium province, will continue. Water Resources have been heavily involved in this aspect in the last two years and will continue their investigation. Not mentioned in this allocation is an additional \$550,000 showing an increase of \$321,000 for development work on government projects such as forestry projects, missions, Aboriginal settlements etc.

Referring to the Mines Branch, the most interesting aspect to come out of last night's budget was that there was no reference to a proposed gold tax that was intimated should be placed on the industry by the Australian Industries Commission Interim Report handed down some 3 weeks ago. The report intimated that there should be an income tax on gold and tax exemptions on purchases concerning gold production should be removed. This would have been a heavy blow to the gold mining industry in the Northern Territory as well as other parts of Australia. It was very pleasing to hear that this was not pursued in last night's budget. The Mines Branch appropriation in 1975-76 of \$600,000 shows a monetary decrease of \$5,000 for the period and, taking into consideration the other increases in costs that we are burdened with these days, it probably shows a retrogression in activity in the Mines Branch. However, the Mines Branch has attained certain economies within its own operation. It now has the Mt Wells battery operating on a two-shift basis which has given considerable economies to the department. The operational expenditure for this is \$95,000. The Tennant Creek battery, which is still operating on a one-shift basis, will need \$36,500 for its operational budget this year. The most encouraging figure in the whole of the Mines Branch's contribution is the diamond drilling figure of \$242,500. I do not have to explain that the mining industry is like many other industries: if you don't have a go, you will never find anything. If the geologists knew what was under the ground, they wouldn't have to look to find out. If ever we stop drilling, we will be

in a very desperate position. There is also not shown in the Mines Branch budget of \$600,000, a consultants' fee of \$5,000 for a study in the disposal of tailings and effluent from the treatment of uranium oxide in Arnhem Land. This is a separate study that will go on.

Not shown in the budget for the Northern Territory, but allocated to the Atomic Energy Commission, is an expenditure of \$4,700,000 for mineral exploration in the Northern Territory in 1975-76. This has most interesting connotations. The Atomic Energy Commission has spent the last 25 years of its existence specialising in work relating to atomic energy and, in the last 12 months, it has been put in the position where it has to gear up to get into the mineral exploration business. Its exploration will be confined to approximately 6 months of the year. It would be a fair comment to say that, in order for a department as new in the game as the Atomic Energy Commission, without any support from the Bureau of Mineral Resources or the Mines Branch in the Northern Territory, to spend \$4,700,000 in 6 months of operations will need an army of men and machines.

As the Majority Leader has already indicated in his statement, the expenditure for the Forestry, Fisheries, Wildlife and National Parks operation shows an overall increase of \$462,000. The Forestry's share of this is \$838,300. Fisheries will be spending \$129,600. Forestry will be continuing a program of softwood planting at the rate of 1,000 acres per year and will also be involved in conservation of native forests, surveys and assessments of resources, fire control activities, sawmill management and training opportunities for Aborigines. The Fisheries Department will continue its servicing of the commercial fishing industry, including prawn research, and will be policing fishing regulations and monitoring effects of the pollutants on marine ecology. Again, a certain amount of work will be done in Arnhem Land in this field.

To confirm the Majority Leader's statement that the increase of \$452,000 may have been hidden in certain regards, there is a figure of \$60,000 increase in this year's budget that will go exclusively to the enforcement of law pertaining to the catching of fish and the apprehension of poachers. This is an ever increasing problem to both the fishing industry and the department and it is one that they intend to become tougher on. Not shown in

the Fisheries' activities is \$100,000 allocated to the Port Authority for the establishment of a marina in the harbour. While this is not ostensibly for the fishing industry, it will be of great assistance to fishermen who have no facility at the moment at which to unload their catch. There is also a figure not shown in the Budget for the Fisheries Department of \$7,000 which will pay for a consultancy fee for investigation into the industry.

The Northern Territory Government Tourist Bureau, which is controlled by the Tourist Board, has an appropriation of \$625,000, an increase of \$175,000. This is a most timely increase. It is very encouraging to see that advertising and promotional expenses this year will reach \$143,000, and this comes at a time when the industry in the Top End is particularly depressed. The southern regions, while still enjoying a semblance of a tourist industry, should use the promotion themselves.

The bush fire control appropriation is \$67,000. Although there is a decrease this year of \$88,000, this decrease may be reflected in the fact that last year an enormous amount of money was expended on bush fire control during the dry season. I think probably more will be needed this year to control fires and ultimately the heavy loss of stock. I am hopeful, and I will be seeking an answer to this from our advisers, that any additional funds required to fight bush fires in the coming season will be available from Treasury without much hassle at all.

I would like to comment on the expenditure taking place in Tennant Creek and my electorate in the 1975-76 fiscal year. It is very pleasing to see that the department is continuing with its program of building departmental homes for such people as doctors, dentists, fire officers, school teachers and the erection of 20 houses at a cost of \$945,000 will be a very welcome addition. Had they failed to continue with this program, we would have finished up in a worse bind than we were 12 months ago. Our new power station, which opened 30 days ago, is already in for increased capacity and the additions to this power station this year will amount to \$420,000. There are subdivisional works and street works which come to about \$3,600,000, an overall increase of \$1,600,000 on last year's budget. Not mentioned ostensibly in the Budget because it was allocated last year was the amount of \$6.5m for the Tennant Creek hospital. This money is not shown in this year's budget as a new work. As far as we are

concerned, it is a new work because the contractors will move on site in the next 90 days to begin work on this very necessary project. We also are about to construct a 5,000,000 litre reservoir at the cost of \$583,000, which is an addition to the town's water supply.

The Deputy Leader mentioned that we would be having 29 units built by the Housing Commission in Tennant Creek this year. This is also a very welcome addition because we have a waiting list of 80 and a waiting time of 2 years to get into a flat in Tennant Creek or 6 to 8 months to get into a house depending on your misfortune. However, there is a hidden trap in this. The 29 houses have already been tendered, the contracts have been won by various builders and the expenditure will take place during 1975-76. There is no mention of any forward planning in this regard and if building contractors in the Northern Territory are ever going to become established and gain the expertise of their counterparts in the southern states, they must have forward planning programs on which to base their current contracts and possible future contracts. I hope that the other members of this Chamber would join with me in asking that the government commit themselves to an additional \$24,000,000 expenditure next year that the Housing Commission will require in its next budget. For the Housing Commission to be able to expend that money next year, it will need to do its tendering, contracting and paperwork this year. If we don't do it this year, there will be no homes next year. It is as simple as that.

The road works program as approved by the Parliamentary Works Committee is anticipated to get under way. I feel that the construction of the Newcastle Waters causeway will be the greatest boon to the southern end of the Territory this wet.

In the education budget this year we have had an allocation for a fully equipped media mobile system to be stationed in Tennant Creek. This is an innovation for us. As I understand it, the mobile unit will service 25 isolated schools with educational material, professional library and equipment for making, repairing and maintaining audio visual aids. In addition to this, we have on our books the completion of the Tennant Creek East School at a cost of \$1.8m.

In the Aboriginal Affairs budget we have an allocation of \$6,200,000 for Northern Territory Aboriginal Housing Association operations. We have at this stage spent about \$115,000 in Tennant on the Aboriginal Housing Association and we have not yet completed a building although there are two that are nearing some semblance of completion. I would hope we get this year in the budget an allocation to the Housing Association that will allow them to complete a building after 3 years of operation.

I would now like to comment on the overall money raising activities in the Territory. The Northern Territory exists ostensibly on communications. This year, our communications have taken a knock with increases in airport charges and petrol taxes which will force up airline costs. Postal costs and telecommunication costs are again going up. These costs will be built into the operating costs of businesses and government in the Northern Territory and be paid for by yours truly, the consumer. In that sense, these costs will have the effect of being very inflationary.

I represent an electorate of 63,000 square miles, most of which is taken up by cattlemen and most of whom are in the same plight as every other cattleman in the Northern Territory. I was disappointed to see there was no assistance for the cattle industry because bankruptcy is paid for by everyone, not just the man who goes bankrupt. As these people go bankrupt and disappear off the scene in the ensuing 18 months, everybody in this community will be helping to pay for that in one way or another.

We have seen indications in the Budget so far that there will be tax incentives and deductions in income tax for business and private individuals. A tax deduction is always most welcome, but the country does not run on tax deductions. It runs on confidence and, until we get some confidence back in the economy and the country, we are not going to generate very much progress at all.

I think that, overall, the Northern Territory and particularly my own electorate has done particularly well. In our area we are catching up on a drought that we had in the early 1970s. We are catching up the backlog now and this program outlined by the Executive Member for Finance and Law this morning will allow us to continue.

Mr TAMBLING: In attempting to appraise the Budget in the time available to us,

particularly from the areas that vitally concern my own responsibilities and interests in this Assembly, I can only say that I am extremely appalled at the complete lack of sensitivity to what this community is all about in the Northern Territory, particularly in the Darwin situation as a result of cyclone Tracy. Whilst the Budget papers have given many glowing figures of the excellent rehabilitative and social work that the government has undertaken, at many millions—I think \$70m in the last financial year—and proposals for many more in the coming one, when we get down to looking specifically at the actual operation of the functions of the way in which we are to get back to a normal type of life, then I am afraid the Budget leaves me with a great deal of concern and a great deal of real worry about how the people of the Territory and the institutions of the Territory are going to be able to operate within the confines of this particular Budget.

If we look at the area vitally concerned with my own interest, that is community activity and involvement in the arts, we find that an appropriation of \$110,000 has been made for this particular year and we are informed that that figure includes \$40,000 to the Australian Council for the Arts of which \$20,000 is a retrospective payment for something they forgot to pay for before 30 June. Immediately we are back to \$70,000 to be split between all the other community groups. They list some half-dozen: Alice Springs Youth Centre, Scout Association, tennis clubs, CWA. I have no objection to any of those particular groups, but what about the scope of the rest of them right throughout the Territory? They say in the document that there had to be a gearing down because of cyclone Tracy, that the effect of cyclone Tracy has caused a decrease in applications for assistance. Good grief! People are only just getting organised to get their applications in. Surely they haven't taken that sort of a measure so quickly so as to not anticipate what the communities are going to want in the way of subsidies and assistance this particular year? Some of these groups have been labouring under great strain and stress with complete voluntary help and to make statements such as that is just completely naive in my opinion. Whoever prepared that brief had no control at all.

When we look at local government, there are two sectors in the Budget that concern me. One is the section where the Australian Government makes a payment in lieu of rates

to local authorities. This year the appropriation is \$100,000 compared with last year's of \$242,000. We are politely told that there has been a cyclone in Darwin and whilst at 24 December there were some 1,443 departmental residences there were only 410 habitable at 30 June. What do they do? They get at the funds and they gear down their contribution to local government rates in proportion from 1,400 to 400, and they allow some \$40,000 to be paid to the Corporation of the City of Darwin. Does anybody suggest that the Corporation is not going to go on maintaining the roads, the streets, the lighting, the recreational facilities? It appears the government have one rule for themselves and another one for other people; they are going to force local government to jack the rates up on those other people who have stayed, who are going to have to service these things to make the City Corporation meet its bills. I thought local government under a Labor Government was meant to be a full partner in the federal system. If this is partnership, then it is no wonder that local government is questioning its particular role in a ridiculous game.

Local Government for the rest of the Territory perhaps ought to be closely looking at this if Katherine and Tennant Creek are looking at local government offers with tremendous components of Australian Government housing and ownership of housing in their towns. If they have a disaster, if there is a wind storm through Tennant Creek which blows it away, what will local government in Tennant Creek be left with to pay its bills if they apply this?

Alice Springs has been allowed a minor increase from something like \$50,000 to \$60,000. I suggest that this is going to be one year when I would be very surprised if the rate increase in Alice Springs is limited to 20%. I am sure that inflationary trends in this period will force Alice Springs to jack its rate up more than 20%, but of course the government has not made the provision that it is going to be able to come up with an appropriate level.

Let us look at the other subsidy arrangements that are made for local government. Here again, nobody has bothered to do his homework. Obviously this document has been prepared by some newly recruited staff member in that Brisbane office; he knows nothing about the way in which local government functions in Darwin or of the top end of

the Northern Territory. We see in this document that there is a statement that capital subsidies to the Corporation of Darwin are estimated to cost an additional \$88,000. We had a cyclone. Naturally, when you knock the place out in December and it normally does 70% of its work in the following year, it did not get round to spending its capital subsidies in the normal financial year. Sure, it spent a bit more, but last year they had approval for a subsidy of \$580,000 and they spent nowhere like this. This year, they have allowed a capital subsidy of \$225,000 and they say that is an increase of \$88,000. It's damn well a decrease of \$350,000 in the operational subsidy to local government in this particular town.

There is obviously no relationship between what local government in Darwin asked for and the grants it got. I am informed that this year the corporation sought a program subsidy of some \$300,000 to cover its normal works and programs. It put in a request for additional restoration programs also of some \$300,000, additional building requirements to re-instate the Civic Centre, the cost in addition to what they are going to get out of insurance and the other works projects throughout the city that have to be re-instated and are not covered by insurance. What do they get? \$225,000. Marvellous! We have been given money at a lower rate in an inflationary period and they are wanting to knock it down all the time.

The operational subsidy for local government in Darwin has been traditionally based on a quinquennial review. Local government in the Territory has been screaming about it for years as being a totally inadequate and a totally inappropriate system. It is meant to provide the difference in operating costs between a corporation in the Territory to a corporation of similar size in a southern state but, if you are only going to review it each 5 years, it is going to take you 5 years, with this sort of inflationary trend, to ever catch up. What a terribly wrong form of calculation. Add to that, this year's peculiar problems of local government in Darwin and all the additional operational requirements that have been needed. Did they get any form of suitable assistance? Nothing doing. It stuck at the same particular figure. Similarly, my argument about the rates problem of this town—67% of the leases in this town prior to Tracy were privately owned. We have heard in the debates and in the questions in this House in the last few days that some 1600 blocks are in the

process of being offered back to the government and, even given the dreadful forewarnings of the DURD vote in the Budget where they have only \$2,000,000 instead of \$20,000,000 to pay for them, who is going to pay the rates for those 1,000 blocks of land that are going to come back into the public sector? Somebody really has not done his homework; they have not appraised the principle of what local government should be. Obviously they are going to turn around to local government and say "You have the facilities to raise loans". We saw elsewhere in the Budget papers that local government could raise some \$900,000 by way of loans. That is just the indicative proposal of what they could do if they wanted to go to the private sector. Obviously this government is trying to pass on that responsibility and force them out into dear rates of interest and borrowing in order to meet these types of problems.

Let us look at the provisions for the Museums and Art Galleries Board where they granted a \$50,000 increase in appropriation. The previous year it was \$300,000; this year \$350,000. It is simply recurrent expenditure; again there is no level of contribution or allowance for progress. What about the new building for the museum? We are all aware that that was a very historic and a very beautiful building. It got wiped out. I am informed that the Museum and Art Galleries Board has not even had its submission acknowledged by the DRC, let alone emerge anywhere on a civil works program or a budget item. What about Alice Springs? The museum has for some time been trying to establish facilities in that place. Did they get any recognition for it? It was in their budget estimates. Obviously we have a tremendous need to preserve the art and historic factors of this particular place. The Museums and the Art Galleries Board asked for \$1.1m to purchase collections. What did they get? Nothing; we get some blind statement: "Pending a report to the government by a committee of inquiry on the museums and national collections". That committee of inquiry has no relevance to the Museums and the Art Galleries Board of the Northern Territory. That board is structured under an ordinance of this Assembly and it is answerable to the Administrator in Council and, let's hope, to the Executive when, with the constitutional development of this Territory, it will come under our wing. But suddenly this great big centralist grabbing octopus wants to get hold of it and limit us by

doing absolutely nothing for it in that particular area. Again, there has been a degree of insensitivity.

If we look more specifically at housing problems and the Housing Commission in particular, there are 2 sections of the Budget here. The first one relates to basic grants to cover a small operational problem and the second one with regard to a rental rebate scheme. I question the arithmetical homework for the rent rebate scheme which applies on the economic evaluation of property as against needs test formula applied to people from welfare-type houses. We have been appropriated \$150,000. That is obviously hopelessly inadequately for the situation of what we have and how it is going to develop in the next few months. I have been informed by the Housing Commission that within 12 months the requirement for that rental rebate figure will be in the order of \$400,000 to \$450,000, given the present economic climate and the way that costs are escalating. Under the programmed requirements and programmed allocations for the Housing Commission we are given an allocation of \$13m, and we are told that this is a brilliant increase of \$7.7m on last year's appropriation. Again, the wording is just so insignificant when you consider that there was a cyclone which blew out the program that was under way. The Housing Commission would have expended more than \$10m had there not been a cyclone. The Housing Commission in its estimates indicated that it had the capacity and the desire to complete some \$24m worth of work. It would have sought a cash appropriation of some \$17m or \$18m. This has been turned down in a time when we need housing, particularly for that welfare type sector in our community. Again there is no sensitivity, no recognition of the requirements of this particular community.

Similarly with the appropriation for the Home Finance Trustee for loans under that scheme and under the Patterson scheme. We have \$4m appropriated for this year and the notes inform us that 213 applications have been received at an average of \$30,000 each. Just multiply that out and that comes to \$6.3m. That is not taking into account any more applications than 213. Does anybody think that, with some 6,000 privately owned leases in Darwin, as they begin to re-establish and rehabilitate, there won't be further applications on that particular budget item that will require a great deal more than \$4m?

There are going to be some very embarrassed faces when the Treasury talks take place in November and February for their review and some of these figures have to be lifted so very considerably.

When we look at the appropriations for the Darwin Reconstruction Commission, this adds weight to the debate which is currently before this House, on which a number of members have had the opportunity to speak last week and more will no doubt do so tomorrow. When you analyse the budget allocations of cash expenditure of \$97m and total approvals of \$300m to the DRC, it is a matter of apportioning where that money is being spent. How much of it was on the books before Tracy and had to be reinstated? A great proportion of it had to carry over. Sure, I don't think anybody disputes that there had been housing orders of some \$170m but it is orders and there will probably be some sort of appropriation of \$70m this year. Who does that \$70m provide housing for? It will provide some 1400 houses in this community for the public sector. What forms of assistance, what forms of initiatives or innovative ideas have emerged under the DRC vote? When you look at the normal Civil Works Program that went on and on through the different comparisons from year to year, and if we took out of the DRC vote and put it back in H and C or in the appropriate departments where they belong, then what would really belong to the reconstruction of Darwin, particularly for housing problems and housing priorities? Obviously Cabinet has geared it down phenomenally on what it is prepared to accept as an adequate growth rate for Darwin just to re-establish, and I believe that it is totally inappropriate. Again, I believe that the DRC figures are going to have to undergo major reviews in November and February and let us hope there is some degree of sensitivity in the way in which they will then be approached.

I have covered a number of areas that are particularly vital to the role of community development. I have drawn out a number of total inadequacies and let us hope that, with the passing of constitutional development, we can have a lot more say in these particular areas in budget formulation and maybe even their implementation this year.

Mr RYAN: In commenting on the Budget, I will concentrate mainly on the proposed expenditure in the Northern Territory on roads. It is rather difficult, with the time we

have had, to get a full background on the expenditure but I have attempted to do so. In the program for 1975-76 the new works for the development of roads will be \$1.65m in comparison to a new works program last year of \$4.7m. If the program had moved along without cuts, we would have expected it to have been about \$5.7m this year. A figure of \$4,402,000 was spent last year on development roads in the Northern Territory. The estimate for this year is \$4.24m which is an actual drop. Taking into account the extra costs that are involved, there is a significant drop in the expenditure on roads this year. I would like to point out that, in that, \$4.24m is a carry-over mainly contributed to by the contract which was let for the upgrading of the Erldunda to South Australian border section of the Stuart Highway. This contract is \$3.275m. Thus the bulk of the money that is anticipated being spent this year does constitute one large contract, leaving quite a small area for new construction.

In 1974-75, the Stuart and Barkly Highways maintenance was \$6,150,000 as compared with the proposed expenditure of \$5,321,000 this year. The maintenance of development roads in 1974-75 was \$2,431,000 and this has been increased this year to \$2,566,000. This gives a total expenditure on maintenance in 1974-75 of \$10,330,000 as against \$11,619,000 this year. Taking into account the increased costs, about the same amount of money will be spent.

What worries me, apart from the fact that the road systems in the Northern Territory must continue to be upgraded and developed, is that to continue this development those industries involved in the construction of roads must have work available and any cutback in areas such as road construction will vitally affect the capability of these people to recover and get back into the business of building roads when the economy takes an upturn. It also affects drastically the Department of Housing and Construction, our main road building organisation. If they are not able to keep their complete complement busy, they are put in the same situation as the private sector in that they will find it difficult to recover. While the figures indicate that there is a holding situation with regard to the developmental roads and maintenance, it would appear that we have had a cutback in that area.

Before I get off the subject of roads, I'll briefly mention once again the upgrading of

the Stuart and Barkly Highways which is not contained in the Budget because this is an item which is taken care of by the Public Works Committee. The Cabinet will have to approve the expenditure. I am hopeful that the Department of Northern Australia will be able to ensure that money will be spent this year on getting the second three-year program under way. We can only guess at what the Public Works Committee result will be. I believe that they will recommend that the programs be started. However, we still have to wait for the Treasury to make funds available and it is hoped that the money made available for the Stuart and Barkly Highways, whether it be for maintenance or supplemented by money made available through the Parliamentary Works Committee, will enable Housing and Construction to continue their programs on the highways.

The Port Authority do not have much reason for complaint with regard to the amount of money that they asked for and received. In fact, the \$1.176m that was allocated to the Port Authority for restoration is the figure that was asked for that authority. There is no indication that any particular new works will be involved although I believe that there is an investigational study taking place on the proposed future development for the port of Darwin. A rather important item which has been made available to the Port Authority is \$101,000 for the construction of a fishermen's wharf. I certainly know that the executive member for Resource Development is most happy to see that that money has been made available. It may not be enough, but I think that we should be most thankful that it was made available at all.

The extra costs for fuel will certainly affect our communications. We have just been hit by a rise in shipping costs in the order of 40%, rail has been increased 20% and we now have an increase in the price of petrol. This will no doubt affect our road haulage which constitutes the major supply to the Northern Territory. Postage will also affect the Northern Territory. Unfortunately, the rules made by the people down south don't take into account the fact that we are rather isolated here and we have to accept these decisions.

I will now refer to the expenditure on the fire service. There does not appear to be a great increase. An increase from \$148,730 to \$177,000 is an increase of only \$28,250. This takes into account a decrease of \$12,500 in their requirements for uniforms and clothing.

I'm wondering if we are going to get a similar situation as we have in the police service where uniforms are in short supply. I am not completely aware why there should be a decrease in the amount for uniforms and clothing. There has obviously been no thought of implementing any of the recommendations that were contained in the Meeve Report. I can only hope that, when we get some sort of executive power there may be extra money made available to implement some of the proposals in the report such as a new headquarters for the fire service. Bush fire control has been cut back by \$88,000 and this must be a bit inappropriate in view of the situation regarding bush fires in the Northern Territory. Maybe we will be able to have this decrease reviewed in an attempt to make the situation more realistic.

The bus services in Darwin have had an extra \$23,000 made available. It is interesting to note that the estimated cost of running the bus service in Darwin is \$545,000, with a receipt of \$117,000, which means there is a subsidy of \$428,000 to run the bus service in Darwin. Looking at those figures purely from a business point of view, it would appear that something needs to be done to make our bus services more viable.

That covers the areas that I have some concern with. I would once again like to stress that the road situation in the Northern Territory has not been helped by this year's budget. Everybody says that we have to cut back on various items; however, the roads in the Northern Territory are vital and we cannot afford to cut back any construction of roads because the people who actually construct the roads are not particularly easy to come by in the Northern Territory. We can ill afford to lose industries in this area.

Miss ANDREW: I would like to second the remarks made by the members who spoke before me in thanking officers, especially those of the Education Department, for their co-operation in the compilation of facts and figures in the Budget. Mr Hayden suggested last night in his opening remarks that it was a budget of consolidation and restraint to encourage sound and substantial growth. With reference to the Northern Territory, I would like to suggest to Mr Hayden that in order to sustain growth one needs a basis on which to sustain it. In the field of Northern Territory education, we have a history of belonging to somebody else, of being an arm of another body. It is only in the last two years, even

though we still suffer controls from Canberra, that any form of independent entity has appeared. We are told from this Budget that, in early 1976, there will be over 1,200 places for children in Darwin schools. This pre-empt's a population growth from its present state to that of 50,000 which is obviously unrealistic. The budget provides for schools, for example, in Nakara, Wagaman, Wanguri and Tiwi over and above those existing. However it fails to provide the necessary finance for staff and facilities in the schools.

In looking at the \$4½m increase within the Territory in terms of the Department of Education, I think we are very lucky. However, there are certain complaints that I would like to make known to this House. The first is that of recruitment. Advertising received the princely sum of \$10,000. That would not provide for advertising for the janitors for the school at Borroloola. I have advocated several times in the last 8 or 9 months that what the Territory Education Department needs is a sound system of recruitment based on public advertising by people competent in that field. We are looking for teachers in isolation, we are looking for a contract system, we are looking for specialist teachers to round off our whole system of education and these simply won't be available because they cannot be attracted. It is all a matter of selling in trying to attract professionals to the Territory. The sooner the Department of Education recognises that we are in 1975, the better off the education system will be.

I acknowledge that Mr Beazley has won his case in Cabinet to update salaries in mission schools. I hope that this will have the effect of improving the standard of teaching. We will have to wait 12 months for that. Remote areas in general have fared rather well. I quote from Mr Beazley's speech in which he refers to "a fully equipped media mobile staffed by a teacher-librarian and technical officer to take to isolated schools a wide range of the latest educational materials, a selected professional library and equipment for making and repair and maintenance of audio visual aids". He goes on: "I am delighted to report this and that this first unit will be located in the Tennant Creek area servicing 25 schools in that and the Katherine region. Secondly, further funds are to be made available for teachers of School of the Air in Katherine and now Alice Springs to visit their pupils".

Furthermore, extra money will be provided to the mobile school complexes instituted in

the 1974-75 budget for special duty vehicles and equipment for the decentralising of Aboriginal communities and the continued operation of outstations. Furthermore, an increase of over 35% operates in the maintenance and repair section and principals have now been recognised and can pass a sum of \$200 in terms of maintenance or repairs for their own particular centre without having to attack the bureaucracy for school cleaning. The complex system of contracts has now been considerably streamlined and, in Aboriginal areas, Aboriginal people have been put on award wages for the cleaning of the schools. This too is a further development.

However, in these remote areas, whilst I applaud Mr Beazley's recognition of them, we still have not done anything about attracting and keeping the teachers. What about the lack of communications they have to put up with? What about their cars? I will refer to their accommodation at a later date.

The capital works program, considering the general reductions which the government has made, is quite commendable. I am delighted to see that over 21 houses will be erected in various locations, considerably improving the standard of accommodation for teachers. Similarly, \$980,000 will be for the provision and transfer of transportable classroom units for Aboriginal schools. This will considerably alleviate many of the problems. \$16m will be spent on capital works outside Darwin. Looking at Darwin, Dripstone High has received a grant of \$7m for its construction and a total of \$11m capital works will be done on the DRC capital works program. This is a very realistic figure and reflects the somewhat indeterminate state of Darwin's population in catering for school children. General maintenance and repair and care of school grounds, which received \$228,000 and \$203,000 for maintenance and services, should greatly improve. Libraries, I am delighted to report, got \$101,000 for the upgrading of government schools whilst \$436,000 was made available in grants, subsidies and allowances to upgrade independent school libraries, in terms of furniture, books and audio visual equipment. This was long overdue. Scholarships, especially in recognition of the events since cyclone Tracy, have been increased by \$77,000. However, it is high time that the Minister for Education took a realistic look at the situation of children in isolation in the Territory and recognised that \$350 was a little

unbelievable as an amount offered for education of children in the Territory today.

I am delighted to see that finally we are becoming autonomous from South Australia. It is worthy of particular mention because, for the first time in the history of education in the Territory, we see a budget without any allocation needed to be paid to South Australia over and above that for goods bought. For excursions an increase of over \$73,000 for community school children and of over \$60,000 for Aboriginal school children has been made, recognising the importance of children going into the community and education being a 24-hour process.

Replacement of supplies and stores is upgraded by \$½ and is an area of constraint. Tracy blew much away. The schools are suffering, not only in Darwin, but all over the Territory because stores were held in Darwin at the time. The Northern Territory is badly in need. The total appropriation of \$67,418,100 is, therefore, whilst acknowledging consolidation and restraint, unrealistic. I only hope that what little footing Territory education has achieved in the last few years can be maintained in the forthcoming twelve months.

Turning to the Darwin Community College, this seems to be a hare and the tortoise race from department to department. Mr Beazley, in commenting on the Darwin Community College, says that he has made available \$4.3m for the college's running costs. This is a fairly realistic figure, considering the correspondence courses and the Alice Springs segment of the college as well as Darwin. However, the only recognition of the fact that the college virtually blew away is \$2.3m and I quote "for capital works including plant and equipment". This makes \$314,000 available for the academic block, \$283,000 for the workshop, \$938,000 for demountables, \$500,000 for equipment necessary for the operation of those blocks and \$50,000 for minor new works in Alice Springs. That is temporary. What happened to the permanent allocation, I simply don't know. It is not in the DRC's \$16.8m allocation; it is not in any independent allocation and it just does not seem to exist. I hope that from somewhere some money will come and the Community College will be replaced. It can go on on a temporary basis for so long, but I don't think it can extend much beyond next year. Any cost outlay on the college must be recognised as of a purely temporary nature.

I mentioned last week that the libraries in the Territory were in the most appalling state that has ever been my displeasure to know of in any form of resource service anywhere in the world. We got an increase of \$103,124. For the purchase of books and library materials, \$168,000 was made available, freight, repairs and other services \$31,000. They tell me that this is reaching towards the ideal of 3 books a head. Considering the proportion of the population of the Territory that does read, it seems a little unrealistic to me for books and library materials, and I stress that books seem to be the only thing they have in mind. A section has been established in Brisbane to catalogue them. Presumably that is where the majority of the freight charges go. I consider the libraries' allocation in this budget an insult to the intelligence of the people of the Territory.

The Majority Leader this morning mentioned the situation of the wildlife and national park allocation. All sorts of inglorious references to investigations regarding developmental policy, researches and survey and other mundane platitudes were trotted out. He explained the unrealism of this allocation. What about land use, a long overdue area to be explored in the Territory? The Reserves Board were given an increase of \$150,000—if one considers the cost of living this would probably result in a decrease—"for greater protection of the environment and ecology by improved planning, management and control". They have 9 out of the 28 reserves manned at present, but all they got in increase was \$150,000. I am sure honourable members can do their own mathematical equations on that subject.

Services in general were reflected in the Budget as being necessary evils and allocations, a little unrealistic again in the terms of the cost of living and inflation in general, are more aimed at continuance with a hope of the collection of dues in terms of providing any expenses over and above the appropriations. I tried to contact the water service people on the subject of the promised improved Katherine water supply. It seems urgent business in other areas makes him not available. In terms of consumer protection, once more we get a budget of \$7,000 for the board which merely keeps pace with the current situation, perhaps an unrealistic appropriation considering the government promise of new legislation with increasing powers for the Consumers' Protection Council. In terms

of price and rent control, they received the magnificent amount of \$6,135 for new equipment. You will be pleased to hear that we are going to have improvement in the weights and measures laboratory. However, the Price Controller did manage to get 6 positions prior to the Budget so, hopefully, this will give promises of new degree of service operating in this department. Whilst I recognise the Government's needs for cuts in public expenditure, I leave you with one question: can a developing area such as us be treated as the receiver of foreign aid? Some recognition of our developing area and our belonging to Australia must be made. I hope constitutional development will provide this.

Mrs LAWRIE: It amuses me somewhat that on a national level the Liberal and Country parties should be calling for massive cutbacks in Government spending, but locally the Country Liberal party is saying that the cutbacks have been too severe and there should be more government spending. Whilst realising that we have a home-grown electorate to serve, I think that they have employed a double standard during this debate—most particularly in the closing comments of the honourable member for Sanderson.

The budget in general for needy people throughout Australia is a good budget and there are plenty of needy and depressed people in the Northern Territory. Certainly as far as the Northern Territory goes, we have been fortunate in the amount of money which will be available to be spent in the Territory. The present government has seen fit not to cut back to any large extent programs that we were all fearful about 2 weeks ago. The Northern Territory, by and large, has been excepted from the general government restraint. Give credit where credit is due. I think this is most significant for us. Honourable members are well aware that without a continual government spending in the Northern Territory, the private sector would collapse too. I find the carping comments of members, complaining on the national level about too much government spending and on a local level not enough, a little unfair.

However, some of the comments of members who have spoken previously have been, up to a point, quite valid. In congratulating the present government on the level of spending maintained in the Territory, I reserve judgment on the wisdom of its allocation. I am sorry too that more co-operation was not sought from members of the Assembly in

preparation of the budget. It will be interesting, when that glorious day is reached, to hear the relative executive members defending against all-comers the budget they have prepared. Surely we must agree that, when money is finite as it always is, there will never be the perfect budget.

There are a couple of obvious omissions from the Civil Works Program. One glaring omission is the lack of any mention of a detoxification centre. Unless I misread the Civil Works Program, there is also no mention of a specific psychiatric unit. These 2 things are overdue by about 10 years and with the unfortunate position of people post-Tracy, living in peculiar circumstances, strangers being forced to live together, both of these facilities have become a crude necessity.

I am sorry that the administrative expenses of the Darwin Reconstruction Commission have not been shown in detail. Its one line allocation in the budget and its supporting material only showed salaries and other general expenses. What I would like to see is the way in which the figures for salaries and expenses were arrived at. Is it for the appointment of permanent staff members? Is it for the continuation of people to act in a consultant position? In what proportions, if both of these are to continue, are they listed? How did they arrive at the figure of \$2½m for administrative expenses?

I am concerned that, regarding the reconstruction, repair and new work for schools, we find one glaring omission—the Nightcliff Primary School. Under Education on page 101 of the Civil Works Program, we see a reference to Nightcliff. This is for proposed new works but it is listed as erection of extensions to Rapid Creek Primary School—\$1.6m. I agree with the honourable member for Jingili and I am glad that Rapid Creek Primary School is getting such a large slice of the cake. But if the Department of Education, in its isolated wisdom, thinks Rapid Creek Primary School will be able to cater for all the children of the Rapid Creek, Millner and Nightcliff areas, I am afraid they are going to be sadly mistaken. One would also wonder if they thought that the Nightcliff High School could continue in its present role of accepting primary school children. Having no faith at all in the tortuous collective minds of the Department of Education, I would point out that it is a decision of the Nightcliff High School Board that next year the high school

shall offer the full range of high school facilities. On the assumption of that becoming a reality, there will not be space available for primary school children.

Mention was made that the Department of Education will supply demountables for Nightcliff Primary School in the coming year. I have known about that for months and I think everyone in Nightcliff was aware of it. It will provide for an immediate need. No one in the Nightcliff area, not one parent whose child attends school, expected that a new school would be built, but what they did expect and were led to expect, was that a school would be programmed, finance made available, plans drawn up and the whole train of process for the building of the new Nightcliff Primary School would have commenced in the coming year. If the Education Department thinks the parents of Nightcliff will accept no reassurance as to the rehabilitation of their school in the finite sense, they are sadly misled. The people of Nightcliff will go direct to the Minister and insist that the children receive a good education. We would be prepared to accept demountables for 2 years and would hope that the teachers would co-operate and be prepared to teach in less than optimum surroundings, but only on the indication that the light at the end of the tunnel is apparent and the children will only by in these demountables whilst the proper school is being built.

I touched briefly on the lack of any planning for a detoxification centre. I am critical of the present policy of the Reconstruction Commission in putting two demountables or two caravans on one small Darwin town area lease. It is bad enough if you have 2 reasonable families with perhaps one child each, no pets and a tremendously high tolerance level. But very few people are in that state. Most of us have likes and dislikes, most of us have more than one child and when you come to a family group, most of us have pets. How then can you expect two diverse family groups to exist happily on a small Darwin town area lease without prior consultation? How can you expect this to go happily without realising that there will be a tremendous need for additional services such as family counselling, assistance in school services, the provision of detoxification centres, with attendant staff, and psychiatric services.

It may have passed by honourable members' attention although they have the "Darwin Drunks" report in front of them,

that we have our share of alcoholics in Darwin. The alcoholic is a cross the family bears the best way it can. It is a dreadful position for a family to be in. However, place this crisis family on a block with another family which has no alcoholic member; how do you affect the second family on the block? If ever there was a need for a detoxification centre, that need has been trebled and quadrupled because of the peculiar living arrangements Darwin people will have to accept for the next five years at least.

There are a couple of items outside my electorate on which I would like to comment. I query the proposed bunding of the swamp at Leanyer. I will be asking a question on notice that a full explanation of that particular item be tabled in the Assembly. Where in the Leanyer Swamp is the bunding to take place and what is its purpose? Honourable members may be aware and may be less interested, that Leanyer Swamp happens to be an area of ecological significance. Unfortunately, it has been used mainly as a dump but there are many people in Darwin aware of its other activity. One wonders what purpose the bunding has.

At long last, we see the widening of Trower Road Nightcliff to Rapid Creek Road at a cost of \$600,000. I hope someone will drop Tom Bell a post card in Scotland to tell him that at last his dream is to come true and that horror stretch at last is to be widened and straightened. One would hope that the large proportion of fatalities which have occurred in the past will no longer be a feature of our traffic life.

We see that there is to be erected at Wulagi a juvenile training centre at a cost of \$195,000. I congratulate the Government that it is providing a large amount of money for something that is needed as much as a detoxification centre. What form will this juvenile training centre take and who made the recommendations on that form? I have been engaged in several committees which have some expertise and I have had a happy association with members of the Darwin community who have had tremendous expertise in this rather fragile area. Unhappily, I have also seen a proliferation of committees dealing with juvenile facilities and other prison facilities, for both male and female adults. The composition of these committees leaves me to wonder if any juvenile training centre which they recommend will have any relevance to the local scene. By and large the membership

of the committees is restricted to people from Canberra, in many cases from the Institute of Criminology with a large academic background but no practical background, and to a couple of locals who, until they were put on the committee, would not have known what the term "juvenile training centre" meant let alone what it entails. My doubts and worries may be misplaced. The members of inter-departmental committees who made the recommendation may be qualified academically, practically, administratively and locally but then again they may not. I hope that, in ensuing debates in this Assembly, my doubts will be set at rest and we will get information as to the form this juvenile training centre will take.

A large amount of money has been allocated for the physical reconstruction of Darwin. I wonder if we are capable of spending that amount of money. I wonder whether we will have the supervisory facilities to ensure that the reconstruction takes place in a proper manner. We all agree that lack of supervision contributed greatly to the poor standard of quality of many of the old Darwin homes which disappeared. It is essential that, in the rebuilding of Darwin, supervision is made available otherwise the whole thing is farcical. To have a code and not to build to that code is self-defeating.

I wonder too at the way in which contracts for houses are being let by the DRC. I think it is build in haste repent at leisure in some areas. Look at the first site of the permanent housing let by the DRC in the far northern suburbs. There are six slabs of concrete on the ground, one of which has not had adequate supervision because the slab has cracked. Obviously, it has not been properly cured. The first batch of these homes are far removed from any services and far removed from contact with other suburban groups. In fact, they are in the midst of a most desolate area. The place is a dust bowl; it is tinderbox dry. These six slabs are surrounded by the skeletons of homes that were never completed and are now lying sideways. It is a scene of utter and complete desolation; it is like a moonscape. I love Darwin and I have lived here 16 years but I wouldn't live there. I would live in a tent on Mindil Beach or I would live on a rock on the local beach quite happily but I wouldn't live in one of those houses in that scene of incredible desolation away from other human contact, away from bus services, away from

hospital services and away from shopping facilities. It is an unwarranted imposition to ask people to live in these incredibly bad circumstances and it is not necessary.

One of the criticisms of the budget which I support is that insufficient money has been made available for the resumption of blocks where people have offered their land back to the Government. Had sufficient money been available, one would hope that the blocks would have been speedily acquired, any unsafe buildings speedily demolished and then new housing built on those sites. It would have added to the cost of the homes but it would have lessened the social costs and the need for social support services incurred by building in isolated pockets in the far northern regions of Darwin without any support facilities at all.

I hope that I have adequately expressed my appreciation for the Budget overall for the Territory; I think we are remarkably lucky. There are some areas lacking such as the rural industry but other people with more expertise will no doubt comment on those. Darwin has been remarkably lucky. My only fear is that so much money that has so generously been made available may be unwisely spent.

Mr POLLOCK: We have had the comment from the member for Nightcliff that the Country Liberal Party has been advocating a policy of restraint yet we are today saying that not enough money has been provided in certain areas. In the 2 areas in which I am principally concerned, Aboriginal Affairs and Health, we seem to be relatively happy with what we have received. However, I should remind the honourable member for Nightcliff that the Territory does depend a great deal on public spending as the present regime we have in Canberra seems to have satisfactorily stifled and strangled the private sector in that it has stopped any development of mining and exploration and so many of the Territory's private sector enterprises. Therefore, we are so much more dependent on the public sector spending to survive.

For Aboriginal Affairs this year in the Northern Territory, there has been \$44,028,065 allocated, which is an increase of \$2,892,021 over last year. This is not a very great increase when you consider inflation and the fact that several projects which last year were on the federal Aboriginal grant were transferred to Territory administration

during the last year and these monies are appearing on the Territory's regional expenditure. The civil works program will upgrade existing services and provide water, electricity and access. Apart from servicing the Aboriginal communities, this area is important to other departments such as Health and Education which are working in association with the Aboriginal communities. It does disturb me a little that the proposed new works program totals \$11,113,000 but, of that total program, only \$1,500,000 is expected to be expended in this financial year which means nearly \$10m is carried on to future years.

One area of concern in the Aboriginal Affairs appropriation is the amount allocated for housing and the housing associations. Last year \$7,828,211 was expended for Aboriginal housing in the Northern Territory but, unfortunately, not too many houses have been finished. This year, there is only \$6.269m allocated for expenditure. However, if the government is to fulfil its pledge to provide Aboriginal housing within 10 years then expenditure should not go backwards to the degree that it has this year; it will need to be stepped up. No matter how much money is expended, it is the results of that expenditure that really count. Frankly, it was disappointing last year to see how little has come out of it all.

In relation to Health, the Budget provides for expenditure of \$39.8m for operating expenses of the Health Department in 1975-76. It also provides for a capital works program amounting to \$2.61m which is in addition to the capital works program in the budget of the Darwin Reconstruction Commission. These figures compare with the expenditure of \$28.9m for operating expenses and a capital works program totalling \$10.2m last year. The latter amount includes two large ongoing items, the Tennant Creek Hospital at \$5.26m and a series of projects at the Katherine Hospital totalling \$2.1m. Neither of those amounts was touched last year and, looking through the civil works program, I notice that quite a number of allocations last year to the Health Department were not commenced. There is still a considerable amount of work on the program. However, the way things are going with the government and its policies at the moment, we just won't have the staff to care for the people. There has been a growth ceiling of 1.5% placed on the public service as at the strength at 30 June 1975.

The staff of Darwin Hospital at 30 June was perhaps the poorest that it has been for some considerable time. With the provision of new wards, and with the increasing population of Darwin, the hospital will be totally unable to cope if this limit of staff increase is enforced on the Hospital and the Health Department generally. Added to that, we have the problem of recruitment. Unless the department is prepared to provide adequate salaries and conditions for medical officers, we will be unable to recruit them. I am told that 15 medical officers is the absolute minimum that can effectively operate the Darwin Hospital. Last week, there were 14 medical officers with 3 resignations in the pipeline. Fortunately, in other centres, they are managing to survive. However, with the pressure that is placed on them, I am sure that that situation will not continue. What we really need, apart from capital works and general operating expenses, is realistic and adequate salaries for medical officers. That is not just for doctors but for the whole range of the medical service.

There has been an increased allocation of \$42,000 for prisons. The appropriation this year is \$360,800 for the Prison Service of the Northern Territory. Funds of \$30,000 are required to cover operating costs, including new equipment at the Alice Springs laundry. There is no provision in the estimates for any new prison facilities and this is a matter of concern.

Turning briefly to my electorate, I am particularly concerned about the lack of a roads program in the Territory. Last May, we had a Rural Roads Conference in Alice Springs and, at that conference, there was a great mine on information of what a terrific growth program we could look forward to, allocations left right and centre and \$6m for roads, upgrading and sealing of the road from Eriunda to Ayers Rock, the Glen Helen Road. I went away from that conference quite happy and a lot of my constituents were very happy that they could see in the near future some improvement to roads in the area. However, having received the Civil Works Program, we find there is not one additional new item in the program. For the whole of the Territory, you could count them all on one hand. It is not particularly bright. Even the works under the Aboriginal Affairs section, the proposed upgrading of the Santa Theresa road, got the axe.

I can't find any monies for the Ayers Rock tourist village development, apart from

\$20,000 for a consultant's report. I see \$120,000 for the acquisition of further property there for one of the remaining chalets at the existing facilities at the Rock. It looks as if the 5-year plan is already extending into 6 and I don't know how many years it will eventually extend into to provide the much needed tourist facilities at Ayers Rock which have been talked about for some time. We got \$20,000 for another report and a lot of consultants. I suppose that'll keep us going for another 12 months.

Mr Kilgariff: That's a stretched version.

Mr POLLOCK: A stretched version.

I am very happy in my own electorate to see that monies have been provided for new schools at Haast Bluff and Maryvale and housing at Docker River, Maryvale and Haast Bluff for the school teachers who at the moment live under relatively primitive conditions. I am also pleased to see that a police station is to be built at Hermansburg and to see that 2 portable police station units are to be provided which can be taken from place to place in the Territory as required.

Mr KENTISH: Like most others, I haven't had a long time to study the Budget but I have a few things to remark upon. This year's Federal Budget is a logical conclusion to 2½ years of careless, wasteful and irresponsible spending. At last the moment of truth has come to the government, that the time for care has arrived. Having reached that stage, the next thing they look to is where to exercise this care and responsibility which has so long been absent from their financial affairs. Apparently the third Federal Treasurer in 2½ years has arrived at a reasonably happy conclusion with most of his decisions or a good many of them.

As far as the Territory is concerned, we appear to have come off very fortunately in the pruning that has gone on. When I was a boy, I was very fascinated at a show once watching a man who poured a cup of sugar into a machine and then put some water in the machine and this machine was set whirling and from this little bit of sugar and water he produced great bundles of white material and pink material, very wonderful looking stuff called fairy floss. The present financial situation is very much like that. The wealth that once could be put into a bucket now requires one or two wheelbarrows to cart it around. The dollar has inflated and we have these huge amounts of money which remind me of fairy floss. You tap it and it disappears to a

little thing in your hand; there is nothing there, no value. The sugar and water job is repeated and so we have this situation which has grown upon us.

The Government have directed their pruning towards certain sectors and I just wonder if they have reached the full limit of their wisdom yet in their financial affairs. It would appear to me that in some of their pruning they have gone after that old goose again, the one that lays the golden egg, and although they have had some respect for the producer, I don't think that they have gone far enough in this respect.

People on lower incomes will get a great deal of relief all over Australia which will be a good thing. But I noticed last night that coal is going to get a kick. They have found out that coal is worth money and this goose is going to get well and truly plucked—a \$2 a tonne levy on ordinary coal and a \$6 a tonne levy on coking coal. It will be all very well as long as they don't lose their customers and kill the goose that lays the golden egg. They may be following this same principle in quite a few other directions in spite of the alleged care and restraint in helping the private sector.

In the Northern Territory it is noticed that most departments have done very well, although the allocation within the departments has not been the best. In the realm of primary production, although the amount is reasonable for a tight budget, being much the same as last year, when the discount is made for inflation, the allocation appears to be somewhat unwise. It is allocated in areas where it cannot be spent and left short in other areas that desperately need expenditure. It is to be hoped that discrepancies and faults like this can be corrected as the year goes along. I presume that these things are not as unalterable as the laws of the Medes and the Persians. I hope not.

I notice that the Government does not intend to subsidise outback air services anymore and this is where the wealth of the country is normally won, in these outback areas. These people are to be punished. Again, the goose that lays the golden egg is to get a kick in the rump and their air services will not be subsidised. But the Government will continue to subsidise bludgers in all parts of Australia, the people who in their thousands are illegally riding in the social welfare boat; they will continue to be subsidised. A little while ago in Darwin, we had 350 people

out of work. None of them were officially unemployed and none of them were on unemployment benefits, but you can be sure, Mr Speaker, that all those people were very well fed. I remember that a public servant questioned an item for wine and cigars on a ration list for one of these people and he was rapped on the knuckle and told to mind his own business. What they bought with their ration allowance was their affair he was told. The Government will continue to subsidise bludgers in all parts of Australia and hand out bountifully in the social service realm. This does not mean that I think nothing should be done in social service but I think that very little care and responsibility is taken in this realm. All the air services people are wanting is a fee of \$35 on the mail delivery section to put down planes in these remote places, \$35 a flight. This will be discontinued but people will be fed by the thousands doing nothing all over Australia. The producer will cop it again.

Aboriginal advancement again has been well treated. We have a list here of projects right through the Territory. They are mainly related to water, electricity, roads, airstrips, barge landing places and housing. Those are the main items that are being cared for right through. There is a \$9m vote for the maintenance of Aboriginal people on missions and Government settlements. These places have had water for many years, they have had electricity for many years, they have had roads and they have had airstrips. Most of them have had some sort of barge landing places. Houses have been at a premium and scarce. The idea is that all these things will be upgraded and multiplied which gives a very good foundation indeed for Aboriginal settlements. I applaud this very much but I note that in business enterprises only about \$½m has been spent in the last year or two if I interpret the paper correctly. I see that \$2½m will be spent in the coming year; it is allocated for business enterprises. This is a thing that interests me greatly because the viability of these Aboriginal settlements and missions is at a very low ebb. What is conducted mainly in these places now is a sort of army establishment where one man cuts the wood and, while he is away cutting wood for everybody, someone mows his lawn for him. There is a little too much of that atmosphere on the places. However, where development works are in progress, the people are employed on these projects, sewerage works, road works, airstrip building, housing and many other

things like that. They are assisting a good deal in these things.

There is room for more initiative and more enterprise in this business encouragement sector. With the present price of tanned leather, it surprises me that one or two of the missions or settlements have not set up a tannery. It is around \$100 now for a side of tanned leather. There would be scope for folk in this direction. The basic requirements of expenditure on these things would be fairly low.

There is a wonderful basic set-up being prepared in all these places, with roads and airstrips and schools and electricity and water supply. This is called Aboriginal advancement which is excellent again, but it is a material advancement. It is really an Aboriginal settlement advancement, but it doesn't denote the advancement of the people at all and this is the saddest part of the whole picture—the people themselves are not advancing. Their buildings are advancing and their airstrip, their water and electric supplies are advancing, but the people are not advancing as well as they could. One of the reasons is the lack of gainful and useful employment in industry and the other is the scourge of alcohol in their midst which is having a shocking effect in all these places, affecting education and affecting employment. I go out to some of these places and I find half the work staff are missing after an all-night binge; housing projects are lagging; some work has ceased altogether and the interference with development and work is enormous because of the scourge of alcohol. You have to subtract this mighty figure from this Aboriginal advancement program and it makes a nasty appearance for those who know the truth about these things.

I am not satisfied there is no answer to this. I am not satisfied that enough attention is being given to this or that enough effort is being made to overcome this thing. The Aboriginal people have a double problem. They have the problem of drug addiction which is inherent in alcoholism and they also have the problem of an age-old relationship affair. No man tells his uncle to work a bit harder or to do this or to do that. There are taboos of relationship which makes it extremely difficult for Aboriginals to do anything in relation to certain relatives. The town councils are hamstrung by this age-old relationship problem. In a town council, you will find that a certain matter will come up and no one will talk because that man is an uncle of 2 or 3 or 4 of

them. No word is said and no decision can be reached on many vital matters. This is a thing that we can't do anything about. We did have a cure for it years ago because the man who made the decisions then wasn't an Aboriginal, but now that the people who have to make the decisions are Aboriginals, this old-age problem of close relationships comes into the picture and it is causing great difficulty amongst them. It is nearly as difficult a problem as the Indians have with their sacred cows.

The provision for school maintenance and repairs I find very good. I have about 14 Aboriginal centres in my electorate, major and minor; there are 10 major Aboriginal towns and settlements in Arnhem plus minor ones. Every time I turn my back, there is a fresh one springing up and I notice that some of these little ones are now getting electricity supplies and water. They are little bush settlements and they are proliferating greatly. The maintenance and repair of schools and things like that in these areas is a very great job and I am pleased to note that the honourable member for Sanderson has mentioned a substantial vote in respect of that.

Mr BALLANTYNE: A number of executive members have spoken on fields that I had decided to speak on so, rather than duplicate any of those, I would like to speak about education, particularly in my electorate. The Treasurer last night said that the Budget was presented at a time of high inflation and, by Australian standards, high unemployment. There have never been truer words said and I am sure that, after we have been through the Budget, we would still come up with the same answer that he predicted in the first few lines of his speech.

The Treasurer said that the keynote of this Budget was consolidation and restraint rather than further expansion of the public sector. To my mind, if you want to progress or you want to try to curb inflation, you must have some sort of buoyancy in your public sector, particularly in public spending, giving people more value for their money and keeping the dollar floating, perhaps even looking towards devaluation. During the course of this last year, we had a national disaster in Darwin which caused the government to hand out millions of dollars. During that year, they introduced a health scheme which will cost about \$1,445m. They think fit to introduce these things when we are suffering not only national disaster in the main continent of

Australia but also in Tasmania. I just refer to those things to give an idea of the ambiguous thinking about the economy.

In conclusion, the Treasurer said: "If inflation is to be curbed, there are no soft options only a choice between more or less difficult ones. For our part, our hope is that, with the community appreciation for the need for restraint, we can make a real start with getting inflation under control and further raising living standards for everyone". I'm not going to say any more about that. I'll leave it to the other honourable members of the Assembly to look through the details of the Budget. Perhaps in a few months time, we might be able to go back to look at those remarks at the beginning of the speech and at the end of the speech.

I am interested particularly in education in my electorate. We have an Aboriginal school being built for \$6.5m in the coming year. We have extensions to Dhupuma College which have been going on for the past twelve months. The outlay for this is in the order of \$379,838 of which we have spent \$263,165. They will have a swimming pool built there which will cost \$97,921. When you add these sums up, with the extensions in the new school, in the order of \$6.7m will be spent on education for Aboriginal people. However, in the nearby town, Nhulunbuy, the area school has extensions being built in the order of \$1.2m. There are only about 150 children who attend this school every day and we have about 80 or 90 children out at Dhupuma College. They are finding the money to spend on small groups of people. I am not decrying that they should not have some reasonable buildings but I feel that we have a school in Nhulunbuy which is quite adequate for senior students for Aboriginal children.

What I am getting at is that two years ago nobody thought fit to build a high school at Nhulunbuy. Once the children get to the senior school stage, grade 11, they are forced to go down south. I looked to see if there is anything in the Budget for isolated areas. They have increased the means test from something like \$6,500 to \$7,500 but they do not give anyone else a chance for any more concessions or allowances for isolation. If a child goes down to school in a southern capital, there are no concession fares for the parents from these isolated areas. They can only go by air and we have had increases recently in air fares. The average person

wouldn't be able to afford to go down because that would probably be his yearly savings. If they are going to get a formula, they must look at various areas and work out a formula that will do for a particular area.

The Education Minister, Mr Beazley, has done fairly well in this last year. He has allocated a \$400,000 grant for a pre-school at Nhulunbuy. The other expenditure on education is very small. With the rise of about 15% inflation and the cost of living, there is \$36,000 for cleaning of schools at Nhulunbuy; I doubt whether they will get much out of that for the whole year.

Another area that I would like to talk about is the coastal shipping service subsidy. It has been increased this year by \$8,000. It provides a payment of a subsidy for a shipping service from Brisbane to Melville Bay, Gove and Millner Bay Groote Eylandt, for ultimate delivery to Roper River, Rose River, Elcho Island etc. The subsidy was increased from \$24,000 per annum to \$48,000 on 15 November 1974. We are only getting an \$8,000 increase but, with the cost of living and also the payment on goods arriving, we won't even see anything for that \$48,000 by the end of next year.

There is also another item in the Department of Northern Australia, Division 455, under the heading of Nhulunbuy township. It provides for payment for services for sewerage, garbage, chilled water, electricity and general rates. The appropriation figure for 1975-76 is \$108,000 yet the expenditure for 1974-75 was \$230,929. For some reason, there is a decrease of \$122,922. They say that this is brought about by a review of the electricity charges during 1974-75 resulting in the need for an additional appropriation of \$172,900 to enable payment of new rates including arrears. Incidentally, the department controls 92 houses and 2 hostels at Nhulunbuy. If that is the estimated cost to service these units, I am sure they will be in a bother by the end of the year.

I was going to add strength to the honourable member for Education and Consumer Affairs' case concerning the library situation but I don't think there is anything more for me to add on that. It is quite funny to hear that the number of books remaining after cyclone Tracy is estimated at 40,000 and it says funds have been provided for the purchase of 20,100 books which is \$140,700 yet the appropriation figures for 1975-76 are \$200,000.

They have actually increased that by \$103,000 and the people controlling these books are either living in Brisbane or have offices in Canberra.

One of the things that I was amazed at when looking at the Department of Transport's expenditure was that there is no money set aside for upgrading some of the airports in the Northern Territory. Gove has been in existence for a number of years because it was an old wartime airstrip but it hasn't even got landing facilities for night flying. There is not one cent set aside for any airports in the whole Territory. I may have misread it but I'm sure that not one cent has been set aside for upgrading these airports.

We were talking about Yirrkala earlier. With all the money that is being spent on the school, there is no provision for housing for the Aborigines in that area. They are going to erect five three-bedroomed houses and four two-bedroom houses but I believe that these houses will be for the educational staff. I'd like to see more consideration given to housing in these areas instead of spending millions and millions of dollars on other contingencies which don't really affect the people generally. With those few words, I now remain silent.

Debate adjourned.

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

Mr POLLOCK: I was asked a question in relation to Essington House. Essington House is still under the control of the Social Development Branch. Its purpose was as a juvenile remand and training centre. Until an adequate assessment of the facilities there has been concluded, no firm decision on its future use will be made. Essington House was extensively damaged during the cyclone and, without work, cannot be used as it was. I am advised that some four months or so ago, the WEL approached the Director of Emergency Services and it was agreed to allow Essington House to be used as an emergency creche. It is also being used as a community health centre by the Department of Health. I am advised that up to 20 local organisations, ranging from Landrover clubs to law reform groups, the YWCA and YMCA, have all made overtures to use the facilities in one way or another. It appears that some of them are applying pressure to get an outright control of the area. No firm decision on the future use of the establishment has been made. I have to go and look at the place before the end of the week.

Mr TUXWORTH: In answer to a question from the honourable member for Stuart this morning, Mr Jack Walker from the Australian Atomic Energy Commission in Sydney said that the Minister for Minerals and Energy, Mr Connor, had stated last October that the Australian Atomic Energy Commission would be the agents for Australia in all exploration of uranium in the Northern Territory. He further stated on 15 April that the Commission would be spending \$4.4m in the 1975-76 financial year although the budget amended this figure to \$4.7m. The money would be spent on auger drilling, rigs and equipment, field parties, motorised equipment, vehicles and stores etc in Darwin and Alice Springs operation bases.

CROWN LANDS BILL

(Serial 9)

Mr ROBERTSON: I would like to reiterate the purpose of this bill. It is designed to provide the maximum utilisation of Crown lands within the Darwin environs after Tracy and to overcome some difficulties imposed by section 10 of the Crown Lands Ordinance. The bill will overcome these difficulties in that it will override any regulations previously made by the Administrator or the Administrator in Council. It could probably be argued that section 108 of the Crown Lands Ordinance by regulation would provide the Administrator and the Crown Law Office in the preparation of leases of Crown lands used for residential purposes with a sufficient cut and that it could be done administratively rather than by legislation in this manner. An opinion has been provided that, in so doing, the Administrator in Council would be in conflict with section 6A of the ordinance. This is of course debatable. Whether or not it would be in conflict with section 6A, I think that all honourable members have agreed that the most appropriate way to deal with matters of this kind is by legislation rather than by what the present government commonly refers to as executive action.

The bill will provide for Crown land to be used for temporary residential purposes. I am sure that the intention of the government is to have the bill in operation in the Darwin area. Its necessity arises out of cyclone Tracy. However, there is no definition and it would be very difficult to make a definition available for temporary accommodation or what is referred to in clause 3 of the bill as "an accommodation unit".

In its present form, the bill will apply to the Northern Territory in toto. That was not the intention of those who proposed the bill and I don't think it was the intention of the Majority Leader in sponsoring the bill. Therefore, I foreshadow an amendment confining the operation of this bill to a 40 mile radius of the GPO in Darwin. We have in Alice Springs numerous campers, European and non-European, camping on Crown land up and down the length of the Todd River and in numerous other vacant Crown land areas. I am quite sure that it was not the intention of those who had this bill drafted that such areas and such accommodation should be covered under the umbrella of this particular bill. If the bill comes to apply to the entire of the Northern Territory, someone looking at the legislation could say that there is a legal mechanism whereby they can continue indefinitely to have these presently illegal camp sites.

Mrs LAWRIE: In speaking to this bill, I recall the words of the honourable Majority Leader who of course did not sponsor the bill but presented it on behalf of the government department. He indicated that urgency for the passage of this bill was to be sought and that he would be guided by the feeling of honourable members. Consequently, I advised him that I did not think sufficient case has been made for the urgent passage of this legislation. I deplore the introduction and passage of legislation through the one sittings of the Assembly unless there has been demonstrated a real and urgent need for such passage. That has not been established to my satisfaction and I would hope that the majority party would adjourn debate on the bill for further consideration by the people concerned through their elected representatives and the bill be debated to its final conclusion in the October sittings of this Assembly.

Having said that, I would indicate my general support for the principle of the bill. However, I have 2 serious reservations. This will be used to provide demountable accommodation on Crown land, accommodation other than that which we used to regard as residential accommodation, which is a permanent dwelling. Because of this and understanding the need for such legislation, I think it vital for the legislation to have an expiry date. I foreshadow an amendment which will link this to the life of the Darwin Reconstruction Commission; that is, at the end of five years this legislation will cease to have effect.

It would be dangerous, because of an emergency which has arisen in Darwin in the aftermath of Cyclone Tracy, to continue to pass legislation relating to that specific trauma in our lives and making it continuing legislation when it is only put forward and passed to serve a specific purpose. This is such a case. I agree with the honourable member for Gillen when he said that, because it pertains to a particular situation, the legislation should be specific and relate only to the area of the Northern Territory serviced by the Darwin Reconstruction Act. My argument in support of his is logical and is a natural progression. It should be related to that area and to the same time span.

The second amendment which I hope to introduce will have more substance and may meet with more debate, not necessarily opposition. It certainly merits better debate than can be afforded by presentation and passage on the same day. The proposed amendment would be that, for the purpose of placing demountable units on Crown land, the Darwin Reconstruction Commission should cause to be published their intent as to which specific parcels of land are proposed and that a date of perhaps 14 days be allowed for objections. The objections should be considered by the commission which will then go ahead with the proposal, reject it or amend it. I have said 14 days because I think it is vital to have public opinion noted and considered. I would not wish to hold up the provision of accommodation unnecessarily. Fourteen days is neither here nor there, but it is a very basic right which I am seeking to have continued in this legislation, that the people who are going to be affected, the residents of the area—and by residents of the area I include all people affected under the Darwin Reconstruction Act—shall have a right to express an opinion when they disagree with the provision of accommodation on Crown land which may affect them one way or another and which may have most undesirable consequences. Only 14 days is envisaged but the commission should have to take notice and consider the objections. One would hope, if they reject the objections, they would be required to give some reason for rejection. They may amend their original proposal; it may be that it meets with no objection and it goes ahead. In that case, no member of the community can complain later that they did not have the right to object.

The reason for this is that we are not considering simply the subdivision of Crown land in residential units; we are considering a different concept, the provision of unusual accommodation anywhere where land appears to be available. "Crown land" is a very wide term; it could be that the Darwin Reconstruction Commission want to place many demountables or caravans on an area which is at present an open space, which would have most undesirable consequences and to which the local people would have a legitimate right to object. Because of this, I hope I will be given the time and opportunity to have proper amendments drafted, circulated, discussed at length in committee and, after reasonable discussion, either accepted or rejected by the committee of this Assembly.

I repeat that I do not oppose the legislation; it is probably necessary in an amended form, but I most definitely oppose its passage at this sitting. I do not see that it is vital to the program of the Darwin Reconstruction Commission.

Debate adjourned.

MOTION

Darwin "Drunks" Report

Mr POLLOCK: I welcome the report as a realistic appraisal and review of drunkenness in Darwin and the options available in any effort to deal with the problem. The report reviews the situation in Darwin in particular and also in respect to the whole Territory scene. In contrast to many other reports that have been prepared for consideration, this report deals with the problems face to face. It is by a man who understands what drunkenness is all about and has a good appreciation of methods available to overcome the problem. He also appreciates the real cost associated with any anti-drunkenness program.

The report is quick to recognise the problems that flow if intoxication and drunkenness are "decriminalised", for want of a better word, without the provision of valid alternative measures. This is the situation we now have in the Territory and the problems that face us could be all that more difficult to solve. The situations that followed decriminalisation of drunkenness varied considerably from centre to centre. In Darwin, police were more stringent in their street cleaning of drunks as compared to Alice Springs where they let the

community stew in its own juice. That community stewed well; it came to the boil some months ago, bringing several community organisations, in particular the Central Australian Aboriginal Congress, to the point of taking some local community action to overcome the problems by the establishment of a drunks pickup service.

I agree with Dr Milner in his statement that decriminalisation of Territory public drunkenness will prove a good and logical move, but only if it is one of a comprehensive set of community actions designed to recognise, meet and overcome alcohol use problems. I think that we would all agree that drunkenness and alcoholism is a serious problem. However, what so many people either fail to recognise, or show absolutely no desire to recognise, is their own individual contribution through their own drinking habits to the alcoholism problems of our society. Early in the report, Dr Milner points out some facts associated with the problem. Territorians drink more liquor than is good for them, much more than other Australians. They spend half as much again on alcoholic beverages than other Australians. We suffer double the road toll of the states; the road toll this year is already far in excess of the figure at this time last year, mainly contributed to by intoxication despite the increased use of the breathalyser. Admissions to our hospitals, always hard pressed to provide community standards, are added to by problem cases associated with liquor. Dr Milner estimates that at least 10% of out-patient attendances at Darwin Hospital in 1973-74 sprang from alcohol use problems. Crime levels are also associated with the use, or misuse, of liquor.

The report outlines underlying factors which tend to lead to alcohol and other drug use problems in society. Dr Milner reports that these general factors obviously exist in Darwin. If we, the community, are ready to acknowledge the community's alcohol problems, comprehensive action must be taken. What I would like to bring to the whole Assembly's attention is the chapter "Darwin Drunks—a Phased Response", the chapter "based on priorities, causative factors and appropriate counter measures" on page 97 of the report. Dr Milner admits he has no "magic silver bullet" to offer Territorians to relieve woes of Darwin drinking patterns.

Personally I think these woes could be contributed to in varying forms by the whole Territory. I do not think that the drinking problem is that much less in say Katherine or Alice Springs, it is just that Dr Milner made his report on the Darwin scene. In this chapter, Dr Milner gives a comprehensive plan which is capable of step by step development with inbuilt testing and the capacity to flex with changes in problems, need, failures and successes. He outlines some 23 overall needs:

Declaration of social ideals and of long and short-term goals. Community education for high risk groups; for groups of influences—doctors, nurses, social workers, teachers, police, judiciary, politicians, journalists and service club; for youth in general; for the community as a whole. Identification of problem drinkers, groups at risk and their needs. Measurement of the problems and their costs. Adequate funding of necessary services. Referral systems. Recruitment of key co-ordinating staff. Purchase of equipment and facilities. A “sobering up” unit. Detoxification facilities. Recruitment of general staff. Staff Training. Assessment procedures and centres. Treatment facilities. Rehabilitation facilities. Compulsory care facilities. Confidentiality for all clients. Follow-through capability. Evaluation of results. Research into new intervention and detection techniques, as well as the identification of what type of client does best with any given therapy. Access to computer services. Prevention. Co-ordination of the above complex set of responses, for no one measure will work in isolation.

He has spelt out several aspects of these needs. Members will be quick to realise that the implementation of these needs is one that cannot be taken lightly. What we must ask ourselves is whether we are prepared to accept these approaches to fight the immense problem that faces the community every day of our lives. Are we prepared to commit the amount of public resources required and thus not available for some other community use or are we prepared to only maintain a strict cleaning program? To my mind there is no half way house, the community must face the alcoholism problem that is with us. Individually many of you will say you do not have a problem; this itself is one of the major problems of the scene. We must face it, fight it and beat it. I commend the report to members

and congratulate Dr Milner on its comprehensive nature and its realistic approach.

Mr KILGARRIFF: If ever a subject causes me frustration in the Legislative Assembly, this subject does because, over the years, there have been so many expressions of opinions, so many reports, and what happens? A lot of steam is let off and nothing happens. I am only speaking for a brief 3 or 4 minutes because I have said these things over and over again, but very briefly I go back to the day when we asked the Legislative Assembly for an inquiry into liquor. We had an inquiry into liquor. Mr Adams QC brought in a report which indicated the problems of the Northern Territory. He indicated the death rate and the accident rate per population; he indicated that we had the highest in Australia and one of the highest in the world. In that liquor report certain things were recommended. What happened? Nothing happened. Admittedly the Legislative Assembly tried to bring in a Liquor Commission but that has been frustrated too because of lack of draftsmen. What actually has the government done? They have done nothing except consider the situation and we have a most serious situation on our hands. What has happened now is that we have had another inquiry into liquor and, with due respect to Dr Milner, it is a good report. The recommendations are good or most of them are—there are one or two that I think we would have to look at much more closely, particularly when it comes to recommending a 0.03 alcohol content. The fact is that what he is saying has been said before and nothing has happened.

Dr Milner says that decriminalisation of public intoxication will prove a good and logical move if it is one of a comprehensive set of community actions designed to recognise, meet and overcome alcohol use problems. We all agree with that. As a firm step forward, I would like to recommend to this Assembly so that something firm can be done about it, that we consider setting up an alcohol and drug authority based on the Western Australian report of 1973, “The treatment of alcohol and drug dependence”. This alcohol and drug authority should provide us with treatment, management, care for those people suffering from alcohol or drug abuse. That is what we need here today.

Why do we have to continue to have reports? Why do we not take the bit between our teeth and look after these people who are our biggest problem in the Territory today?

We all recognise it; wherever we go this is a major problem. That is all I have to say. We have a good report saying something that has been said before. Let us for once start having action by government to take a firm step forward. I suggest that the step forward is the provision of an alcohol and drug authority.

Mr EVERINGHAM: Dr Gerald Milner has done an extremely thorough job. I cannot but endorse the remarks of the honourable member for Nightcliff who said that there has been no provision made for the setting up of detoxification centres in this year's Territory budget. This report has been in the hands of the Minister since March of this year and one would therefore consider that the Minister would have had adequate time to budget for the setting up of the centres.

This is another one of the reports commissioned by the Australian Government which is so fond of commissioning reports and so fond of doing little about them when they finally see the light of day. The Federal Government, as it is constituted today, is just a "waffle" government. It goes in for lots of waffle, lots of paper, lots of reports, but no action. We know all about everything. We have reports from here to breakfast time but they never do a damn thing about them. They sit on them; they have cushions feet high comprised of reports.

I cannot also but comment on the way that this report at least supports the bill which I introduced into this House earlier this year, namely the "Drunkenness" Bill. I don't think that this report detracts one whit from the provisions of the Drunkenness Bill and I hope, when the interdepartmental committee finally gets itself together and the Executive Member for Finance and Law and myself meet with it, that we can say "Here is your report; here are the facts in your report; here is the Drunkenness Bill; what have you got against the Drunkenness Bill in the light of the report that has been commissioned by you?" I ask the Federal Government to start putting its money where its mouth is in relation to the treatment of alcoholics in the Northern Territory. This report is a far more important document than the Budget that has come down before this house today. That budget is a transient thing and ensures that there will be a reasonable degree of prosperity in the Northern Territory for the next 12 months but this report deals with the lives

and futures of a good percentage of the population of this Territory for the foreseeable future.

Let's look at the background. Last year the Legislative Council was persuaded to do away with the provisions relating to drunkenness in the Police and Police Offences Ordinance and introduced an amendment which was supposed to fill the gap. What does Dr Gerald Milner say in relation to the decriminalisation of drunkenness? "Obviously the decriminalisation of public drunkenness is a logical move, but not if it is an isolated move in the absence of alternative valid social responses". What valid social response have we seen initiated by government since? Not one, not a tittle, not a jot of response. You couldn't get anything out of them if you put a battery onto them. What have we done as a response? At the request of Northern Territory communities, we have introduced a Drunkenness Bill. How can the Australian Government departments oppose the provisions of this bill when they have done nothing, not a thing?

Dr Gerald Milner speaks about the magnitude of the problem. He says "The average Australian drinker is near the threshold of problem drinking, generally regarded as 80 grams of absolute alcohol a day or eight 7oz beers. If the average Australian drinker is near the threshold of alcohol problems, the average Territorian is way over. This makes it especially important to avoid the use of denigratory terms like drug, wino, alcoholic, and even criminal". Obviously Dr Gerald Milner, from his researches, has ascertained that we drink approximately 50 per cent more per capita than other Australian citizens. Here is another very valid passage from his report: "Thus whenever public intoxication has been removed from the list of crimes, without the provision of valid alternative measures, a backward step has impaired community attitude and overall problem solving success". That is exactly what has happened in the Northern Territory since the amendment to the Police and Police Offences Ordinance. The Darwin police have more or less covered up for the inadequate action of the community and the simplistic change in legislation. In Alice Springs, however, it would appear that the police have accepted the change in the law at its face value and in the words of the Executive Member for Social Affairs, quoting once again from Dr Milner's report, "have stood back to let the community

stew in its own juices (distilled from a high average intake of alcohol, ethnocentric conflicts and perhaps even local ill-will directed towards their lawgivers)." A very erudite man, Dr Milner.

I say that, in the absence of any action being taken by the government, in the absence of any money being reallocated for detoxification centres, we have done the only reasonable thing. "Northern Territorians have serious problems with alcohol use, problems likely to increase with recent changes. The Territory has special problems with its hot, hard and happy Aussie image, its isolation, the great distance between clusters of people, changing patterns of life amongst Aborigines, a high proportion of men in a generally itinerant white population and of course the recent catastrophe, but it has strengths, special assets". Dr Milner has pointed out numerous statistics, particularly in relation to the per capita expenditure on alcoholic beverages. In Australia for 1973, it was \$133 as a whole; in Darwin it was \$198. The total Australian expenditure came to close on \$2 billion. Dr Milner reports that medicos, medical practitioners, private medical practitioners, hospitals, institutions in the Territory are just unable to cope. They do not have the facilities and most of the doctors do not have the right attitude; their training is not directed in this area.

In Darwin in the administration of justice as it stood in 1973, half of the activities and cost of police and court work were alcohol-related. Now that the amendments to the legislation have done away with the offence, there should be, one would imagine, money left over which could be allocated towards the setting up of detoxification centres. Has that money been made available? No, it hasn't. The courts complex has been further filled up since 1973. Like most public service type empires, even courts aggrandise themselves as they get more magistrates and more staff. I think that the present setup in the courts here—just bypassing the subject—has probably approached a state of perfection and perhaps it wasn't in 1973.

Dr Milner says that there is a complete absence of facilities and manpower for the implementation of a rehabilitation program and it is difficult to say in the present context that the criminal process is utterly lacking in social values. Dr Milner feels that it would have been better to leave well enough alone if you were not going to provide any alternative.

In Canberra, the offence of drunkenness is still on the statute books and magistrates daily deal with that offence. Our masters have not seen fit to repeal it in their own backyards. It still stands in Canberra, but in the old experimental ground, the pilot farm of the Northern Territory, we are getting the treatment.

Mrs Lawrie: Oh come on! That was passed by all members of the old Council not just the government.

Mr EVERINGHAM: Dr Milner says that studies have shown that emergency treatment, sobering up stations and detoxification centres are not enough to meet the problems of debilitated alcoholics. I agree with him entirely but you have to start somewhere and if we do not start now the problem will just get worse and worse and the Drunkenness Bill is some sort of start. The government will not give us any money. We are trying to use the existing facilities to operate the Drunkenness Bill if it is ever passed and assented to. It is the only feasible thing that can be done within the next 2 years.

Overseas countries have different approaches to the treatment of alcoholism. Dr Milner says that Sweden, Poland, Bulgaria and Yugoslavia have compulsory alcohol treatment laws whilst most other countries offer voluntary treatment. Russia also has compulsory alcohol treatment laws and I consider that the Drunkenness Bill follows on the fine traditions of Soviet legislation.

Mrs Lawrie: So did I!

Mr EVERINGHAM: The Russians no longer make a secret of the fact that they have a substantial alcohol problem and that there is considerable public drunkenness. They have established a system of municipal sobering-up stations to which persons appearing drunk in public may be taken for detoxification with possible follow-up action. There are 29 of these in Moscow, 28 for men and one for women. A typical sobering-up centre is a nice old building converted for this use. The entrance is up a few very well-worn marble steps. There is no reason why nice old buildings in the Northern Territory could not be taken over. All a sobering-up centre needs is a large house or building.

Members: This Assembly building.

Mr EVERINGHAM: Yes, you could put a lot of beds in this room. In fact, I wonder that they don't do it now.

A different type of detoxification service is being delivered to the alcoholic individual at starting point, a non-medical emergency care centre in Stockton California. That is an entirely voluntary centre. In my considered opinion a voluntary centre would not work in the Northern Territory. Most of our alcoholic people are fairly hardened in their ways and I do not think that gentle persuasion is going to get them in there to start with. I certainly advocate a voluntary system given time, but I think that we have to make a start right now and some compulsion will be necessary to make the expenditure of public moneys at all worth while. In Melbourne, they have a detoxification centre with 14 intensive care beds, outpatients facilities and close links with hospitals and other emergency care units. We should be able to get away with at least that.

The report does not only deal with drunkenness, it deals with multiple drug use such as heavy smokers, people taking excessive doses of analgesics and tranquilizers. Of course, I could not let pass the way doctors prescribe valium these days. My own comment is simply that with any prescription for valium a copy should have to be forwarded to a central Health Department pool where it should be noted and the people receiving prescriptions for valium and other types of tranquilizers should be called on to report for psychiatric or other corrective treatment because the prescription of drugs such as valium is merely putting the thing down; it is not curing; it is not a constructive move at all.

Social controls have an important bearing on diminishing or enhancing the extent of drug use and social problems and as has been remarked in this Chamber earlier today, could be a particularly great spur to use of drugs such as alcohol, tranquilizers and other stimulants especially in the present social climate of Darwin. Bans and restrictions cannot provide the true answer to large social problems. I agree with Dr Milner on that.

Dr Milner's view is that the government should issue an explicit statement of national ideals, goals and expectations in relation to alcohol and other drug use. I think that is the most important part of his report. Dr Milner provides concrete proposals in relation to setting up counselling centres, having counsellors roving through the community and the detoxification centres or sobering-up units as he prefers to call them. He details the economic loss the community suffers as a result of the excessive intake of alcohol and the use of

other drugs. He relates a couple of jokes from Yugoslavia which apparently is a country where there is a great deal of alcoholism. The 2 most notorious cases were of a child of 4½ who developed delirium tremens and a man who was a lifelong TT developing DTs also. The latter earned his living as a fisherman and when he was at sea on a small ship with a number of colleagues for several days at a time, they would subsist largely on fish soup and the soup, although he did not know it, was prepared on a wine base.

Dr Milner proposes stringent amendments to the law in relation to publicans, imposing requirements on them in relation to the servicing of alcohol to young people. He asks us where we are heading. That is the whole question. Where are we heading? That is what I ask also. The problem is a very serious one and it is probably because I am one of those Northern Territory alcoholics that I am speaking for quite as long as this. I ask that members view this report seriously. It concerns particularly the people of the centre. I ask this Assembly to support Dr Milner in his report and push consistently, without overlooking the report, for reforms, both in legislation and in setting up of the various facilities needed to deal with alcoholism and other drug dependences which we choose now to regard as a social evil, choose to regard as an illness, a disease, rather than a crime. If we choose to do that, we must accept the responsibility for paying for the treatment and I ask this Assembly, in supporting Dr Milner, to keep pressing for the provision of finance to set up the centres that Dr Milner asks for. I completely support the report.

Debate adjourned.

ADJOURNMENT DEBATE

Miss ANDREW: I move that the Assembly do now adjourn.

I wish to bring to public attention the remarkable work being done by a small group of people who are currently occupying, or perhaps squatting, after the information the member Social Affairs gave us earlier today, in Essington House.

Mr Pollock: I didn't say that.

Miss ANDREW: Essington House was designed in 1962 and the concepts that it had were very different from those of 1975. It was not occupied until late in 1974. I guess in

some respects it can be viewed as a "step forward" in the management of juvenile members of the community who have got themselves involved in misdemeanours. I would see it as a retreat. However, fortunately it was damaged by the cyclone and vacated. Sitting out there on McMillans Road is barrack accommodation for about 40 people if some form of repairs took place. Lying idle beside it is what could only be called the best God given community centre that Darwin has at the moment. Three women with initiative discovered this and decided to put it to good use. In spite of the commendable efforts of the Department of Social Development, the need for creche facilities following the cyclone was simply not being met. These women, by standing outside offices for long periods of time, by making their demands, eventually brought to the attention of the department the urgent need for some form of private enterprise in the field of providing childminding facilities. Eventually they were let in. This was some months ago and one of the most thriving creches that I have ever seen, and certainly one of the happiest, now exists in this hall out at Essington House.

What about their future? This happy little building seems to belong to the Department of Social Development and they simply are not willing to give it up. The people in that area urgently need the community centre. If you look around the suburbs of Wagaman, Jingili, Wanguri, Nakara, just where do you hold a meeting? The schools are providing both day and night services to their students and the rest of the halls either blew away or are in constant demand. These women held a meeting and publicised this meeting as being a time for representatives of all community groups to come together to formulate some sort of submission. They hoped that, with the backing of several community groups, the government would finally recognise the urgent need for a transfer of this out-dated resource. The meeting was attended by 26 people, a small committee formed and the submission is currently being formulated.

I see Essington House as being a white elephant. I deplore the fact that, in today's budget, there was no mention made of some other centre for juvenile offenders.

Mr Pollock: There is.

Miss ANDREW: Where?

I don't think Essington House is the place. I see an urgent need for community centres and

I see an urgent need for accommodation. With the expenditure of a few thousand dollars, Essington House could provide both. Let us hope that we see Government action in the next week or so and let us get Essington House under way as a community centre.

Mr DONDAS: I am concerned at the Government's attitude towards the persons who have applied to purchase their homes prior to 24 December 1974. This morning, I asked a question without notice to the executive member for Finance and Law concerning this problem. I did not really expect an answer because of the complexity of that problem, but I wish to delve into that topic now.

On 11 June, Dr Patterson issued a press release stating that persons who could verify that they had intended purchasing or building a home would be entitled to the home loan at 6%. However, I must report now that I am concerned that the various government departments administering such a loan are not doing their job. I must read a letter that I have received from some constituents of mine. They have a problem that has been troubling them for the past 4 to 5 months:

A few months ago a statement was published in the N.T. News stating that public servants who had applied to purchase government homes and residences could still do so and they would be entitled to the 6% interest loan available from the Australian Government. Fortunately, we had applied early in 1974 and efforts to locate competent authority to advise us on the procedures to purchase the land for rebuilding has been to no avail. When we approached Home Finance for the loan, we were told that we would be notified as to the price of a particular block. Since then, we have received nothing but "I don't know", as nobody else seems to know: (1) whether or not I can purchase the block; (2) who values the block—for example, Home Finance says Lands Branch are handling it, Lands Branch say the DRC are handling it and the DRC say all valuations have been sent to Adelaide. We are at a loss to know whether or not we can buy the block, how much it will cost and who is actually handling the application. We forwarded our reference to purchase the residence in 1974 as we would like to buy and rebuild as soon as possible.

These people are in a dilemma placed upon them by the authorities. They do not know which way to turn; whenever they seek information, they are shunted from a government department to the Darwin Reconstruction Commission and vice versa. This is not good enough. Those people would like to know where they stand and so would I. I call on the Government to make their policy clear on this matter. It should be straight forward if we are to take Dr Patterson's statement regarding the home loans at face value. It's now time enough for a proposition from the authorities and, until such time as a decision is reached, persons in this category will remain confused and uncertain as to their future. Building costs are increasing from day to day and, until such time as this subject is finalised, we shall be losing good citizens from our community because of the Government's indifferent attitude regarding Dr Patterson's press release.

Mr VALE: I rise to speak about two areas of concern for Centralians. I am concerned at the continued and obvious set of double standards being applied to indiscriminate campers in and around Alice Springs. This continued laissez-faire by those authorities who have the power to move these campers would appear to indicate that they are either unaware or unwilling to act. The continuation of these camps and the resultant drunken bloody fights are disruptive to other residents, both black and white, who wish to live and work in harmony in the area. Further, the behaviour of a number of these campers is adding fuel to the fire concerning race relations in Alice Springs. Those groups who purport to have the true welfare of Aborigines at heart should assist the authorities in curbing the drunken fights and assist with the removal of those campers who are causing a disturbance to other residents in Alice Springs.

I am also concerned at the recent order to police officers concerning the carrying of fire arms. I believe that police officers, as such, occupy a position of trust in the community and their superior officers should support them and rescind the recently imposed restriction relating to the carrying of fire arms. The recent incident in the Mt Nancy area, when police officers who were called to a disturbance and had to return to Alice Springs Police Station, a distance of some 2 miles away, to sign out fire arms and then return to the disturbance, indicates the absurdity of the present rules.

Mrs LAWRIE: I want to raise two points concerning education. For 4 years now, I have commented on the unfortunate position of the Northern Territory in that there is no high school able to offer a course of music. There are many skilled young musicians in the Territory and their talent has been fostered largely by the primary school headmasters. Some schools have excelled in this. At schools such as Nymira and Casuarina High School, the study is intense and the dedication of the teachers who are teaching these kids music is a joy to see. Honourable members will be aware that tonight there is a concert in the Gardens Amphitheatre with a combined school orchestra and a choir. There has been a tremendous amount of work and effort, not only by the kids, but by the teachers. It is very nice but it is treated by the Department of Education as an extra activity, almost an out of hours activity. In any other part of Australia, at least some schools offer music as a subject up to and including matriculation classes from whence the kids perhaps go to conservatoriums.

Why can't one high school in the Territory offer the same course? We get the same old tired answer—there are insufficient teachers. When Dr Hedley Beare was an official member, we finally elicited information that, in the eyes of the Commonwealth Teaching Service, a teacher of music had not only to have music teaching qualifications but the Commonwealth Teaching Service teaching qualifications. I would agree with Dr Beare and the present director that the combination of those qualifications is very hard to come by. Fortunately, in the Darwin school system, there are several people who do hold both sets of qualifications, but sufficient time is not given to them to conduct a proper high school course because they have to supervise the musical education of all the kids in the area at whatever level.

I see from a recent advertisement in some papers that the South Australian Education Department has a more enlightened approach. The Commonwealth Teaching Service has put it to me that it is impossible to employ people to teach music unless they have teaching qualifications besides their musical qualifications. South Australia is under no such disability. I have here an advertisement from the South Australian Education Department for instrumental teachers of violin, viola, flute and cello. The application states that the applications are invited from

qualified teachers of violin, viola, flute and cello. The teachers appointed will be required to give instructions to groups of 4 or 5 pupils in primary and secondary schools in the metropolitan area. The applicants should include all relevant information regarding training and experience, as well as full personal particulars. It gives a salary range of between six and a half thousand to over twelve thousand. They get a demonstration allowance of \$425 for the first year and \$513 for subsequent years. The usual conditions for teachers regarding holiday, sick leave, superannuation and long service will apply. I have made some further enquiries and it does appear that the advertisement is in fact what is accepted in South Australia. Suitable people with music teaching qualifications are accepted by the South Australian Education Department and are teaching in the schools. The kids in South Australia are in the happy position, if they are of that bent, of being able to qualify in music. Armed with this information, I am again aghast at the policy here which does not allow qualified music teachers to be employed.

Miss Andrew: The unions are the first problem.

Mrs LAWRIE: I am aware of the union problem. It is also a department policy which has never changed, despite 4 years of entreaty and every other approach that I could make. If South Australia can do it, and if the kids in South Australia can get good sound musical teaching, it is about time the Territory woke up to itself, the CTS woke up to itself and had another look at their stupid, restrictive practices. Our kids are missing out on what should be a natural part of their education. Despite the restriction, the kids are getting a basic music grounding by the use of the few qualified people that the department has plus part-time teachers who are doing a tremendous job. However, 4 years after I raised the subject initially, there is no hope of a music course as a part of the secondary school syllabus being introduced in the Northern Territory and I say that this is disgraceful.

On a happier note, honourable members will be aware that I have approached the Department of Education regarding the keeping open of schools in the long Christmas break because of the obvious social disability we are suffering, and I asked if they would agree to approaching Treasury for the employment of salaried people to supervise the kids attending these centres. I have received what I can

only describe as a most encouraging reply from the Department of Education. They say that they are conscious of the difficulties which are being faced at the present time by youngsters living in make-shift accommodation and the additional pressures they will face in the vacation period. The department indicates that it has already taken some action in the matter in that 6 home liaison officers have been appointed to give support to families experiencing difficulties, that an out of school activities officer continues to provide financial and other support to groups operating after school hours and that three additional officers are being sought to enable Brown's Mart to expand their activities. Allowance has been made in estimates to continue support for YMCA and YWCA programmes. They indicate that school buildings and resources will be made available during both terms and vacation periods.

The most hopeful sign yet is in answer to my specific query about finance. I pointed out in my letter that it is unreal to expect volunteers to work in the position of some trust and responsibility for a 6 to 8 week period. The Acting Director of Education has replied, "We would be able to pay a program coordinator for each centre and provide salary for part-time instructors in various special areas. The hardware resources of the school—projectors, record players, tape recorders, kilns etc—would be available and provision has been made for some art and craft material." That is the best news from the education field that I have had this year.

I was greatly concerned at the coming school vacation. Every vacation has its own specific problems but, with up to 90 per cent of the mothers working to preserve their sanity, and with home facilities at the very least unsuitable for kids, I envisaged another mini-disaster in January—the long school break, inclement weather, kids with time on their hands and left completely to their own resources. I would like to congratulate the department for the direction which they are apparently taking. I am sure that honourable members who have suburban electorates in Darwin will offer any support the Education Department may need for such a scheme to be set up.

Perhaps, I should go on to quote another part of the letter where the Director says, "The community at large has some responsibility, as you suggest, and we as a department are only too happy to co-operate with any

programme which might be mounted in the manner outlined above, but you will appreciate that we are in no position to compel children to participate in the activities during the holiday period". That, of course, was never intended. There would be no compulsion but what the Department has apparently agreed to offer is a range of activities using the resources of the schools which will be community centres for the period and they have agreed to fund people to co-ordinate and supervise the programs. For that, the Department of Education has my unbounded thanks and gratitude.

Mr TUNGUTALUM: I would like to say just a few words on mining at Jabiru. I just want to read some of the summary that was made in the Environmental Impact Study made by Ranger Uranium Mines Pty Ltd. "The natural, physical environment in the area proposed to be operated by Ranger Uranium Mines at Jabiru is an integral part of the area described as the Alligator River region. It has a climate pattern similar to Oenpelli and Aboriginal tradition can be extrapolated from data collected in Darwin. In some of these areas, some of the Aboriginal people claim some of this land, but I think mining in a place like that can give a lot of employment, not only to Aboriginal people but also to Europeans. I am not sure if the Minister for Minerals and Energy has put a stop on this mining at Jabiru. If he does this, I think overseas interests will come in and take over. We would rather see our own company carry out this job". This statement was made by Ranger Uranium Pty Ltd. I think I will have to do a little bit of study on it. I think that whatever they may do will be very good. Some of the aspects of what they do will affect the place but I think they clearly come out with some really good points and proposals for environmental management and I feel it will come out pretty good. Mr Deputy Speaker, I personally accept this statement by Ranger Uranium Mines Pty Ltd.

Mr EVERINGHAM: I rise to speak on a subject which we do not often advert to in this House and that is defence expenditure. It is particularly timely, in view of the Australian Budget having been delivered last evening, to refer to some of the happenings that have been taking place a few hundred kilometres north of our shore line. I do not know who our enemies may be and I do not know that we have any—I hope that we have none—but Australia is an inviting prospect and there is

no doubt that many people consider we have more than a fair share of the world's goods. One would think that, in the changing pattern north of us where in place of the world's, oldest western empire new and perhaps less stable regimes are arising, Australia may have some worries when we consider that we do not have a wharf in Darwin at which our largest warships can berth. HMAS Melbourne had to stand out in the fairway after the cyclone because there is not a wharf in Darwin to accommodate it.

There is unrest and it is not so far from home. People in Portuguese Timor, or East Timor as it has been called in the last week or so, have, if we can believe the newspaper reports, been having their homes burnt down around their ears, perhaps having their throats slit whilst they sleep. The people concerned have every right to come to power in that particular place if they possess the majority of—

Mrs Lawrie: Knives.

Mr EVERINGHAM: . . . the population in their support. Or the majority of knives, as the honourable member for Nightcliff so succinctly put it. Who is to say that they have not every right to rule Dili, Baucau and Kupang and places like that? Who is to say that they may not become friendly with powers which possess navies of much greater strength and importance than the Australian Navy which I think has descended from some importance in World War II to a next to nothing type existence at the moment, where most of its ships are fit for nothing but the scrap heap. Our air defences in Darwin are down to SFA if I might use the expression, and the advanced early warning radar station, which was demolished in the cyclone, has apparently no provision in this year's Budget for its restoration, repair or reinstatement.

A fellow was in Darwin last week from Timor apparently preaching revolution. What of Indonesia? Indonesia might today seem a stable country; I hope that it is a stable country. Whilst there is a friendly government there we are quite well off, but we don't know what will happen; you could wake up tomorrow morning and find that what has happened in Bangladesh had happened in Indonesia. Where would we be then?

Mrs Lawrie: Safe and sound in Darwin.

Mr EVERINGHAM: Who is to say that the Timorese, on achieving independence, will not offer naval facilities to some foreign

power? I invite attention to recent newspaper reports that the Chinese Navy is now the third most important naval force in the world. I would also invite attention to the Chinese naval exercise which took the Paracel Islands in the last days of the Vietnam conflict, almost unnoticed by the world, by one of the smoothest amphibious operations since the second world war.

What I am advocating is a complete review of our defence forces and expenditure on them. I am saying this because people in this part of Australia are in a particularly exposed position if anything happens—and pray God it doesn't. I think that we can live by compromising with persons of other political creeds in the world. I have nothing against the governments in Indo-China, in North Vietnam and Cambodia. They can do what they like; it is their business. I believe that the government in China today has given the people of China a square meal 3 times a day which was a damn sight more than the

governments of China did for 200 years before the collapse of that particular dynasty. Therefore I am not preaching any war, any aggrandisement. I am not in favour of imperialism. I just want to make sure that we look after our own back yard. That is why I am particularly disturbed at the amount of \$1.9m which has been allocated in the present Budget to the Darwin Reconstruction Commission to pick up the tabs for capital expenditure on defence projects in this area. Have a look at it gentlemen, it is there for you to see. What will it do? They wouldn't be able to rebuild their wrecked houses on the RAAF base with that sort of money. It is just a laugh.

With the unrest happening to our north, our government which says that we have 15 years before Australia thinks in terms of another war is just taking drugs. It is in an unreal world if it believes that. We should not be ready to fight an aggressive war, but we should be ready to protect ourselves and fight a preventative war at any time.

Motion agreed to; the Assembly adjourned.

Thursday 21 August 1975

MOTION

Representation on Darwin Reconstruction Commission

Dr LETTS: I move that in the event that the resignation of Dr G. A. Letts from the Darwin Reconstruction Commission is accepted by the Governor-General, the member nominated by this Assembly as of that date pursuant to section 19(1) of the Darwin Reconstruction Act shall be Grant Ernest John Tambling.

This matter has already been fairly well covered in the comments that I made in relation to an earlier motion moved last week in which I indicated that I had presented my resignation through the Minister for Northern Australia to the Governor-General and was awaiting advice of its receipt and acceptance. I have not as yet had that final advice although I did receive word by telephone a few minutes before coming into the Chamber this morning that the matter is in the Governor-General's hands and it may by now possibly have been processed but I am not certain of that. In any event, it seems extremely likely that the resignation will be received and accepted within a few days and unless the Assembly takes steps to nominate a replacement now then it may be up to 2 months before we have the opportunity to do so again. I am sure that all members will desire to see a continuity of representation or what I might call a "people's representative" on this body—

Mrs Lawrie: Hear, hear!

Dr LETTS: . . . and particularly continuity in the form of somebody who is well aware of the affairs of the commission and capable of making the best representation possible on behalf of the people of Darwin. I believe that such a person is the Executive Member for Community Development and I have no hesitation in putting his name forward to this Assembly as my successor.

Motion agreed to.

CROWN LANDS BILL

(Serial 52)

Bill presented and read a first time.

Dr LETTS: I move that the bill be now read a second time.

Like the Crown Lands Bill which I moved last week, this is a government-sponsored

measure and the second-reading speech which I am about to deliver in support of the bill is one prepared for me by departmental advisers. It goes as follows.

This bill is designed to eliminate the difficulties which have arisen in the implementation of section 24BA of the Crown Lands Ordinance and to restore to the lessees of leases subject to mortgages the right of appeal against forfeiture action. Honourable members will be interested to know that this section has been in the ordinance for many years but only since an amendment which took effect in November last year has this section been expanded from its application to agricultural leases only to include all leases under the Crown Lands Ordinance. Briefly, this section was intended to give some greater degree of protection to all mortgagees, in that the forfeiture of a lease could not proceed to finality without the mortgagee being given the opportunity of selling the lease, thereby recouping the amounts which may be owing to him.

The government is in agreement with the concept that, by giving greater protection to lending authorities, lessees will benefit by the greater readiness with which lenders may be prepared to make adequate loans available. Unfortunately, as the provisions now stand, the section is not capable of implementation where there are 2 or more mortgagees, particularly in the disbursements of the proceeds from a mortgagee sale. Honourable members will note that only one mortgagee is catered for under the existing law and that is the mortgagee who in fact makes the sale. Should there be any surplus funds, these must be paid to the government and the other mortgagees, if any, are not entitled to any share of the proceeds. Obviously, this is not an equitable or acceptable situation. In addition, the government considers that the lessee's right of objection upon forfeiture should not be lessened solely because the lease is subject to a mortgage. It is important to note that, but for the existence of the section 24BA as it now stands, a lessee whose lease is subject to forfeiture is entitled to object, firstly, to the Administrator and, if the lessee is dissatisfied with the Administrator's decision, he may request a review by the Land Valuation Review Tribunal. The forfeiture is not effective until after these objections have failed and the forfeiture is notified in the Gazette. Existing section

24BA removes these rights. Once the Administrator gives notice to the mortgagee of intention to forfeit, he sets into motion a sequence of events which could result in the Minister giving permission to sell the mortgage. Upon the sale, the lessee would lose his lease, would not be entitled to any part of proceeds and he would have no right to object to any of these actions.

The bill proposes the repeal of section 24BA and the insertion of a new section 24 BA which will provide for a mortgagee sale only after the lessee has been given the opportunity to exercise all rights of appeal pursuant to section 106E of the principal ordinance. At that point, prior to the publication of the forfeiture notice, the mortgagees are given the opportunity of exercising a power of sale, not one created by the Crown Lands Ordinance but one in existence under the mortgage or under the Real Property Act and Ordinance.

Turning now to the clauses of the bill, clause 3 is the crux of the matter and it embodies the proposals that I have outlined. Clause 4 is a minor consequential amendment.

Since these notes were prepared for me by the government advisers, I have received some further notes to the effect that on closer study of the bill it was found that in the new section 24BA inserted by clause 3 there was no time restriction in subsection (3) imposed on the mortgagee advising the Administrator that he wished to exercise the power of sale. To make this matter quite clear, I foreshadow an amendment to new section 24BA(3) which will give the mortgagee the period of one month, or such further time that the Administrator allows, to lodge the required notice. I expect to have that amendment distributed probably later today.

Originally, the senior officers of the Lands Branch who discussed this particular legislation with me had in mind that I should seek urgency for it at this sitting. I asked them to demonstrate fully to my satisfaction that the matter was urgent in the way of causing hardship to certain people in order to justify urgency. They have since indicated that it will be sufficient if the measure takes the normal course of events under standing orders and is dealt with at our next sittings.

Mr POLLOCK: I support this bill. It sets the provision with respect to the rights of

mortgagees and thus would improve the likelihood of loans to primary producers whenever the time arises again when lenders would be prepared to lend to the primary industry. The aim of the bill is to improve the situation of primary producers and I am sure every member of the Assembly would support that end.

In this time of crisis in the rural industry, there is another matter of great concern to the industry. Cash returns to many producers are small or non-existent but the general covenant conditions under which they hold their leases provide that they shall perform general stocking development and maintenance requirements and will be liable to forfeiture of their leases for non-compliance with covenant requirements. It is important that some power to stay such action be included in the legislation because the present position in the rural industry is such that a large number of lessees have no current resources to enable them to comply with covenant requirements and thus face potential forfeiture of their leases. I am taking the opportunity of the introduction of this bill to propose a further amendment to cover this position. I foreshadow an amendment to provide that, on application by the lessee, the Administrator may suspend or temporarily vary a stocking, development or improvement covenant for a period no longer than two years, with a power to extend that action for periods no longer than one year if necessary. Non-compliance with the covenant during the period of suspension will not render the lease subject to forfeiture. The Administrator is required to take into account the financial resources of the lessee to ensure that he will only take this action when the lack of such resources makes it impossible for the lessee to comply with particular covenants. The new provisions also propose that if circumstances change or it is found that the lessee is abusing the concessions granted to him, any suspension of the temporary variation may be terminated.

All honourable members will appreciate the difficult conditions that are now facing rural lessees and there is no indication of an early return to good conditions. The amendments I foreshadow—copies of which have been circulated this morning—will assist such lessees by postponing covenant requirements they are not able to meet at present and I am sure members will support the move.

Debate adjourned.

MOTION

Budget Statement

Mr WITHNALL: There has not been sufficient time to study the budget in detail, even the budget as it applies to the Northern Territory, so that all that one can hope to do at the present time is to scan it and find out the direction in which it is headed and to discuss the principal provisions which it contains.

My first statement about it is that I find it a welcome document so far as it applies to the Northern Territory and an appalling document so far as it applies to Australia as a whole.

A member: Hear, hear!

Mr WITHNALL: It is welcome in the Northern Territory because I frankly had expected a very much tougher budget so far as expenditures in the Northern Territory were concerned and indeed, if the budget had been tough overall, I was prepared to accept that. It is not as tough as I expected it to be by any means; the treatment which the budget provides for the economy is not likely to do much at all to prevent what has become now a galloping inflation. It is most extraordinary that the budget is said to be designed to curb inflation at 20 per cent in the coming year. If you are planning on the fact that inflation is going to continue, surely when you say that it is a budget designed to curb inflation, you are speaking with your tongue in your cheek. This is apparently what the government has done; it has planned on a 20 per cent inflation during the coming year.

Looking at the budget overall, I had looked for a very serious curb in government spending in many departments. In that I have been disappointed. One of the more serious aspects of the Commonwealth government today has been the growth in the Commonwealth Public Service far and above the needs of the community. The public service has been expanded by setting up or creating artificial needs. Whole departments have been set up that never existed before merely to supply what this government regards as one of its hobby horses. I refer particularly to the Department of Urban and Regional Development which has sprung up and grown like a mushroom and which is now going to absorb many millions of revenue merely to keep its staff going. All departments are growing at a most unhealthy rate every year and, from my observation, the Northern Territory Public

Service is not growing at all. From my observation of what is going on in some departments, I think that there are some persons in the public service who say every morning, "Give us this day our daily loaf". There is a good deal of loafing going on in the public service, a good deal of wasted manpower and a good deal of unhealthy growth. This is what I had hoped to see cut down and this I have found has not been effected at all. We had no statement about any cutback in the numbers of the public service, no statement about limiting the growth of the public service beyond the statement made some time ago about 1½ per cent. It was merely glossed over and I think that failure to attend to the cancer of the Commonwealth Public Service will create more financial problems for the government and the people of Australia than any other single factor. I call upon the government to review its policy with respect to the public service and to make a very careful examination of the necessity for the employment of the large numbers of persons in all sorts of off-beat departments which have been recently created.

I have made some study of the new tax scheme. I don't think that anybody having studied it only overnight or for one day could possibly come to understand it, but at first hand the results at least seem to be rather curious. We have been provided with a document headed, "Comparison of tax payable, 1974-75 rates and proposed 1975-76 rates", showing the saving or variations. I find it most curious that, right throughout, whether we are looking at a taxpayer with a wife and one child or wife only, wife and 2 children neither a student, wife and 2 children including one student, wife and 3 children, the fellow who makes the greatest actual saving and gets more money in his pocket is, first, the fellow on \$16,000 per year where there is only a dependent wife; secondly, the fellow on \$25,000 per year where there is a wife and one child under 16; thirdly, the man on \$50,000 per year where there is a wife and 2 children under 16 neither a student and where there is a wife and 2 children including one student. It is the man on \$50,000 per year who makes the saving of \$1,500 per year where there is a wife and 3 children under 16 including one student. It is the man on \$50,000 a year who makes the greatest saving where there is a wife and 3 children under 16 years. It is the man on \$50,000 a year who makes the greatest saving.

I am not talking about percentages, I am talking about money in the pocket. As you go through the lists you find, for instance, that with a dependent wife and one child under 16 years, a man on \$35,000 will save \$1,300, a man on \$40,000 will save \$1,250 and a man on \$45,000 will save \$1,331. If you examine these figures, they have no progression with income; they jump about all over the place and they don't seem to add up to any pattern. No doubt if one studied the documents or the act very carefully, one could find reason for this but at the present time I find many aspects of the new taxation scheme baffling. By and large, accepting the accuracy of the documents with which we have been presented, it seems this new taxation scheme is designed to allocate tax more fairly than it has been allocated before and to that extent I find it welcome.

I don't propose to go into Northern Territory expenditures except to say that I think the budget for the Northern Territory is a very haphazard document. It is unbalanced and I think it has been thrown together by a number of different persons and not co-ordinated or considered in the light of what is the greatest need. Undoubtedly the greatest need in the Northern Territory and in Australia today is to find some way in which the cattle industry can survive its present crisis. The cattle industry is a very valuable industry and I have no doubt that in some years to come—I hope not many years but it may be many years—it will again become a very valuable industry. One would have expected some sort of budgetary concession, either in the Northern Territory or in Australia at large, which would have enabled persons who are on the land to get over the crisis which they now face but there is nothing. The 1973-74 budget took away every concession the pastoralist ever had by way of accelerated depreciation. It removed in the Northern Territory any right to claim depreciation over a period for the building of quarters or a house. It took away in the Northern Territory the right to claim fencing as a deduction in the year in which the fencing was undertaken. These things were at the time very serious to quite a number of pastoralists and I had a number of complaints about it. Those deprivations hit some pastoralists very hard. There is no attempt in this budget to repair that mischief; the provisions inserted for depreciation over a period of years still persist and the pastoral industry is still

expected to struggle on without any assistance as far as the laws of taxation are concerned.

I find the budget welcome in so far as it allows the Northern Territory more expenditure than I had expected but as a document designed to curb inflation I find it appalling.

Mr STEELE: Like the honourable member for Port Darwin, I have not had a lot of time to study the Budget. It seems a little bit of a hoodwink job. It is neither this nor that—third time around, third Treasurer. Just looking at the private sector aspects, we are looking at a reduction in company tax to 42½ per cent. It was back at 45 per cent a little while ago. Before that it was 47½ per cent. I suppose next week it will be down to 40 per cent or maybe back to 50 per cent. Double depreciation on plant and machinery—these things are very nice but not really aimed at improving cash flow in a business and consequently aimed at big industry and not aimed at the small business fellow down the road from here. There is suggestion that something like the 5 per cent payroll tax could be pulled off to give people the cash flow that they need in this financial climate. It is not really aimed at containing inflation. It is not encouraging people to save. There is no suggestion that they would allow a tax deduction or tax free interest on savings—things Australians might like to do. There is no suggestion poor old grandma down the street can send a letter from Melbourne to Queensland at a lower cost to some old friend she has had for 45 years—no suggestion of these things that are pretty important.

I will say just a few words on the civil aviation side of things. "The government does not believe that the general taxpayer should continue to subsidise air services and proposes to achieve its objective of 80 per cent recovery by 1977-78. Action will be taken to increase the recovery rate to 70 per cent this year". I suppose this government would consider that flying an aeroplane is a silvertail activity. Jo Bjelke has a plane, Tom Lewis has a plane and Charlie Jones hasn't got a plane, so I suppose there is something there.

Just a few words on the pastoral industry—once again the honourable member for Port Darwin has said a few words about the allowances and the writing off of fencing in the one year. There is no suggestion that there would be a provision of funds made in advance of the Industries Assistance Commission to provide money to implement or return some of

these things to the pastoral industry. There is no suggestion of that in the budget at all. Where does that money come from? Do a Santa Claus job on that. If you are waiting for any money for the pastoral industry this year, the \$19m that has already been spent won't go very far.

I suppose the only redeeming feature of this budget as far as we are concerned up here is the fact that Darwin people can build some houses.

Mr PERRON: Like some other honourable members, I find all these budget papers rather bewildering. However, looking through the maze of big figures and plus and minus percentages etc, there seems to be one terrible aspect which stands out and that is that this budget works on a deficit of \$2,798m. If we add to this the \$2,567m deficit of the 1974-75 budget, it gives us a total deficit of over \$5 billion for the 2 years. If this is how the Labor Party fights inflation, we are on the road to economic ruin.

We are asked by the Treasurer to suggest areas where budget savings can be made if we are to criticise his particular allocations. This is a reasonable request and I would suggest a few areas to him and to the Labor government and to any other government which comes into power. The first action I would suggest would be to get out of the areas which take the responsibility away from the individual to look after himself and the areas which stifle private development. Forget the socialist insurance ideas and let the individual make provisions for his own well being in the future. Drop the terribly costly Medibank scheme and put the onus on each person to arrange his own medical insurance if he so desires. Get out of the area of mining and exploration; taxpayers' money should never be used in this high risk industry; it rightly belongs to competitive enterprising individuals who take high risks in the hope of high returns but bear any loss themselves. Scrap this ridiculous price and rent control and the Prices Justification Tribunal. These departments cost a fortune to run and they prevent the economy of a free market operating and expanding as it should. I urge the government to help save our economy by promoting the private development of urban land, not by spending taxpayers' money but by conditional land grants to companies willing to subdivide, build and sell on the open market and competing with each other

to produce a quality product at a reasonable price.

Perhaps the most important area in which the government should involve itself is restricting wage demands. If we are to pull out of this dive into bankruptcy, the insane wage spiral has to be stopped. Average weekly earnings rose 26 per cent during 1974-75 and the Treasurer only predicts a marginal decrease in this percentage during 1975-76. No doubt the Treasurer is relying on big wage increases to provide more tax revenue. These figures spell disaster and if the Labor government does not do something to restrict wage rises then we are in the hands of militant union leaders who aim for the destruction of our society.

I will only touch on 3 specific items in the budget in relation to the Northern Territory as most areas have had reasonable coverage by other honourable members. The Northern Territory Home Finance Trustee has been allocated \$4m to promote both the normal \$12,000 home finance trustee loan which is available to most Territorians and also the \$42,000 reconstruction loan available to owner-occupiers. The budget notes indicate that there are already 213 firm applications for the reconstruction loan and those approved so far have averaged \$30,000 each. On this basis, the \$4m will help approximately 133 people. Are we to understand that the rest of the people have to wait for next year's budget or will the government crank up the printing presses and just add it to the deficit?

The second aspect I wish to delve into is the Housing Commission allocation. The budget appropriation totals \$13,817,285. This represents a severe cutback on the funds which were requested by the Housing Commission at a time when we need the commission's services more than ever. The commission's original bid on 14 May 1975 was for a commitment of \$25.09m with an allocation to cover that commitment of \$19.68m in this budget. Following discussions with Treasury, these figures were amended on 3 July to be a commitment of \$27.21m for which \$17.43m would have had to be allocated in this budget. The commission needs the cash provision in 1975-76 of about \$17m to cover a commitment of \$24m for 4 reasons:

1. The commission has a very large program of new works and repairs in Darwin, emphasised by the fact that commission dwellings withstood the cyclone

better than average but now require extensive repairs and strengthening involving about 1200 tenanted dwellings.

2. The commission has received and/or accepted the following tenders:

Darwin	\$13,364,624
Alice Springs	\$3,048,419
Tennant Creek	\$1,114,458
Katherine	\$874,700

Total	\$18,402,201
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3. The commission has a very strong moral obligation to proceed as fast as possible with the permanent restoration of 800 tenanted houses with a total estimated cost of \$8m over 3 years; and 490 flats with a total estimated cost of \$5.4m over 4 years.

4.—

- (a) The commission is required to pay a reserve price for the land it uses payable when each dwelling is handed over by the contractor.
- (b) Some expenditure on minor capital works is unavoidable and the provision for 1975-76 for the payment for this land and for minor capital work is \$0.99m.

Based on tenders received or accepted but allowing nothing for future tenders which might be called during the balance of this financial year, the commission's commitment requirement for 1975-76 is \$18.4m for tenders in hand or accepted, \$4.4m for the restoration of houses and flats and \$0.99m for land and minor works—a total of \$23.79m. It is important that commitment of \$23.79m be allowed even if the Treasury budget appropriation is restricted to \$13m which it has been. It is clear that the commission is in an excellent position to spend in excess of \$13m in 1975-76 with acceptable tenders exceeding \$18m already on hand. The Housing Commission is in a perfect position to make very good use of more money that has been allocated to it at this stage.

My last point is the allocation of a miserable \$300,000 to commence work on the drainage roads and footpaths in the Winnellie area. This work was agreed to by the city corporation and the government and was to be done over 3 years with a maximum expenditure of \$750,000 in any one year. At 1 January

this year, the total cost was estimated at \$1,449,000. Who knows what it will cost by the time it is finished? Doing one-fifth of the job at a time seems like pretty lousy economics to me. In the meantime we have to put up with a dustbowl in the dry season and a quagmire in the wet in the middle of Darwin's biggest centre of private industry.

Mr DONDAS: My original impression was that it has been a good budget for Darwin. There was some concern before the budget was handed down that we would miss out, that the government would cut costs by weeding out all the dead branches and cutting expenses and that the same thing could happen here in Darwin. This was highlighted by reports that there were going to be quite a large number of public servants transferred out of Darwin to help ease the expenditure. We have been appropriated with \$21,347,400 for salaries and allowances, an increase of \$1,763,544, and that in itself would be an indication that as far as Darwin and the Northern Territory were concerned there was not going to be any tough cost cutting with regard to employment in the public service.

Tourism has received an increase this year of \$175,000 and that must give us an indication that we have a future here in tourism. The appropriations for 1975-76 are \$625,000 compared to \$450,000 last year. At the moment the Tourist Board is not really functioning as a board and has staff problems and various other difficulties in getting itself organised since the cyclone. However, the government has seen fit to give them an increase of \$175,000. The board currently operates a tourist bureau in Darwin, Alice Springs, Sydney and Melbourne and is establishing another branch in Adelaide—another sign that we do have a future in tourism and that the increase of \$175,000 could be justified.

There has been an increase of \$42,667 for maintenance of prisons. Whether this is going to be sufficient or not remains to be seen. Consider the Fannie Bay jail in its present condition and the amount of money that they are going to have to spend to maintain it for a couple of years until we get a new one.

A member: It will build a fence.

Mr DONDAS: It will build a fence for sure and that is all we want.

From the education point of view, in my electorate we have the Dripstone High School

going ahead at a cost of \$7m. From my electoral point of view, the budget only leaves one loophole and that is in regard to the Darwin Community College. There has been some confusion as to its future but I hope that in the coming months it will sort itself out.

There is one thing we should take into consideration: the budget will assist the Darwin Reconstruction Commission to do its job. With \$99m to spend on housing and other functions, I think that we must be grateful—and I have not heard anybody say it yet—for Dr Patterson's assistance. Our Majority Leader has said that he did a good job in getting us that money. As a back bencher I think that Dr Patterson has done a good job in getting the money into the budget for us in the Northern Territory and especially Darwin.

Dr Letts: A good Country-Liberal man in the wrong camp.

Mr DONDAS: No doubt the people on the land have missed out badly and there must be efforts by this Assembly at the next budget to force the issue and make sure that our man on the land is properly cared for.

Mr KILGARIFF: I am quite pleased with the allocation of funds for the Northern Territory. In the last few weeks, we have been anticipating severe cuts but overall the Territory has done very well. Certainly we see a very comprehensive Civil Works Program which, if it is carried out, will mean that the building industry and employment will be sustained at a very good level. When a Civil Works Program is introduced with so many millions of dollars being proposed to be expended in the Northern Territory, there are 2 points to it. Often, for various reasons, those works do not go to tender. We have seen this on many occasions. It is my hope that this year, the projects proposed in the Civil Works Program will come about and that tenders will be committed this year. The amount of money spent this year depends on the date the proposed works go to tender. It could well be that very little will be spent on new works, depending of course on the date they go to tender. I hope that a lot of these projects will go to tender at a reasonable time to ensure continuity in the building industry, which will mean continuity in employment and continuity in the services to the various communities, particularly continuity in housing.

The honourable member for Stuart Park made a plea that the Housing Commission be given more funds. I join him in this plea and I

would hope that, as the Housing Commission now has a cash flow of some \$13m and they indicate that they are in a position to spend more and carry out more works in this financial year, when the expenditure is reviewed as is done at the end of each calendar year, they should not hesitate in making a bid for further funds. Housing is the most necessary thing in the Northern Territory if we are to have development. I think it is indicated in the budget that priority has been given to housing and also to those facilities to service the community such as subdivisions, provision of water, power and so on.

As the member for Alice Springs, I am pleased to see the program for that area because this will mean continuity of the development of the town and continuity of the various facets of life in that area. We have provision for health, education and all those things that I had feared would suffer and we will see development in Alice Springs.

I regret, however, that the Australian Government, while they have provided considerable funds for the Northern Territory this year, have overlooked one very necessary thing: the Home Finance Scheme. The maximum amount that can be loaned to a couple is still only \$12,000. I find this extremely disappointing because this maximum amount of \$12,000 has been in being for some years and the government have not recognised that the value of the dollar has gone down and down and down. Some two or three years ago, \$12,000 was a substantial amount toward a young couple building their own home in the Territory, now it is just the beginning.

Dr Letts: Peanuts.

Mr KILGARIFF: As the Majority Leader has said \$12,000 is peanuts.

In Darwin and other areas now the cost of a home built by a private individual ranges from \$25,000 to \$45,000. How on earth are young couples, whom we badly need to remain in the Territory, going to finance it and what can they do? They are forced to go to another lending institution and take out a second mortgage at a much higher interest rate. With the tensions and stresses of living in the world today, for a young couple to commit themselves to a second mortgage above the \$12,000 is something that many of them fear. They can see that for the rest of their lives they are going to have high interest repayments and high repayments on capital. This has an unsettling effect on people,

especially young people whom we want to get their roots down and become citizens of the Northern Territory. They are being given absolutely no encouragement. A young couple might work in Darwin, Tennant Creek and Alice Springs for a period, find the cost has beaten them and they will return south where they can get a house at a much more reasonable cost. I am bitterly disappointed that this fact has not been appreciated and that this loan of \$12,000 has not been increased. I believe that a young couple these days, with the returns they get in their salaries, can in most cases well afford to repay a loan of much more than \$12,000. It is very disappointing.

The other point that concerns me is the increased costs that are having to be borne by the people of the Northern Territory. As the honourable member for Port Darwin has said, over the last year or two there has been a diminishing of assistance to people living in the outback. What is being granted in the budget as far as the rural industry is concerned, carry-on loans and all that sort of thing, is just a pittance and it means absolutely nothing at all. On top of this, because of the various policies of the government and the various things that are happening in the budget, there will be an increase in fuel prices. The policies of the government, which I will get onto in a moment, mean that freight rates in the Territory will keep on increasing in the next few months as some of these costs are passed on. I feel that this is being directed against the people of the outback and not the people along the seaboard of Australia who do not have these additional costs. Tasmania is getting a subsidy of \$1m to offset freight costs. Good luck to them. They made a noise about it and they got it. But here is the Australian Government, on the one hand assisting a large number of people in Tasmania, but on the other forgetting the people of the outback.

Why do they forget people in the outback? It is because government policy on the various transport facilities is to work now on a cost-recovery basis. As Mr Jones says now, in the airline industry it is 55 per cent and they are hoping to recover 80 per cent. We can imagine what is going to happen. The people in the Territory are going to pay more and more to get out of the Territory; it is the people in the outback who are going to be hit. Mr Jones says that it is the policy of the government to have cost recovery. He applies it also to the Central Australian Railway. In a

letter, a copy of which has been forwarded to me, addressed to Mr Sinclair and relating to representations for reduced road and rail charges and so on, Mr Jones says, "Whatever the outcome of these considerations, my principal concern is that the Australian national railways, which are expected to operate on a commercial basis, should not be expected to bear the costs of providing any subsidies by artificially low freight rates".

He is applying this policy now to the freight rates of the Central Australian Railway from Port Augusta to Alice Springs. In this last week, he has indicated that passenger fares will go up by some 25 per cent and freight by some 20 per cent. Containers coming up for the Northern Territory in the next few months are going to go up similarly. How on earth can he apply cost recovery to put the Central Australian Railway on a commercial basis? It is a worn out railway line; it is a narrow gauge; it has no foundation and it gets washed away with an inch of rain. You can't make a railway like that an efficient operation. Yet on this cost recovery policy, Mr Jones expects the people of the Northern Territory to pay for the cost of this worn out railway line. This is most unfair. Surely the people of the Northern Territory could expect some sympathy from the Australian Government, recognising that this is a worn out railway line and it can't be run efficiently. Surely they must have some sympathy for the people in the outback and give some subsidy to make up for the fact that this line cannot be efficient. The people of the Northern Territory should not be expected to pay for this inefficiency. If the people of Tasmania can be given a million dollars to offset freight costs between the mainland and Tasmania, surely the people of outback Australia, the people of the Northern Territory, can expect and should get similar treatment.

I take note of the remarks made by the honourable member for Port Darwin when he talked of the expansion of the Australian Public Service. He indicated that the development of the Australian Public Service was a cost on Australia which should be watched and I agree with him. One should look at the paper on health which I tabled yesterday. It was signed by the Director of Health and right at the end of it there is a paragraph which I hope authorities will not overlook. He speaks of staff levels and says, "A factor that should be mentioned in relation to the budget is the introduction of new staff levels which will limit recruitment to a level based on the staff

ceilings reached in June 1975". The comment I make here as far as health is concerned relates to education too. When you have a civil works program such as we have had in the last 2 years and we are getting new hospitals and new schools, there has to be a sufficient establishment to staff these facilities. When the restriction goes back to June this year, it means that all those positions that have not been filled at that time cannot now be filled and all these facilities that are being developed cannot be staffed. I hope the government will review the situation. I agree with the honourable member for Port Darwin that there had to be restrictions on public service growth, but we must look at the servicing departments that keep the communities of the Northern Territory going to ensure that this restriction does not limit the professional people we require so urgently in the Northern Territory.

Provision is made in the Civil Works Program for the construction of juvenile training and care centres in Darwin and Alice Springs. I support this move very much and I congratulate the government and the authorities on building these child training centres. I hope they are committed very early in this year's program. In Alice Springs, we have a very big problem, and I think that the problem exists not only in Alice Springs but in other centres of the Northern Territory. We have now a large number of children who should be at school—I am talking of the 13, 14, 15 age group—and are not at school. There is no inspector that I know of who goes around to endeavour to get the children to school. It doesn't matter very much because, even if we did have an inspector, there would still be a percentage of children now who will not go to high school. We have this group in the Territory now who will be a problem. They are beginning to be a problem now. In Alice Springs, they are going before the children's court for pinching cars; it is an organised gang that does this. I would not like to name the particular area.

Mr Everingham: Is it in your electorate?

Mr KILGARIFF: Yes, it is in my electorate, that is why I am speaking on this point. While these children are going to be a problem for the community, they have my sympathy and I have to the best of my ability been endeavouring to arrange jobs for them even though they should be at school. There is very little chance for them because they need training to use their hands, training to take an

interest in life. This sort of facility is most urgently needed in Alice Springs and I hope that it comes about very soon. Mr Speaker, as a member of the Katherine Rural College, you have taken evidence on this problem and I know that the Katherine Rural College is interested in this problem; so are the community colleges; they are recognising that we have a very big problem which must be worked on very quickly. If children will not go to high school, we will have to have institutions to give them other training, and that is training with their hands.

As Executive Member for Finance and Law, I note that Tennant Creek is to be given an extension to the courthouse for \$58,000.

Mr Robertson: We got ours painted.

Mr KILGARIFF: I am very pleased that Tennant Creek has got this. As the honourable member for Gillen says, it looks as if Alice Springs courthouse will get only a coat of paint. This courthouse was built in 1926-27 and for years the judges of the Northern Territory, the magistrates and the police have been pressing for a new courthouse suitable for a modern developing town. Unfortunately, this has been dropped from the Civil Works Program, which I think is most unfortunate. The courts sit under very poor circumstances and in fact the courts have to sit in various parts of the town which I do not think is conducive to good hearings. I regret that once again this has been dropped from the Civil Works Program.

I think that the Minister for the Northern Territory, Dr Patterson, has battled hard for the Northern Territory and this is reflected in the program that is being presented to us now.

Dr LETTS: I wish to comment on one or two points which have been raised during the course of this debate. The honourable member for Nightcliff took the opportunity to criticise the majority party in this Assembly, and possibly to attempt to gain some political mileage in the process, for what she regarded as an inconsistent attitude between the comments we have made here and the policies of our federal colleagues. I suppose she sees that as her job in this Assembly, and we shouldn't decry her for doing what she sees to be her job, but I don't find any inconsistency in what we have said and what the Federal Opposition have said. Certainly we support the call for restraint on public spending and I think it is fair to say that all members who have spoken here have expressed their gratitude

for the magnitude of the Budget as it applies to the Northern Territory, and gratitude to the Minister for the efforts that he has obviously made to secure us a better than average deal. It is the job of this Assembly and all members to look for holes, and to bring deficiencies to light in the hope that the government, when it has the opportunity for revising the budget, will take some note of the comments made.

The fact that you call for restraint on public expenditure does not mean that all increases of expenditure or any new expenditure must be avoided at all costs. The honourable member for Nightcliff's plea on behalf of the Nightcliff School demonstrates that. What we have tried to do is to suggest that, with the money that is now available to the Northern Territory, perhaps there would be a review in some cases of how it is being spent with particular emphasis on production aspects and essential services. I am not satisfied that that approach has been fully adopted and I gave several instances earlier.

The Executive Member for Finance and Law has very properly reminded us that the budget in a sense contains many promises of things that are going to be done in the 1975-76 financial year or which are going to be started in the 1975-76 financial year. We must remain vigilant in the Assembly to see that those promises are carried out. We have had plenty of examples, not only under the present government but under previous governments, where promises have been broken. If one went back to the 1969-70 budget, one would find reference in speeches and in the documents to \$20m being committed for the redevelopment of the port of Darwin and some 6 years later neither that government nor any subsequent government has taken any action to implement that budget promise. We must be eternally vigilant.

Other members have developed to a greater extent the theme which I introduced in speaking to the honourable member's statement, about the great disappointment at the lack of attention being given to primary industry, one of the traditionally great productive industries in the Northern Territory. The only significant matter was the \$600,000 of special carry-on finance which we knew about months ago, well in advance of the budget. There is no mention of any other measures whatever, although many suggestions have been put to government from here, from industry groups all around Australia,

from union groups and all sorts of people. There is no mention of the possible relief from the slaughter levy of 1.6c or thereabouts. Of course, when the price of beef drops 2c you get 1.6c more and that is a big amount of money. There is no mention of other financial measures such as interest holidays or deferrals amongst the many options that are available. The complete lifting by the unions of the ban on the export of live cattle would be some small measure of assistance in the Territory's case. And in the case of other areas, there is nothing other than what we already knew.

The excuse the government uses for this is that the matter has been referred to the Industries Assistance Commission who have 90 days to come up with their report. We could say categorically that their report will contain no new information over and above that which the government already has at its disposal and which it has had available for 4 months. I see this simply as a very unfortunate passing of the buck and one wonders what is really at the end of this lack of policy, whether the government wants to see this industry brought to its knees, to see it become completely moribund so that they can in some way achieve what other industries have been forced into, some form of nationalisation, which they might only be able to do when the industry is completely bankrupt. I hope that is not the kind of ulterior motive which is behind this lack of assistance, but it certainly gives us ground for some suspicion.

What we are concerned about here, in spite of our gratitude for the overall amount of money that has been made available in the circumstances and within the major divisions of the budget, is our concern for the priorities and the way that that money is to be spent. One can think of hundreds of examples where the views of Territory people would benefit the whole community, the Australian taxpayer and the government, in the expenditure of moneys here. Take the health services problem in the form of shortages of doctors. Let us say the establishment of the Darwin Hospital is 24 permanent doctors; we know at the moment the number is down to 14 and possibly within a few days it will be as low as 11. What is the point of having an establishment of 24 doctors when only 11 positions are filled? The reason the other 13 positions are not filled is because the terms and conditions of employment are not good enough to attract doctors from elsewhere in Australia; it is as simple as that. No doctor is going to come

here and start work on \$11,000 or \$12,000 per year when he can get double the money anywhere else in Australia, working probably with better amenities and better tools. In looking at how the money is used, we would have been better off if we had 20 doctor positions at the hospital and the balance of the four positions used to upgrade the terms and conditions of service of those 20 positions. This is the kind of approach we know about, if we could only make the decisions or influence the Minister for Health to make this kind of decision. That is a simple example of what we are trying to get at in our comments on these financial measures.

Whilst we made a start in participating in the final stages of the adjustments of this budget, I reiterate that not only do I hope that from hereon we will participate in the whole financial procedure of preparing estimates through to the next budget but also, as soon as possible and starting from now, the advice of our Executive Member for Finance and Law, and of this Assembly through him, might be accepted by the various departments concerned in the controls, expenditures and adjustments of the budget during the course of the next 12 months.

Motion agreed to; statement noted.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

Mr RYAN (by leave): I gave an answer to the honourable member for Port Darwin concerning the appointment of a member to the Port Authority. I believe that the answer I gave was not clear in that I said there had only been one meeting of the Administrator's Council. I meant that there had only been one meeting since the Administrator had gone on leave almost 2 months ago. Prior to that, the applications had not been completely received so nothing could be done. There have been in fact 5 meetings of the Administrator's Council since the beginning of April.

CROWN LANDS BILL

(Serial 9)

Mr WITHNALL: I am somewhat puzzled at the introduction of this bill. I find nothing really wrong with it and, as far as I can see, the object to be attained is one which the Commonwealth is entitled to attain. I am puzzled because it seems to me—I may be corrected by some lawyer more astute or more experienced than I am—that the Commonwealth already has the power to get rid of people who are occupying crown land under

some sort of an agreement or licence. As has been pointed out, section 6A of the ordinance provides for the making of agreements under that section for temporary or at least weekly, monthly or quarterly agreements for tenancy. If those agreements are made, then section 118 of the ordinance provides a perfect answer to the Commonwealth for its requirement that it should be able to eject persons from the premises.

Section 6A was originally inserted because the agreements for tenancy, or "occupation licences" they used to be called back in the 1960s, were found to be quite unlawful because of the provisions of section 6 which says that alienation of crown land had to be only in accordance with this or some other ordinance. Section 6A was put in to cover public servants' agreements. These were the agreements with respect to public servant houses recognised by Section 6A(7) and, wherever there was on crown land a building which was the property of the Commonwealth and a person was in occupation of that crown land, then the crown land was deemed to be leased to the person under that section.

I do not see any reason at all why the existing provisions cannot meet the problem which the Commonwealth seems to see. Perhaps what may happen is that caravans owned by private persons will be allowed to occupy crown land and indeed the present ordinance does not provide for that. To that extent, perhaps some amendment of the ordinance may be necessary. The expressions used in new section 110A do not require that the accommodation unit or the caravan has to be the property of the Commonwealth and so, to that extent, there is a need for the ordinance if the Commonwealth of Australia proposes to let people with private caravans or private accommodation units camp on crown land. If that is the case, subsection (2) of 110A must only apply in circumstances in which the Commonwealth owns the accommodation unit or the caravan, because an agreement to hire an accommodation unit is referred to and this means hire from the Commonwealth of an accommodation unit. I see little need for this section if it is intended to apply only to land upon which the Commonwealth has a building. Section 6A quite clearly refers to there being on crown land a building which is the property of the Commonwealth. If somebody says that a caravan is not a building, then I would suggest to them

that they are perhaps reading the word "building" very rigidly.

In any event, since there is some scope for the operation of the ordinance, I have no objection to its being passed. Of course, the Commonwealth has always been careful to insist upon everybody complying with the Landlord and Tenant (Control Rents) Ordinance except themselves. They seem to believe that, like Caesar's wife, the Commonwealth is above suspicion. But the Commonwealth is not above suspicion because I have seen some rent fixations which they have used for various purposes which were fixations of rent which the Landlord and Tenants Control Rents Ordinance would not have approved of. But, by and large, I am inclined to agree that the Commonwealth in most of its relationships with its tenants does not exceed any rent which would be fixed under the landlord and tenant regulations.

I have another whinge about this. The Commonwealth comes and asks for this power almost in advance of its necessity, I don't think that is important, but it asks for this power when it has power with respect to houses in Darwin that are occupied by unauthorised people and it does not exercise those powers. In my own electorate, in Packard Street, there are 3 or 4 houses which were formerly occupied by persons employed in the Department of Education and which are now cyclone wrecks. In those houses, there are a number of persons living who have no right to be there. One would have thought that if the Commonwealth came to this Assembly and said, "We urgently want this power to be able to throw people out who are unlawfully occupying crown land", they would have looked to the existing situation before they came and said, "We know that other people are occupying crown land quite unlawfully and we will throw them out first". Not once since the cyclone has the Commonwealth invoked section 118 of this ordinance. That is the section that says the Commonwealth may evict people almost without notice. It has not invoked it once and there are many buildings owned by the Commonwealth which are occupied by persons quite unlawfully at the moment. The Commonwealth has taken no action whatsoever. Once you have a power and you don't use it, is it proper for you to come to this Assembly and ask for another power? Is it not right for us to ask why they want another power when they continue not to use what they have? If they

don't use this one, in all the circumstances which exist, how will they be expected to use the one they are asking for?

I don't deny that many of the people living in these houses ought to be permitted to live there. They have come in cars and caravans out in the northern suburbs and indeed even in Port Darwin. They want some shelter; they want accommodation; they want water; they have come into these places and I have some sympathy for them. But, if this is the case and the Commonwealth does not exercise their powers on grounds of humanity, will they not take the same attitude to the ejection of people under the powers that are now asked for in this bill? I don't complain about it. I don't think the powers are excessive. I think they are probably unnecessary except in one minor point. But I do complain that, although this is to be an urgent power, I don't expect they will urgently exercise it. If you come to this Assembly and ask for something to be passed urgently, then surely to goodness after the bill is assented to we could expect some urgent action. If this bill passes this Assembly at this meeting, I will expect to see some action taken under it before the next meeting of this Assembly, because, if it is urgent, then some action must be contemplated between now and October.

Dr LETTS: I seek leave, notwithstanding that I have already spoken in this debate, to make a statement concerning the urgency of this bill.

Leave granted.

Dr LETTS: As I indicated in my second-reading speech, the department which sponsored this bill and provided me with the explanatory notes did seek urgency. I indicated to the Assembly that the question of whether I would seek urgency under standing orders would be determined on the points that were put forward in the debate. After listening to the debate and finding that there are at least two amendments foreshadowed and going back to the department for a further reinforcement of the reasons for urgency, I have been unable to satisfy myself that the normal grounds for urgency really exist. The bill is probably uncomplicated enough to qualify but the question of hardship does not arise and the department could have circulated the contents of this bill some weeks ago so that members could have been better prepared for it but they did not take this opportunity. I believe that they can go on administering the

situation in the same way that they have been in the last 2 or 3 months until the bill is finalised the next time we meet. For that reason, I do not propose to seek urgency under a standing order 152.

Mr Withnall: When it is passed it won't be used for 12 months.

Debate adjourned.

MOTION

Address to Senate and House of Representatives—Darwin Reconstruction Commission

Mr DONDAS: I support the amendment proposed by the Executive Member for Community Development and I support the feelings of the previous speakers as it is apparent that there is a great problem and, if we are to succeed in rebuilding our city quickly, this problem must be overcome immediately. Other members have covered the problems that we as citizens are facing and I shall endeavour not to traverse the same path but, if my remarks are repetitious, I do not apologise because I speak with concern.

With regard to the amendment, I would like to talk firstly about point 7: "review the manner of nomination and appointment of the Darwin Citizens' Council to obtain better and more democratic representation from the community on that body". Section 45 of the Darwin Reconstruction Act 1975, subclauses (1), (2) and (3) state:

During the prescribed period, there shall be a council to be known as the Darwin Citizens' Council, which shall consist of such numbers, not exceeding 20, of members as the Minister determines.

The functions of the council are (a) where the council thinks it is desirable to do so, or at the request of the commission, to give advice to the commission in relation to any matter that is likely to affect the interests of persons who are or become resident in the Darwin area and in relation to which the commission may exercise its powers or perform its functions; and (b) to give advice to the commission on any matter referred to the council by the commission in connection with the exercise of those powers, the performance of those functions or the operation of this act.

The Commission shall refer to the council for advice on any matter relating to the operation of this act on which the Minister has requested the commission to obtain

advice of the council and, upon its receipt of that advice, the commission shall transmit that advice to the Minister.

I don't intend reading out the whole section but I particularly wanted to cover that part because one would think that the Minister was endeavouring to do the right thing, especially for those people living in the northern suburbs. It was first moved in the early days that, because of the number of people living in the northern suburbs and with the vast amount of reconstruction to be done in that area, the northern suburbs would be allowed to have a representative on the Citizens' Advisory Council. We duly called a public meeting in the northern suburbs which approximately 250 residents attended. We elected several people and presented their names to the Darwin Reconstruction Commission for inclusion on the Darwin Citizens' Advisory Council. We submitted our nominations in accordance with the requirements of the act and waited and waited until such time as the Minister released the names of the chosen 15. Then it was announced that the other 5 persons to be on the council would be selected at a later date. Again the citizens of the northern suburbs waited. When the final 5 were named, we found out that we had been tricked or forgotten.

I accept as being close to the target a statement made by our federal member, Mr Sam Calder, on 24 May 1975 when he said, "With the Minister having the appointment of the 20 members of the Darwin Citizens' Council, such series of appointments could be stacked". He was dead right. The northern suburbs are still not represented. The Darwin Citizens' Council now has 4 senior Labor Party officials, most of whom were defeated at our last election, and in fact there was one nominee who could not even make the city council; he is now on the Citizens' Advisory Council. The Darwin Citizens' Council has come under constant attack for being unrepresentative, non-elected and for failing to act for the people it is supposed to represent. In the selection of this citizens' council, Dr Patterson has failed to accept the advice of major employer groups, action groups and other organisations. His decision to date has not been proven wrong, but the writing is on the wall because to date this council has not proved itself and the only reason for its existence now is because of the Darwin Reconstruction Act it represents.

When the Darwin Reconstruction Commission finally obtained staff and endeavoured to function, I was a little concerned that statements being made by the commission were a little confusing due to the ambiguity of some of their press releases. I request that all future press releases be issued by someone with authority in order to get the proper message across, because there has been a lot of confusion. There must have been a breakdown somewhere because last April a statement was issued with regard to the commission providing financial assistance to people wishing to put caravans on their blocks. This press release was issued in error. The error was that this press statement was premature because, although it was decided to be an acceptable practice and policy, it had not received the Minister's blessing via the Cabinet. It still hasn't; nevertheless the damage has been done by the DRC, because it went back on its word. I sincerely hope that this does not happen again.

Another area that I would like to speak about is town planning. The town plan of the Cities Commission came under constant attack in the early days. People in Darwin have been waiting 6 months for some final resolution of the plan. The first Cities Commission report on the northern suburbs said they were not going to reconstruct the northern suburbs. There was a lot of despair and a lot of people left town. A lot of people surrendered their blocks because they thought there was no future in the northern suburbs. Then the second Cities Commission report came out with the buffer zone, the tidal surge area and all the other implications. There was more worry and more people left town.

I shall not delve into this subject any further but would add that the northern suburbs citizens generally are concerned and I would like to read out a submission that we presented to the Reconstruction Commission on 10 March:

Following release of the Cities Commission report "Planning Options for future Darwin" almost all citizens of the northern suburbs expressed some concern about numerous aspects of the report. As a result, our Planning and Environment Sub-Committee compiled a list of resolutions for discussion at a public meeting.

On Wednesday 26 February 1975 a planning seminar was sponsored by the Northern Suburbs Residents Action Group to discuss the whole issue.

We wish to point out that this meeting was attended by Cities Commission personnel who were most welcome, although officially acting as observers, they did participate in the discussions.

We enclose for your information and consideration by the Darwin Reconstruction Commission, a list of the recommendations prepared by the people attending this seminar. A copy of these recommendations will be forwarded to the Minister for the Northern Territory and the Cities Commission for their attention.

Recommendations prepared by the seminar sponsored by the Northern Suburbs Residents Action Group were:

1. In future reports the Commission should fully consider the welfare of the people and the security of their employment.
2. Major replanning should not be at the cost of expediting the early rehabilitation of families who desire to return to their former place of residence whether they are owners, lessees or tenants.
3. All land required by the Commission should where possible be purchased by negotiation which should also include a transfer system where agreeable.
4. All services such as electricity, telephones, fire hydrants, plus provision for chilled water and CATV should be located below ground level. In the event of any future emergency the majority of these could possibly be utilised immediately.
5. We consider that permanent residential reconstruction in surge areas should not proceed until final criteria is prepared for these areas, and examined by residents who will be affected. If a surge line is adopted the areas below this line should be utilised as open spaces for cultural, active and passive recreational activities, provided the owners of land in these areas are willing to negotiate with the Commission for compensation and/or reallocation of land in a similar situation.
6. On the understanding that the suggested employment and business centre is actually located on the southern

boundary of the northern suburbs, the suggestion is acceptable. An extreme peninsula location is not acceptable.

The existing Casuarina Shopping Centre is seen as serving the northern suburbs centre needs.

7. We do not agree with the medium density housing or high rise development of the type which existed pre-Tracy.
8. It is preferred that modern well planned medium density housing if undertaken should be confined to group areas within and surrounded by appropriate open space.
9. People should where possible be given the choice as to the style in which they live i.e., detached housing, medium density or high density housing.
10. All blocks in the northern suburbs should be cleared systematically by the Darwin Reconstruction Commission at the earliest possible date.

This could go on, but I will cut it off here. The point I am trying to make is that a small group of people have put in a lot of time and effort in preparing a submission to the Darwin Reconstruction Commission and there was never any reply. My point is that, if they are going to do anything about planning, wasting everybody's time, putting things on display, and then finally shelving them, the Assembly and other citizens should look at that particular process very carefully in order not to waste any more time.

Another subject I would like to discuss is the matter of a permanent chairman. It disturbs me that the chairman appears to be another one of our mysterious phantoms. The first requirement for this position should be that he is a Darwin-based person who spends at least 90 per cent of his time in Darwin where the proposed action is supposed to be. I don't wish to criticise the present chairman—I've not met the man—but it is only a matter of common sense to anybody that, with the enormous task that confronts the commission, its captain should be present all the time to guide and advise the employees of the organisation. Maybe if the chairman had been a Darwin resident or permanent citizen this debate might not have been necessary. We need a chairman who lives, sleeps and believes in Darwin, and we need a person who is here 24 hours a day, a person who can make decisions and offer assistance all the time, not

a person who resided in Canberra and only visits Darwin. We want our city built now and not in the distant future. We have had enough delays—there is too much at stake and we have no more patience. The Executive Member for Community Development has eloquently expressed views which most members share; I support his amendment.

Mr ROBERTSON: I address the House as a rather concerned member of the electorate of Gillen, 1000 miles away from this centre. I suppose everyone in the Territory would be most anxious to see the reconstruction of Darwin completed with the minimum possible delay. After all, the prosperity of Darwin is reflected in the prosperity or otherwise of the rest of the Northern Territory. Certainly you would find none of us in electorates remote from this place who would begrudge Darwin any amount of money it may be getting by appropriations for the reconstruction of the city.

The thing that concerns me, however, is the apparent waste of funds which has occurred. The present economic situation is such that even the present government has come to recognise that the barrel is not bottomless and there is a limit to the amount of funds available in this country of ours and the amount of funds available to the Northern Territory. I think a very strong *prima facie* case has in fact been made out by members speaking either on the original motion or on the amendment that indeed there has been a substantial waste of public funds, particularly in the matter of consultants, travelling and general excesses in administration. These are the funds that all members, both in Darwin and remote from this place, feel could be better spent. I am quite sure, Mr Speaker, that you could help Treasury any time with some good suggestions for those sort of funds to be spent in your electorate of Elsey, in the Katherine area and in the rural sector. The Executive Member for Community Development has certainly pointed out the economic and financial failures of the commission. Inherent in these failures is the consequent failure to use the funds correctly. The point has been covered very well and I am quite sure that the officers of the Darwin Reconstruction Commission and the Australian Government will take note of what has been said in this place in respect to public money.

My principal concern, however, lies in another direction. I cannot help but view with great concern what the honourable member for Port Darwin would describe as the public

service octopus. We are being encompassed by this octopus and it does not only affect Darwin; this type of thing reflects throughout the length of the Territory. I cannot help but wonder what will become of this tremendously complicated and vast machine which now comprises the Darwin Reconstruction Commission when its task, if ever, is completed. I have grave doubts that the commission's—the name may well be changed—bureaucratic machinery will be dismantled. I doubt that it will be packed up and returned to Canberra from where it came. I wonder if it is not the intention of Mr Tom Uren in particular to turn it into a massive extension of the Department of Urban and Regional Development, whether or not this bureaucracy will eventually take over and spread its wings and its suffocating effect over the entire Northern Territory. We have already seen one attempt which, but for this Assembly, probably would have had effects throughout the Territory. I refer to an attempt by the Darwin Reconstruction Commission to have its building manual applied to the rest of the Territory, without any reference at all to any member here and completely outside the powers of the Building Ordinance.

All members here must guard with great jealousy the very limited powers and functions that we do have, and watch that these are not taken over by a body like an extension of the Darwin Reconstruction Commission when its purpose in the Northern Territory is indeed over. In the light of constitutional development, the offers and proposals that have been made, and in the light of the 2 joint parliamentary inquiries into constitutional development in the Northern Territory, I fail to see a justification for a continuation of the Darwin Reconstruction Commission when it has finally served its purpose. I fail to see that type of continuation being commensurate with the objectives of both of those reports and the objectives and wishes of this Chamber. Certainly it will not help in the matter of regional autonomy if it continues. If we are going to have to get back to every little decision being made by the same people who are now running the Darwin Reconstruction Commission, what little advance has been made over the last 6 months in regional autonomy for your area, Mr Speaker, for Tennant Creek, and more particularly for Alice Springs because of its extreme remoteness from Darwin, will suffer as a result of the continuation of the commission.

I close by saying that I concur with the views expressed by the majority in this Chamber and also naturally with the view put forward by the Executive Member for Community Development that the motion of the honourable member for Port Darwin is probably not the most appropriate way of going about this; I support the amendment.

Mr STEELE: In speaking to the amendment, I make comment about the growing involvement of government in the affairs of the ordinary person, the management of people in their day to day lives, particularly in the Northern Territory. I find this management a little bit lacking and I think the honourable member for Fannie Bay was being very charitable when he said, "Call on the Australian Government to announce immediately their policies on the role of the Australian Government in re-developing the public and private sectors of the Darwin community".

I say this because I think management as far as a government is concerned is an ever increasing responsibility. I can only speak for a government that has disadvantaged me personally; I can't speak for other governments. I think their approach is delinquent, irresponsible. There is a reversal of decisions all the time and Darwin people are just not getting a fair go at all. What they did do for Darwin, of course, was divide the community with plenty of air fares for public servants and \$20 a week if you sleep under your ruins even if you paid \$40 a week rent the week before the cyclone. They did not listen to the voices from the private sector about zone allowances and reduction in taxation—the things that might have got this town back on its feet—no way in the world. Just queue up to the bureaucracy and put your little hand out. The queues are getting longer and longer every day of the week; the handouts were not so bad. I think the mentality of people got to the stage that in the queues to the Darwin Relief Trust Fund there were something like 6 people a day signing a false declaration to get funds. If that is a product of the handout society, I guess it is something we have to live with.

Darwin people are pretty tough, or the ones I have known since 1948 are, and I think they believed Sir Leslie Thiess when he said he would have 1000 homes built before Christmas. They understood that he was a man of experience, a man who had done some pretty big things in Australia, and they didn't mind waiting a while. Of course he left; he became

disappointed. Then they noticed little things that I have mentioned in this House before. It took until around the middle of April for the first caravans to arrive. That should have been an indication to somebody. If you look around today, Mr Speaker, you will notice that there are probably 5000 homes and flats restored. Restored to the code? No way in the world; who wants to follow that code?

I remind members too of the efforts of members of this House when they went to the Senate and had appeal provisions put into the Darwin Reconstruction Act. I will also remind honourable members that members of the DRC have said, "If you fellows hadn't gone down to Canberra and messed up the act, we could have got on with the job a month earlier". We know what has happened since then.

I look at the effectiveness of the Citizens' Council and I put a big zero there. Can you imagine the Darwin Citizens' Council and the Department of Northern Australia running the show up here? Can you see the electorate accountability? Can you see what would happen to this place? I can. What a lovely bunch of coconuts! One redeeming feature is that one person on the Citizens' Council is on the board of the commission, and I should imagine that someone who has the interests of the place at heart would speak in the right manner and follow the right approaches for the town. I don't really know—and I stand to be corrected—but did they ever really draw to the attention of the government some of the inadequate policies of the Darwin Reconstruction Commission? I don't really think so.

I finish my speech with a few words on the acquisition aspects. I concur with the honourable member for Port Darwin when he denounced the government for their dirty decisions about the surge line. This is the way I see it. I see no finance to rebuild for people in surge or buffer areas. I see no satisfactory valuations arrived at for people whose only crime was to live in the wrong street. I see no swop blocks available anywhere in Darwin—if there is a list, I would like to see it. I can see no government relief from the restriction of section 28A in the Darwin Town Area Leases Ordinance—none of the bureaucracy considered it might have been useful for some people to be relieved of the responsibility of having to hang on to their homes for 5 years after buying them. There is not even a hint of

consequential compensation for delays, uncertainty, the anxiety people have suffered because of the unfortunate location of their property and deprived of the opportunity to sell their properties on the open market. What a situation!

I suppose it is very easy for me to call on the government to do this; they are not going to listen to me. But I think it is a pretty serious indictment that they have done nothing—and what they have done they have reversed, matters such as postage and this type of thing. We have been very patient but it appears now that something extra special has to be done. I think possibly even a deputation should go to the Prime Minister to make him aware of the situation because I don't think that his ministers are getting through to him. If they are, they are telling him the wrong story.

Mr KENTISH: I sympathise greatly with the motion brought forward by the honourable member for Port Darwin in connection with the Darwin Reconstruction Commission. However, I support for practical reasons the amendment to that motion which has been introduced. During February of this year, we debated at some length the setting up of the Reconstruction Commission and at that stage I had serious misgivings as can be indicated by the Hansard reports at that time. I questioned very much all the drum-beating and noise and ceremony that was going on concerning the commencing of rebuilding. I voiced my opinion that all the fuss and noise that was going on seemed quite unnecessary. When Nabalco wanted a town built at Nhulunbuy they told someone to build a town for 4,000 people and a few months later there was a town built for 4,000 people. We hardly heard about it here in Darwin; it was just built. I would hazard a guess that the same people who built that town at Nhulunbuy for 4,000 people, if they had been told to build one for 8,000 or 10,000 people, would have carried out the same quiet, efficient procedure and a town would have appeared within a matter of months rather than years. I mentioned that in the February debate and I mention it again now; the noise did not indicate any efficiency or speed.

The thing that is amazing is that, with an emergency operation like this, the chief director of the whole procedure should be living interstate. It is incredible. From the very beginning there seems to have been a serious lack of business-like approach to the operation in hand. Perhaps red tape has its own

sort of business-like approach, but it is a very long drawn out one. I mean a business-like approach related to urgency in getting things moving, the sort of thing we saw Americans do here during the war to our wonderment at times. The whole situation seems to have been bogged down with dithering and red tape and we have reached the stage, 8 months after the cyclone, when practically nothing has happened, except of course a huge quantity of temporary homes, caravans have arrived. They serve a useful purpose really but the whole operation has become completely lopsided. To have temporary homes is good, but they should have been balanced by at least an equal quantity of permanent homes. The whole thing has become lopsided.

After the wind had died down and the dust had settled, the first thing was the cleaning up. The people engaged in the cleaning were not builders; they would not have had any effect on the building program and they could have been left alone with their cleaning up. They followed a special trade in getting rid of the debris. Even at that time, provision could have been made to get started with buildings. It is true that the matter of the surge area intruded into the program but there was a terrific lot of Darwin that was not in the surge area where building could have commenced almost immediately, on crown land at least. A very few private people got very quickly onto their own repairs as soon as materials were available, but even these people were held up for a shocking length of time by the fact that no one could decide exactly how they should build and to what specifications they should build. This is ridiculous because there were similar arrangements in Townsville after a cyclone had hit that place and we all had copies of the requirements in that area if a cut and dried copy was needed.

After the wind had settled and people had got back on their feet again, we still had left in Darwin sufficient competent builders and engineers who could have got going immediately on rebuilding without any help from outside. Nevertheless, consistent with accommodation being available, ample help from outside would have been available because of unemployment in southern states. The food supply was at no time a problem. While the food was being provided at the schools, I have never been so well fed in my life. Food was never a problem which means that communications were not severed at all. I am quite sure that we would have had

sufficient qualified people here to have given us the specifications within a fortnight of what was required in rebuilding for cyclone resistant purposes.

I am not a professional in these matters, neither architecturally nor as a builder, nevertheless in the Darwin area in the past number of years I have designed 8 houses and supervised the building of them and none of them blew away in the cyclone. In fact 5 were undamaged and 3 moderately or slightly damaged. There was a lot of luck in that. If a house gets a deluge of rubbish from the roof of a neighbour, nothing will save it. However, these houses proved themselves strong enough, and if an amateur like myself can do this, surely all this fuss and bother which has landed us in 8 months with nothing is quite unnecessary. I am quite certain that building could have been in progress by the end of February if we had had the right business-like people on the job with the sense of urgency behind them.

While I sympathise with the motion that has been brought forward by the honourable member for Port Darwin, I support the amendment because I believe that there would be enormous disruption at the present time if we tried to do otherwise. We might upset something that may be in motion or we hope is in motion anyway; we may be optimistic in that respect. At the present time, I would be inclined not to put all my eggs in this basket of the Darwin Reconstruction Commission. Their performance has been so poor that we would be foolish to rely on them entirely. I would have liked to have seen in the Budget a much greater reliance on the Housing Commission whose performance we know has been solid. I would have liked to have seen the Housing Commission more strongly supported and in the future I would like to see the Department of Housing and Construction in the Northern Territory given a go at this housing problem. There is some criticism that some of their houses blew down. Of course they were building to a plan and a pattern and they had to follow the plan and pattern, but if the same department were building to a better plan, a stronger plan, I think that they have the efficiency to come up with a much better performance than we have seen in the past. I would like to see these 2 other organisations brought in to this rebuilding program much more heavily.

Mr WITHNALL: Speaking to the amendment, I am anxious to say that the amendment represents the sort of watering down, the sort of "I hope I am not hurting you too much old chap but I want to hurt you a little bit", the sort of middle of the road nonsense that I hoped not to have heard in this Assembly. In effect, cutting all the verbiage aside, the amendment talks about doing what I want to do but perhaps 12 months from now if the commission does not behave itself in that time. But 12 months is too long; 12 months is at least another wet season and maybe 2. I want to see something done now, not then. I did not come into this Assembly merely to criticise the Darwin Reconstruction Commission; I want to see something done about it. The amendment says, "We think you are being very, very naughty but we'll let you go another 12 months, but my word, chaps, if you haven't done much before the end of 12 months . . .

Dr Letts: Where does it say another 12 months?

Mr WITHNALL: At the end of your amendment.

Dr Letts: It is the end of 1975; that is not 12 months.

Mr WITHNALL: I think the amendment represents the opinion of somebody who is anxious to be heard; he doesn't want to be out of the picture but he is very hesitant to condemn. I think that the honourable members are a set of a "go-alongers but watch it, son", Micawbers, trusting in the face of future failure. You don't really think that the Darwin Reconstruction Commission is going to change its skin, that it is going to be any different, either at the end of this year or in 12 months time? Do you really think that? If you really think that, then I think that you are fools because no leopard changes its spots and that leopard up there is not going to change. It will go along exactly the same as it is going along now because it doesn't know any different. I think that it is a pretty outside bet, you would want long odds. Why don't we, as an Assembly, say that this commission has failed? Why don't we grasp the nettle and say, "Get out"? Do not say, as honourable members supporting the amendment say, "We will look at it again tomorrow". If I can quote from Macbeth: "Tomorrow and tomorrow and tomorrow creeps in this petty pace from day to day and all our yesterdays have lighted fools the way to dusty death". I think

that you are being fools and, in the eyes of the people of the Northern Territory, when this commission fails utterly, you might have lighted yourselves to dusty death.

Amendment agreed to.

Motion, as amended, agreed to.

MOTION

Darwin "Drunks" Report

Miss ANDREW: I wholeheartedly support the recommendations from page 91 to 101 of this document although I do differ on certain technicalities with Dr Milner, for example, the 0.03 which he suggests on drunken driving charges.

I would like to pay special attention to the problem of women concerned with alcohol and drugs in particular. On page 13 of the report he states that, if we talk in units of 10,000 population, about half of these will be men and the other half women; he means 2,500. He continues in point (c) saying that 75% of the women will regularly use alcohol; I would like to tackle this in 2 different categories and firstly refer to Aborigines. On page 46 he says: "Aboriginal girls who have had some years of schooling and westernisation have special difficulties when faced with a tribal demand to, say, become the fourth wife of 65 year old Jim. Some girls flee to the city, become lonely, drink, need money, go into prostitution for the sake of day-to-day living, company and drinking—so they enter into a vicious circle of deteriorating circumstances". Similarly, other Aboriginal women who perhaps have not been so "fortunate" to have had the schooling or perhaps the degree of westernisation enter into drinking habits. I suggest, to block out their life style or simply to follow their men.

Turning to white women, I do not think that we can put this entirely on the Aboriginal population and I would like to suggest that we have a real problem. I think this falls into 2 categories: firstly, they perhaps drink or take drugs to relax or they perhaps drink or take drugs to assert their independence or hostility to their situation; perhaps they do it to experience the phenomena. But I am suggesting that, especially since the cyclone, we have a genuine problem of women turning to drink to escape the fact that they are locked up in a caravan or a hotel all day with 3 screaming kids, perhaps 6, and a husband who just does not seem to appear. On the other hand, we

have women who, whilst not in danger of becoming alcoholics themselves, are suffering from the effects of someone in their family who is. Darwin has always been in some respects a very male-oriented society and it takes a reasonably independent woman to assert herself and cope with the situation. Wife and husband and family shift to Darwin. Husband meets males through work. Husbands drink with male after work. Wife goes home because she does not want the children to come home from school and find nobody there. She sits at home, gets the dinner and, at 10.30 at night, she is still sitting there waiting for the husband who is still drinking with his mates from work. This becomes a spiralling circumstance because the wife becomes increasingly unpleasant to go home to as a result of her dissatisfaction and the husband continues drinking—and so it goes on. The crisis at home, when he does appear, often makes him physically violent.

Members interjecting.

Miss ANDREW: I do not seem to have much sympathy from around this House and I think probably the whole tone of this town would change if a few people faced up to it and recognised the situation. I suggest that drinking is arising because of a breakdown of social stability and a breakdown of social control. We are living in days of confusion, whether we like it or not. We no longer have some of the social pleasures we enjoyed before the cyclone, especially in the first few months after the cyclone when unfortunately habits were formed. Consequently, people are becoming more and more reliant on drugs and alcohol as both a consequence and a cause of social circumstances.

On page 72 of this report, turning to solutions, Dr Milner states: "In Australia, the response to drug use problems is tending to change from a punitive approach to a medical one. What is needed now is the greater appreciation of the sociological basis of drug use problems and the effective deployment of all community facilities. These can be backed up and supported by specialised clinics, voluntary bodies, church groups, police and customs, drug squads and so on, but in practical terms the only complete answer must be social". I stress this to honourable members. The community as a whole cannot shed its responsibility and I think the first step is to face up to the fact of what is going on in Darwin, face the fact that there are women who are too terrified to see their husbands because

they know they are going to be beaten up and there are real and genuine problems which sometimes ethnic circumstances present.

Dr Milner suggests legislation for confidentiality of personal details. He suggests that teams of community workers should be set up to offer services for crisis intervention and medical help. He suggests that police should concentrate on identification and guidance and not arrest. I think that one of the most commendable suggestions of his report is that voluntary organisations should become realistic sources of primary prevention. We could consider what the Executive Member for Finance and Law suggested yesterday; we are sick of hearing reports on this subject. The situation gets worse and worse while the reports pile up. We need some action but if, firstly, the community would recognise the situation and, secondly, the voluntary organisations would recognise their responsibility as being a source of primary prevention and a community link, it would be a start. God helps those that help themselves—let us start.

On page 131, Dr Milner refers to the importance of the family. The family circle seems to be something which is increasingly deteriorating in post-cyclone Darwin society. He says: "In treating alcoholism, attention should be given to family interactional factors in addition to individual problems". An alcoholic who has a family is not only causing himself damage, he is causing permanent damage to a large number of other people, depending on the size of his family. This should be recognised.

I again bring to honourable members' attention the situation in Darwin, the fact that women are suffering either directly or indirectly from the effect of alcoholism and there is a need for somewhere for these women to go. I suggest that the community takes a jolly long look at itself but I hope that, in the near future, we will see the establishment of a non-medical but nevertheless material embodiment of a place where women can go for some safety, where there will be some tender loving care. With a little bit more of that around Darwin, I consider there would be a little less alcoholism.

Mr KENTISH: I commend this report on Darwin drunks. They are not all in Darwin of course but the report is entitled that way. We have perhaps worse situations in other centres of the Territory but that does not detract from

the rather frightening situation we have on our hands in this city. This report contains nothing new; we know all these things that Dr Milner has unearthed and brought together. There is nothing new but, when you see it collected into a long report, it hits you. Liquor means big money to the people who brew it and sell it and even bigger money to the Federal Government in excise duty. While this is so, it is unlikely that there will be any strong move to reduce the consumption of it or interfere with the selling of it in any way. Nevertheless, many of us wish that something could be done about it.

I live in the midst of a Darwin liquor emporium at Berrimah. The "Railway Hotel" in front of my house has sprung up again; the cyclone demolished it completely, but it is back again. I know that I am criticised occasionally for falling asleep in the Assembly when there is nothing very interesting happening. The drone of voices tends to do that but it is very difficult for me to get a full night's sleep at Berrimah with the "Railway Hotel" out in front. Anyway, we are moving away in a few months, and we will be very happy to get away from this noise of screaming and fighting that goes on from evening until morning. There will be still a great concern in my mind as to where these beaten and knocked about women will go for refuge in the middle of the night. Where will they seek refuge when we have moved away? Who will look after them and who will ring the police or ambulance as required? I will move out of this scene in a month or two with this nagging thought still in my mind.

I have noted that, in the past few years, it has been classified as a disease. I suppose all other drug addictions would be classified as a disease but this would not be the full truth. It is a little more than a disease; it is a self-inflicted disease and this is left out of the description generally. This is an important factor when the cure for a self-inflicted malady has to be considered. If the disease is self-inflicted, it is also apparent that the cure will have to be self-inflicted. It is a matter of self-discipline with a considerable amount of assistance. This brings us to the major point of the report that every assistance should be given to these people to get out of this quagmire of addiction into which they have fallen.

The Aboriginal people in the electorate of Arnhem have problems. A man phoned me today from an outside settlement and he wants to see me this evening. He is distressed

about what to do or where to turn on the settlement. There is no hotel but planes are continually bringing in liquor and there is hell to pay on the place. The majority of people do not want it. These people would perhaps need even more assistance in freeing themselves from the effects of this self-inflicted disease than our white community because of peculiar influences which prevent them from helping themselves effectively. They are stuck with problems of relationships which prevent them from taking effective action in many of these matters.

I recommend the report and I hope that it will not be long before we are able to find some effective means of acting upon these recommendations.

Mr TUNGUTALUM: I support the honourable member for Education and Consumer Services' comment about women at home waiting for their husbands to come back. This is happening in my electorate at Snake Bay, Garden Point and Bathurst Island. It is not happening on Croker Island but it is happening on other places. Drinking is a major problem in our community and it is really destroying our cultural life and our tribal ceremonies. People have asked me what I can do to stop the alcohol that is coming in to missions and settlements. I replied that I can do little to stop it and it is up to people on missions and settlements to decide whether or not they will have beer on a reserve or settlement. I decided to tell them that, if they have no beer on the reserve or settlement, they will have husbands, wives and boyfriends go up to Darwin and bring a lot of alcohol on to the reserve. Some of the people decided to have a small licensed club but that still does not stop this problem of alcohol. Some of the people cannot take it; some of the people get drunk by drinking 3 cans or even 2 cans.

In his report Dr Milner states on page 45: "Aboriginal drinking is often more obvious than particularly heavy; true, it is sometimes explosive and represents a search for oblivion, a blocking out of too inadequate a lifestyle, but more often it is social group drinking. Because their drinking is often out in the open rather than in an air-conditioned bar, a few warm beers and a shared bottle of sherry can be very soporific. An outdoor life style of just settling down wherever you find yourself, to sleep, produces a picture of Aborigines lying on a nature strip by a liquor store or close to a hotel". You can see this at

Katherine and Alice Springs or other places around the Territory. All these drinkers have nobody down there to look after them. The Department of Aboriginal Affairs is doing nothing to solve this problem of alcohol and it is not encouraging the town councils of those areas. I hope that the Minister for Aboriginal Affairs will encourage his department throughout Australia to try to stop misbehaviour as a result of alcohol. I support this report.

Mr BALLANTYNE: I rise to support the motion. We have had time to look at the report by Dr Milner. I can see that he is very well qualified to write such a report; it is a very valuable document indeed. There are some things that we may not fully agree on but, basically, I think that we can agree with the report in its entirety. Dr Milner is an expert in this particular field but, like all experts, he is not able to carry out all his theories because of government law, availability of money and, more importantly, because he cannot get the full co-operation from the people. If you cannot get co-operation, and I doubt that you ever will get full co-operation from the people, you have to resort to other methods that are written in this report. Some of the methods have been tried out in other parts of the world. They have been quite successful in some cases and not so successful in others; it depends on the people themselves.

As far as I can see, problem drinkers have little concern for themselves and will not undertake treatment on a voluntary basis. It is very hard to talk to a drunken person and say, "Listen I think that you should have some treatment". He would say, "What for?" He has little regard for his family and certainly he has no concern for his fellow man. When I look at this report, I can see a ray of hope that perhaps we can solve some aspects of this very serious problem.

The recommendations on rehabilitation should be shouted from the tallest building so that everybody can really get the message. People should be told even if we have to send a book to everybody's post office box. Many people do not know what is going on until they look into those facts. The statistics will show you that it is appalling. Many people are just killing themselves and they are taking other people along with them to the grave through road accidents. Some of the rehabilitation methods are quite logical and quite

simple to set up, particularly the detoxification and medical facilities. All you need is a 12 bed unit; 2 of these beds should be of the detoxification type which have high adjustable sides and associated equipment for positive pressure respiration, cardiac monitoring, giving intravenous fluids and regular checks of level of consciousness. They should have treatment in a place specially set aside. I do not mean that they should flood to the hospital outpatient sections because they would become a menace, particularly to the nursing people.

The report states that the cost of these beds is unlikely to be more than the average cost of beds in general hospitals which, in 1974, was \$55 per day. He suggested that to cater for a population of about 40,000 people, it will only cost 12 times that per day, plus the cost of staff. Perhaps we could take some of the money out of the Medibank scheme to help these people. If we do not do it, we are just going to go on and on. As the honourable member for Finance and Law said yesterday, we have had all sorts of reports but little action. There is no action taken at all on some of these reports. They are beautifully documented, very well printed and make good reading but that is about all. The government must take up reports like Dr Milner's and spend a few dollars. If they do not, before long most people will drink themselves to death.

Mr DONDAS: There is a serious problem with regard to alcohol. There is a quotation signed by Dr Milner: "People who drink now and then usually drink more now than then". Whilst I agree with the contents of his report, I do not really think that it is a true report on Darwin drunks.

The report states on page 28 what they do in Russia with their drunks: "The Russians no longer make a secret of the fact that they have a substantial alcoholism problem and that there is considerable public drunkenness. They have established a system of municipal sobering-up stations (vytrezviteli) to which persons appearing drunk in public may be taken for detoxification, with possible follow-up action. There are 29 centres in Moscow, 28 for men and one for women. A typical vytrezvitel centre is a nice old building converted for this use; the entrance is up a few very well worn marble steps. On the left is a room with two vinyl-covered benches, where patients are first examined."

That would be very fine but very recently in the Assembly we tried to institute a Drunkenness Bill. If I remember correctly, part of that Drunkenness Bill was to provide facilities for people who were picked up in the streets so that they could be taken to a place of refuge without being fined by the police, given a bed for a few hours until 7 am next morning, given a breakfast and then set free without any criminal charge. In Russia, if they pick up a drunk, they feed him, clothe him, give him a rest and then charge him financially for the inconvenience that he has caused to other people. He is put to bed, treated symptomatically and those who are violent but do require transfer to hospital are given a subcutaneous injection of apomorphine or dimedrol and they soon fall asleep. I would imagine that they were asleep before they got there. "Immediately responsible for these and other procedures is a Fel'dsher one of whom is on duty in the centre for 24 hours a day"—maybe as a punchup man. "One centre has 25 beds, from 3 to 6 beds in each room. The system operates by the use of small radio equipped minibuses marked SpetsMed which cruise about the city. If a drunken person on the street is reported, one of these cars is despatched to pick him up. Tourists, foreigners and some internal VIPs are taken to their hotels or homes, others are transported to the vytrezvitel. First offenders are released in the morning; they must pay for transportation and services, between 3 and 10 rubles. Second offenders are charged more; the amount is determined administratively by a police official according to a schedule which seems to have a considerable margin for discretion and takes into account such factors as the severity of the offence and ability to pay. Repeaters are invited to attend group sessions and may be reported to their district dispenser (outpatient facility) which invites them to seek treatment."

Russia is a very socialistic country but they have hit on a solution which could work very well in Australia or any other part of the world. If you are a drunk and incapable, you are picked up, given medical treatment and required to pay for that service. Why should the taxpayers pay for somebody else's folly?

On page 73: "Coordinated response. An effective coordinated response to the problems of illicit drug usage should be formulated. Community advisory councils on drug use problems should be created.

Governments should issue an explicit statement of national ideals, goals and expectations in relation to alcohol and other drug use." At what cost? We have an executive of the Assembly which has taken over the second floor of Block 2 and we have not even got any money in this Budget to operate an Assembly for the Northern Territory, let alone to start worrying about spending money on centres for drug addicts and for alcoholics. It all costs money unfortunately and we as a society realise the problem but charity begins at home. The honourable member for Sanderson made a statement that husbands go home, have a few beers and then punch their wives up. He does not have to have any beers these days: he goes home and his dinner is spoilt so he will still punch his wife up.

Basically, I thought the report was to be about Darwin drunks but I find that it is an international report. It is a very good one. "What we must do is to honestly and truthfully declare our community ideals. We can then make certain assumptions and establish goals and aspirations in terms of society, politics, individual needs, economics, health education, welfare and so on". I quite believe in that. If there was a fund, like the Heart Foundation fund throughout Australia, I am quite sure that most Australians would give to it because it would be a good cause.

"Treatment and rehabilitation: the goals here, after sobering-up and detoxification, should be to attack the four factors which have previously been described as underlying the inappropriate use of alcohol and other drugs. They are: availability of the toxic agent, peer group usage, societal control and developmental retardation" Grog is available throughout the four corners of this land. You can be 175 miles inland from any particular capital city and there will be a small pub or store that sells grog. Thus, it would be very hard to control the actual availability of it. Drugs are a different story. Unfortunately, I am not familiar with the way that drugs are purchased but I imagine it would be mostly from overseas. "Peer group usage"—some people like to keep up with the Jones's. There is nothing you can do about that because it is just habit. "Societal" control—we could go to a party and the host could turn round and say, "Listen, we are a society and we are going to try to control alcoholic consumption. Tonight we are not having an alcoholic party but a dry tea party." Nobody would ever go back to his place for another party.

Once again, I would like to say that the report that Dr Milner has provided the Assembly with is a very good report. I will finish with the quotation that I started with: "People who drink now and then usually drink more now than then".

Mr TUXWORTH: I would agree wholeheartedly that Dr Milner's report is a good one. Unfortunately, it has been misnamed; it should have been called "Territory Drunks" as it covers the whole of the Northern Territory. The alarming thing to come out of it, and I am speaking for my own electorate, is that I doubt whether anybody in the Northern Territory is really sincere about wanting to solve the problem or take up the challenge as Dr Milner has suggested. The Legislative Council repealed certain legislation last year to decriminalise drunkenness and I do not think there is anybody who would dispute their action. However, their activity was supposed to be complemented by a government activity to provide detoxification centres. The government has not been sincere in what it is doing. It was experimenting with some far out legislation which they were not game to bring in in the ACT.

We have an Education and a Health Department but neither of them operates an educational program for juveniles or adults on the damage and destruction and the wanton mess that alcohol makes of people's lives. They are not fair dinkum. They all talk about how we want to fix it, but no one is doing anything about it. The very few services we give to alcoholics and drunks in the Northern Territory at the moment are provided by the churches and Alcoholics Anonymous. For the government to express its concern is just a hollow gesture. We have no outreach program. This is something that would be extremely easy to get under way but we have no such program for the drunks or the families involved with excessive drinking. We have no acceptance of responsibility by the business community, the people who make the money out of the grog. You never hear of them sending money to Alcoholics Anonymous or the churches to rehabilitate drunks or to help in the programs that these organisations operate. They do not want to know about it; there is no acceptance of responsibility there.

It will be interesting to see what sort of acceptance the law makers take towards Dr Milner's report. It is only too easy to push it into the background and legislate for the expedient things and leave the tough measures

out. The measures that are really needed will not be acted upon. We have seen penalties suggested in Dr Milner's report for drunk driving offences where a person has 0.03 per cent blood content of alcohol. It will be very interesting to see whether we get full support from this Chamber to reduce the alcoholic level to 0.03. We probably know in our minds that we are not fair dinkum either because we do not have the guts to get tough with it. We have got to a stage where we must all stop pretending. We have to stop pretending that it is the other bloke who needs help and not us because this is the attitude in the community at the moment. We will go on killing, maiming and destroying property simply because we are not ready to accept the hard cold facts and God only hopes that it will not be too long before we wake up to ourselves.

Dr LETTS: The honourable member for Resource Development has touched on an important aspect of this debate. In the last year or so, we have had two important documents come before us on the question of drinking problems and their relationship to licensing laws. We had an inquiry under the Inquiries Ordinance and now we have this report from Dr Milner. I have noted that there is a tendency in the debate to call on the Australian Government to implement certain things which seem in connection with this problem of excess drinking. Various facilities such as rehabilitation centres have been called for and undoubtedly they would require Australian Government support because we do not have any money at our disposal to be able to put that sort of program into operation. On the other hand, we have some responsibilities as a legislature here and we will be put to the test over the next year or so to see how well we can match up to those responsibilities.

In the previous Legislative Councils, there have been attempts made to do the reverse of the suggestions and recommendations that Dr Milner has provided. We have seen attempts made to widen the availability of alcohol in the Northern Territory community so that it does become more readily accessible than milk or bread. We have seen the licensing of stores carried to a point where practically any kind of store in the Northern Territory could sell alcohol. Butchers shops, furniture shops and all sorts of stores are selling alcohol. You get your bottle of plonk when you get your pound of steak and there was an attempt to extend that further so that these stores could

open all day Sunday as well but the Council did not approve that particular amendment. These things are in our hands and these are the decisions that we have to take.

There has been a concept arising in the community that hotels are outmoded, antiquated methods of providing alcohol to the public. In the past, the hotels had some kind of protection in recognition of the extra service that they provided to the public by way of accommodation and food. We have undoubtedly broken down any degree of protection that they had by making it more available in all these places. We have made it more readily available to teenage people who have not reached the age where they can be more easily checked by a responsible publican in a hotel. These are the questions which we will have to consider during the life of this Assembly. We will be held accountable to each other and the community as to whether or not we can do the part which are we are able to do legislatively. Unless we are prepared to do that, there will be little point in calling upon the Government to provide the finance to do the part they will have to do.

Motion agreed to; report noted.

ADJOURNMENT DEBATE

Dr LETTS: I move that the Assembly do now adjourn.

I want to make a couple of brief announcements. The first one concerns the Australian Constitutional Convention. The next plenary meeting of the convention will take place between now and the next meeting of the Assembly. I remind members that myself, the honourable member for Port Darwin and the honourable member for Jingili will be constituting the delegation to go to the convention which is presently planned to be held in Melbourne on 24 September. We expect the agenda to have at least 4 items which will be of direct concern to the Northern Territory and those items will be introduced by myself and the honourable member for Port Darwin.

The other matter which I wanted to touch on is the question of executive members. I indicated earlier that, if we made a change in our nomination to the Darwin Reconstruction Commission, there could be some consequential changes in executive membership to balance out the work loading. We have already moved a motion this morning that the honourable member for Community Development would take my place on the

Darwin Reconstruction Commission when my resignation became effective. I have received a telegram since then to say that the Governor-General has received my resignation and advice has been sent back about the nomination of the honourable member for Fannie Bay. I am foreshadowing to the Assembly that the responsibilities in relation to the local government portfolio formerly held by the Executive Member for Community Development will be transferred to the Executive Member for Finance and Law and that the section of the Executive Member for Education and Consumer Services' portfolio that deals with environment will be taken on by me and put alongside my primary industries role. These changes will be notified formally in writing to all members and to the various departments and statutory authorities with whom we deal.

Miss ANDREW: As I said yesterday, the Darwin Community College permanent rehabilitation appropriation does not appear in the Budget. It is a bit like little Bopeep who has lost her sheep, neither the DRC nor the Community College, nor the Department of Housing and Construction nor Treasury can find it. Originally, the Darwin Community College was in the surge line and therefore they could not rebuild. Due representation was made to the DRC and, even as late as 20 June, a subcommittee of two members of the Darwin Community College Council were assured by the Darwin Reconstruction Commission that 39 hectares were available in the Marrara complex. They wanted 50 hectares and they were very reluctant to accept the 39 because they were looking at the obvious future expansion of the college in the next 10 years. Nothing more was said other than the fact that the 39 hectares were restored and 11 further hectares were promised if certain events took place such as the removal of the airport. On the strength of this, they assumed that there would be a change in site.

Alternatively, they had put forward an idea that a further 20 acres from the Brinkin subdivision be acquired to facilitate extra buildings which would be necessary in their foreseeable five year program. Letters were written to the Minister for Education to whom the Community College is directly responsible and from him to the Department of Northern Australia. The courier system between these two departments seems to be like our postal system and needs some updating because that

particular subject was lost. Unlike other portfolios, those two were not changed so I trust the honourable ministers have some explanation for this.

All in all, this leaves us 8 months later with a homeless Darwin Community College. They have received several letters making vague statements relating to the "embarrassment of options" which is faced by the Community College. This is typical of the DRC bungling which we have heard about so often in the last few days and typical, unfortunately, of this interministerial courier service. I do not lay all the blame for the lack of appearance of this appropriation in the Budget at the feet of either of the ministers or the DRC. Darwin Community College has jealously guarded its autonomy. In the first place, it had a fear of the Darwin Construction Commission taking over and ignoring the Darwin Community College policy and its whole concept of community development. Secondly, there was a certain jealousy of their own autonomy.

This I support because the DRC has hardly inspired us with confidence. The Darwin Community College has been answerable to no-one in the Territory and it is important that our tertiary education system be answerable to the Minister and not caught up in the usual bureaucratic bungle. However, from the date that the Darwin Reconstruction Bill first appeared in the House of Representatives, we were fully aware that the DRC was to be responsible for the rebuilding of Darwin and any suggestion that there were going to be certain exclusions was totally unreal. I can only suggest that the people concerned must have known nothing of the act or had their heads buried in their wondrous academic sand. We admit that bungling has taken place and constructive criticism has been levelled at it. However the Treasury substantiated—and it should have been substantiated some months ago—only last week that any permanent rebuilding of the college must be through the Darwin Reconstruction Commission.

In the continuing saga of letters, correspondence, meetings, but nothing definite on paper regarding site or money, the Budget appeared. Yuncken and Freeman were employed late last year by the Darwin Community College to look into probable numbers, probable means and probable concept of education in the foreseeable future.

After the cyclone, they took over other matters including the permanent rehabilitation of these buildings. However, after 5 months of complete inaction, the college could no longer afford this firm and so they were directed to two specific projects—the Batchelor Linguistic Centre and the branch at Winnellie. When the \$16.9m for public works was announced on Tuesday night, where was the DCC? If we insist upon the Darwin Community College, who is going to miss out and why should they because of the inaction and lack of application by this particular organisation? \$2.3m was allocated for plant, equipment and temporary reparation but this is only to facilitate the opening of the college next year. \$4.6m was allocated for operations.

Let us get operative. This money has not appeared anywhere. Yuncken and Freeman are not going to make their proposals known until September, but this is only one of the reasons and they cannot be blamed for the lack of appearance of this money. We need co-operation and co-ordination and a very realistic approach to provide a long-overdue community education facility. We need some lobbying by the Community College, we need some definite decisions at ministerial, Cabinet and DRC level and we need some plans on paper by the consultants. Let us put the DRC in its proper role as a hub in the reconstruction wheel. There are probably 6000 students waiting to enrol at the college next year. Let us give them something, not only next year as the Budget has provided for, but let us give them and their successors something for 5, 10 and 20 years time.

Mr KENTISH: First, I would like to make some comment on the lack of activity concerning the Newcastle Waters causeway which affects all the Top End. About 5 or 6 years ago, the causeway flooded badly for several weeks. In February 1974, the causeway was out for quite a few weeks. We had another heavy flooding in the last wet season. It is now August, about 8 or 9 months after the last flooding, and the people that have the responsibility for doing something about this causeway do not know yet quite what they will do. They have not drilled the bed to know whether there is rock underneath or what they will have to do. There is no engineering knowledge yet on the subject. How long are we going to be afflicted by this crowd in Canberra—the crowd down there who are dead from the shoulders up?

I heard an item on the news today that the ship that brought the refugees from Timor is leaving empty. They would like to buy a lot of beef here. They could buy a good deal of beef which would help our Northern Territory producers. They want to buy many things but they are leaving empty because the wharflies have decided that some of the cargo may reach the UDT in Timor, a party which is opposed to the Communists whom the wharflies here support. They will not load the ship because it may not be in the best interest of communists in Timor. It is incredible that this can happen in this country. It is incredible that we have no authority with enough guts or back-bone to do something about it.

I would wonder whether there is not someone with enough authority to sack the whole lot of the wharflies for refusing duty. I do not understand that they have any legitimate right to refuse duty on political grounds. I am just wondering why they are still in permanent employment when they refuse duty on political grounds. They may occasionally get away with a multitude of strikes on the grounds of safety and various other excuses, but it is incredible that a ship is forced to leave here empty because the communists may not benefit. We begin to wonder whether we are not living in a communist country ourselves at the moment.

We have all heard about detoxification centres. I notice that that the member for Casuarina and the Majority Leader both mentioned that we would like to do something about this if we had the money but we are waiting on the Federal Government to produce some money. There is not much chance of the Federal Government producing another budget egg at this stage; it will take them a while before they lay something else. I wonder whether we have the money ourselves. The last time I heard, we had quite a magnificent surplus in the Darwin Relief Trust Fund. I would suggest that our executive get on to this organisation and find out what is happening to the tail end of the Darwin Relief Trust Fund. Most Darwin people have fared very magnificently from this trust fund and it would be a very fine gesture if the residue of that fund was directed towards doing something for our Darwin drunks in the way of detoxification centres. It could be applied also in the matter of drug addiction. In fact, there may be enough surplus to help other centres in the Territory.

Beef prices have come to our attention today and this is a thing which we have the machinery to deal with almost straight away. The other states of Australia, except perhaps South Australia, are unable to deal with this problem but, thanks to a control that most of us do not rejoice in but have had to put up with for a year or two, it would be possible for the Price Controller with the sanction for the Minister to raise the price of beef 3 cents a pound throughout the Northern Territory and ensure that it goes to the producer. Perhaps that is over-simplifying it, but surely we must be mentally flexible in these sort of situations. The alternative is that the grazier will be finished. He is getting a price for his cattle that will not pay for the processing at the meatworks. At that point, he is out of business; he does not send them to the meatworks but tries to get subsistence from the government. We have the price control machinery which should be able to offset this difficulty.

Mr VALE: I would like to speak this afternoon on the plight of cattlemen both in the central and North Australia and the urgency of the need to keep open the Northern Territory's only meatworks at Katherine. This meatworks is the only logical market for cattlemen in Northern Australia and they must be encouraged to continue supplying cattle to the meatworks. This morning the Majority Leader indicated the price to cattlemen in Katherine had dropped by 2c per pound. This reduction and resultant loss of income could be overcome if the 1.6c per pound export levy was removed. Cattlemen are not after charitable handouts and, indeed, it should be noted that in 1973-74 the beef industry earned for Australia \$636m in export earnings. The provision of \$600,000 carry-on finance provided in Tuesday night's budget is totally inadequate. In fact, at \$15,000 per applicant, this would be totally exhausted after 40 grants. I represent an electorate with 63 stations so that \$600,000 would service two-thirds of my electorate and leave the rest of the Territory unanswered for.

What the cattle industry requires urgently if the industry is to survive is: temporary removal of the 1.6c per pound export levy, an increase in the amount of carry-on finance, a moratorium on all interest commitments related to pastoral properties and associated industries within the Northern Territory, provision of cash benefits equal to unemployment benefits for all those relying on beef industry for the duration of the present crisis

and a freight stabilisation scheme to enable producers in the remote areas of central and northern Australia to market their cattle and thus overcome the geographic disadvantage and the higher production, processing and marketing costs.

While I support the IAC inquiry into the beef industry, the 90 days requested is a delaying tactic by the Federal Government. It will be at least 6 months before any benefits may flow from this inquiry. Those suggestions I have made this afternoon will not cost the Federal Government a huge payout from the federal coffers, but it will assist in preventing the total collapse and ruin of a valuable cattle industry in the Northern Territory.

Mr PERRON: I wish to speak briefly on the subject of a report that was in the news at lunch time today. It relates to the fact that the waterside workers in Darwin have refused to load cargo aboard a ship which was bound for Timor. The news report stated that the watersiders would not allow the goods to go to Timor because they might fall into the hands of the wrong political party. That is presumably the party which the Waterside Workers Federation does not agree with. This situation is deplorable. Surely it is the responsibility of the Australian Government to decide which countries this nation is going to trade with.

Mr Robertson: We have to decide who is running the country first.

Mr PERRON: Exactly.

It is not the first time that we have seen these people on the waterfront take the law into their own hands by preventing international trade through Darwin. About 12 months ago, this town witnessed a monstrous travesty of justice in a similar situation when a shipping company was physically prevented from loading a barge which was their legal right to do. Unfortunately, the battle to use dumb barges was lost to the communist leaders of the Australian Seamen's Union because the police refused to clear Fort Hill Wharf of law breaking picketers. That matter rests. It is not resolved; it just rests. So long as there remain somewhere enterprising businessmen who feel that this so called free country will allow them to operate within the law, there is a chance of the subject being revived. We may yet see the full potential of the Territory's coastal resources utilised economically if only we can free Darwin of the illegal, restrictive activity on the waterfront. I

suggest that this Assembly consider a review of legislation pertaining to the conduct of people in the wharf area with a view to giving it some teeth.

Mr TUXWORTH: The reply to the question I received yesterday is that none of the 49 applications for exploration licences made this year have so far been granted. There are also a number of applications made prior to this year which are still outstanding. There are two major reasons why this is so. Firstly, a number of applications for licences on Aboriginal reserves have been held in abeyance following the Woodward Commission's recommendation that no new licences should be granted before 1977. Secondly, it is the government's policy that all new exploration for uranium in the Territory, other than on existing licences, should be carried out by the government. The government is examining methods whereby the right to explore for uranium can be excluded from the rights normally accruing under an exploration licence and such rights retained by the government. It is not the government's policy to refuse further exploration licences altogether.

Mr WITHNALL: I rise this afternoon to complain about dictatorship in the mining industry. The curious policies pursued by the Minister for Minerals and Energy seem to have resulted in a total slowdown or even, in some cases, a total stop to all exploration in the Northern Territory. I have just listened with some interest to the answer that the honourable member has given me to the question that I asked him and it is quite clear that, because of some problems about uranium, people are not entitled to get their exploration licences granted even though they are not concerned with uranium, but only want to do their exploration with respect to such humble things as lead, zinc, copper or tin. Because there is a bug in the head of a fellow called Connor that he has to have all of the uranium prospecting right in his own two little hands nobody can mine for any zinc until he makes up his mind just exactly how he is going to get this little bug in his mind to work. Forty-nine applications are now pending, some of them since last September and October, and nothing has been done about them.

This might not be quite so serious if only the person who applied for the exploration licence was held up. However, under the Mining Ordinance, once a person applies for an

exploration licence nobody at all can do anything in that area. Many small prospectors have complained very bitterly to me that if they go on to a piece of land which is subject to an application for an exploration licence which has been held up for so long and they find something, it is either not going to be given to them because the exploration licence will require that it be given to the person who applied for it if the licence is granted or it is going to be taken over by the Crown.

We have large areas of the Northern Territory tied up with applications for exploration licences. In one case, somebody has had \$300,000 ready and waiting since last November to explore a small piece of country. He is not allowed to spend it because somebody says, "We are thinking about uranium and, because we are thinking about uranium, we are going to put a complete blanket on all exploration licences in the future". None has been granted for a long time. As far as Aboriginal reserves are concerned, I know of one exploration licence that was applied for in 1971 and that application still has not been dealt with. I do not know what it is about but I think the actual result is that a fellow called Connor has taken over the Northern Territory and, as far as mining is concerned, it is a complete dictatorship.

What will be the result? I will tell you. The mining companies who want these areas are now saying, "For God's sake, if we cannot get it, we cannot get it; we are not going to keep our \$300,000 in the Northern Territory; we have to go somewhere else where this does not happen. You have only to tell us that you do not want us here and we will go somewhere else but you cannot keep us on this silly hook for 12 months or more." I call upon the government to cease this policy. I call upon the honourable Minister for Minerals and Energy to make up his mind. Surely to God, he has had time enough in the last 3 years to make up his mind. If he wants to control all mining for atomic energy in the Northern Territory, let him do it but let him say so and let him have someone else go and look for other minerals.

The answer to the question I asked this morning is that somebody is trying to work out a way in which people can mine for other minerals and still leave the mining for uranium a matter for the Crown. That is the simplest thing in the world. You can give an exploration licence which excludes any right

to peg leases for mining of uranium or any energy resources. It can be done in three or four ways. Under the Atomic Energy Act, you can simply say that no leases for uranium will be granted in the Northern Territory. That was done years ago in respect to the Hundred of Goyder and nobody could get a lease for mining uranium in that area. The answer given to me is a piece of nonsense because there is a way available and there always has been a way available for the Minister to say, "Anybody else can explore for minerals in this area but we want the rights to explore for uranium."

Mr Robertson: Do you think that is desirable?

Mr WITHNALL: I do not say that it is desirable but I think that the action that has been taken by the Minister that nobody is going to get any licence to mine for anything or explore for anything is a piece of dictatorship.

Mr KILGARRIFF: In the adjournment debate last night, we heard the honourable member for Jingili voicing his concern about the defence of Australia. He mentioned the political unrest and turmoil in Timor and the possibility, in not so many years to come, of Australia having confrontation once again on our northern shores. I think that many would agree with what he said yesterday. I am particularly concerned at the absolute couldn't-care-less attitude of the Australian Government to Timor. When I say the Australian Government, I mean more than the Labor Government; I also include the previous government who some years ago withdrew the consul stationed in Baucau and left no liaison with those people at all.

Having been in Timor not so long ago, I was rather appalled by the careless attitude of Australia to Timor. Let us go back to the last war, when the Australian troops were left in Timor for a considerable time. They existed through the assistance of the Timorese. These Timorese people assisted the Australians under fear of death because, if the Japanese caught a Timorese assisting the Australians in any way, they were executed and many were. What did Australia do to create good relations from then onwards? Nothing! It is a very poor country—I think their budget is something like 1 or 2 million dollars a year—yet we have done nothing to foster good relations with them. Indeed, we could have done something when one considers what they did for

the Australians during the war. Later, the consul, the person representing the Australian Government, was removed and since then there has been absolutely no contact whatsoever. The Timor people have a kindly feeling for Australia and Australians regardless of the fact that we have done nothing for them.

New Guinea is a territory and we have responsibilities there and many millions of dollars have been spent in New Guinea. In this budget, there is \$240 million being spent there to help to foster good relations with a country that is going to be independent. Timor is a different situation admittedly. Timor is a neighbouring country which is living under very poor circumstances yet we do not see fit to give any assistance. The honourable member for Jingili shows some concern for what will happen in the future. I think he has every reason to show concern because we have let the Timorese down very badly.

Last year, I tried to get Timorese people into the Darwin Community College. What happened? The Darwin Community College was prepared to accept them but the Australian Government would not see fit to even allow one or two to come into Australia. I think the whole matter is most unfortunate. Now we have this political unrest in Timor. If things do go the wrong way, Timor could be a base, as it was once before, to attack Australia. The Australian Government must review the situation and at least make some contact with them and put a consul back in Timor. Last week, they had to charter an aircraft to send a couple of people over there to see what happened to the Australian people there.

Some weeks ago, the member for Transport and Secondary Industry, myself and other MLAs in Alice Springs met with the Alice Springs council to discuss the Comrail Report, the proposed location of terminal facilities in Alice Springs now that we are getting a standard line. This report has been discussed at length with the Keep Alice Springs Beautiful Association and the city council. Following these discussions, a submission is going to be made to the Department of Conservation and Environment at a hearing on 15 September. It is proposed that a consultant with expertise in this matter will be used by the council and a brief will be given to a person to go before the hearing to make a report on the feelings of the Alice Springs people.

The whole matter is that Comrail wish to put in a modified railway complex in the heart of Alice Springs. It means they will demolish everything that is there now and put in a modified scheme. As well as that, they have looked at other areas. They have looked at Bond Springs, MacDonnell siding and so on yet the amazing thing is that, without real reference to the people or to any other department, the Railways are pushing the modified scheme. This means that the future railway complex is going to remain in the heart of Alice Springs despite the fact that the report has indicated that the MacDonnell siding, some four miles south of Alice Springs, would be equally suitable except that there would be some additional cost.

The people in Alice Springs have not been given a fair go in this matter. First of all, the Cities Commission brought in a town planning report in regard to the future of Alice Springs. Then, it was indicated that the Australian Railways were going to bring their own impact study report. This has been completed in the last few weeks. Copies were made available to the Department of Northern Australia, the Alice Springs City Council and two went into the library at Alice Springs. There have been no other reports made available. If you want a report, you go to the Railways and pay \$25 for this report. This \$25 is part of the cost recovery business. If people in Alice Springs want to see what is going to happen within their own town, they have to pay \$25. This is very poor. The Alice Springs people have been given very little time to prepare this brief for the hearing. I would expect that the inquiry will heed the request that time be given to the people so that they can prepare a proper brief.

The member for Nhulunbuy asked why members of the Commonwealth Police Force wear firearms at the airport when other members of the force have been restricted from carrying firearms. The answer from Commissioner McLaren is, "At present, officially, they are still members of the Commonwealth Police Force. The law concerning amalgamation of the forces has not yet been passed officially. They are still members of the Commonwealth Police Force although, by administrative arrangement and other arrangements for operational purposes, they are under the control of the Northern Territory Commissioner of Police. The Northern Territory Police Force has been requested not to wear firearms on display. They may choose to

wear firearms if they so desire. They wear firearms exposed when on escort work and on night shift". That is the answer that I have received from the Commissioner of Police. I find it rather confusing myself as I understand that the police are not allowed to carry firearms at all. As far as I am concerned, the answer is unsatisfactory and is being referred back to the commissioner.

Mr TAMBLING: I would like to raise one specific electoral problem that I see coming up in the next few weeks in this city. The one advantage that I thought Tracy had brought me as the member for Fannie Bay was the fulfilment of one of my electoral promises—to get rid of Fannie Bay Gaol. Unfortunately, it looks like the red tape machines of the Department of Northern Australia have decided that Fannie Bay Gaol, because of expediency, is going to remain for some time. Again, inter-departmental reports and specialist consultants reports have been called for. One officer of the department will tell you that they are in the system and another very senior one will tell you that they are definitely not available. You strike the immediate problem that you have to accommodate the existing prisoners and those people that are on remand. At the moment, the figures are in the order of 70 or 80 people. Where do you put them? They don't seem to be able to find suitable locations close to Darwin with the facilities required.

What do they look at? They look back to Fannie Bay Gaol. It is easy to look at the facilities that are there. They have some ghastly Sidney Williams huts that were previously hidden behind fences up the back. My comment on the inspection was that they would make an ideal zoo. The conditions were appalling. If they are going to rehabilitate them, they will be even more disgusting. The old sections, the infirmary and the old building that the National Trust wants preserved, have suffered a great deal of damage. However, to accommodate the urgent need it is now envisaged that the government will spend some \$200,000 to build a fence around the compound. Perhaps they might "contain it" in some way was the suggestion that was put to me.

As the member for that electorate, I was invited to go on an inspection. I was invited to concur with the actions proposed. I am afraid that I don't agree. I don't believe an expenditure of that proportion has been properly researched or alternatives properly studied.

Sure, we have 70 or 80 prisoners that always have to be looked after but the majority of prisoners are on remand. As a result, we have to have two fences and two sections, one within the other, so that the remand prisoners and the convicted prisoners are not thrust one on the other.

The facilities at Fannie Bay should have been scrapped ten years ago. The budget makes absolutely no provision for a gaol in the civil works program even if it was to start in early June next year. Like the Darwin Community College, it is one of these forgotten projects because it is easy to shelve. It is a facility that is required by this community and temporary repairs to a totally inadequate facility won't in any way serve our purpose. If it is necessary to proceed with some form of rehabilitation at Fannie Bay, then I am going to insist that the Minister before committing works projects—obviously he can find that \$200,000 from his minor works projects—make public his commitment to a more suitable structure that will meet the long term requirements of prisons in the Northern Territory. I would also like him to make public any expenditure on the Fannie Bay Gaol. The indication at the moment is that it will cost up to \$200,000 just to put up a fence.

On this tour of inspection, we talked about the actual fence and what style it would be. Galvanised iron? Again? All of the jokes and songs and traditions that have been written about Fannie Bay Gaol previously will be perpetuated. Fannie Bay is the oldest and most closely knit community within Darwin. It has always repelled and rejected the gaol in its prime position as real estate. The area was accepted by the DRC planners as being suitable for open space and recreation units. I do not consider its continuance, even temporarily, as a gaol area as being compatible with the new town plan.

Mr TUNGUTALUM: I would like to report on an incident at Knuckeyes Lagoon which happened 3 weeks ago. I had a report from a person who is involved in helping these people:

The following is what happened at Knuckeyes Lagoon Aboriginal transit camp on the night of Friday 18th July at about 11 p.m. On the morning of Friday 18th July when I was with the people of Knuckeyes Lagoon working on the rebuilding of temporary buildings, there was preparation for the majority of the people there to go to

three tribal areas out of Darwin for Tribal Ceremonies. Between the 14th and 18th, the men at the camp had worked fairly well, knowing they would be away for the weekend.

The people at Knuckeys Lagoon had tidied up their camping area and had placed all of their possessions in their tents and huts, in preparation for their weekend trip.

At 1 pm on Friday 18th most of the people were preparing to leave. Those who had worked that week in the camp went to the local shops to purchase supplies for their trip.

When I had visited the camping area at 6.30 pm that day, there was only about six people left out of sixty that were there that morning. Before leaving their area, everything seemed to be in order.

On Saturday 19th July, I had taken a trip to the Tree Point Aboriginal camping area to clear part of the track in preparation for a truck that was to deliver building materials for that group, the following Saturday.

On Sunday morning, I attended a Darwin Hospital Board meeting. At this time, Major Bangun visited my home to advise me of what had happened at Knuckeys Lagoon while he was away.

On returning home at midday and finding out what had happened, I went straight out to offer any assistance possible. I was shocked at the destruction that had been done to these people and their possessions.

Of the six people in the camp on Friday night, only one man had been able to say what happened. His name is Donald Dargie. He is one of the men on the rebuilding program, and his story is as follows: "On Friday night a car stopped in the camp and I went over to ask the people in it what it was they were there for. The reply was they were after young women. I told them to leave because there was none in camp that night.

The car left the camp and a little later came back. I was awakened by some noise over the other side of the camp and saw a tent burning. The flames were very high. Then I saw a car leave as a match was thrown on a second tent. This tent went up in a bang. Outside this tent was sleeping the

old age pensioner Mr Mickey Knowles and his wife.

I ran across the camping area to bring back old Mickey Knowles as he cannot walk very much. On the way back, I saw a fire in Major's hut.

When I settled the old man, I saw two white men dragging Peter Maylin on the ground, and then hit him. I ran and fought the two men off. While I was fighting, I saw a fat white man approach, and I took off so as not to be beaten by all three men, as three of my people by then had been knocked out".

The attack on Mrs Dolly Knowles left her with a broken jaw. This woman is a frail old woman who cares about her husband who depends on her at this time of his life. Mickey Knowles is really dependent on his wife.

Another old pensioner, Mr John Palmer was chased around some plants and then punched three times in the face. He told the police he was knocked out until the sun shone the next morning.

Peter Maylin also suffered a heavy blow and he also said the blow knocked him out. He recovered next morning with a very swollen face.

At least twenty people lost all their possessions in the three fires that were lit by the three intruders.

The description of the vehicle and also of one of the men and a name was given to the police. At this stage, I do not know if much has been done by them for the Offence committed. When the people of Knuckeys Lagoon returned they were very bitter and there was a lot of talk that they would not let this happen again.

Between that night and Thursday last there were about four cars that came to their camp at night and then drove off. On the evening of Thursday 24 July, they were disturbed by the car that was there on the night of Friday 18th. When this car raced through their camp area, there was fear that someone might be killed, at the way it was being driven recklessly.

If these sort of people do these kind of things, they should be punished heavily. You can't do these kind of things on somebody else's property. I say this because these people are in my electorate and I will do what I can to help them.

Motion agreed to; the Assembly adjourned.

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