

NORTHERN TERRITORY OF AUSTRALIA

**LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY**

Second Assembly  
Second Session

**Parliamentary Record**

Wednesday 22 August 1979  
Thursday 23 August 1979

Part I—Debates  
Part II—Questions  
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PART I

DEBATES

Mr Speaker MacFarlane took the Chair at 10 a.m.

#### LEAVE OF ABSENCE

Mr EVERINGHAM (Chief Minister): Mr Speaker, I indicate to honourable members that the absence of the honourable Minister for Industrial Development from the Assembly today is caused through serious illness. I have a medical certificate in my possession which is available to you, Sir, should you wish to peruse it. Any questions relating to the minister's portfolio may be directed to me. I will do my best to answer those that I can and place on notice those that I cannot. An application for leave will be made by the Whip later during today's sittings.

#### DISTINGUISHED VISITOR

Mr SPEAKER: Honourable members, I draw your attention to the presence in the gallery of Mr M.T. Williams MP, a member of the Victorian Legislative Assembly. On behalf of honourable members, I extend a warm welcome to this distinguished visitor.

Members: Hear, hear!

#### SUSPENSION OF STANDING ORDERS

Mr EVERINGHAM (Chief Minister): Mr Speaker, I move that so much of Standing Orders be suspended as would prevent 8 bills relating to the establishment of the staffing of the Electricity Commission outside of the Northern Territory Public Service being presented and read a first time together and one motion being put in regard to, respectively, the second readings, the committee report stages and the third readings of the bills together and the consideration of the bills separately in the committee of the whole and passing through all stages at this sittings.

Motion agreed to.

#### ELECTRICITY COMMISSION BILL

(Serial 318)

#### PUBLIC SERVICE BILL

(Serial 319)

#### ELECTRICAL WORKERS AND CONTRACTORS BILL

(Serial 320)

#### TRAFFIC BILL

(Serial 321)

#### FIREARMS BILL

(Serial 322)

#### SOCIAL WELFARE BILL

(Serial 323)

#### CRIMINAL LAW AND PROCEDURE BILL

(Serial 325)

#### WORKMEN'S COMPENSATION BILL

(Serial 326)

Bills presented and read a first time.

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

Tomorrow, I will be seeking the suspension of Standing Orders to enable these bills to pass through all stages at this sittings. Honourable members will recall that the establishment of the Electricity Commission implemented the major recommendations of the McKay Report on the generation and distribution of electricity in the Territory. Most of the recommendations of that report were followed with the exception of the third recommendation which was that "the employees of the Electricity Commission be employed directly by the commission and be separate from the public service". This recommendation was given full support by both sides of the House. However, as was explained when the bill to establish the commission was introduced, the establishment of a commission separately from the public service was not possible at that time because of the arrangements made for the transfer of public servants from the Commonwealth to the Northern Territory Public Service. The government has kept this recommendation in mind and has been examining the appropriate measures to implement it and to ensure the continuance of the existing rights of employees who would transfer from the Northern Territory Public Service to the independently staffed Electricity Commission. There has been some industrial unrest from employees of the commission who were concerned that action to implement that recommendation had not been undertaken. I gave an assurance to those employees that I would ensure the introduction of bills to give effect to the recommendation and would ask the Assembly to treat the bills as matters of urgency so that they may be brought into operation and an independent commission established as soon as possible. These bills give effect to that undertaking.

The Electricity Commission Bill is a simple statement of the proposed new powers of the commission. A definition of "employee" is inserted for convenience of reference. Clause 5 removes the provision that the commission is a prescribed authority for the purpose of the Public Service Act. This is necessary as employees will no longer be Northern Territory public servants for the purposes of the act. Clause 6 provides the commission with full employment powers and the power of determination of terms and conditions of employment of such employees.

The Public Service Bill is a most important bill. Initially, the employees of the commission will be the present employees of the Northern Territory Public Service. It is essential that none of those employees is disadvantaged by transferring to an independent electricity commission. The purpose of the Public Service Bill is twofold: it provides a mechanism for the transference of Northern Territory public servants to an independent electricity commission and it protects the interests of such transferred public servants by ensuring that they retain all the rights they possessed as Northern Territory public servants. I wonder if you could read in place of the word "independent" the words "an authority staffed outside the Northern Territory Public Service". I should make it clear that the commission is subject to ministerial direction.

Clause 4 of the bill inserts a new part in the act to transfer certain employees to the Northern Territory Electricity Commission. Proposed new section 44B provides a means of transferring public servants to the commission. Clause 44C ensures that a transferred employee who was originally transferred from the Commonwealth will continue to retain all the rights he enjoyed as a transferred Commonwealth public servant. Clause 44D ensures that a transferred employee retains the right to apply for positions in the public service. Clause 44E ensures that an employee is transferred on the same tenure as he

possessed in the public service. Clause 44F provides that a transferred employee shall be paid a salary or wages at a level not less than that payable to him in his permanent public service position and that he is entitled to any increments accruing to him from the position he held in the public service. Clause 44G provides for employees who are serving with another authority on the date of transfer. Clause 44H provides for retention of recreation, sick and long service leave accrued in the public service. Clause 44J enables the continuation of action in respect of a provisional promotion effected before the transfer date. Clause 44K permits authorised deductions to continue after the transfer date.

I am assured that these provisions will fully protect the transferred employee from any loss of conditions as a result of transfer. Those employees who were originally transferred from the Commonwealth will retain the right of application and appeal in respect of positions in both the Commonwealth and the Northern Territory Public Services. Later employees retain that right in respect of the Northern Territory Public Service.

I have also taken action, in cooperation with Commonwealth authorities, to arrange for the necessary amendments to regulations under Commonwealth acts to ensure that transferred employees retain their superannuation rights and that those who originally transferred from the Commonwealth retain their transfer rights in respect of the Commonwealth Public Service.

The remaining 6 bills are consequential upon the transfer of public servants to the commission. Employees of the commission will have a continuing need to carry out the duties they earlier performed as public servants. The relevant acts have been amended in general to provide similar rights, duties and responsibilities to employees of the Electricity Commission as those which presently exist in respect of Northern Territory public servants.

The Traffic Bill is differently expressed but its effect is the same. It defines "government vehicle" in a manner which would include vehicles of the Electricity Commission.

The bills will enable the implementation of the McKay recommendation that the Electricity Commission be independent of the public service. This recommendation has been supported by all parties. It is unfortunate that there is only limited time for debate of this important proposal. I had arranged for copies of the Public Service Bill to be distributed to all honourable members a couple of weeks ago so that they would have an opportunity to consider it. I might mention that there is one variation in this bill as presented to that which I circulated: section 44D has been deleted and the clauses have consequently been renumbered.

Because of the need to preserve industrial harmony in this important industry and as the proposition has already received support in principle from all members of the Assembly, I am seeking the passage of the bills at this sittings so that the creation of the commission as an authority which can establish its staffing outside the public service may be effected speedily. I commend the bills to honourable members.

Debate adjourned.

#### BROADCASTING OF BUDGET SPEECH

Mr ROBERTSON (Manager of Government Business): Mr Speaker, I move that this Assembly, for the purposes of section 24 of the Legislative Assembly (Powers and Privileges) Act, authorise the broadcasting of the budget speech of

the Treasurer on Thursday 23 August 1979.

Mr ISAACS (Opposition Leader): Mr Speaker, I indicate that the opposition supports this motion. This does raise the wider question of the general broadcasting of parliamentary procedures - a proposition which I personally support. It is the sort of proposition I think which depends on 2 things: that other members of the Assembly support it and we can find somebody who is prepared to broadcast the proceedings. Nonetheless, I would like to indicate support for this particular proposal.

Motion agreed to.

LOCAL COURTS BILL  
(Serial 298)

ABSCONDING DEBTORS BILL  
(Serial 299)

Continued from 17 May 1979

Mr ISAACS (Opposition Leader): Mr Speaker, the opposition supports the passage of the bills. The Absconding Debtors Bill is simply an amendment to the Absconding Debtors Act consequent upon the Local Courts Bill and the raising of the level of the jurisdiction from \$2,000 to \$10,000. The first proposition in the Local Courts Bill is to do just that and the opposition supports that proposal. It might be thought that, by raising the level of jurisdiction from \$2,000 to \$10,000, the matters of law which will be raised will be somewhat more complex. However, I am convinced that the complexity of the legal tangle does not depend upon the amount of money that is in question. I can envisage quite complex matters of law being determined by magistrates when only a small amount of money is involved. The only matter that does concern me by raising the level of jurisdiction is that the magistrates will be confronted with far more work than they have at the moment. However, a check at the courts will show that the magistrates' lists are only about a month in arrears. That certainly shows that, although they may be very well occupied, the magistrates are certainly coping with the volume of work. Thus, I am not concerned that the magistrates will be given a workload which they are incapable of dealing with nor that the raising of the level of jurisdiction will create any more complex legal problems than they face at the moment. It will mean that there will be a lessening of the volume of work for judges and I am not suggesting that therefore we ought to start heaping more work on judges.

The second matter which is raised in the legislation is that it gives the local courts the power to dispose of or to make some arrangements for property which is the subject of dispute. I would have thought that the courts had that power in any event. Nonetheless, this makes it perfectly clear that they do have that power and that is welcomed by the opposition. So far as the power to be given to the local courts to take notice of equities appearing incidentally to the case is concerned, that is a commonsense proposal which I would have thought the court already had power to deal with. If this clarifies it, then that is all to the good.

The final item in the Local Courts Bill relates to the matter of the lodgment of appeal from a judgment of the local court. I would ask the Attorney-General to give consideration to 2 matters which arise from this particular proposal. First, I would like clarification that the word "judgment" is clearly defined in the legislation. I have not had a chance to go through the relevant legislation but there could be some doubt as to just what the date of

judgment is? Is it in fact the date on which the magistrate says, "I determine that such and such should happen and I will publish my reasons later"? The reasons may be published a week or a fortnight later. If the date of the judgment is taken as the date from which the 28 days start, the appellant to be is at a disadvantage if he is not appealing the judgment but rather wants to know the reasons for the judgment.

The second matter relates to an appellant having to give notice of appeal within 28 days. I hope that the legislation is clear that that does not mean simply notice of appeal to one of the other parties or the other party but is in fact the motion of appeal which is before the court. In other words, the court is not aware of what an appellant might be doing until an appeal is lodged with the court. With those remarks, the opposition welcomes the bills.

Mr HARRIS (Port Darwin): In rising in support of these bills, I would first of all like to say that we are indeed fortunate in the Northern Territory to be the envy of just about every jurisdiction in Australia for the speed in which our courts hear matters and also the speed in which a litigant is able to come before the court. The reason for this is that we are well staffed; we have 4 Supreme Court judges to service a population of some 127,000 people. Admittedly, we do have a very high crime rate in the Northern Territory but we still have the shortest waiting list in Australia as far as courts are concerned. I guess that, in the years to come, we may have to look to providing another court into our system but, as the Chief Minister has already explained in his second-reading speech, this is not to be at this present time. It is only right therefore that we make use of the system that we currently have: the lower court and the Supreme Court. This is achieved by making orders such as those restraining people from leaving, orders relating to the transfer of property, matters of liberty to be dealt with by the Supreme Court itself and the day-to-day matters to be dealt with by the magistrates. The raising of the upper monetary limit as outlined in these 2 bills will benefit litigants. Any debt now under \$10,000 will be able to be prosecuted in the lower court rather than in the Supreme Court itself. This will mean a great saving both in time and money.

The inclusion of the proposed new sections under clause 6 of the Local Courts Bill allow for a debt to be frozen. Clause 6 also allows for properties or perishable goods to be sold or disposed of quickly where it is desirable to do so. Provision is also made for the determining of the quality of the vegetables or fruit by means of experimentation or inspection. One of the big problems that we have in the Northern Territory is the fact that we still have far too many people leaving the Territory owing money. It is bad enough when the money owing is to someone who is reasonably well off but, when a person leaves owing money for wages, time and cost are of the essence.

It is obvious that one of the reasons for introducing this legislation was cost and time. The bills will provide a means of speeding up prosecution and a means of reducing costs to the litigants. I believe that the amendments will provide us with a far better system than we have today. I support the bills.

Mr BALLANTYNE (Nhulunbuy): Mr Speaker, I rise to support the cognate bills. The amendments have resulted from the Law Review Committee bringing these matters quickly to the attention of the Chief Minister. He has acted very promptly in bringing them to this Assembly for amendment. The limit of \$2,000 now has been raised to \$10,000 and gives much more scope to the local courts. I believe that they can handle this. It will give them more scope in the type of work they are dealing with. As the Leader of the Opposition said, I do not think the monetary value really means much when it comes to a particular case

because some items may be big and others could cost very little money. The raising of that monetary value will give more substantial power to the local courts. Clause 5 of the Local Courts Bill raises the \$100 limit in section 28 to \$500. I believe that this change is to be commended because we have not had a change to this particular act since 1975.

Another main amendment to the principal act will allow the local courts in places like Nhulunbuy, Katherine and Tennant Creek to be able to hear these cases. It was a costly exercise to bring people to Darwin or Alice Springs to hear these cases in the Supreme Court. This is another amendment sought by the Law Review Committee. Although the Absconding Debtors Bill only went through last year, they have seen the necessity to have these amendments to the principal act. I do not think that, in any state, you could find more swift action taken by an Attorney-General to bring about these changes to assist the court system. We have a fairly flexible system even though we only have a two-court system. I do not think it will overwork the magistrates in the local court; I think it will give them more scope in their job and I am sure they are very capable people who can handle that work.

Clause 6 amends section 32 of the principal act. This provides an avenue for perishable goods to be sold. One only has to think of a case involving stolen prawns to realise the importance of this. What would happen if they were kept without any refrigeration? The Law Review Committee has to be commended for this. I also commend the Chief Minister for his prompt action in bringing this to our attention. I only hope that the amendments are assented to quickly so that the court system can handle these cases. I support the bills.

Mr EVERINGHAM (Chief Minister): I thank honourable members for their support for these bills which certainly will effect a great relief in the administration of justice, particularly in those parts of the Northern Territory outside of Darwin. The Leader of the Opposition raised a few interesting points. He was concerned about an additional workload being imposed on magistrates. This was considered before the bills were introduced and indeed there was some debate about the level at which the figure should be set. The figures ranged between \$5,000 and \$15,000. Of course, the amount of the jurisdiction really determines the amount of the likely work. After consultation with the Chief Magistrate, it was decided that \$10,000 would be appropriate. Indeed, I believe that there was considerable enthusiasm for it. I remember hosting a dinner for the members of the Remuneration Tribunal some time ago at which members of the magisterial bench were invited to be present because their remuneration is established by that tribunal. I seem to recall overhearing a conversation that probably was not meant for me but, as the night grew later, the voices grew louder and various people were talking about increased jurisdictions and increased salaries. I dare say that there is something working in the backs of people's minds and, consequently, judges of the Supreme Court who will have lessened responsibilities will probably submit to the tribunal at the next hearing that their salaries should be lowered. Be that as it may, the magistrates are very keen to take on this work. It is unlikely that the Northern Territory could, in the foreseeable future, afford or even warrant the establishment of an intermediate court such as the district or county courts which are now operating in all states bar Tasmania.

The Leader of the Opposition asked for clarification of a couple of technical points. He asked whether the term "judgment" is to be taken as being the day on which judgment is delivered or the day on which reasons for judgment are given. This is an important point because I recall, when I was an articulated law clerk in Queensland, a district court judge who delivered his judgment but did not give his reasons until 9 months later. That rather slowed down the appeal process. I am assured by my advisers that the effective date will be

the day on which judgment is delivered.

The Leader of the Opposition then referred to another point about giving notice to the court. Clause 7 of the Local Courts Bill provides that the appellant must serve on, or post to, the Clerk of the Court and the opposite party or his solicitor in the action or proceeding a notice in writing of his intention to appeal. Therefore, the notice must obviously be brought to the attention of the court in that way otherwise there will be a grave technical defect although I am reasonably sure that could be cured by an order of the Supreme Court.

In the past, appeals from the local court have sometimes been instituted with a view to delaying execution of judgment as it is difficult to legislate precisely to cure the problem effectively and the jurisdiction in this area is best left with the courts because almost every case needs to be decided on its merits. Assuming that the reasons for judgment have been given and a notice of appeal has been entered, I would think that, if steps were not taken to prosecute the appeal within a reasonable time then, obviously, an order could be sought by the successful suitor seeking an order for directions from the Supreme Court as to the prosecution of the appeal. If that order for directions, which would stipulate times by which various steps must be taken was not complied with, then the next consequential step would be either for the Supreme Court to strike out the appeal if it was in fact established and, if it was not formally established, then to give the successful suitor leave to enter judgment and to execute the judgment.

Despite my earlier levity in respect of magisterial salaries, I believe that the Northern Territory court system, both supreme and magisterial, is certainly as good as any in Australia. On a basis of time taken to get the suitors before the court, it is the best because the time between the institution of an action and when the action gets to the court virtually depends on the speed with which the parties or their solicitors prosecute the action. If you get your Supreme Court action into the lists, you get a speedy trial. If you get your local court action into the lists, it takes about 1 month to get before the court. I believe that any delays in the administration of justice in the Northern Territory will invariably be attributable, for the first time, to delays in prosecution of suits by the parties themselves.

I thank honourable members for the contributions they have made to the debate and I commend the bills.

Motion agreed to; bills read a second time.

Bills passed remaining stages without debate

#### CONTROLLING LITTER IN THE NORTHERN TERRITORY

Mr COLLINS (Arnhem): Why this report was tabled in the manner it has been is intriguing because more than one submission was received by the Territory Parks and Wildlife Commission in regard to this litter problem. It is unfortunate, in consideration of at least one of these other submissions, that only one submission was submitted for debate in this House. I think it is unfortunate that the single submission that has been tabled in this House is from a person employed by the industry that has a vested interest in maintaining the use of the bulk of the material that litters our cities and streets.

The actual material contained in the report is hardly original. The research that was conducted, if you could call it that, has not brought to light any startling information. In fact, one thing that surfaces as you read

through the report is that it is merely a statement of what everybody knew in the first place: that the majority of litter along the Stuart Highway is between Darwin and Berry Springs. That is something that all of us who have been living here for some time knew. That comment also applies to the other factual information contained in the report. The majority of litter is to be found on each side of the stopping places on the Stuart Highway that sell cans.

None of the data that was collected is really very original or startling. I refer, for example, to the section in the report devoted to the litter problem involving Aborigines. The writer of the report himself admits that he did not really have very many clues about this particular subject and that any clues that he did have he obtained from Mr Creed Lovegrove. He says in the third paragraph: "The initial clue surfaced in a meeting with Mr Creed Lovegrove". Mr Lovegrove's very realistic observation, which is the substance of this whole section, is that if Aboriginal people are creating a litter problem and you provide receptacles for them to put litter in, they will do that. As I say, none of the factual information in the report is startling or new. I would imagine that any officer of the Chief Minister's Department or the Territory Parks and Wildlife Commission could have collected probably a better set of data had time been allocated for him to do so.

The substance of the report boils down to whether we are to advocate a deposit system on beverage containers or not. Not surprisingly, this submission on behalf of the beverage industry is a case for not having a deposit system on containers. It says as much in its conclusions. It is certainly not the view of the opposition that this should be the case and there is a substantial body of evidence available, which unfortunately has not been tabled along with this particular submission, to bear out our view.

I would like to take up some of the comments that Mr Gilson makes in the report. He says on page 43 of the report:

*There are indeed large numbers of beverage containers in the Northern Territory litter stream. . . But to single them out with the objective of overcoming the Territory's litter problem would be to leave great parts of those problems still prevalent. Experiences with deposit legislation in the United States have shown there is no appreciable 'halo' effect. Citizens holding on to beverage containers to get their deposits back - and many do not do so - do not automatically stop littering with all of the other items that make up the total content. The last figures from the state of Oregon, for instance, which adopted deposit legislation in 1972, showed but an 11% reduction in across-the-board litter.*

I do not think you have to be an expert on litter to know that, although beverage containers certainly would not occupy the entire volume of the litter problem of the Northern Territory, they certainly provide the most visible component of the problem. Paper containers, cardboard containers, milk containers, paper tissues and all of the other things that are listed by Mr Gilson in his report are certainly deposited along the roads. One of the possible beneficial byproducts of our annual fires is that most of these containers are disposed of whereas the steel cans and the aluminium cans remain. I think it is a fair observation to make to anyone who drives down the highway that the majority of the visible litter in the Northern Territory consists of used beverage cans. I do not think there is any doubt about that. I would certainly dispute the validity of that particular statement.

He talks of the experience in Oregon in the United States of America where he says that only 11% reduction resulted from deposit legislation. There is no doubt, on the man's own data collection, that a deposit system on beverage containers will result in a significant reduction in the litter

problem. Even a man with poor sight can see that the most visible component of the Territory's litter problem is these soft drink and beer cans along the roads and in camping places all over the Territory.

I return to these figures from Oregon. It has been said in this House before that it is very easy to play with statistics. When he was considering a report from the Health Department even the honourable Minister for Health said that you have to be careful when looking at statistics. This also applies to this litter report because, when you look at the study that was done in Oregon, 2 figures were arrived at, one based on an item count of litter and another on a volume count of litter. According to the Oregon report, estimates of the reduction in total litter range from 10.6%. This figure is based on item counts in which a cigarette, a paper bag and a half-quart bottle all count the same. The same study showed on a volume basis that it resulted in a 47% decrease in the litter problem. The figure that is quoted by Mr Gilson is from a study where a cigarette butt on the ground counts the same as a soft drink can or a bottle. When the volume of the litter reduced is taken into account, the figure is 47%. Quite apart from the case that Mr Gilson submitted, I think that it was proved conclusively the implementation of a deposit system was extremely beneficial in Oregon.

One lady whom I assume would know something about the results of this legislation in Oregon is Nancy Fadeley who is the Chairman of the Oregon House of Representatives Environment and Land Use Committee that carried out a study on the effectiveness of this legislation. In the report she said: "In Oregon we buy beer not bottles. Since the enactment of the Oregon Bottle Bill which prohibits the sale of beer and soft drinks in non-returnable containers, we Oregonians have started to recycle the American throw-away ethic and, as a result, have cleaned up our roadsides and parks, conserved natural resources and energy and encouraged our kids to pick up our trash. Container control law is one of the simplest, most workable and potentially most significant legislative instruments available to help conserve both energy and resources. Moreover, it is self-enforcing". She then refers to a study that was done on the effectiveness of the legislation: "The report shows a reduction in beverage-container litter along Oregon highways of at least 81%. The percentage jumps to 96% when non-returnables purchased out of state or before the effective date of the law are discounted. The Oregon Bottle Bill is significant not only as an anti-litter measure but it also has important implications in the current energy crunch. Every year we throw away vast amounts of both natural resources and energy along with the 59.9 billion disposable containers. We discard the equivalent of 1.7 billion gallons of gasoline or enough electricity to supply the electrical needs of 9.1 billion people in America". I have no hesitation in saying that, despite the views of Mr Gilson, if legislation was enacted in the Northern Territory to substantially reduce the number of beer and soft drink cans that are thrown away, it would make a significant impact on the visual state of the litter problem in the Northern Territory.

The proposal to implement a tax or a levy on containers rather than a deposit system is a very bad one. I am sure that the attitude that would be encouraged by the imposition of such a tax or levy would simply be that people would feel that, since they would have to pay the extra amount of money for the bureaucrats to come behind and clean up, that would discharge them of any further responsibility in respect of the can or the bottle that they were throwing away. I am sure that the litter problem would increase on a personal level.

The other possibility that we have to consider is recycling. On the surface, recycling appears to be a very desirable scheme. However, the wealth

of written evidence available as to how the scheme actually operates in Australia illustrates that it is not nearly as desirable as it may seem at first glance. The fact is that steel cans, particularly, are an environmental disaster from the time of their manufacture to the time of their disposal. In Australia, 4,000 million cans are produced every year to be thrown away. 300,000 tonnes of metal is produced every year to be disposed of mainly in garbage tips or along the sides of the roads.

BHP and beverage companies engaged in a fairly extensive public relations exercise to persuade the public and legislators that a deposit system was not necessary and that recycling the cans was the answer to the problem. The evidence is conclusive. The steel can people as they came to be known, the group set up by these companies to push this particular line, put forward the proposition that charities would benefit as a result of this recycling and they offered a price of \$10 per tonne for the recycled material. During the operation of the organisation, half a million dollars was expended. Of that half a million dollars, less than \$20,000 went to the charities which collected the cans. The rest of the \$500,000 went in fact to Image, the public relations company that put out all of the glossy pamphlets which are quite interesting to look at. It was a fairly intensive and very polished public relations campaign and that is where the money went. In fact, as the charities soon found out, they even had problems collecting any money at all. Internal BHP correspondence, which is freely available, shows clearly that organisations as prestigious as the Rotary Club in Western Australia completely failed to collect a cent from BHP for the effort they put in collecting cans for recycling. The Smith family in Sydney, who also entered with a great deal of enthusiasm into this scheme, found that, after a year's operation, it had cost them \$30,000. They suffered a net loss of \$30,000 and had to discontinue the operation completely.

The correspondence from the steel can people is freely available and I have copies of it here. It is interesting to have a look at this correspondence and I will read some of it out. The steel can people were formed by BHP in conjunction with can making companies J. Gadson Australia Ltd, Containers Ltd and United Packages Ltd and with BHP's advertising agency of Ogilvie and Mather and the public relations firm of Image Australia Pty Ltd. This is where all the money went. Darwin gets a mention in some of this correspondence. The facts are that, in the actual operation of the scheme, even cans that were taken to the collection points to be recycled were subsequently dumped in the local garbage dumps. The correspondence clearly shows that this was of great concern to Image Australia and to the can making people. They came up with a brilliant solution. I have a copy of the minutes of the meeting at which this solution was arrived at. In Brisbane, where the problem first arose, there was a university and they were frightened that university students might get on to it. In view of the fact that the cans that were being dumped from their recycling plant in the local tip were so visible, they decided that they would put all the cans in plastic bags from then on and then dump them.

On 31 October 1972, a meeting of the steel can people was held in the BHP board room attended by Messrs Wright, Todd, Duggan, LaFitte and Mrs Hanfield. The following is an extract from the minutes of that meeting.

*Mr Wright: The Health Department in Townsville is prepared to take cans to the tip. No local people would worry about cans being tipped except for a few radicals at the university.*

*Mrs Hanfield: We cannot afford to be associated with tipping.*

*Mr Wright: We are doing it in Darwin, aren't we?*

*Mr Todd: This does conserve the environment because it is providing land fill.*

*Mrs Hanfield: It is a little romantic to say Townsville does not care. You can't take a public posture that you are interested in recycling and then dump the cans. To be in cans, you have got to be in recycling.*

On 9 October 1972, a further meeting was held in the same board room to discuss the Darwin situation. Present were, Wright, Todd, LaFitte and Mrs Hanfield. Also present were Mr J. Llewellyn, chief engineer, J. Gadson and Mr K. Smith, consulting engineer, from Containers Ltd. The following is an extract from the minutes:

*Mr Wright: Darwin is a worry, not so much because of its market value but because of the repercussions if legislation was brought in in the Territory. People in Darwin do not care about solid waste. There are plenty of places to put used cans. You cannot ship them to the Whyalla Steel Works. We haven't conned Whyalla into taking cans yet.*

*Mr Todd: We could always put them in United Packages Ltd dump in Townsville. It would be years before we would be found out.*

For the benefit of honourable members, I would be happy to make this correspondence available because it is fascinating stuff to read.

The facts are that the recycling scheme adopted by BHP was a fraud and a farce from start to finish. It was just a huge public relations operation to protect the market of disposable steel cans. 4,000 million of them are produced every year. All except \$20,000 of the \$500,000 was spent entirely on the public relations campaign. Less than \$20,000 went to the charities which were actually involved in the collection of the cans. Friends of the Earth, who carried out a study on it came up with figures - which can be substantiated because they were all done by experts - that the amount of energy consumed in Australia every year from the production of steel cans would be sufficient to provide 6 million people with food for a year.

The whole industry is an environmental disaster from start to finish. Recycling in Australia has so far been proven to be a fraud. It is something that did not work and, certainly from the attitude of the companies that have a vested interest in it, will not work because their interest lies clearly in maintaining the incredible market for disposable cans. They are not interested in going back to the old system of a deposit on the bottles so that those bottles can be re-used again and again.

The whole thrust of this report which we are debating today is a case for not having a deposit system. It is no surprise to find that the consultant comes to this conclusion - he is an employee of the companies that are manufacturing the litter in the first place. He placed emphasis on legislation. On page 5 of the report, there are 4 parts to his plan for controlling litter in the Territory: adequate legislation, modern technology, continuous education and serious back-up enforcement. In other words, there is absolutely no degree of responsibility whatsoever placed on the people that are manufacturing the rubbish in the first place.

There is no doubt from the evidence in the United States of America where deposit systems have been implemented that, even if people are not prepared themselves to go to the trouble of returning the containers, there are plenty of people who are quite happy to do that for them, particularly younger children.

I think that every member of this House is able to remember that a fairly lucrative income earner for 10 or 12 year-olds was bottle collection. For many years, I was associated with the Nightcliff scouts. Their scout hall was built through the efforts of one man, Mr Bell, who travelled around in his own vehicle every weekend and collected bottles.

You do not have to go back many years to remember that there was a total acceptance on the part of the public in those days for deposit bottles. It was an accepted thing that you bought your soft drink from the store and, when you finished it, you took the bottles back the next time you bought more. It is just that we have become extremely lazy. We have completely surrendered to the disposal mentality: use it once and throw it away. We do not see that it is possible to pursue any other course.

The whole industry itself is at fault, not simply the consumers. If a deposit on beverage containers was introduced in the Northern Territory, it would have a significant impact on the amount of visual litter. Despite claims to the contrary, after the deposit system was introduced on beer in the state of Oregon, the consumption of beer increased - it did not decrease as the manufacturers of the steel cans claim.

I would be happy to walk from Darwin to Alice Springs if the imposition of any sort of deposit system in the Northern Territory resulted in the reduction of the sale of one can of beer. I do not think that it would at all. You would find that drinkers in the Territory would not be bothered to take their own bottles back but the result would be an extremely lucrative industry in bottle collection for charities, for organisations such as the boy scouts and girl guides and for St John Ambulance. They could then sell them and use the money in a very positive way. There is evidence to support that belief. At Nightcliff, a single scout hall was built, at a cost of \$22,000, through the efforts of one man collecting bottles. That figure exceeded by \$2,000 the total amount of money paid to charities in Australia by the steel can manufacturers in their recycling campaign. Of the \$500,000 expended on public relations, less than \$20,000 was paid to the charities. The evidence strongly supports my belief that a deposit system would be more beneficial to charity than recycling could ever be.

The opposition very firmly advocates the implementation of a deposit system on soft drink containers in the Territory. I look forward to the Territory Parks and Wildlife Commission tabling in this House many other submissions on the litter problem that they have surely received, rather than just this one submission from a representative of the industry that produces the rubbish.

Mr BALLANTYNE (Nhulunbuy): I rise to speak on the Gilson Report. I believe some of the recommendations by Mr Gilson to be quite the contrary to the theme taken by the honourable member for Arnhem. If we look at the litter problem today, we find that the main problems are how to control it and how to get the people to cooperate.

There is no doubt that it is impossible to implement our litter laws in the Territory. We have had on-the-spot fines for some time but very few cases have been put through the courts. I asked the question last year and I think there had been about 4 at that particular stage. Somewhere along the line, Mr Speaker, someone will have to get off his tail and start moving in the direction of getting people to observe the law.

Over the years, litter has caused a tremendous problem at sporting venues, public places and shopping centres. As the honourable member for Arnhem said, you have only to go down the Stuart Highway or any other highway

or any high-fenced areas to find wind blown papers and other assorted litter. We have to do something about it. I advocate that this Assembly start to really do something with regard to rationalising our laws on litter. They cover a big range through different statutes. I think that we should, in the near future, get down to tin tacks and establish an education program to let the people know that we are going to take a hard line right throughout all the communities, cities and minor centres in the Territory.

One of Mr Gilson's recommendations concerns litter bags. He states some of the figures in some of the states in America where this has worked. They prove conclusively that there has been a reduction of some 60% with litter bags playing a key role. If we can have the same sort of percentage here, we will have achieved a major success.

I cannot understand why the average human being throws things out of vehicles. Rather than put the rubbish in plastic containers which are available anywhere today, they throw it out the window. If this recommendation is implemented and the government sees some way of introducing these bags - whether by a package of 10 for the school kids to take home or through the service stations or the Motor Vehicle Registry, the companies, the local union people, the service clubs, the petrol stations, motels and so on - I think we will get somewhere in that area.

The other means of getting the message over is through the media. In some of the outlying areas, we do not have television but in the main centres there could be some television spots as recommended in the report. Much can be done through the Keep Australia Beautiful program. We could have radio spots, jingles etc. There are people expert in that field and I am sure something can be done.

In Darwin, we have new litter bins which are quite attractive. I have not inspected inside of them yet but I hope that those bins are being filled quite regularly. I only hope that, when the mall is finished, we do not see some of the sights that we see at the local football matches or cricket matches where people drop litter where they stand. They are too lazy to walk 10 or 20 feet to put their litter in a receptacle. I don't think there is much more we can do. I think that the education program is the only way we can really get the message over to the people. We can hit them hard with the on-the-spot fine and make sure that there will be a few test cases to really prove that we are taking a hard line.

Mr Collins: Why don't we stop making cans?

Mr BALLANTYNE: I don't particularly like the can. I too would prefer the glass bottle but there is a certain amount of risk and danger to young people. Years ago, my own son severed his foot jumping in sand at the beach. How many other people have had that same experience? I do believe that the ring tops off the cans have also caused many problems for young people.

On page 22 of the report, Mr Gilson talks about highway signs. I am not impressed by some of the highway signs. However, I feel that signs to indicate a litter stop or that the next litter stop is so many kilometres would give people an idea of how far they would have to go to drop their litter into a proper receptacle rather than throw them out of the car.

On page 23, he talks about cleaning. I know the amount of money it costs to clean up in Nhulunbuy where I live. This is not entirely a question of litter but it costs about \$78,000 a year to clean up the streets around Nhulunbuy each morning. The main shopping centre is hosed and they have a machine which sweeps the gutters and picks up all the rubble which may be there.

For a small town like that, that is quite a large sum of money. I know that Mr Gilson is talking about \$100,000 for the highways and he has another program which will increase the cost by another \$100,000. I think \$50,000 of that is required to set it up. I don't know what it costs in Darwin but I would say it would cost 10 times more than in Nhulunbuy.

I was somewhat disappointed that the Gilson Report made no mention of Nhulunbuy. It is the same old story: they came to Darwin and then went to Katherine, Tennant Creek, Alice Springs and even Ayers Rock but they did not come over to the green oasis town of Nhulunbuy. We have probably set an example in litter control there. It has been a very hard job and it will continue to be a hard job. Some of the Aboriginal people are working with us and we have had a clean up on the highway. We have put bins down on the beach where many Aboriginal people camp. They have become educated to leaving their cans in those bins.

The member for Arnhem spoke about recycling. I think that Kokoda Industries have a project whereby the handicapped people collect the aluminium cans which can be recycled. It has been quite profitable for them. Recently, I read in the Miner that over a million dollars has been collected for these aluminium cans in the last 12 months. It proves that it can be done. This can help these sorts of people in their rehabilitation program and help them learn to do a job and be paid for it. I think that they are getting a lot of benefit from that. There has been some talk about going door-to-door to collect different materials. We do this in Nhulunbuy; I think the Lions Club has collected quite a lot of material. I think that that sort of thing can be done.

The honourable member for Arnhem talked about the bottle campaign and I think that is a tremendous idea. Recently, a driver collected old medicine bottles etc from houses and dumped them. That was done in Adelaide by the Lions Club. Drugs were being kept in cupboards and many children have been able to get access to these things. They instituted this program to collect and dump them so that they are out of harm's way. There is no reason why scout and guides organisations cannot still collect things other than bottles.

One of Mr Gilson's main themes was to implement a litter control committee - the sooner the better as far as I am concerned. This should be set up to look at ways and means of overcoming our problems. By setting up this control committee, we would show that we are getting behind all the councils and various departments who are looking at ways of educating the people. The recommendation relating to litter bags should be implemented as soon as possible. I think that is a great idea. If it fails, we will look at something else. It says that, in Victoria, the cost for a million bags worked out at \$15 per thousand. We could also have stickers such as "This is a litter bag car" to try to promote the idea. It is also important to have sufficient receptacles scattered around. I do not think we have enough. I know it takes a workforce to pick them up. In Nhulunbuy, we have changed from half 44-gallon drums to 10-gallon drums sitting on posts painted with different colours.

We must educate people through the media, through the schools and through all the service clubs. Golf clubs and other sporting organisations have problems with litter. We must stop procrastinating. I remember we stood up here in 1975 or 1976 to speak about litter but there has been very little done. The sooner the people wake up to themselves, the better off we will be. People must show a little bit of civic pride and national pride in keeping our country beautiful.

Mrs LAWRIE (Nightcliff): This is an emotional issue for everybody to get up and thump the tub. No one likes litter bugs but I have not heard many valuable contributions really from the honourable member for Nhulunbuy so far. I never did think we were totally empathetic and now I am sure of it after reading this incredible report. I use my words carefully: it is an "incredible" report. The honourable member for Nhulunbuy suggests that we have to bite the bullet and get on with it - all of which we know - and that things will all fall into place if we have litter control councils and litter bags. The honourable member for Nhulunbuy was also espousing what I term "aural pollution": more jingles on the radio enjoining us, in this case, to put our non-recyclable litter in litter bags.

I am disgusted at this report. I am pleased that the Chief Minister saw fit to engage the attention of the National Parks and Wildlife Commission on what is certainly a very visible problem in the Northern Territory. We see in the preface to the report that the Chief Minister, in August 1978, requested the Territory Parks and Wildlife Commission to consider the possible introduction of beverage container legislation with a view to solving part at least of the Northern Territory's massive litter problem. I congratulate the Chief Minister on his initiative and I hope he will not be led astray by the 45-odd pages of absolute gobbledegook with which we have been presented here.

The Northern Territory government accepted an offer and a Mr Gilson subsequently arrived in Darwin on 20 November 1978 to conduct this inquiry. I would ask how much this gentleman was paid by the government. If his fares were paid in toto by the beverage container industry, I really do not give a tinker's cuss; they can waste their money as they see fit. If it was public money, I would like to know precisely how much the taxpayer contributed to the incredible report.

I want to turn to the report itself because so far there has been scant attention paid to it other than the wide emotive issues of "kill all litterers" and "we must have a beautiful Territory". I do agree we should have far more civic pride and far more pride in our own environment. However, let us start with page 6: controlling litter in the Northern Territory, ordinances and enforcements. After reading this page, I felt the first twinges of apprehension. This gentleman starts off with the statement: "In order to correct the situation that now prevails, 2 steps, one to be taken immediately and the other to be undertaken as a project, are recommended. The first calls for an in-depth seminar to last at least one day". I would ask the Chief Minister to ban people from writing in reports phrases like "in-depth seminars". We do not need such phrases. I assume the minister wanted to get at the heart of the problem of litter and he is faced with yet another jargonistic report.

On page 8, we find the definition of litter: "Litter is any quantity of uncontainerised paper, metal, plastic, glass or miscellaneous solid waste which may be classed as trash, debris, refuse, rubbish, garbage or junk". That is not a definition and not for one minute do I think that the Cabinet members opposite would accept it. Something that may be classed as something else is now defined in legislation - that is rot. "Public property includes verges between streets and footpaths, lanes, alleys, public rights-of-way etc". Later on, I shall address my attention to what litter consultants would like us to do on private property. If anybody thinks this report should be treated lightly because it is a dreadful report, I hope to enlighten them.

On page 9 in "Section 1, Pedestrians and Motorists", we find: "It shall be unlawful for any person to throw, discard, place or deposit litter in any manner or amount on any public or private property except in containers or areas lawfully provided therefor". If you wrap up your litter in a container and

throw it out the window, that is lawful. You have not got rid of it but you have hidden it. The honourable member for Nhulunbuy has not read the report - he has just carried on a bit about the state of the litter problem - because right throughout the report these inconsistencies occur. This report was given to the Chief Minister and his colleagues as a basis on which to draft legislation and, therefore, it cannot be taken lightly.

"It shall be the duty of every person distributing commercial handbills, leaflets, flyers or other advertising and informational material to take whatever measures that may be necessary to keep such materials from littering public or private property". I assume the legislative draftsmen are having the vapours because the way this report is presented is far too vague.

On page 10 it talks about the duties and responsibilities imposed by section 2 being applicable alike to the owners of trucks and vehicles. There is no comment about any responsibility by the packaging industry which is producing a very obvious source of litter in the first place. The honourable member for Arnhem drew attention to that and I shall continue to do so as I go through this report.

I draw the attention of the honourable Minister for Community Development and the Treasurer to page 11 of the report at 5 (b): "It shall be unlawful for any resident to deposit household solid waste in any receptacle maintained by the municipal government on a footpath or at any other location for the disposal of litter by pedestrians". We know what they are trying to say: if you have excess garbage, you should not go and put it in a council receptacle which is there for the passing pedestrian traffic. If you are going to choose the lesser of 2 evils, it is better to put it in a receptacle that is going to be emptied eventually rather than to throw it in the bush as people do. To me that is analogous with the thinking which says: "We will close the garbage dumps at weekends and public holidays or we will charge you to dump your litter at a municipal garbage dump" - both of which I think are wrong in principle. One should encourage people to deposit waste, garbage and litter in the places which are specifically set aside. In fact, the depositing of garbage no longer becomes littering by definition; it is acceptable.

In dealing with section 9, "Keeping property clean", I would ask certain members of the Cabinet, who have evinced an interest in the rights of property owners, to pay attention to this section:

*(a) It shall be the duty of the owner, agent, occupant or lessee to keep occupied private property free of litter. This requirement applies not only to removal of loose litter, but to materials that already are, or become, trapped at such locations as fence and wall bases, grassy and planted areas, borders, embankments and other lodging points.*

*(b) Owners, agents, occupants or lessees whose properties face on public footpaths and verges between streets and footpaths shall be responsible for keeping those footpaths and verges free of litter.*

*(c) It shall be unlawful to sweep or push litter from footpaths and verges into streets. Footpath and verge sweepings must be picked up and put into household or commercial refuse containers.*

I have made a note on section 9: "God Help Us!" Not only will we be responsible for keeping our own personal property in a manner that suits some other person but we have to sweep the footpath and pick up the litter that is there. We must not sweep it into the street. We shall, as private property owners, be lawfully responsible for whatever litter is deposited on the verge

or footpath adjacent to our property, if our property happens to face it. I cannot accept that. Just think of the implications in law of such a ridiculous proposal. Nevertheless, it is put forward seriously by this litter consultant, Mr Gilson.

There is still no mention that the packaging industry might have something to do with creating litter. The honourable member for Barkly will have to carefully dispose of what anyone else has seen fit to deposit on the footpath outside of his house. I wonder how long he is going to like that. If he has had a party and he leaves the odd can or large numbers of cans lying around his own private property, according to this recommendation, an authorised person shall have the right to come into his property and order him to remove it. If he does not, he may be charged. That is what is in this report. No one seems worried about it. The penalty for unlawfully depositing household solid waste in a municipal litter receptacle is \$35. Personally, on balance, I think I would give them a medal. At least, they have not dropped it on the footpath outside my place where I will have to pick it up.

The penalty for failure to hold a dog on a leash is \$50. The mind boggles. The penalties sought to be prescribed are apparently without relevance and without any logic.

We now come to the great, lovely, emotional thing: the litter bag. Litter bags are going to solve the problem. All litter bags do is create more litter. Litter bags are one of the most obvious forms of litter pollution occurring in the Northern Territory. If anyone has not woken up to that, I suggest he is walking around with dark glasses and a raincoat.

There was some concentration on the actual constitution of the litter: apple cores, paper and things like that. Whilst they might be unsightly for a time, they are biodegradable and they are not the constant problem that steel and aluminium cans and glass bottles are.

On page 18 of this report, there is reference to items disposed of after stopping for refreshments or supplies. They include all kinds of things and I actually farmed out this report to a group of people for comment. Where it has "lists and receipts", they have added: "and litter consultants' reports". I think that is a fair enough comment. When we talk about litter bags being distributed to cars, it is okay only if you put your litter in the bag then put it in a larger receptacle which is taken to the dump. There is a recommendation that the Motor Vehicle Registry should provide a litter bag to every driver whose car does not have a litter bag in it when brought in for inspection. I am very wary of putting things like that in legislation. It implies a compulsion under another act. To say that your car is not roadworthy because it does not have a litter bag is not on.

We see in recommendation 12 that the Gideon Bible will be replaced in motels by litter bags. A packet will be provided in each room and replaced when taken by guests. I will try to prevent my levity from getting away with me.

The report refers to litter problems at beauty spots throughout the Territory and the National Parks and Wildlife Commission has a particular interest here. "It is understood that a head tax for tour groups and others is under consideration to help defray the cost of such necessities. This comes into focus as a logical and practical course to follow". I don't agree with him one iota if he is saying that the way to solve the litter problem is to tax everybody going on to reserves.

I agree with the honourable member for Arnhem that the prime source of

litter is the packaging industry. It is over-productive, it is wasteful of our resources and it should rightly share the burden of the litter problem. I would advocate a refundable deposit on receptacles and would discard most of the nonsense spoken about in this report.

The report talks about curriculum development. Everybody agrees that we should educate the children of the Territory to be responsible but, if you look very carefully at the way in which he wants to do it, there is no mention of interesting the children in the part the industry itself has to play. It is all the adults' fault; the industry apparently is above and beyond reproach.

We turn to Aboriginal groups. Mr Lovegrove said that it was his experience that, when a group of Aboriginal people had their attention drawn to litter, they would be inclined to clean it up. He emphasised that the asking had to be continual. What is new about that, Mr Speaker? We all know that and the industry has to be asked to continually recycle. They do not offer; the government has to put the pressure on the industry. It is not only Aboriginal people who have to be continually reminded. There are examples right throughout this report of restraints and constraints being put on citizens. If someone does not like something people are doing on their own property, someone else will enter and certain things will happen. No attention is paid to the proper responsibility of the packaging industry.

On page 41, we find: "Media promotion of car litter bags use. Discussions should be held with the media people to arrive at common agreement on coverage needed to make the kind of impact visualised and the costs thereof". A journalist friend of mine made the comment: "Bye, bye free press or what there is of it".

Further on, there is a comment: "It is understood that about \$100,000 a year now is spent on highway cleaning and the emptying and maintenance of drums". I think that the industry itself should pay the vast majority, if not all, of that cost - not the municipalities, not the taxpayer of the Northern Territory, but the industry producing it. "It is suggested that \$250,000 to \$250,000 be considered as the range within which to arrive at a final figure". This is the overall cost of a program for the first year. I assume that is for the litter consultant's press secretary.

I am very disappointed with the report and I place no blame at all on the Cabinet members who commissioned it. There is one saving paragraph in this report. It is the fourth to last paragraph and it has my total support: "The heart of the matter in reducing litter is to change the attitudes, habits and practices which generate it from all its sources. This is what systematic litter control is designed to do". Let us start with the packaging industry.

Mr PERRON (Treasurer): First, I would like to touch on a couple of remarks made by other honourable members. The member for Nightcliff reflected on how much the report cost and who paid for it. I am not quite sure who paid for it; perhaps that is one of those things I should have looked up. She seemed to imply that, because she did not like its recommendations - and I don't either, generally speaking - it has been a waste of public money. Obviously, when any expert or supposed expert is engaged to conduct a report on any matter, be it for the government or private sector, one cannot always tell what the end product will be and whether you will like it or not. I wonder if her view that the money has been wasted would still be the same if Mr Gilson's recommendations accorded completely with her views. If that had been the case, I believe it would have been a total waste of money as well. I hope she does not place too much emphasis on the waste of public money aspect.

The member for Arnhem gave us the most brilliant piece of useless information that I have heard for a long time. He said that the effort that goes into manufacturing steel cans could feed 6 million people. He gave no further elaboration. We do not know whether it would feed 6 million people for one meal or for one year or 6 million people for life or whether he is talking about their eating crayfish and champagne or bread and water. One could say that the energy, finance and effort which goes into running the Melbourne Cup would probably feed half a million people for one meal. Is he suggesting that we should wind up all absolutely non-essential activities in the community? It would be a dull world if all we had to do was eat and sleep.

The member for Arnhem spent most of his time concentrating on returnable containers and deposits. He seemed quite happy to live surrounded by litter, provided it was selected litter. He does not like bottles and cans but is not greatly perturbed about all the rest of the litter about the place. If you take the bottles and cans away, apparently the rest will look after itself.

He touched on only a few of the problems associated with the system that has been adopted in Oregon. One was compulsorily returnable containers on which a deposit is paid. There are many problems and the scheme costs an enormous amount of money. I have not taken the trouble, as the honourable member for Arnhem has, to look up specific information on the Oregon system but I have read something about the problems associated with the storage of these returnable cans and bottles: people are required to check the documents of the people returning them and the transportation system involved in running these cans from supermarkets to depot to subdepot and eventually back to the steel smelter. The cost is absolutely enormous and, of course, somebody has to pay. It would certainly be a way to employ some more people, but not a very sensible or practical way. Why should the majority of people, who are quite capable of disposing of containers in a proper fashion, pay for those persons who will not do so?

The honourable member for Arnhem believes that many Territorians would not bother to return the containers for the deposit; they would throw them out the window of their car. He feels that the saving grace is that someone will come along one day and pick them up because there is a quid in it. That is quite commendable, but all he is doing is condoning a system where rubbish is forever poured on the street until people pick it up and more rubbish is deposited. That hardly seems to be much of a solution to the litter problem.

The member for Nightcliff stressed the responsibility of the manufacturers of containers. It seems the packaging industry should bear all the blame and carry the burden because they make the profit from selling the can. There are many other people who make a profit from selling a steel can: the people who explore for minerals; the people who process the minerals; and the people who fill, distribute and sell the cans. The packaging industry is not the only one making a quid out of containers. Why lay the blame at their feet? Do we blame car manufacturers for the fact that people misuse cars? Do we blame the manufacturers of knives because someone is stabbed with one? We are talking about the responsibility and attitudes of the end user of a product which is causing the problem that we are discussing this afternoon. What about the paper manufacturers? Why aren't they held responsible for the little square of paper wrapped around hot dogs that we see in the streets outside every take-away food house in town? Surely we should put the responsibility for the litter problem where it belongs, and stop dodging the issue. It belongs, quite clearly, with the litterer.

In this regard, the Northern Territory has particular problems. We have a fair percentage of transient people who have little affection for the place.

They have little attachment and they have very little community pride. In our western society, community pride stems largely from an attachment to one's surroundings and a desire to keep them pleasant. Many interstate people who have received parking tickets have torn them up and dropped them in the gutter because they will never be caught. That is the attitude that we are stuck with.

I think Mr Gilson's recommendations were somewhat off beam. His report reminded me of the old saying that you cannot see the wood for the trees. There was so much attention paid to things like the analysis of litter that it seemed like a bureaucratic exercise to justify the writing of the report and to fill in the pages. I found that a bit disappointing. I do not believe that things like car bags will help at all. For example, some hire-car companies provide a litter bag which hangs from the glovebox. The bag is in the way every time you turn around. These days the first thing I do is tear it off and throw it on the back seat. I do not feel that car litter bags can help. I do not feel that public appeals have more than a minimal value but they should not be abandoned altogether. They should be continued but without using great sums of money on public appeals. If public appeals worked, we would not have the problems of unmown footpaths, illegal car parking and so on. Public appeals reach a limited group in the community and, quite often, those persons are already conforming.

The answer to the litter problem is very simple: fairly draconian fines. Singapore provides the most famous example of this solution. There are some 15 pieces of legislation in the NT that already prescribe penalties for littering. There are already some 1,000 people in the Northern Territory who are in a position to enforce that legislation and the regulations thereunder: the police force, parks and wildlife rangers, city council inspectors, health inspectors, crown land inspectors, motor vehicle inspectors etc. However, there is some reluctance on the part of these people to go out of their way to charge people for littering.

Mr Gilson touched on this problem on page 6 and that is one of the only parts of the document that I agreed with. He listed 6 points relating to the enforcement of existing laws to help in his overall program. I believe that, if they were brushed up enough, they would solve the problem completely. The points are: "Insufficient diligence in observing violations; reluctance on the part of authorised personnel to go beyond reminders and warnings to violators; inadequate or uncertain enforcement authority; unfamiliarity with some ordinance sections and the interpretations thereof; insufficient training of personnel in enforcement techniques; and cumbersome procedures in taking violators to court".

Any government should address those problems. It should train those persons who are charged with the responsibility of tracking down litter offenders and smarten up the law where it is ambiguous. There are a number of problems relating to the simple definitions of litter, where it is dropped and where the jurisdiction of a particular officer starts and ends. These 1,000 people in the Northern Territory who are already capable of instituting action could hardly claim that they have not seen littering recently. You only have to stand on any city corner for an hour or two to see many offences. If you concentrated on the Post Office or outside take-away food stores, you could book people as fast as you could write tickets out. It seems to me that there is a reluctance to put the responsibility where it lies: grab hold of the person who throws something out of a window or drops it on the street and charge him. If we consider littering to be an offence against society, let us accept that responsibility as a parliament and get out there and enforce it.

Mrs PADGHAM-PURICH (Tiwi): Mr Speaker, I did not expect to find anything startling or new in the report. It is more or less what everybody who has lived up here for a while and is conscious of the litter in our countryside already knows. I do not agree with everything in it but I do not condemn it out of hand as some speakers have. I consider the report to be very comprehensive. The man has considered 24 places and approximately 16 situations in each of those places. I will just comment briefly on points that I find of interest.

On page 5, Mr Gilson talks about achieving and sustaining large-scale reduction of litter. It is very hard to work out whether he refers to litter in the streets or he wants a large scale reduction of potential litter. I think there is too much packaging on goods these days. In the past, before I have taken things out of supermarkets, I have removed the unnecessary packaging and left it for the supermarket to dispose of.

Turning to page 6, I would like to comment on the seminar. I think that is the "in" word these days. An in-depth seminar for one day seems to be a contradiction in terms. To have an in-depth seminar with the people referred to here would be like preaching to the converted and an in-depth seminar could not be held with the public generally.

On page 7, there is mention of what can happen to people if they fail to dispose of their litter thoughtfully. It does reflect a bit on the community's way of thinking. Enforcement of the law regarding littering is the only way to get people to stop littering. At least, that is the recommended way.

On page 8, we find a definition of "litter". The member for Nightcliff thought it rather odd. I would like to take issue with the word "uncontainerised". This is one of those modern words. It is a jargon word. It is a very bad definition all round and is much too loose.

On page 10, there is a recommendation dealing with vehicles transporting loose materials. It says: "The duty and responsibility imposed by section 2(a) " - about carrying loose materials - "shall be applicable alike to the owner of the truck or other vehicle, the operator thereof, and the person, firm, corporation, institution or organisation from whose residence or establishment the cargo originated". The recommendation seems to imply that the householder is responsible for his litter once it is on the back of the truck. This is a little bit unrealistic.

In section 4, I find there is an unrealistic recommendation dealing with the piling up of litter on demolition projects before, during and after completion and construction of demolition projects. It seems that the two do not work out. If you are demolishing something, it stands to reason you will collect a bit of litter somewhere or other. If you cannot collect it during the demolition, you will not have any demolition and sometimes demolition is necessary. It is rather odd.

On page 12, section 7 deals with the control of dogs: "Owners shall be held responsible for molestation in any way by their dogs of household or commercial refuse containers on or in front of the properties of other individuals". He seems to have no objection to people letting their own dogs hop into their own rubbish bins. I find this rather odd.

On page 14, section 4(c) states: "It will be a violation if there is inability to show proof of proper disposal of construction or demolition waste materials". If the waste materials were disposed of properly at the dump, you could not very well show proof that you had disposed of them properly. The

stuff would have been burnt or would have been bulldozed. The only way you could identify the material would be if it was dumped improperly elsewhere.

Further down, it specifies a penalty for failure to hold a dog on a leash. That has nothing to do with littering. Mr Gilson was obviously ignorant of dog control because, whether the dog is on the leash or not, it may not necessarily be under control. He does not want the dog to defecate in public places. The dog will do that, if it gets the urge, whether it is on the leash or not.

Other members spoke derogatorily about litter bags. This is one place where I agree with some of the comments. There is one time when I think litter bags should be carried. I would call them "doggie-do" bags. If somebody wants to take a dog to a public place, it should not be allowed to be loose and it should not be in a public place if it is liable to defecate. The person controlling the dog should have a "doggie-do" bag and a "doggie-do" shovel and do after the doggie.

Page 15 proposes a litter control officer working full time. Perhaps that would be a good idea. If you want this person to work to the best advantage, a better idea would be to pay him a base salary and a percentage of the tins he collects.

On page 16 we find that, "while some roadside discards can be attributed to tourists, the evidence is that by far the larger percentage is coming from the people who live here". I do not know whether he means that litter in the rural area is being deposited on the sides of the road by the people in rural areas. If so, I would dispute that. If he is talking about the people who live in the Territory, perhaps that is right. I am not saying that the people in the rural area do not drop litter on the sides of the road but a lot of the litter that is dropped on the side of the road is dropped by the people who come out from the city to enjoy the beauties of the bush. Unfortunately, they do not leave it as beautiful as they find it.

Mr Collins: I thought it was the southern tourist.

Mrs PADGHAM-PURICH: In certain cases, it is them too. On page 17, there is mention of having litter bins placed in the city. I think this is an excellent idea. However, it is most important to have them emptied regularly. There is nothing worse than finding a litter bin overflowing onto the footpath.

On page 18, there is a description of certain litter. One of the speakers has said that this litter is biodegradable. I do not consider that to be litter at all. If it is left in the bush, wallabies or wild pigs will eat it. If it is left in town, the cats and dogs will eat it so this is recycling.

I am not completely against car litter bags. I think they serve a purpose. If a person uses a car litter bag, he is the sort of person who would probably leave his rubbish in the car anyway to dispose of at home later. Therefore, perhaps they will not serve the purpose that people would really like them to serve. Page 20 continues to deal with car litter bags. I am not in favour of suggestion E4. If people are to advertise litter bags, they should encourage businesses to use them as part of their own advertising.

On page 21, there is a suggestion that metal drums be used as uniform receptacles for rubbish. Mr Gilson suggests the use of a bin larger than a half 44-gallon drum. Anything larger than a half 44-gallon drum would be a three-quarter 44-gallon drum or a whole 44-gallon drum. Although I have not

personally emptied a full 44-gallon drum, as a member of the show society council, I know that these are extremely difficult to empty. I think sticking to a half 44-gallon drum is more practical. There is an omission in C, under disposal facilities, in that camp sites off highways are not mentioned.

There is a recommendation on page 22 that officers of the roads division of the Department of Transport and Works service and maintain the disposal facilities. One of my children went on a school camp on the Mary River about 3 years ago for the weekend. Although litter bins were provided, they were overflowing to the point of uselessness. The children, as part of a community effort, took garbages with them. They filled 40 garbages in one exercise and then ran out. While the teacher was to be commended for encouraging the children, once was enough for any child of mine to go around picking up litter after people who could not give a damn themselves.

On page 24, it is mentioned that the Darwin city council has an order for 20 new litter bins. I am assuming that those litter bins are the ones now around Darwin. I think they are quite colourful bins and they seem to be kept in good order. One day I saw one of the people who was emptying one of these bins wiping down the outside of it. I thought that was very commendable. I particularly like the yellow and green colours.

The main points made in this report are that the problem of littering has to be recognised and, after recognition, we must provide education to remedy the problem. Hand in hand with this education, we must provide enforcement provisions.

Mr TUXWORTH (Mines and Energy): I would like to take up some points made by the honourable members for Arnhem and Nightcliff. They were very critical of the packaging industry and thought that the best way to solve the litter problem was to attack the packaging industry. I have a little bit of an insight into this particular game because I spent 7 years in the manufacturing and wholesaling sides of the soft drink industry. During that time, we sold half a million cases of products. An interesting point that the honourable members may have missed is that the people in this game do not sell what they want but what the customer takes off the shelf.

There are many shops in this town that supply non-returnable containers and recyclable bottles. The recyclable product is coming a very poor last. This is not because the manufacturers want it that way. There is no money for the manufacturers in the one-way package. If they lose half a cent a unit out of their profit from their manufacture, they are doing very well. The profit for the manufacturers is in the returnable package. The returnable package reduces their package cost and it enables them to put the product on the shelf at a very cheap rate compared with the one-way unit. If the beverage industry had its way, there would be no one-way packages.

Mr Collins: I was talking about BHP, the can manufacturers.

Mr TUXWORTH: The honourable member says he was talking about the can manufacturers. The truth of the matter is that the can manufacturers can only sell what the producers of the product want. If the producers of the product do not want to have one-way packages, then there would be no market for the can manufacturers. The people that determine how the manufacturers package their product and sell it are the consumers. The consumer is the be-all and end-all of the market.

The honourable member for Nightcliff suggested that the companies should

be made to enter into programs and pay for them. Baloney! The consumer pays every time, not the company or anyone else. If there is a cost to be paid, it is built into the cost of the product and the consumer pays. There is no way that you can set aside a cost, inflict it on the company and pretend that it does not get back to the consumer because it does.

While I am no supporter of the one-way package industry as I do not think it does a great deal for anybody, there are many places in this country, and particularly in the Northern Territory, that would not get a particular product if it was not in a one-way package. The honourable member for Arnhem has many places in his own electorate, as I have in mine, that would never see a soft drink or a beer if they were confined to returnable packages because the consumer and the manufacturer would never be able to meet in that particular market place. It was not until the can came along in the late 1960s that coca-cola became an available product in the southern half of the Territory. The can enabled people in very remote areas to have a beer or a soft drink if they wanted one.

The honourable member for Arnhem spoke about some of the practices in America that are implemented to try to reduce the volume of one-way packaging that was causing the litter problem. I would like to mention another one. This practice was introduced in America by some of the states in the mid-west which had trouble controlling one-way packages. They introduced a tax at the wholesale stage which was paid to local government for the collection of the refuse. The way we introduce taxes of this nature in Australia, it would not be very long before it became a general revenue item. It was used in America as a method of milking the public in yet another way. It had a very limited effect. We keep coming back to the fact that society is very affluent and is prepared to pay for the convenience of the one-way package. The laws we make here will not change that one little bit.

Mr PERKINS (MacDonnell): I rise to make a few observations about the report. I was most intrigued with the comments from the honourable Treasurer. I thought he was most unfair and unkind in accusing the member for Arnhem of condoning a system which would involve the creation of more rubbish. That statement demonstrated the Treasurer's ignorance of what the honourable member for Arnhem had to say. The member for Arnhem spoke about litter problems in the Northern Territory and enlightened us on the experience in America and in other places. I was impressed with what he had to say because I learnt more from him than I learnt this afternoon from the Treasurer. I would have thought that the Treasurer could have enlightened us a bit more on the problems of litter in the Northern Territory. He professes to be concerned about these problems but it would seem that he needs to examine this matter more closely himself.

It would be a fair assessment to say that the Gilson Report has received a thrashing from both sides this afternoon and I would like to join in the criticism. I would like to support the criticism of the member for Arnhem that there is nothing new or startling in this report. Members from the other side of the House were also critical of this report with the exception perhaps of the member for Tiwi who described the report as very comprehensive.

I think the report is very superficial; it hardly tells us anything new about the problems of litter in the Northern Territory or anything that we do not already know. This is most unfortunate because we understand that it was the intention of the Chief Minister to ask the Northern Territory Parks and Wildlife Commission to examine the possibility of legislating on the matter of beverage containers in the Northern Territory. Unfortunately, this report is a rejection of the proposition that there ought to be such legislation in the

Northern Territory. In that sense, the report defeats the original intention of the honourable Chief Minister when he asked the Northern Territory Parks and Wildlife Commission to examine that particular matter.

The Gilson Report has come up with the argument that we ought to adopt a systematic approach to the problem. There are 2 basic proposals: education programs and heavier, on-the-spot fines. It is obvious that he is not impressed with the argument that we ought to have the deposit system operating in the Territory. I do not want to knock Mr Gilson's remarks about education programs because it is important to have education programs on litter problems in the Territory. The report advocates widespread distribution of car litter bags, more rubbish bins, advertisements in the media and education material to assist the children in schools. I do not disagree with that approach; I think that would be a constructive approach.

I do disagree with the manner in which Mr Gilson has rejected the proposal to come to terms with the problem of litter by introducing legislation relating to beverage containers. I would like to support the proposition advocated by the member for Arnhem that we seriously examine the possibility of legislation involving a deposit system on such litter as beer cans and beer bottles. Every member in this House would be well aware of the great profusion of beer cans and beer bottles in the Northern Territory. This is a problem with which we have to come to terms.

I would like to emphasise that an effective way of coming to terms with this problem would be by legislation. It is disappointing that Mr Gilson has not really seen fit to advocate both the systematic approach and a simple approach involving legislation. I would have thought that a man of his experience with these sort of problems would have been able to come up with comprehensive proposals. I agree wholeheartedly with the honourable the member for Arnhem that there would be a significant impact on our litter problems if deposits were required on beer cans and beer bottles. It is a pity that the Treasurer and the Minister for Mines and Energy did not really take more notice of what the member for Arnhem had to say.

I would not like to go into too much detail because I think that a number of matters in the report have been widely canvassed here this afternoon by honourable members from both sides of the Assembly. There is one point which has not really been canvassed this afternoon and that is the question of costs. In the report, there is an estimate of cost to the government. Mr Gilson estimates the program would cost \$350,000 or approximately \$3 a head on current population estimates. In addition, he talks about cleaning programs on highways and adds to his estimate of \$350,000 another \$250,000. Thus, we are looking at costs in the order of \$600,000 for the sorts of programs that are recommended in the report. The government is accountable to the people of the Territory for the amount of money it spends in relation to these problems. I would like the government to take a close look at those estimates to see if they are realistic estimates of the costs of implementing the programs. On page 41, the report indicated that about \$100,000 a year is spent on highway cleaning and maintaining drums in the Northern Territory. We are looking at an estimate of \$600,000 overall. We need to consider whether that amount of public money is really justifiable as an expenditure on the sorts of programs advocated in the report.

Like other members, I was disappointed with the Gilson Report. I was happy to hear that even the honourable the Treasurer was disappointed and thought that some of the recommendations were off beam. I was even more intrigued by his comment that the Gilson Report may have been a great

bureaucratic exercise.

One of the other aspects of the report that really disappointed me is the suggestion which often occurs in reports like this: that we must have another seminar to talk about these problems. In my experience, the more you talk about having more committees, meetings and seminars, the less is done about the problem. If the Gilson Report is advocating more committees and more conferences to deal with this problem, I would not be in favour of that approach. I would agree with the honourable member for Nhulunbuy who said that we have to stop procrastinating and get on with the job of coming to terms with the problem of litter in the Northern Territory. He also said that the implementation of a litter control committee would be a good idea. I do not know really that it would be a good idea or whether it would solve these problems. We need to get on with the job as soon as possible. One way of getting on with the job is for the government to seriously consider legislation which will deal with the problems of litter in the Northern Territory.

I agree with the honourable member for Nightcliff that the report is plagued with inconsistencies and is vague and imprecise in certain respects. I was particularly surprised to see in the section on Aboriginal groups that the consultant mentioned speaking to other people about Aboriginals. I was amazed to note that he made no mention of talking to the Aboriginals themselves and asking them what they thought about the problem. He asked Creed Lovegrove and the Aboriginal liaison section of the Department of the Chief Minister but not the people themselves who are directly affected by the problem. It is unfortunate that there was no direct input into this report from Aboriginal people themselves, particularly those people who may have some problems with litter in their communities. On page 35, he talks about his conversation with Mr Lovegrove and other individuals who have had experiences with groups but there is no mention of talking to the Aboriginal people themselves, particularly those people directly affected by the problem. That is also another area in which the Gilson Report is sadly lacking.

A number of suggestions were made about the control of litter in the Territory. Those suggestions ranged from asking Northern Territorians to have more civic pride in the general tidiness of the place to the almost draconian suggestions of the honourable Treasurer that we must take a very hard line on the control of litter problems in the Northern Territory. I interpreted his comments as meaning that we ought to adopt the system that operates in Singapore where there are all sorts of draconian penalties for littering.

I am particularly concerned with my electorate of MacDonnell where there is not only a problem with beer cans, beer bottles, broken glass and other associated rubbish but also problems associated with the prevalence of wrecked motor cars. I suppose they could be more aptly described as "bombs in the bush". They are a plague on the environment, an eyesore to people and, in some cases, may even present a health hazard to those people who live near them. I am concerned that the Gilson Report does not say much about that particular problem. I do not think that this problem is peculiar only to my electorate. It is a widespread problem as there is a prevalence of old, wrecked motor cars in the Northern Territory. I would have liked to have read something from the litter consultant dealing with that problem.

In my own electorate, the people wish to have the problem dealt with. There has been a suggestion that Aboriginal people could be involved in retrieving these vehicles and bringing them to a central point so that the wreckers can come in and crush them. Those people could be paid for any vehicles retrieved. I understand that there is a firm in Adelaide which is interested in bringing a crusher to the Northern Territory which can be used

to dispose of these vehicles which are plaguing many of the communities in my electorate. That would be one effective way of dealing with this problem. It would involve the community and, in this case, Aboriginal people themselves in ridding the environment of old motor cars. At the same time, they would have a source of income. There is enough concern with this problem to initiate a project where the community itself is involved in eradicating the problems that are caused by littering.

In conclusion, I can only re-echo the sentiments that were expressed by the honourable member for Nhulunbuy who said that we ought to get down to tin tacks. I do not agree with him that we should take an extremely hard line on these matters. I suppose our particular role in that regard would be to deal with legislation in this House that, hopefully, will lead to deposits on beverage containers. I also agree with the honourable member for Nhulunbuy that it is important to obtain the assistance and cooperation of Aboriginal people to overcome the litter problem. There is also a wider question of having to obtain the assistance and the cooperation of all people in the Northern Territory to be able to deal more effectively with the problems of litter.

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

Mr OLIVER (Alice Springs): I was not going to talk on this particular subject but I just thought I would make a few comments. I agree that we have problems with containerisation and packaging. The blame has been thrown back at the manufacturers of the containers but the blame for the increase in containerisation could well come back to the advertising companies. Things in gaudy packets sell better than things in ordinary brown paperbags. Whether we have containerisation or not, I certainly will not be going up to have my pan filled with tomato sauce or anything like that. The deposit and the returnable container idea would not work terribly well. If they pay a deposit on a can or a bottle, most people will eventually absorb that as part of the price. I think that the same thing would happen with the returnable container as people would not be bothered by the expense of not taking the thing back.

I was most impressed by roadsigns and litter-collection areas in South Australia and Victoria. These roadsigns are quite colourful and well designed. They indicate the collection points for rubbish and that sort of thing. As you drive along, you receive warning that, after several hundred yards, there is a point where you can throw your rubbish. It does not matter if you hit the net or not as it lands in a general area and is more readily picked up. I do not know how this would apply up and down the Stuart Highway. Certainly, the highways down there are much cleaner. I doubt very much that they drink any less in South Australia and Victoria than we do in the Northern Territory. As there are more towns, there should be more litter. There is no litter whatsoever so I attribute it to that particular point.

After 3 days of the Alice Springs Show, it cost over \$2,000 to have the grounds cleaned up despite the fact that there were ample drums around the place. People just dropped things where they finished with them. I think that it comes back to education, to more disposal areas and to developing a civic pride amongst Northern Territorians. I do not have the slightest doubt that, eventually, we will ease the situation.

Mr EVERINGHAM (Chief Minister): It has been interesting to listen to the various contributions to this debate this afternoon. I should have indicated when I tabled the report that the government has not adopted Mr Gilson's report but has put it forward to seek the opinion of honourable members. It was said by the honourable member for Arnhem that other submissions should have been put forward at the same time but I think that other submissions that

the Territory Parks and Wildlife Commission may have received are the more expected type of submission.

Mr Gilson's report, which was paid for by the beverage-container industry, was a document which was sufficiently provocative to cause members to crystallise their thoughts on this subject and to put them forward in this House. There was little to lose, as the Parks and Wildlife Commission saw it, so I agreed to permit the industry people to commission Mr Gilson on behalf of the Parks and Wildlife Commission. Whether honourable members care to recognise the fact or not, Mr Gilson is an internationally known consultant and his methods, techniques and philosophy have gained some measure of acceptance elsewhere. I do not think we will ever know whether it is the right philosophy for the Northern Territory because I think there has been sufficient opinion expressed in this House this afternoon to make certain that Mr Gilson's recommendations will not be adopted. I believe that this is an issue where, if possible, the government should try to get a consensus of views from all sides of the House and act accordingly.

The only person in the House who has had a great deal of practical experience is the Minister for Health who manufactured Crystal Cordials in Tennant Creek for many years. I thought he put forward fairly realistic views in that, however much we criticise the packaging industry, the consumer in the long run sets the demand.

The honourable member for Arnhem and the honourable member for MacDonnell both seemed to be critical of Mr Gilson for speaking to Mr Lovegrove. I should point out that Mr Gilson spoke to Aboriginal communities - Amoonguna and Warrabri. That is mentioned on page 36 of his report. He also visited Aboriginal camp sites at Alice Springs and Tennant Creek. I hope that the honourable member for MacDonnell will read reports more thoroughly before he criticises consultants unjustly.

The honourable member for Arnhem spoke of the Oregon legislation and I must confess that, when I first approached this subject, I too proposed beverage container deposit legislation. The Oregon legislation applies in a state which is much smaller than the Northern Territory and has a much larger population. This is really our big problem. With great respect to the honourable members for Nightcliff and Arnhem, they spoke from an urban point of view without realising the logistical problems of enforcing that type of legislation in the Northern Territory. Since proposing the beverage-container legislation, I have found that manufacturers will simply withdraw from the small market in the Northern Territory. People in communities outside the major towns and, in some cases, people in the major towns will find that various products will no longer be available to them. This will have a particular impact in the electorate of Arnhem which has some of the greatest transport problems in the Northern Territory. I would appeal to members to have a deal of patience with the efforts of the government in this matter which, I can assure you, will be motivated solely towards reducing the litter problem. However, simplistic solutions that appealed to me in the first instance, and still appeal to me, may not necessarily produce the sort of results that the public generally will desire. I do think that we have to bear in mind the people who live outside the main urban centres.

The honourable member for Nightcliff referred to the fact that the report was tabled or commissioned in August 1978 and the Deputy Leader of the Opposition indicated his abhorrence of more committees, more meetings and more seminars. I really wonder how a man can win in this game. Whilst I abhor committees and am not entirely a devotee of seminars, one finds that if one

attempts to do things without committees and seminars and without all the steps that have been taken in the matter of this beverage-container legislation - consultation with the industry and environmental groups and this report - one is told that one does things without proper consultation. That criticism has come from the honourable member for Nightcliff herself at least once before but, when I try to go through all the stages of consultation to the nth degree, I am a bad boy as well.

I do not have a great deal of sympathy for the packaging industry. Have you ever been to buy a shirt? I prefer the \$5 ones from Woolies because they come with 2 pins in them and they are easy to get undone. When you buy a long-sleeved shirt in some men's stores, you get at least \$5 worth of packaging with it. There is a cellophane front on it, a cardboard box, a bit of card under the collar, a bow-tie on some of them and 500 pins that I usually drop on the bedroom carpet and stand on for the next 3 weeks. I cannot understand why all this is necessary. One thinks: "Let us legislate to stop it because it is totally unnecessary". However, they will just stop sending the shirts to the Northern Territory and, furthermore, if it did catch on around the country, it would put people out of work in these industries. All these other effects, that one really does not want to happen, do happen because our society has become geared to the wishes of the average consumer.

Honourable members can take it that the Gilson Report has been noted by the government but pretty much cast aside. This is a shame because I held out great hopes for Mr Gilson coming to us from the land of the free. He certainly seems to preach a great deal of restriction and infringement on areas that I am sure that people in the Northern Territory would not tolerate. Nevertheless, together with the Minister for Community Development who has responsibility for the administration of the Litter Act, I will keep working towards a consummation which I hope will be to the satisfaction of this House, to the benefit of the Northern Territory environment and to the satisfaction of the people who live here.

Motion agreed to.

#### ABSENCE OF MEMBER

Mr VALE (Stuart): Mr Speaker, I seek leave of absence for the honourable member for Ludmilla for the duration of these sittings. As the Chief Minister mentioned this morning, he is ill and a medical certificate was presented this morning.

Leave granted.

#### ADJOURNMENT

Mr PERRON (Stuart Park): Mr Deputy Speaker, I move that the Assembly do now adjourn.

Mr OLIVER (Alice Springs): Mr Deputy Speaker, I know that what I am about to say is not news but it must be said both for the record and to clarify my own situation. As the honourable members know, I have resigned from the Northern Territory Country Liberal Party. Consequently, I no longer belong to the majority party. Although I have resigned from the Country Liberal Party, I want to make it abundantly clear that my political outlook and philosophy have not changed. One cannot change a lifetime of habit or tradition on what, in the long term, is possibly only a minor issue. For the rest of the term of this Assembly and for future terms, and I say "future terms" because I am

completely confident about coming back again, I will be standing in this Assembly as an independent liberal member. Because of that, Mr Speaker, and despite where I am now sitting, I am not opposed politically to the majority party. I have no doubt that there will be minor areas of disagreement between that governing body and myself and you can rest assured I will exercise to the full my prerogative of independence in expressing my disagreement. In the same vein, I would say to the honourable Leader of the Opposition that neither he nor his opposition members should expect too much political joy from my changed situation. Whilst it may be a complete physical change of sides in this Chamber, I repeat that there is no political change.

I had little option in doing what I did and I can assure you that the decision was not taken lightly. It was a decision that involved my whole family. We spent all of last weekend in discussions and counter discussions, in proposals and counter proposals and in talk and counter talk; it was a long, sad weekend. I do want to place on record my gratitude and appreciation to my wife and family for their support and understanding and for their faith in me.

Finally, I say to the constituents in Alice Springs electorate that I have not changed; I am still the same Rod Oliver to whom you have all grown accustomed and I am still the same Rod Oliver to whom you can readily and easily turn; I doubt that I will ever change. My sole purpose is to serve the electorate of Alice Springs; my road may not be easy and I turn to you now for your continued support. Having an independent voice in the Legislative Assembly will be to your advantage. I assure you that your wishes and desires will be heard in the Assembly and without restrictions imposed by any party discipline. I have worked hard for Alice Springs in toto and I will continue to do that and let nothing, but nothing, dissuade me.

Mrs LAWRIE (Nightcliff): Mr Speaker, I suppose I should preface my remarks by welcoming my colleague on my left; it is rather an unusual place for him to be. I do not for one minute think that his influence will be diminished by the fact that he has joined the other independent in the Assembly.

This morning, I asked 2 questions of the Minister for Lands and Housing concerning an Aboriginal housing project in Alice Springs funded by the federal government and administered by the Northern Territory government. They are both questions which I asked previously on Thursday 31 May. It was fortuitous that, on the way into the Assembly that morning, I heard the Treasurer being interviewed on a nationwide program called "Morning Extra". I was very proud of the comments he made and pleased that he was a minister of the Northern Territory government and therefore expressing a government view. When I arrived in the Assembly, I asked the Treasurer to restate those views in this House and he did so.

I asked, first of all, question 769 without notice:

*This morning there was an item on "Morning Extra" which dealt with a controversy that arose in Alice Springs over the provision of special-ist housing for Aboriginal people and the Treasurer's name was used. Can he advise the House of the nature of the controversy and his role in it and if the people are not to be given the precise type of housing they require?*

He replied:

*The question the honourable member for Nightcliff asked is a matter probably for a ministerial statement rather than an ad hoc answer. The*

*Department of Aboriginal Affairs proposed some time ago to fund the construction of some special Aboriginal housing in urban centres throughout the Northern Territory. The Northern Territory government readily agreed to the Housing Commission having the agency of the construction of these houses and their administration. We felt that, in this way, the Northern Territory government would have some control over the operation rather than reject the suggestion and let the Commonwealth have the Department of Construction build the houses.*

He went on to say that the program was drawn up, the houses would be built in Alice Springs and Tennant Creek as the first stage. He mentioned that a figure of \$1m had been set aside by the Department of Aboriginal Affairs for the program and he went on to say that, in Alice Springs, the contract had been let to build 15 houses and, in Tennant Creek, a contract had been let for a further 5 houses. He spoke of the controversy which has arisen and he said some people have become disturbed at the siting of the houses. This was the Treasurer's comment:

*They are sited in normal urban areas. Some of them in Alice Springs are to replace former welfare houses that are due for demolition. Some are sited on vacant lots and others in the new Head Street subdivision which is yet to be settled. There is some community concern and this is appreciated. However, the project will be proceeding on the basis that there will be a homemakers service established which will be run by the Department of Community Development in the Northern Territory.*

He spoke of the establishment of a homemakers service and of a selection committee which would vet and assess the people chosen as to their ability to cope with that urban positioning. I was very pleased at his answer. I asked a supplementary question: "Was the minister reported correctly on 'Morning Extra' this morning when it was indicated that he had stated it would set a very dangerous precedent to ask neighbours their opinion before moving families into Housing Commission homes and he would not be a party to such an exercise?" His answer was:

*The answer is yes. The Housing Commission does not ask approval of neighbours of any house where it proposes to house any ethnic group - Timorese, Greek, Chinese or whatever. I do not think we should adopt such a practice in relation to Aboriginals. I further understand it was reported on the ABC that I was acting under a federal government directive in regard to Aboriginal housing. I would like to set the record straight. The federal government does not have such powers of direction nor has it sought to influence my decision in this regard in any way.*

I asked this morning at question time for a reaffirmation of the minister's stance on the matter and he affirmed it again totally. He said that the commission would not and does not ask approval of neighbours of any house regarding the housing of any ethnic group. When I asked why this housing scheme was not proceeding in the original manner, the Treasurer, somewhat ill at ease, said that it was proceeding and 10 houses were being built. He did not say 15 this time; he said 10. The facts are that the houses which were programmed are not all being built now at all. In fact, we had a press release, not in the name of the Treasurer but in the name of the honourable member for Gillen - this press release came out while the Chief Minister was overseas - which stated the government had ruled that these homes will not now be built and occupied if they are adjacent to or opposite privately-owned homes.

I find this an incredible state of affairs for the government of the Northern Territory. Of course there was community concern in Alice Springs as

there probably would be in Darwin or other areas. The minister went to some pains in the House on 31 May to allay those fears and to say that, before the people would be placed in the homes, they would be considered able to cope adequately by a group of people especially selected to assess them, including Alice Springs citizens.

Of more significance was his categorical statement, repeated today, that the Housing Commission would not be asking the approval of neighbours before they moved people of any particular ethnic group into Housing Commission homes. That policy has been reversed. The program has been stopped in certain areas and I believe it was a disgrace for the Northern Territory Cabinet to have acted in this manner. I still do not believe that the approval for this reversal of policy was universal.

The Chief Minister has a fairly good track record in Aboriginal affairs. When we had a group of strange people in Katherine who launched public meetings and spoke in strange accents of their rights, the Chief Minister did the right thing and confronted them at a public meeting. He said that the Territory was for all Territorians regardless of colour or creed and that he was there to uphold that fine tradition and would not tolerate these divisions being driven into the community. They were his statements of about 12 months ago. I came out in print publicly supporting him for having made them. I will do that again when he voices such an excellent policy. I heartily approved of the Treasurer's comments upholding the same sentiments.

All those good sentiments have gone out the window. They have disappeared as a result of pressure from a couple of right wing members of Cabinet. A decision was taken when the Chief Minister was away and the Acting Chief Minister was under obvious severe pressure. This decision has brought disgrace upon the government of the Northern Territory and I say that with a great deal of sorrow. I am not particularly aligned with the Country Liberal Party. I am closer to some members than others because there are some members of the Country Liberal Party in this House who are to the right of Johannes Bjelke-Petersen and Chengis Khan. Those people do not include the Chief Minister or his deputy and yet their policies have been overtaken and overthrown. It was a sad day for Alice Springs.

Mr Everingham: Careful Dawn, you are doing us damage.

Mrs LAWRIE: The honourable Chief Minister interjects that I am doing him damage. He has done himself a great mischief in allowing this reversal of a good policy.

Mr Everingham: I have done myself a few in my time.

Mrs LAWRIE: Yes! The Chief Minister has allowed an emasculation of his excellent policy - of the Territory for Territorians regardless of colour - in the way in which this housing program in Alice Springs has been knocked about.

I am absolutely appalled at what has happened not only because I think it is wrong for Alice Springs, for the Territory and for its government but also because it is a dramatic reversal of what was an excellent, well-stated policy.

Mrs PADGHAM-PURICH (Tiwi): This afternoon, I would like to draw a few matters to honourable members' attention. People who have always lived in Australia expect certain things just by virtue of the fact that they have always been doing them. The people who come to live in Australia do so because certain freedoms exist which they do not have in their countries of origin. Some of

those freedoms may seem very ordinary, for example, the freedom of people being able to go into supermarkets and, provided their health is suitable and they have money in their pockets, buying certain foods. Another freedom is that of being able to look after the welfare of young children. Yet another freedom that people seem to expect is the right to go for a little walk in the bush.

I would like to quote from this little yellow book: "Environment Protection Regulations Relating to Jabiru". Those 3 freedoms I just mentioned, and which we normally expect, are rather different if you happen to be working and living in Jabiru. I will read out the company's obligations first. I know that the things contained in this book will not be taken to an extreme of reductio ad absurdum. The company and the engineer in charge out there will use their common sense and see that these things are considered in a sensible light.

I will read out the company's obligations:

*The company wishes to restrict the effects of its operation upon the natural environment of the Ranger project area as much as practicable. It must also comply with the very strict environmental requirements laid down by the Minister for Trade and Resources, in his authority under section 41 of the Atomic Energy Act 1953, and the Northern Land Council in the agreement pursuant to subsection 44(2) of the Aboriginal Land Rights (Northern Territory) Act 1966. Therefore, every person entering or remaining upon the Ranger project area, including every employer and each of their respective employees, dependants or visitors must comply with the conditions and requirements of these environment protection regulations for the protection of the natural environment and the way of life of Aboriginals.*

Under the heading, "Use of Roads and Tracks" it says:

*The driving of vehicles on land, other than recognised roads or defined vehicular tracks, is prohibited and a pedestrian may only use for travelling from place to place recognised roads, defined vehicular tracks or specified walking tracks and may not take shortcuts.*

I am not in favour of indiscriminate bashing down of the bush by four-wheel-drive vehicles. Sense has to be maintained there but, regarding this business of taking short-cuts, a situation could arise where a little boy is going home from school and is bouncing a ball that happens to go into the bush. He cannot retrieve that ball because he cannot take a short-cut to get it. Consider the case of a boy who is bouncing a football. If his football leaves the defined vehicular track and it happens to go into the bush, he may not take a short-cut.

Under the section dealing with the preservation of wildlife, under the heading "prohibitions", it states: "unless authorised by the company". I am pretty certain that the company will exercise common sense and discretion here, but it states: "A person shall not take into, capture, kill or have in his possession any native animal, bird, reptile or fish". By forbidding a person to possess any native animal, bird, reptile or fish, his diet will be rather restricted. If he has taken game quite legally in other parts of the Northern Territory, for example, wild ducks, wild geese or barramundi, he cannot have them in his possession at Jabiru because these are native animals and fish.

"A person may not lay any poisonous bait". This means that one may not lay down any Ratsak for the rats or mice. You may not lay down any Tugon for the flies because this is a poisonous bait.

The next subheading is "firearms and traps":

*A person shall not have any firearms or traps in his possession provided that a member of the Jabiru Gun Club may have in his possession, during authorised meetings of the club, a firearm that is registered with the Northern Territory Police and is at all other times held in a locked arsenal under the custody of the president of the club.*

On the surface, this may seem sensible. Perhaps it is because it means that the president of the club is the sole person in charge of these guns. There are other points to consider. If the Jabiru gun club arranges a shoot with members of other clubs, what would be the position of the members of the other clubs because their guns would not be under the custody of the president of the gun club? Another point to note is that, if a person has a particularly valuable firearm, the question of insurance arises. The question of cleaning these firearms also arises. Is the president of the gun club to be bothered every minute of the day and night by people wanting their guns to clean and maintain them? There is no mention of police firearms at Jabiru. This may be covered in other legislation but, on the surface, it appears that the police may not carry firearms. In certain situations, the public expect the police to protect them by carrying firearms. I hope these situations do not arise at Jabiru.

On the subject of restrictions on pets, it is stated that "unless authorised by the company, a person shall not keep or feed any animal, bird or reptile as a pet". It does not say anything about insects so perhaps a person may keep his fly or the odd mosquito. Consider the case of somebody travelling along a defined vehicular track or a road who happens to find an injured bush animal. What does he do with it? He cannot take it home and nurse it back to health. He cannot put the injured animal out of its misery because his gun is under the care of the president of the gun club. He cannot even hit it on the head with a rock because that might be disturbing the environment. All he can do is leave this injured animal where it is and callously walk away. I hope that the good sense of the company can be relied on but the situation could arise where a small child, whilst playing outside a person's place, was threatened by a brown snake slowly slithering towards it. What should he do? Do you carefully persuade the king brown to go the other way?

The next heading is "protection of plants". It refers to the prohibition of exotic plants: "A person shall not, unless specifically authorised by the company, have in his possession or plant for rehabilitation ...". The expression "have in his possession" is what I am concerned about. When we go to the supermarket, there are many plants that we buy to eat. We buy whole plants like leeks, spring onions, sprouted mung beans, sprouted onions, sprouted potatoes, sprouted sweet potatoes etc. If this is enforced according to the letter of the law, all of those would be prohibited. Also, the top of a pineapple is a plant; unless the pineapples have the tops removed, they would be restricted. People who have eaten pawpaws, apples and citrus fruit will have seen that sometimes you get shot seeds in the fruit. The seed is germinated and you get a root and a shoot which means, if you have a root and a shoot on a seed, it is a plant. In the paw paw, apple and citrus fruit, one may find these plants. Just to be on the safe side, perhaps we should not have any pawpaws, apples or citrus out at Jabiru.

We come to the serious question of preservation of vegetation: "A person shall not, unless pursuant to the company's specific authorisation, cut down, break down, trample, burn, pick, remove or otherwise disturb any native trees or shrubs". Taken sensibly, everybody would agree with that. It also says that there shall be no unauthorised open fires. What happens if a bushfire does happen to blow through? One cannot burn back yet the houses will be mostly in the middle of the bush. Bushfires will be a big hazard there; luckily none have occurred so far.

We turn now to the protection of natural waters: "All precautions necessary to avoid disturbance or contamination of natural streams of water shall be taken. A person shall not, unless specifically authorised by the engineer, disturb any natural waters". I had in mind the little boy who went to look for his ball and ended up disturbing the natural waters. Well, he can't.

We come down to the next heading which relates to the protection of the air: "Dust control measures shall be employed at all times in accordance with the directions from the engineer". This would be sensibly done. "The release of any substance, including insecticides, fungicides or herbicides into the open is strictly prohibited unless pursuant to the engineer's specific authorisation". No doubt the engineer will give his specific authorisation because, if he doesn't, it would mean that you could not use Aeroguard and the mosquitoes would certainly have a heyday. You could also have lots of flies if the flies dare to go to Jabiru. With the restriction on the use of insecticides, you could not possibly protect native bush plants. If you had a native fig tree which had woolly aphid, you could not treat it. You could not even break the offending branch from some poor, native fig tree.

I raise these matters today to show that the people out at Jabiru do have rather different conditions under which to live than the people in the rest of the Northern Territory yet it is only about 150 miles from where we are now.

Mr COLLINS (Arnhem): Mr Deputy Speaker, as the honourable member for Nightcliff stated earlier, it is marvellous how flexible principles can be, particularly when you are on the home straight to an election. When we heard in this House assurances from the honourable Treasurer that the housing program in Alice Springs was not to be interfered with, I believed him and believe even now that, when he made those statements, his obvious sincerity was so clear that I have no doubt that they were his sentiments and probably still are. The justice, common sense and human rights involved in not asking permission from neighbours was so obvious that, along with the member for Nightcliff, I applauded the Treasurer when he made those statements. Some considerable mention was made of a petition which was circulated in Alice Springs which clearly, because of what subsequently happened, did have an effect on the government's decision-making. The fact that that petition collected 1500 signatures in Alice Springs gave a clear warning to the government that they could expect a reaction at an election and caused the principles to go out the window.

Since that statement was made, I have received many inquiries as to what this petition was. I had not read it at that stage but I subsequently obtained a copy of it. I am not going to apologise to this House for reading out the Treasurer's answers again because a number of people in the community want these statements to appear together in the public record. The honourable member for Nightcliff, as she has already stated, asked the honourable Treasurer 2 questions on 31 May. I am quoting from the Hansard:

*This morning there was an item on "Morning Extra" which dealt with a controversy that arose in Alice Springs over the provision of specialist housing for Aboriginal people and the Treasurer's name was used. Can he advise the House of the nature of the controversy and his role in it and if the people are not to be given the precise type of housing they require?*

The answer was quite a lengthy one and the minister gave this House a categorical assurance that the program would proceed as planned because the tenants were going to be vetted. To quote the honourable minister: "A homemaker service will be established which will assist people to fit in with the urban community".

During the same question time, the honourable member for Nightcliff asked a second question: "Was the minister correctly reported in 'Morning Extra' this morning when it was indicated that he had stated it would set a very dangerous precedent to ask neighbours their opinion before moving families into Housing Commission homes and that he would not be party to such an exercise?" The minister replied:

*The answer is yes. The Housing Commission does not ask approval of neighbours of any house where it proposes to house any ethnic group - Timorese, Greek, Chinese or whatever. I do not think we would adopt such a practice in relation to Aboriginals. I further understand that it was reported on the ABC that I was acting under a federal government directive in regard to Aboriginal housing. I would like to set the record straight that the federal government does not have such powers of direction nor has it sought to influence my decision in this regard in any way.*

Those are fine sentiments indeed which, again, I vocally applauded in this House. I subsequently heard an interview with the Treasurer on the ABC which I have on tape. It was one of those dreadful interviews with politicians where they know they have done the wrong thing. It comes clearly across in the interview that their government has committed an act which is totally indefensible, totally unsupportable, and they are simply trying to slip and slide their way out of it. The conclusion to that interview is a classic example of the kind of performance on the part of politicians that gives this profession such a very bad name. The interviewer asked the Treasurer if, in consideration of his categorical statements in the House only 2 weeks before, the government's current stance could not be considered as a complete disownment of those principles and a complete reversal of its policy. The reply of the Treasurer was, and I am sure he will remember it, that it was not at all a reversal of government policy but merely in line with the practice, which the government adopted in so many other issues, of being flexible. I have that interview on tape and it does the Deputy Chief Minister and his government no credit whatsoever.

An article appeared subsequently in the Nation Review of Thursday 26 July. It started off with the statement: "With little publicity, if any, outside central and northern Australia, what has been called one of the ugliest cases of racial prejudice in recent memory has arisen in the past 2 months". It went on to detail exactly what did happen and the current situation with regard to the housing. It was supported again this morning by the contradictory statements of the Treasurer. The article went on to detail the objections and protests that arose from Aboriginal groups in Alice Springs to the action of the government. I quote again from the article:

*In reply to the Aboriginal statement, a Citizens for Civilized Living spokesman said they were surprised at the irrelevant and irrational response. "They do not seem to have read our petition", he*

said. "These groups seem to think our objection is based on race. We have made no mention of any person's race but rather of living standards".

The article went on to say:

*The statement by the 5 Aboriginal groups was promptly telegraphed to the Northern Territory Chief Minister in Darwin on 6 June. The Minister for Lands and Housing, Marshall Perron, telexed Wenten Rabuntja with Mr Everingham's reply: "The Northern Territory government will continue to support the special housing program for Aboriginals as a means of assisting such tenants' families to adapt to urban living," Perron said ... Amongst other concessions, the new proposals of the government acceded to the citizens group's most pressing demands that no houses for Aboriginals be erected adjacent to or opposite existing private residences. The original scheme had been for 15 specially designed new homes to be built this year and five existing homes ...*

*The turning point seems to have come late in June when the Citizens for Civilized Living or Alice Springs Citizens Association as it later called itself secured the active support of the member for Gillen, Mr Jim Robertson. The representations made in Darwin by Mr Robertson, himself a resident of the east-side area where the houses for blacks are not wanted, are believed to have brought about the eventual backdown by the Northern Territory government.*

*Senator Chaney, the federal Minister for Aboriginal Affairs, visited Alice Springs soon after the Territory government announced the changes. He described the conflict and the unilateral alterations to the scheme as "unfortunate" but he agreed to the amended program.*

On the ABC interview, the Treasurer totally disowned this petition, but all the rhetoric in this House avails him nothing when the facts are there for anyone to see. After listening to that interview and realising the cheap political nature of that interview, no person would be convinced by any of the arguments the Treasurer put up. It was clear that representations from Alice Springs' members had swayed the government and it is clear that, prior to that, there is no doubt that this petition with 1500 signatures had indeed affected the members and influenced them to take that sort of stand.

This petition is significant in another very real way. The petition was written by Mr Ted Skuse who is a senior partner in the law firm of Mildren & Partners and runs their Alice Springs office. This is of some significance because, as indicated in the last budget papers of the Northern Land Council, Mildren & Partners collect from the Northern Land Council an annual retainer of \$96,000 of Aboriginal money. A senior partner of the same firm of solicitors that has a retainer of \$96,000 per annum of Aboriginal money prepared this petition. For the sake of the many people in the community who have asked me for the wording of the petition - I only received it last week - I wish to read it into the public record. I must say that I would not go near Mr Skuse with a 10-foot pole after reading this petition. Irrespective of the sentiments in this petition, which are scurrilous and abhorrent, I am very pleased also that Mr Skuse is not a parliamentary draftsman because the wording itself is quaint. The petition reads:

*To the honourable the Chief Minister, Mr Paul Anthony Edward Everingham Esq. Sir, whereas it is proposed by your government, through the medium of the Housing Commission and funded by the Commonwealth government through the Department of Aboriginal Affairs, to convert and erect*

certain special houses for the accommodation of tenants of a sub-standard nature who do not comply with the minimum standards of acceptability as tenants by the Housing Commission and whereas the undersigned will suffer loss, injury, noise nuisance and injury to health as a result and will otherwise be damnified as set out hereunder and whereas there are viable alternatives for housing of the said substandard tenants which your government has not explored therefore your petitioners will suffer loss if this plan proceeds because your proposed tenants are (a) unemployed and unacquainted with the work ethic; (b) unused to suburban living and incapable of performance of simple household duties which are the minimum requirements for suburban living, eg, the collection and removal of their own domestic garbage and litter; (c) ignorant of the importance of hygiene; (d) tribal or quasi-tribal so that a single family unit is not their customary family group, rather an extended family numbering scores of humans and canines; (e) unacquainted with bylaws and reasonable standards of Australian urban behaviour; (f) subject to addiction to alcohol, your petitioners will be injured as follows:

1. Householders who follow the Australian work ethic cannot maintain surveillance on their property during working hours.
2. Petitioners who are shift workers, without whose assistance such essential services as power, ambulance, fire and police would not operate, will suffer acutely from noise and pollution emanating from your special houses.
3. Ordinary working families will suffer noise and disturbance during ordinary sleeping hours from the noise created by these unacceptably large domestic units.
4. Your petitioners anticipate suffering health problems arising from the accumulation of large deposits of unsanitary domestic rubbish.
5. Your petitioners will suffer stench problems and the putrefication of the air they breath arising from the tenants' inability to remove rubbish.
6. Your petitioners will suffer a litter problem in the streets of Alice Springs and damage to the aesthetic beauty of the town.
7. Your petitioners foresee that you intend to construct numerous special houses as aforesaid and to undermine the quality of life, general health, happiness and quiet enjoyment of life, therefore depriving your petitioners of the minimum expectations of any Australian following the working ethic and contributing taxes to Her Majesty's Government.
8. Your petitioners in the immediate neighbourhood will suffer financial loss in the lowering of the value of their homes in which they have invested their savings gleaned by years of careful effort in adherence to the aforesaid working ethic and notwithstanding the ravages of Her Majesty's tax collection.
9. Your petitioners will suffer financial loss in the inability to sell their homes or let their homes at reasonable prices and rates.

10. *Your petitioners in the Gap area are distressed by the fear that the continued peaceful integrated existence of the races will be disrupted by your crash assimilation program and friction between the races will thus be fostered and fanned.*

11. *Your petitioners are concerned that your proposed tenants do not desire to cope with the responsibilities and stresses of suburban living and your tenants will therefore suffer unhappiness.*

*Your petitioners pray that you cease forthwith the program on which you have embarked, you cease to threaten the quality of life of your humble petitioners and that you arrange for the construction of a village to house your tenants away from the township of Alice Springs so that your petitioners will not be damnified as aforesaid.*

The inclination of anyone reading that is to laugh but it is not funny. It is not funny because this government of the Northern Territory responded to it; it is not funny because the members from Alice Springs responded to the 1500 signatures attached to it; and it is not funny because the legal firm that prepared this disgraceful document collected as a retainer \$96,000 a year of Aboriginal money from the Northern Land Council. It is not funny at all.

Mr Deputy Speaker, I felt it was essential to read the entire contents of that disgraceful document into the public record. I believe that the sentiments of the article in the National Review are correct: this whole act of the Northern Territory government does constitute one of the ugliest cases of racial prejudice in recent memory. I believe that the government of the Northern Territory will stand forever condemned for their action.

Mr ROBERTSON (Gillen): Mr Deputy Speaker, while I would prefer to speak as the member for Gillen, I suppose I have to speak as minister because I am involved in this as a minister with my colleague, the honourable Minister for Lands and Housing. Let us get a few things into perspective. Firstly, the government has not changed its policy in respect of the development of special Aboriginal housing in Alice Springs. The program is continuing. Fifteen houses will be built with Department of Aboriginal Affairs money for the housing of Aboriginal people who can demonstrate to the commission not that they would necessarily conform to the normal standards "of Housing Commission tenants" but that, with assistance, they are able to cope with urban living. It would be quite unfair to Aboriginal people or any other people if they were to be placed in an urban community in Alice Springs or anywhere else without any prospect whatsoever of being able to cope with that sort of living. It is for this reason that the government quite some time ago initiated, with the special series of programs in mind, the original concept of the Homemaker Service. I personally approached Cabinet, as Minister for Community Development, on 2 occasions to obtain increases in funds for that service and my Cabinet colleagues agreed to that. As a resident of Alice Springs, I certainly consulted at length, night and day and at weekends, with the Minister for Lands and Housing on this very important matter. I am glad that the subject has been raised here.

The honourable member for Nightcliff seemed to think that this all came out of some incredible Chengis Khan attitude of Robertson, the right wing member of Cabinet. If the Chief Minister thought that to be the case, his decision to give me 2 humanitarian portfolios in succession is extraordinary.

The honourable member for Arnhem seems to think that it was the petition which had an effect on the decisions - decisions which were not a reversal of

policy but a settling of policy. Incidentally, the words "the government has ruled" have never occurred in any press statement whatsoever. The minister exercised normal ministerial responsibility in respect of an area for which he was ministerially responsible. It was a settling of a policy, not a rule, and it was not a reversal of policy. I am quite sure that the the Minister for Lands and Housing will explain all of this tomorrow in some detail as he quite obviously does not have the opportunity today unless we were to defeat the motion for adjournment I doubt he would choose us to do that.

I state categorically in this House, fully aware of the conventions involving false information in parliament, that I have not at any stage read that petition. I was shown the petition. I commenced reading one clause of it and, in front of 150 people who were very hostile to me and the government program, I threw that petition down in front of the person who handed it to me. That person has been named as the solicitor in Alice Springs who wrote it. I publicly refused to sign it and the first time I learned of its full contents was here today. I am quite certain that the citizens of Alice Springs who signed that document had no idea of what was in it. As I have said in this place before, people will very often sign on the principle of the petition and also to get rid of people. I said that in respect of the casino proposal and I suggest it again here. Many good, sensible, decent citizens of Alice Springs signed that petition. I am quite certain that those same people would have flatly refused, as I flatly refused, to sign that document had they known the disgusting contents within it. I do not care whether that hurts me politically; I think the document is disgraceful.

The reasons for the decision had nothing to do with the public meeting I attended. Officers of the Central Land Council, of legal aid and people who are known to be my political enemies congratulated me in the street on the attitude I took at that public meeting amidst a small but, nevertheless, vocal, howling mob. Many people were there because they were genuinely concerned and they behaved themselves. I stood in front of them. I defended this program then; I will defend it again before all comers. I did it as a minister of the government with the approval of the Minister for Lands and Housing. I defended it in front of people who were demanding that we withdraw it. I categorically stated on that occasion that the government would not be withdrawing it. The honourable member for Alice Springs was present and I believe the honourable member for Stuart was also present. I know that the honourable member for MacDonnell was not because he does not really care about these things anyhow. The fact is that I defended the program; I said it will continue. I outlined my belief that these people are, as are all people, entitled to have proper housing.

What developed was not a result of that meeting but a result of extensive consultations by the honourable member for Alice Springs, the honourable member for Stuart and myself with many people. A member of my personal staff, Mr McGorman, was also involved in it. Incidentally, he deliberately sought the views of Aboriginal people and was told that the attitude which the government was taking, while morally correct and while they applauded it, would not work. That came from Aboriginal people and the reason is simple. In order for an assimilation program - for those Aboriginal people who quite rightly want to join an urban community - to occur, 2 things must happen: the Aboriginal people themselves must be satisfied that they are able to do it and there must be harmony.

As far as I am concerned, whether it is right, in purely moral terms, that values of property will be affected because an ethnic group moves in next door, because a poor family moves in next door or because a noisy family moves in next door - I am talking about whites - is irrelevant. The cold, hard, nasty, commercial fact is that it does. It is unfortunate and regrettable but it does.

Even if it did not, the essential thing is that the people alongside of whom these places are located believe that it would. If they believe it, potential buyers would also believe it. The purchase of a home is the single, most important investment in peoples' lives. The important thing is that they believed that, by arbitrary government action, their life investment would be affected. Now I am not so much concerned with that but rather that their belief will reflect on their new neighbours. There is no way in the wide world that this program had one snowball's chance in hell with that sort of ill-feeling developing between neighbours.

Since then, I have spoken to many people on this issue. Alice Springs people are in favour of it. Only a very small fringe group object to it as a matter of principle. What they tell me is: "For God's sake, do it so that it will work and so that we can help without fear or apprehension". The moment there is resentment by neighbour A of neighbour B, neighbour B will feel it and, if that person happens to be struggling to cope with a change in life-style from a camp, he will have problems. These people need all the help they can get - not fear, not apprehension, not hostility, not resentment but good, neighbourly friendship. You are not going to get that as long as people are afraid of it. I rapidly came to realise this. The program, as I said, is going ahead.

Might I say in answer to the slur in the newspaper that I come from the east-side that that is a damnable falsehood. I live on Bradshaw Drive in the Gillen area and it is absolutely, physically impossible in the Gillen area to build one house of this nature because there is no damn land in the subdivision. The program has no personal motivation whatsoever. The program could not affect my electorate as there is no space there for it. I took that view in consideration of the overall interests of the Alice Springs community.

It is all right for the honourable member for Nightcliff to sanctimoniously squat in her plush suburb of Nightcliff, if that is the way she views it, and criticise a massive concern. I was not pulled up once in the street by normal, sensible, stable citizens about the casino issue. I was stopped every 4 or 5 feet at the height of this issue not by people saying, "what are you doing bringing Aborigines into Alice Springs?" but by people saying "Do you know what you are doing? Do you know the consequences of bringing the Aboriginal people in to a position where there is going to be resentment?" It does not help the Aboriginal people to be thrust into a situation of resentment.

After advice to the minister responsible for this area, after very painstaking research, after very serious thought and with more sincerity than I have ever been able to muster, I went to that meeting and told them that I did not think they knew what they were talking about and that the government was going ahead with the program. It was no act of cowardice in the face of petitions or anything else. I fronted them and said what I believed was proper at the time. I did the same thing when I advised the Minister for Lands and Housing. It is not a matter of being right-wing or left-wing; it is a matter of being part of the Alice Springs community, of representing that community and of trying to safeguard the interests of that community whether they be black, white, Greek, Italian, Australian or English. That was my sole concern and it was the sole concern that my colleague took on board - harmony not disruption.

Mr ISAACS (Millner): Having listened to the last speaker, it is quite clear what differentiates the Country Liberal Party from the Australian Labor Party. The Minister for Education made it quite clear that he was faced with

a choice between cold, commercial fact and morality and he chose the former. If that is the way he wants to make his assessment, so be it. It certainly gives a clear indication of the difference between his government and a Labor government.

We have also learnt a few new words here. The government is going ahead with its program as it has not changed its policy. Having listened to that speech from the Minister for Education, one would have thought: "Well, what is all the fuss about?" They have certainly not chosen to implement their policy. The Minister for Education asked how you convince the people of Alice Springs that what the government is doing is right. If ministers showed a bit of strength, a bit of frankness and a bit of openness, as suggested by the member for Alice Springs, they might be able to convince the people of Alice Springs that the program is right.

Mr Deputy Speaker, you would be aware of the crusade undertaken last year by the member for Stuart who was concerned that funds being given to the Central Australian Aboriginal Congress were used for political purposes. I am sure members would be aware of the encouragement he was given by the Minister for Education. He had written to the Prime Minister about the matter of using congress funds for political purposes and, of course, the person in his sights was the member for MacDonnell, the Deputy Leader of the Opposition. Members would recall the statements made by the member for Stuart and the member for MacDonnell in the September sittings of the Assembly. We would all recall the statement by the Deputy Leader of the Opposition in November when he made it known that it was brought to his attention that an account of a political nature was paid out of congress funds and that he would immediately reimburse that amount. As soon as it was made known to him, he made a statement to this Assembly.

I believe it was a brave and honest statement.

We would all recall too the stupid and petulant response from the Minister for Education. What happened was that that situation was left up in the air because the member for Stuart said on 13 September:

*In summary, Mr Deputy Speaker, what we are intending to do in Central Australia is to ensure that those funds are properly spent on their intended recipients. The Prime Minister's reply to me on the 21 August said: "I am concerned about the contents of the declaration and I have asked the Secretary of the Department of Aboriginal Affairs to investigate and report to me". There is at last some positive hope for the future that we will get the organisation straightened out.*

That was in September. You will recall that we sat on 21 November and continued for a fortnight. The Deputy Leader of the Opposition made his statement on Tuesday 21 November and that was followed in the afternoon by the statement from the Minister for Education. Our wonderful friends opposite are always so honest about these things and always want to make sure that the truth is seen and that everything is carried out to its logical conclusion. What they failed to do was to give the final letter from the Prime Minister. The Prime Minister did write to the member for Stuart on 16 November. I am not stating that the Minister for Education knew of the contents of the letter within 5 days of its being sent; I am quite certain that he did not. However, I am also quite certain that the member for Stuart did know the contents of the letter, certainly by the end of those sittings. If he had read the contents out, he would have displayed honesty. The contents of the letter have been made available to me and the Deputy Leader of the Opposition has been entirely vindicated by none other than the Prime Minister. I don't know whether he

is very proud of that but he has been vindicated. I will read into the public record the reply from the Prime Minister dated 16 November 1978:

*Dear Mr Vale,*

*I refer to my letter of 21 August. I have had a thorough investigation made by the Secretary of the Department of Aboriginal Affairs into the matters raised and the two statutory declarations which accompanied your letter to me of 4 August 1978.*

*Whilst I have been informed that the substance of the allegations have not been established, the investigation indicates there is a need for a review of the present rules governing the provision of Commonwealth grants to Aboriginal communities and organisations. The Minister for Aboriginal Affairs has set such a review in train and he will make known the results to you. Thank you for bringing these matters to my attention.*

*Yours sincerely,*

*Malcolm Fraser.*

Despite all the hullabaloo that went on by the member for Stuart and the Minister for Education about funds being spent by congress for political purposes, none other than the Prime Minister gave the Deputy Leader of the Opposition a completely clean bill of health.

Mr DOOLAN (Victoria River): Mr Acting Speaker, I would like to speak on the subject of Aboriginal employment. As members of this Assembly will be aware, an alarming situation exists in the Territory in regard to the shockingly high rate of unemployment on Aboriginal settlements and missions. Frankly, I cannot see it improving in any shape or form in the foreseeable future. Bearing this in mind, I would like to propose that some kind of a special committee of inquiry be set up to investigate the situation because it is soul-destroying for large numbers of employable people to be sitting around with nothing to do day after day and week after week.

It is traditional for Europeans to accuse Aborigines of being shiftless and lacking in application and concentration. With a little thought, it is very easy indeed to disprove this theory. If one watches an Aborigine hunting, it is quite obvious that a tremendous amount of concentration goes into the hunt. To observe an Aboriginal man standing in the bow of a canoe with a harpoon poised hunting a dugong and remaining immobile for anything up to half an hour is an object lesson of a remarkable ability to concentrate. Consider also the amount of concentration which goes into an Aboriginal bark painting or carving. In most paintings, apart from the human and animal figures depicted, there are usually numbers of concentric circles and myriads of dots and other markings. It is marvellous to see the amount of concentration which goes into the painting of these beautiful and intricate pictures.

I believe that these examples of Aboriginal powers of concentration alone should prove that Aboriginal men do not really lack the ability to apply themselves or to give concrete evidence that they possess immense powers of concentration. The same may be said of Aboriginal women if you observe them in such exercises as basket weaving. Although it is not a traditional skill, we find today that some Aboriginal women excel as artists. One could not disagree that many Aboriginal people are not happy with many European jobs and find it difficult to cope with punching the bundey and set hours of work. Despite this, in normal circumstances in traditional life, they would work for

longer than a 40-hour week in hunting and food gathering in order to exist.

The committee which I envisage would look mainly at 2 particular aspects of Aboriginal employment. Firstly, it would look at the type of work which they enjoy and excel at and which coincides as closely as possible with the type of work which they perform in traditional Aboriginal society. Secondly, the committee could look at a system of staggered work hours and piece work. Anyone who has employed Aboriginal people will know that "contract" is a magic word with them. They prefer to work under a contract for lesser money than work to a set routine of hours for more money. The committee would therefore investigate the possibility of organising work whereby Aboriginal people could work hours which best suited them and be paid accordingly.

I feel certain that a discerning committee with a knowledge of Aborigines would relieve the Aboriginal employment situation which, at the present time, is dreadful. There are fields in which the Aborigines excel, for instance, as stockmen. Mustering cattle seems to take the place of their original hunting activities and it is noticeable that Aborigines on cattle stations, despite the squalid conditions which they are forced to endure, are usually a far happier group of people than those living on settlements or missions. The reason is quite simple. They are carrying out work which suits them and which they enjoy and, most importantly, which they can see as meaningful. I urge that the government form a committee along the lines I have suggested before all incentive to work is lost forever by those people for whom there is no suitable work available and, indeed, no work of any nature available on settlements and missions and for fringe dwellers around the town.

Finally, I must say that I was quite astonished to listen to the extraordinarily paternalistic speech just made by the Minister for Education. At one stage, he mentioned assimilation of the Aboriginal people. For his information, he is something like 20 years behind the time. The policy of assimilation, which was propounded initially by Paul Hasluck, was introduced into the Territory just prior to Harry Giese's arrival here which was some time back. The policy of assimilation was later supplanted by a policy of integration and again later by one of self-determination. If one thinks as the minister does, I would suggest that I must now ask my neighbours if they are likely to resent me before I move in and I am sure that no black would ever have moved into a white school anywhere.

Mr TUXWORTH (Barkly): Mr Deputy Speaker, I would like to raise an issue that has been of concern to me for some time. It relates to policy and I direct my remarks particularly to the Leader of the Opposition and his colleagues on the other side of the House. I have mentioned on many occasions in this House that the mining industry has a very long lead-time in bringing to fruition an ore body, has a high level of investment and the people who work in it move around the countryside to work on mining sites. We have a situation arising in the Northern Territory that I would like to refer to as an erosion of confidence. Both the exploration and the mining side of the industry and the people working in the industry are suffering from an erosion of confidence in their future plans because of the lack of policy by the Labor Party on the uranium issue in the Northern Territory.

I believe it is very important for the Northern Territory and the continued development of mining that both parties in the Northern Territory have a policy on uranium mining that will allow an orderly, controlled progression of development in the industry that will benefit the whole community. It is very difficult to get this when there is a great deal of uncertainty looming on the horizon because one or other party in the political scene does not have a policy. There appears to be a great deal of confusion over the Labor Party's

policies so far as uranium mining, exploration and sale is concerned. I would like to ask the honourable Leader of the Opposition and his colleagues in the Northern Territory to state, quite unequivocally, what their policy is and where the Northern Territory is going to go should their party ever come to power. I am not for one moment considering the possibility that next June or July the Labor Party would come to power but, in the period following that, it is quite likely and we are only looking then at a period of 5 to 8 years. In the mining industry, 5 to 8 years would not see the development of a mine from the drilling to the extraction phase. It is not a great deal of time and I think the uncertainty should be cleared up.

People working in the uranium province have said to me already: "We think this place is okay and we would like to stay here but what is going to happen to us if you fellows go out of government and the Labor Party comes in? We are not quite sure where we are going to go because their policy is not well-defined". It appears that this sort of situation could exist in any political party over any particular issue. I do not think the Country Liberal Party would be terribly different from others in that sense but I think it is an issue on which we should get a clear definition from the Labor Party.

The confusion comes from the fact that the federal conference of the Labor Party has taken a stance on uranium that says that it is declaring a moratorium on uranium mining until problems of nuclear proliferation and waste disposal are resolved. That is fine. As I understand the structure of the Labor Party, the federal body at the national conference is the supreme governing authority of the party whose decisions are binding on every member in every section of the party and it has 6 state and 2 territorial branches. If that is the case, that is fine. The confusion arises when the leader of the Labor Party in the Northern Territory says that he believes that uranium mining should continue in the Northern Territory if the Labor Party comes to power. That seems to be in conflict with the will of the national body. The confusion is further added to when the member for Arnhem, who is an avowed opponent of uranium and is the shadow minister for mines and energy, has quite openly said in this House and in other places that his every effort as an opposition member will be to grind uranium mining to a halt and see that it never occurs.

It is very difficult for people in the industry at any level to have confidence in where they are going over the next 5 to 10 years while this uncertainty remains on the horizon. I would like to put it to the Leader of the Opposition that he can help to develop the Northern Territory considerably by coming out with a good pro-Northern Territory, pro-development, pro-uranium policy that would enable people in the industry to have a little more confidence. If the Leader of the Opposition is in a position to take a pro-uranium stance in the Northern Territory, I would welcome it, not just because I am a pro-uranium man myself but because it would give continuity and security to people working in the industry. If he can do this, a public statement would be welcome. If he can explain how to reconcile that with the thoughts of the central body which seems to have control over these things, that too would be appreciated. If the Labor Party in the Northern Territory says it is not prepared to adopt a pro-development, pro-uranium mining stance in the Northern Territory, that is fine - they are entitled to that - but I think it is not unreasonable that they say to the electorate: "this is where we stand and this is what you can expect". It would be of particular benefit to the people working on the ground in the uranium province.

I can appreciate that, within the structure of the Labor Party, there are pros and cons for uranium mining and I believe that, in the course of time, the pros will win out. It is quite obvious that their party, like any other party,

can be expedient because in Queensland we see the situation where the ruling body of the party has not got its way because Mary Kathleen chugs along merrily turning out uranium at a great rate.

Mr Collins: And at a great loss.

Mr TUXWORTH: It is true that in previous years it has been operating at a great loss but I think you will find their most recent balance sheet has put them in the black.

I would like to put it to the honourable members of the opposition that the Territory would benefit very greatly from their quite clearly stating their position on uranium mining in the interests of everybody in the community.

Mr EVERINGHAM (Jingili): Mr Deputy Speaker, it was with some personal regret that I heard the statement made by the honourable member for Alice Springs this afternoon and it was with even greater regret that I received his resignation yesterday morning. I would like to say that I certainly have enjoyed working with the honourable member. What has occurred to him is a matter of some pain to me, but I think it is a timely reminder to all members, other than independent members, that we are but creatures of our party branches, who hand out endorsements, and also of the people we represent. It can happen to any of us if the party branch is of the view that it has a candidate of superior ability to represent the interests of the people of a constituency. Nevertheless, I am pleased to note that the honourable member for Alice Springs has not changed his philosophy as some people from time to time appear to do rather like a chameleon. This encourages me to believe that the Northern Territory government and the honourable member for Alice Springs will be able to cooperate on most issues.

The honourable member for Fannie Bay asked me a question in relation to the allocation of the responsibility for price control and the administration of the Tenancy Act to the Northern Territory Treasury rather than to the Commissioner for Consumer Affairs. When I first made my administrative arrangements in July last year, I believed that it was probably best that these matters be all in one group under the consumer affairs responsibility. On reflection, it seems to me that we are entering a time when matters of price control, especially in the energy area and possibly the rent area, may need to be under the purview of the department which is responsible for economic policy generally in the Northern Territory because prices and rents are basic costs to the whole community. I believe that the necessary expertise is located best in the Northern Territory Treasury. This department is responsible for the general economic position of the Territory and these 2 matters are of considerable concern in that area.

The honourable member for Victoria River spoke on the question of Aboriginal employment. I am pleased that he did raise that subject because, on 24 July last, I wrote a letter to all Aboriginal community councils, the land councils, the Department of Aboriginal Affairs, the Northern Territory Tourist Board, the Northern Territory Development Corporation and all Aboriginal liaison officers employed by the Northern Territory government. It is a long letter which I would seek to incorporate into Hansard rather than read it out.

Mr Deputy Speaker, I seek leave for the letter to be incorporated in Hansard.

Leave granted.

24th July, 1979

Distributed to:

All Aboriginal communities in the N.T.  
All Land Councils  
Department of Aboriginal Affairs  
N.T. Tourist Commission  
N.T. Development Corporation  
All Aboriginal Liaison Officers

79/576

You have already discussed with me and my officers on many occasions ways and means by which you, your Council and the community can take steps to make self-management and self-reliance a reality on Aboriginal communities and to find out how industries can be developed which will help to do away with "welfare handouts". You have also expressed concern on how better employment opportunities can become available for Aborigines in each of the home communities, particularly for your younger people.

My Government and I are keen to help you wherever we can to meet the goals and aspirations you may wish to set and to help you understand the various options you may have to consider in achieving these goals.

In this direction, I would now like to discuss with you and your Council the future of the tourist industry in the Northern Territory and the part Aborigines may want to play in fostering and expanding this very important industry.

Presently the tourist industry provides many jobs for Territory people and tourists spend at least \$45,000,000 each year coming to the Territory and in the Territory. All of this money helps to build the Territory into a much better place by providing better facilities and services such as better airstrips, better places to stay and better passenger and freight transport services.

We want people to visit the Territory and experience the good way of life we have without harming that way of life or the natural environment.

We also want our visitors to gain a real understanding of the Aboriginal people, to learn to appreciate the Aboriginal culture and to realise that Aboriginal people have so much to offer which can enrich the whole of Australian culture. This cannot be achieved successfully if the Aboriginal people themselves are not involved and it is in this involvement that I would like to have your views and ideas. I am aware the uncontrolled tourism can be a danger to your privacy and can become a threat to areas where sacred sites are located and where aspects of your culture can be harmed. I believe however that by controlling tourism to the satisfaction of the Territory people and under conditions acceptable to Aboriginal communities, there can be real benefit to all concerned and a further move towards financial independence. For instance, growth in tourism could mean increased, more frequent and better air services to Aboriginal communities.

You may be interested to learn that the Tiwi people of Bathurst and Melville Islands are looking at ways and means by which the tourist industry can be expanded to take in visits to these islands where the Aboriginal people expect to feature fishing, hunting and shooting, Aboriginal dancing and art and crafts as well as creating new sales.

outlets for the goods they produce. They are confident that more people will get to know about their pottery and silk screen printing with Tiwi designs, and will want to buy them.

A group of Tiwi people are now visiting some of the tourist centres in North Queensland to see what is being done and how the Aboriginal people there are becoming more involved in the tourist trade.

There are many issues to consider as we work to encourage the controlled growth of tourism in the Territory, particularly in terms of the problems you may see in the greater involvement of Aboriginal people in the industry. I sincerely believe however that by working together there is a great opportunity to develop a first class income producing activity which, as I have said, will assist you and your community to move towards economic self-sufficiency.

I would like you to tell me what you think about the development of this industry in your area and any ideas you may have. If you want someone to tell you more about it I shall be quite happy to send one of my officers to your community to discuss the matter directly with you.

Kind regards,  
Yours sincerely,

Paul Everingham .

Mr EVERINGHAM: The main points of the letter are that the development of tourism is a means by which many Australians have achieved a good measure of financial self-sufficiency. Self-sufficiency helps develop self-confidence and self-esteem and is preferable to welfare handouts. Much Aboriginal land is suitable for the development of tourist activities. There are risks to Aboriginal communities in the development of tourism and these need to be taken into account and, therefore, development should be undertaken in a way which will reduce these risks. Tourism is a means of assisting other Australians to learn about and respect the culture, customs and indigenous skills of Aboriginal people so that the varied way of life which many Aboriginal people seek may be understood, appreciated and supported by their fellow Australians. The Northern Territory government seeks the views of Aboriginal people on the development of tourism and offers extension services where Aboriginal people may wish to explore the possibilities at greater depth. The ultimate decision is one for Aboriginals to make. Other points I made were that tourism is a labour intensive industry and it has flow-on effects for remote communities such as improving the likely transport access to them in that it could increase frequencies of aeroplane services, barges for freight etc since more freight would be required.

However, it seems that the letter has met with some opposition from the honourable member for Arnhem. It really amazes me. When a suggestion is made that will create employment if it is taken up by some Aboriginal communities that might be interested in engaging in tourism, it is misrepresented by the honourable member for Arnhem to the Aboriginals. It seems to me that it is the "in" thing today to exploit the minds and fears of Aboriginal people just as viciously as they were exploited in other ways in bygone days.

The letter was widely distributed. It is in no way confidential. I believe that the Northern Territory government's initiative is one that should appeal

to many communities. It is one that will help alleviate the unemployment situation in Aboriginal communities by leading to construction work and by leading to work in running the concerns connected with tourism such as accommodation, restaurants, handcrafts, transport etc. Yet that letter has been talked down by the honourable member for Arnhem in his electorate. If the government is to take an initiative which is in no way binding on any Aboriginal community, then surely you would think such a step would be welcomed by honourable members opposite. You would think that they would go to lengths to explain to their constituents that they do not have to be in it and that they can locate the tourist places where they want, away from the particular community, not near sacred sites and not near any special place.

I am afraid we just do not seem to be able to win. We tried to encourage a means for employment in remote communities and, let us be realistic, those means are fairly limited. Tourism provides one of the major hopes for future employment in these communities and what happens? We are undermined, we are white-anted and we do not get anywhere because it is an initiative of the Northern Territory government. Whenever we do anything that may help employment, for example, the small ships facility that the whole north Australian coast is crying out for, the Australian Labor Party is in there trying to knock us down and stop the whole thing because they know that, the more employment opportunities that we create, the greater the disenchantment of the public generally with Labor policies.

Motion agreed to; the Assembly adjourned.

Mr Speaker MacFarlane took the Chair at 10 a.m.

### PETITION

#### Redevelopment of Arafura Hostel Site

Mrs O'NEIL: Mr Speaker, I present a petition from 103 residents of the Fannie Bay and Parap areas expressing their concern at the proposed plan for the redevelopment of the former Arafura Hostel site and the proposed extension of Hudson Fysh Avenue. The petition bears the Clerk's certificate that it conforms with the requirements of Standing Orders. I move that the petition be received and read.

Motion agreed to; petition received and read.

*To the honourable Speaker and members of the Legislative Assembly of the Northern Territory, the humble petition of the undersigned residents of Darwin respectfully sheweth that the proposed plan in respect of the redevelopment of the former Arafura Hostel site is undesirable in that it would create a major traffic collector road through a quiet and peaceful residential area (including a 4-way intersection with a major traffic distributor, that is, Ross Smith Avenue) and result in danger to residents, particularly young children, increased noise and disturbance and decreased land values. Your petitioners therefore humbly pray that the government abandon its proposal to create a major collector road by the extension of Hudson Fysh Avenue through the former Arafura Hostel land and directly aligning with Gregory Street and your petitioners, as in duty bound, will ever pray.*

### MESSAGE FROM THE ADMINISTRATOR

MR SPEAKER: Honourable members, I have a message from the Administrator which reads:

*I, John Armstrong England, the Administrator of the Northern Territory of Australia, pursuant to section 11 of the Northern Territory (Self-Government) Act 1978 of the Commonwealth, recommend to the Legislative Assembly a bill entitled the Appropriation Bill (No. 1) 1979-80 to provide for the appropriation of certain sums out of the consolidated fund for the service of the year ending on 30 June 1980. Dated this 22 day of August 1979.*

*J.A. England, Administrator.*

### APPROPRIATION BILL NO. 1 (Serial 315)

Bill presented and read a first time.

Mr PERRON (Treasurer): I move that the bill be now read a second time and, in so doing, it is my pleasure to present the Northern Territory government's budget for 1979-80.

The Appropriation Bill now before honourable members is being presented to this Assembly in accordance with the Financial Administration and Audit Act and the Northern Territory (Self Government) Act. The revenue and expenditure provisions in the bill have been framed with careful regard to the specific problems and priorities of the Territory. This, the second budget introduced

by this government, dramatically demonstrates the increased level of financial responsibility now assumed by the Assembly on behalf of the people of the Northern Territory. For the previous financial year, the Assembly appropriated \$350m. Proposals in this budget total \$516. I believe the budget confirms the sound financial basis for the development of the Territory. It maintains the programs and policies of the past year and also breaks significant new ground.

The Territory is in a period of economic growth. Measures contained within the budget will sustain that growth and provide for expansion of services to cater for our rising population. The mining industry, which is the Territory's most valuable, is expanding rapidly and its growth, along with the other vital economic sectors of pastoralism, agriculture, tourism, fisheries and industrial production, will be further stimulated by these proposals. The optimism and confidence generated by the devolution of power from Canberra will continue and, through this budget, the still very new Northern Territory government will maintain the pace and challenge of reshaping and broadening the Territory's long-neglected economy. The maintenance of high levels of capital expenditure, the development and diversification of the economic base and the provision of necessary infrastructure to cater for growth will do much to create jobs and attack the unemployment problem.

As in the rest of Australia, unemployment in the Territory is at an unacceptable level. Undoubtedly, this situation is aggravated by the effects of inflationary and unemployment trends transferred to the Territory from other parts of Australia. More specifically, on the unemployment front, I am pleased to announce that this budget provides direct incentives to local industry via significant payroll tax concessions. The amendments to the Payroll Tax Act that I now foreshadow will benefit some 600 small businesses in the Territory. The level for the payment of payroll tax will be raised to \$12,500 per month. Honourable members will recall that I informed the Assembly last November that payroll tax reform would be a feature of this budget.

Another innovation in this budget is the creation of a new home loans scheme. This scheme will particularly help the low income earners to own their own homes and it will also have a direct beneficial effect upon the housing construction industry. The scheme has been structured to relate interest rates directly to incomes. The government will launch this scheme with an allocation of \$10.5m in the first year of its operation. I will provide further details on both the payroll tax concession scheme and our breakthrough in housing finance later in this speech.

Commonwealth financial relationships: I have mentioned the sound financial approach established in this budget. Honourable members will recall that the last financial year was called the transitional year and, in accordance with our agreement with the Commonwealth, their subvention in that year was a single global amount of \$250m. The Memorandum of Understanding sets out the financial arrangements that now apply to the Northern Territory. The memorandum provides that 1979-80 is the base year for future funding by the Commonwealth. Under this arrangement, recurrent funds will escalate by the percentage increase in net personal income tax collections multiplied by the percentage increase in the Territory's population. Capital funds will vary by the same proportional increase as that which applies to the states from year to year. For 1979-80 the total Commonwealth payment to the Territory is \$442m.

We have cost disabilities not shared by other parts of the country and I would like today to register the Northern Territory government's appreciation of the recognition of that fact by the Commonwealth. I am reminded of the words of the Premier of New South Wales during a recent visit to Darwin when he said it was a responsibility of the federal government to support the

Territory. For other Australians, he said, it would be short-sighted and parochial to be resentful of Northern Territory funding levels. Mr Wran said it was in Australia's interest for the federal government to cushion the burdens of a large land mass and a small population. His comments were an echo of the view of this government and the view of the Commonwealth government under the leadership of Malcolm Fraser.

The keynote of all this is a most important factor, namely, predictability. The Northern Territory now has an assured level of funding and, with it, the capacity to provide governmental services and the infrastructure support essential for entrepreneurial development. The day of stable financial funding has arrived in the Territory. I cannot overemphasise just how important that is to all of us.

In this context, honourable members will quickly appreciate the significance of the base funding figures in this budget. The overall level of funding was settled by agreement between the Commonwealth and the Northern Territory governments. We made sure, before reaching this agreement, that there was full recognition of the above average population growth we are facing and that the 1979-80 subsidy for the Electricity Commission has yet to be finalised and agreed. This year's subsidy may prove to be as high as \$45m. The requirement for fair and equitable treatment of the Territory was, of course, set out in the Memorandum of Understanding which this government successfully concluded with the Commonwealth upon the grant of self-government on 1 July 1978.

I have been referring to Commonwealth assistance in terms of principles and, in this our base year of funding arrangements, it is appropriate for me to give a brief overview of the precise forms of financial assistance provided to the Northern Territory under the base year arrangements.

General purpose revenue assistance is the single, most important form of Commonwealth payments to the Territory. It is composed of 2 elements: firstly, the tax-sharing entitlements, represented by the general purpose recurrent grant and, secondly, the special additional assistance grant. One essential point about these funds is that they are discretionary and can be applied to any form of expenditure within our legislative powers. They are the primary source of funds for the provision of government services and amount to \$207m and \$20m respectively.

As already noted, the tax-sharing entitlement will be relatively predictable in future years. In particular, this will shield us from the uncertainty of Commonwealth budgetary considerations.

The special additional assistance grant is a temporary addition to the Northern Territory's general purpose funding. In accordance with the memorandum, this grant will phase out over the next 6 years or be replaced by the special grant of financial assistance upon recommendation of the Commonwealth Grants Commission. The Commonwealth has honoured its undertaking to provide funds sufficient to maintain the standard of service at the level existing at the date of transfer of the various responsibilities to the Northern Territory.

At the same time, I must emphasise that the funding from the Commonwealth is not sufficient to upgrade those areas of service that are below a reasonable standard. Thus, the areas which we consider are not up to standard are subject to a separate study being conducted at our request by the Commonwealth Grants Commission. We expect supplementary funding by way of a special grant from the Commonwealth on the recommendation of the Grants Commission to raise the overall standards of these deficient services to a level that is comparable with those in the states.

During 1978-79, we applied for this grant of special assistance in relation to 1979-80 and the Grants Commission has completed its preliminary work. This part of their inquiry, referred to as "the advance assessment", was conducted within the constraint of an understandable shortage of past and present quantifiable and comparable data. The data problem will only be corrected in the course of time. In these circumstances, the Grants Commission has recommended an advance grant of \$10m. As we are guaranteed \$20m by the Commonwealth, the recommended advance grant of \$10m does not apply. I will report further to the Assembly on this matter upon receipt of the commission's full report.

**General purpose capital payments:** This form of capital funding can be applied to any area of capital expenditure the Northern Territory chooses. It is also the largest source of our capital funds and is subject to the same rate of growth as applies to capital funds provided to the states. Additional capital funding will be available to us in particular circumstances as is the case with the states. There are 2 elements to the general purpose capital assistance. One third of these funds are in the form of grant funds. The remaining two thirds are in the form of repayable loan monies which attract interest charges. The general purpose capital payment to the Territory for 1979-80 is \$107m.

**Specific purpose payments:** In addition to these discretionary funds, the Commonwealth provides funds which are tied specifically to a particular on-going program. Funds are also provided for certain one-off programs from time to time. Our agreed on-going specific purpose payments should remain reasonably stable, though there may be variations from year to year depending upon the Commonwealth government's own budgetary priorities. They are well established as a normal feature of the state-type financial model under which we now operate. Some are payable under special agreements, some under legislation, whilst others are subject to Commonwealth departmental appropriations.

Specific purpose payments feature in both the recurrent and capital outlays in the budget. Hospital cost sharing is one of the most significant specific purpose recurrent payments. Road funding is one of the important specific purpose capital payments. The specific purpose payments to the Territory in 1979-80 are \$66m for recurrent purposes and \$42m for capital purposes.

**Budget overview:** I will now briefly outline measures contained in this budget which give effect to the government's policies for promoting the continuing development of the Northern Territory. Because of its remoteness, the Northern Territory's transportation links with the rest of Australia are clearly of vital importance. Negotiations continue on improvements to road, rail, sea and air transport and announcements have or will soon be made concerning initiatives in these fields. Nevertheless, road transport continues to be the basis of the Territory's supply system and, in recognition of this, the government proposes to spend \$26.7m for the construction of new roads and \$11.5m for maintenance. This is an increase of some \$11.8m on the provision made in last year's budget and clearly represents a gigantic step to overcome the Territory's road problems.

\$8.1m has been provided for the agricultural and beef industries, \$1.6m for fisheries development and \$1.3m for tourism. A further \$4.1m has been allocated to the Territory Development Corporation and, after allowance is made for the opening balance in the corporation's trust account, this will provide the corporation with cash exceeding \$5m for its operations in 1979-80. \$9.9m has been provided as recurrent and capital expenditure for the continued development and control of parks, reserves and wildlife.

The importance to the Territory of the mining industry has been recognised by the provision of \$5.1m to the Department of Mines and Energy, an increase of 30% over 1978-79.

\$1.4m has been provided for the hire and installation of a new computer to improve the government's administrative and management information facilities.

The allocation to the Department of Lands and Housing has been increased to \$7.7m, a rise of 20%.

Capital works: 1979-80 will see a continued rise in the level of activity and employment throughout the construction industry. This government will be approving new contracts worth \$80.5m making the total value of works in progress during the course of the year \$173m. In addition to these capital works, the Housing Commission will be undertaking a program of \$32m, the Territory Parks and Wildlife Commission will continue its capital improvements to parks and reserves to the value of \$1.4m and the Electricity Commission has budgeted for capital works of \$27.5m. Thus, the total value of the Territory's capital works program will be in the order of \$234m, an exciting prospect for the Territory's continued growth and development.

I now turn to the government service functions. The education function was transferred to the Territory government on 1 July this year. In 1978-79, the Commonwealth government allocated \$61.3m for the operations of its Northern Territory education division. The Territory budget now provides \$71.9m, a significant increase of 17%. In addition, \$17.9m has been provided for repairs and maintenance and for expenditure on new works and works in progress. The total outlay for education in 1979-80 is therefore \$89.8m, a clear indication of my government's high priority for education.

The Territory's health services will receive an appropriation of \$67.5m for the year, an increase of 23% which accommodates the opening of Casuarina Hospital.

Water and sewerage services will be funded by an appropriation of \$29m, an increase of 26%. In line with the government's campaign to encourage conservation of water, we will this year increase the rebate scheme as an incentive for those who use water sparingly. Honourable members will recall that \$75 is currently charged for an annual basic water allowance of 750 kilolitres with a \$15 rebate for those who use 300 kilolitres or less. The new rebate scheme is as follows: 300 kilolitres or less - a \$15 rebate will apply; between 300 and 400 kilolitres, a \$10 rebate will apply; between 400 and 500 kilolitres, a \$5 rebate will apply. This benefit will accrue to the current year's consumption and the deductions will appear on the 1980 consumer accounts.

The subsidy to the Electricity Commission will be at least \$30m as compared with \$23m last year. Indications are that, after allowing for projected fuel price increases, the actual Commonwealth subsidy for 1979-80 may prove to be of the order of \$45m. I indicate that the government has requested the Northern Territory Electricity Commission to investigate and recommend a scheme to provide financial incentive for Territorians to install solar power units in their homes. This initiative is linked to our concern relating to escalating oil prices. Any easing on demand of reticulated power by greater utilisation of solar energy will be of benefit to us all.

\$26.6m is provided for community development. The amount includes provision of \$6.1m for Aboriginal essential services and \$4.3m for local government activities. Grants and subsidies totalling \$1.8m will be made

available to community organisations. Funds provided in this budget for Aboriginal essential services will enable the Northern Territory government to provide a range of services to Aboriginal communities. Negotiations are continuing regarding the further transfer of responsibilities for Aboriginal communities to the control of the Territory government.

Fire services will receive \$4.1m. \$17.4m is to be appropriated for the Northern Territory Police, an increase of 17%.

I will now highlight some specific aspects of our budget proposals.

**Primary industry:** The Department of Primary Production has been restructured to ensure that positive assistance and advice is provided to primary industry within the Territory. This will assist in the development of the potential of the Northern Territory in agriculture, beef, fishing and other primary industries. After adjustment for one-off payments in 1978-79, the department will receive an increase in funding of \$2.1m, up 24% to \$10.7m. Provision of \$200,000 has been made for the implementation of projects recommended by the Board of Inquiry into Feral Animals. The brucellosis and tuberculosis eradication campaign - \$2m. For the purchase of a fisheries patrol vessel for patrolling of fisheries in the Gulf of Carpentaria and waters east of Croker Island \$421,000 is provided. The vessel will also assist in providing extension services in remote coastal communities. The department will continue its programs orientated towards the development and expansion of cereal and grain cropping in the Northern Territory.

**Parks and Wildlife:** In 1978-79, the commission expended \$9.1m. This budget provides for an increase of \$800,000 to maintain the impetus generated last year. The allocation includes \$2.2m for capital expenditure and plant and equipment. \$350,000 has been provided for continuation of the urban beautification program. It is important to note here that construction at Yulara Village will continue in 1979-80, including major new works such as the airstrip, internal road system and commencement of the powerhouse. Capital projects sponsored by the Territory Parks and Wildlife Commission are listed in Budget Papers Nos. 4 and 5.

**Museums and art galleries:** After allowing for non-recurring expenditures, this budget provides for an increase of \$99,000, or 18%, to \$649,000 for the operation of the Museums and Art Galleries Board. A major government initiative will be realised when construction of the new museum complex commences.

**Mining:** Mining is the Territory's most valuable industry, worth about \$208m in 1977-78 according to the latest figures available. The Territory is fortunately placed in terms of mineral deposits and, in what will be a very significant development, uranium will soon join the major exports from the Territory of bauxite, manganese, gold, bismuth and copper. Recent developments outside the Territory place added emphasis on our critical dependency on imported fuel. Investigations are being carried out into coal reserves and hydro-power supply for the Territory. Known gas reserves and the Mereenie oil deposits in Central Australia are vital energy assets.

This budget provides \$15m for the functions of the Department of Mines and Energy, an increase of \$1.2m or 30%. This, added to the 35% increase last year, is evidence of the Territory government's determination to support the discovery and development of the mineral resources of the Northern Territory. In conjunction with this, the government is reviewing its mining and royalties policies with a view to new mining legislation being introduced in this House.

Construction of the new township of Jabiru has now commenced in the Alligators River region. The Commonwealth has provided \$1m as a specific purpose payment to enable the Northern Territory government to meet the capital cost of the town's social infrastructure development during 1979-80. The Jabiru Town Development Authority will undertake a capital program of \$7.6m to be funded through public borrowings by the Northern Territory government. On the Jabiru recurrent expenditure side, this government is responsible for the normal state-type functions within the uranium province, including police, health and education. In order that these costs would not be a burden on the Territory taxpayer, the Commonwealth, in accordance with the Memorandum of Understanding, has incorporated \$1.5m in our base recurrent funding.

Concerning environmental protection in the uranium province, honourable members will note that the expenditure on this function does not form part of this budget. Following agreement with the Commonwealth, \$3.3m has been budgeted by the federal government for environmental protection programs. Units of the Department of Mines and Energy, Transport and Works and the Territory Parks and Wildlife commission will undertake, in accordance with these agreed programs, the supervision, monitoring, assessment and control of the environment in the region. Expenditure by the Territory government on these activities will therefore be fully reimbursed by the Commonwealth.

Territory Development Corporation: The Territory Development Corporation is responsible for the encouragement of industrial development. In order to achieve this objective, the government has budgeted additional resources to the corporation. This will provide a range of services to industry, including direct loans and government guarantees. Honourable members will note that the Appropriation Bill now before the House includes \$4.1m for the corporation's activities. This amount will be added to by the opening balance in the corporation's trust account, making total funds available in excess of \$5m for industry development this year.

Housing: The government will provide a total of \$38.8m this financial year to the Northern Territory Housing Commission. A further \$9.2m is available to the commission from the following sources: public borrowings by the Northern Territory government - \$2m; cash sales of houses - \$3m; cash carried forward from 1978-79 - \$3.2m; and anticipated operational surplus - \$0.5m. Total funds available therefore to the commission are \$48m compared with \$46.6m in 1978-79.

I will now detail this year's allocation for housing. The general public housing program for 1979-80 provides \$17.4m for works in progress and for the commencement of 339 new dwellings. This program will reduce waiting times in some centres and provide for 218 dwellings in Darwin, 4 in Katherine and 13 in Nhulunbuy. A sum of \$1m has been set aside to provide rental rebates for those tenants who are unable to afford current rentals and to reimburse the commission for loss of concessional interest.

Public service housing: The program for housing employees of the Northern Territory government provides \$15.9m for works in progress and for the commencement of 163 dwellings in Darwin, 82 in Alice Springs and 29 in other centres. Last year, this housing program was confined to Darwin.

Aboriginal housing: The Commonwealth has provided \$0.7m for the construction of special houses for Aborigines. This is supplementary to the special housing program for Aboriginal people provided by the Commonwealth through the Department of Aboriginal Affairs.

Cyclone concessional loans: \$2.5m is provided for the 6% cyclone concessional loans scheme. Although applications have closed, qualified applicants may take up loan entitlements until 31 December 1980.

Home loan scheme: The government is introducing an innovating new scheme for Territorians to finance home ownership. \$10.5m has been set aside for this new scheme. \$8.1m will be provided within our own budget, \$2m will be raised via public borrowings by the Northern Territory government and \$0.4m will be made available from a projected operational surplus on loan operation. The home loan scheme replaces the existing Home Finance Trustee loans. It will also be used to finance the sale of Housing Commission loans to tenants. The scheme will be established by regulation and will be administered by the Housing Commission. Summarised details in pamphlet form will be forwarded to every mailing address in the Northern Territory within a week. The new scheme is primarily directed towards low income earners, though persons on middle or higher income will be able to participate in the scheme which will generously supplement finance obtained from banks and other private lending institutions. The maximum loan available under the scheme is \$44,000. This will enable a person, with an income as low as \$175 per week and with \$1,000 deposit, to purchase or build a house costing \$45,000. This will open up a home ownership opportunity to hundreds of families to whom home ownership was previously an impossible dream.

The scheme incorporates the system of variable interest rates which are income-geared and time-geared. The initial interest rate payable by a borrower will depend on his or her income. Each year, the rate will be increased by 0.5% until a common ceiling rate is reached. If necessary, the loan funds will be secured by a second mortgage. The income-geared starting interest rates are designed to permit a total monthly repayment on first and second mortgages which will not exceed one week's salary or wages during the initial year of the loan.

Lands: It is estimated that \$6.4m will be received from land sales, leases and rents during 1979-80. Honourable members will be aware of the government's announced policies regarding direct land grants and the excision of land from rural leases for other uses. These initiatives are already contributing to new development projects within the Territory.

To facilitate the turn-off of blocks, the government is encouraging private enterprise developers to participate in the construction of new Territory subdivisions. Our intention in this approach is to achieve greater participation by private investment in Territory development. Provision is made for essential headworks to enable Karama and Leanyer subdivisions to be privately developed.

Following a June sale of residential land in Darwin, a further residential land auction will be held in October. 100 allotments in the northern suburbs will be offered for sale. Land suitable for town houses and flats will also be made available at that time. Additional land will be offered for sale. Land suitable for town houses and flats will also be made available at that time. Additional land will be offered for sale in January and April 1980. Some 342 allotments have been allocated to the Housing Commission in Darwin and most of them will become available in the first half of this financial year. In addition, a large cluster housing site is available to the commission in Malek. It will accommodate around 100 dwellings in an exciting and innovative scheme.

It is expected that measures being undertaken by the government will serve to reduce pressures which might otherwise have occurred in Katherine. These

include relocation of the Transport and Works depot and proposals for small rural living allotments.

The budget will provide for the commencement of the Weaber Road subdivision in Tennant Creek to provide over 40 allotments. A rural subdivision program immediately adjacent to Tennant Creek will provide up to 40 allotments.

The supply of land in Alice Springs is considered to be sufficient to meet current demands.

Mr Speaker, I would remind the Assembly of my proposal to bring forward a bill proposing a simplified tenure system for Territory land. Public comment on this land reform measure will be sought prior to the introduction of the bill.

The capital works program: Government outlays on capital works and on housing programs have a very real impact on employment and the maintenance of economic growth in the Territory. Full details of the proposed capital works program for 1979-80 are set out in Budget Paper No. 5. The value of works-in-progress as at 1 July 1979 was \$92.5m. In 1979-80, the government will put out to contract new proposals valued in the order of \$80.5m making the total value of works in progress during the course of the year approximately \$175m. It is estimated that the cash required against this program will be in the order of \$90.6m.

I will now summarise the regional impact of the new works proposed for this year and detail some of the significant items. The planned capital works expenditure by regions in 1979-80 is as follows: Darwin - \$58.5m; Gove - \$1m; Katherine - \$7.7m; Tennant Creek - \$8m; and Alice Springs - \$15.4m. The significant works program for 1979-80 includes stage 2 of the landbacked wharf in Darwin, the overpass at Bagot Road - Stuart Highway intersection; and road-works of major importance including the Mainoru-Bamyili, Jay Creek-Hermannsberg and the Plenty Highway stage 1. Major improvements are programmed for upgrading the Stuart and Barkly Highways. Other important new works include the museum and art gallery complex, the airstrip and road access serving the Yulara Tourist Village, the water pipeline to the abattoirs at Tennant Creek and the provision of additional water supplies, sewerage, barge-landing facilities, airstrips and other essential services to Aboriginal communities.

Tourism: Tourism is one of the fastest growing industries in the Northern Territory. The government clearly recognises the social and economic benefits of tourism and is currently introducing legislation for the formation of the Northern Territory Tourist Commission which will succeed the Tourist Board as it is now constituted. This commission will be responsible for administering an industry which, in the previous financial year, was worth in the region of \$45m to the Territory with a subsequent flow-on value of around \$110m. The government is putting together the infrastructure of a world-class tourist industry and I am confident that the \$1.3m allocated in this budget will provide the stimulus to develop the industry's potential to an even greater degree than that achieved last financial year. The increase of \$133,000 is 11% above the allocation last year. The expansion of the board's activities into Queensland with a full bureau in Brisbane and agency representation in Cairns has meant that active promotion of the Northern Territory as a tourist destination is now being carried on in all mainland capitals except in Western Australia and the ACT.

Health: The estimated outlays by the Department of Health in 1979-80 total \$67.5m. This represents an increase in the order of \$12m or 23% over the last financial year. The major contributing factor to this increase is

the provision of \$4.5m for the expansion of the Darwin Hospital Group through the planned opening of the Casuarina Hospital in March 1980. The 1979-80 budget allocation includes the full year's effect of funding additional community-based health services commenced in 1978-79. The program for upgrading the Aboriginal community health facility and services will continue and the school dental service will be expanded.

In accordance with the provisions of the Health Insurance Act, the Commonwealth will contribute \$21.6m to the cost of running hospitals in the Territory. This Commonwealth contribution under the hospital cost-sharing agreement covers increases in hospital charges announced recently by the Commonwealth to apply from 1 September throughout Australia. I will explain the effect of these charges in the revenue portion of this speech.

Education: Provision has been made in the budget for the transfer of the education function from 1 July 1979. The total budget for the Department of Education, the Darwin Community College, the Community College of Central Australia and the Northern Territory Apprenticeship Board is \$71.9m. In 1978-79, the Commonwealth government spent \$61.3m on these activities. The increase of \$10.6m represents 17% overall and is clear evidence of the Territory government's intention to improve the educational service. Specific provision has been made for school libraries, the opening of Dripstone High School, the first year of operation of the Katherine Rural College, the introduction of recommended Northern Territory curricula into primary schools, a secondary correspondence course for students of grades 8 and 9 and the operation of a school at Jabiru.

School children in isolated areas: The provision of suitable educational facilities for children in isolated areas has always been a matter of concern to this government. During 1978-79, the government adopted a policy of subsidising these students in respect of text books, fares, travel, correspondence and boarding allowances through a per capita grant reimbursement scheme for Northern Territory students attending non-state boarding schools in Queensland. In 1979-80 these allowances are expected to cost \$330,000, an increase of \$71,000 over last year.

Important on-going programs include the training of Aboriginal teachers, Aboriginal adult education, improved staffing formulae for grades 11 and 12 and the upgrading of the Alice Springs college into the Community College of Central Australia.

The Darwin Community College has budgeted for increased student numbers in award courses with emphasis on vocational training. Special attention is being given to trade courses which will cater for the training of apprentices from outside Darwin.

Police: Funding for the police has increased by \$2.5m or 17% to a total of \$17.4m. New initiatives include coastal surveillance and the police cadet scheme which were approved in 1978-79. These will be maintained. Provision has been made to commence a vehicle replacement program and for a full year's operation of the new air wing. Since 1 July 1978, this government has increased expenditure on police services by \$6m or 53%.

Emergency services: \$549,000 has been provided for emergency services in 1979-80, an increase of approximately \$200,000 or 57% over the previous year. Provision has been made for the commencement of an air-sea rescue organisation.

Community development: The cost of these services in 1979-80 is estimated to be \$26.6m, an increase of 21% or \$4.6m after adjustment for special once-only payments. I will now detail some of the specific provisions under this heading for the benefit of honourable members. Concessions for pensioners - \$281,000; the Northern Territory Homemaker Service - \$120,000; and the Aboriginal Community Workers Program - \$185,000. Provision is also made for a multi-lingual information service to non-English-speaking residents of the Territory.

\$4.3m has been provided as assistance to the 4 local government authorities. This covers operational subsidies, capital grants on a dollar for dollar basis and establishment grants. Included in the total general assistance of \$4.3m is an amount of \$1.1m representing disbursement to councils under the personal income-tax-sharing arrangement operating for the first time this year. I draw to honourable members' attention that the \$6.5m provided to councils last year included several large capital payments of a non-recurring nature. An example is the government contribution to the mall in Darwin. Excluding these payments, the 1979-80 provision in fact represents an increase in the level of general assistance to councils.

The commissioning of the new Darwin gaol will permit the implementation of a substantially improved treatment and training program for prisoners. Specific provision has been made for the revision of the services provided by the Northern Territory Parole Board.

Community, youth and recreation organisations will benefit from this budget including provision of subsidies to encourage participation in Territory and national sporting championships. There is provision for continuing assistance for community art and cultural groups including the preservation of historic buildings and sites, the Araluen Trust and the upgrading of libraries.

Provision of essential services for Aboriginal communities: The complete transfer of state-like responsibilities for town management and public utility functions for Aboriginal communities is still under discussion with the Commonwealth. The 1978-79 budget provision for essential services to these communities was \$4.6m. This year the amount is \$6.1m, an increase of \$1.5m or 33%. This is largely attributable to the increased landed cost of fuel oil used for power generation. The new works program for essential services for these communities of \$9.2m represents a substantial increase over last year's amount of \$5.3m. The emphasis in the program on water supplies and sewerage disposal is tangible evidence that the Northern Territory government is tackling the basic health problems confronting Aboriginal people.

Racing and gaming: Provision is made for the control of the Territory's first casino scheduled to open in September and for a study into the development of the racing industry. A Casino Inspectorate Unit has been established within the Racing and Gaming Commission to control all aspects of casino operations on behalf of this government. Proceeds from bookmakers' turnover tax, licence and permit fees for 1979-80 will be \$770,000. Of this amount, some \$300,000 will be set aside in the commission's trust account as a racing industry assistance fund.

Office of the Auditor-General: Provision is made in the budget for continuation of the agency service provided by the Commonwealth in 1978-79. The assessed cost of services for this financial year is \$387,000.

Staffing: Major reviews of staffing resources initiated by the government were undertaken during 1978-79 and will continue in 1979-80. In total, \$162m has been provided for the staffing of the Northern Territory Public Service in the current financial year. This amount includes provision of \$49m to fund the staffing requirements from the newly transferred function of education. Excluded from this figure are the staffing needs of the Electricity and Housing Commissions, the Port Authority and operational trust funds operated by the Department of Transport and Works. These are separately funded. The 1979-80 allocations are sufficient to maintain the existing levels of staffing. Some staff increases will occur to provide for important governmental initiatives such as the Territory Development Corporation and the casino inspectorate and functions which have yet to be transferred such as the Supreme Court. All proposals for staff increases are subject to scrutiny by a Cabinet committee. Additional information on salaries is contained in other budget papers.

Remissions to the Commonwealth: The Northern Territory government is required under the financial arrangements to make remissions of principal and interest to the Commonwealth in relation to certain assets and advances transferred from the Commonwealth. Remissions totalling \$14m will be made in 1979-80 in respect of repayments of advances to the Housing Commission, repayments of advances to the former Home Finance Trustee and assets transferred in respect of electricity, water and sewerage undertakings and staff housing. The annual cost to the Territory of debt charges in the early years will be met by a specific purpose payment to the Territory equal to the debt charges. \$3.4m has been provided by the Commonwealth for this purpose in 1979-80.

Mr Speaker, I now turn to the revenue estimates. The government has been able to determine its expenditure priorities in a manner which avoids the need for additional state-like taxes. Indeed, as stated earlier, the government will relieve the payroll tax burden on some 600 small businesses, thus providing an incentive to local industry to undertake additional employment and attract new business. The principal amending reform to the Payroll Tax Act is that the total exemption already in force on monthly payrolls of \$5,500 will rise to \$12,500. In annual terms, wage and salary bills totalling \$150,000 will be free of payroll tax compared with the present level of \$66,000. I am pleased to say that this \$150,000 payroll tax exemption threshold is the highest in Australia and reflects this government's policy to assist industry and improve employment prospects. This tax relief will save employers \$1.1m per annum.

There will be no change in the existing scale of charges for services except electricity and hospital charges which are tied to intergovernmental agreements. Honourable members know that our electricity charges are tied to the north Queensland tariffs and will only be varied in accordance with changes within the north Queensland tariff from time to time.

Concerning hospital charges, the Territory government participates in the hospital cost-sharing agreement with the Commonwealth in the same way as the states. As previously mentioned, the funding for 1979-80 includes a provision for revised hospital charges to apply as from 1 September. The general order of increases as announced by the Commonwealth is 25%. I must emphasise that this does not affect the provision of free public ward hospital care for uninsured patients. In the case of insured patients, the increased charges will be covered by the new schedule of fees under the hospital insurance schemes.

Close examination of the estimates of revenue will show that, in 1979-80, additional revenue will be generated by the natural growth in the revenue base accompanying population growth and development. I now detail the sources of revenue totalling \$516m.

The Commonwealth, within the terms of the Memorandum of Understanding, has provided \$442m for the Northern Territory government. Additionally, the Territory government will raise an estimated \$74m from its own revenue resources. Territory receipts from its own sources are: taxes and charges and miscellaneous receipts - \$47.6m; loan repayments by statutory corporations - \$19.9m; interdepartmental recoveries - \$5.4m; and opening balance of the consolidated fund - \$1m. Details of the \$47.6m for Territory taxes and charges and miscellaneous receipts are as follows: land sales, leases and rents will contribute \$6.4m and water, sewerage and health rates \$5.7m. Payroll tax will add \$14.6m. I point out that over half of the payroll tax estimate will be met from government payrolls. Income from motor vehicle registration and licences is expected to be \$2.6m and the combined returns from stamp duty charges, racing taxes and fees, soccer pools, tattsлото and liquor licences and fees is \$4.9m. Interest earned is estimated to amount to \$4m. There are other areas of revenue-raising amounting to an estimated \$9.4m which I have not specified. These are detailed in the accompanying budget papers and include fees collected by the Registrar-General, sales of government property, departmental revenues and minor miscellaneous receipts.

To summarise, the Northern Territory budget for 1979-80, totalling \$516m, will be funded from the following sources: opening balance of the consolidated fund - \$1.24m; Territory taxes, charges and miscellaneous receipts - \$47,585,700; interdepartmental recoveries and loan repayments by statutory corporations - \$25,390,300; and receipts from the Commonwealth - \$442m.

In summary, the broad thrust of the budget is to encourage small business, to enable the expansion of private enterprise, to employ more people in the private sector and to establish new business. I believe we have provided for all of these through the reduction in the payroll tax threshold and an expanded Territory Development Corporation with expertise and funding capacity to provide loans and guarantees to business enterprise and generous support for our basic industries.

This budget also encourages families to move towards home ownership. The new home loans scheme provides a tremendous opportunity which has not existed to date, and does not exist in the same form anywhere else in Australia, for families to move towards owning their own homes. In particular, it provides the opportunity for low-income families to become home owners.

This budget gives close attention to the people in the rural areas by improving the Territory's road system and by provision of an education allowance to isolated children. A major effort is being made through the budget to improve our road system, to improve conditions in the rural and isolated areas for the people living there and to open up areas to the tourist industry. The overall effect upon the Territory's economy will no doubt be substantial.

Your government is concerned about the rising cost of services to wage and salary earners. In this regard, efforts have been made to eliminate unnecessary expenditure and we have avoided increasing state-like taxes and, to the extent possible, we have not increased charges except those covered by intergovernmental agreements. I would like to reiterate that the Territory is free of a number of burdens faced by taxpayers elsewhere in Australia. As a result of previous initiatives by this government, the Territory still has no road tax, no land tax, death duties have been abolished and there is no tax on first home purchases in the Territory. We also have the lowest stamp duty in Australia. School councils, household insurance and workmen's compensation insurance have been exempted from stamp duty altogether. Through this budget, the Northern Territory has the most attractive pay-roll tax exemption in this country for small businesses.

We have also insisted that our agreement with the Commonwealth for operating the Electricity Commission is observed so that the charges are kept to the north Queensland level. Indeed, the Territory government has acted responsibly in the matter of tariff parity with north Queensland. However, people sometimes fail to remember that, because of its special problems, the full cost of electricity charges are not borne by the people of the Territory. The extent to which they are subsidised under the agreement, and justifiably so, could be of the order of \$45m for this year. The effect of this subsidy would be a cost saving to each and every person in the community of at least \$400 per annum. This intergovernmental agreement certainly supports our efforts to contain the cost of services.

Concerning unemployment, our position is aggravated by the number of unemployed people who, having heard of the growth and development in the Territory, make their way here in the hope and expectation of finding employment. Unfortunately, we cannot create jobs for all but, to the extent possible, this government is doing its utmost to reduce the problem through this budget.

The current upsurge in exports of beef from the Territory has injected enthusiasm and profitability into our rural sector. The growth in tourism continues. Similarly, developments in the uranium province have reached a point where there is now tangible evidence of a major upsurge in construction and mining activity. Both industries generate considerable flow-on effects throughout the community.

Development of the Territory centres upon people and capital. Children are our future population and they will be given a good education. \$90m, or 17% of our total funds, has been allocated to education and we see this as a most important investment in the future.

The total cash allocation of capital works covering the whole of the Territory will be \$142m in 1979-80. This sum assures the continued progress and economic development of the Territory. I reiterate that people and capital development are the highlights of this budget.

In conclusion, I believe that this budget properly addresses the many problems now facing the Territory. It will take some time to overcome the many defects of the past and to raise all our standards to equal those of the states. This budget clearly lays the foundation for improvement of services to the people of the Territory based on sound financial management. In this speech, I have highlighted our financial proposals for 1979-80. It is my sincere belief that we have an exciting period of rapid development before us. This budget reflects a major step forward along the path of self-government. It is an expression of confidence in the future. I commend it to honourable members.

Debate adjourned.

#### ENERGY SITUATION IN THE NORTHERN TERRITORY

Mr TUXWORTH (Mines and Energy) (by leave): My paper today is on the energy situation within the Northern Territory and I would preface it by saying that, several hundred years ago, the onset of the industrial revolution was marked by the large-scale use of energy for the production of manufactured goods. The supply of large quantities of cheap energy was critical to the success of the industrial revolution and has resulted in high standards of living in industrialised western countries. In general, up until October 1973, energy costs have been insignificant in the manufacture of many products. The drastic alteration to this situation, brought about by changes in OPEC pricing

policies subsequent to 1973, is what we know as the energy crisis. The so-called energy crisis is not really a crisis of energy shortage. There are sufficient alternatives to oil to provide energy for the world demands far into the future; it is a crisis rather of time and money. Time is required to vary technology away from petroleum to coal, gas, solar, nuclear and other fuels. Money is required for capital investment and research and, in addition, education is necessary so that people become aware of the role they play in energy utilisation and its consequences. It is the function of government to steer civilization through this period.

Although Australia as a nation is richly endowed with energy resources, the Northern Territory is much less well off. Current proven recoverable fossil fuel reserves are mainly black and brown coal in the 3 eastern states of Queensland, New South Wales and Victoria. Although this coal amounts to several hundred years current annual consumption, transportation problems have prevented the use of eastern states' coal in the Northern Territory. The only proven energy reserves in the Northern Territory, the Amadeus Basin for oil and gas, amount to only 0.15% of the proven national energy reserves. Because of the limited energy reserves in the Northern Territory, all energy used at the present time - apart from a small solar contribution - is imported from other states or from overseas.

The low costs of petroleum products during the early development of the Territory led to a situation that was unique in the Australian context. The Northern Territory is 100% dependent on imported petroleum products as its energy source. In effect, the Northern Territory is the most vulnerable of the Australian states to the effects of the energy crisis. It is thus critically urgent that we respond to this crisis by developing our own resources and substituting other fuels for petroleum wherever possible.

Although the Territory lacks large fossil fuel reserves, we do have an abundance of another energy resource: uranium. The possibility of nuclear power in the Northern Territory should not be dismissed lightly. Apart from all the difficulties associated with waste disposal, capital outlay and economies of scale, one glaring fact remains: uranium is the only known large-scale indigenous Northern Territory energy resource. The strategy for Northern Territory energy policy is clear: we must substitute alternative fuels for petroleum products wherever possible. In the event that substitution cannot be achieved, we must ensure that efficiency of use provides maximum conservation of petroleum products. This strategy also implies development and maximum use of indigenous resources.

The total Northern Territory imports for the 1977-78 financial year were 878 megalitres - about 850,000 tonnes or 34 by 10 to the 15th joules consisting of aviation gasoline which amounted to 1% of our total consumption, motor spirits which amounted to 10%, kerosene fuels which amounted to 8%, automotive distillate which amounted to 17%, industrial diesel which amounted to 15% and fuel oil, mainly for our power houses, which amounted to 49%.

Aviation gasoline is used as a fuel for light piston-driven aircraft. No potential substitute is foreseen in the near future and conservation amounts to limiting the use of aircraft.

Motor spirit is consumed by cars and light trucks, largely for personal transport. Again, no short term substitutes are foreseen in the Northern Territory.

LPG is not cost-competitive at about 45c per equivalent petrol litre at the present time as opposed to a cost of 17c a litre in Victoria. Although

there is a high potential for petrol conservation, this will not be as significant as in other states where petrol consumption represents about 40% of the overall petroleum consumption.

Kerosene fuel used in the Northern Territory consists mainly of jet turbine fuels used by the major airlines. Both TAA and Ansett have already indicated that they are taking all appropriate steps in increasing fuel efficiency.

Automotive distillate has 2 distinct large-scale Northern Territory applications: as a transport fuel in diesel-engine road carriers and as a fuel for electricity generations in all areas other than Darwin. Some potential may exist for conservation measures but it is difficult to foresee any other fuel substituting for distillate in these end uses.

Industrial diesel is used by heavy mechanical equipment in manufacturing and mining. Because of the large capital cost involved in equipment purchases, no short-term substitution is likely. Low cost variation would also preclude significant conversion.

Fuel oil has 2 uses in the Northern Territory. It is used by Nabalco at Gove in bauxite mining and by NTEC for power generation at Stokes Hill. Since it represents 49% of the Northern Territory's primary energy consumption, fuel oil conservation and substitution should be given a high priority. Although the government will have little control over fuel oil used at Gove, the Stokes Hill power plant is a prime target for both substitution and conservation campaigns.

Although Australian refinery production of motor spirit, kerosene and automotive distillate equalled or exceeded national consumption during 1977-78, direct imports of fuel oils which amounted to 32% industrial diesel which was 24% imported and avgas which was 57% imported were necessary to complement the refinery output. Additionally, 30% of the total refinery input was imported heavy crude oils.

The significance to the Northern Territory of the above factors is clear: if imported crude and other refined products become scarce in the near future, it is fuel oil, industrial diesel and avgas - together comprising 65% of the Northern Territory's primary energy consumption - which will be in the shortest supply. This situation will have a far more dramatic effect on the NT than on other states because Darwin's electricity is fuel oil-generated rather than coal-generated. The high costs and possible scarcity of petroleum fuel are not problems which are likely to diminish in the future. If anything, they are likely to worsen. Hence, it is critically urgent that consideration be given to alternative energy sources, particularly for electricity generation.

Occurrences of coal have been reported in the Northern Territory since the early part of this century. At the present time, however, no economic resources have been identified and, generally, the coal encountered has been of a very low rank and seams or, more correctly, bands have been only a few centimetres thick. Three principal areas of interest can be identified at the present time. Encounters of coal at Gove by water resources investigators in 1955 were reported out of all proportion by the press. Diamond drill cores taken subsequently showed only extremely thin bands of lignite. Again, press reports on coal at Port Keats have been out of all proportion with the results of test drilling. Although thick bands of black coal are known to exist at Port Keats, it should be stressed that seams should be about 2 metres thick minimum before the coal reserves can be considered recoverable. Lignite occurrences in the tertiary sediments have been reported from several sites in

the Alice Springs region. Although this area is currently under investigation by the geological survey division of the Department of Mines and Energy, results of preliminary tests are not promising. The lignite is very poor quality and contains significant sulphur.

Although further work is indicated, prospects for the discovery and utilisation of economic coal resources in the NT are not promising. In the northern tropical zone, problems with establishment and maintenance of transport systems to any resources would probably mean that economics would favour on-site power generation. Such stations would be difficult to maintain and could only be established with the approval of the traditional owners if deposits are on Aboriginal reserves.

The only known Northern Territory petroleum reserves are at the Mereenie anticline in the Amadeus Basin, west-south-west of Alice Springs. Recoverable reserves of Mereenie crude are estimated at about 65 million barrels for about 10 years total Northern Territory energy consumption. Although Mereenie oil can have a significant effect on the local Alice Springs petroleum market, such small reserves are unlikely to provide a long-term solution to the energy problems in the Northern Territory. It should also be pointed out that further wells will need to be drilled to "prove up" the estimated reserves of oil.

Current plans are for the use of unrefined Mereenie crude as a substitute for distillate in the Alice Springs power station. Development time is still uncertain but it should be stressed that the initial oil-producing well was drilled in 1967. Difficulties have been encountered by the developing companies both in the establishment of a local market and negotiation with local Aboriginal groups. The problems encountered in the development of Mereenie are poor advertisement for the Northern Territory. Developing companies must be actively encouraged, not frustrated. Although the Northern Territory is larger in area than all the states except Western Australia and Queensland, only Tasmania had had fewer exploratory wells drilled.

Natural gas reserves are known in 2 regions in or near the Northern Territory. These are the Palm Valley gas field in the Amadeus Basin and several non-economic deposits and wells drilled in the Bonaparte Gulf Basin of the north-west coast. Reserves of natural gas at Palm Valley are estimated at 25,000 million cubic metres or about 25 years total Northern Territory energy consumption at the present rate of use. If economic development of the field and the resultant transport of the gas could be achieved, it could replace significant quantities of fuel oil at Darwin and Gove. Further wells must be drilled to clearly establish the extent of reserves and large-scale investment will be required. Unfortunately, the size of the Northern Territory markets does not provide the required economies of scale at the present time. These conditions may alter as imported parity pricing of oil makes natural gas development a better proposition.

Hydro-electricity: the government is currently proceeding with plans to connect Darwin to hydro-electricity from the Ord River in Western Australia. Two 30-megawatt units are to be installed at the Ord supplying 30-megawatt firm capacity and 60-megawatt peak to Darwin. In addition, a 50-megawatt unit is being considered at Mount Nancarrow on the Daly River. Although these systems are being given high priority by the government, they will not solve problems associated with fuel oil electricity generation because of expected increases in demand.

As noted earlier, uranium is one energy source which is plentiful in the Northern Territory. If conventional fuels continue to increase in price, then

it only remains to provide the necessary large-scale power market to give the required economies of scale for nuclear power use. A nuclear fuel processing unit or an aluminium smelter would provide much of this market estimated at between 500 to 1,000 megawatts. The Northern Territory is at this time not considering the use of nuclear power generation mainly because of the small, diverse and widely separated population of the Northern Territory. However, it is quite likely that Territorians will have to address themselves to the use of nuclear power in the long run to provide basic energy needs.

Solar energy incidence rates are high in the Northern Territory relative to the southern states. Even with the obvious restrictions during the wet season, there is a high potential for solar energy use for water heating and air-conditioning. Solar water heating has already been firmly established by use in government-built housing. The Department of Mines and Energy is currently planning experiments which should also establish the viability of solar air-conditioning. Additionally, experiments in the use of photovoltaic cells are planned so that these can be quickly introduced when price reductions improve their viability. Photovoltaics will probably become feasible for outback power generation within the next 5 years especially when combined with low-energy, high-insulation housing.

The high tides prevalent on the coast of the Northern Territory indicate the high potential of tidal energy available. Associated capital costs in the small scale market preclude the use of tidal energy in the Northern Territory at the present time. A watch is maintained on technical developments in this area so that the state of our knowledge is available for any further use.

Little is currently known of the potential for wind power generation in the Northern Territory. Consequently, a wind-solar experimental pack is being purchased by the government for investigation in this area. This unit will be used to power Northern Territory outstations and all performance data will be recorded and analysed. Further work will be based on the results of these experiments. With regard to the use of solar-wind energy technology, it will be necessary for the Northern Territory to be involved in prototype experiments, the evaluation of which will take some 2 to 3 years. Because of this, there is no immediate comfort for a solution from the introduction of this system as a sizeable source of energy.

There are various possibilities for energy conservation and substitution which can relieve the Northern Territory's unhealthy dependence on imported petroleum. These can be separated into long-term and short-term objectives. The primary long-term objective must be the substitution of alternative fuel oil used in power generation in Darwin. Although hydro-electricity from the Ord can provide part of the solution, current growth rates of power demand indicate that substantial additional generating capacity will be desired. Consideration of current national and state energy reserves indicates 2 alternatives: a natural gas pipeline from Palm Valley or black coal imported from eastern states. Technical evaluation of possible schemes for the pipelining of Palm Valley gas to Darwin and Gove indicates that economic viability would need to be very carefully assessed. A small market for gas would give a long field lifetime with expensive pumping costs. Increasing the market would reduce the pumping costs but would decrease the life of the field. The alternative scheme might involve the construction of a rail link to Queensland coal deposits and subsequent derating of Stokes Hill power station to pulverised coal firing.

In the short term, a variety of measures will be used to reduce petroleum consumption in the Northern Territory. Some of the measures under consideration are: a review of power generation efficiency which could achieve savings of up

to 4% of total petroleum consumption; variation in urban planning to include low-energy housing, shorter commuting distances, use of roundabouts in place of traffic lights - potential savings are estimated to be of the order of 5% in petroleum consumption; variation of legislation to allow car pooling by commuters and this involves the elimination of the payment by kind, hiring problems and third party insurance coverage; discouragement of large 6 and 8 cylinder vehicles by increases in fees at a state and federal level for sales tax and registration; petrol rationing to allow refuelling on alternate days only; the promotion of solar air-conditioning systems; the use of advertising campaigns to educate the public in energy conservation; and the removal of pollution control equipment on Northern Territory registered vehicles. So far as pollution controls are concerned, there are no requirements in Northern Territory legislation for these and the government would not discourage people if they wished to remove pollution control equipment from their vehicles to gain greater fuel economy. In order to be effective, most of these options should be taken by the Northern Territory government in conjunction with other state governments to achieve the highest possible standardisation in the introduction of these measures.

The government will continue to actively manage Northern Territory energy resources and needs by the following steps: there will be continuous monitoring of energy consumption, patterns and requirements; there will be full-scale exploration and evaluation of indigenous energy resources and determination of potential uses of these resources; the dependence of the Northern Territory on imported petroleum will be reduced by development of indigenous reserves and diversification of imported resources; local industry will be sought as a better basis for a large-scale energy market; energy efficiency campaigns and techniques will be used to conserve energy wherever possible; and, as previously advised, the Northern Territory government is establishing a Northern Territory Energy Council and the government will be referring to this body for advice on matters relating to energy. The council will consist of 3 official members representing the Department of Mines and Energy, the Department of Transport and Works and the Northern Territory Electricity Commission at secretary level. There will also be 6 non-official members.

I have a great deal of pleasure in announcing that the non-official members who will be appointed to the Northern Territory Energy Council are: Mr D. Thomas, who has been nominated by the Northern Territory Confederation of Industry and Commerce; Mr D. Buntine from Alice Springs who has been nominated by the Northern Territory Road Transport Association; Mr John Lawson who has been nominated by the Northern Territory Trades and Labour Council; Mr Mike Schapel, the Regional Manager of BP Australia in Darwin; Mr Phil Purich who represents the Northern Territory Chamber of Mines; and Dr F.H. Bauer, the Director of the Australian National University Scientific Research Unit in the Northern Territory. It is a normal practice of state energy advisory councils to co-opt members of oil exploration companies to provide their particular expertise. If this desirability arises in the Northern Territory, a similar move will be considered at a later stage. The council secretariat will be provided by the Energy Division of the Department of Mines.

The introduction of this paper today is essentially to provide information so that people can assess for themselves the true position of energy in the Northern Territory. There is much conjecture in the press and throughout the community about the state of energy in the Northern Territory. The main reason for introducing the paper was to try to clarify some of the aspects that have been creating confusion in some people's minds. I move that the statement be noted.

Debate adjourned.

## REGIONAL AIRLINE FOR NORTHERN TERRITORY

Mr EVERINGHAM (Chief Minister) (by leave): In the Assembly yesterday, I answered a question from the Leader of the Opposition regarding the progress in the establishment of a regional airline for the Northern Territory. The Leader of the Opposition has issued a press statement calling upon the Minister for Transport and Works to make a detailed report to the Assembly during the current sittings on plans that East-West Airlines and Connair have for a merger. On this occasion, I am pleased to accede to the request of the Leader of the Opposition.

In his press statement, he talks about transactions going on behind the scenes. The government has not been involved in any behind-the-scenes transactions and has clearly and openly indicated its vital interest in the development of a properly-based regional airline. This was a recommendation contained in the Gallagher Report which we fully support. Some time ago, a proposal was received from East-West Airlines, an airline based in New South Wales but operating to other states in Australia as well as Norfolk Island and the Northern Territory. The proposal was that East-West Airlines would purchase the undertaking and operation of Connair Pty Ltd presently carried on in the Northern Territory. They proposed that the new company should be formed of which East-West Airlines would have a 51% interest and the management expertise. 49% of the shareholding would be reserved for people and corporations resident in the Northern Territory. The airline would operate the regular air services within the Northern Territory and these would include services to the communities presently provided by Connair with the benefit of a Commonwealth subsidy. The new regional airline will operate without a subsidy.

At no time has East-West Airlines given any indication that it might seek to move away from the government's strong desire that there should be no diminution in the standard and range of services presently available in the Territory. Certainly, the so-called "creaming off" of the most profitable airline routes has been anathema to the negotiations. In addition, the regional airline would service such routes as Alice Springs to Tennant Creek, Katherine and Darwin and Darwin to Groote and Gove. The proposal also refers to an operation between Darwin and Cairns.

The new regional airline would also be interested in redeveloping services which previously existed between Darwin and the nearer international locations in Indonesia and Papua New Guinea. The House will be aware that international traffic through Darwin has dropped considerably in recent years due to a number of factors including poor services and, in some cases, higher fares where service standards are better.

An essential part of the East-West proposal was that the staff presently employed by Connair would be guaranteed future employment and that has always been one of the points which the government has insisted on. The formation of this new regional airline will present the current employees of Connair with more enhanced career opportunities, especially pilots because the proposal contains ideas on re-equipment. It is proposed that Bandeirante aircraft will be purchased to replace the existing DC3s and F27 Friendship aircraft will be used on some routes that are presently operated by DC3s. East-West have an application with the federal government at the present time for permission to purchase and operate jet aircraft within this country.

The Northern Territory government will, in the near future, have powers to licence civil aviation operations within the Territory and we hope to bring

legislation before this House at an early date to achieve that end. I want to make it quite clear that the Territory government will use these powers to ensure the allocation of routes to the new regional airline that will ensure its economic viability as well as maintain an existing or better standard of service to the people presently being served by other airlines. The government will also endeavour to obtain for the regional airline the rights for the essential interstate and international routes to which I have referred.

At present, negotiations are proceeding between East-West Airlines and Connair in regard to the purchase of Connair by East-West for incorporation in the future regional airline. The details of this transaction, which is based largely on a valuation of Connair's net assets, are a matter for the respective board rooms and not for this House. However, I urge both parties to come to a prompt conclusion on the negotiations in order that we may go about the essential business of establishing the new regional airline.

At one stage, the Leader of the Opposition called upon this government to purchase Connair. I think he mentioned a purchase price of \$2m and a re-equipment cost of \$8m. That would have been \$10m down the drain considering that the Northern Territory government has no expertise in the operation of airlines. It is much more in the interests of people of the Northern Territory that a company with a sound history of good management and commercial success, such as East-West which also has a history of service to people throughout outback regions of Australia, be brought in to help Connair.

The merging of the 2 operations will create a much stronger force in civil aviation which can only benefit the Northern Territory. The Leader of the Opposition would do all Territorians a great favour by leaving this entire business to the commercial judgment of other people who are more qualified to bring matters to a satisfactory conclusion. If he would stand aside at this 11th hour, as indeed he should have done previously, it may well mean that the negotiations that are presently going on will be concluded satisfactorily. There is a danger that wild public utterances of the sort that the Leader of the Opposition happily engages in could prejudice the final stages of achieving the best possible aviation deal for the Territory. By the next sittings of this House, I hope that these matters will have been largely resolved, if not completely, and my colleague will then report to this House.

Ms D'ROZARIO (Sanderson) (by leave): I move that the statement be noted and seek leave to continue my remarks at a later date.

Leave granted.

#### HERITAGE CONSERVATION AND TOURIST DEVELOPMENT

Mr EVERINGHAM (Chief Minister) (by leave): Mr Speaker, as part of the government's broad and developing program to further heritage conservation and tourist development, we have been considering a number of initiatives available to us. The government believes that a concerted effort must be made to ensure that the man-made heritage resources of the Territory are at least as fully developed and promoted as our internationally known natural attractions. As we all know, the Territory contains a wealth of heritage material relating to the history of Aboriginal people, Europeans and Asians. At present, this material is not as well managed and developed from the conservation and tourist points of view as are similar attractions elsewhere in Australia. As a result of the steps we are about to take, these man-made heritage resources will become at least as significant to the tourist industry as places such as Ayers Rock and Katherine Gorge. A byproduct of our initiative will be to strengthen the sense of community among all Territorians by managing and presenting our man-made heritage resources in a way which will make everyone

proud to be a Territorian.

The government proposes to give support to physical protection and restoration of these historic attractions through the Territory Heritage Committee. At the same time, there will be generation of increased community awareness through publications, films, general media coverage and special interest activities involving particularly schools and community groups. By promoting and presenting the Territory's heritage resources in this way, national and international recognition of what the Territory has to offer can be achieved. These initiatives will be sustained to culminate in Northern Territory heritage year in 1983 to celebrate the 5th anniversary of self-government. This will give us a target date and something to work towards. However, 1983 will only be the beginning of a new phase in the continuous management and promotion of these resources in the Territory.

A small working party has been set up to get the idea off the ground. Shortly, a steering committee will be formed to ensure that there is optimum involvement by all levels of government including the Tourist Board, the Territory Parks and Wildlife Commission, community groups such as the National Trust and historical societies, the tourist industry and the community generally. Early action will be taken to ensure that all localities and regions within the Territory will benefit from these programs. The Territory Heritage Committee has been asked to pick up a National Trust suggestion that a regional heritage park should be brought into being in the Pine Creek area. This proposal parallels activities I have seen in the South Island of New Zealand, in the Queenstown district, and which has been of tremendous benefit to the local economy. The idea is to implement an on-going strategy for the identification of all the natural and cultural heritage resources of the Pine Creek district. Physical conservation and management programs will be developed leading to systematic presentation and promotion of these resources as tourist attractions. The provision of backup facilities needed to support greatly increased levels of tourist traffic will be encouraged. In this regard, I am sure that the Territory Development Corporation will play a major role.

I am confident that this proposal will result in greatly increased tourist traffic in and around Pine Creek. It will also underpin the economic revival in that district. Pine creek is strategically located near the old mining districts around Burrundi and Grove Hill and is a logical starting point for visitors to the Kakadu area. I want to make it quite clear that this proposal does not involve a park development in its conventional sense. The area will not have fixed boundaries and there will be no large-scale reservations of land. Rather, the idea is to encourage existing owners and authorities to make optimum use of their sites in a co-ordinated and cooperative way. The success of the proposal will depend upon joint effort and goodwill on the part of many people and organisations. The support of the government will of course be vital. I have asked that work commence urgently on the preliminary stages of survey and identification. This will be done in collaboration with the working party that I have previously set up on the Pine Creek economy and township facilities.

Another urgent task will be the exploration of the availability of funding from special sources, including the possibility of funds from federal government tourist development and heritage conservation programs. In particular, we will be looking to the present day mining industry to support the conservation of one of Australia's most interesting and significant historic mining areas. The trust may be one of those bodies.

As we know, so much of Darwin's heritage has been lost over the years

by bombings, cyclones, white ants and neglect. My government believes that those parts of Darwin which have a distinct urban character should be preserved. I have already indicated that the government is committed to the reconstruction of the former Naval Headquarters buildings on the Esplanade in Darwin. For over 3 years after cyclone Tracy, these buildings were neglected by the responsible authorities. Immediately after self-government, following representations to me from the National Trust, I acted to investigate the feasibility of reconstruction so that the site could be put to a worthwhile use and the former historic nature of this part of Darwin recaptured. As a result of these studies, the government has decided that the buildings will be reconstructed. Unfortunately, much of the evidence of how the original buildings were built has been lost over the years and it will be necessary for us to launch a nationwide search for such evidence before we can be sure that our reconstruction plans are accurate.

The Department of Transport and Works will be using the services of an archaeologist, Dr Eleanor Crosby, who will be made available by the National Trust. This will ensure that every piece of evidence remaining on the site is retrieved and considered. However, there will be additional material in private hands in many parts of Australia. I am certain that former residents of Darwin and visitors over the years have photographs and other material which will be of immense help to us in piecing together the precise details of the ruined buildings. I appeal to anyone who may be holding such material to make it available to the government. This material may be loaned and its safe return is guaranteed. If anyone wishes to donate such material to the Northern Territory, then he can be assured that such donations will be publicly acknowledged and the material will be either properly stored or displayed.

I move that the statement be noted.

Debate adjourned.

#### STATEMENT ON THE PUBLIC SERVICE

Mr EVERINGHAM (Chief Minister) (By leave): I would like to make a statement to the House on the current state of our Northern Territory Public Service and to comment on the changes that have occurred, and are still occurring, to the scope and direction of the service.

Transfers of staff to local control were first made in January 1977. However, the major impact occurred on 1 July 1978 when 3,993 Australian Public Service employees were transferred to the Northern Territory Public Service. In the short period since then, based on the direction envisaged by the government, we have seen significant and timely advances in the area of public administration. Since 1 July 1978, two additional major transfers of employees have been made to the control of the Northern Territory government involving a total of 4,074 employees. Thus, we see that the number of staff in the Northern Territory Public Service increased from 1,746 on 30 June 1978; 5,679 on 1 July 1978; 8,718 on 1 January 1979; 11,037 on 1 July 1979; and 11,063 at 31 July 1979. Overall staff is 1,006 over and above the number of positions transferred from the Australian Public Service since 30 June 1978. The transfer of certain functions in the Department of Aboriginal Affairs and the Supreme Court is envisaged in the near future. This will conclude the relatively smooth transition of federal public servants to our own Northern Territory Public Service.

The re-arrangement could not be accomplished without significant organisational changes. These have included: developing and setting up

essential advisory and overview organisations, including the Treasury, Public Service Commission and Chief Minister's Department; breaking up the functional monolith, Department of the Northern Territory, and distributing functions across a number of new Territory departments; providing for new government initiatives such as the ombudsman, Liquor Commission, Racing and Gaming Commission, Territory Development Corporation and so on; and providing for the necessary levels of expertise in top management, policy and project areas so that the government can obtain the expert and balanced advice it needs to carry out its mandate. I believe that, over the past 12 months, the response of the public service to the community it serves through this government has resulted in enhanced standards and a sense of commitment. There is no doubt that many former Australian Public Service employees had anxieties and trepidations when first transferred, especially those in July 1978. It is my observation, and the Public Service Commissioner supports this, that these same employees have now generally welcomed the change and are adapting readily to their more fulfilling role.

Dr Coombs observed, in his report on public administration in the Australian Public Service some years ago, that in any large organisation which has significant changes to its role there is an accompanying downgrading of morale. If applied to our situation, it is considered that his observation is much overstated. My impression is that morale in the majority of the public service is clearly higher than that existing prior to the transfer of functions.

In his annual report for the year ending 31 December 1977, the Public Service Commissioner stated: "There is reason to be cautiously optimistic that the industrial relations climate within the Territory Public Service will be relatively harmonious". Having regard to the changes which have occurred since that time, it is pleasing to note that the optimism in the report has been fully realised. Of course, as with any employer employee relationship, some dissatisfaction has occurred. However, it can be said that, in the majority of instances, issues have been resolved by consultation rather than confrontation. This is not to say that management cannot further improve their industrial relations and, to this end, the Public Service Commissioner is conducting training programs for departmental employees involved in the personnel and industrial areas. In addition, the need for employees to attend courses conducted by the trade union training authority has been recognised and leave has been granted on a fairly flexible basis.

The government has aimed and is continuing to aim at the creation of a distinctive Northern Territory Public Service that is dedicated, responsive, flexible and decisive. The service has been restructured to take into account the educational facilities of the Territory and to provide for an integrated and mobile workforce. Brief examples include: the old restrictions and snobbery of the divisions in the Australian Public Service have been swept aside and a core administrative executive structure developed; a number of specialist restricted groups, including keyboard, senior prison officers and rangers, have been directly related or included with the core group; artificial qualification barriers have been restricted to a minimum to eliminate selection criteria based on paper qualifications as distinct from experience and capacity to do the job; and a complementary certificate course in administration has been developed through the community colleges.

Whilst recognising the rights of compulsory transferees, we are developing conditions of service more suited to a permanent Territory-based service: new travelling-allowance policy provides for a common rate of travelling allowance throughout the Territory; recreation leave fares and district allowance have been restructured to accord with the non-discrimination provisions of the

Public Service Act; and government housing policy has been reviewed.

The government has taken the initiative in streamlining its administrative processes in the service. These include continually reviewing or amending instructions concerning the administration of conditions of service to simplify procedures and meet Northern Territory needs and devolving recruitment responsibilities to departments and prescribed authorities. The creation of an internal audit bureau is already proving to be a successful innovation and is expected to become a major contributor to improvements in service efficiency, accounting and administrative regularity. The bureau will report on operations where internal control and effectiveness can be upgraded.

Positive action has been taken on identifying activities which could be better carried out by private industry. A committee has been formed to undertake this task and the government eagerly awaits its results and any phased plan of implementation.

It is a fact that a substantial number of additional senior positions have been created in the public service following the transfer from the Australian Public Service. These senior positions are necessary to not only administer the departments which have been created but also each department has a need for senior staff of the calibre to develop and advise on policy. The structuring of the service is such that there is an adequate lower base for recruiting an expanded middle level of employees to service the public and senior management tapering to a relatively small number of senior people in managerial and policy advising positions. The public service profile, whilst varying from department to department depending on the actual functions carried out, very much follows the normal pattern which would be seen in any public service.

This government has a positive policy of decentralisation and regionalisation. A great deal of thought has been put into bringing the administration closer to the people, particularly in the main regional centres. The Departments of Health and Education are structured on a north and south regional basis whilst the Department of Community Development has regional offices in all main centres. The Department of Transport and Works also has a major centre in Alice Springs and regional offices in the other major towns. The Department of Community Development provides, through its offices in the various regional centres, a service if other departments which are not represented in the town require a particular activity to be carried out by community development on their behalf. Other departments such as Primary Production have staff scattered throughout the Territory and all departments are looking at ways and means of increasing their regional activity so that decision-making is as close to the work base and community as possible. The Territory Parks and Wildlife Commission and the Tourist Board have their headquarters in Alice Springs.

It is important that centres outside of Darwin also have direct access to the service which should be capable of responding quickly to public demands in these centres. With this in mind, the government has endorsed the concept of decentralisation and regionalisation of the service. The efficiency and effectiveness of the public service is directly related to the skills, attitude and knowledge of its employees. The government realises the need to develop our own employees and we have made available to management a very well equipped resource centre with specialist staff capable of assisting management in assessing its needs and advising suitable development programs. In addition, we have encouraged employees to undertake further study by making study leave provisions more flexible and we are currently looking at the introduction of an executive development scheme. It must be seen that, although we are only a fledgling service, we are developing a public service that is both unique and

suited to the Territory needs.

What then does the future hold for the Northern Territory Public Service? Obviously, there will be a continuation of steps taken already for structural simplification and perhaps further streamlining of the administrative process, greater use of delegations and semi-autonomous working arrangements and a breaking down of traditional hierarchical structures. Closer examination of the overall control and deployment of resources, possibly through an enhanced budget process, will result in various new approaches being considered. Clearer definition of purposes, objectives and priorities of individual departments and programs will result in more adequate means of assessing achievement. We will continue in our efforts to ensure that the taxpayer's dollar is well spent by development of the effectiveness of review mechanisms and we will strive to make our public service free of the bureaucratic red tape which seems to typify other public service organisations.

The government recognises the increasing role women are playing in the workforce at large and, in the Territory situation, I can see further career opportunities being expanded for women including permanent, part-time employment and job-sharing arrangements.

We are aware that we will be faced with problems associated with the accelerating rate of technological change. We intend to face these problems. It seems to me that, if change is inevitable, then it must be met with a minimum of conflict and so turned to our best account.

We have passed through a very difficult and significant state in the history of the Northern Territory public administration. The public service is not concerned with building bureaucratic empires but is keen to get on with the job of providing service to the public and the Territory as a whole is evolving. From its current healthy state, I am extremely confident that the service is destined to become the envy of our southern counterparts and a model of efficient public administration.

Finally, I would like to express thanks to all employees of the public service for a job well done but I warn them that we must not sit back and become self-satisfied. There are significant challenges ahead and we must guard against bureaucracy for bureaucracy's sake and keep in mind that the public service should indeed provide service to the public. I move that the statement be noted.

Ms D'ROZARIO (Sanderson): I thank the Chief Minister for the information that he has given. Unfortunately, the statement is more wondrous for what it does not say, and which appears in other documents pertaining to the Country Liberal Party, than for what it does tell us. Yesterday, in the adjournment debate, the honourable Chief Minister remarked that, except for the independent members, all members of this House are creatures of their party system. We are indeed creatures of the party system, but it would be nice if the Chief Minister would say what his government's philosophy is rather than submit to this House a statement which is quite innocuous in itself but which, when read in conjunction with other pronouncements of senior people in the Country Liberal Party, is quite sinister.

At the annual conference of the Northern Territory Country Liberal Party in May or June, the Chairman of the Country Liberal Party, a very eminent citizen of the Northern Territory, delivered the keynote address to the faithful supporters. It quite clearly and most succinctly explained what the Country Liberal Party will do with the public service. The keynote address was prefaced by a brief statement by the editor of 'Focus' which is an official

publication of the Northern Territory Country Liberal Party. He said: "We commend Mr Barry Wyatt's address and believe all our readers will appreciate the insight his address provides to the philosophic stance the Northern Territory Country Liberal Party represents". Not for a moment do I deny that the annual conference of a major political party should be anything else but a policy-directing conference and that all its members in the parliament should adhere to that policy. Despite assurances from the backslapping and congratulations that we have just heard, may I remind members of this Assembly, and I presume that all members opposite subscribe to this journal, that the President of the Country Liberal Party has quite a different view on how the public service should develop in the Northern Territory.

The Chief Minister gave his view about what sort of public service he was developing. Unfortunately, he might well be bound by his party's philosophic stance. The Chief Minister said he was developing a service which would provide expert and balanced advice. He also said that it was his government's aim to create "a distinctive Northern Territory Public Service that is a dedicated, responsive, flexible and decisive". Those are sentiments that people would find it very hard to disagree with. What Mr Wyatt had to say about the public service at the recent annual conference was: "I want an enthused, loyal, small, efficient, conscientious public service". There are few adjectives in that statement to which I do not take exception. The questions that must be asked in relation to those adjectives are: "Enthused" by what? "Loyal" to whom? What does "small" mean? Mr Wyatt feels that the public service should be loyal, presumably, to the Country Liberal Party. My understanding is that a public service advises the government of the day; it is not required to be loyal but it is merely required to be efficient and conscientious in discharging its functions. Loyalty is not a requisite of the public service but, apparently, Mr Wyatt would have us believe that it is. He would also like us to have a small public service.

We heard from the Chief Minister's speech that the government has recently set up a working party to look into those areas of activity currently undertaken by the public service which could be discharged by the private sector outside of the public service. Until we see what this working party comes up with, we do not wish to make any criticism. In addition to that working group, there is another little group, of the Country Liberal Party's own making, working sinisterly in the background. I am referring to a resolution which was carried at the recent conference. That resolution was that the CLP should establish a taskforce of 5 to investigate those services now provided by the government which could be provided by private enterprise and to report their findings regularly to the central council. I point out that this is not a function of the government. This is not a working party of the government; this is a working party of the Country Liberal Party. We now have, in addition to the working group set up by the government and chaired by Mr Lawrence Ah Toy, another group working on ways and means to cut back the public service. I do not object to the Country Liberal Party holding these views of the public service. All I would ask is that they put their views honestly instead of expressing 1 view in this House and to the public service and another to their own party faithful.

It is quite clear what the Labor Party wants. We want what the Chief Minister has said in this House: a public service that can dispense expert and balanced advice. We do not require loyalty from the public service and nor will we when we are in government next year.

The Chief Minister made reference to the fact that his government is developing conditions of service that are more suited to a Territory-based service. He gave some examples of the sort of conditions that they were

looking at. I recall sitting through the address in reply delivered by the honourable Treasurer. He said that it was high time we all thought of ourselves as Northern Territorians, that we all thought of the Northern Territory as our home. He said that it was about time that we stopped expecting to take holidays in other parts of Australia at the expense of the government.

When employees were transferred from the Australian Public Service to the Northern Territory Public Service, they had certain rights and conditions. These rights and conditions were hard won. One of those conditions was that leave fares were to be paid every 2 years. This right, presumably, was carried across with those compulsory transferees. When I heard the honourable Treasurer speaking in the address in reply, I thought it was the beginning of a campaign to get public servants used to the idea that some of these conditions would be looked at again. They can only be looked at, in the philosophy of the Northern Territory Country Liberal Party, with a view to cutting them out or at least reducing them. We have just heard the Chief Minister say that we are developing conditions more suited to a permanent Territory-based public service. My fear is that this will mean the reduction in leave entitlements and the possible cutting out of leave fares.

I have no objection to people considering themselves to be part of the Territory but I do not see how the current conditions of taking leave fares and taking 6 weeks leave in any way relates to where we came from. This is a condition which many public service unions fought for and has now been won. It has nothing to do with the person's place of residence; it has to do with the conditions of service. Any attempts to alter the conditions of service by reducing them will certainly be resisted by us.

The Chief Minister made reference to the fact that the government's housing policy is being reviewed. In March of this year, the Public Service Commissioner made available a series of circulars outlining the new government housing policy. I wonder if the Chief Minister knows the manner in which this policy is being implemented. The Chief Minister has often spoken about the non-discrimination provisions in the Northern Territory Public Service Act. These provisions are there but the question is how they are being implemented. When we look closely at that, we find that the Public Service Commissioner has his own views on what this particular section means and on whether or not certain discriminatory practices are subject to section 14 of the Public Service Act.

I am sure it comes as no surprise to the Chief Minister, and certainly I should not have to stand here to tell him, that there are only 7 women applicants on a housing list numbering 447. That is a very small percentage indeed. We do know, however, that women represent a large proportion of the Northern Territory Public Service yet there are only 7 women whose eligibility has been recognised for the housing list. There would be a good many more women on this housing list were it not for the attitude of the Public Service Commissioner who is the final arbiter in matters dealing with housing.

It is well known that, when a male public servant becomes eligible for housing, he simply has to say that he is married or in a de facto relationship. No questions are asked and his name is added to the housing list. A woman public servant has to demonstrate that she is responsible for the provision of housing in her household unit. That would sound fair enough if the government was only trying to make sure that the housing resources are fairly distributed and that a situation would not arise where 2 people of the same household unit are entitled to 2 separate sets of housing. However, the manner in which this demonstration is taking place is entirely abhorrent. It certainly is ab-

horrent to me and to the ladies who have been asked to provide this information. For example, women are being asked to provide a statutory declaration as to their living circumstances. They are also being asked to provide a statutory declaration to the effect that they are responsible for providing housing. I do not know in respect to a married couple how it is determined which of those people is responsible for providing housing. Nonetheless, women are being asked to make a declaration to the effect that they alone in their households are the providers of housing.

They are also being asked to provide information from the employer of their partner or their de facto partner on the partner's level of earnings. I consider this to be an entirely unnecessary breach of a person's privacy. It is no business of the Public Service Commissioner what a woman's husband is earning. However, he is asking for this information and some women are actually supplying it in their effort to get housing. All sorts of information is being required about the assets held by the 2 parties concerned, the disbursement of their respective incomes and how these accounts are held and so on. All these things are not asked of male applicants. Male applicants are simply admitted to the list and no questions are asked.

In recognition of the large number of de facto relationships, the Public Service Commissioner has conceded that, where a person is living in a de facto relationship, that person is entitled to housing. However, that process is a good deal easier for a man than it is for a woman. He has also laid down apparently that, if it is the intention of a man to get married, he may apply to go on the housing list 6 months in advance of the date on which he expects to be married. Of course, this particular provision is not extended to women public servants. I have in my electorate, at the moment, a young lady who proposes to get married in 6 months time and her application for housing is not being considered. It is not being considered because she is a woman. A male colleague working beside her, who is in exactly the same living circumstances, has been put on the housing list and no doubt he will probably obtain housing long before she does. These are the non-discriminatory provisions that the Chief Minister speaks about and, on paper, they look very nice indeed. I urge him to look into the manner in which the Public Service Commissioner is implementing these particular provisions.

We have also heard that the Country Liberal Party, both privately and publicly, is committed to an investigation for cutting back the public service and, included in that particular objective, is an investigation to see what functions currently performed by the public service could be performed outside of it. I think the government is in a desperate situation of looking for ways and means to cut back the public service. It is committed to this notion that the public service is too large.

Before the framing of the budget that we heard brought down by the Treasurer today, I do know that Cabinet considered a very important document on the size of the public service. The advice given by the Treasurer to his Cabinet colleagues was that the current level of the Northern Territory Public Service establishment and the growth expectation for the financial year 1979-80 is in excess of the anticipated available funds. As I now find by doing a quick calculation, he was right and he set out for his colleagues a series of 5 options. Some of these are not very palatable. One was recommended by the Treasurer and urged upon his Cabinet colleagues and that one appears to have been carried forward in the budget today.

Basically, it appears that there are far too many public servants for what the Northern Territory Public Service can afford to pay. In his Cabinet submission, the honourable Treasurer concluded that the actual numbers

employed were already exceeded by at least 200 jobs what it was anticipated would be available to pay them. We see that the government is desperate to get rid of at least 200 public servants. The honourable Treasurer urged upon his colleagues what he considered to be an acceptable option but it is not so acceptable when we read it with reference to the budget that he brought in today. This particular option was that current numbers, not including vacancies, employed in public service departments would have to be reduced this financial year. This is the option that the Treasurer recommended to his colleagues.

The honourable Treasurer, however, was very worried about what effect it would have. Knowing the views of his august party leader, Mr Barry Wyatt, he went so far as to put a small paragraph in this submission relating to what he politely termed the "public impact" of this recommendation. That is a very good paragraph indeed. It is a mere 2 sentences but nevertheless it says quite a lot. It said that control on the growth of bureaucracy is expected - I don't know by whom; by his party, I imagine - and would generally be well received by the private sector. Of course, it would. It is a direction from his party boss and it must be well received.

However, he was a bit worried because he said: "There would, of course, be some adverse reaction within the NTPS". I dare say there is going to be some adverse reaction. Instead of saying outright in the budget speech and the Chief Minister's statement that what they really have in mind for the public service is to reduce it, they gave all the mumbojumbo about what a great job the Country Liberal Party is doing and what the government is doing for the public service. By the Chief Minister's figures, we find that, at 31 July 1979, there were 11,063 Northern Territory public servants and what we find in the Treasurer's figures given this morning is that the number he can afford to pay is 10,250. By my calculation, the Treasurer and his colleagues will have to shed 813 public servants. I do not know how they propose to do that but there you are.

In his Cabinet document, the Treasurer gave a figure of \$14,500 as being the average salary of a Northern Territory public servant. By using the federal Treasurer's estimate that salaries would rise by 9%, this figure is raised to \$15,805 per year for the average salary of a Northern Territory public servant. In this morning's budget, the Treasurer tells us that he had \$162m to provide for salaries in the Northern Territory Public Service and this runs out at 10,250 public servants. It is a fact that the Chief Minister proposes to remove the Electricity Commission from the public service and we find that, at the end of last year, there were 840 people employed by the Electricity Commission. Presumably, these people are not accounted for in the Treasurer's estimate today. Even so, that figure approximates the 813 public servants the Northern Territory government has to shed. However, the Treasurer has also said that he has provided for the newly transferred function of education, for the expected increase in the casino inspectorate, the Territory Development Corporation and the transfer of the Supreme Court function.

When we consider all those things that are not accounted for in these figures, we find that there are at least 200 positions that the Northern Territory government does not want in the public service. These are not positions that are unoccupied; these are current numbers of people employed in the public service and these people will all have to be got rid of in one way or another. It was proposed that this should occur by natural wastage but, despite the fact that the Treasurer and his colleagues seem to think that employment in the private sector is booming, we find that opportunities outside the public service are few. I wonder where these 200 people who are to be off-loaded by the Northern Territory government are going to go.

These are a few things that emerge in various documents of the Northern

Territory Country Liberal Party. It would be very nice if honest statements were given to this Assembly instead of these factors being completely hidden in budget estimates, Cabinet papers and Country Liberal Party publications. I would like to make this point because I think that neither the Chief Minister nor the Treasurer this morning gave any indication of what was to happen to the growth of the public service.

Mr EVERINGHAM: A point of order, Mr Speaker! I complain of the words "honest statements were made to this Assembly" used by the honourable member for Sanderson. I make the complaint pursuant to Standing Order 55. The member for Sanderson has gravely reflected on my character.

Mr SPEAKER: I request the honourable member for Sanderson to withdraw the remarks complained of by the Chief Minister.

Ms D'ROZARIO: Mr Speaker, I withdraw the remarks complained of by the honourable Chief Minister.

Mr Speaker, there is a difference in the information provided by the Chief Minister this morning and that provided by the Treasurer in his budget estimates this morning. There is also a difference in the philosophy expressed by the Chief Minister and that expressed by the President of the Country Liberal Party. These are the points that I wish to make here.

In conclusion, I too would like to thank the Northern Territory Public Service for a job well done. It has not always been done under the best of circumstances and it has not always been done with the best of morale but, as the Chief Minister assures me, morale is now on the increase. I would be happy to believe it if I could see it. Like the honourable member for Nightcliff who interjected when that statement was made by the Chief Minister, I too do not see morale in the same way that the Chief Minister sees it. I hope that, with the passage of time and provided that the honourable Chief Minister and his colleagues do not expect the public service to be loyal to them but rather to be loyal to the Northern Territory public at large, morale might be increased. I would also like to thank the public service for a job well done sometimes under extremely difficult circumstances.

Mr PERRON (Treasurer): Mr Speaker, I would like to reflect on some of the matters raised by the honourable member for Sanderson. She made the rather amazing statement that, as far as the ALP is concerned, loyalty is not a requisite for a member of the public service. Quite obviously, reference to the word "loyalty" in this context and in the context that she read out was quite clearly to the government of the day. I doubt that there would be many members of parliament in this country who would agree with the honourable member for Sanderson that loyalty is not a requirement or an expectation of the public service or the civil service. However, it is perhaps nice to know that the ALP would not expect loyalty from them should it ever gain government.

She reflected on the fact that, at a Country Liberal Party convention, a committee was formed to look at areas of activity which the government is currently performing that might be undertaken by the private sector. She referred to it as looking for cutbacks. It might also be seen in the context that the government is continually establishing new functions and that there is a possibility of a containment of growth in the public service. After all, we are spending taxpayers' money in the public service as a government and that has to be borne in mind continuously. I do not think that there is anything wrong with the government itself considering ways to ensure that work undertaken by government is undertaken by the most efficient method and by the most economical method. When we deal with taxpayers' money, the aim is to be economical.

The member for Sanderson was criticising us on philosophical grounds. There is an enormous difference in philosophies between this side of the House and hers. Should the ALP ever reach government they would, being the socialists that they are, set up a committee to look at the functions currently undertaken by the private sector that could be done at the expense of the public purse. Indeed, they have already announced a range of policies on specific areas where they would seek to have the taxpayer's dollar spent. We believe that the private sector is looking after many of those areas reasonably well. They proposed that the government should either buy or invest heavily in a Northern Territory airline. As the Chief Minister explained this morning, that is an area that we believe is better left to the experts in the private sector who have done a pretty good job in the past. An ALP government in the Territory would seek to buy its own airline and run it and I am quite sure that you, Mr Speaker, would appreciate the problems that they would encounter.

They have also announced that the ALP would instigate the building of a chain of government hotels. That is into another area that the private sector can look after pretty well. They would rather the civil service ran the hotels - wonderful! They have also proposed other socialist type schemes, for example, in regard to the TIO, they proposed that premiums from the no-fault system - it used to be third-party insurance - should be cross-subsidised from workmen's compensation insurance. That is another typically socialistic idea. It is related to the idea of equalisation of earnings by taking away from the businesses and giving to the man in the street. They also proposed that we buy out private mining interests in the energy reserves in Central Australia.

Obviously, the honourable member for Sanderson was really expanding on differences in philosophy. She went on to speak about inequities in the public service in regard to equal opportunities. She quoted what she believed to be inequities in the administration of the anti-discrimination section of the Public Service Act. One would have expected her to take her complaint through the proper channels. The Chief Minister is responsible for that aspect of the Public Service Commissioner's activities. I do not feel that the Public Service Commissioner's view in this regard is off key at all. He regards that the head of the household is the person who has the right to obtain government supplied housing. It seems that the honourable member for Sanderson would be quite happy to see a doctor from the private sector, whose wife happens to be a clerk or a typist in the public service, obtain public service housing through his wife.

The honourable member for Sanderson continued with some confusing figures - confusing to her as well as to the House - about how this government, seemingly, is working towards cutting the public service and how the government is desperate to get rid of at least 200 public servants. It is funny that she should say that because the Leader of the Opposition said on the radio today that he was concerned that, as a result of initiatives in the budget just brought down, the growth of the public service would increase by 100% this year. That was the Leader of the Opposition's statement on the radio today yet the member for Sanderson is saying that the government is desperate to get rid of 200 public servants. There is obviously a clear conflict there.

Later on, she plucked another figure out of the air. She said that we have to shed 815 public servants because we simply have not provided for them in this budget. That is a load of nonsense. She almost admitted where she was wrong as the relevant section in the budget speech, which stated that \$162m is provided for staff, excluded from this figure the staffing needs of the Electricity and Housing Commissions, the Port Authority and the operational trust funds of the Department of Transport and Works because these are all funded separately. She probably knew that or she simply did not do her homework. I think that her

criticism of the Chief Minister's statement here today was simply electioneering on her part.

Mr EVERINGHAM (Chief Minister): Mr Speaker, I was surprised to hear the remarks of the honourable member for Sanderson. One does not expect loyalty by public servants to a political party or to its philosophies but one does expect, in the traditions first started in the English Civil Service by Samuel Pepys in the 17th century, that civil servants should be loyal to the government of the day. At the time of the revolution of 1688, Samuel Pepys, who is looked upon as the founder of the English Civil Service, resigned from the service when King James was turned out of England and William of Orange became king. I would suspect that those people who understand the philosophy of an independent civil service would be rather appalled at the views of the honourable member for Sanderson. One does not expect loyalty to politicians; one expects loyalty to the government by the civil service that is employed to support the government that is elected by the people.

The honourable member for Sanderson further expounded on the misleading concept that the committee established by the Public Service Commissioner to review public service functions is a committee to carry out cutbacks in the public service. In fact, it is a committee to review functions and this is an on-going operation that would probably, if the civil service is not to ossify, continue over the years.

Public complaints have been brought to my attention which obviously have not manifested themselves to honourable members opposite. I was at a meeting with welfare agency administrators not so long ago and the complaint was that the government was moving into areas that are better performed by voluntary agencies. Complaints were received in respect of the activities of the Department of Community Development and I was accused of promoting "big" government. I referred the complainants to the Public Service Review Committee which was established by the Public Service Commissioner. If the people can make out a case that the services would be better provided to the public by their agencies being assisted with a government grant, then that would be the right way for the government to go about the operation.

The old perennial of the erosion of the rights of the compulsory transferees was revived again. I have given at least 2 undertakings to this House that there would be no erosion of the rights of compulsory transferees. The honourable member for Sanderson sought only to mislead because she totally omitted to take into account my prefatory remarks in that paragraph. My words were that, whilst recognising the rights of compulsory transferees, we are developing conditions of service more suited to a permanent Territory-based service. No one can interfere with the rights of compulsory transferees. The people who join the service from here on join on the prevailing conditions. I have already received 2 submissions from the Public Service Commissioner that apparently emanated from the public service associations and unions that asked that they be allowed to participate in the conditions of service that are being granted to new public service employees. Once and for all, I refute the assertion that the government will be attempting to erode the rights of transferred employees. We heard rumours that there would not be enough money to pay them before self-government on 1 July 1978. I think that the budget last year and surely the budget this year have put down once and for all those extraordinary rumours which were promoted by the opposition.

I really think that honourable members of this House are questioning my character by saying that attempts will be made to erode the rights of transferred employees. There is legislation before this House at the present time in relation to the transferees to the NTEC. Their rights are being protected both in

the NTPS and the APS. There cannot be any greater earnest of the government's intentions to carry out its obligations. There is no intention to review its priorities and its functions from time to time so that it does not ossify as such a large group will if it is never looked at. After all, if we do identify some functions that could be better performed by private enterprise, it just means that more people will be available to undertake the many new initiatives being put forward by the government. I do not want to comment on the extraordinary calculations of the member for Sanderson. I think my colleague, the Treasurer, has already done that. If they are any indication of the strength of the rest of her arguments, honourable members should have no difficulty in dismissing her contribution to the debate as entirely false.

Motion agreed to.

#### DARWIN RECREATIONAL LAKE

Mr EVERINGHAM (Chief Minister) (by leave): The provision of a recreational lake to serve the population of Darwin has been an issue for several years and one in which this government has taken a keen interest. Tourist interests and various clubs representing water sports have raised the matter with a view to providing a wet season aquatic venue for both local residents and tourists. A great deal of information has been obtained on recreational lakes elsewhere. Because of his experience over a number of years in the use of Mt Isa's lake Moondarra for recreational purposes, the power and water superintendent of Mt Isa Mines Limited, Mr R.R. Thwaites, was commissioned to inspect the Darwin situation and provide his views. His report is now tabled for the information of members.

A solution which readily comes to mind is to use one of the 2 existing water storages, that is, either Manton Dam or Darwin River Dam. Unfortunately, this raises the question of maintaining health standards. Darwin is fortunate in having 2 reservoirs with fully-protected, single-use catchments and health authorities are anxious that this asset should not be placed in jeopardy. Manton Dam could be separated from the Darwin drinking water supply and then used as a recreational lake. However, this will lead to a reduction in the availability of water for Darwin with possible disastrous results during the dry. In his report, Thwaites argues strongly against the suitability of this dam for multi-purpose development. Before the Darwin River Dam can be used, comprehensive treatment of the water would be required involving capital costs in the order of \$6m and an annual cost of \$1m plus additional cost for access work and service developments.

The government is now examining several other schemes to meet the demand for this recreational facility. The report rules out some other options involving the use of the existing water storages. Other options presently under consideration include 3 sites on the Elizabeth River which have been appraised for possible construction of a single-purpose recreational dam with costs ranging from about \$9m to \$25m. Another proposal which would improve one aspect of recreational facilities at the Darwin River Dam is the creation of a swimming pool in the river downstream from the dam. Improvements could be made to the existing picnic area and this would take the pressure off Berry Springs and allow swimming near the dam without the problems associated with the use of the reservoir itself. A detailed feasibility study and estimate is needed but a preliminary estimate is \$150,000.

Some interest has been shown by private developers in providing aquatic facilities and sporting bodies will be asked to support these enterprises. The government wishes to complement rather than compete with such facilities. The question is very complex and the government is deliberating on it. The commissioning of this report is evidence of our commitment. I am hopeful that the government will be making a final decision within the next month which will be reported to this House in the next sittings.

I seek leave to table the report and I move that it be noted. I seek leave to continue my remarks at a later date.

Leave granted.

TENANCY BILL  
(Serial 328)

Bill presented and read a first time.

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

My government has moved the responsibility for the administration of tenancy matters from the community development portfolio to the Treasury. This has been done as part of a consolidation of economic affairs matters in the interest of a single perspective and economic development of management. This bill will effect that change by allowing an officer other than the Commissioner of Consumer Affairs to be responsible as the Commissioner of Tenancies under the Act. I commend the bill to honourable members.

Debate adjourned.

NORTHERN TERRITORY TOURIST COMMISSION BILL  
(Serial 331)

Bill presented and read a first time.

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

The basic aim of the Northern Territory Tourist Commission Bill is to provide a new organisational framework within which the government can most effectively encourage and assist the expansion of the tourist industry. There are 2 structural changes prescribed in the bill: first, the Tourist Bureau function with its inherent statutory responsibility will in effect transfer from the current Tourist Board to the proposed Tourist Commission; and, secondly, a tourist advisory council will be established. Before outlining the detail and rationale for these changes, I would like to draw to the attention of members some characteristics and recent developments in the tourist industry.

Tourism has long been recognised as making a significant and enduring contribution to the world economy. Subject to definition, it may be the world's largest single industry. The economic activity directly generated by tourism in the United States of America, for example, is almost as substantial as that of the whole Australian economy, both in terms of income and employment creation. Over a period of a century or so, tourism has grown from a minor economic nuisance to an industry of major social and economic significance. It is a composite industry comprising many varied industrial, commercial and governmental activities. Transport, accommodation, food, recreation, clothing, equipment, building and retailing are but a few of the goods and services involved.

As far as the specific importance of tourism to the Territory is concerned, members will be aware of the dazzling rate of growth the industry has demonstrated. Although reliable statistics on tourism are often difficult to obtain, Territory visitor traffic in 1977-78 totalled some 225,620 persons with a majority of 135,372 visiting the Alice Springs region. This latter figure compares with estimates of 110,000 in 1976 and a mere 26,000 in 1966. Visitor traffic is the normal way of classifying a tourist. The widely accepted definition for statistical purposes is "any person who travels more than 40 kilometres

from his normal place of residence for any reason other than to commute to his normal work place". Conventional wisdom states that the direct contribution of tourism to the Territory economy is of the order of \$45m per annum. Multiplier and other spin-off benefits would probably indicate a total contribution in excess of \$100m per annum. Further, this figure is considered to be capable of substantial growth as material living standards increase, as leisure time expands, as travel and mobility increases and as transport access to the Territory improves.

Turning now specifically to the structures of government machinery established to encourage and foster the development of tourism, it is apparent that change is necessary. As the industry moves with increasing speed from the cottage industry state of the 1960s into the sophisticated and dynamic style of the 1980s, so too must the degree of professionalism appropriate to the government's industry promotion efforts also expand.

The Northern Territory Tourist Board was established in 1962 to frame Territory tourism development policy and to set up and operate the various tourist bureaus. The Tourist Board Ordinance currently provides for 10 board members and the board usually meets on a quarterly basis. However, times have changed and so has the pace of the tourist industry. Accordingly, the government now believes that, to achieve the type of executive function and structural organisation required to reflect the industry's new style and importance, a smaller but high-level commission with a full-time chairman should replace the Tourist Board. The commission outlined in this bill would consist of 3 members, a full-time chairman and 2 part-time members.

The commission will report to the Minister for Industrial Development and will, firstly, encourage and foster, inside and outside the Territory, the development of tourism in the Territory; secondly, operate the bureau and establish others; thirdly, advise the minister in matters relating to tourist promotion; and, fourthly, manage and control its own affairs and property. The government considers that, in performing the above functions, the commission will provide expert and orderly management, public resource involvement in the tourist industry and will formulate detailed plans and policies for industry advancement and realisation of the great potential Territory tourism is generally agreed to possess.

The bill also provides for the establishment of a tourism advisory council of up to 15 members. The council would provide a forum for the discussion of views on the current state, problems and prospects of the tourist industry. The council would also provide advice on the Tourist Commission and to the Minister for Industrial Development. Membership will be filled by representatives of the tourist industry by public advertisement in the normal manner.

The bill represents another step along the way to streamlining government organisation in the interests of maximising efficiency to the benefit of Territorians. The proposed commission represents a small, top-level executive body to assist and guide the industry to grow and keep pace with national and world tourist developments. I commend the bill to honourable members.

Debate adjourned.

#### PAROLE OF PRISONERS BILL (Serial 332)

Bill presented and read a first time.

Mr DONDAS (Community Development): I move that the bill be now read a

second time.

This short bill is to remedy what the lawyers call "a nice point of statutory interpretation". When the Parole of Prisoners Ordinance was introduced, it was not intended to cover offences under the Commonwealth acts. Therefore, "offence" and "offenders" were defined to exclude offenders under Commonwealth acts. This was achieved because, under the Commonwealth's Acts Interpretation Act, the expression "act" meant Commonwealth act. However, when the Territory's Interpretation Act came into force on 1 July 1978 the expression "an act" came to mean a Territory act. Thus, instead of excluding Commonwealth offences, definitions excluded Territory offences and, therefore, it may not be possible for a court to set a non-parole period or for the Parole Board to grant parole for Territory offences. The effect of the act would be nullified. The Interpretation Act contained a savings provision in section 23 which may apply but the matter is not beyond doubt. In such an important and often-used act, it should be beyond doubt.

Clauses 3 and 4 change the reference to "an act" to "a Commonwealth act". Clause 6 says that any order is made by the board or a court after 1 July 1978. Clause 5 and the schedule are inserted because the draftsman has taken the opportunity to make some drafting corrections.

Mr Speaker, I move that so much of Standing Orders be suspended as would prevent the Parole of Prisoners Bill being read a second time and passing all stages at this sittings.

Motion for suspension of Standing Orders agreed to.

Mrs O'NEIL (Fannie Bay): Mr Speaker, the opposition supports this bill and its urgency. It is urgent and it is fairly important. Unfortunately, members of the public and interested people have not had the opportunity to see this bill and it is retrospective in some of its applications. Nevertheless, the House has indicated strong support in the past for measures which provide options to imprisonment to people in the Northern Territory. For example, we had the debate on the Conditional Release of Offenders Ordinance. As the prisons in the Northern Territory are already overcrowded, we ought to parole as many prisoners as we can so that there will be more space. Berrimah Goal, which is to be occupied within a couple of days, is already too small for the number of prisoners presently accommodated at Fannie Bay. I note in the budget papers presented this morning that money has been allocated to provide a new cell block at Berrimah.

The overcrowding in Fannie Bay Goal has created concern. Recently I discovered that juvenile offenders remanded to the gaol were not being segregated from adult prisoners as they had been in the past. This caused me some concern because, in the past month or so, the parents of 2 different 16-year-olds came to see me. Their sons had been sent to gaol and these parents were naturally concerned. They feared that the boys would be mixing with adult prisoners. I thought I was in a position to reassure them that it was not the habit of the prison system and that some lengths were taken to keep juvenile prisoners separate from adults. I was very concerned to find out that it was not possible to do that any longer because of overcrowding.

I would like to ask the minister if he can let the House know what arrangements will be made for juvenile prisoners once the move is made to Berrimah. I am referring to non-Aboriginal juveniles. I understand that it is generally thought that it would be better for 16-year-old Aboriginals to be mixing with Aboriginal adult males rather than with non-Aboriginal youths. Nevertheless, parents of some children involved have come to see me about it and I would ask

the minister to direct his attention to it.

Mrs LAWRIE (Nightcliff): I rise to support the legislation and also to support its urgency. As the minister has stated, we are not altering the substance of the legislation but we are enabling it to act in the way in which we thought it was acting. It is interesting that the Country Liberal Party, the Chief Minister in particular, always assumes the role of the public conscience and tells us what marvellous things they have done for the Northern Territory.

Mrs O'Neil: I thought that was you!

Mrs LAWRIE: Well, it is me. When the parole and conditional release of offenders were the prerogative of the conservative government in power in Canberra for 23 years, the parole of prisoners was left to an order of the Governor-General. We found that prisoners who were transported south, usually to Yatala, had to rely on the recommendation from the department in Darwin. If the prisoner came from Alice Springs, his case had to come to Darwin and it was then referred to the Department of Interior in Canberra. It was considered by people 2,000 miles away who put it to the executive council. They then put it to the Governor-General who finally signed an order granting the man parole. I used "man" generically and not sexually. This whole business was quite incredible. I visited Yatala many times and spoke to Northern Territory prisoners who were grossly disadvantaged as a result of this cumbersome procedure. They were suffering the same deprivations of civil liberty as their counterparts from South Australia yet they did not have the same opportunity to gain parole.

When I was an elected member of the Legislative Council, I introduced a Parole of Prisoners Bill setting up a parole board for the Northern Territory. Since that original legislation was passed, it has been amended quite substantially for the better. The Parole Board has tried to keep pace with contemporary events and, by and large, the legislation which has been introduced subsequent to mine by the Country Liberal Party has received my support.

The parole of prisoners per se is a whipping boy for the local press when they have nothing better to do. When a prisoner on parole offends against the parole order, they seize upon it and usually "beat it up", to use a journalistic term, to create fear and disturbance in the minds of the public. There is often a backlash against the very concept of parole. I think it is to the credit of the present Minister for Community Development that we have not seen, as a result of these "beaten up" press stories, any move yet to curtail the availability of parole in the Northern Territory. I do not expect to see such moves within the life of this Assembly.

The position of prisoners on parole is very interesting. The honourable member for Fannie Bay has spoken about the inadequacy of the Berrimah Gaol. At my instigation, the Legislative Council set up a select committee of inquiry into prisons. This was chaired by the late Mr Justice Ward. They brought forward certain recommendations and, at the same time, the then Minister for the Northern Territory, Kep Enderby, set up his own inquiry into prisons and penal reform within the Northern Territory. He appointed, as a specialist adviser, Professor Gordon Hawkins who, with Professor Norval Morris, is a world acclaimed authority on the criminal justice system, treatment of offenders, alternatives to imprisonment and related subjects. One of Gordon Hawkins remarks was to be careful of building large jails because you always fill them. The crime rate does not increase but the more cells or the more beds, the greater the occupancy. Unfortunately, that seems to be the case with Berrimah Gaol. As those who have inspected it will agree with me, Berrimah is a fairly high-security installation. I will say - and I am sure the Chief Minister will love this - that I have been

in and out of Fannie Bay probably more times than any other elected member here. At all times, I have been released because I was present as a visitor. But I have been through 29 prisons throughout Australia and Berrimah Gaol is fairly horrific. It is analagous to Boggo Road.

Mr Everingham: Oh, come off it!

Mrs LAWRIE: I must ask the Chief Minister when he was last in Boggo Road. Boggo Road, which is undergoing upgrading, is a concrete jungle. Berrimah Gaol, as it has been designed and built, is not warranted given the level of security needed to contain Northern Territory offenders. Not all prisoners need to be housed in a small, maximum security installation. There are those who do but the vast majority of prisoners in Northern Territory prisons are low to medium security risks.

The one saving grace with Berrimah Gaol will be its administration. It appears that the administration will be fairly benevolent and that, as far as is practicable, prisoners kept in that institution will not be incarcerated in their cells but will be allowed a variety of other pursuits. To say that Berrimah Gaol is already insufficient for the purpose of housing the prison population of the Northern Territory is absolutely incorrect. Instead of another wing for Berrimah Gaol, we need more availability of alternatives to imprisonment. Weekend detention is an administrative horror but it is far better. We certainly need greater provision of parole. Probation and parole are part of our system now and deservedly so.

I do not know how many people in this House are aware of the history pertaining to jails. They were set up by the puritans and the ...

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I think the honourable member is straying from the subject of parole.

Mrs LAWRIE: With respect, Mr Speaker, I am dealing with parole because I am talking about the necessity for parole given the alternative. If you will bear with me for 90 seconds, you will see.

The quakers and the puritans recognised that the old system of punishment under British law was really quite barbaric. Instead of deciding to lop off thumbs and behead people or transport them to the colonies, they set up what were called penitentiaries. Felons were placed in these to meditate in silence upon their misdeeds and become penitent. It was set up in a benevolent sense as an alternative to the then prevailing forms of punishment. Unfortunately, this very good concept of penitence has been used totally repressively in some cultures and in some states of Australia. We are moving out of that.

Parole services always will be under seige. If 100 people are on parole and 2 offend publicly, the press will seize upon these 2 and ignore the other 98 who may be coping adequately with their return to an almost normal life. I say "almost" because they are under supervision. I would ask that the minister remember the other 98 when he is attacked for the misdeeds of the two. He will have my support in this House if he resists the pressures which often come through the press for a diminution of the acceptance of parole in our community.

It is also quite relevant to ask the minister to try to ensure that volunteers are brought into the supervision of parolees, particularly when those parolees are not white Anglo-Saxon protestants. They might be people with a variety of ethnic backgrounds such as part or full-blood Aborigines. These people normally respond well to parole but I think they would respond even better if their supervisor was of the same ethnic and cultural background.

There is a vast reservoir of people who are only too anxious to assist if the minister would take deliberate steps to get them into the system.

I have said publicly that the police force in the past has suffered from the fact that it is mainly comprised of white Anglo-Saxon people. In the last 4 years, there has been an increase in people of other ethnic backgrounds in the police force and that is good for the police force and good for the people whom they serve. The minister responsible needs to take the initiative to get volunteers to act within the section dealing with the parole of prisoners and to ensure that, when a person is paroled, he can relate to and feel comfortable with his parole officer. Parole officers at the moment are doing a very good job, sometimes under almost incredible odds, given the distances in the Northern Territory and the variety of people put on parole. They are doing the best they can but the service needs expansion and that will only come from the top if the minister agrees and takes the deliberate steps which I have outlined. The legislation before us has my support.

Mr DONDAS (Community Development): I am not going to go into the full history and conduct of the correctional service division but I would like to pick up a couple of points that have been made by members in support of this legislation. The member for Fannie Bay referred to juveniles who were looked after in Fannie Bay. There were 4 - not 5 as originally suggested - and, whilst in the same block, they were isolated from older prisoners. Unfortunately, because of overcrowding in the women's section, these 4 young lads had to be transferred over to the male maximum-security side. In the new Berrimah Gaol, juveniles will be kept segregated in another part of the prison.

Unfortunately, I have never been to Boggo Road but I have been to Jika Jika which is the new maximum-security prison at Pentridge. I think it cost something like \$7½m for 54 prisoners. That is real security. Whilst Berrimah has very good security, it is not in the same class as that maximum-security block.

I certainly hope community service order programs will assist as far as prisoners are concerned. Two magistrates are now looking at the community service order programs and, hopefully, before we even get to the parole situation, a community service order program will solve that problem for us. It is very new and I certainly hope that the magistrates will support that concept.

For the first time in 20 years in the Northern Territory, a Prisoners Aid Society has been set up. The government certainly supports that. Parolees will be able to go to them for advice and consultation. This is now operating in the Territory and I am happy to say that the Prisoners Aid Society will receive some funding from my department to really get them going this year.

I thank honourable members for their support for this legislation.

Motion agreed to; bill read a second time.

In committee:

Bill taken as a whole and agreed to.

In Assembly:

Bill reported; report adopted.

Mrs LAWRIE (Nightcliff): Mr Speaker, given the remarks of the honourable minister, I must say before the third reading that Sister Eileen Heath in Alice Springs has been the moving force behind Prisoners Aid in that community for a number of years. Prisoners Aid has been set up in Darwin recently but it

has existed in Alice Springs for a long while. Prisoners Aid is mainly concerned with the unconditional release of people from prison and not in a parole sense. It is not to be seen as analogous to the parole system and neither is it to be seen as analogous to the volunteers in the parole system whom I have suggested the minister should take deliberate steps to incorporate. Prisoners Aid is something entirely different.

Bill read a third time.

PAYROLL TAX BILL  
(Serial 317)

Bill presented and read a first time.

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

This bill is designed to put into effect the measures announced in the budget to reduce the incidence of payroll tax on small to medium-sized employers and is in line with the government's stated policy of encouraging the expansion and development of small businesses in the Territory. As honourable members will be aware, businesses in the Territory are already faced with high operation costs compared with their southern counterparts. The government, by providing taxation relief to smaller firms operating in the Territory, is able to partially offset this disability.

Specifically, the government has decided to further raise the general exemption level on monthly payrolls to \$12,500 or \$150,000 per annum. It thus reduces by \$2 for every \$3 in wages until the full 5% is reached when a firm's payroll rises to \$31,250 per month or \$375,000 per annum. It has been estimated that the scheme will save employers approximately \$1,140,000 per annum which can be turned into new jobs and more activity. 540 businesses will be totally exempted from payroll tax as a result of this concession and a further 70 will be partially exempted. This is a significant measure to reduce the costs of operating a small business and encourage further development and increased employment. Administrative arrangements will be taken so that affected employers who have been paying tax at the old rate may receive a speedy refund of tax paid since 1 July 1979.

To give honourable members an idea of the extent of this saving, take the example of a small firm of 15 employees on an average wage of \$240 per week. Payroll tax will fall by \$6,000 per annum from \$9,750 to \$3,750. For a firm with 10 employees with a similar average wage rate, no tax is payable at all which represents a saving of \$5,833 on the previous year's tax scale. The employer will not be required to lodge payroll tax returns.

The government is determined to encourage and promote economic development in the Territory and reduce the level of unemployment. This is one of a number of initiatives take by the government to assist economic growth in all sectors of the economy and is aimed specifically at the small business. The tax relief to small businesses generated by this measure is the most generous in Australia.

Clause 3 of the bill itself states that the act is to take effect from 1 July 1979, that is, the new rates will be effective for the whole of the fiscal year. In clause 4, it is necessary to insert the revised definition of "tax". This is a technical matter that is required to bring the bill into line with other amendments. Clause 5 has the effect of raising the general exemption from the present \$5,500 of payroll per month to \$12,500. Clause 6 does the same thing, only on an annual basis. By clause 7, the minimum weekly

payroll at which an employer must register for payroll tax assessment has been raised from \$1,150 to \$2,800. Clause 8 raises the annual exemption levels from \$66,000 to \$150,000 in cases where grouping provisions introduced at the last session are applicable.

I commend the bill to honourable members.

Debate adjourned.

TERRITORY DEVELOPMENT BILL  
(Serial 330)

Bill presented and read a first time.

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

This bill seeks to amend the Territory Development Act in order to finalise the intention of the administrative arrangements order of 2 July 1979 as it relates to the restructuring of the Northern Territory Development Corporation.

The corporation was established on 1 July 1978 under the provisions of the Territory Development Act. In its first year of operation, the corporation operated primarily as a lending institution. The corporation was staffed by officers of the Department of Industrial Development and the secretary of that department was also the chairman of the corporation.

The administrative arrangements order of 2 July 1979 provided for the creation of a Department of Primary Production and a broadening of the responsibilities of the Territory Development Corporation. The principal areas of responsibility of the Territory Development Corporation are now listed as industry, trade promotion and marketing, and industry assistance. As an interim arrangement, the staff of the corporation is employed as a division of the Department of Primary Production. In order to complete the intentions of the government, it is now necessary to amend the Territory Development Act in order to prescribe the corporation under the Public Service Act and to formalise the employment of a full-time chairman of the corporation.

The effect of the bill is to preserve the public service rights of the full-time chairman of the corporation in those instances where the chairman was, immediately before the appointment, employed within the provisions of the Public Service Act. Once the corporation is prescribed under the Public Service Act and the Financial Administration and Audit Act, the latter already applying, the corporation will have the autonomy considered necessary to ensure the proper carriage of its responsibilities.

The corporation will be responsible to the Minister for Industrial Development and will be staffed within the Northern Territory Public Service and will be accountable for its finances in accordance with part IV of the Financial Administration and Audit Act. I commend the bill to honourable members.

Debate adjourned.

ELECTRICITY COMMISSION BILL  
(Serial 318)

PUBLIC SERVICE BILL  
(Serial 319)

ELECTRICAL WORKERS AND CONTRACTORS BILL  
(Serial 320)

TRAFFIC BILL  
(Serial 321)

FIREARMS BILL  
(Serial 322)

SOCIAL WELFARE BILL  
(Serial 323)

CRIMINAL LAW AND PROCEDURE BILL  
(Serial 325)

WORKMEN'S COMPENSATION BILL  
(Serial 326)

Continued from 22 August 1979.

Ms D'ROZARIO (Sanderson): The opposition is very pleased to cooperate with the government in honouring an undertaking to the Electricity Commission employees that eventually the employees of the commission would be under the control of an independent commission.

As honourable members would know, one very important recommendation of the McKay investigation into the operations of the electricity generating and supply authority was that the eventual organisation be independently staffed and removed from the purview of the public service. At the time, we concurred with that recommendation. I believe that the government was also keen to see that recommendation implemented but, with the massive transfers that occurred on 1 July last year, it has been 12 months before this particular set of bills could come before this House.

There has been some industrial unrest on the part of certain employees of the Electricity Commission and we are pleased that the government has sought the passage of these bills at this particular time. We all recognise that the employees of the Electricity Commission are discharging a very important function in an essential industry and it is not our wish to submit any reason for the continuation of industrial disputation.

It is my hope that the setting up of this commission will improve the morale of employees but, whilst I think that this is also the feeling of the Chief Minister, it is not sufficient simply to transfer employees from one authority to the other whether or not they are within the control of the public service. It calls for a change in the attitude of management and a change in the way that the commission has hitherto operated. The government's decision to increase the size of the commission may well solve that particular problem. There is some argument as to whether or not these bills will improve morale but, when the larger commission is operating, we might see a change in the attitude of management and perhaps some greater consultation between management and employees.

One or two things remain to be done that can only be done by the Electricity Commission. One such thing is the proposed technical-grade structure which has been promised for some time but has not yet been forthcoming. Some time ago, an undertaking was given that a new technical-grade structure would be established. There are still staff in technical designations who are concerned that this has not yet been done and I hope that the new

Electricity Commission will satisfy these particular employees.

The honourable Chief Minister detailed the terms of the Public Service Bill which is a cognate bill. I am satisfied that all the rights of transferees to the new, independent Electricity Commission will be protected. I am not absolutely certain that the transferees from the previous Australian Public Service will be catered for in this bill. This bill makes several references to transferees from the Northern Territory Public Service but I would like an assurance from the Chief Minister or the Minister for Mines and Energy that new provisions will not prejudice provisions which have occurred in previous bills in respect of employees who have transferred from the Australian Public Service. I have no particular clause in mind but I seek an assurance that, in our effort to satisfy employees of the present commission, we will in no way cut the conditions of employees who have transferred from the APS to the NTPS.

We understand the extent of the provisions that have been made for the portability of leave entitlements for persons who have hitherto been employed by the Northern Territory Public Service. I understand from the Chief Minister that there is to be a similar portability of superannuation entitlements. Those provisions are supported and we look forward to the new, independent commission. I am sorry that there has not been more time for debate. We have had some feedback from unions concerned with this particular matter and we look forward to the operations of the new, independent, under-ministerial-control Electricity Commission.

Motion agreed to; bills read a second time.

Bills passed remaining stages without debate.

MENTAL HEALTH BILL  
(Serial 273)

Continued from 8 March 1979.

Mr TUXWORTH (Health): Mr Speaker, I seek leave to withdraw the Mental Health Bill (Serial 273). By way of explanation, I refer to the remarks which I made when presenting this bill. Honourable members will recall that I invited representation from interested parties on any way in which they felt the bill could be improved. Because of the nature and the number of amendments, it is preferable to incorporate them in a completely new bill which I intend to present as soon as this one has been dealt with.

Leave granted; bill withdrawn.

MENTAL HEALTH BILL  
(Serial 334)

Bill presented and read a first time.

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

Earlier this year, I introduced into this Assembly a Mental Health Bill Serial 273. At that time, I invited comments from all interested parties on how they considered the bill could be improved. A number of submissions were made and my government accepted several of the amendments suggested. Because of the nature of those amendments, some restructuring of the bill has been necessary and it is considered preferable to present this new bill rather than proceed with the original one. Despite the restructuring of this bill and the number of amendments, the basic principles set out in the original bill have not been changed.

The major change incorporated in the new bill is the inclusion of a new part IV which relates to offenders and disorderly persons. Essentially, the provisions of this new part are designed to ensure that mentally-ill persons who have committed offences are regarded firstly as sick people and secondly as offenders. This is done in 2 ways: firstly, by enabling courts that hear charges laid against mentally-ill persons to order those persons to undergo treatment in lieu of any other sentence the courts could impose and, secondly, by enabling the courts to intervene and order appropriate means of treating mentally-ill persons who are already serving terms of imprisonment.

Changes have also been made to the provisions relating to the authorisation of particular forms of treatment for individual patients. In the original bill, the responsibility for authorising treatment rested with the magistrates in all cases except emergencies. The intention was to guard against indiscriminate application of the more extreme forms of treatment. In the great majority of cases, however, the treatment requires a standard which the present bill allows the Chief Medical Officer to provide. At the same time, the requirement to obtain the authority of a magistrate for treatment is retained. The relevant clauses are 13, 14 and 36. The concept of a continuous treatment patient has been omitted. Provision is still made in clause 13 for custodial orders to be issued for periods exceeding 6 months. However, those orders are to be reviewed by a magistrate at 6-monthly intervals in accordance with the provisions of clause 11.

Another provision omitted from the current bill is that relating to sexual intercourse with mentally-ill persons. Provisions of this nature are considered to be more appropriately dealt with in other legislation.

The times for taking specific action have been changed to make these more appropriate for the conditions which apply in the Northern Territory.

This bill is the end result of a great deal of consideration given to the best means of providing a legislative framework for the treatment of mentally-ill persons in the Northern Territory. I believe the bill represents a major advance in the reform of the Territory's social legislation and I commend the bill to honourable members. It is our intention to deal with it during the September sittings.

Debate adjourned.

#### ADJOURNMENT

Mr TUXWORTH (Barkly): I move that the House do now adjourn.

Mrs O'NEIL (Fannie Bay): This morning I presented a petition from a number of residents of my electorate which was given to me just after the last sittings in May. When I received it, I thought that it was probably a little bit too late and that, by the time we sat in September, the issue would have been resolved. Unfortunately, it has not been resolved. Although the wording of the petition might not be quite appropriate to the present predicament, those people still have a problem.

I have raised this matter in this House in the past and I regret that I have to raise it again. The old Arafura Hostel was vacated in March 1978. In November 1978, 3 planning options were put on display and people were invited to comment upon them. About 200 residents and others offered written comments and most of them opposed one particular option: a certain road alignment. Regardless of this, formal planning proposals were put on display in February 1979 which appeared to completely ignore the opinions that those people had

earlier expressed when invited to do so. Nevertheless, they went through the process again and submitted written objections to the Town Planning Board. Once again, nothing appears to have happened. That procedure has lapsed and, according to the paper last week, the Town Planning Board is calling applications under the new Planning Act for the replanning of that particular area of land. These people have expressed their opinion twice yet it has been ignored, either deliberately or for some other reason. Naturally, they are beginning to feel rather distressed about the whole system. I urge the minister to do whatever he can to have this business resolved as soon as possible and, at the same time, listen to the opinion of the people who live nearby.

At Arafura, there is a considerable area of vacant public land. As the Minister for Lands and Housing knows, there is a fair bit of vacant land in the Stokes Street area too. The vacant land at Arafura and Stokes Street occasionally attracts groups of Aboriginal people who camp on it. Unfortunately, from time to time, those Aboriginal people disturb nearby residents. Those residents have rung me as the local member and I have approached the Aboriginal Liaison Unit of the Chief Minister's Department on a number of occasions and said: "Can you speak to these Aboriginal people and explain to them that they might be disturbing nearby residents". The people in the Aboriginal Liaison Unit have said: "We will try but there is nothing much we can do". As far as I know, they have done very little about the problem because it continues. I know it is not an easy problem to solve but I feel that the government must find, as a matter of urgency, appropriate areas of land to be used by Aboriginal people coming into town who wish to camp for some period of time. That situation will not change; I think we are likely to find more and more people from outlying areas of the Northern Territory coming into Darwin for periods of time. They will require somewhere to live. They are certainly not going to start moving into the Travelodge straight away. Land with appropriate services in an appropriate area will have to be provided and I ask the government to act upon that as a matter of urgency.

I would like to offer a word of praise to the Housing Commission which is frequently unjustifiably criticised. At times, they become a little oversensitive because when you offer suggestions to them they sometimes think you are criticising them. However, I would like to make it clear today that I am praising them for their efforts in beautifying the various flat complexes in Darwin. In my own electorate, the gardens of the Wirrina flats at Parap have been improved dramatically over the past 12 months or so and really look lovely. That is appreciated by both the tenants of those flats and by other residents of the area. The Hudson-Fysh flats and Fenton units on the Stuart Highway are also looking beautiful and, because many visitors pass them on the way from the airport, I think that is particularly appropriate. They are quite a show piece for the Housing Commission and I hope that owners of private flat units will follow this example set by the Housing Commission.

The large block in Kurringal, which is a very difficult block to manage, is still rather unattractive but I understand the Housing Commission has plans to beautify that as well. It is not an inexpensive project; planting trees costs much more than people think. Nevertheless, even from a financial point of view, it might be well worth while for the Housing Commission because the residents of those flats take much greater pride in them when they are given this attention. I am sure the Housing Commission will find decreasing maintenance costs, vandalism and so forth. The Housing Commission has implemented a project whereby it encourages the tenants of its houses to beautify their gardens and I am pleased that they have expanded this to flats also.

Mrs LAWRIE (Nightcliff): Mr Speaker I am sorry that the Minister for Education is not in the House. I did advise him that I would be speaking

on matters pertaining to his portfolio and I hope what I have to say will give him and his Cabinet colleagues some food for thought.

Firstly, I am going to talk about Aboriginal teacher training which has been in the hands of the Darwin Community College. It appears that the Department of Education is anxious to take over this training and control from the community college. I think that the member for Port Darwin might have some interest in this as well. At the moment, Batchelor Village offers 3 years' training to Aboriginals which is recognised by the Commonwealth Teaching Service as the equivalent of 2-year-trained status. That status is currently being phased out of the Commonwealth Teaching Service and has been for some time.

The community college has shown enough concern to present a fully recognised, nationally-accredited program for Aborigines to become teachers. On perusal of the information which I have, it seems that the present Secretary of the Department of Education, Dr Eedle, is resisting this estimable move with every force at his command. Towards the end of June, the minister announced Batchelor to be a technical and further education college. There was no consultation with the community college and the minister was probably not aware of the ramifications of what he had done. The Shimpo Report made several recommendations relating to Aboriginal teacher education, not the least of which was a recommendation that the Darwin Community College accept the whole responsibility for training Aboriginal teaching staff in the Northern Territory. However, notwithstanding that recommendation and the fact that the Darwin Community College has capably undertaken control in the past and has been looking to complete that education, 2 high-level, non-teaching positions have just been created in the Department of Education dealing with Aboriginal education at an annual commitment of approximately \$60,000. That is \$60,000 padding to the department while the Darwin Community College, which has been undertaking this program, has been largely ignored.

It looks as though the centre at Batchelor is to become a departmental TAFEC institution and it appears that the Cabinet of the Northern Territory government has approved that the Northern Territory Aboriginal education consultative group should become the board of governors for the Batchelor centre. Is this board of governors to have any real say in the program being conducted at Batchelor or is it simply to be put in the role of an advisory council to the Minister for Education, which happens all too often within his department?

I cannot understand why these moves have been taken given the recommendation of the Shimpo Report that the whole responsibility for training Aboriginal teaching staff in the Northern Territory should rest with the Darwin Community College and that program be expanded to allow a nationally-accredited teaching course to be offered to those people. That excellent recommendation seems to have been done away with and I doubt whether the minister understands what is happening. I think the minister is being fed selected advice by certain senior people within his department and has not had the time to get to the nitty gritty and understand what is happening.

The status quo in Aboriginal teacher education is that, since 1974, there has been an understanding between the Education Department and the Darwin Community College that the complete Aboriginal teacher education program should ultimately become the responsibility of the Darwin Community College alone. It appears that the present Secretary of the Department of Education is quite determined that this will not happen and that the Darwin Community College training is to be pushed aside. In fact, the secretary has written saying that

a proposal from the Darwin Community College to extend the training of Aboriginal teachers has been taken over by them. This is in advance of further reports which are to be tabled to the minister through various organisations. The secretary of his department seems to be acting unilaterally, taking decisions which are the prerogative of the minister, going back on undertakings which have existed since 1974 and deliberately embarking upon a course which will remove Aboriginal teacher training from the Darwin Community College and which will deny it accreditation nationally.

The Secretary of the Department of Education does weird and wonderful things. Besides usurping the prerogative of the minister and writing these letters hell, west and crooked on the training of Aboriginal teachers, he gave an address in London entitled "Education and Development in Northern Australia", a paper by J H Eedle, MA, MPH, PhD, FACE. In his august address in London, the Secretary of the Department of Education made some rather astounding comments. Listen to this: "Provision must be made too for gifted children, unpopular though this may be to certain philosophies. I believe that the future prosperity of the Territory depends in no small measure on the emergence of an elite to replace the transients who now control so much of the Territory's activities". Bye, bye transients, bring on the elite! Listen to this, ye who control our destinies and who are about to be supplanted by the elite: "Potential delinquents must be helped to develop more positive attitudes". I guess, gentlemen, you are the potential delinquents. He said that a proposal was now with the minister to constitute the existing advisory group on Aboriginal education as the governing body of an Aboriginal open college. "This would effectively give the responsibility to Aborigines for all post-school education and training for Aborigines thus turning the concept of self-management into a reality and giving due prominence to the educational needs of adults". There is no mention of national accreditation there.

Now we come to even more interesting things. This paper was delivered in London. We are all worrying about the future of the Northern Territory children. I think each member of the House, including the knitting member for Tiwi sitting back there, really believes in doing all he can to ensure the future of Territory kids and to make this a better place in which children can develop - of course, as they develop, so does the Territory. However, according to the Secretary of the Department: "We are also considering the provision of more hostel accommodation in the towns so that rural children need not leave the Territory in order to complete their secondary education". Good one! "At the same time, children must not be penalised by remaining in the Territory, lacking familiarity with the way in which most Australians live in the cities of the temperate south. Two possible programs have been suggested to meet this need. One envisages the establishment in Adelaide of a Northern Territory educational building staffed by Territory teachers where senior pupils could follow their courses for 1 or 2 terms. This would enable Territory children to gain experience of life in a major city without the need to transfer permanently to schools outside the Territory. The second proposal is for an Education-Australia program based on the example of Education-Canada. This program consists of a network of exchanges which enables older students to spend up to a year at schools in states other than their own". As a concept that is fine. I cannot wait to see the thousands of Territory kids flying around Australia at somebody's expense to complete their education. This is pie in the sky. This gentleman, the Secretary of the Department of Education, is advising the Northern Territory Cabinet through the minister.

Again, from a reprint in the Journal of the Royal Society of Arts, a Professor Connell asked: "What kind of teacher training is available in the Northern Territory?" The lecturer, Dr Eedle, answered:

*I feel, and here I do not carry with me all my colleagues in the Territory, that it will be a long time before the Territory generates enough people to be trained as teachers. I am also in 2 minds as to whether it is wholly desirable that anybody should grow up in the Territory, go to school in the Territory, be trained as a teacher in the Territory and teach in the Territory without experience in the way in which 85% of the Australian population live. Given our numbers, I cannot see that the Darwin Community College, for example, which already trains some primary school teachers, can offer the range of courses and the range of options which would give us well-trained, competent ones. I believe that the Community College would be best employed in in-service training, upgrading specialist courses, working with people who are already there and not concentrating, to any extent, on initial training.*

Well, isn't that nice? Our kids are born and educated in the Territory but, if they wish to become teachers, Dr Eedle thinks they would be unsuitable because of the conditions prevailing in the Territory! We are not talking about climate but about cultural conditions in the Territory, which I happen to think are richer than those which the other 85% of Australia enjoys. According to Dr Eedle, kids who are brought up in the very rich culture of the Territory cannot be adequately trained to then teach future generations of Territorians without having been sent south first - at whose expense, I wonder, and to what purpose?

I feel that the remarks of the Secretary of the Department of Education amount to nothing less than a totally unwarranted slur on the competence of the staff of the Darwin Community College who are engaged in teacher training. I repeat that I do not believe that the Darwin Community College, which has already trained some primary school teachers, cannot offer the range of courses and the range of options which would provide well-trained, competent teachers. He does not say that he will be pressing his minister and the Treasurer to provide whatever is lacking but, rather, he suggests that the trainee teachers should be sent to some other place to gain whatever knowledge is lacking in the courses offered by the Darwin Community College.

Mr Deputy Speaker, I think this is a poor example of the thinking of senior public servants who advise the Cabinet of the Northern Territory government. I think that the minister owes an explanation to the people of the Northern Territory and should inform them of the Cabinet feeling regarding the courses and the status of the Darwin Community College and, particularly, whether it is feasible to educate your children in the Northern Territory to a standard which will be acceptable throughout Australia. The secretary of the department is on record as saying that it is not feasible and yet he does not suggest ways in which the programs can be improved, if they need improvement, and he does not suggest that any improvement should come from within the Northern Territory. He simply says that we are not doing it well enough and we should export the kids some place else for training. I hope that, at the next sittings, the Minister for Education will present the policy of his Cabinet colleagues on this question.

This article was drawn to my attention by members of the Darwin Community College who feel fairly bitter and let down by it. I have also had it drawn to my attention by people in the Darwin community whose kids, like my own,

were born here and have almost reached the end of their secondary schooling. These people thought that, by keeping them here, providing them with a stable home background and doing all that they could to educate them within the Territory, they were doing something for the Territory. It seems that, at this senior level of government, that philosophy is being thrown out the window. I would like to know what the policy of the Country Liberal Party is on this particular issue which is causing great distress to a large number of people who have had access to this document.

Ms D'ROZARIO (Sanderson): Mr Deputy Speaker, I assure you that I did not know that the honourable member for Nightcliff was going to speak in connection with education. I think her speech pointed out that, even from a distance of 12,000 kilometres, senior public servants should not consider themselves safe from the scrutiny of the member for Nightcliff.

I will also raise a question in connection with the Darwin Community College. I am disappointed that the honourable Minister for Education is not here. In my view, it is a quite scandalous situation. I wanted to point out to him a few of the problems confronting the college and the type of service that it is expected to give, not only to its own students but also to the community at large.

Yesterday, I asked 2 questions of the honourable Minister for Lands and Housing in connection with the land allocation to Darwin Community College. I must say that, if I thought the situation was a little fuzzy to begin with, by the time the honourable Minister finished his answer, my understanding of the situation was even less clear. Some 12 months ago, in company with the honourable member for Nightcliff, I went to the Darwin Community College and met with some of the senior staff. Both the honourable member for Nightcliff and I were shown fairly advanced design plans for the extension of the college facilities. It was, therefore, with some amazement that I listened to the honourable Minister for Education answer a question from the member for Port Darwin that plans were in the process of being drawn up because, even 12 months ago, the design was in a very advanced stage indeed.

Mr Deputy Speaker, since the cyclone, the Darwin Community College campus has been split between Casuarina and Winnellie. This came about as a result of extensive damage to some of the buildings during the cyclone and there is little point in questioning whether the move to Winnellie was a good idea or not. We ought to be wondering about when the situation is going to change for the better because the facilities at Winnellie are little short of shocking. The honourable Minister for Education has assured us that the facilities in Alice Springs are worse. I find it hard to believe that anything could be worse than the conditions that the college staff and students are working under at Winnellie.

The accommodation at Winnellie is provided by a series of warehouses that have been converted at great cost, rented to the community college at great cost and are simply not suitable for the purpose of teaching or learning. These converted warehouses are partitioned but they are not soundproofed. Large numbers of students and staff commute between the Winnellie and the Casuarina campuses. These are very difficult circumstances under which to pursue a course of either full-time or part-time study. I do not know whether the buildings have been examined recently by the Chief Fire Officer but, certainly, their interior would lead one to believe that they are a fire hazard.

Some weeks ago, I was invited to lecture during a course on urban sociology at Winnellie. It was only then that I realised how hard it must be for students and staff to work in those buildings. Although I was only speaking to about 12 students, it was a strain to speak at all because I could hear other people's conversations, lecturers lecturing in other rooms and other students discussing things amongst themselves. The partitioning in this place is only three-quarters high and everything can be heard from adjoining rooms. There are no facilities for private study. Indeed, I wondered what it would be like in the wet season when rain thunders down on the tin roofs. It must be impossible to hear and I am assured by students at this campus that it is absolutely impossible to hear a lecturer speak and even to hear the person sitting beside you speak. These are the conditions under which students of the community college have to work.

Yesterday, I asked when certain land could be consolidated with the existing Casuarina site in order to program the future physical development of the community college. I had been led to believe, as had indeed senior staff of the community college, that it was the intention of the government to make an allocation of some 42 hectares, formerly held by the Hooker Corporation, to the college for its future development. Yesterday, we heard from the honourable Minister for Lands and Housing that, indeed, his government had given such assurance to the community college and that at no time had this assurance been either reviewed or reversed. He went on to say that - and I might say that, if he had left it at that, I would have been satisfied - since that time, the government has looked at a range of land uses for the area in association with additional land for the college. When I questioned him further, I learned something of the nature of this range of land uses. The minister mentioned the development of a foreshore, the development of a lake, a possible caravan park, a significant buffer zone from the cliff tops, public recreation areas and open space. At the same time, he said that accommodation needs of the community college would also be considered. I interjected - unfortunately, it is not recorded in Hansard - when the Minister gave this list of land uses: "What is left for the college?" What indeed? My understanding, as was that of the community college and the architects who were assisting the community college in the preparation of the plans, was that 42 hectares of land, formerly held by the Hooker Corporation, would be the amount allocated. There was no talk at that time of a range of uses, including caravan parks or anything else of that nature.

When I discussed this matter 12 months ago, I was sent this document with a covering letter from the chairman of the council of the community college, Mrs Giese. This document is what is referred to as an educational specification. The covering letter which was sent to me by Mrs Giese stated: "As well as outlining the purpose of the college and providing guidelines and suggestions as to how the college will develop, the specification translates the education program of the college into a co-ordinated program for the development of physical facilities and capital works projects". She went on to say: "The council of the college endorses and supports the general framework for the physical development of the college in Darwin. Development plans for the college in other centres require further research and on-going discussions and are not available at this stage". This made it quite clear that what she and the council were in fact speaking of was only the Darwin campus. She also said: "Although precise details of the organisation and structure outlined in the specification are regarded by the council as suggestive rather than prescriptive, the council considers the document as presented provides a solid base from which the education and physical requirements of the college in Darwin will emerge".

As I mentioned, this document is quite lengthy. It is quite detailed, both in the scope of the college functions and in the design for future physical development, so I presume this letter and this specification were also sent to members of the Cabinet. I would have thought that the government had sufficient information to enable it to make a decision one way or the other on the allocation of this land. When we look at the physical development that has actually been proposed in this particular document, you will see that the land allocated will barely accommodate the future education requisites in the Darwin area. It is planned that most of the buildings will be walk-up buildings - that is, not high-rise requiring lifts - and it is also planned to provide a series of student and public amenities to foster that concept for which the community college was set up: to be a community college. It is not just simply another learning institution; it is wider than that because it functions in the wider community as well as just simply for its own students and staff.

When this physical plan was presented, the architects in charge of this project went to the trouble of seeing whether the same development could be provided on the existing site. When it is taken into consideration that more than 70% of the site lies below the secondary surge line contour, the architects concluded that the only way in which to meet the requirements of the same development as on the 42 hectares would be to go to very extensive high-rise buildings which would be completely out of keeping with the surrounding development and also with the foreshore area.

Indeed, the member for Nightcliff and myself were given to believe that the design concept was far advanced. We were not told at that time that the government was looking at other things such as caravan parks, public recreation spaces or anything else of that nature. We were given to believe, as the college was and this House was, that 42 hectares of land would be allocated to the community college. I find that, whilst the Minister for Lands and Housing says that his government is concerned to see the college campus consolidated at Casuarina and whilst the Minister for Education gave an assurance in much the same words today, the actual implementation of this project is sadly lacking. It is most important that the community college be given some indication of what its allocation will be to enable it to plan a program of development.

This document also contained a program of development which is quite detailed. It sets out the types of buildings that are required, the anticipated starting dates and the dates of expected completion. All this work is far advanced but the Minister for Lands and Housing and the Minister for Education seem to know nothing whatever about it. Apparently, the honourable Minister for Lands and Housing has recently had his department again looking at uses for this land. It is quite clear that the use of this land should be as an addition to the community college campus at Casuarina. All the other things he mentioned about a range of uses associated with the college simply cannot be accommodated if we are also to have the community college discharge its function in the Darwin area. I call on both him and the Minister for Education to make this allocation as soon as possible without any further discussion about caravan park development and the like.

Mrs PADGHAM-PURICH (Tiwi): This afternoon I would like to tell honourable members a story.

Mr Collins: Not from the little yellow book.

Mrs PADGHAM-PURICH: No, another one today. The story has been written by a Mr Geoff Arthur. It is a little cameo from life or it could be called a thoughtful vignette from the farmyard. Once upon a time there was a little red hen who scratched around and found some grains of wheat. She called upon some other animals to help her plant the wheat. "Too busy," said the cow. "Wrong union," said the horse. "Not me," said the duck. "Where is the environmental impact study?" asked the duck. The hen planted the grain, tended it and reaped the wheat. She then called for assistance to bake the bread. "I would lose my unemployment relief," said the duck. "I would get more from RED," said the sheep. "Out of my classification," said the horse. "At this hour?" queried the goose. "I am preparing a submission to the IAC," said the cow.

So the little red hen baked some fine loaves of bread and held them up for everyone to see. "I want some," claimed the duck and the sheep. "I demand my share," said the horse. "No," said the little red hen. "I have done all the work; I will keep all the bread and rest a while". "Excess profit," cried the cow. "Capitalist pig!" screamed the duck. "Foreign multi-nationalist!" yelled the horse. "Where is the workers' share?" asked the goose. So they hurriedly painted picket signs and paraded around the hen yelling: "We shall overcome". And they did. The farmer came to see what all the commotion was about. "You must not be greedy little red hen. Look at the disadvantaged goose, the underprivileged sheep, the less fortunate horse and the out-of-work duck. You must learn to share". "But I worked and produced the bread on my own," said the little red hen. "Exactly," said the farmer. "That is the way free enterprise works these days. If you have the privilege of working so hard for your living, you must also have the privilege of giving the fruits of your labour, namely the bread, to those who gave you the privilege of working so hard". The university research team, having obtained a big government grant to study this odd happening, wondered why the little red hen never baked any more bread.

Mr PERRON (Stuart Park): I rise this afternoon to touch on one or two matters which have been raised yesterday and today.

Firstly, the honourable member for Sanderson takes a lot of convincing. She claimed this afternoon that an answer that I had given to her yesterday on the government's intention towards the Darwin Community College's future at Brinkin was unclear. I might just quote 4 lines from my answer and perhaps reflect for a moment on what is unclear. I said: "At no time has there been an intention to alter the commitment to the Darwin Community College. Indeed, the government is very concerned that the college should be brought back on to a single campus. The only way for that to happen is to provide additional land for them". In the earlier part of the answer, I stated that a commitment was given to the Darwin Community College not long before the foldup of the Darwin Reconstruction Commission when it was announced that the Hooker Corporation had handed back its lease. If I recall rightly, I wrote to the Chairman of the Darwin Community College at the time giving that commitment. She says that it is unclear and she does not know what the government's intentions are. I am afraid that one can only put it in fairly simple English and have it recorded in Hansard. It is difficult to do very much else.

As for her references to the government suddenly deciding to find other uses for the land adjacent to Darwin Community College, I think she is a little naive if she expects me to believe that her understanding of the picture is as shallow as that. She was a planner with the government for some time and she was associated with the government at the time the Hooker proposals were made and also at the time the Darwin Reconstruction Commission

came to town. During that time, there was a lot of interest in the Brinkin area. There was interest in the development of a lake and the possible road connection over the mouth of the lake connecting with roads in the area adjacent to Dripstone Caves. There have also been proposals for a possible police academy, a caravan park as well as recreational areas for tourist purposes. She claims that, all of a sudden, the government has dug up these new proposals. She is implying, of course, that we are looking for an excuse not to give land to the Darwin Community College. That simply is not so. Surely she does not expect the Darwin Community College to require all of that parcel of land extending from their existing lease to the Casuarina Hospital, across to the beach at Casuarina and then extending all the way back to the mouth of Rapid Creek? All of this land is high land and useful for a range of purposes. I am sure there is a lot more land there than 42 hectares. I think that, to some degree, she has misled the House by what she said this afternoon about that particular parcel of land.

The honourable member for Fannie Bay explained that, from time to time, she has a problem in her electorate with Aborigines camping on vacant crown land or public open space. I am sure there are quite a number of members in this House who have similar problems in their electorates. It is one that is very difficult to do very much about in the short term. As far as her suggestion that the government should find somewhere where these people can camp is concerned, that has been the aim of the government and has been followed up by action on the part of the government. However, I don't think that is the whole answer either. As the honourable member knows, we have allocated land at Railway Dam for the construction of camping facilities for Aborigines. We have also allocated land at Knuckeyes Lagoon and we are about to allocate land at Kulaluk for Aborigines to camp. Taken together, these are very substantial areas of land. In addition to that, there is the area at Bagot Reserve where many Aborigines stay during their trips to Darwin and there are Aboriginal hostels in Finnis Street and Westralia Street. The latter is run by another organisation and not by the Aboriginal hostels organisation. These are places where Aborigines can stay during their visits to Darwin. However, it could be argued that one should not expect all Aborigines to stay together on a single area of land; a number of areas will have to be allocated to different groups. That principle has been accepted by this government. I would just like to set the record straight: the government is doing something about the problem but it cannot be solved in the short term. If any honourable members opposite can offer any suggestions on how the government should act in this regard, we would welcome them.

I appreciated the comments of the honourable member for Fannie Bay on the Housing Commission landscaping policy. The Housing Commission does not always receive bouquets but, in relation to the landscaping program, they certainly deserve them. I have, in fact, written to the chairman of the commission and I asked him to pass on my congratulations to the persons concerned because a number of people have said to me, without any prompting whatsoever, that some of the Housing Commission properties are as nice as any in town as far as landscaping is concerned.

Yesterday, the honourable member for Nightcliff raised the question of the special Aboriginal housing program in Alice Springs. She believed that the government is not acting within the principles that I had enunciated earlier. The paramount point relating to the whole future of special Aboriginal housing programs is that the first one must succeed. If the first tentative steps into special Aboriginal housing in the urban environment fail, we will have done a terrible disservice to Aborigines and to ourselves. I think that it is worth going to great lengths to ensure that the first one works.

There has been a great deal of discussion and to an froing about who should select tenants, who should be allowed to live in the houses, who should run the Homemaker Service and what role the Homemaker Service should play in deciding between voluntary and compulsory involvement by any particular Aboriginal family in the program. It is something that should be done fairly slowly and very thoroughly because the total consideration in this first program is that it should work. The scheme that is going ahead in Alice Springs does not incorporate 20 houses, as was originally envisaged, but only 10. If it works, it will have been successful but, if it incorporated 20 houses and it did not work, over the next 10 years, there would be an accumulation of two hundred houses and they would just be committed to the grave. This system has to have community support and it certainly was not getting that the way it was being done before.

Mr COLLINS (Arnhem): Mr Speaker, in following the honourable member for Tiwi in the debate, we have the same problem that the comedians in vaudeville had when they followed the strippers: it is a very hard act to follow.

Yesterday, the Chief Minister made a number of comments about criticisms that I had made of the government's proposal to encourage tourist enterprise in Aboriginal communities. I was going to ignore those comments before I heard After Eight this morning. This was very much a case of deja vu because he made precisely the same remarks about the member for Arnhem as he made last year over the Ranger dispute. I found these remarks very interesting because they illustrated that the comment that was made to the Chief Minister at the conclusion of the Galiwinku conference by the Chairman of the Galiwinku Council obviously fell on deaf ears. The feeling with which the man made that statement should have been obvious to anyone - even someone as insensitive as the Chief Minister.

The gist of what the chairman of the council said to the Chief Minister at the conclusion of the conference was: "When you go away from here, please don't go away thinking that everything we have said to you, all the thoughts we have put to you and the resolutions we have passed are things that have been put in our heads by Europeans. Balandas can help us and work for us and say the things we want them to say but we are not stupid. Don't go away from here and dismiss everything that we have said to you and say that it is just the Europeans that put those ideas in our heads".

I listened to the tapes of that meeting again this morning to make sure that I did not misquote George. The reason that the chairman said that to the Chief Minister is that Aboriginal people are really sick and tired of the way in which politicians treat them. When Aboriginal people come out with a statement or a point of view which happens to coincide with what the government wants, and a very cursory examination of the press over the last 2 years will show this to be absolutely true, the government says: "What a wise decision. Aboriginals are showing their self-determination; what a wonderful scheme". When Aboriginal people happen to make a statement which conflicts with the particular direction the government wants to take, they lay the blame on outside stirrers putting ideas into their heads. Aboriginal people are getting sick and tired of this.

I would like to put the record straight regarding the Chief Minister's letter. Personally, I have a number of objections to the letter itself - no serious ones, but objections that raised the hackles of a few people in my electorate. In the first paragraph of the letter, he says that Aboriginal communities should be developed so that they can do away with "welfare hand-outs". I hope that the Chief Minister was not referring to community

grants-in-aid that the Aboriginal communities receive from the federal government because that is what a number of people in my electorate assumed he was talking about. The Labor Party in the Northern Territory certainly does not consider those government grants to councils, to run their own communities, to be "welfare handouts". I found the term extremely offensive.

I have been working with Aboriginal people in Arnhem Land for a long time. I believe that the strides that Aboriginal people have made and the way that they have coped with the extraordinary chain of events over the last 5 years is nothing short of remarkable. Aboriginal communities were formerly under the control and care of a benign mission influence and government settlements under superintendents and they were largely protected from the outside world. In the space of a very few years, a total, sudden reversal of policy - as a result of a federal Labor government being elected into office - that was many years overdue, has forced these people into accepting responsibility and coping with a bewildering chain of events. The devolution of self-government in the Northern Territory has accelerated the force of this pressure to an enormous degree.

This House has passed hundreds of bills since the election. Many of those bills affect Aborigines. The Chief Minister would know from talks with his Aboriginal Liaison Unit that the Aboriginal people are becoming increasingly concerned about the never-ending stream of people coming into their communities and presenting something new every day. It would do the Chief Minister a lot of good to try to look at the letter that he has written from an Aboriginal point of view rather than from the extreme, traditional European viewpoint that he has taken. He keeps reiterating: "We are not forcing anything on Aboriginal communities; we are simply offering them this and they can accept it if they want to". It would have been highly instructive for the Chief Minister to have been at the council meeting at Maningrida when his letter was read out.

I should, for the sake of the record, put the Chief Minister straight. The first I knew of this letter was when I heard it read out at the Maningrida Council meeting. At that council meeting, as is normal, I had absolutely nothing to say; I speak only when I am specifically asked to do so. This is a fact to which the Chief Minister's own officers and even the Chief Minister's own ministers - at least one of them - can testify to. I spoke briefly at that council meeting on the subject of the Liquor Commission and applications that the community wanted to make for declaring it a dry area. That is the only thing I had to say at that council meeting. The council did not need me to say anything about the Chief Minister's tourist letter because their reaction was so strong. They did not see it as an offer that they could either accept or reject. It was just something else coming from the government that they had to cope with and reply to. The response was extreme: "We do not want tourists here. We have got enough worries now with the roads, with the government wanting to make them public, with the mining at Oenpelli, with the Liquor Commission and with local government". The reaction was not that they never wanted tourists ever. It was just that the government was moving too hard and too fast and loading them up with too many things. They just want the government to lay off for a little while.

Although Aboriginal communities in my electorate have not - and I accept the Chief Minister's word for it - communicated with him because it is probably a little early yet, they certainly communicated with me. I know that the Chief Minister is referring to remarks I made at the Galiwinku conference and, like the Chief Minister, I also was not sneaking around the place or being secretive about it. When I made the remarks about the Chief Minister's letter,

it was in front of the secretary of the Country Liberal Party and one of the Chief Minister's own ministerial officers. The remarks I made were certainly intended to get back to the Chief Minister.

For the Chief Minister's benefit, I say again that I am not opposed to Aboriginal communities becoming involved in tourism. I am certainly not "running around my electorate" as the Chief Minister said this morning on After Eight - the same remarks that he made last year in respect of Ranger. In fact, I am quite amazed that I have not been blamed for the current Nabarlek dispute - I am expecting that any day. I do not initiate points of view or stands on issues in my electorate at all; I simply respond to them.

When I was making the comments at the Galiwinku conference, the Chief Minister would be aware that there were senior representatives of most Aboriginal communities in my electorate present in the room. I am not so foolish as to stand up in front of influential people in my electorate and make statements that I know are not in step with the feelings of the people there. If the Chief Minister had been present at the conference that morning, he would have understood that I was merely making comments that were in line with the sentiments that were felt by everybody in that room.

Aboriginal people do not trust whites generally. They have very good reason for not trusting whites. In the main, the whites they have not trusted have been in governments and they have good reason for not trusting governments. This is why letters like this cause a reaction far beyond that which a European would expect them to cause. You only have to look at it from an Aboriginal point of view. At the moment, it happens to be a fact that the Northern Territory government, and no doubt the federal government, are preparing the ground for the abandonment of some of the last promises that were made to the people of Oenpelli over the size of Jabiru. Despite the circumvention of my question yesterday about Jabiru, when the Chief Minister talked about hectares instead of people even though he knew perfectly well what I was talking about, and his evasion of the question again this morning, it happens to be a well known fact that Jabiru will be built for 6,000 people, not 3,500 people. The Aboriginal people of Oenpelli were given a categorical assurance - assurances have been given since 1976 - by Mr Viner on the day the Ranger Agreement was signed, because he knows it is a problem uppermost in their minds, that Jabiru would not exceed 3,500. I have the transcripts of that meeting if the Chief Minister would like to have a look at them. "Don't worry", he said, "the government has given you a firm promise that Jabiru will not go beyond 3,500".

Aboriginal people have good reason to distrust government. One of the people in the forefront of the current Nabarlek dispute is Rachel Maralngurra, the wife of the chairman at Oenpelli. She is a bitter lady - bitter because she is a very intelligent and articulate person who has watched with despair as Oenpelli has been tearing itself to pieces in the last few months on money and alcohol provided by mining companies, an inevitable result that everyone knew was going to happen and a result that all the committees in the world will not stop. At the moment, the situation at Oenpelli is not a very good portent of things to come.

I would like to conclude by quoting what Rachel said to the Fox Commission:

*You never asked us once about something and we say "mine or don't mine", and that's what we really mean. That's our word. You tell us things, we keep our word and you don't keep your word. You white people yourselves decide amongst yourselves and the government takes notice of*

*what you say, but does not believe us, the people to whom the land belongs. You white people made the alcohol and money, you came and gave it to us. We just know that alcohol will kill us and we will all be dead and that is what you want.*

Mr DOOLAN (Victoria River): Mr Speaker, I would like to endorse briefly some of the remarks of the honourable member for Arnhem. I suggest to the Chief Minister that, if he intends to promote tourism on Aboriginal settlements and missions, he should organise some sort of a crash course in good manners for his potential tourists. This idea of Europeans visiting settlements and missions is far from new. In the 1960s, I was one of those terrible superintendents that the honourable member refers to and we used to hold a most shocking and dreadful day called an "open day". A whole lot of clowns used to walk about with cameras and walk in and out of Aboriginal people's homes. They used to talk in loud voices in full hearing of the Aboriginal people and say: "Aren't they dirty" and "don't they smell" and nice things like that. They used to ask me frequently if I found the natives friendly and other ridiculous questions. To the Aboriginal people's horror, they went into their homes and photographed them. If you think I am joking about this, I suggest you ask Creed Lovegrove and Les Penhall because they obviously went through the same unfortunate experience.

It was embarrassing and I used to absolutely dread the thought of that day. I even cancelled one by telling an untruth. I said that I had no vehicles available to cart them from the airport down to the settlement. I can assure you that they paraded into homes. They embarrassed old people, young people and anyone else by taking these ridiculous photographs. At one time, I got hold of all the cameras I could find amongst the European staff - and there were a couple of Aboriginals who had them - and I lined them up at the airport taking pictures of the tourists. I was severely reprimanded for doing so. In general, Aboriginal people would much prefer to be left alone. They would much prefer not to be looked at as something less than human, some sort of an oddity or a freak that Europeans want to walk about photographing.

Mr EVERINGHAM (Chief Minister): Mr Speaker, I would like to comment briefly on the remarks of the honourable member for Victoria River. I think that it is a good example of the distortion of the nature of this letter that I wrote to Aboriginal communities. The honourable member for Victoria River has attempted to liken tourism to the old open days which I certainly know about and which took place in Aboriginal communities during the period of administration by the Welfare Branch of the Northern Territory Administration. The honourable member for Victoria River persists in asking questions of the government about what opportunities it is providing for employment for Aboriginal people and the honourable member for Arnhem constantly deplores the lack of opportunities for employment for Aboriginal people in their own areas. It is a fact that it will be very difficult to provide many employment opportunities for people living in their traditional areas unless there is some measure of acceptance by them of an industry such as tourism.

As I have indicated, and I think it is stated in the letter, there is absolutely no reason why the tourists need even come near the communities in question. However, various attractions in the areas could be made open and people attracted to come there. It is a labour-intensive industry. If I am to believe the honourable member for Arnhem when he says that he never initiates issues in his electorate, he must be representing the views of his constituents when he deplores the unemployment situation in the settlements. In writing this letter to Aboriginal communities, the government simply sought to put suggestions in front of them relating to tourism.

Whilst I appreciate that many things have transpired, I suggest that, if the honourable member for Arnhem is sincere in not wishing Aboriginal people to be troubled by proposals that might create employment, he and his colleague, the honourable member for Victoria River, desist from criticising the government for not attempting to create employment opportunities for Aboriginal people. If we cannot communicate with Aboriginal communities in respect of employment prospects, then we should not be open to criticism for not making employment opportunities available. It is one thing or the other and they cannot have it both ways.

I certainly have every sympathy for Aboriginal community councils attempting to deal with the number of issues of a very vexing and complex nature that are coming before them at the moment. The alcohol problem is a very serious one yet I suggest that, if the Northern Territory government had legislated to remove the right of Aboriginal people to consume liquor, then the honourable member for Arnhem would have been amongst the foremost of our critics. We have passed that legislation and the communities must make their own decisions. After all, I think all of us are committed in some degree or other to Aboriginal people deciding their own future as far as it is possible.

I concede the fact that there are pressures in these communities and that is unfortunate. However, if there are to be solutions to the problems, then something really has to happen. We cannot sit back and say: "It is only going to cause more pressure on the council. We had better not pass a piece of liquor legislation. We had better let that alcohol problem continue at Maningrida". When they cannot pass bylaws in their community to control the situation as they want to, should we sit back and not pass legislation for community government? It is a difficult problem. The government is putting the opportunities there. The Aboriginal people can avail themselves of the opportunities as and when they want to. It must have been a pretty monumental meeting of the council that the honourable member for Arnhem attended if it was discussing all those matters at once.

I turn back to the remarks of the honourable member for Nightcliff in relation to the speech by Dr Eedle at the University of London Institute of Education. Obviously, Dr Eedle made the speech in his private capacity and, in any event, the speech was made on 4 January this year before he became Secretary of the Northern Territory Department of Education. In any event, I certainly will study the speech myself and, should I consider it necessary, I will discuss the matter with the Public Service Commissioner. I would like to make it quite clear that the Northern Territory government's policy, so far as is possible, is to establish, over the course of time, facilities for complete education in the Northern Territory. Obviously, we are aiming in due course at a Northern Territory university. At present, the Minister for Education is aiming to increase the facilities available in the Territory for technical and further education.

The honourable member for Nightcliff complained that she did not know what the government's policy was on education. The Country Liberal Party paid the Northern Territory News a considerable sum of money to advertise the policy of the party and the government on education some few months ago. I think it was a rather bold step on behalf of the party to do this at considerable expense. It is unfortunate if she missed reading the issue of the Northern Territory News that afternoon. Perhaps she did not think the policy of the Country Liberal Party on education was worth reading and skipped over it.

The situation in relation to the training of Aboriginal teacher assistants and teachers, at least at the Bachelor Education Village, has been a vexed one. This again was raised by the honourable member for Arnhem. The administration of the Bachelor Education Village prior to 1 July 1979 was in the hands of 3 instrumentalities, each of them Commonwealth: the Department of Aboriginal Affairs, the Department of Education and the Darwin Community College. I have had conversations with staff of the Bachelor Education Village who have complained about the division in control and the problems that it has caused. My understanding of the situation was that they would be pleased to see one authority in control and it really did not matter too much to them who it was.

I appreciate that the Darwin Community College considers that it has a great deal to offer in the matter of teacher education and this is obviously something that the government will have to look at. In the transitional phase of the Territory government taking over education, the division of control between 3 authorities has been removed from Bachelor Education Village and hopefully it will operate more efficiently from now on and certainly less to the frustration of the staff.

The Darwin Community College campus issue has been canvassed by the Minister for Lands and Housing and I do not really think there is any need to say anything about that. It is regrettable that the honourable member for Sanderson decided to qualify as a town planner. Although I have heard persons cast grave doubts on her capacity for town planning in any event, I rather think that she should perhaps have gone in for hair splitting and joined the legal profession because she seems to be able to read a double entendre or a convoluted meaning into almost any statement that comes in front of her. Obviously, she is only seeking to stir up trouble amongst the people of the community college. It is unnecessary for me to restate the government's intention, subject to budgetary considerations, to relocate on the Casuarina campus all units of the Darwin Community College. I might say that the facilities on the Casuarina campus now would be more extensive than they were before Cyclone Tracy and that it is obviously due to the expansion of the college that the Winnellie campus still has to be maintained.

Whilst I would suggest that the Winnellie facilities are not everything that could be desired, I can say that they are a darn sight superior to some of the buildings that were part of the University of Queensland. I would suggest that the Leader of the Opposition might have been in worse buildings from time to time at the University of Sydney. I really do not think that, by national standards, the Darwin Community College is doing too badly. Certainly, it is the government's intention to attempt to relocate the whole enterprise on the Casuarina campus within the limits of the budget.

The honourable member for Arnhem chided me for going away from the meeting at Galiwinku last week and coming here and criticising him. He said that we were adjured by the chairman of the meeting. As I recall it, we were not adjured by the chairman of the meeting; we were asked by Kevin, whose surname I cannot think of at the moment, to leave without hate in our hearts and so on. I certainly accept that and I am not, in any way, being critical of the Aboriginal people at Galiwinku, or anywhere else for that matter, in relation to what they may have said at the meeting. I was only being critical yesterday of the remarks made by the honourable member for Arnhem at the meeting and of the distorted view of the situation that he was attempting to purvey to Aboriginal people.

I would suggest that what he had to say this afternoon by way of an objection to my letter showed how petty his case was. He objected to one phrase in the letter: "welfare handouts". That obviously referred to unemployment benefits and to nothing else. I wonder what the person who

actually wrote that letter will think when he reads Hansard. The measure of the pettiness of the honourable member is displayed by the fact that he could only find one phrase to pick out of that letter and then blamed the government for putting additional pressure on Aboriginal communities whilst, at the same time, he blamed the government for unemployment in Aboriginal communities.

Motion negatived.

#### SPECIAL ADJOURNMENT

Mr EVERINGHAM (Chief Minister): Mr Speaker, I move that this Assembly, at its rising, do adjourn until Tuesday 11 September at 10 am or such other time as Mr Speaker may determine by letter or telegram.

Motion agreed to.

#### ADJOURNMENT

Mr EVERINGHAM (Jingili): Mr Speaker, I move that the Assembly do now adjourn.

Motion agreed to; the Assembly adjourned.

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