PETITION

Parkland in Millner

Mr ISAACS (Opposition Leader): I present a petition from 21 residents of the Millner electorate requesting that crown land in Millner be developed as parkland. The petition bears the Clerk's certificate that it conforms with the requirements of Standing Orders and I move that the petition be received and read.

Motion agreed to; petition received and read:

To the honourable the Speaker and members of the Legislative Assembly of the Northern Territory of Australia, the humble petition of the undersigned residents of the Millner electorate respectfully showeth their desire that blocks 7565 and 7566 Brayshaw Crescent Millner be developed as parkland. These are blocks of crown land and residents request they be developed as parkland to ensure there is adequate open space in this newly developed subdivision and that their children have a safe place to play. Your petitioners therefore humbly pray that the honourable members of the Legislative Assembly act to ensure that lots 7565 and 7566 Brayshaw Crescent are developed as parkland, and your petitioners, as in duty bound, will ever pray.

PETITION

Dust Problem in Sanderson

Ms D’ROZARIO (Sanderson): I present a petition from 108 residents of the Northern Territory concerning a dust problem in the development of new private subdivisions in Sanderson. The petition bears the Clerk's certificate that it conforms with the requirements of Standing Orders. I move that the petition be received and read.

Motion agreed to; petition received and read:

To the honourable the Speaker and members of the Legislative Assembly of the Northern Territory, the humble petition of the undersigned residents of the suburb of Wulagi respectfully showeth that there is an urgent need to investigate and remedy the problem which has been created as a result of the development of the new private subdivision in Sanderson opposite Vanderlin Drive. A serious dust nuisance exists as a result of trucks using an unsealed section of road thus causing inconvenience to surrounding residents. Your petitioners therefore humbly pray that the honourable members of the Legislative Assembly act to ensure the problem is rectified, and your petitioners, as in duty bound, will ever pray.

CYCLONE TRACY RELIEF TRUST FUND REPORT

Mr EVERINGHAM (Chief Minister): Mr Speaker, I table the Report of the Darwin Cyclone Tracy Relief Trust Fund for the months of November and December 1979 and for January, February, March, April, May and June 1980. For the
information of members, I should add that there are no spare copies for distribution but that copies are available in the library.

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

Leave granted.

MESSAGE FROM ADMINISTRATOR

Mr Speaker: Honourable members, I have received a message No 1 from the Administrator. It 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 1980-81 to provide for the appropriation of certain sums out of the consolidated fund for the service of the year ending 30 June 1981.

Dated this 19th day of August 1980.


STATUTE LAW REVISION BILL
(Serial 11)

Bill presented and read a first time.

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

Since self-government, a number of bills have been passed by this Assembly for the purpose of correcting minor defects in statute law and to update the laws of the Territory. This was especially so in consequence of the transfer of executive powers to the Territory on self-government. Earlier this year, a program was started to reprint the statutes in force in the Territory and, as I mentioned yesterday, some 50 acts have now been reprinted and the job is continuing at a reasonably rapid pace. As amendments are made to acts, they will be reprinted so that it will be fairly easy to consult the law of the Territory without having to riffle through multitudes of acts and pieces of legislation.

It is appropriate, therefore, that we take action to update many of the outmoded expressions in legislation. One particular one that this bill removes is references to ordinances by the Northern Territory (Self-Government) Act. This Assembly passes enactments and references to ordinances and the laws of the Territory should therefore be changed to acts to reflect this. Honourable members will notice that only a small proportion of acts currently in force are affected by this bill. At further sittings of the Assembly, further bills of this nature will be introduced. In addition, as bills to amend particular pieces of legislation are brought forward, the opportunity will be taken to include a schedule making this type of amendment. The bill is a purely machinery bill and no changes of substance are made.

Mr Speaker, I commend the bill to honourable members.

Debate adjourned.
PUBLIC SERVICE AMENDMENT BILL  
(Serial 27)

Bill presented and read a first time.

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

This is a short bill and its purpose is twofold. It seeks to amend the Public Service Act by firstly deeming the establishment of a Department of the Legislative Assembly. The amendment vests the Speaker with ministerial and necessary Public Service Commissioner-type powers and the Clerk of the Assembly with Chief Executive Officer powers in respect of the deemed department. It also provides for the Clerk and Deputy Clerk of the Assembly to be appointed by the Administrator on a recommendation of the Speaker. The establishment of a Department of the Legislative Assembly under the control of the Speaker will remove any suspicion of political interference in the operation of the Assembly and will accord with usual Australian parliamentary practice. The amendment sought is on similar lines to section 9 of the Commonwealth Public Service Act.

Secondly, the bill seeks to amend the Public Service Act so that the rights of public servants who have been provisionally promoted prior to the issuing of administrative arrangements orders varying existing units of administration will be protected where it is determined that promotion action should proceed in the interests of efficient government. The amendment sought is similar to section 50A of the Commonwealth Public Service Act and will overcome the current difficulties whereby provisional promotions made prior to the issuing of administrative arrangements orders varying existing units of administration will normally lapse thus necessitating renotification and possible financial loss to the individual concerned.

Mr Speaker, I commend the bill to honourable members.

Debate adjourned.

SUSPENSION OF STANDING ORDERS

Mr Tuxworth (Mines and Energy): I move that so much of Standing Orders be suspended as would prevent 3 bills relating to industrial safety being presented and read a first time together and 1 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 the passage of the bills through all stages.

EXPLOSIVES AMENDMENT BILL  
(Serial 7)

INSPECTION OF MACHINERY AMENDMENT BILL  
(Serial 8)

CONSTRUCTION SAFETY AMENDMENT BILL  
(Serial 10)

Bills presented and read a first time.

Mr TUXWORTH (Mines and Energy): I move that the bills be now read a second time.
Members will be familiar with these bills as they were introduced in the April sittings of the Assembly. The bills are the same as those previously presented except that some minor drafting revisions have been included, such as deleting the word 'ordinance' and substituting 'act'. The purpose of these bills is to increase the penalties for breaches of safety provisions in the various acts covering safety in industry. We hope that this will act as a deterrent to employers to foolishly think that they may cut corners and costs by ignoring proper safety procedures and hence risk the lives of Territory workers.

The penalties have been increased very considerably. For example, under the Inspection of Machinery Bill, the owner of machinery which is not guarded correctly could be liable for a fine of up to $2,000 where it is currently set at $100. There are similar examples in the proposed bills amending the Construction Safety Act and the Explosives Act where, according to the seriousness of the offence, penalties of $2,000 or $5,000 are proposed. We believe that this measure will prove effective in ensuring the compliance with safety acts.

I commend the bills to honourable members.

Debate adjourned.

MAGISTRATES AMENDMENT BILL
(Serial 23)

Bill presented and read a first time.

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

This bill seeks to do 2 things. First, it repeals existing section 10. That section provides that magistrates can only be removed from office following a resolution of this House. The section which this bill substitutes provides that the Administrator can remove magistrates on the advice of the Executive Council. Secondly, clause 5 of the bill substitutes a new section 13 to ensure that the minister and Chief Magistrate have power respectively to appoint the places in the Territory where courts shall be held and direct magistrates and justices where they are to sit and what duties they are to perform.

With respect to the first point, members may be aware that in some jurisdictions, including New South Wales, Victoria, Queensland and the United Kingdom, magistrates are removable at will. In others, they are not. In most jurisdictions, magistrates are public servants and their removal from office does not necessarily affect their job security because, even if they cease to be magistrates, they may still be employed as public servants. However, because Territory magistrates have elected not to become public servants, their removal from office does affect their means of livelihood. The government recognises this and the bill therefore contains safeguards against arbitrary dismissals.

In almost all other jurisdictions, magistrates are recruited locally. There is usually, therefore, adequate opportunity to assess their competence and suitability for appointment. The Territory is in a somewhat different position. Whilst the government is anxious to recruit magistrates of sufficient calibre from the ranks of the local profession, it will obviously be necessary to recruit some magistrates from interstate for some time. All possible care is taken with such recruitment but the lack of opportunity to see prospective appointees in action can make assessment difficult. In these circumstances, the government believes that the ancient and uncertain procedures associated with removal by resolution of parliament are inappropriate in the Territory. The government does believe, however, that magistrates should be removable at will. Their independ-
ence must be seen to be preserved. Clause 4 of the bill therefore provides that they shall not be removed except on certain grounds. The safeguards built in to preserve the independence of the judiciary will also operate to provide some job security for Territory magistrates. Clause 7 of the bill provides that the provisions of clause 4 will apply to existing magistrates as well as future appointees.

It is the policy of this government, so far as it is possible, to take justice to the people and it will become increasingly necessary for magistrates to sit in outlying areas. Ultimately, it may be necessary or desirable to have resident magistrates in places such as Gove, Jabiru, Katherine and Tennant Creek. The government believes that there should be power to direct magistrates where they shall sit and believes that this power is properly exercisable by the Chief Magistrate. These directions may not always be popular with or convenient to individual magistrates but are obviously necessary to providing the most efficient system of administration of justice. I have no doubt that the Chief Magistrate will consult fully with his colleagues and take their wishes into account wherever possible. Clause 5 gives the minister and the Chief Magistrate the necessary power to ensure that justice is taken to the people.

I commend the bill to honourable members.

Debate adjourned.

ELECTRICITY COMMISSION AMENDMENT BILL
(Serial 24)

Bill presented and read a first time.

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

The amendments contained in this bill deal with 3 separate matters: the question of responsibility for electrical safety in mines; the conflict between this act and the Interpretation Act as to the procedures for introducing bylaws; and the correction of some drafting imperfections. Both the Department of Mines and Energy and the Northern Territory Electricity Commission became aware some time ago that there was a conflict over the apportionment of responsibility for electrical safety in mines. Section 13 of the Electricity Commission Act confers upon the commission the functions of promoting the safe use of electricity and of setting and enforcing standards of electrical installation, apparatus, equipment, implements being used or available for use within the Northern Territory, and generation, reticulation and consumption of power. The Mines Regulation Act, which is still in force, states that inspectors appointed under that act and who, of course, are part of the Department of Mines and Energy shall be responsible for electrical safety in mines. This intention has been restated in the Mines Safety Control Act which has not yet been commenced. There is in the latter act a long and exhaustive list of situations which constitute a mine and for which inspectors under that act are responsible.

Clauses 3 and 4 of this act should be read together and they state that, as from the commencement of the Mines Safety Control Act - and I am pleased to say that that time is not far off because work on the regulations is almost complete - there will be 2 clear areas of responsibility. This will regularise what has in fact been the practice. After discussions between the Secretary of the Department of Mines and Energy and the acting General Manager of the Electricity Commission, it was agreed that there may well be occasions when it is convenient for the commission to employ the services of an inspector from the
Department of Mines and Energy. Section 19(2) of the Electricity Commission Act permits this to happen. I therefore foreshadow the withdrawal of clause 5 of the bill.

Turning to the second matter, subsections (4) and (5) of the act are in conflict with the provisions of the Interpretation Act and, on the advice of the Department of Law, they will be removed. Lastly, the further amendments of clause 7 were inserted at the request of the draftsman and they bring the Electricity Commission Act into line with current drafting practice.

I commend the bill to honourable members.

Debate adjourned.

APPROPRIATION BILL
(Serial 25)

Bill presented and read a first time.

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

It is my pleasure to present the government's budget for 1980-81. This is the third budget of the self-governing Northern Territory and by far the biggest of that trio. The funds available to the government this financial year will total $654,393,000. After allowing for special appropriations of some $15m, which I will detail later, $639,215,000 is available for distribution through the Appropriation Bill 1980-81. An additional $26m will be available to authorities for capital works projects under the Northern Territory Semi-Government Loan Program. By historical comparison, the first self-government budget, which I presented to this Assembly in 1978, appropriated $350m. The year just ended saw total appropriations rise to $530m.

This budget continues and expands the proven pattern of its predecessors. We have entered the 1980s with the financial muscle to continue the programs of rapid development and economic stimulus which became the feature of Territory life just over 2 years ago. This position is possible because of the year-to-year increases in Commonwealth funds secured with self-government and because of escalating local revenues due to an expanding economy. This budget will generate further expansion in what was described recently in a respected banking review as 'probably the fastest growing area in the Australian economy'. In human terms, this will translate extra jobs, more opportunities for Territorians, improved services and accelerating development. It will encourage more growth in the private sector. We are again in a position to demonstrate the sound funding principles built into the Memorandum of Understanding with the Commonwealth. The government is able to support a strong development, accept new challenges and provide services to an expanding population without imposing unreasonable taxation. This is not a temporary phenomenon. This is the key-stone of a sound future.

As would be expected, the budget contains confirmation of the government's intention to carry out undertakings given to Territorians during the recent election. Some of these undertakings have been honoured already - for example, reduced registration fees for 4-cylinder vehicles, the abolition of registration fees on motor cycles, the $25 saving on the basic water allowance charge, improvements in the range of pensioner benefits and the increased limit on borrowing under the government's Home Loans Scheme.

In addition, the budget allows for other commitments pledged by the government including: a reduction amounting to 10% in payroll tax; the abolition of
payroll tax on salaries of apprentices; a scheme to refund wholesalers for federal tax paid on interstate freight charges; increased allocations for health, education and housing; funding for handicapped people; substantially increased allocations for the Territory Development Corporation and the Tourist Commission; funding to enable planning to proceed for the promised university; initial funding for the new agricultural and horticultural development program; funding for preliminary detailed studies on Darwin's coal-fired power-station; and provision for further investigation of other energy sources, including hydro in Katherine.

Mr Speaker, the budget is presented in accordance with the Financial Administration and Audit Act and the Northern Territory (Self-Government) Act. Before turning to the budget itself, I might make brief reference to the continuing effect of constitutional change. During 1979-80, the process of devolution of power continued with the transfer of 3 functions from the Commonwealth, the full-year effect of which will be reflected this financial year. The first of these was the Supreme Court function in October 1979, followed in February 1980 by additional activities previously performed by the federal Department of Aboriginal Affairs. Then, in early June 1980, responsibility for the regulation of air transport passed to the Territory. During the current year, responsibility for additional state-like marine functions will also be transferred.

The budget overview: The government's development priorities have been established with an eye to continue the unfolding story of economic progress. That progress requires increasing expansion of the private sector and financial recognition for rolling programs which will continue beyond this financial year. We are aware that our past pattern of expenditure has raised private investor confidence in the Territory to unparalleled heights. There is no reason to doubt that the priorities established and reaffirmed in this budget will confirm that confidence and indeed promote it further.

Capital works expenditure incurred on behalf of the department will be $91.8m and, separate from the capital works program, $1.2m will be expended by the Conservation Commission. The government will provide $50m to the Housing Commission as part of its total budget of $70.8m. The Electricity Commission will finance capital works of $18.5m from semi-government borrowings. These funds are not included in the budget itself. These are the government's capital funds which will spread into the community through contracts let. I now turn to cite the major items and what may be termed the basket of encouragement dollars.

The Northern Territory Development Corporation budget will double to $10m. The Tourist Commission will receive $2.6m and the Department of Mines and Energy will get a 45% increase to $7.7m. The budget provides $13.3m for development in the beef and agricultural industries, including funding of $2.5m for the new Agricultural Development and Marketing Authority. Fisheries development will be aided by $1.5m. There will be a total cash outlay of $38.1m on Territory roads, an area of expenditure vital to Territorians and particularly to the tourist, mining, pastoral, agricultural and retail industries. $23.2m of this will be applied to new road construction and $14.9m to maintenance. In order to improve access to the more isolated centres, 1980-81 will see a start on an improved program to upgrade airstrips servicing isolated communities. Maningrida, Bathurst Island, Snake Bay, Elcho Island, Hooker Creek and Numbulwar are on this year's program. On the energy front, the budget allocations confirm the government's policy to move the Territory away from dependency on high cost oil for electricity generation.

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The government's commitment to promote Territory development is not a single-minded determination. We are also concerned to expand and improve our service delivery responsibilities to the general public and thereby encourage a more stable Territory population. We will settle for no lesser standard than is the southern expectation. Education expenditure this year will be $85.8m compared with $75.4m in 1979-80. In addition, $350,000 has been allocated to fund planning for the Territory university. The budget available for the Department of Lands will be $15.6m including provision for the purchase of serviced land. Against that figure, $8.4m was allocated last year. The total available for water and sewerage services will be $30.3m. Health services expenditure will rise 13% from $67.5m to $76.6m. The allocation for the Department of Community Development with its expanded functions will go up 33% to $45.3m. Fire services will receive $4.5m and a sum of $20.6m is provided for the Territory Police.

Mr Speaker, appropriations now before honourable members have been carefully balanced to provide a fair division of available resources between the development needs of the Territory, on the one hand, and the service functions on the other.

The budget expenditures: I now turn in more specific detail to the expenditure proposals.

The Territory Development Corporation: An allocation of $5,750,000 is included in this budget to the Territory Development Corporation. To this must be added the corporation's opening balance and reserves of $3,250,000 and borrowings under the Semi-Government Loan Program of $1m, bringing the total funding available to the corporation, this financial year, to $10m. From this position of financial strength, the corporation will embark on an ambitious promotional campaign to attract new investment and industry to the Territory and vigorously promote existing businesses through loans, guarantees and advice.

Mining and energy: Mining is the Territory's most valuable industry. Annual production is over $250m according to the latest available figures. Uranium has now joined bauxite, manganese, gold and copper amongst the Territory's major mineral exports. I am pleased to be able to announce that this year the Northern Territory will, for the first time, receive revenue from the Commonwealth in lieu of royalties on uranium. The mining operations at Nabarlek have advanced to the stage where actual sales and delivery of uranium ore will take place over the course of the year and, in accordance with the Memorandum of Understanding, 1.25% of net sales is payable to the Northern Territory government. The estimated receipts this year are $933,000.

This budget provides $7.7m for the functions of the Department of Mines and Energy, an increase of $2.4m or 45%. Together with increases of like proportion in the 2 previous years, this reflects the government's determination to promote discovery and development of mineral and energy resources and to use such resources to create an economic base for the benefit of Territorians generally. This expenditure encompasses important new and continuing initiatives.

Government expenditure on geophysical and drilling work will be doubled. Library services and geological data systems will be improved, providing the mining industry with a basic framework necessary for accelerated exploration. In the face of expanded exploration activity, the government will give positive assistance to the industry to ensure that the delays of the past do not recur. The department's staff will be expanded to speed up the processing of mining applications. At the same time, the issue of mining titles will be planned and controlled so that the environmental and economic interests of the Territory
are fully protected. Expansion within the department will enable it to cope with demands associated with new mining projects and to provide effective supervision of safety and environmental aspects.

Energy cost is a major constraint in the promotion of significant new economic activity in the Territory. The budget allows even more emphasis to be given to the relatively new Energy Division so that it may more thoroughly research and investigate the Territory's energy options and assist industry to implement various new energy applications, including solar electricity generation. $100,000 is provided for investigations on dams for the Katherine proposed coal-fired power-station for Darwin. The budget also provides for the implementation of a third stated policy undertaking in the energy area. I refer to the introduction of a 10% subsidy on the approved new cost of solar heaters and air-conditioners for households and industry.

Mr Speaker, the government expects the 1980-81 Commonwealth subsidy to the Territory on account of losses by the Electricity Commission to be in the order of $48m. The final figure will be arrived at on the basis of the difference between an accepted estimate of the costs of running such a commercial undertaking in our special circumstances and revenue expectation based on anticipated sales at the same overall unit of power return as averaged under the basket of charges applied in north Queensland.

Primary production: An expanded Department of Primary Production will give emphasis to future activity aimed at the development potential of the Territory in agriculture, horticulture, beef and fishing. The department will receive a total of $12.4m, an increase of $2.2m or 22%. Projects commenced in 1979-80 will continue in 1980-81, including the cropping development scheme ($115,000), feral animal research ($205,000) and the brucellosis and tuberculosis eradication campaign ($1.6m). Added emphasis will be given to the fishing industry through the provision of $400,000 for a number of projects related to the development of inshore fisheries. As mentioned earlier, the budget also allocates $2.5m to the new Agricultural Development and Marketing Authority. This major initiative of the government is designed to provide the Territory with another expanding industry by significantly increasing the value of farm produce in the Territory.

Tourism: The tourist industry continues as one of the significant growth areas of the Territory economy. Its annual turnover is now estimated to be worth in the region of $85m. Provision is made for a $2.6m allocation to the Tourist Commission and, during this year, in excess of $700,000 of that amount will be spent on an extensive interstate television promotional campaign. The commission will also contribute towards the construction of transportable tourist information centres for use on location within the Territory. As part of measures to increase facilities and accommodation for the tourist industry, provision is made in the Lands Department's budget for services to be provided for a rural tourist area in Alice Springs as well as a camping area in Batchelor. Higher funding for the Territory Development Corporation is also designed to increase loan capital available to the tourist accommodation sector.

Housing: The government will provide a total of $50m this year to the Northern Territory Housing Commission compared to $42.4m last year. $14.5m of this has been made available by the Commonwealth as a specific purpose grant. A further $20.8m will be available to the commission from internally-generated funds and borrowings of $2m. Details of the various sources are listed in Budget Paper No 4. The commission this year will devote some $39.5m to new dwelling starts and completion of works in progress. Territory wide, new dwelling starts will total some 800 units compared with 700 last year. In Darwin, the program will total 607 starts, 94 in Alice Springs, 61 in Tennant Creek, 20 in Katherine, 12 in Batchelor and 6 in Alyangula.
Honourable members will already be aware of the restructured government Home Loans Scheme announced earlier by my colleague, the Minister for Lands and Housing. A total of $26.9m will be available for the scheme this year, the bulk of it from within the budget and $1m from public borrowings. The popularity of the Home Loans Scheme is demonstrated by the fact that it has attracted an average of 90 applications monthly since its inception last October. Up to the 30 June, loans approved under the scheme totalled some $20.7m. Additionally, I expect it will be possible during this year for the government, under special arrangements with Nabalco, to extend the Home Loans Scheme to Cove. The operation of the restructured loans scheme will be closely monitored to ensure that banks and finance institutions contribute fairly to home purchase and construction in the Territory. The scheme was not designed to replace the private loans sector and modifications will be introduced if necessary. The commission has budgeted $1m for industrial housing, $1m for survey construction and repair work associated with staff housing on Aboriginal settlements, $1.5m for rental rebates and basic interest grants and $835,000 for other expenditures including plant and equipment and the Katherine office.

Lands: The government has already announced plans to give private developers the opportunity to open up the Sadadeen subdivision and future urban areas in Alice Springs. This follows the successful attraction of developers to the Leanyer and Karama subdivisions in Darwin during the course of the last year. This new approach to generating rapid service land turn-off is proving its worth and it is intended to further expand the scheme in Darwin to involve the planned Brinkin subdivision. The capital works program makes provision for external water and sewerage services for the planned development of Palmerston. Auctions are being planned in Darwin, Alice Springs and Katherine for November. They will involve remaining land in Darwin's central business district and those residential lots available after the needs of the Housing Commission have been met. In Alice Springs, some 20 residential lots will be offered and, in Katherine, the remainder of the works depot subdivision will be auctioned.

The strong demand for land in all centres, including Mataranka, Tennant Creek and Katherine, reflects the new prosperity in the Territory and the high levels of investment and confidence engendered since self-government. This budget will provide for the commencement of subdivisions in Tennant Creek, Batchelor and rural areas. Major developments in the supply of land in Katherine were commenced in 1979-80. Further details are contained in Budget Paper No 5. Services will be provided to the Frances Bay subdivision in Darwin to boost the maritime and fishing industry developments already undertaken. External services will be provided to the Hudson Creek area and the noxious industry zone in Darwin to meet the burgeoning growth of local industry. In Alice Springs, the Mount Nancy industrial subdivision will be commenced.

Conservation Commission: In 1979-80, the commission spent $10.3m. This budget provides for an increase of $600,000. The allocation includes $138,000 for land conservation studies basic to the government's agricultural and horticultural schemes and $1.2m for capital works. Construction at Yulara Village will enter its second stage in 1980-81 and the commission has been funded $465,000 for town management functions. Capital projects sponsored by the commission are listed in Budget Papers Nos 4 and 5.

Health: Provision is included in this budget for outlays totalling $76.6m by the Department of Health in 1980-81. This represents an increase of some $9m or 13% over the previous year. The 1980-81 budget allocation provides for funding for Casuarina Hospital's first full year of operation and for the continuance of geriatric rehabilitation and psychiatric services at the old Darwin Hospital. The Commonwealth contribution under the provisions of the Health Insurance Act is $25.3m towards the net cost of running hospitals in the
Territory during this year. This money will be received as a Commonwealth specific purpose payment to the Northern Territory. Funding is also provided under the Department of Health allocations for grants-in-aid for various community organisations for operational and capital purposes. This assistance will total some $4.1m this financial year.

Education: The budget for the Department of Education totals $75.6m, an increase of some $9.6m or 15% over the previous year. In line with an election undertaking, $500,000 has been provided for dollar-for-dollar subsidies on money raised by school organisations for direct educational purposes. $100,000 has been provided for establishment expenditure for the new Territory Teaching Service. $96,000 has been provided for the expansion of Aboriginal Teacher Education programs. Additionally, funding is provided for the continuance of programs introduced during 1979-80, including the full year's effect of this government's decision to increase assistance to independent schools to 20% of the Northern Territory government schools' average cost of educating a student. As mentioned earlier, provision has been made to enable university planning to proceed.

Community colleges: Allocations totalling $10.2m have been made available for the operations of the community colleges in Darwin and Alice Springs. After discounting 1979-80 expenditures for the one-off purchase of a computer for the Darwin Community College, the increase for the colleges is some $1.3m or 14%. Specific funding is provided in the budget for the operations of FM radio stations in both centres, additional equipment for trade and general courses and the operation of the School of Catering and Tourism in Alice Springs.

Industries Training Commission: As honourable members will be aware, the government has established the commission to provide one training agency for Northern Territory industry. The budget allocates $1.5m for its operation this year. The commission's role will include manpower forecasting and the identification and analysis of training needs and manpower development requirements of industry. As a link between industry, government and the education system, the new commission will fulfil the need to enable our workforce to keep pace with advances in technology.

Police and emergency services: Police funding has been increased by $1.4m to a total of $20.6m. The 1980-81 budget includes provision for the fisheries enforcement function and for a further intake of police cadets. Provision of $671,000 has been made for emergency services, an increase of $99,000 or 17% over last year. Much of the increase relates to the expansion of counter-disaster planning, training and operations.

Community Development: Including functions which transferred in 1979-80, funds amounting to $45.3m have been provided for the Department of Community Development, an increase of $11m or 33%.

I draw honourable members' attention to some of the specific items included in the allocation. $800,000 is provided for the devolution of library services to corporations in Darwin, Alice Springs, Tennant Creek and Katherine. $5.9m has been provided for operational subsidies, the establishment grants and capital grants on a dollar-for-dollar basis to the 4 corporations. This included $1.4m in respect of the local government tax-sharing entitlement payable by the Commonwealth to the Territory. Funding has been provided to increase concessions to pensioners in respect of electricity supply to one half of quarterly accounts. Additionally, administrative arrangements are in hand for the introduction of a subsidised airfare scheme for pensioners each 2 years. The commencement for the eligibility period is 1 July 1980.

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The government will continue with its policy of assistance to community bodies engaged in youth, sport and recreation, and art and cultural affairs. Provision of $2.6m is included in this budget for this purpose. The allocation included funding for grants and low-interest loans to licensed community-based recreation clubs.

Provision of services to Aboriginal communities: The government recognises that Aboriginal communities still lack the standard of services available to the people in the major Territory centres. For this reason, we have embarked on a plan to redress the situation. The government is committed to actively involve local communities in planning and implementing projects to be undertaken. As a first step, this government has programmed new works to the value of $14.6m, scheduled to commence this financial year. This amount will only touch the surface in righting the serious deficiencies. More rapid progress would be possible if Commonwealth funding were provided and the Territory has approached the Commonwealth for such assistance. Although a final response is still awaited, the Territory has gone ahead and made a commitment to this program from within its own resources. This budget also provides $17.1m in relation to the provision of town management and public utility services to Aboriginal communities. Additionally, provision is made for grants to Aboriginal youth, sports and recreation activities.

Museums and art galleries: An additional $477,000, an increase of 56%, has been provided in this budget including provision for staff for the new museum's complex due for completion in July 1981. This new facility will prove to be a major tourist attraction in future years whilst providing a modern high-standard education and cultural facility for Territorians.

Racing and gaming: Provision of $545,000 is included in the budget to cover the operations of the commission, an increase, after allowing for non-recurring payments made during the last year, of $200,000 or 58%. The increased allocation allows for the establishment of a casino inspectorate in Alice Springs and on-going research into gambling. Revenues from bookmakers' turnover tax and licence and permit fees are estimated to be $672,000 of which some $368,000 will be set aside for the Racing Industry Assistance Fund.

Office of the Auditor-General: The assessed cost of provision of audit services on an agency basis by the Commonwealth is $520,000 in 1980-81.

Sales tax, freight subsidy for wholesalers: $500,000 is included in the allocation to the Department of the Treasury to cover the introduction of a scheme to refund the equivalent of federal sales tax paid on interstate freight, handling and insurance charges. This new scheme, announced prior to the recent election, is a positive step by this government to encourage the development of commerce in the Territory with attendant benefits to consumers through a wholesaling sector competitive with that operating in southern states.

Capital works program: A major factor in sustaining economic growth in the Territory is the government's capital works program. Full details of the proposed program for 1980-81 are set out in Budget Paper No 5. The value of works in progress as at 1 July 1980 was $85.5m. This year, the government will put out to contract new projects valued in the order of $100m making a total value for works in progress during the course of the year of approximately $185.5m. The budget provides $91.8m for expenditure against the total program for the current financial year.

The planned expenditure by regions in 1980-81 is as follows: Darwin - $49,343,000; Gove - $887,000; Katherine - $10,481,000; Tennant Creek - $10,635,000;
and Alice Springs - $20,454,000. The total is $91.8m. Planned expenditures in Alice Springs, Katherine and Tennant Creek show substantial increases on last year. Significant works programmed for 1980-81 include stage 2 of the Yulara Tourist Village, schools at Humpty Doo, Karama and Leanyer, stage 2 of the Aboriginal Teacher Education Centre at Batchelor and the first stage of the Community College of Central Australia.

New major works and works in progress will ensure the orderly turn-off of residential and industrial blocks in Alice Springs, Darwin, Katherine, Tennant Creek, Batchelor and Borroloola. Water supplies at Tennant Creek, Darwin and Alice Springs will be upgraded and major road works are to be programmed for the Stuart, Barkly, Plenty, Arnhem and Tablelands Highways. A bridge is to be constructed on the Bynoe Road at Tumbling Waters and other major upgrading projects will be undertaken during the year. In all, new roadworks totalling $26.8m will be commenced. The new program for the upgrading of services in Aboriginal communities of $14.6m is an increase of 59% on the $9.2m programmed in 1979-80.

Advance to the Treasurer: Honourable members will note the provision of $12m as Advance to the Treasurer in 1980-81. The Treasurer's Advance represents 1.8% of the total budget and provides for emergent and unforeseen expenditures which cannot be included in departmental appropriations including the cost of national wage cases.

Staffing: In total, $200m has been provided for the staffing of the Northern Territory Public Service this financial year. Excluded from this figure are the staffing needs of the Electricity and Housing Commissions, the Port Authority, operational trust funds which are part of the Department of Transport and Works and uranium regulatory services. From 1 July, the Northern Territory government became fully responsible for the provision of town management and public utilities functions on Aboriginal communities. 52 staff are involved at a cost of $768,000. Some staff increases will occur in 1980-81 to provide for top priority government initiatives including the Agricultural Development and Marketing Authority, mining and energy, industries assistance, education, casino inspectorate in Alice Springs, Tourist Commission, a second police cadet intake, the university planning unit and also the museum. Mr Speaker, the government, during the course of this year, is further examining a proposal to introduce the system of permanent part-time employment in the Northern Territory Public Service. Additional information on salaries is contained in associated budget papers.

Special appropriations: The Appropriation Bill does not include funds totalling $15.2m which have been set aside to meet appropriations made under other acts of the Territory. Items included in this category are the remuneration and expenses of the Supreme Court Judges-$301,000 (under the Supreme Court Act); the Northern Territory government contribution towards the Legislative Assembly members' superannuation fund-$300,000 (under the Legislative Assembly Members' Superannuation Act); interest and sinking fund payments $10,620,000; and expenses associated with public borrowings of nearly $4m (both under the provisions of the Financial Administration and Audit Act).

Revenue measures: I now turn to the revenue estimates. Once again, the government has been able to decide its expenditure priorities in a manner which avoids the need for additional state-like taxes. Indeed, as mentioned earlier, the government will provide relief to the motorist, will reduce the cost of water to the householder, industry and small business and will materially assist employers and small businesses by cutting payroll tax by 10% and abolishing payroll tax on the wages of apprentices.
Amendments to the Payroll Tax Act are being introduced in this session of the Assembly. I now detail the sources of revenue totalling $654,393,000. Under the terms of the Memorandum of Understanding, the Commonwealth will provide $404,930,000 for recurrent and capital general purpose payments. In addition, the Territory will qualify for specific purpose payments estimated to total $152,379,000. Honourable members will note that the specific purpose payments are detailed in Budget Paper No 2 - 'Statement of Revenue Sources'.

In addition, funds from local revenues and the balance in the Consolidated Fund total $97,084,000 and are made up as follows: Territory taxes, charges and miscellaneous receipts - $65,856,700; loan repayments - $23,846,000; interdepartmental recoveries - $4,855,300; and balance in the Consolidated Fund from 1 July 1980 - $2,526,000. This is a total of $97,084,000. This compares with the total of $91m last year.

In summation, the budget confirms the Territory on the development course which began with the constitutional move to self-government. That development process is accelerating and there can be no remaining doubt that the Northern Territory is increasingly becoming a preferred place in which to live and invest. New initiatives and projects already under way will be funded through this budget and assure Territorians that the government can and will do its utmost to further stimulate the economic growth of the last 26 months.

The sensitive economic barometer of development - industry production, population, capital investment, private sector building approvals and new car sales - all continue on an upward trend. However, I would point out that the current optimism must be tempered by a realistic appreciation of external factors which could impact on the long-term outlook. International oil prices, world prices for minerals and Commonwealth policy in a number of important areas all fall within this category.

The Territory government is convinced that our upward economic spiral will reach new heights should the Commonwealth eventually accede to our request for a realistic zone tax allowance and announce a commitment to the extended rail link from Alice Springs to Darwin. The argument for northern development is the national interest and our campaigns for tax concessions, the railway and for cheaper air services with better frequencies and new air terminals consistently expressed this view.

The potential of the Territory, discussed for a century or more, is at last being realised. The proposals now before honourable members have been designed to maintain the pace of that realisation and to further broaden our economic base. In tandem with this philosophy of development is the careful allocation of resources to the service side of this government's responsibilities. The Territory's young, our handicapped and disadvantaged have not been neglected in our budget considerations. The government's entire program will provide more stability for Territory families. Our approach, our design, has kept people uppermost in our minds. New commercial and industrial activity has but one end goal: to provide a wider range of opportunities for resident Territorians and the thousands of other Australians who each year are opting for a life in what has become known as a frontier of action.

I commend the bill to honourable members.

Debate adjourned.
EDUCATION AMENDMENT BILL
(Serial 30)

Bill presented and read a first time.

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

Firstly, I apologise to the House. This is, of course, a piece of legislation which should have come in as a cognate bill with the Teaching Service Bill. It was designed purely to allow for the delegation of authority by the Secretary of the Department of Education to the commissioner or teachers in the field. Quite clearly, functions and powers given to the secretary under the Education Act, needed for the establishment of our own teaching service, should be delegable to principals and the like within the system. Otherwise, the whole mechanism will break down. Mr Speaker, that is the sole purpose of this very simple piece of legislation and I commend it to the House.

Debate adjourned.

PAYROLL TAX AMENDMENT BILL
(Serial 26)

Bill presented and read a first time.

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

The purpose of this bill is to amend the Payroll Tax Act to allow employers to have a 10% discount against payroll tax in respect of wages paid from 1 July 1980. It is estimated that the 10% payroll tax discount will reduce the impact of this onerous tax on private employers by an amount in excess of $1m. The result will be not only a boost for the viability of business in the Territory but also direct encouragement to increased employment. Honourable members are well aware of this government's commitment in cooperation with the states to secure a more general form of funding which will allow the eventual complete abolition of payroll tax. Whilst this case is being pursued with the Commonwealth, we will absorb the loss of revenue arising out of our initiative. We are well placed to do this during the expansionary phases of activity in the Territory.

The government has also undertaken to relieve employers of all payroll tax relating to wages of apprentices paid from 1 July. Legislation to extend tax relief in respect of particular classes of employees was assented to last May and regulations to effect this tax relief in respect of apprentices will be made shortly.

With these measures to reduce payroll tax, we have firmly established ourselves as a pacesetter in Australia. The opportunity is also being taken in this bill to introduce technical amendments to the Payroll Tax Act in order to further refine the provisions which grant exemptions from tax to religious and other non-profit-making institutions. The proposed changes in the wording of the act are in line with recent amendments in several other states and are designed to ensure that the existing exemptions will apply in respect of the wages of persons during the period such persons are employed in the work of the kind ordinarily performed by such non-profit-making bodies.

Finally, the schedule to the bill contains other minor amendments to the Payroll Tax Act to bring the wording into line with Territory legislative practice. These minor amendments stem largely from the legislative changes
associated with self-government. I commend the bill to honourable members.

Debate adjourned.

DANGEROUS GOODS BILL
(Serial 9)

Bill presented and read a first time.

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

The Territory has never had comprehensive legislation covering the handling of goods and substances recognised as dangerous and likely to cause injury or damage to persons or the environment. Man has developed new chemicals and substances which have benefited the community in many ways and most of these chemicals and substances have little or no potential adverse effects upon man or the environment. However, some substances in commercial use can present a serious safety, health or environmental hazard. The Northern Territory has been relatively free from these dangerous goods but, as our industrial base grows, the accident possibilities involving dangerous goods will increase. Experience interstate and overseas has highlighted the need for comprehensive legislation to cover the handling and use of dangerous goods and it is the purpose of this bill to ensure that Territory people are protected when dangerous goods are handled and used.

Dangerous goods will be classified in accordance with a worldwide classification system. The need for this classification and appropriate rules to cover these goods was first felt at sea. Many maritime countries regulated the transport of these goods but, although the need for international regulation was recognised by the 1929 International Conference on Life at Sea, it was not until 1960 that a unified code was recommended. Work has also been proceeding through the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations to promote a universal code covering matters relating to the carriage of dangerous goods by all forms of transport.

Thus, today, we have the 1976 United Nations recommendations on the transport of dangerous goods, the International Maritime Dangerous Goods Code of the International Maritime Consultative Organisation and the International Air Transport Dangerous Goods Code of the International Air Transport Association. Each of these uses essentially the same system of classification of dangerous goods. In Australia, the maritime section of the Department of Transport is preparing to use the IMO code for its regulations relating to the shipping of dangerous goods. This will replace their red book under the Navigation Act. The Australian Transport Advisory Committee has very recently approved a model code for the transport of dangerous goods by rail and road. This code uses the same international classification. The Dangerous Goods Bill is therefore complementary to these international and Australian codes in that it will have the same requirements of classification, packaging and labelling.

The classification system I have just spoken about places dangerous goods in 9 categories. However, this bill will only cover 8 of these 9 categories as class 7, radioactive substances, has already been covered in other legislation, namely, the Radiation Safety Control Act and the Radioactive Ores and Concentrates (Packaging and Transport) Act. This bill will not apply to mines as the handling and use of dangerous goods will be covered under the Mines Safety Control Act.

The main points of the bill are: the appointment of inspectorial staff, the specified power of inspectors, including the power to destroy dangerous
goods in the interests of the public, the licensing of the manufacturing, storage, transporting, selling, purchase and possession of dangerous goods—prescribed amounts will be exempt from licensing—to allow for the establishment of disposal areas, the right of appeal to the minister regarding a decision of the inspector, and regulation-making powers, including the design and handling of containers, notification of accidents and the qualifications of persons using specific dangerous goods.

This bill will bring the Territory into line with the rest of Australia and the world in the handling of dangerous goods. It will ensure effective protection of the Territory's people and the environment from incidents involving the handling and the use of these goods. I commend the bill to the honourable members.

Debate adjourned.

INQUIRY INTO LEAVE OF ABSENCE FOR EMPLOYEES REPORT

Mr EVERINGHAM (Chief Minister): Mr Speaker, I table the Report of the Commission of Inquiry into Leave of Absence of Employees in the Northern Territory. Accompanying the report is the transcript of evidence of the inquiry and exhibits that were tendered to the inquiry.

In tabling the report, I should point out that honourable members are acquainted with the history of the Employment (Leave of Absence) Bill 1978 which sought to incorporate into one act provisions for annual leave and sick leave for non-award areas and for long-service leave and public holidays for employees in the Territory. Suffice to say that problems associated with the contents and the drafting of the bill have resulted in the bill not being proceeded with and subsequently lapsing. Such were the objections to the bill that, on 20 September 1979, the Assembly agreed to a motion to establish a public inquiry under the Inquiries Act to inquire into, report on and make recommendations concerning leave of absence for employees in the Northern Territory.

We all know the terms of reference of the inquiry. The government was fortunate to be able to ask for the appointment of the honourable James Edward Taylor CBE to chair the inquiry. That report is in 3 volumes and we are now considering the report and its recommendations. The tabling of the report will, however, allow public consideration and comment by all interested parties.

I move that the report be noted.

Debate adjourned.

ADDRESS IN REPLY

Continued from 20 August 1980.

Mr VALE (Stuart): Mr Speaker, in rising to support the Address in Reply to His Honour the Administrator's speech, I cannot help feeling that he gave us more than just a forward outline of the government's legislative program. His Honour also implied that he was satisfied with the state of affairs as they presently exist in the Northern Territory. I am sure his attitude is shared by most people who are proud to be Territorians.

It is interesting to reflect on the degree of opposition that existed 3 years ago to the concept of self-government and then contrast that with the endorsement of the actual success of self-government that we saw at the polls 2½ months ago. The only conclusion that can be drawn is that some people, thankfully very few in numbers, need everything put on a plate in front of them before they
too will contribute to improvement of their lifestyle. Some people, and I look opposite when I say this, at one time displayed a strange and now historic resistance to the very worthwhile changes that self-government then promised and has now delivered. Others, and there are many tens of thousands, are showing themselves to be increasingly motivated and excited at the many advantages of self-government. In a mere 26 months, that achievement of constitutional advance has done what the continuation of the colonial rule that we knew before would have taken decades to fulfil. His Honour said that we are here to build on the momentum already established and I am certain that we can and that we will. The initial 2-year threshold we have just crossed is a solid foundation for this. With respect, I congratulate His Honour for his optimism.

Both the Administrator and earlier speakers in this debate have raised a number of issues very dear to my heart as the member for Stuart, the Territory's largest electorate. I found extremely interesting the remarks made by the member for Barkly and the member for Arnhem concerning the level and standard of services provided and, in many cases, not provided to people in the more remote areas of the Northern Territory. Notwithstanding this, I must say that, of all the federal ministers with whom I have had contact over the years, the present Minister for Post and Telecommunications has proven the most cooperative for the people in Stuart. Through Mr Staley, we have achieved a commitment that Yuendumu will see the installation of a manual telephone exchange in 1981. Also, through Mr Staley, elsewhere in Stuart numerous pastoral properties and Aboriginal communities have progressively been linked either to manual or to direct subscriber trunk dialling services. I find it hard to complain of the rate at which this is occurring. Nevertheless, I will be maintaining the pressure for the time being.

Previous speakers also took up His Honour's reference to the Mereenie crude oil project. At long last, the refinery at Alice Springs has become a potential reality and I welcome the progress. It will ensure for the southern half of the Territory a reliable supply of major petroleum products for approximately 40 years. My association with the Mereenie project dates back to 1965 and the opposition has never delighted me more than the day it tabbed me the 'member for Magellan'. By the time our next elections come round, the Mereenie saga will, I am sure, have come to fruition.

Alice Springs' long-awaited recreation lake is a popular move in the Centre. The lake will also add to Alice Springs' tourist appeal but I believe will be most used by CENTRALLANS in their pursuit of recreational facilities. The Yulara Tourist Village has been mentioned a number of times. Any discussion on this mammoth project always brings to mind a general accommodation shortage for tourists in Alice Springs. New development is now commencing at an unprecedented rate. However, the fact is that, as fast as new beds are provided, we find that there are still not enough. The situation augurs well not only for our tourist operators but also the general building and construction industry. Of course, the now recognised accommodation shortage is not a Territory phenomenon. Most tourist promotion conscious places around Australia have the same problem.

Hand in hand with the government's tourist initiative is the commendable role in the substantial upgrading of the Territory's highways and rural roads. These are vital to a number of industries and the rate of accelerated progress in only the past 2 years is quite astonishing to say the least. The Plenty, Petermann, Tanami, Glen Helen and Hermannsburg road projects are all extremely costly but the economic returns to the Territory will be many times more than this.

His Honour said: 'employment for Aboriginal people is a matter of grave concern for my government'. Employment for Aboriginal and other people is also a matter of grave concern for hundreds of Aboriginal people and, in fact, all
Territorians. I frequently find Aboriginal people raising this issue with me. In my electorate, there is an increasingly widespread view amongst Aboriginal people themselves that the delivery of unemployment benefits must be restructured. Many of them would like the introduction of a situation that saw unemployment benefits passing directly into their councils for distribution on a workplace performed basis. These people, and they are not a small minority, are sick and tired of just sitting around. They want work. They are also sensible enough to know the reward for working should be paid after the work is done. Unemployment cheques now turn up whatever happens and this is no incentive to work. This system is criticised by the Aboriginal people I am talking about. There is work they can usefully do if organised along appropriate lines.

I call on the federal government to take up their concern and perhaps look over the border into the Kimberleys where, I understand, the Department of Social Security does indeed pass so-called unemployment benefit payments directly to the Aboriginal councils. It is then up to those councils to allocate money to individuals who have been seen to provide sufficient service to at least their own community to deserve the payment in the first place. Mr Speaker, I am not the author of this suggestion; I wish I was. I believe it is an idea which should be taken up not only by Aboriginal communities but also by town councils and other authorities not only across the Territory but perhaps across Australia.

The member for Barkly called for some street planting schemes to be stepped up. In recent weeks, Ti Tree, possibly one of the untidiest towns along the Stuart Highway, embarked on an ambitious tree planting program. The government has happily provided hundreds of trees and the recently formed Ti Tree Progress Association, comprised of both Aboriginals and Europeans, is to be commended for the progress now in evidence.

In conclusion, I want to refer in passing to what the Chief Minister is often heard to describe as our greatest natural resource. Territory children. There is much in the government's program for this term that is directly related to their needs in this increasingly demanding and competitive world. I congratulate the government for its very genuine interest in this area. I also take this opportunity to congratulate the organisers of the week-long event that ended in Darwin only yesterday, the Australian Schoolboys' Football Championship. Darwin should feel honoured to have been chosen for the 50th anniversary of this competition. The events of the past week have been tremendously successful and, quite conspicuously, have attracted the attention of a great number of Territorians. They might only be schoolboy competitors but, on a per capita basis, the results of these matches seem to have been as eagerly followed in the Territory as the people of Melbourne might have followed a major VFL round.

Mr Speaker, I congratulate the government on the program outlined on Tuesday by His Honour and must tell you that I am still proud to be on this side of the House.

Mr ISAACS (Opposition Leader): Mr Speaker, I would like to say a few remarks in support of the Address in Reply to the Administrator's speech. First, I would like to make some comments on the Administrator himself. The Administrator was appointed to that position in May 1976. He had just retired as a matter of fact from the Australian parliament as the member for Calare. He was taken out of that marvellous life of retirement and brought to the Northern Territory at a time of great change and great constitutional development. I would like to put on record my own views that I believe the Administrator has played a most significant part in the development of the Northern Territory's constitutional history and has given great stature not just to the office but to the Territory as a whole.
On many occasions, I have been in the company of the Administrator at various communities, large and small, and, on every occasion, he has carried out his office in a most commendable way. People in the Territory, I believe, genuinely admire the Administrator and that is a great tribute to him. Not only was he taken out of retirement in 1975 or the middle of 1976 to become the Administrator of the Northern Territory but he has had his term extended until the end of this year, again simply to accommodate the problems of the election coming at the end of his term. Again, at a time when he thought to retire he has had his term extended. I would like to place on record my appreciation of the job he has done as Administrator of the Northern Territory.

One of the matters raised in the Administrator's speech was that of transportation and the member for Arnhem has spoken about the great problem affecting pilots of the new airline of the Northern Territory, Northern Airlines. I would like to make a few remarks which, I hope, will give the government some way of lending its assistance with a view to solving the problem. We all know that Northern Airlines is a subsidiary, but not a wholly-owned subsidiary, of East-West Airlines. Very shortly, if it has not already happened, 49% of the stock of Northern Airlines will be put out to Northern Territory people to take up. I would hope, and I feel pretty confident it will happen, that Northern Territory people will take up the full 49% share. If they do, it cannot be said that East-West Airlines wholly owns Northern Airlines.

However, the East-West pilots are taking the view - and I am afraid that they are backed by the company - that the Northern Airlines pilots will have to go to the end of the queue in terms of seniority when the integration of the 2 airlines takes place. I might say that the East-West Airlines Company is showing great lack of nerve in its attitude to its newly-acquired pilots. I believe that the company's view is that, simply because they have rescued the pilots from an airline which was faltering, therefore the pilots owe East-West Airlines something and ought to consider themselves lucky that they have been given a place in the seniority list even if it is right down at the end of the queue.

I believe that East-West Airlines and the pilots who are employed by East-West Airlines ought to be told, not in a hectoring way but in a way which presents the facts, that the pilots of Northern Airlines have played a considerable role in the development of the Northern Territory and that the new airline, rather than just being a small subsidiary of East-West Airlines, is an entity of its own and is identified very much with the Northern Territory. Their views ought to be taken into consideration.

The Northern Airlines pilots have been most conciliatory - and I would like to commend them for their attitude - in trying to arrive at a solution. They have put forward a number of proposals to the East-West pilots which have been flatly knocked back. The point has now been reached where the Flight Crew Officers Tribunal will hear the matter on 28 and 29 August in Sydney. I believe that the Northern Territory government could play a significant part in achieving a successful resolution of this problem by being represented at the tribunal hearings. I urge the government to attend the hearings in Sydney and to seek leave to intervene, not on behalf of the pilots so much but to present the history of Connair and the take-over of Northern Airlines and to put forward what I believe are the relevant facts that I have presented here this afternoon.

If the government did that, it would find that that would assist the pilots of the Northern Territory very greatly. It seems to me that the East-West pilots have one thing in mind. In the last decade, when Ansett Airlines took over MMA and Airlines of South Australia, the Flight Crew Officers Tribunal, as it was then constituted, made a decision that all Ansett pilots who were employed by the company prior to the date of acquisition had seniority over the
new pilots. The East-West pilots are now seeking to have the same principle applied. However, the facts, as we all know, are different. Although it is true that Northern Airlines has been acquired by East-West, in no way is it being totally subsumed in the same way that MMA and Airlines of South Australia have been. It is most important that the Northern Territory government enter an appearance at the hearings and put the case. I believe it would have a very marked effect on the result of the tribunal hearings.

I might say that, on this occasion, it is very much a matter of a dog-in-the-manger attitude of the pilots themselves. As I understand it, the Pilots Federation is totally hamstrung. It has members in both camps and, although it has acted in some ways as an intermediary, it has been totally unsuccessful. The result is a hearing before the tribunal at the end of this month. I urge the Territory government to seek leave to enter an appearance and to put before the tribunal the facts of the situation. I am sure that that would assist the pilots of Northern Airlines very greatly indeed.

Mr Speaker, there is another matter that I would like to mention that does not result directly from the Administrator's speech. It is a matter that I have shown an interest in over the years and it relates to the establishment of the Northern Territory Electoral Office. I said at the announcement of the results of the election that I believe that the Northern Territory Electoral Office had conducted the poll extremely well and nothing that has happened since has changed my view on that. I believe it did an excellent job in circumstances which obviously were somewhat rushed. An election was not due till August; it was told in May that there would be an election in June and it performed very creditably indeed.

I wonder whether the Northern Territory can afford the luxury of having the mechanism of a Northern Territory Electoral Office. However, since a decision has been taken to establish one, I would like to see the government utilise the Northern Territory Electoral Office as much as possible. There is a great deal of expertise there. It has shown on a number of occasions, because the personnel has not changed very much, that it can run an election well. In 1981, 3 local government elections will take place in Katherine, Tennant Creek and Darwin. In the last Assembly, I think on 2 occasions, validating legislation was passed to regularise circumstances which arose simply because of the lack of expertise of the returning officers employed by the local government authority. It is a situation that does not bring credit to the parliament and can be easily side-stepped by giving the experts, the electoral office people, the opportunity to run those local government elections. It certainly makes them useful; it certainly justifies their existence.

In terms of running a proper election, I do not believe we can go beyond the Northern Territory Electoral Office. Again, I ask the Chief Minister, who does have responsibility for the electoral office, to consult with the Minister for Local Government with a view to seeing whether or not we can have the elections for local government regularised once and for all. If the Northern Territory Electoral Office runs them, we will be confident that they will be run fairly, properly and that we will not have to pass validating legislation after the event because some presiding officer has misread or miscalculated as has happened in the past.

The other matter that I wish to speak about has been the subject of a number of petitions in the Assembly over the last couple of days. The Minister for Primary Production presented a petition yesterday and the member for Sanderson presented one today relating to dust problems in their electorates. I have similar problems in mine.
Darwin itself seems to be subjected to dust because of the winds that we have at the moment. Because of the roadworks which are taking place, a very severe dust problem exists. Even in established areas, Winnellie for example, the dust problem is severe. I live in Parap but I am quite sure that I get the dust from Winnellie whenever the wind blows. It is a matter which can be easily fixed if the government takes it upon itself to do something about it. I have spoken in the past about job-creation schemes and the employment problem. This does not seem to rest very heavily with the government. The Treasurer does not seem to worry too much about it either. His electorate cops the dust and I am sure that just about every member who comes from a Darwin electorate knows what I am talking about. The government could do a lot worse than to look at the problem in Winnellie with a view to a grass-planting and tree-planting program there of some magnitude not only to beautify the place but to ensure that residents of nearby suburbs do not suffer the problems that they do at the moment.

I spoke to a person who lives in the Sanderson electorate who told me that the solar hot water systems need a hose run on them almost every week simply because their efficiency is downgraded greatly by the amount of dust which collects on them as a result of passing trucks. In terms of the unemployment problem which we have at the moment - and we know that the unemployed are mainly unskilled people - it seems to me that the government could be killing 2 birds with the one stone: providing employment opportunities and beautifying the areas whilst making sure that nearby suburbs do not suffer from dust.

Mr Speaker, the only other matter that I wish to reflect upon was raised by the Administrator obliquely in his speech, that is, Aboriginal affairs. It seemed to me that there was a qualification on the Aboriginal outstation movement. The Administrator qualified the merits of the outstation movement and talked about the Aboriginal people's desire for privacy etc. We have heard the Chief Minister on many occasions berating the members for Arnhem and Victoria River for their condemnation of tourist plans and development programs in Aboriginal communities. I believe it runs along the same theme. What members opposite do not understand but clearly what Aboriginal people do understand, as shown by their vote in the last election, is that, if you are going to talk in terms of self-determination and self-reliance of Aboriginal people, then it has to be at a pace and in a way determined by them.

I believe without qualification at all that the outstation movement is a success and ought to be encouraged. It concerned me greatly to see the qualification in the Administrator's speech because it is a reflection on this government and its attitude about the further development of Aboriginal people. I believe this and I spoke in a similar vein to a group of tourist operators. We will do a great damage to Northern Territory development by insisting that, at this stage, Aboriginal communities be developed for tourism and so on at our request and at our pace. It seems to me that, the more you hold a gun at people's heads, the more likely they are to dig their toes in. I am certain that is the position with Aboriginal people. Their view is not just of the Northern Territory but is a national view. They see the attitude of governments right around this country in terms of the situation in Queensland, the Aurukun and Mornington Island examples, the fights that they have with the South Australian government in the Pitjantjatjara area, which seems to be at a fairly delicate stage of negotiation, and the outrageous actions of the Court government in Western Australia in regard to Noonkanbah. They see those things happening and Aboriginal people in the Northern Territory discuss those matters as well as their own problems. So long as governments fail to recognise the right of Aboriginal people to their land, Aboriginal people will dig their toes in and will oppose governments in the manner that they have shown recently.
I believe that, if we are talking about harmony in race relations, then people must come to terms with fundamentals. It is no use saying that one agrees with land rights, as the current government of the Northern Territory does, if one's actions belie that. The proof of that proposition has been amply demonstrated in the recent election. You cannot trust the government if they say in the communities, 'We support you and we will do things for you' and by written word and by action you have a different situation entirely. It does not help when pressure is placed upon Aboriginal communities to accede to different requests for tourist developments, mining developments and desires by other developers to interfere in areas which have some significance to Aboriginal people. The more that happens and the more it has government backing, the more will be the opposition of Aboriginal people and their supporters. It does no good to qualify the various fundamentals of Aboriginal land rights. Land rights ought to be a fact of life; they ought to be accepted by people.

When various organisations look at the legislation which regulates land rights, they find it bewildering. In my discussions with organisations they have always come down to the statement, 'We believe that Aboriginal people ought to have land rights' but then they qualified that by saying that they do not understand it. Perhaps I might conclude the remarks I have to make with regard to Aboriginal affairs this way: in addition to the government saying that it supports Aboriginal land rights, there ought to be a program funded by government - and no government is immune to this - to explain to people, both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal, the meaning of land rights and the ramifications. It should be made clear that, when one talks about closure of seas and land claims, one is not saying to white people that they cannot go there. One is saying that, if people wish to enter Aboriginal land or the seas that have been given to the care and custody of Aboriginal people, they may but they must seek permission.

Having studied the way Aboriginal people have operated when they have been given that power and control over the last 2 or 3 years, I believe that Aboriginal people have been way ahead of non-Aboriginal in their determination to be conciliatory and in their determination to handle that power and that authority in a responsible way. I believe that there should be a program by government, not just lip service as we have had in the past by both federal and Territory governments but a program of real education of people to make them aware of the difficulties with regard to land rights from both points of view and to ensure that people are aware of what land rights mean to both Aboriginal people and to non-Aboriginal people.

Mrs Pocham-Purich (Tiwi): Mr Speaker, it gives me much pleasure to join in this debate today in reply to the Administrator's address to the Assembly. In reading through the Administrator's speech, there are several points on which I would like to comment.

The Administrator mentioned the government's determination to place responsibility for Territory affairs in the hands of Territorians. I think this is a most important beginning because, unless Territorians govern the Territory, it will not be as good a place to live as we would like. I think our government has shown that the Territory can be governed by Territorians to the great benefit of the Territory. I would like to see the governing of the Territory by Territorians not only at the state level and the local council level but also further down the scale to the actual people in different areas. I am referring to the people in the rural area of Darwin who sometimes have decisions of public servants foisted upon them whether they like it or not. I have spoken of these decisions before in regard to certain roads that are not repaired, certain street signs that are erected without consultation with anybody and other things like that. If people have been encouraged by this government to come to the Territory
to live and to continue to live in the Territory, they should have a say in how the Territory should be governed and how their little particular part of it should be managed by the government.

My next point is on the subject of education. The Administrator said that provision of education in remote areas will continue to receive attention. I spoke yesterday about a demountable for Middle Point School and Point Stuart Station School and I also spoke about the deficiency at the Snake Bay School. I think it is such an important subject, Mr Speaker, that I would like to reiterate the remarks that I made yesterday about education in country centres. If it can be more important than education in the city - and all education of children is important - but if it can be more important, then I think it is more important because the teachers and the children work under some disadvantage and every help must be offered to them.

The Administrator also spoke about community welfare, the importance of child welfare, child abuse, juvenile justice and general welfare. The point I would like to speak on is the subject of juvenile justice. When we see the words 'juvenile justice', we are inclined to think it means that juveniles must have justice because there is an injustice committed against them by non-juveniles. There was a very unfortunate incident which occurred in my electorate. It was an incident of injustice perpetrated on one juvenile by another juvenile. It happened several times on a school bus. It was a situation that could have turned very nasty for the child victimised through no fault of his own. After much consultation between officers of the Education Department, the Police Department and the Transport and Works Department, the situation was remedied. It is important to remember that juvenile justice is important not only between juveniles and adults but between juveniles themselves because, unless adults are prepared to listen to them and make sure that they get a fair go between themselves, they will grow up not thinking much of our system.

The next point in the Administrator's speech of interest to the Tiwi electorate is the subject of new industries, improved transport links and other infrastructures. In the rural areas, there are not many big industries except certain individual ones. Most industries in the rural area are very small, family industries. I think it is very important that these be considered in any government overall view of industry in the Northern Territory.

The Administrator spoke also about the importance of an all-weather highway system in the Territory and nobody would gainsay this. What is more important to me than an all-weather highway system in the Territory - I do not travel over the highways much - is all-weather roads in the Tiwi electorate especially in the rural areas because some of those roads are certainly not all-weather roads. I was very interested to hear other members talk about sophisticated bicycle tracks in the urban electorates. We do not necessarily want bicycle tracks; we just want plain, ordinary roads.

I was also very interested to hear that the honourable member for Arnhem takes his exercise riding a bike. He mentioned that he had been up the Stuart Highway and down the Arnhem Highway. I was wondering whether we could come to some agreement whereby he could do me a good turn by running my cattle in and I could do him a good turn by clocking his speeds on the highway.

The next point that concerns me in the Administrator's speech is the remark that he made about reliable water supplies being important to the residents of the Northern Territory for both domestic and industrial purposes. The people who are on a reticulated water supply in the rural areas regard this as a very sore point. Before they were connected to our town water, they signed a document which stated that the reliability of supply could not be guaranteed past the
II-mile. I think those horse and buggy days have disappeared. These people past the II-mile in the rural area are paying exactly the same for their so-called reliable supply of water as the people in town are paying. Whenever there seems to be a discontinuity of supply, it is at an unfortunate time. Somebody rang me to express his concern. He had just returned home from work one Friday afternoon - it was a long weekend - and he did not have any water. He had horses to water. Because he was used to a reticulated water supply, he did not have 44-gallon drums available with which to obtain water from the watering point. He looked up the telephone book and rang the emergency number. The man from Norvald answered. I have spoken to them and they are really good blokes. They are very sympathetic but all they say is, 'Sorry, love, you will just have to ring back at 8 o'clock on Monday morning'. This is not much help to somebody who has to water his horses over the weekend and it is certainly no help to anyone who owns a nursery which is his sole source of income.

All in all, it is a wholly unsatisfactory situation. I think that the time has more than arrived when the people in the Water Supply Branch have to do something constructive for the people in the rural area. I have written to the minister, I have telephoned these people several times and I have suggested that they do what the Electricity Commission has done. The Electricity Commission has put out a booklet explaining very clearly how people can join in the electrification of their particular area - what money they have to pay, what money they do not have to pay and all the conditions surrounding the supply of electricity to a block. It has set out to reach the people and the public relations in this area is second to none. I cannot see for the life of me why the water supply people cannot do the same.

The next subject in the Administrator's speech that I found interesting was the mention of a committee of inquiry into pastoral land tenure. I find this very interesting as would most people who are concerned with land in the Northern Territory. It will be an all-embracing inquiry because there are so many aspects to be covered to make sure that everybody who has a connection with pastoral land is considered equally favourable. To my way of thinking, land is very precious and must be used properly. It must not only be used for present occupancy but must also be properly preserved for future generations. In this inquiry into pastoral land tenure, I see several important aspects which will have to be considered: firstly, absentee landlords; secondly, Aboriginal land; thirdly, overseas ownership; and, finally, the fact that we all live in the Northern Territory together. All of these points connected with pastoral land tenure have to be considered so that everybody will get a fair go in the Northern Territory. Land must be used to the greatest benefit not only of the particular landowner but also the Northern Territory of the present and the Northern Territory of the future.

There is one thing that concerns me a little now but I think that my concern will vanish in the future. It concerns me that agriculture is very fragmented in that people are doing so many things. With the development of the new Agricultural and Marketing Development Authority, some cohesion will be brought into the whole agricultural scene. I do not think that I am looking at the world through rose-tinted spectacles in saying that, provided the whole scheme is started off in a small way with somebody's feet well and truly on the ground, watching what is being done and what has been done and watching what the people want for the future and what they can do for the future, this fragmentation will vanish and agriculture will come together as a cohesive unit.

The Administrator spoke about public libraries. The new primary school at Humpty Doo will have a public library incorporated into the school library which is using government capital investment to the betterment not only of one section of the community, namely the children, but also another section of the community, their parents and others.
The Administrator mentioned the fact that the federal government still has responsibility for housing Aboriginal people. In my electorate, Mr Speaker, this has given rise to some confusion and to great dissatisfaction with the federal government. It has given rise to confusion in that it is very hard, not only for Aboriginal people but also for people who visit Snake Bay and Garden Point to try to help them, to differentiate between the federal responsibility and the Northern Territory government responsibility. There are 3 houses at Garden Point which are still the responsibility of the federal government. They are in the most disgraceful, disgusting state that I have ever seen.

It seems that the federal government is completely deaf to any letters that are written to it or any remarks that are passed on by federal politicians who come up here. This is to the gross disadvantage of the Aboriginal people living in these 3 houses. I have never seen such bad houses in my life. Because the housing association at Garden Point is doing the best it can to catch up with the backlog in housing, the 3 families are forced to live in these houses.

At Snake Bay, a similar situation holds. Some of the houses cannot be occupied because they are in such a shocking condition. They have not been repaired by federal government officers. Nobody will live in them; nobody would want to live in them. This adds greatly to the confusion of the whole housing situation and it also makes it a bit more difficult for the Northern Territory government because it has no involvement with that housing. I will just conclude my remarks by saying that the federal government - and I do not know how - certainly should be brought to task about the housing in those 2 places.

The Administrator said that the efforts of the government will continue to be relevant to the needs of the Aboriginal community. On Monday, there was an official ceremony at what has been Garden Point for 150 years and which has now reverted to the Tiwi name of Pularumpi. The people of the area wanted the name changed and it has been changed back to the original name. It was a very happy occasion and the honourable member for Victoria River was over there as well as the Leader of the Opposition. I think that they would agree with me that it was a very happy occasion. It was attended by many people, both visitors and friends from Darwin and also Tiwi people from the 2 islands.

In conclusion, it has given me much pleasure to speak about these points of interest in the Tiwi electorate and I am very pleased that they will be included in this debate.

Mr DOOLAN (Victoria River): In his speech on the opening day of this sittings of the Assembly, His Honour the Administrator touch on quite a few matters of great interest to Territorians and, in particular, to the people of my electorate. I was delighted to hear that the government will undertake major upgrading of the Victoria Highway including extensive realignment. I would hope also that the government will be considering upgrading the Buchanan Highway and the road through Victoria River Downs that links the Buchanan and the Victoria Highways. To do so would open up Jasper Gorge to the tourists and I thank the honourable Minister for Tourism for his support of my contention that Jasper Gorge offers a tremendous tourist potential.

The Administrator said, 'My government will continue to press both the Commonwealth and neighbouring states to ensure adequate transport links to this Territory. This pressure will be uncompromising'. I am glad to see that the government has apparently undergone a change of heart in this regard because I would suggest that bridging the Georgina River near Camooweal in Queensland at the expense of the Northern Territory government could hardly be classified as uncompromising pressure.
His Honour devoted a considerable part of his speech to Aboriginal people of the Territory. At one stage, he remarked, 'The interests of Aboriginal people will be given attention, particularly in relation to the promotion of development aimed at increasing self-reliance. Employment of Aboriginal people is a matter of grave concern for my government. Wherever possible, stimulus will be given to useful projects in remote areas to attempt to increase gainful employment'. This statement can only be commended.

Later in his speech the Administrator said, 'A high level taskforce has been established and the process of extensive consultation with Aboriginal communities will continue throughout the program to ensure that the targets are met and that the efforts of my government continue to be relevant to the needs of the Aboriginal communities. An important benefit of this program will be the opportunities which will be created for employment and training of Aboriginal people providing facilities for their own communities'. Again, His Honour's remarks are most commendable. Personally, I trust that this high level taskforce is not comprised of the 3 recently failed CLP members now employed by the Chief Minister's Department on his personal staff.

Unemployment rates are unbelievably high in Aboriginal communities and I agree with the necessity for training Aboriginals so that they may be employed in providing facilities for their own communities. However, job opportunities are fairly limited in this area and the high level taskforce which His Honour mentioned must look very hard at alternative ways of providing employment in consultation with Aboriginal communities. In order to achieve any success at all, this taskforce must start from scratch and try to find out what the Aboriginal community sees as meaningful work rather than what Europeans see as meaningful employment. My statement by no means implies that what Europeans see as meaningful and what Aboriginal people see as meaningful are mutually exclusive. Aboriginal people do possess certain skills which are often more highly developed and come more naturally to them than to Europeans and it is this type of field which should be investigated more thoroughly. An actual example of this may be seen at Nguiu with the development of an enterprise which is now producing nationally known fabrics which are in great demand. This enterprise started off on a very low-key level and is now a highly profitable industry in conjunction with a pottery industry at Bathurst Island.

The Administrator mentioned that legislation has been introduced to provide for subleasing of land on pastoral properties to Aboriginal people and to arrange special purpose leases in urban areas. It so happens, Mr Speaker, that Aboriginal people on pastoral properties are not particularly interested in subleases. Recently, I was requested to prepare a submission to the Inquiry into Pastoral Land Tenure in the Northern Territory and, in the process, I did quite a bit of research. My inquiries led me to believe that the Department of Aboriginal Affairs and the Aboriginal Land Fund Commission, following advice from their legal experts, make it abundantly clear that both of these bodies have expressed grave reservations with regard to the security of tenure offered by sublease. In the report of the Woodward Commission, in paragraph 228, in relation to the creation of community areas on pastoral leases, it says: 'The form of tenure which I envisage for such cases is a special purposes lease'. I believe that most reasonable people would take cognizance of the remarks of such an eminent jurist as Justice Woodward.

My advice is that a sublease is not as satisfactory as a special purpose lease because a sublease is merely an agreement between the lessee and the community and, as a result, the Aboriginal community does not hold title to land. I have also been advised that the Department of Lands and Housing has advised pastoralists not to agree to excisions by SPL. As the Northern Territory government has demonstrated clearly its attitude to Aboriginal land claims since the
advent of self-government by opposing, in one way or another, every claim that
has been lodged to date, with the sole exception of the Amadeus claim, it is only
logical that its Department of Lands and Housing would recommend to pastoralists
a less secure form of tenure than SPL. The opposition of pastoralists and their
advisers to the granting of special purposes leases seems to have had its
genesis in the feeling that they would have less control over an Aboriginal group
than they would have if the group had only a sublease.

In relation to the future of Aboriginal people in the Northern Territory, I
have 3 documents. One is 'A Statement of Policy for the Improvement of Aboriginal
Communities'. The second is headed 'Development of Aboriginal Towns, a Discuss­
ion Paper' which is compiled by the Department of Health and seems to me to be far
the better of the 2 papers. The third document is 'A 5-year Plan for Essential
Services at the Remote Communities'. I would like to make some comments on these
in line with what the Administrator said in his address.

Firstly, in the 'Statement of Policy for the Improvement of Aboriginal
Communities', at page 6 paragraph 2, we read: 'The achievement of these object­
ives in employment will require a commitment on the part of Aboriginals themselves
to accept such employment and to make every effort to ensure that their young
people undertake measures to equip themselves for employment of this kind'. The
achievement of these objectives in employment assumes that the nature of the
employment is such that the community will wish to undertake it. Therefore, it
must essentially be a program geared to the needs of individual communities in
which administration, health, housing, maintenance and education respond to the
community rather than maintain an image of an imposition lessening their
effectiveness.

Paragraph 3 draws attention to the need for an innovative and effective
administrative system. The innovative, effective administrative system can only
be successful if it does not revert to bureaucratic dogma. It must be fluid and
responsive. At page 9, there is another comment. Paragraph 3 also mentions
tenant counselling which I will be talking about later. Paragraph 4 says: 'It
takes note in a positive way of the ideal opportunity which these schemes present
for vocational training in a wide range of skills and the employment which will
be possible'. I think that the implementation of a competent vetting body for
potential European employees is also essential. This would minimise wastage and
monetary loss, not only in the housing area but in all areas. The European
concept of rip-off in Aboriginal communities is still prevalent with resultant
disillusionment by Aboriginals with European efforts to develop communities.

At page 14, it states: 'There are still aspects to be negotiated with the
Commonwealth and with Aboriginal communities, but we are well along the way and it
is the intention of this government to undertake a commitment and to formulate
a definitive plan to bring about a significant improvement in services and
facilities in Aboriginal communities over the next 5 years'. I would like to
point out that improvement in services and facilities does not necessarily
correspond with social improvement. I can quote from personal experience in the
1960s under the old Social Welfare Branch. Facilities such as community dining
halls were introduced. Without any doubt, this improved the diet of the community
but it was a social disaster. People were lined up in a queue, cafeteria style,
and sat wherever there happened to be available space. The result was that
families seldom sat at the same table together. Mr Speaker, a family meal is not
just a feed; it is a social occasion when people sit down with their spouse and
their kids and have a meaningful discussion. This just did away with all of
that. As a result of herding people in a race to collect meals and sitting them
down anywhere, the family, as a unit, was almost disintegrating. Fortunately,
in 1972, the federal Labor Party was returned to office and community dining halls
went out of fashion through a new department and a new director.
The second document was compiled by the Department of Health. As I said, I think it is by far the best document. It is called 'The Development of Aboriginal Rural Towns, a Discussion Paper'. There are a couple of things which I would query in it. In paragraph 2 on 'Background' on page 3, it says: 'The Northern Territory government has inherited 30 to 40 rural townships with perhaps the same number of smaller camps and villages'. And yet, in the 5-year plan, we have an entirely different number. On the front page, it says: 'The approach of the taskforce was organised in 3 progressive stages, consultation with 40 major communities and an appraisal of 530 outstations to assist total requirements'. There seems to be quite an amazing discrepancy in the figures quoted. The Health Department paper lists a maximum of 80 possible rural townships, smaller camps and villages yet the 5-year development plan is talking about 570 communities. I just do not know what they are getting at.

On page 10, under 'Vocational training and the development of a comprehensive range of skills in Aboriginal communities - basic skills requirements', it says: 'The program is to be primarily directed to Aboriginal people resident in their communities to enable them to gain the skills to deal with their day-to-day vocational problems. Conventional, professional and technical entry requirements, courses and examinations will, in most instances, be inappropriate and specific formerly recognised rural community courses and staff categories will need to be tailored to local Aboriginal needs'. I would like to know if any arrangements will be made to reach higher standards or if local course is seen to be enough. I refer to such things as the Aboriginal teacher education. I would like to know whether the potential is being considered for higher training as the 5-year plan progresses.

The last paper and the one about which I have the most criticism is the 5-year plan. For instance, under 'Housing' on page 7, paragraph (f), we read: 'The question arises of whether the one standard, suitable to the needs of both Aboriginal or non-Aboriginal Northern Territory Public Service staff, can be developed or whether 2 or more standards will need to be considered. It is thought that there will be considerable advantages in providing all new accommodation required for Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal staff to a common standard or nearly so. This would lessen the likelihood of charges concerning discrimination'.

If you turn to page 12, it gets even worse. It says: 'All new staff housing on settlements will be provided with the same or very similar external appearance but with different standards of internal finish. Such action should minimise the problem of discrimination and help to ease racial tension in settlements'. For God's sake, it will do the reverse. It will increase racial tension and it will point out very clearly that there is discrimination. I am not talking about staff and people living down the camp. These comments are in respect of housing for Northern Territory public servants. Is the person who prepared the paper so dumb that he imagines Aboriginal public servants do not go into European public servants' houses and, if he thinks they do, does he also think they are too stupid to notice the difference? Northern Territory public servants should not be discriminated against with regard to housing. Here we have a double standard being considered conditional upon a person's racial origin. It seems to whitenash a potential visual display of housing discrimination.

On page 13, we find mention of staff housing management committees. These committees should comprise: 'One representative from each of the Northern Territory government departments with a presence in the community, one member representing the community council and one part-time Northern Territory Housing Commission employee to act as secretary'. I suggest that such a committee is going to be very heavily loaded. It could quite likely consist of 4 Europeans and 1 Aboriginal. We are not talking about a normal European town; we are talking
about an Aboriginal community. Therefore, I think it suggests a disproportionate representation in the community in favour of Europeans. It would never work because the Aboriginal person would be outvoted or would start to sulk and say, 'Oh well, to hell with it. No one listens to me'. This staff housing management committee has various functions and determines eligibility for houses on various criteria but there is nothing mentioned about the size of the building blocks. What size building blocks are being considered in this wonderful era of the next 5 years planned by the Northern Territory Public Service? Also, there is an underlying assumption that Aboriginal people wish to live in a nuclear family situation with the same constraints as an equivalent European family. I can assure anybody that they do not.

Three areas which these housing committees are supposed to look at are alcohol abuse, noise pollution and other nuisances. That could be a lot of things. This is the responsibility of the staff housing management committee and what eludes me is just where the local council or the community government fits in. Does this preclude the local council or a community government from any form of control of social behaviour and in handling other nuisances as it sees fit? I think it is a dreadful paper, Mr Speaker.

On page 20, there is mention of social behaviour. It says: 'In order to render the expenditure of funds on new and restored houses more effective or, in other words, reduce the likelihood of early serious damage being caused by the occupants, the government should step up its activities in the community development area within settlements'. Well, I would suggest that it is the community that should step up activities rather than the government.

On page 21, it says: 'Greater efforts must be made to minimise the incidence of alcohol abuse'. It does not say how or by whom. Finally, in paragraph 5, it says: '...community housing at a unit cost per dwelling ranging from $30,000 to $35,000, based on 1979 prices, at the same time recognising that investigations may show that houses of a lesser standard may well be more appropriate in some instances'. I think they could wipe out 'lesser standard' and substitute 'different standard' or 'culturally-relevant housing'. It is a bit rude putting that there. It is quite obvious what the intention is.

As other members have done in this debate, I would like to take the opportunity to thank my constituents for returning me to office in Victoria River. For this I am most grateful. I found it was a lot easier election to contest than the 1977 election. In my opinion, it was a classic example of the old dog for the hard track and the pup for the road.

Mr D.W. COLLINS (Alice Springs): Mr Speaker, I count it as a great privilege and an honour to be elected to this House and I thank the people of Alice Springs for so honouring me. I would like also to put on record my thanks to a number of people who assisted me in the election campaign. Firstly, I would like to mention Senator Bernie Kilgariff, who was a former member of this Assembly and the first Speaker in this House, and Mr Sam Calder MHR. These gentlemen's encouragement and advice were of great help and assistance to me. I would also like to mention ministers of this government, in particular Mr Roger Steele and Mr Ian Tuxworth, who assisted me in the door-knocking campaign and again gave considerable encouragement and help. I would be remiss if I did not mention and thank my colleague, the member for Stuart, Mr Roger Vale, whose hard work and enthusiasm in the pioneering field did not do my electoral chances any harm at all.

It is said that if you want to win you have got to back a good horse. I fully acknowledge the Everingham government and the high regard in which it was held throughout the electorate. My election to this House was rightly aided by
the government and its high standing in the community. I had an army of friends. I had my family. I would like to pay tribute to my wife, members and supporters of the Country Liberal Party, both in Alice Springs area and in the Top End and, in particular, the Alice Springs Young Country Liberal Party who all worked tirelessly in helping me be elected. I thank them all. I also believe that I received some rather unexpected help from one of those quirks of fate. A certain similarity in beards between myself and another member of this House helped me gain some very vital second-preference votes and I am grateful to assistance from wherever it may come.

I would now like to address myself to the address given by His Honour the Administrator, particularly in relation to some topics relating to the electorate of Alice Springs. It has been very obvious since the advent of self-government that growth and expansion have been at a great rate and one of the big problems we have, and it has been mentioned in this House, is the lack of housing and serviced land. I was very pleased to hear in His Honour's address that this matter is being attended to with the utmost speed. Subdivisions are being developed. The first land should come off in Alice Springs in the Sadadeen subdivision in May and an ongoing program which is very important is being produced to help to overcome this situation.

I do have one suggestion which, in the short term, may provide some solution to this housing problem. In the Alice Springs electorate, there are a number of empty blocks and also there are a large number of houses that are nearing the end of their economic life. Quite a few of these are in zones which are suitable and allowable for developing such things as flats and holiday units. In particular, holiday units interest me because, if holiday units were developed on such blocks, they would produce, in the short term, housing for many of those people who do not have housing. In the future, as blocks were turned off and houses were built so that people could go to proper housing, these holiday units could revert to their original purpose. This is a very important point because, as the Stuart Highway gets progressively sealed and there is less and less dirt road, people from down south and the eastern states will be very tempted indeed to get in the family car and drive up to Alice Springs and the Centre. Those people are the ones who cannot really afford the frightfully expensive airfares and motel accommodation. Holiday units, I predict, would be an excellent choice and they could look after themselves. It may be something which the Territory Development Corporation could look into although I do not see that there is much need for government interference in this area. It is something which could be done between private people. It just means it may need a little bit of a push.

Tourism is obviously a very important interest to Alice Springs and the residents there. It will be the source in the future of considerable employment and, in the Territory, we have to learn to welcome tourists and that tourist dollar. I must confess that there are times when people say that tourists are a nuisance. Overall, I believe that we have an excellent opportunity to meet people from all over the world who come into Alice Springs as tourists. If we treat them well, we will not only be doing them a service but they will go away contented and pleased with their visit to the Territory and they will send other people to us as well. That would serve the employment problem about which we are concerned.

I was very pleased to note in His Honour's address that mention was made of law and order. Many people from my electorate spoke to me about their fear of not being able to walk the streets free from interference. I strongly believe that every person on legitimate business should have that freedom to walk unmolested and without fear along the streets and I heartily endorse efforts which may be made to enforce this situation.
The Alice Springs electorate is one in which there are many families with young children and the provision of schools in the electorate will be very important. The new east side valley subdivision is one of those and no doubt Sadadeen stage one, when it comes off, will also be in that situation. I know that the honourable Minister for Education is well aware of this particular problem and that things will be done to provide a new primary school within the area because the Ross Park Primary School is almost filled to capacity. Education is an area of vital concern to me as I know it is to all Territorians because, unless we can guarantee a high-quality education for our children, parents are going to be very concerned and will consider sending their children down south. If they do that, then they will have a problem of expense and the breaking up of the family. Many families may say, 'Well, it is best if we return to the south'. I am sure that that is not what we want. We must have stable families and we must look into every aspect of education and continue to upgrade the standard wherever possible.

In the Alice Springs electorate, there are a number of roads which I look forward to seeing constructed in this term, particularly the road from the newly reconstructed bridge around Kurrajong Drive, the reconstruction of Undoolya Road, the upgrading of the Undoolya causeway and the RSL crossing. I would like to see culvert systems put in there and a sealed road put across. This is done in most other states. People in my electorate, particularly those who work at the powerhouse, are very concerned about the corrugated road which they have. That is another one that I would like to see constructed. I am also very keen to see an extra link between the electorates of Alice Springs and Gillen down Telegraph Terrace so that the congestion at the Larapinta Drive corner, which is a real bottle-neck, may be eased.

It is very pleasing to hear that the bike tracks in Darwin are getting considerable use. I would like to report that there are bike tracks in Alice Springs and they are getting considerable use also, not only from bike riders but from joggers who enjoy the safety of jogging along that track free from motor cars. I certainly will encourage everything that can be done to expand the spread of bike tracks throughout the electorate.

There was mention made this morning of the recreation lake. I am not too sure if it is to be at the old Telegraph Station or not, but I know that it will be a very welcome addition to the town, to the townspeople and to visitors. I am sure that anybody who has been to Mt Isa or Broken Hill and has seen the difference that a lake in an arid area makes will appreciate the benefits that such a lake will bring.

Alice Springs is a very sports-minded town. Almost every game that is played seems to be played there and many hundreds of people are involved. Facilities are short but efforts are being made. I am pleased to see that Traeger Park will be upgraded. I certainly support moves being made by the council for a sporting area outside of the Gap.

Agriculture is hardly an area which falls within the actual electorate of Alice Springs, but it is an area in which I have a personal interest. I have even had a little dabble at it once or twice and I come from a family involved in that area. I am very keen to see that, wherever possible, the Territory can become self-sufficient in the production of fruit and vegetables, particularly in that southern region.

I was also delighted to hear that the Alice Springs powerhouse will be fuelled by gas. This will stop the need for transporting oil. There have been occasions when the Alice Springs power-station has almost run short of fuel and
this gas should prevent that. I was also delighted to hear news about the refinery. Although, with the parity pricing, we may not have much cheaper petrol, I think that, in the future, we can have guaranteed supplies of petrol. This is something that many other people will be envious of indeed.

Attention has been drawn to the financial arrangements this government has with the federal government and no doubt some fine bargaining was done by members of this government and people in government departments. I would also like to pay a tribute to the Prime Minister, the Right Honourable Malcolm Fraser, who came to the party with this arrangement. It was he who threw down the gauntlet that we could take up self-government and which the previous Everingham government took hold of with both hands. It has proved to be a success and I think we should acknowledge that the Prime Minister, in these financial arrangements, is giving us an excellent base from which to develop. We are being funded by the southern taxpayers but I believe that, in the national interest, this is a very commendable and very wise thing. These are exciting times. I am very proud to be involved in this Assembly and hope that I can make some worthwhile contributions to it.

Mrs LAWRIE (Nightcliff): Mr Speaker, in His Honour's address on behalf of his government, he stated: 'My government is pledged to the continuation of the social, economic and constitutional progress that characterised the past 2 years of self-government'. All I can say is that it is a pity about that. If we are talking about the social, economic and constitutional progress, there is precious little of which we should feel very proud in what has occurred over the last 2 years. Certain things, of course, have been set in train and we have had the progressive handover to the Northern Territory government of such functions as education. When I see in the Northern Territory serious unemployment - there seems to be little or no inroad being made on that - when I see housing in the top end of the Northern Territory at a crisis point - and very little seems to be being done about that; there is a lot of hot air but not much brick building - when I see health services being curtailed and I notice that the Dripstone Health Centre apparently will not proceed, when I see that some education services, particularly the capital works program, have been cut back, then I wonder about the statement of a commitment to this supposed continuing progress.

Mention was made of constitutional development. I know there have been many press releases lately, emanating mainly from the Chief Minister's office, about the Chief Minister's desire for the north-south railway and his efforts on our behalf. Of course, they are efforts which we all support but there does seem to be an assumption that the federal government will listen to the Northern Territory government. I have reason to believe that the federal government listens to the government of the Northern Territory when it suits the federal government and not otherwise. One outstanding example was raised in this House by the Minister for Mines and Energy.

On 22 November last year, in response to a series of questions from myself and the member for Port Darwin, the minister spoke of efforts his government made to convince the federal government of the need to send a health team to Timor to assist and to alleviate the extreme distress of the people of East Timor as a result of the armed intervention of the Indonesian people. He is reported in the Hansard of that date as saying that he had received a reply from the office of the Prime Minister which he deemed unacceptable. He said: 'We will follow up the matter by contacting the federal government every 2 or 3 days until there is a result because it seems to me that it is taking them an unnecessarily long time to consider an offer of the sort that we have made'. That was 22 November 1979. Months have passed and I do hope that a telex went every 2 or 3 days as the minister undertook to send.
We find the honourable gentleman admitting yesterday: 'I have one more topic that I would like to touch on. It is related to the Northern Territory and its close proximity to its neighbours. Last year during the Timor confusion...'.

I might pause there; it was more than last year. They have been confused in Timor since the Indonesians marched in. '...for want of a better word, the Northern Territory government, through the Commonwealth, made an offer of assistance to the Indonesians in the form of a medical team for Timor. That offer was initially ignored and subsequently refused. I feel that our offer was treated very unjustly by the Commonwealth and the Indonesians'. He went on to say it was a genuine offer to help the people. Mr Speaker, I share his sentiments. Obviously, I share the sentiments of the Northern Territory government because it is extremely unlikely that any Cabinet member in the present government would have taken such action unilaterally. I am quite sure that he had full Cabinet backing, meaning Northern Territory government backing. It did not suit the Commonwealth to assist us in this reasonable offer; they ignored it and eventually refused it.

I note that the Chief Minister has been honest in saying that he is not holding his breath for the construction of the railway this year and I pay him credit for having acknowledged that the federal government is again treating us with a little less than the concern we feel is our due. I bring these points forward to show that, when we talk about constitutional development and the role that the Northern Territory government has to play in federal affairs, I voice my concern that our role is only as important as the federal government lets it be and wishes it to be seen to be. I am not holding my breath for any great advances in constitutional development in the next 4 years.

The honourable Chief Minister spoke about bicycle paths and a couple of other people have raised this subject and have said how nice it is to have the bicycle paths. The connector road from Nightcliff to Fannie Bay is a good example. I am also delighted to see that bicycle path and I am more than a little amused because, in giving evidence to the original parliamentary works committee of inquiry into what was then the Palmerston arterial road, sometimes misnamed the Palmerston Freeway, I was the first politician to suggest that we should have a bicycle track and I was absolutely rubbed down by the senior departmental people who are now advising the honourable Chief Minister. The same gentleman was involved but, since he is a public servant, I would not name him; that is unwise. Anyone with a long memory finds a small amount of amusement in what was abhorrent yesterday being the thing of today and the sentiments apparently being espoused by the same people.

One of the nice things about the connector road, apart from the bicycle track, is that, if one comes through at high tide, one can actually see families fishing. I think that is marvellous. I hope that the powers that be, when they have to upgrade the road slightly because of some extra pressure that may be put upon us, will not litter that road with the signs we see on Trower Road and on the bridge: 'No Fishing from the Bridge', 'Children Forbidden' and that kind of thing. I put in a plea now for the continuation of the delights of the family being able to go crabbing and fishing in close proximity to the Fannie Bay connector road. It is rather nice.

A couple of people mentioned the Coat of Arms which we now see in the Assembly. I would like to say that I think it adds respectability and dignity to this Chamber. I have always admired the Coat of Arms and I am also delighted to see the Northern Territory flag displayed on every available occasion. I am also delighted with the little lapel pins, the little Northern Territory flag badges, which one sometimes receives from the Chief Minister's Department and which are very much appreciated by the recipients. Perhaps it is salient to remark that that is the badge of the people of the Northern Territory and not of
the Country Liberal Party.

Mr Speaker, having pleased half the House, I now displease the other 18 members. The honourable Leader of the Opposition spoke about the proposal to close the seas within 2 kilometres adjacent to Aboriginal land. I do not concur with his outlook and I have stated so publicly on many occasions. More importantly, in 1975, in company with the then government leader, Dr Goff Letts, and a couple of other members, I flew around the coastal communities talking to them about the Aboriginal rights bill, which had then just been introduced, and voiced to the people my concern that, if they pressed for a closure of the seas within 2 kilometres of their areas of land, they would cause more problems than they would ever cure, they would create greater divisions than they believed possible and that other methods could be used to ensure the safety of their traditional hunting grounds.

It has at last become apparent to the people of the Northern Territory that professional fishermen who have an existing right to fish in those waters will not be excluded. They will continue to be able to fish. The concern which the Aboriginal people have, and which I share, that their sustenance may be taken from them and they could well be fished out is not covered by the proposed closure at all. Amateur fishermen, unless they receive permission, are the ones who will be excluded. There have been many articles in the press from one side or the other and we certainly have seen big divisions in the community over this particular issue. The amateurs say, with justification, 'We are not the ones who are fishing the place out yet we are the ones who are going to suffer'. What I think is not appreciated by some people, black and white, is the very deep feeling that many Europeans, along with Aboriginal people, have for the sea. The country has recently been populated - it is only a couple of hundred years old after all - by people who came from largely maritime nations. I speak as a sixth generation Australian who understands the genuine dismay of people who feel they will have to apply for permission to be in salt water within 2 kilometres of an area without otherwise committing any act that would lead to some deprivation for the people living on the land.

Europeans are extremely sensitive on this issue. They cannot understand how their presence in a boat within 2 kilometres constitutes an affront to the Aboriginal people. It is a pity there is not more opportunity for the Aboriginal people and the European people affected to talk to each other face to face because I think many of the difficulties and misunderstandings could then be resolved. At the moment, I am extremely concerned that no one seems to appreciate a legitimate concern of Europeans who cannot understand why such a prohibition would come into effect. They do understand that they may apply for permission but salt water has a slightly different connotation than entry onto land.

One of the reasons that they become so stroppy about this, besides their own feelings about the right of access to salt water, is the fact that the poor, hapless amateur fisherman of the Northern Territory finds his access to so many waterways restricted. We saw in the Administrator's address mention of the Inquiry into Pastoral Land Tenure, a point which was taken up by the honourable member for Victoria River. It is again germane to advise the House that there is a large body of opinion in the Top End which states quite categorically that it wants access to natural waterways. It is worried about any proposal to alter pastoral lease tenure which may further exclude people from access to waterways, to recreation and fishing. We must remember that we are talking about pastoral lessees, not freehold owners of land, and we again see a proliferation of signs - 'Do not enter', 'Trespassers shot', 'Keep out' etc. There are precious few places for the amateur fisherman to go. When we see advertisements in the paper calling for submissions with regard to inquiries into a proposal to close off
water adjacent to Aboriginal land, I must say the poor Aboriginal people cop the frustrations not only for a proposed closure of that area, but the frustrations resulting from an inability to get to fresh and tidal waters for recreational fishing because of the actions of pastoralists and others who exclude people. I would ask that the government bear that in mind when considering the report which no doubt will be tabled in this House and about which I will speak at that time.

On the same subject, I would like to say that the Chief Minister and a member of his staff addressed a group of fishermen recently. I was not present but they said there was some implicit notion that I was in favour of the closure of the seas. This apparently was put by the Chief Minister's staff member, not the Chief Minister. Mr Speaker, I leave it on public record that they know me well enough; they thought that was very strange, because they had read everything I had said, not just what was shown to them. They treated that implicit suggestion with the derision it deserved. I do not think I could have made it more plain or more public that I am opposed to the closure of the salt waters and the first people I told were the Aboriginal people concerned. They got the message from the first. I might say they appreciated it and they said to me, 'You speak with one tongue'.

I would like to conclude my remarks by saying how much I believe the people of the Northern Territory appreciate the present Administrator, Mr John England, and his wife Polly. I have been here 20 years and have seen a succession of administrators, all of whom applied themselves to their positions, but never has there been such a popular administrator. Never has there been one who has so successfully raised his office above politics and who has so successfully gained the respect of all Territorians. If the present Administrator is to leave at the conclusion of this extended term, I think the Territory will be all the poorer. As is sometimes flippantly said in talking of other people, his will be a hard act to follow. He has the respect of all of us and so has his wife.

Mr Harris (Port Darwin): Mr Speaker, in speaking to the Address in Reply, I would like to relate my comments to 3 matters that were raised in the Administrator's speech. The first concerns the wharf. Mention was made of having a reliable shipping service between the eastern states and Darwin. I could not agree more. I have always believed that the future of the top end of the Northern Territory is very closely linked with the development of our port. The advantages that would be received if companies and individuals could again have confidence and faith in the operations of the wharf would be tremendous. I would like to say that the reliability of a shipping service is far more than just having a ship come once a week or once a month to Darwin on a regular basis. Reliability is having goods delivered to the doorstep and, unless we are able to have a regular shipping service, coupled with reliable handling of goods, then I believe we may as well forget the service altogether. Somehow, the Northern Territory government, the responsible organisations and the unions have to get together to discuss this matter. I believe these problems can be solved and, in order to encourage people to use the shipping service, they must be given some guarantee that their goods will be delivered to their doorstep. Most of the people whom I know in the Territory want Territory development. They want the Territory to go ahead. We may have different ideas of how we should go about this development, but I believe that one of the ways that would open the door for development would be for us to have a reliable shipping service.

The second point that I would like to touch on is the continued efforts of the Chief Minister in pushing for a rail service from Alice Springs to Darwin. Most other members have commented on this. When I was a boy, we used to travel
down the track with my father. Mention was made regularly of the possibility of having a rail link between Darwin and Alice Springs in the future. When we stayed at Tennant Creek in the old Goldfields Hotel, which was a pretty rough pub in the early fifties, discussion often arose about the possibility of having a railway station at Tennant Creek. A section of land was put aside for that particular purpose in Tennant Creek. Because of the lack of legal follow-up on this piece of land, there is no longer a plot set aside for this purpose. However, there is a real possibility that, in the near future, Tennant Creek will have a railway station.

There is no doubt that a rail line between Darwin and Alice Springs will benefit all of the people in the Northern Territory. It will benefit the people on the land, the people in the urban areas and the people who live alongside the railway line. But there is one aspect which has not been emphasised enough and I believe it has to be canvassed a little more: the benefit this rail service will give to the aged people of the Northern Territory. In every other state of Australia, aged pensioners receive concessions on their rail fares. Why should that not happen up here? Why shouldn't our pensioners be given the rights of these other people? Why should they be penalised because of isolation?

The third point that I would like to comment on is in regard to government assistance to organisations and associations such as the Northern Territory Pensioners Association and the Northern Territory Handicapped Persons Association, associations which provide an important and wonderful service in our community. Whilst the Northern Territory government has assisted financially many such organisations, it is becoming increasingly obvious that careful consideration will have to be given to the methods in which this assistance is to be given if these organisations are to survive. Some of the associations are finding it very difficult at present to continue operations, not knowing if financial assistance in the current year will be forthcoming or not. I speak specifically of Tracy Lodge. It is a magnificent complex and has provided a tremendous boost to the living standard of our aged people. Places such as Tracy Lodge rely very heavily on financial support from service clubs, from government or from a combination of both. If any area of finance that was received the previous year is not forthcoming, then that association finds itself in financial difficulty.

The competition that is generated in the field of raising money for these associations is tremendous. To give an example, last year a 'lovely motherhood quest' was run. The money from this quest went towards Tracy Lodge. This year there was no 'lovely motherhood quest'; there was a 'lovely tinytots quest'. The money raised from this quest went to the Northern Territory Handicapped Persons Association. One could go on naming the various quests and competitions that are set up to raise money for these needy causes and each year this will worsen. It is very hard to expect a city the size of Darwin or towns the size of Katherine, Tennant Creek or Alice Springs to continually provide large sums of money for this purpose from their communities.

Let us not forget the other areas that tap into this source of money, those raising funds for sporting bodies and clubs in the area. The service clubs in our communities have provided, over the years, a tremendous service. They have helped in the building and operation of places such as Tracy Lodge. However, we cannot expect the service clubs and associations to continually provide assistance to the same club or the same association year in, year out. I believe that I am touching here on the principle which governs government initiative on such matters. Should the government be involved in the continual funding of such associations as Tracy Lodge or should these associations, which provide a magnificent service in the community, be self-sufficient?
I believe that, because of the restrictions placed on the revenue-raising powers of these associations, the second option is not possible. It is obvious that associations such as Tracy Lodge need to be able to plan ahead and, in order to do this, they need to have some means of continual funding. I believe that this must cover a period of at least 3 years. To continue to go on from year to year without knowing where funding is to come from will only mean that these vital services in our community will not survive. The only revenue that Tracy Lodge receives is from the residents of that lodge and, again, this is governed by the Aged Persons (Homes and Hostels) Act which provides for 85% of the basic age pension to be paid. This allows for a small amount to remain with the pensioner, as it should, for his own personal needs and requirements. Apart from that, there is assistance from the federal government in the form of personal-care subsidies which are paid to Tracy Lodge when a resident meets certain requirements. But again, this subsidy is minimal and barely meets the cost of providing those extra services. On the expenditure side, there has been assistance given by the Northern Territory government and Tracy Lodge, indeed, is grateful for this assistance. But again, it is only minimal.

There are obviously many other groups in a similar position to that of Tracy Lodge and I have only raised the matter this afternoon because I believe that, if the Northern Territory government is to continue to provide incentives for our aged people to remain in Darwin, some alteration to the method of funding must be looked at so that we are able to provide operational subsidies of a continuing nature. Perhaps another method would be, and I believe that certain states have implemented this method, to allow for deficit budgeting to approved associations - I emphasise 'approved associations' - such as Tracy Lodge. This might be more acceptable to the people than the arbitrary handout and it would mean that these associations would still need to make the effort to raise money each year; they would still need to make the effort to make the association operate economically. Where they could not legitimately make ends meet, then the government would be able to assist in that shortfall between its income and expenditure. This shortfall could be arrived at by forward budget estimates so the government would know the exact amount.

Mr Speaker, in concluding my remarks on the address, I would just like to say that we cannot allow associations such as Tracy Lodge to falter. In order to make sure this does not happen, consideration must be given towards improving the methods of continual funding.

Mr Perkins (MacDonnell): In rising to speak on the address in reply this afternoon, Mr Speaker, I would like to express my appreciation to His Honour the Administrator for his speech in which he outlined the government's program for this next term. In doing so, I would also like to convey my appreciation to those people in the electorate of MacDonnell who re-elected me to this House for another term. I would like to place on record that it is indeed an honour and pleasure to be able to serve the constituents of MacDonnell again in the Legislative Assembly. I would also like to welcome the 2 new members to the Legislative Assembly, especially my colleague, the new member for Nhulunbuy. I hope that their stay in the Assembly over the next term will be as meaningful and as productive as the stay of the other honourable members here gathered.

I was interested in the program of the government which was outlined by His Honour the Administrator. I was interested to note that top priority will be given to Territory development in the areas of energy, mining and essential services and in relation to transport and roads. Indeed, there was much talk about development in the speech by His Honour the Administrator and I will be saying a bit more about that.
I would like to turn to a couple of matters which I was happy to see in that speech. In the first place, the government is indicating that it will be introducing some legislation in this House to establish a Territory alcohol and drug authority. I believe that this is not before time and, after many committees and many reports in relation to problems of alcohol abuse in the Northern Territory, I do not need to emphasise here what a social problem alcohol is in the Territory. Honourable members would be well aware that it has caused a great deal of social damage and disruption in the Territory overall. It is encouraging to see that legislation will be introduced to establish a Territory alcohol and drug authority which, hopefully, will have the power and the teeth to come to grips with this particular problem in a significant way.

I was interested to hear of the resurrection of the recreational lake in the Alice Springs area. I want to make it clear that, at the outset, I am not opposed to the concept of a recreational lake in the Alice Springs area. I need to emphasise that because there might be a fear on the part of the Minister for Primary Production that I might be opposed to this particular concept. I want to assure him that I am not.

I wish to point out that there were submissions made to the Department of Transport and Works last year - I was one of the people who made a submission - regarding the recreational lake in the Alice Springs area. Unfortunately, I have not yet received a response to my submission and I doubt very much whether any other person has received a response. In those submissions, various problems were raised regarding the proposal and, in particular, the idea to establish a lake north of the Bungalow, otherwise known as the Telegraph Station, in the Alice Springs area. Outlined in these submissions were hydrological problems, environmental protection problems and those problems which relate to Aboriginal sacred sites. These are significant problems and we all ought to be concerned about them. Obviously, there has to be some adequate and proper response. I am just hoping that, in the course of this Assembly, we might have an indication from the Minister for Transport and Works as to the progress of the recreational lake and whether there will be a response to the submissions which have been made to his department.

I was interested this morning to hear the response from the Chief Minister to a question about the existence of Aboriginal sacred sites in that area and whether the government would go ahead and establish the recreational lake in that area in view of the existence of these sites. I cannot really stress enough that, in that particular area on which it is proposed to establish the recreational lake, there are significant Aboriginal sacred sites. I think it would be rather improper and would create a dangerous precedent if those particular sites were disturbed in order to make way for a recreational lake. There are other areas in the Alice Springs district that could be used for the purposes of a recreational lake. The people of the Centre deserve a recreational lake not only for the tourists who visit Alice Springs but also for the local people. That is why I have indicated that I am not opposed to the concept of a recreational lake. However, I would urge the government to take adequate and proper account of the concerns which have been raised by the Central Land Council and individuals in the Alice Springs community about the potential damage which a recreational lake in the area to the north of Alice Springs and the Telegraph Station would cause.

I mentioned earlier that the main thrust of the speech by His Honour the Administrator was concerned with the development of the Territory in the areas of energy, mining, essential services and transport, and roads. However, I am disappointed and concerned that housing in the Territory will not really be given the same sort of priority which it deserves in the government's program.
I believe that housing development in the Territory ought to have the same priority and the same prominence as, for example, development in relation to energy, mining and transport. I am concerned to note that there was only a brief reference to housing in His Honour's address and I am even more concerned to note that it was actually claimed that more subdivisions will be opened in all centres to cater for the high demand for land and housing. I do not think that this is enough. I submit that housing is emerging as a key factor in the economic future of the Territory and that, unless the government is able to take immediate action to upgrade housing development as a priority, then I believe that the growth and the development of the Territory will be jeopardised.

I think that the lack of adequate and suitable housing is an issue which would be most likely to inhibit the smooth development of the Territory. I think it is generally well known that the housing shortage in the Northern Territory is critical and it is not just a problem in Darwin, Nhulunbuy, Alice Springs or Katherine but it is a Territory-wide problem. I submit that, in the tackling of this problem — and obviously this involves the acknowledgement of the severity of the problem — the government ought to regard this as a first priority if there is to be any credence given to its claim that the people and the human development of the Territory are uppermost in its mind. I happen to believe that it is the people of the Territory who are the most important resource and I do not think that we ought to be losing sight of this particular fact. I do not think that, with all the emphasis on other kinds of development, we ought to sacrifice the development of the people of the Territory. Unfortunately, a critical housing shortage would lead to the Territory acquiring a reputation as a homeless north. If the government is not prepared to do anything about this in the short term, it means that the economic development of the Territory is actually doomed to falter. The government must recognise the severity of the housing problem.

Let us look at a few facts in relation to housing in the Northern Territory. Recently, a survey was done by the opposition on a Territory-wide basis. We looked at housing in relation to public servants and we found that there is a serious housing situation and that, particularly in the Centre, there are overcrowded conditions. It is interesting to take note of the figures.

In Alice Springs, at the time the survey was taken — the results were derived from housing and employment figures up to 30 June and 7 July of this year — it is interesting to note that there is only 1 government house available per 7 public servants who reside there. In Katherine and Nhulunbuy, there is 1 government house per 4½ public servants. In Tennant Creek, there is 1 government house available per 4 public servants. In Darwin, there is 1 government house available per 2.9 public servants. Those particular figures are disturbing. It would indicate that there is a critical shortage of housing accommodation for the government's own employees and that the employees of the government are living in overcrowded conditions in the Territory. The problem is not just here in Darwin. As those particular figures would indicate, the problem is even greater in the Alice Springs area.

Let us look at some other figures which have been brought to light in a recent survey conducted by the Northern Territory Council of Social Services. I might say that the council conducted a survey in an attempt to draw the government's attention to the seriousness of the housing problem in Darwin. The council established a register in the Darwin Mall and the Casuarina complex for people in need of low-cost emergency housing. In a period of only 4 days, the following figures were compiled. It was found that there were people living on beaches and in cars. In that particular category, there were 82 adults and 6 children. Other people were living in tents and doubling up in flats and
caravans. In that particular category, there were 177 adults and 101 children. The survey indicated that 136 of the people who used the register indicated they were dependent upon unemployment benefits or had no income and 31% registered as being in the low-income bracket. There were some who were employed part time.

In those particular figures, there is an indication of the nature and extent of the housing and accommodation problem in the Territory. As I have indicated, it is a problem not only here in Darwin but also in Nhulunbuy, Katherine and Alice Springs. Indeed, there are many homeless people in the Northern Territory and the government must do something to assist them. Having said that, it is important that the government put its priorities right and ensure that there is more emphasis and greater prominence given to human development in the Territory, in this case housing development, and that we do not end up with the reputation of being the homeless north.

I would like to join with other members in thanking His Honour the Administrator. I would also endorse the remarks which have been made by other honourable members about the contribution of His Honour the Administrator.

I would hope that the housing issue which has been raised by myself and other honourable members will be given the urgent attention which it deserves. We hope to see, in future, some positive action on the part of the government to acknowledge that it is a severe problem in the Territory and a recognition that action has to be taken to rectify the problem.

Debate adjourned.

ADJOURNMENT

Mr DONDAS (Transport and Works): I move that the Assembly do now adjourn.

This morning I was asked a question by the honourable member for Sanderson relating to the Cape Don and Cape Hotham lighthouses. Cape Don is a manned lighthouse and there are 2 cottages on the island, an airstrip, access roads and probably one or two services buildings. It is planned to de-mann the lighthouse in about 1984 or 1985 and install an automatic light. Once that is done, all they will need is a small area for gas cylinders. When it is de-manned, the Department of Administrative Services, who have the responsibility, will dispose of the unwanted property. As a point of interest, I believe that the Department of Administrative Services have received correspondence from the Northern Territory Conservation Commission expressing interest in certain buildings over there.

In relation to Cape Hotham, the only thing there is an unmanned lighthouse and a small storage area. I believe that the Department of Administrative Services have not given any indications that they are going to get rid of it.

Mrs O'NEIL (Fannie Bay): Mr Speaker, the member for Port Darwin had some very admirable things to say about funding voluntary organisations in our community. He referred particularly to Tracy Lodge as an organisation which needs more definite ongoing funding. I would like to talk this afternoon about an organisation in Darwin whose problems are exactly the opposite. Its problem is not one of ongoing funding but of capital funding. I refer to the Darwin Family Centres Incorporated.

This is a non-profit community based group which runs both the Family Day Care system and also a number of family centres at Marrara, Nightcliff, Parap and Wanguri. The family centres, sometimes known as creches, and the Family
Day Care system are partially funded by the Office of Child Care under the honourable Senator Dame Margaret Guilfoyle's department. It only receives part of its funding from the Office of Child Care. The rest of its money for its ongoing operation is derived from parent fund-raising mechanisms and fees. The problem which this very admirable community-based organisation faces is that of obtaining money to provide buildings in which it can operate. As I said, it operates 4 creches in Darwin. It is about the creches that I would like to talk first.

They receive from the office of Child Care about 30% of the salaries of their staff. All the rest of the money is raised by the parents who run the organisations. Because of the limited government assistance they receive from the federal government, they are able to provide for extra community needs such as assistance to parents on low incomes, some occasional care, care for handicapped children and service areas in the community which are uneconomic for commercial child care centres. Indeed, for this reason, they receive the funding from the federal government. Nevertheless, in order to provide this care, for which there is a very great demand, they require buildings from which to operate the child care centres. In Darwin, they have a particular need for 2 new centres. The previous Minister for Community Development, after negotiating with this group, allocated $275,000 to the Corporation of the City of Darwin.

The history of that allocation is as follows. The family centres approached the Northern Territory government about possible funding to replace the creche at Nightcliff which is in a demountable that is about to fall to pieces and also to replace the one at Casuarina, an area where there is a large number of children and a very great need and where there had earlier been a creche in temporary buildings which had been removed. The family centres were told to obtain sketches and costing for the building of Nightcliff. The centres did this and, on 8 March 1979, obtained a quote from Civil and Civic of $137,000 for a centre to cater for 40 children. This quote, which was amended slightly but not significantly, was forwarded to the Department of Community Development in May 1979. In that month, a meeting was held between the city corporation, the Department of Community Development, the family centres' representative and the architect. The department decided to hand over the money for construction to the corporation and gave management responsibility to the Darwin Family Centres. $275,000 was handed over in June 1979. I can remember the then minister, the member for Casuarina, making a press statement to that effect. In July 1979, however, the Corporation of the City of Darwin announced a change in conditions. It said that the YWCA would operate the Casuarina one and the Darwin Family Centres would operate the Nightcliff one. The Chief Minister supported calls by the family centres at that time for the initial conditions set by the Minister for Community Development to be maintained and, after many hassles, the city corporation finally agreed to revert to the initial conditions set down by the minister.

We thought those buildings finally would go ahead. On 16 January 1980, project management had been given to Venturin with no costs or designs decided upon despite the great amount of work that had earlier been done by Civil and Civic at the request of the department. A letter was sent to one of the officers of the department from the family centres outlining its concern at the subsequent escalation of costs to $361,000 and, subsequently, to $449,000 at the end of May 1980. At that stage, nearly 12 months after the original money had been allocated on fair estimates, Venturin withdrew and Civil and Civic were back in again. They looked at their original design and, after 12 months, the cost of building those 2 centres had escalated to $310,000. Of course, the city council only has the $275,000 which was originally allocated. I am told that the basic groundwork which had commenced on the Nightcliff centre has now
ceased because Civil and Civic know that the council does not have that extra money.

The only reason that the council does not have that extra money is because the minister did not stick to his commitment that the Darwin Family Centres would be the operating body and because the Darwin city council spent 6 to 8 months hassling about who the contractors would be and allowing the costs to escalate. If the original commitment had been stuck to, those buildings would now be completed and would be providing child care for families in Darwin. They are not operating in the same sense as commercial centres operate but provide additionally for single parents who might have financial problems, handicapped people and others. It is not surprising that Darwin Family Centres are more than a little concerned. I hope the new Minister for Community Development, who said only yesterday that governments are about land and money, and we know the organisations have the land, will find the money so that those 2 centres can go ahead.

Darwin Family Centres have even more problems. It is pretty amazing when you think that it is exactly the sort of community-based organisation that one would think any government would want to support. It also runs the Family Day Care system. The Family Day Care system is also supported by the Office of Child Care. It is a system whereby child care takes place in the home of registered minders who are appropriately supervised by well-qualified people. The scheme provides playing equipment of good quality and matches children and families appropriately. For example, it is able to provide special facilities for children of different ethnic backgrounds so that they are cared for by people who speak their language. It provides those extra things in the community which private child care systems, no matter how good, and many of them are very good, are unable to do and remain economically viable. It provides after-hours care which is most essential for shift-workers.

You would think that this is exactly the sort of organisation which would receive the support of both our federal and Territory governments. The Family Day Care system also needs offices from which to operate. At the moment, they have 14 staff, not all full-time, operating in Darwin. They operate out of 2 tiny offices in Parap. There was the suggestion put forward at one stage that they would be given a building from which to operate on the land where the Casuarina Family Centre is to be built. It would be most appropriate that they would be in the same place. There would be an advantage in having it in that area in which there is such a great need for child care. It was thought that, under a previous minister, some commitment came from the Department of Community Development that the $80,000 or $90,000 that was needed would eventually be provided, perhaps in this budget. I doubt very much that it has been provided. We are not talking about ongoing funding; we are talking about capital funding to enable these organisations, which are otherwise independent financially of the Northern Territory government and which provide services for the Northern Territory government, to provide those services.

The sort of services that they provide for the Northern Territory government include emergency care for young children. Once upon a time in Darwin, we had Dundas House which looked after children requiring short-term care by the department. The first organisation that the department approaches when it wants to find temporary care for a child is Darwin Family Centres yet we have not seen that this government is prepared to provide basic and capital funding so that they can have buildings from which to operate. I think that is shameful. I hope the new minister, who thinks government is about land and money, also thinks that government is about people now that he is the Minister for Community Development and can find his way clear to sort out this problem so that these organisations can continue.
The Family Day Care system is also having problems with the federal government. In the presence of a number of people, the honourable federal minister indicated in Darwin last year that it would receive funding to expand the number of children in the system in Darwin. That money has not arrived. As a result of the undertaking from the minister that it would get that extra funding and under very great pressure to provide services to the community, this organisation expanded the number of children it is caring for. There are actually 416 of them. Unless that money comes from the federal government fairly soon or there is an undertaking that it will arrive, there are 116 children in Darwin who will have nowhere to go and their parents will have nowhere to send them. I hope that all honourable members, particularly members of the government and the new Minister for Community Development, will exert such pressure as can be exerted on the federal minister, Senator Guilfoyle, to ensure that that money arrives in Darwin so that this excellent community organisation can continue its work.

It simply is not true that the private sector can provide the sort of services that this organisation provides. I cannot repeat that too often. There are many excellent child-minding centres in Darwin as there are in many other areas of the Northern Territory. They cannot economically provide that emergency care, that casual care, that assistance to under-privileged families, that extra assistance that handicapped children require, and still make a profit. They should not be expected to. It is the legitimate function of a caring government to ensure that that happens and to support community organisations which are prepared to undertake that onerous task.

Every year, we have Universal Children's Week and Universal Children's Day. Before this Assembly sits again, that will have passed because it is always the fourth week in October. The theme this year around Australia is 'Children in the 80s - the future can be better than the past'. I certainly hope that, before we sit again in November, this problem is overcome so that the future of our children in the Northern Territory will be better than it looks at the moment.

One other matter I wanted to raise in the adjournment is in response to an answer that the Minister for Health gave to the honourable member for Sanderson yesterday. She asked him once again, as I have asked him in the past, about people being told when they attend the hospital in Darwin and perhaps in other places in the Northern Territory, 'Do not come to outpatients. Do not come to the hospital. Go to a private doctor'. The minister says he does not know anything about it and I say the minister is deceiving the Assembly. He is not telling the truth. He knows that is happening; he knows that is the policy of the hospital. That is what they tell people. When they talk to me or somebody like me, they always say, 'We are not just directing them to private; we also suggest that they might go to the community health clinics'.

We can also see that the policy of this government is not to provide community health clinic services anymore if it can help it. As the honourable member for Nightcliff pointed out earlier this afternoon, the Dripstone Community Health Centre - on which work started before the cyclone and for which money was allocated in last year's budget - has now ceased to exist. There is no mention of it in the capital works program and it is apparently not going to proceed. Clearly, the intention of the government is to direct people for primary health care out of hospitals and to the private practitioners. If that is the policy of the government, the minister ought to have the guts to get up and say so. I am sick and tired of this Assembly seeing me and other members address questions to the Minister for Health and him not answering them. I hope that next time we assemble, or even before, he has the courage to say what his policies are.
Mrs PADGHAM-PURICH (Tiw): Mr Speaker, I would like to say a few words about a reply to a question I received yesterday from the honourable Minister for Transport and Works. My question was in relation to fire services in the rural area. I asked what was happening about the proposed 19-mile fire station and the honourable minister said it was due for completion in May 1981. When the people in the rural area know this, they will be very pleased. I think the members of the fire brigade will be very pleased also because, until adequate fire services such as the proposed 2-bay fire station are provided for the rural area, the people who live there will feel very unsafe and the firemen themselves will feel very frustrated by not being able to do the job because of circumstances. I have spoken of this on a number of occasions and I will continue to speak about the lack of fire services in the rural area until I actually see this fire station with my own eyes.

An unfortunate incident makes me speak about the lack of fire services in the rural area. I think it was 4 weeks ago that a fire occurred in a house at McMinn's Lagoon. Two fire brigade vehicles were on the site. It happened late one afternoon when somebody was cooking in the kitchen. The fire brigade arrived 20 to 25 minutes later. It seemed a long time to the people who were waiting but, considering the distance they had to travel, it was a pretty good attendance. I would like to say that, after 20 to 25 minutes, there was not much left of that house. In fact, I went around to see the house the next morning and to see the people who used to live in it and their family. The roof had collapsed, there was no wood left in the house and it had been reduced to charcoal. The people salvaged only a few dishes, part of a crockpot and some First World War medals.

This points out the lack of fire services that exist in the rural area to cope with emergencies. With the best will in the world, the firemen and many others have spoken to me. One rang me up before this sitting and asked me again to say that there is a lack of fire services in the rural area. These men are one of the best groups of blokes in the Northern Territory as are the bushfires men and the police. They are hard working, they are confident, they are very helpful in times of emergency and they handle people in a kind and cheerful way.

I would like to touch briefly on a few points, which I have raised before, connected with the fire services. I would like to keep them in front of honourable members of this House until we get adequate fire services in the rural area. Since 1974, there has not been much change in the complement of the fire brigade. I cannot speak for the whole of the Northern Territory but certainly for the Top End. If anything, there has been a downgrading of services. There were 4 stations in 1974 but there are only 2 stations now. The half station would be the one that is operating at the 14-mile. It is operated by men who work certain overtime shifts. They do the job to the best of their ability but, again, they are not operating under the best conditions. There have been 2 volunteer fire groups drawn from the rural area: one at Noonamah and one at McMinn's. The one at McMinn's is not going properly yet because it is associated partly with the progress association group there and has not completely formalised its work as a volunteer fire group. Whilst realising that, from the government's point of view and the public's point of view, it is very good to have the general public realising that there is a need in the community and getting off their behinds and doing something for themselves, it also points out the lack of official services that are extended to the people in the rural area.

I will not labour the point any further, Mr Deputy Speaker. Seeing is believing and I look forward very much to seeing the completion of this fire station at the 19-mile in May 1981. I sincerely hope that May 1981 is a firm
date because, in my view, talk of this fire station has been going on for 4 years. Until the minister gave me that answer, it looked like a 'gonna' job. It is distinct from the police station which is planned for the 19-mile because consideration was initially given to that at the beginning of this year. The date for completion will be January next year.

The second subject on which I would like to speak is perhaps a small matter but it is very important to some people. While the government has to make certain regulations for certain situations, I do not think a blanket consideration should be given to all situations because there are often exceptions to be considered. There was a caravan fire in the rural area last year in which one little kiddie was burnt. The fireman who found the child’s body in the caravan still thinks about this situation. Although it is part of his job, unfortunately, he still thinks about it and he also thinks that it might not have happened if there had been a bit more forward planning.

The matter that I am coming to could also concern the death of a child. I understand - I think my information is correct - that school buses do not pick up children within 1.6 kilometres of a school. The Howard Springs School is in Whitewood Road. Between the Howard Springs Caravan Park and the Howard Springs School there is a rather dangerous stretch of road on which some young children and some pre-school children have to walk. The parents are very disturbed, not by the distance the children have to walk but by the dangers which they could encounter on that walk to school. The part of Whitewood Road that I am referring to crosses a swamp. When the swamp is filled, there is 8 feet of water on either side of the road. The children are usually on the road before and after school. School buses are also on the road at that time taking children further away from school. There is other traffic on the road at that time, mainly parents picking up or dropping off children at school. At those particular times in the morning and afternoon, there is more traffic on the road and especially across this causeway. I have spoken about the condition of the pavement on the causeway and a bit of patchwork was done on it. When the children are walking on this road, they have about 3 feet on either side between the pavement of the road and where the traffic travels legitimately. When the water is in the swamp - 8 feet deep on either side - I do not consider it to be safe for young children to be walking. They would only have to trip once and they could go under the wheels of a car.

Having had a few children myself, I realise that children have to learn to be a little independent. But it takes a while for a child to grow and I think it is only fair to say that most parents realise this. They also realise that the child is a human being and is part of a family. They want maximum care and attention given to their children, not only by themselves but by the authorities. One might ask why parents cannot drive the children to school themselves. Most of the people who stay at the Howard Springs Caravan Park and around there are one-car families. They are not wealthy people in the rural area; they are mostly one-car families and the car has usually taken the breadwinner to work so that there is no car available to take the child to school. Also, they are young families and, in most of these families, there are very young children who are pushed around in prams. It would be highly undesirable to add a mother plus a pram or a pusher plus young children to the traffic across this highway. I have contacted the Department of Education about this very upsetting anomaly and I will be doing something further to see if it can be remedied.

Ms D’ROZARIO (Sanderson): Mr Deputy Speaker, most people in the Darwin area would have read with some regret of the passing on of Granny Lum Loy, that dear lady who was a great identity in the Top End for the best part of this century. I would like to extend my sympathy to the members of her family and
indeed to the Chinese community of Darwin amongst whom she was a very honoured and respected member.

Mr Deputy Speaker, I thank the honourable Minister for Transport and Works for his reply to my question on lighthouse reserves in the Top End. The reason why I asked this question is that recently the Departments of Transport and Administrative Services decided that many of the lighthouse structures on the Australian coastline are no longer necessary for their needs and would be auctioned to the public. Amongst these are many fine buildings, including the original lighthouse buildings which have original lighting mechanisms that are still in very good order. Of course, technology has caught up with even this aspect of life and the Department of Transport is progressively installing automatic devices which would do the same work without the traditional lighthouse keeper.

This particular proposal irritates me somewhat because I would like to see the original lighthouses turned over to the National Trust in the various states and the Territory. People might say that they are only lighthouses after all and ask what harm there is in their being auctioned to persons who look forward to the romantic lifestyle. I must say that most of the structures I mentioned are quite historical in their own right. There is a particular style of architecture that we find in our lighthouses and, if those structures and lighting mechanisms could talk, there would be many a tale of our maritime history that could be told. I commend the Conservation Commission for making the approach to take over the care and management of the structures. I for one would like to see them classified by the National Trust and made available for those people who have particular interest in maritime history or that particular architectural style.

Yesterday, I asked a question about travel by the unemployed on public transport. I was pleased to hear in the response by the Minister for Community Development that there was also a further option of free public transport for all patrons of the bus systems in Darwin and in Alice Springs. Reference was made earlier about what has been ridiculed in the past being acceptable today. At least as long ago as 1973, when I proposed at public forums that there be free transport on public transport for persons who wish to avail themselves of that service, I was roundly ridiculed because the general principle has always been that we must recover some of the cost of service. What is often forgotten is that the administration of the recovery far exceeds what could reasonably be expected in revenue. I am pleased to hear that there might well be the option of free public transport in Darwin and Alice Springs. I certainly would commend that particular scheme.

While I am talking about public transport, I might say that I was amazed to see the introduction of articulated buses in Darwin streets. I have no quarrel with the design of these particular vehicles or the routes on which they travel. I find them quite attractive but I was amazed that the government sought to introduce larger vehicles on public transport routes instead of reducing the size of the vehicles and perhaps increasing their frequency. What we find wherever we look at public transport is that at off-peak hours it is a completely uneconomical service. If the size of the vehicles had been reduced and their frequency increased during the peak hours, travel would have been much more comfortable and, at off-peak hours, they would not have been carrying such an unused capacity. Anyway, we have this articulated vehicle and it is certainly a sight around Darwin streets and is much commented upon as well.
I address the next matter to the honourable Minister for Transport and Works because I hope that he will battle for that sector of the labour force that is affected by this proposal. I am referring to the proposal by the federal Minister for Transport, Mr Hunt, to more or less compel all state and territory governments, who participate in the roads grants arrangements, to do away with the use of day labour and to use private contractors. By any standards, private contractors do reasonably well out of the government's road building programs and certainly I would not say that, because there was no day labour, a particular proposal ought not to proceed. The sensible thing to do would be to get the project moving and, if there were no day labour, then the project ought to be undertaken by private contractors.

The federal minister's intention is almost one of compulsion. He has written to all state roads ministers in the following terms:

The federal government will be seeking to ensure that maximum use is made of private contractors in the construction of national roads. This is an objective which the government intends to pursue vigorously and the ways and means of achieving this objective is a matter which I suggest should be discussed in the proposed review of the roads arrangements to be undertaken over the next 12 months as agreed by the Australian Transport Advisory Council. As a preliminary to this review and so that I have a clearer picture of the position as now outlined, I have asked my officers, during their discussions with your officers leading to the approval of the national roads programs, to make inquiries on the extent to which private contractors are intended to be used this year. My government is working on the basis that, when the legislation is amended, this is one area that may need to be amended to give full effect to our intentions.

It is really the final paragraph of that letter that concerns me because it is not a matter of choice on the part of state governments but a matter of compulsion. The clear indication of this letter is that the federal minister intends to amend the relevant legislation in order to give effect to this intention that private contractors will be used exclusively on the construction of national roads. We have seen a trend over the last few years of a diminishing contribution of day labour to road construction. We have reached a stage where not many of the day labour force of the Department of Transport and Works are engaged on road construction. Nevertheless, I think that this particular proposal of the federal minister threatens these men's jobs. I would ask the honourable minister to go into battle for these gentlemen at the next Transport Advisory Council. They do require these jobs and we require them to be there. If he is simply going to back down under this threatening, bullying tactic of the honourable Minister for Transport in the federal government, then he will be selling these men's jobs down the drain. I ask him to register his strong protest at any compulsion to use private contractors.

Mr DOOLAN (Victoria River): Mr Speaker, I would like just to bring to the attention of the Minister for Transport and Works the price of diesel fuel in the Territory. It is of vital interest to people in the country who use diesel fuel in pumps and for lighting plants. My understanding is that to produce diesel requires a far simpler refining process. I can see no reason why diesel should cost any more in transport than petrol and we are encouraged to use diesel because it causes less pollution. It may come out of the exhaust looking a lot blacker but it precipitates and goes to the ground and does not mix in the atmosphere.
I rang 2 different garage proprietors in Darwin and one quoted diesel fuel and super petrol at exactly the same price - that was BP Bagot. At Shell Airport Gates, diesel fuel is more expensive than super grade petrol. I would ask him to approach the federal Minister for Transport because I think it is quite unfair. One pretty stupid piece of logic that was advanced to me was that you can drive a lot further on diesel. That is quite immaterial; it does not matter a damn. I can see no reason why it could possibly cost more to transport.

Mr B. Collins (Arnhem): My Deputy Speaker, the honourable member for Fannie Bay talked earlier this afternoon about ministers who do not keep their commitments. An incident occurred this morning that would have to take first prize as being the most despicable breaking of an absolute commitment given by a minister of this government since self-government. Of course, the honourable Minister for Education knows perfectly well that I am referring to him.

On 30 April this year, the honourable Minister for Education seriously misled this House. As a consequence of misleading this House, he also misled the constituents of my electorate, the parents who send their children to Dhupuma College which, in the most appalling manner, was closed summarily, without prior notice, this morning. Honourable members would recall that, on 30 April this year, the Minister for Education made a ministerial statement in this House in connection with Dhupuma College. I would not have to remind any member of this House the status which should be accorded to ministerial statements in this House.

The minister knows as well as I do the history of Dhupuma College. There have been doubts about its continuing role as a site for educational services for Aboriginal children because of the continuing deterioration of the buildings and the facilities. As a result, the Department of Education sent a team of people to visit all of the communities whose children attend that college and to consult with them in a very proper and a commendable manner - and I commended it at the time - in relation to their feelings about the closure of Dhupuma College. In fact, I attended in 2 communities with the officers concerned. The feelings of people were forthright and unanimous as the minister well knows. Every single community consulted said emphatically that it wanted Dhupuma to remain open and stated - and the department has this on file - the reasons why. I do not have time to go into that this afternoon.

The minister made a ministerial statement in April this year. Of course, I will not be able to quote all of it: 'Mr Speaker, since the Northern Territory government took over responsibility for education last year, a constant concern has been Dhupuma College'. The minister went on to say: 'The college will be rebuilt on its present site in 2 stages with detailed planning for this reconstruction to commence immediately. This will mean the first intake of students into the new college facilities will occur at the beginning of the 1983 school year. I believe members would agree that there are some short-term needs at the college which are already overdue. The most pressing need is to improve staff accommodation and I take the slightly unusual step of committing the government, even before budgetary considerations, to providing on-site accommodation facilities for teachers in the next financial year'. I repeat those words: 'I commit the government'. 'The government will provide funds for the purpose of maintaining and, where necessary, improving student accommodation and I mean that to include the maintenance and improvement of all learning accommodation at the college'.

The minister went on to say: 'An important part of the redevelopment of Dhupuma College must involve the communities from which students come. In
that regard, I can assure honourable members that the community leaders from surrounding areas will be consulted on the major decisions on the college's future. That was not only a categorical undertaking in a ministerial statement that the college would be rebuilt in 2 stages but an undertaking to the Aboriginal people that nothing would happen to affect the future of Dhupuma College without further consultation with them.

It is no news to anybody now but Dhupuma College was closed by this government this morning. A large team of officers, without prior notice, called an emergency meeting this morning of the staff of the college and announced that the college will be closed. There will be no Dhupuma College after this term. The government did this purely, of course, for political expediency. No notice was given at all to the students, their parents or the staff of the college because it was going to be obvious when there was no mention of Dhupuma College in the budget papers that were tabled this morning. That is despite the minister's absolute commitment by ministerial statement earlier in the year that that college would be rebuilt. Of course, the children are not even going to be allowed to finish their school year at Dhupuma College - a despicable act on the part of the Minister for Education.

The reason is that the minister knows full well what the reaction from Aboriginal communities would be to the proposal to close Dhupuma College. He can anticipate and does anticipate the reaction that this broken promise of his will provoke in Aboriginal Communities. So it is going to be a fait accompli - the usual bulldozer style of his government. It is something which we have become used to seeing over the last 3 years. It will close the college, it will call an emergency meeting of the teachers concerned and it will tell them that there is going to be no Dhupuma College within 24 hours. The kids will not be allowed to finish their school year because the minister does not want the embarrassment of Dhupuma College running for another term with further protestations that it should remain open. It is a viable college with people fighting to maintain it at Nhulunbuy, so he closed it immediately. Don't mind the dislocation that this is going to cause to the lives of the teachers whom he showed scant consideration for; don't worry about the dislocation this is going to cause to the Aboriginal children who go to that college. They cannot even finish their school year.

It is more important for political expediency to avoid any further embarrassment for him and his government of having a college in its dying stages over the final term with people being able to put up a fight to try to hold him to the promise that he made in this House in April this year. It is a fairly despicable piece of work on behalf of the honourable Minister for Education and says much for his ministerial statements. He has given notice to every member of this House and to my constituents that nothing the minister says, either inside or outside this House, is worth 2 bob. Nobody can pay any attention to anything the minister says in future.

Mr Deputy Speaker, I am well aware of the financial problems of the continued existence of Dhupuma College - as is the minister. I am not aware of any major change in that particular situation since April this year. I am perfectly well aware of the per capita comparisons that can be made and have been made between Dhupuma College, Kormilda College and Geelong Grammar - as the minister has done already today. The minister knew that 12 months ago, the Department of Education has known it for years and we have all known it for years. But despite having all of that information at his disposal, the minister saw fit to commit his government in a ministerial statement in April this year to a firm plan to rebuild in 2 stages Dhupuma College and to consult Aboriginal people before any further moves were made as to its future etc. We have seen this morning how much promises of this government and, in particular, that minister are worth.
Mr Deputy Speaker, I would like to advise the government to stop wasting its money. Rather, stop wasting the taxpayer's money on the employment of people in Aboriginal liaison units. Stop wasting taxpayer's money in the employment of any number of ministerial officers to do with Aboriginal liaison because the honourable Minister for Education has just demonstrated in the clearest possible way why this government has no credibility whatever with Aboriginal people. Aboriginal people cannot believe anything that this government tells them even when it is made in the Legislative Assembly by a minister in charge of a particular department.

Now, you can only have 2 conclusions to draw from, only 2. Firstly, the minister knew when he made this statement that it was dishonest - a very detailed statement it was, I might add. I went on to commend him for making it. I said: 'Mr Speaker, the opposition welcomes the absolutely categorical statement of the Minister for Education about the future of Dhupuma College...'. I took a great deal of pleasure in photocopying the minister's statement and sending it across my electorate - poor fool me. I will know better than to do that in future. The minister could only have been totally dishonest when he made that statement, knowing he was going to renege on it, or unbelievably incompetent. Either way, either dishonest or incompetent, the minister should resign as Minister for Education. There is not the slightest doubt about that. This was not a passing comment the minister made in the House; it was a categorical assurance in the form of a ministerial statement with details as to what was going to happen at Dhupuma College. It was a promise that has been absolutely broken in the most disgraceful manner. There was no prior notice to the students and no prior notice to the staff. A meeting was convened this morning and Dhupuma College was closed today. 'You're out on your ear, you've got the option if you want it of going to Kormilda College'.

Mr Deputy Speaker, I say again that this government is wasting its money on Aboriginal liaison units; wasting its money on any further attempt whatever to better the liaison between the government and Aboriginal people. It is a fairly disgraceful effort. It is a pretty momentous decision to break absolute commitments to Aboriginal people. There is no doubt whatever as to why the people in my electorate cannot believe anything this government tells them.

I must say that this decision has upset me enormously because I had a lot of faith in the Minister for Education. I had great pleasure in photocopying his ministerial statement and sending dozens of copies to councils and to parents of the kids who I knew were particularly concerned about that college. I am extremely upset about seeing such a categorical assurance over a very major work - to quote the minister again, 'I commit the government' - treated in such a totally cavalier manner. I do not believe, knowing the respect that the minister has for the conventions of Parliament and the importance that ministerial responsibility has, that he was knowingly dishonest when he made that statement. I can only believe that the minister did not do his homework when he made that statement and is therefore unbelievably incompetent. In any case, Mr Deputy Speaker, he should resign.

Mr ROBERTSON (Gillen): Mr Speaker, this certainly does require me to say a few words. It is quite true, as was recorded in Hansard, that I made a statement here in April indicating the government's intention at that time to rebuild Dhupuma College on its present location. As the honourable member for Arnhem knows, I do regard very seriously the responsibility attaching to a minister making a ministerial statement of that kind. However, there is a greater responsibility on a minister and that is one of good government.
Now, the honourable member can say that a Minister for Education ought to know in depth every figure pertaining to those functions within his portfolio. Nonetheless, in April this year I had had the function of education for only a very brief time indeed. We knew and he knew that there was an extremely expensive program going on at Dhupuma College. I must say that I was always firmly of the view, as every statement I have ever made has indicated, that it was the nature of the beast, if you like, that caused those enormous costs. I did not know until very late in the period last year that, in order to run an institution like that in an extremely isolated location, it was necessary to maintain a pupil-staff ratio of 2 to 1. I do not think it reasonable that I could know every detail of that portfolio at that time. I did not know that the figures were pertaining only to the general recurrent salaries and normal administraton and did not take into account the additional cost of capital commitment repairs and maintenance, which brings the figures up to a degree of staggering proportions. The figures are as follows. In straight recurrent wages and so on per student, per year for Dhupuma College, it costs about $10,800 per student. The average cost of a primary and immediately post-primary student in the Northern Territory is less that $2000. Let us recognise the fact it is a residential college. Let us look at Geelong Grammar which the honourable member mentioned. Mr Deputy Speaker, you could send every student from Dhupuma College to Geelong Grammar by first-class return airfare, to Australia's most expensive and sophisticated college, and pocket $3000 per student at the end of the year. I owe something to the general taxpayer of this country in addition to the Aboriginal people who, I know, are going to be hurt by this unavoidable decision. We have a responsibility for good government throughout.

The reality is that Kormilda College and Yirara College are, leaving aside the air fares, still and will still remain the most expensive colleges in Australia. There is something significant there in that they are not utilised to the full. Of course, by increasing the number, you could use them to the full and bring down the per capita cost to a more reasonable level. This is not to be taken as any sort of threat to those institutions. They are quite a different ball game altogether.

The honourable member referred to a survey done approximately 18 months ago and he talks about honesty in this place. He knows and his colleagues know, contrary to what he just stated here, that every community in his own electorate did not say it wanted to go to Dhupuma College. What he said was untrue. How dare he talk about honesty. I have the information in front of me to which the honourable member referred to. The honourable member stated that, unanimously and without reservation, all of the communities said they wanted their students to go to Dhupuma. That is not so. This information came from departmental offices.

There are only 2 communities on this list of 10 which gave unreserved support to Dhupuma College. If he did his homework, the honourable member would be very well aware that there were 18 students and their families on Elcho Island who were very disappointed because of the decision taken to zone the 2 residential colleges in the Northern region. The Commonwealth was concerned about its costs and it tried to maximise the use of Dhupuma College by zoning the area. Elcho had to send its children to Dhupuma if it wanted to send them anywhere. Eighteen students nonetheless applied to go to Kormilda. That was hardly what one would call a unanimous resolution to go to Dhupuma.

Milingimbi has mixed feelings about residential colleges generally. The community is divided on the issue. There are strong feelings that the department should develop local secondary courses. There was some support for attending Kormilda. Others desired to see Dhupuma redeveloped on the current site.
This is all factual; I am not hiding anything. In 1979, they had the opportunity of choosing either college and 50% at Milingimbi chose Kormilda College. This was not just reflection or the honourable member's version of reflection; they actually applied to go to another college but, because of zoning, were unable to.

The point I am trying to make is that the majority of these students will now welcome the opportunity of being able to go to Kormilda College. Admittedly, there will be many people who will be disappointed in not having the opportunity to go to Dhupuma and I accept that. Of course there will be. We know the very long-standing appreciation that the people in the Roper River area have for Dhupuma. Honourable members would also be well aware that Umbakumba has a very strong desire to send its students to Dhupuma College. That is 2 out of 10 yet the honourable member said that all the communities wanted to go to Dhupuma.

As for my concern in this matter, it would be as good a method as any to simply read the letter of instruction that I felt duty bound to send to the secretary of my department having regard to the astronomical costs:

As you are aware, the government has been examining its objectives and the effectiveness with which public funds are being utilised in achieving those objectives.

Of course, this is something we are still doing: examining where we are going and what sort of value the taxpayer is getting for his money. We are determined to achieve that value for money and, at the same time, keep our program going. The letter continues:

As you would also be aware, I have been concerned for some time about the costs associated with operating Dhupuma College, including the high maintenance bill required for the present run-down facilities. It was with this in mind that I announced the proposal to rebuild the college on its present site. The in-depth review of the government's expenditure has, however, revealed that the cost of running the college, not including capital or repair costs, amounts to $10,800 per student per year. A new facility at Dhupuma would not reduce these costs. The per capita costs are approximately $3,500 above those at Kormilda College where cost per student would be reduced even further if the institution was fully utilised which it is not at present.

Bearing in mind that we have spare capacity at Kormilda College and the ability to provide post-primary education at selected locations, the massive burden of continuing to operate Dhupuma will not, in my view, be any longer tolerated by the taxpayer. I therefore ask you, whilst doing everything possible to minimise destruction to students' progress, to close Dhupuma at the end of this term. You will please advise me as soon as possible as to how you would provide the continuing education of the students affected. I would also expect advice as to the re-employment of permanent staff and any proposals for the possible re-employment of temporary staff.

Mr Deputy Speaker, I am very concerned about providing for the future education of the children affected by this unavoidable decision. It would not just border on crass irresponsibility in financial management to have allowed this situation to continue; it would have probably been the sort of thing that would have turned the entire population of the Territory away from us.
Mr ISAACS (Millner): Mr Speaker, conservative governments around Australia have shown that, while they appear to be in favour of the establishment and in favour of convention, they are the first and the only party to tear conventions up when it suits them. I do not need to detail the history of conservative governments throughout Australia to establish that point. The Country Liberal Party in the Northern Territory, although it claims to be an independent party of the Northern Territory, fits very nicely and snugly into the milieu of conservative government throughout Australia's history.

The minister seems to think that he can discuss the matter of Kormilda College in a vacuum. If the statement that he made now was the statement he had made on 30 April, I suppose we could have listened to it and accepted that it would have been crassly irresponsible and stupid to have kept the college open. I think he would have been criticised for it. I am sure the member for Arnhem and the now member for Nhulunbuy would have criticised him for it, as I would have because I have made statements about it as well. Nonetheless, it would have been a decision taken and it would have been an honest decision. The minister knew, as we did not know, that there was an election to be announced about 8 days after that statement. Perhaps that may have influenced the statement. The member for Arnhem has been a bit more charitable to the minister than perhaps I might be.

The fact is that the minister cries poor. He says, 'Give us a break. This was April 1980 and I had only just been given responsibility for education'. The minister was given responsibility for education on 1 January 1979. Although education had not then been transferred, he was relieved of the onerous duties of responsibility for community development. These were handed over to the Minister for Youth, Sport and Recreation at the time, now the Minister for Transport and Works.

The minister knew about Dhupuma and, in fact, as the member for Arnhem says, it has a long and tragic history. In fact, it was the then federal Minister for Education, Senator Carrick, who was given the responsibility for what would happen about Dhupuma. We know that his department here urged him to close it and we applauded at the time the strong representations and protestations made by our current Minister for Education who, at that time, had liaison responsibilities for education. I am sure that it was a result of his actions that Senator Carrick did not close Dhupuma College. So it is not new.

On 30 April this year, after much agitation by the various communities and after consideration of a review that had been undertaken by the Territory government, the minister gave a firm and complete commitment. The figure of $10,000 that he has trotted out today is not new. In fact, I understood the figure to be slightly higher. I thought the cost was something in the order of $12,000 or $13,000. Be that as it may, we are not cavilling about that.

As the member for Arnhem says, nothing has changed between 30 April and 21 August. Certainly, there has been nothing new with regard to Dhupuma College but there has been with regard to this Legislative Assembly. It is no longer the Second Legislative Assembly, it is the Third Legislative Assembly. The minister made a statement on 30 April regarding Dhupuma College. He now says that the reasons which he gave then - and which we thought were good reasons even to the point where the member for Arnhem let his electorate know what the minister had said - were, to use his own words, 'crass irresponsibility and stupidity'. Nothing has changed since the decision of 30 April except that there has been an election. The minister now believes that the college should not continue.
Mr Deputy Speaker, I think that is a tragedy because I share the same view of the minister's attitude to parliament as the member for Arnhem does. I think that he has shown that; I do not dispute that. His words are the ones, I believe, which will ring long and hard in this parliament, not just about him but about other ministers. He says that, if the college were to remain open, it would be crass irresponsibility and stupidity. Those were his words and that was his decision on 30 April.

Motion agreed to; the Assembly adjourned.
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