INTRODUCTION

The Eric Johnston Lecture series was established to fill a serious gap in Darwin's cultural calendar, since the city had no lecture series dealing in depth with the Territory's culture and history in all its diverse ramifications.

The series was named after the Territory's then Administrator Commodore Eric Johnston. Commodore Johnston himself delivered the first lecture in 1986, and has taken a personal interest in the series ever since.

The Eric Johnston Lectures are delivered annually, in general alternating between a prominent Territorian and a reputable interstate/overseas personality. The topics of the lectures can cover any subject providing the central theme relates to the Northern Territory. The lectures are published by the State Library of the Northern Territory in its Occasional Papers series, and we are optimistic that the ABC will continue its established practice of recording and subsequently broadcasting the lectures.

The Eric Johnston Lectures have already established themselves as a prestigious and scholarly annual event in Darwin and have made a real and lasting contribution to the spread of knowledge on Territory history and culture throughout Australia.

The 1991 lecture was delivered by Sir Paul Hasluck, dealing with the Northern Territory's Administrators and senior public servants in the 1950s, those years when so many new policies were introduced and the Territory finally seemed to be moving out of its 90 year old economic slumber.

Who is more qualified to speak of this period than Sir Paul Hasluck, who, from 1951-1963, as Minister for Territories, had responsibility for the Northern Territory. He developed the policies and appointed the men to implement them. This was the period of awakening dreams of self government, and of economic recovery - the days of Rum Jungle and of a flourishing pastoral industry.

It was a period of prosperity for the Territory. Never before or since has the Territory had a Minister who took such a deep personal interest in the people and the land, who spent extended periods travelling across the Territory, and really got to the "grass roots" of Territory affairs. His talk is one of those vignettes of history, a sharp, clear-cut image, preserving for us for ever the feel and sense of a vanished period in our history.
Pioneers of Post War Recovery

By Sir Paul Hasluck

Drawing on personal memories of forty years ago, I propose to talk about a few of the forgotten men who laid the foundations for the post-war development of the Northern Territory and the transformation of this part of Australia. To support the use of the word “transformation” may I remind you of a few figures. At the 1947 census the non-Aboriginal population of the Territory was 9,000 and the total population of the Territory, including Aborigines, was estimated to be about 30,000 people. At the 1986 census the total population of the Territory was over 154,000 people. The number of occupied dwellings in the Territory rose from 9,607 in 1947 to 39,779 in the 1986 census. Other elements in the transformation include a greater diversification in the community. More families live in the North. Education, health and housing have improved. Private investment has risen both for trade and production and for the provision of services. Today the Territory has a closer resemblance to the general Australian pattern of Australian life than it had forty years ago.

Another side of the transformation is a change in outlook. Not only do people living in the Territory think of themselves in a new way but the view that other Australians have of the Territory has also changed.

One the worst fates that can befall any region on earth is to be regarded as a problem - not just a tract of country with a mixture of difficulties and opportunities - but a problem. This is a handicap similar to that of a delinquent child who, instead of receiving the benefit of such normal responses as a loving hug or a smack on the behind, has to be made the subject of a long series of reports by social workers and psychologists. He is no longer a person but a problem. The utmost disadvantage comes when either a person or a district starts to regard itself as a problem.

That was the sorry fate of the Northern Territory in the five years immediately following the war of 1939-45. Planners wrote about “the problem of the north”. Residents in the remote tropical region of the continent thought of themselves, with a sort of inverted vanity, as being different from all other Australians. Some of them had reached a stage where they enjoyed their grievances more than their blessings.

In my early visits to the Territory I was struck by the way so many northerners regarded themselves as oddities and played up to the role. On my earliest acquaintance with the Territory community my sense of humour found remarkable the way in which so many old residents identified so many other old residents by the term of “a bulsh artist” - a yarnspinner, a bogus big man of the wild frontier. “Bulsh artistry” was one of the clearly recognisable cultural oddities of the Territory and remained so for at least another decade.

I suppose I am a humdrum old sobersides without any romance in my life, for when I incurred Ministerial responsibility over the Territory in 1951 I thought that one of the basic needs of the moment was to accustom both residents of the Territory and Australians in other parts of the continent to regard the Territory in a more matter-of-fact way as a normal part of Australia inhabited by normal Australian people. In short, I wanted both the locals in Darwin and the remote rulers in Canberra to stop thinking of the Territory as though it were “a problem” and think of it as a place where fellow Australians tried to make a living. I suppose I was a spoil sport. Forty years ago one of the few luxuries the local community allowed itself was the luxury of being neglected.

May I give a few simple illustrations. There was a move to extend library services to Darwin, Alice Springs and other towns. In Canberra, Treasury officials objected saying that was not the sort of thing one did in the Territory. I had to force the argument that if the Government provided the service in the Australia Capital Territory it should also provide it in the Northern Territory. A local committee wanted to start preschool centres but was refused financial support for staffing the centres. Again I had to force the argument that what was fair and reasonable for southern cities was fair and reasonable for Darwin.
In the attempts to improve the public service, one of the major obstacles I met was the view of the Chairman of the Public Service Board that any claims of the Northern Territory were different from the higher priorities in the southern regions. At the time of shortage of construction materials of many kinds we had to fight hard to have any allocation of supplies from Australian production to the Northern Territory on the same lines as allocations were made to various States of the Commonwealth. In the Commonwealth works programmes we had a continuous struggle to obtain due priority for urgent undertakings in the Territory. I had to argue almost fiercely that the need for a school lavatory at Tennant Creek was no different from the need for a school lavatory at Yarralumla, except that at Tennant Creek there were fewer bushy shrubs to provide alternative accommodation. Incidentally one of the hardest objections to overcome in bids for construction - even of a school lavatory - was the argument that, as there was no “works potential” in the Territory to carry out a project therefore the project should be deferred (no matter how urgent it was) until the works potential came into existence.

The general purport of these examples is that a large part of my administrative task in 1951 was to overcome the habit of regarding this part of the continent as being different from the rest. At the same time that task was complicated because so many Territorians themselves were accustomed to think of themselves as strange characters on the wild frontier. A clerk transferred from Moonee Ponds to Darwin would start to walk bow-legged and stare moodily into the far horizon just like a true frontiersman.

Against this background I have selected a handful of names for notice tonight as representative of those who shaped a change in outlook.

The first is the Administrator. In those years of course the office of Administrator was different in character from what it is today and his functions and powers both in respect of the legislative and executive roles of government were considerable.

Soon after becoming Minister I made a change. The new Administrator was Frank Joseph Scott Wise. He was born in Queensland and educated at the Gatton Agricultural College. In the nineteen twenties he was appointed to the Department of Agriculture in Western Australia and rose to the position of Adviser in Tropical Agriculture. He played a prominent part in the development of plantations on the Gascoyne River and also in the introduction of buffel grass into pastoral areas in that State. He was elected to the Western Australian Parliament as member for Gascoyne in 1933 and during the next eighteen years held the portfolios of Minister for Agriculture (1935-39), Minister for Lands and Agriculture (193945) and Premier and Treasurer (1945-47). Wise was Administrator of the Northern Territory from 1951 to 1956. He brought to that post the prestige of the high offices he had previously held, a wealth of political experience and recognised standing in the field of northern development. As the Minister who recommended his appointment I thought that the government and the Territory were blessed with exceptional good fortune in being able to fill the office with one so well fitted for it. The fact that he had served in Labor Governments was not seen as an obstacle either by myself or by my Prime Minister, Mr Menzies, for Frank Wise had gained high respect on all sides of politics.

In 1951, over five years after the end of the war, the Northern Territory was lagging in any moves for post-war reconstruction. One sunny day in June of that year Frank Wise and I walked around Darwin together. The Esplanade, apart from a small patch at the football ground, was a wilderness of high brown grass from which the rubbish of war had not yet been cleared. Doctor's Gully was a junk yard. The old post office was still a roofless ruin. The harbour had not been cleared of the wrecks left by the wartime raids and indeed the main berth was a temporary construction on the upturned hull of one of the wrecks. In the main street none of the war-scarred buildings had been repaired. Most of the public service worked in galvanised iron sheds erected in the wartime. Single officers were lodged in a collection of hutments in a makeshift compound. The inmates named it Belsen. The skyline of Darwin was dominated by the vandalised bulk of the meatworks which had been started but not completed by Vestey's before the war and extensively vandalised during the war. Both electricity and water supply for the town were inadequate. Government House, the Administrator's residence, was untidy. Wise started to change all this.
In my estimation, Wise had a triple achievement. The first was that he gave the people of the Territory a better conceit of themselves. The second was that he set them an example of normalcy. The third was that during his term numerous material improvements were either completed or inaugurated.

He was accompanied to Darwin by his second wife and a young family and both Mrs Wise and the youngsters helped in the social transformation. Their family life gave great reinforcement to other influences already at work in the community to modify the old romantic notions of the wild frontier inhabited mainly by hard-drinking crocodile shooters and cattle duffers. As President of the Legislative Council Wise elevated local politics to share in parliamentary traditions. In this he was helped by a decision to give the Council its own parliamentary building by reconstructing the war-damaged post-office building. The opening of the new Council was performed by the Governor-General (Field Marshal Sir William Slim) and was attended by a delegation from the Australian Parliament headed by the President of the Senate and the Speaker of the House of Representatives. Henceforward Legislative Council members, whether the ex-officio members or the elected members, had status and dignity. Politics took a higher place.

Steps were also taken to restore municipal government. Following work done by the Assistant Administrator, Reg Leydin, a Local Government Ordinance was passed in 1954 and in due course, after some hesitation local government was inaugurated in Darwin. Alice Springs followed later.

Meanwhile there was slow but steady growth in administrative services. Administrative expenditure doubled; works expenditure more than tripled. Electricity and water supplies were improved. Work started on the Darwin harbour. Expenditure on housing and hostels for administrative staff rose. Alongside this public expenditure private investments also rose both in town building, pastoral improvements and mining. A housing loan scheme to assist erection of private houses were introduced. The value of trade trebled. Alongside these measures under the control of the Administrator, the Commonwealth Department of Health expanded and improved the hospitals and the health services both in the towns and the outback. Wise's administration was a turning point in the Territory's post-war history.

When Wise retired I recommended the appointment of a man with different qualifications. J C. Archer had a deep and varied experience of administration both in New Guinea and Australia and had risen to senior levels of the Commonwealth Public Service. In my judgement he had both the professional qualifications and the experience needed to consolidate the improvements already made. The growth in activity started in the term of Wise was accelerating. The bid for funds was growing year by year. Many of the incoming officers of the Administration were new to the job. It seemed to me that what the Administration now needed was greater know-how and skill at the administration level. Archer's great success was in that field. While Wise had experience in politics, Archer had deeper experience in the routines of administration. His expertise and diligence brought not only an improvement in public service efficiency in general but a more practical and convincing preparation of claims on the Budget. Knowledgeable, practical, quiet in method, he brought a transformation of a different kind. The Territory Administration became a reliable and workmanlike part of government. In the community he and his wife maintained the high standards of propriety and the social graces which had been set by their predecessors.

After Archer's appointment, Reg Marsh was selected as Assistant Administrator. He and Archer made a good team and while Archer made government more efficient, Marsh helped to make the community more progressive and improved the social life in many ways. During their term a stronger substructure for future economic and political change was built and new influences for social development were felt.

One of the very happy results which personally I welcomed was the growing liveliness of local politics. Local government was inaugurated in the city of Darwin and various community movements flourished. Agitation for constitutional change became clamant. Oratorically we heard the rumblings of a war of
independence. Two lawyers - Dick Ward of Darwin and Neil Hargraves of Alice Springs - brought to the campaign legal knowledge as well as reforming zeal and later they were joined by Ron Withnell, a senior officer of the Attorney-General's Department. They were the local Jefferson, Adams and Washington of this revolutionary campaign. As Minister, I was cast in the double role of George the Third and Lord North - a villainous opponent of freedom. Privately, however, I regarded the agitation as one of the most welcome and hopeful portents. At last the Territory was thinking of its future and not dwelling on the grievances of the past, and even if some of the old "bulsh-artists" climbed on the wagon of constitutional reform, it was a worthy cause and a commendable agitation. As Minister I could not myself promote a quick change and was restricted by some wider constitutional arguments, but I endured the criticisms of my obduracy with equanimity. It was better for the Territory politicians to be campaigning for something rather than only complaining about their misfortune.

Now I turn to another senior member of the Administration who, under Wise and Archer and in co-operation with other departmental heads, diligently shaped an important part of the transformation. This was Hugh Barclay, Director of Lands. Hugh Barclay was born and educated in Western Australia. He qualified as a surveyor and served with the Western Australian Department of Lands and Surveys until 1938. He spent most of the war in the Second A.I.F. as a surveyor in the New Guinea campaigns. He came to the Northern Territory as Director of Lands in 1947 and in that Office was either chairman or a member of various boards and committees concerned with land development.

As Director of Lands, Barclay had an immense responsibility and an enormous task in postwar reconstruction. One task concerned town leases for Darwin. Under the Labor Government the whole of the property in central Darwin had been compulsorily resumed and one of the major reasons why there had been little post-war building in the town was that no-one had any long-term title to land. Even the institutions which had returned to occupy pre-war premises carried out no repairs to their buildings because they had unsatisfactory titles. Other enterprises had nothing to offer as security in order to finance new construction. One reason for the indecision in restoring titles was divided opinion whether the town was in the right place. Planners wanted to build Darwin somewhere else. One of my first decisions as Minister was that the town should stay where it was and town leases should be restored. That decision took no more than a day. The consequent work for the Lands Branch, coupled with the consequent impetus to the growth of Darwin, meant many years of hard labour for Hugh Barclay and his officers.

At the same time the land tenure system for pastoral holdings was revised with the general objective of giving better security and consequently better credit facilities to pastoralists. Development conditions were written into new leases. Negotiations took place with the holders of leases over large areas for the surrender of part of their leasehold in return for more satisfactory title over the remainder. This move to increase the number of areas open for new applications was accompanied by an investigation and classification of unoccupied lands with a view to providing additional holdings. The Lands and Survey staff faced heavy demands. Then they also had to survey stock routes, roads, the reserves for newly-created facilities and thousands of miles of boundaries. In due course the promotion of agriculture, the expansion of mining and provision of public utilities added to the growing demands on the Lands Branch. Two major enterprises - uranium mining at Rum Jungle and the establishment of the town of Batchelor and a major American investment in a rice-growing venture at Humpty Doo - also entailed more work for the Branch.

Barclay was not a showy man. Quietly, patiently, methodically, devotedly and with limited resources he and the officers of his branch went on with their work. In addition, as an official member of the Legislative Council, Barclay had the responsibility of handling a wide range of Ordinances on lands and survey matters in the Council. He was an effective parliamentarian, unfussed, determined and reliable. Often on my visits to the Territory he accompanied me on visits to inspect new projects and I came to know him well and respect his quality. His devotion to the Territory's welfare and progress was constant. He had a puritanical stubbornness in arguing his case for change. He spoke quietly but plainly
and consistently. At times I may have disappointed him for my lack of enlightenment but I came to admire him greatly. He fitted my image of a patriot and a man of probity.

Wise, Archer, Marsh and Barclay could correctly be described as orthodox, using that term as one of praise. They were correct, responsible and, in a large measure, predictable. Anyone engaged in government learns to value very highly the dependability of the orthodox. The next officer of whom I shall speak, however, was most remarkably unorthodox yet I shall speak of him with an admiration no less than I had for his colleagues.

Lionel Rose was the son of a clergyman. That fact came more as a surprise than a testimonial. He was educated at Sydney Grammar School and the University of Sydney, taking the degree of Bachelor of Veterinary Science. He served as a veterinary officer in New South Wales before the war and during the same period served in the Militia with successive Light Horse Regiments. At the outbreak of war the Light Horse was converted to armour and from 1940 to 1946 Rose saw service in the Middle East, New Guinea and the Netherlands East Indies mainly as a Staff Officer for Combined Operations. He returned with the rank of Colonel and in 1946 joined the Northern Territory Administration as Director of Animal Industry and Chief Veterinary Officer.

Rose located his department in Alice Springs and not in Darwin like all other departments. Having built up a departmental structure at "The Alice" he strongly resisted all subsequent attempts to bring him more closely under central administrative control. Indeed at times he openly regarded Darwin as the brake on all progress and as the seat of an authority to be evaded rather than obeyed. It was a refreshing change for me to listen to Rose talking. Whereas my critics in Darwin always complained about those "bloody fools" in Canberra, Rose only targeted those "bloody no-hopers" in Darwin.

At a time when other branches of the administration had difficulty in overcoming their many handicaps, Rose, often acting independently, built up an efficient and largely self-contained unit of his own to serve the animal industry.

Our first encounter - I deliberately choose the word "encounter" instead of "meeting" - was when Mr Wise and I made our inaugural visit to Alice Springs. There had apparently been some incidents, completely unknown to either Wise of myself, which left Rose with an impression either that we were "investigating" his work or that we intended to force the transfer of his branch from Alice Springs to Darwin. In the first sixty seconds of the encounter he bristled and bared his teeth and I told him to behave himself and be a good dog. I did not attempt to pat him. We soon became friends. He found that Wise and I were really interested in his work and we found that he was an officer with purpose, drive and a good organisation.

A closer understanding developed a few months later when I made a second visit to the Centre in January, 1952. I gained his approval as the first Minister who had visited the Centre in any month except June. We went out on the track together for a few days, had a few punctures and a few hold-ups in boggy patches, and came to know each other much better.

Some of my happiest memories of the middle years of my long life are being out on the track in the Northern Territory with Lionel Rose moving from station to station. When we camped out our chief equipment was two bed rolls and a tucker box. One adjunct was a waterbag hanging on the front bull bar where it caught the breeze, a carton of Alice Springs lemons and a bottle of Bundaberg overproof rum. The camp routine was strict. In the late afternoon we pulled up in the shade, stretched our limbs, and then each of us squeezed a lemon into a pannikin, added a spoonful of sugar and a dash of the 'Bundy'; and topped up the mug with cold water. That was the only time the rum bottle was touched. It was a wonderful reviver before deciding whether to push on or to camp. On the job Rose was a disciplinarian.
Rose has become a legend so I should not spoil the story by representing him as a model public servant. It is enough to say that he gave great service to the animal industry in the Territory. Cattle at that time were the major product of the Territory, although mineral production was increasing. One of his major services was to improve the access to market. The chief outlet in the northern half was to a rail head at Dajarra in Western Queensland and thence by rail to meatworks on the Pacific coast. A smaller number went on the hoof to meatworks at Wyndham. The chief outlet for the Centre was to the railway at Alice Springs or Deep Well and thence into the metropolitan market in South Australia.

Most cattle moved to the railhead on the hoof, although a small commencement had been made with trucking by road to Alice Springs. One of the major early achievements of the Animal Industry Branch was the reopening, improvement and supervision of the stock routes leading to these outlets. In round figures, by 1956 there were about 5,000 kilometres of developed stock routes serviced by over 160 bores equipped with windmills (or pumps), tanks and troughs. Trucking yards were provided at the terminals, dips at strategic points and facilities for holding any mob of travelling stock in which disease had been detected. Movement on the stock routes was controlled by stock inspectors and all mobs inspected.

Although this period was at the tail end of the great days of droving, the annual movement to market was an impressive achievement with a total turn-off between 120,000 and 160,000 cattle, moving during the dry season in mobs varying from a few hundred to a thousand. Some travelled only three or four hundred kilometres to the railhead and others made long journeys right across the Territory from the Victoria River into Queensland.

The turn-off of cattle from the Top End of the Territory presented a different problem, partly because of the quality of the beasts produced. One outlet was found with the improvement of the jetty at Darwin Harbour and shipment live to the Philippines and at a later stage another outlet came with the development of inland killing works to produce packaged manufacturing beef for the United States market.

Alongside the control of the movement of cattle to market, Rose and his stock inspectors introduced more effective inspection and control of disease and measures for the improvement of the herds both by improved station management and better breeding. One of Rose’s texts was “A good bull can work wonders”. A scheme to subsidise the introduction of herd bulls of approved quality from other parts of Australia and the encouragement of bull sales in the Territory meant that the magic-working sires were more readily available throughout the Territory.

In the combating of disease, the regular inspection and the enforcement of dipping against tick-borne diseases brought great improvements. Another major achievement was in combating pleuro. A pleuro line was drawn to separate clean from infected regions and step by step that pleuro line was pushed further back until eventually the Territory could be declared clean. This achievement has not been as fully recognised as it should be as one of the big success stories of the Australian beef cattle industry.

In association with the measures against disease the Animal Industry Branch established its laboratory at Alice Springs under Archie McKenzie for pathological testing and research. It did notable work on the Kimberley horse disease, the Birdsville disease and Georgina River poisoning and, in general, on the poison plants of the Territory, co-operating with other research institutions in Australia and overseas.

Another basic service to the industry was conducted principally by Tom Hare, Rose’s administrative assistant. This was the registration of brands. A sound system of registered brands is the fundamental requirement to check cattle duffing. The approval of the design of a brand is just as important as its registration. A brand should be so designed that it cannot readily be altered in the way in which, say the letter ‘p’ can become the letter R with one stroke or a triangle can become a diamond with two strokes. Tom Hare did a mammoth rogue-proof job and his eventual publication on Northern Territory brands is a bibliographical treasure as well as a service to the cattle industry.
I will make one critical remark about Rose. He robbed the drovers of one of their best stories. In two successive years, during the height of the droving season, he and I travelled from east to west along the main stock route from the Queensland border to the Victoria River, meeting mob after mob as they drifted eastward. These were memorable experiences for me and taught me a lot. On one journey, somewhere west of Newcastle Waters, we came on a droving plant resting at a bore while the mob was being watered. As we had done on several other occasions, Rose asked if we could borrow a couple of horses to ride around the resting mob and look at the condition of the cattle. The drovers, lounging at the tank, indicated the saddled horses hitched to trees in a patch of shade and suggested one drooping animal was a nice quiet one for the Minister. We walked over. Without fuss Rose suggested that I take a horse other than the one offered. We rode off among the cattle. On our return about half an hour later we met a young stockman who had been on the skirts of the mob while his mates rested. We dismounted together and nonchalantly Rose said something to the lad about the quality of the horses and, nodding towards the one I had been offered, just asked: "What's he like?. "A bad tempered bastard", said the lad. "You never know what he'll do. He's moody. He had me off three times this morning, so I left him". Later I asked Rose how he knew. "I saw the glint in their eyes. They were just waiting to see you bucked off. It would make the best story that ever passed along the track. They've never had a chance before to play tricks on a Minister."

Lastly, I will mention another unorthodox character, Col Adams, Director of Mines from 1955 onwards. He was a South Australian by birth but after graduating in engineering he took a position with Wiluna Gold Mines in Western Australia. Later he joined the Mines Department of Western Australia, rising to become Superintendent of State Batteries. Major mining development in the Territory was being promoted either by an Australian Government agency in the case of uranium at Rum Jungle, or by the big mining enterprises. The service Adams gave in the Mines Branch was partly in the administration of the mining laws of the Territory and partly in the encouragement and facilitating of the work of the smaller mining ventures - the prospecting and the testing of prospects that were the spearhead of development. He spent more time in the field than in the office and, like Lionel Rose, rather enjoyed an opportunity for distancing himself from Darwin. One qualification I make on that comment is that when in due course he became an official member of the Legislative Council he revelled in Council debate for the chance it gave him to pit common-sense and practice against dreams and theory. Adams made his own distinctive contribution to the growth of the mining industry.

In one phase of his career in the Territory he earned the nickname of Moses for he struck water in the thirsty land. Tennant Creek grew rapidly because of developments both in mining and road transport. It had a limited water supply and no reticulation in the town. Some water was carted from two remote bores, each with a limited yield. The town dam to collect rainfall gave a supplementary supply of brown liquid but, as expressed in one of the local jokes, its usefulness was limited because while the annual rainfall was twelve inches the rate of evaporation on the surface of the dam water was twelve feet. Mostly however, the disability of the town was said to be the fault of those fools in Canberra, and especially the Minister for Territories, who had not provided a water supply. I remember one packed meeting of protest on one of my visits to Tennant Creek. One local politician after another harangued the crowd. I copped the lot. What could I say in reply? Any Aboriginal rainmaker would have known better answers than I had. While the fury of protest still raged, one of the old-timers rose in the middle of the crowd. All he said was: "Words! Words! Words! If words were water we would all be drowned. I'm going for a beer." The protests dried up even more quickly than the town dam and no-one seemed to expect me to say anything.

It was on this visit that Col Adams had a yarn with me. The search for water have been confined to scientists and was not his official concern. In his laconic way he said in effect that Tennant Creek did not get much regular annual rain but every now and again during the past few thousand years it had a downpour. That water did not run away. It sank in. He reckoned he knew where it went. He took me out of town and indicated the area. The scientists had been trying in other places. The experts said we would never find water there but he would like to test his theory by putting down a shaft. He wanted a
shaft so that he could inspect the sides. Could I get him three thousand pounds without bothering the professionals? I did. He engaged Len Purkiss and his son to sink the shaft. About 25 to 30 feet down he found water and gained information about the aquifers. He sank a few more shafts and proved his point. The engineers in the Works Department took over, made various tests to prove quality and quantity, but in due course Adams was proved right and Tennant Creek had a piped water supply. There was great rejoicing when I performed the ceremony of turning the first tap but on that day of rejoicing Tennant Creek did not forget the old lesson of use water sparingly and the citizens drank lots of beer. "Moses Adams" was the toast of the day.

Another great day and night of rejoicing at Tennant Creek was the opening of the new battery and once again Adams was the bringer of all good gifts to the struggling small town. After having been rebuffed by Darwin he persuaded me that it was a well-established Australia-wide custom that at the opening of a State battery the government "shouted the mob". On the appointed day I opened the battery and shared in a typical Territory demonstration of pride and joy in local achievement. Once again I had the momentary thrill of feeling that we were getting somewhere and doing something that mattered. The reopening of the Battery was a really great day at Tennant Creek - one of those days that lasted until tomorrow morning.

In this necessarily brief review of the post-war reconstruction I do not have space to refer to the work of the Welfare Branch or the achievements of such notable officers as Harry Giese, Ted Evans and Creed Lovegrove. Unfortunately some more recent events have meant that one cannot praise these worthy men today without entering on an involved and contorted argument. Perhaps it will be enough to comment in passing that they made life better, with brighter prospects for the future, for thousands of human beings.

As I have written elsewhere, I enjoyed my years as "head of government" in the Territory from 1951 to 1963 and, in spite of a few disappointments, was much encouraged by seeing the results of the constructive work in which I shared. I remember the easy and congenial relationship with many persons in the Territory community and the pleasure I had in being alongside people who knew what they were trying to do and applied themselves practically to the job in hand. It may be true that the Territory had a few odd characters and a fair crop of "bulsh artists" but most of them did little harm and caused much amusement. The memories I value are those of men and women of exceptional worth in many occupations who were turning a frontier province into a substantial unit in the Australian Commonwealth.

I congratulate the Northern Territory on its progress. I thank it for giving me the best fun I ever had in politics.