MEDIA RELEASE

CHIEF MINISTER
HON. MARSHALL PERRON, MLA

Ref: P-0460-93
Date: 26.05.93

The Legislative Assembly today called on the Federal Government to honour its commitment on the Alice Springs-Darwin rail link.

Proposed by Chief Minister Marshall Perron, the successful motion asked the Prime Minister to honour the promise he made during the Federal election campaign to complete the survey of the line.

Mr Keating promised only days before the election to spend $3 million on the survey.

The motion, which is similar to one passed by the South Australian Legislative Council also called on the Federal Government to comply with its obligations under terms of the Northern Territory Acceptance Act of 1910.

That Act said the Commonwealth would build the Adelaide-Darwin rail line in return for taking over control of the Northern territory from South Australia.

During the debate, Mr Perron said Territorians feared that the Federal Government would not keep its promise on the north-south-rail link, Mr Perron said.

"We have all heard of various election promises that Labor has decided not to keep," he told the Legislative Assembly. "...That all election promises have been put on the chopping block."

"With that sort of background, and in the absence of any confirmation from the Prime Minister that his very personal promise will be kept on the railway survey work, quite a few Territorians have begun to feel uneasy about his intentions."

Mr Perron said one of his concerns for the project was the precarious position of Senator Collins within the Federal Labor Cabinet.

"I seriously doubt that a Commonwealth project of this size in the Northern Territory would earn a priority rating on the discussion agenda in the Labor Cabinet without the ardent support of that Cabinet’s sole member from the Territory," he said.

"However, even if the Senator was to prosecute the cause for the railway among his ministerial peers his latest exploits involving the Pay-TV debacle have become a ball-and-chain around his personal credibility."

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