Information:
Mr HATTON (Nightcliff): Mr Speaker, during the debate on the Appropriation Bill in the early hours of last Thursday, I provided a response to the member for Wanguri on the matter of expenditure for external printing and advertising costs in 1990-91 for the TDZA. My response at that time was that, due to the transfer of these funds to the Department of Industries and Development in February of this year, precise details were not immediately available. I stated at the time, however, that I would provide the information during the course of these sittings. The following information is now provided. I will read his questions and the answers to them. ‘How much was paid for external printing and advertising services in 1990-91?’ The answer is $119,008.30. ‘Who were the payments made to?’ The details are: Colemans Printing, $1,872.30; Copytime, $3,247.28; Image Offset, $23,822.64; Mattingly Woolfard Cawrse, $70,634.08; Auslink, $16,421; Presentations, $13,615; and Sovereign Gold Enterprises, $4,175. ‘What selection process was followed in each case?’ Procedures for selection are based on public service purchasing procedures with emphasis placed on preference being given to local businesses. The response to the final part of the question was provided during last Thursday's debate. I believe that completes all of the matters that I had outstanding from the Appropriation Bill debate.

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Secondly, I wish to respond to some comments made this morning by the Leader of the Opposition. He chose to deal loosely with the truth in respect of matters relating to a debate in this Assembly concerning the government's position on the railway project. All I can say is that the comments made by the Leader of the Opposition were absolutely outrageous. The attempt by the Leader of the Opposition to hijack the rail link issue - and quite clearly that is what he is attempting - is nothing more than political plagiarism. It is very obvious to anybody who has followed the debate over the years that he is either very poorly informed or very poorly advised.

The Leader of the Opposition's latest idea is something that he calls the Australia-Asia trade link. It may be new to him, but it is a concept that this government has been pursuing for years. We have been dealing with hard economic facts, and we have the studies to prove it. One might expect the Leader of the Opposition, who has commented in the past on the need for a hard-nosed practical approach to the rail link, to show a professionally realistic attitude. However, I will give members an example of the depth of his thinking on this issue. In the August sittings, in the second-reading debate on the Appropriation Bill, the Leader of the Opposition said:

We have a vision for the Territory, where our natural advantages of land and water produce the crops, the food needed to feed the appetites of the rapidly expanding economies to our north. It travels on the ships that bring vast quantities of container cargo across the Australia-Asia trade link, of which Darwin is the hub.

Many people have visions, and for a variety of reasons. I will not attempt to guess what chemical process has prompted the Leader of the Opposition's vision in this particular case. We all need our visions, but as well we need some action to underpin our visions. That is what is sadly missing from the Leader of the Opposition's recent statements.

On the other hand, this government has been working strongly towards a rail link, exploring the potential of every new opportunity that emerges. We have not been sitting on our hands waiting for the rail link to become a reality before we do anything else. At the same time, we have been working to encourage trade links, particularly in the South-East Asian region. Honourable members may have
noticed reference to our most recent involvement on the front page of this morning's NT News. My department has been working to coordinate Northern Territory participation in the Ujung Pandang trade exhibition next month. This is part of our move to forge closer economic relations with Indonesia. However, there is much more.

The Trade Development Zone is the most obvious project to boost our export capabilities. We have spoken in this House about the trade zone partnerships. We have referred to the work involved in developing the offshore supply base, including negotiations for the development of port facilities and shipping links, not only with Indonesia but through ports in China, and many other developments which I will not repeat now. All these things should be known to the Leader of the Opposition. All he has to do is sit in the House long enough to listen to the debates that are held. If he does that, he will educate himself significantly and overcome his problems. Of course, that is assuming that he really wants to understand what is occurring in the Territory and has a genuine desire to cooperate and work towards those goals.

However, out of the mouth of the Leader of the Opposition came this morning, on ABC radio, the clear motive for his so-called MPI and statements.

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yesterday. I refer to his misinforming of the community by alleging that the Minister for Transport and Works had leaked the names of consultants. Quite clearly, the naming came from the Leader of the Opposition's actions. When she interviewed the Leader of the Opposition on ABC radio this morning, Clare Martin asked:

Well, Brian Ede, you would have to say that, if you had not even mentioned the current investigation of the prospects of a railway being done by an international company, we would not be doing this interview this morning. I mean, in fact, you have raised it, haven’t you?

That was exactly what the point was in respect of the naming of the consultancy. The answer was even more revealing. The Leader of the Opposition said:

I have raised the railroad because the government, for 5 years, has not said anything in parliament about the railroad and what was needed was for somebody to take the political initiative to match what is going on in the bureaucracy, and also what is going on in business so that Territorians can realise that there is a possibility here and to get behind it and to talk to people interstate to get the excitement build-up again here in the Territory.

That is a crystal clear admission of 2 things: firstly, there is a great deal happening within the government bureaucracy and the business community; and, secondly, he wants to grandstand politically and try to grab the agenda for his own personal political ends, irrespective of the damage that may cause to negotiations that are occurring. There cannot be anything more crystal clear than what was said this morning. I condemn the Leader of the Opposition for his cheap political grandstanding at the potential expense of a fundamentally critical infrastructural development project for the Northern Territory. He has condemned himself out of his mouth. He should be condemned by all people in the Territory for that cheap political grandstanding. We have been refraining from public comment in order to allow a businesslike approach to the development of this project and others. I hope the Leader of the Opposition can be put back into his shell and will let the real experts get on with the business while he tries to work out what the Territory is all about.