NORTHERN TERRITORY OF AUSTRALIA

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

Fourth Assembly
Second Session

PARLIAMENTARY RECORD

Tuesday 18 March 1986
Wednesday 19 March 1986
Thursday 20 March 1986

Tuesday 25 March 1986
Wednesday 26 March 1986

Part I - Debates
Part II - Questions
Part III - Minutes
Northern Territory Legislative Assembly
Fourth Assembly
Second Session

Speaker
Chief Minister and Treasurer
Opposition Leader
Deputy Chief Minister and
Minister for Industry, Small Business and Tourism
Attorney-General and
Minister for Mines and Energy
Special Minister for Constitutional Development
Minister for Education
Minister for Transport and Works and Housing
Minister for Lands,
Minister for Primary Production
Minister for Ports and Fisheries and
Minister for Conservation
Minister for Community Development and
Minister for Correctional Services
Minister for Health and
Minister for Youth, Sport, Recreation and Ethnic Affairs

Roger Michael Steele
Ian Lindsay Tuxworth
Bob Collins
Nicholas Manuel Dondas
Marshall Bruce Perron
James Murray Robertson
Tom Harris
Daryl William Manzie
Stephen Paul Hatton
Barry Francis Coulter
Raymond Allan Hanrahan

Price, including postage, $7.50 per calendar year. Subscriptions, made payable to the Collector of Territory Moneys, should be sent to the Editor, Hansard, G.P.O. Box 3721, Darwin, N.T. 5794.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Division</th>
<th>Member</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Arafura</td>
<td>Bob Collins</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Araluen</td>
<td>James Murray Robertson</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arnhem</td>
<td>Wesley Wagner Lanhupuy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Barkly</td>
<td>Ian Lindsay Tuxworth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Berrimah</td>
<td>Barry Francis Coulter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Braitling</td>
<td>Roger William Stanley Vale</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Casuarina</td>
<td>Nicholas Manuel Dondas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elsey</td>
<td>Roger Michael Steele</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fannie Bay</td>
<td>Marshall Bruce Perron</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flynn</td>
<td>Raymond Allan Hanrahan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jingili</td>
<td>Richard Alfred Setter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Koolpinyah</td>
<td>Cecilia Noel Padgham-Purich</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leanyer</td>
<td>Michael James Palmer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ludmilla</td>
<td>Colin Charles Firmin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MacDonnell</td>
<td>Neil Randal Bell</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Millner</td>
<td>Terence Edward Smith</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nhulunbuy</td>
<td>Daniel Murray Leo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nightcliff</td>
<td>Stephen Paul Hatton</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Port Darwin</td>
<td>Tom Harris</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sadadeen</td>
<td>Denis Wilfred Collins</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sanderson</td>
<td>Daryl William Manzie</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stuart</td>
<td>Brian Richard Ede</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Victoria River</td>
<td>Terence Robert McCarthy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wagaman</td>
<td>Frederick Arthur Finch</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wanguri</td>
<td>Donald Francis Dale</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Chairman of Committees - Mr Vale
Deputy Chairman of Committees - Mr D.W. Collins
Mr Finch
Mr Leo
Mr McCarthy
Mr Palmer

House Committee
Mr Speaker
Mr Bell
Mr Lanhupuy
Mrs Padgham-Purich
Mr Setter

Standing Orders Committee
Mr Speaker
Mr B. Collins
Mr Ede
Mr Hanrahan
Mr McCarthy
Mr Robertson

Publications Committee
Mr Bell
Mr D.W. Collins
Mr Dale
Mr Lanhupuy
Mr Setter

Privileges Committee
Mr B. Collins
Mr Firmin
Mr Leo
Mr Perron
Mr Setter

Subordinate Legislation and Tabled Papers Committee
Mr B. Collins
Mr Dale
Mr Finch
Mr Palmer
Mr Smith

Sessional Committee - Environment
Mr D.W. Collins
Mr Dale
Mr Ede
Mr Lanhupuy
Mrs Padgham-Purich

Sessional Committee - New Parliament House
Mr Speaker
Mr Finch
Mr Leo
Mr Smith
Mr Tuxworth

Select Committee - Constitutional Development
Mr B. Collins
Mr Dale
Mr Lanhupuy
Mr Palmer
Mr Smith
Mr Robertson
PART I

DEBATES
Mr Speaker, with the passing of Les MacFarlane, the Territory has lost one of its most prominent and outstanding citizens, a man who made a pre-eminent contribution to our political development, to this parliament and to the northern pastoral industry. John Leslie Stuart MacFarlane was a distinctive man in every way and he made a distinctive contribution to the Northern Territory. He was an individualist, a hard worker and a man of independent mind. He was not the sort of man to take a stance purely because it was popular, nor was he likely to toe the party line just because it was the party line. He has been described as a rebel with a cause and that cause was the cattle industry.

John Leslie MacFarlane was an impressive man in all ways. Few who knew him could forget his physical presence. He was a solidly-built man who always exuded determination, confidence and solid strength, the archetypal northern cattle man. When he was fighting for a cause, particularly when he was fighting for the cattle industry, he was pugnacious and tenacious. If he decided to make a stand on a point, he would set his craggy Scots features, with his jaw jutting forward, fold his arms and berate friend and foe alike. He was a man who thought for himself and believed in what he was doing.

He was a representative, a proud and unashamed representative, of traditional values. He was a strong family man with a firm belief in the value of hard work and the future of both the cattle industry and the Northern Territory. He loved his property, Moroak, and he was a hard worker, a man who drove himself hard and demanded similar effort from those around him. Yet, at the same time, he was a man who demonstrated outstanding loyalty and compassion. At one stage, a long-serving station employee was arraigned in Katherine court for a serious, violent offence. Despite the nature of the offence and the prevailing public opinion, Les MacFarlane did not hesitate to front up to the court and give character evidence and help the man as much as he could. Such was the strength of the man. He believed in standing by those who, through the years, had stood by him.

This compassion, this acceptance of human error, was also evident in his conduct as Speaker of this Assembly. While he was a strict Speaker who controlled both sides of this Assembly with his Katherine rules of debate, he was also ready always to give assistance to members who were indisposed. He was understanding of our faults and was always particularly kind to those who,
like him, had served the Territory for many years. He was a great supporter of everything to do with parliament but, in keeping with his independent mind, sometimes he defied parliamentary convention while Speaker.

His loyalty to his electorate was such that, when issues relating to Elsey came before the parliament, he would vacate the Chair and speak from the floor - and he did that often. I remember one instance when some bureaucrat was seeking to charge those who swam in the lower reaches of the Katherine River a fee for the privilege. This stupidity raised Les' ire. No one, he said, was going to charge Katherine kids to swim in their own river. He always had a sharp eye out for those silly little rules which can so harm the young and defenceless in our community.

In keeping with his traditional values and his belief in the family, he always displayed particular deference to all women, particularly those in politics. I am assured that, with ladies on both sides of the political fence, he won a reputation for fairness, kindness and considerable personal charm. He treated women with great respect and courtesy in the manner we have come to expect from a man of his generation and ideals.

Whilst upholding traditional manners in these areas, Les was not one to stand on protocol. With his independent and self-sufficient approach to life, he did not need that sort of formality. The only area where he demanded appropriate protocol and respect was this institution, the Legislative Assembly. Les was a great believer in the value of parliament and the freedoms that it guarantees. He was a keen supporter of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association and contributed much to it.

Les was also a very strong believer in the value of northern defence. As an ex-serviceman, he had been through the horror of war, and he was always a strong lobbyist for strength in northern defences.

Les MacFarlane was a Territorian of considerable personal charm and achievement. He was a traditionalist but he was also a man of compassion. The Territory is poorer for his passing.

Mr Speaker, the former Chief Minister and present member of the House of Representatives, Paul Everingham, also wishes to record in this place his admiration for Les MacFarlane. I would like to read his comments into the record:

'Les was a man of his times in this Northern Territory. He came here with 2 strong hands and a determination to build a cattle station out of nothing. With Peg's support, he succeeded and, for that alone, he must go down in the books as one of the post-war pioneer cattlemen of the Top End.

With Moroak up and running, Les realised that there were only political solutions to the seemingly insurmountable problems stifling industry and enterprise in the Territory in those days: distant markets, lack of roads, the most basic communications and the tyranny of distance. Territorians had no political clout at all so Les joined the other political pioneers of those days - Dick Ward, Tiger Brennan, Tony Greatorex - and was elected to represent Elsey in the Legislative Council. He used the council and later the Assembly unashamedly as a forum to battle for his people, the battlers, especially those in the Katherine district. He spent many years as
Speaker but never hesitated to put aside his wig and step down on the floor of the Assembly if he felt something had to be said on behalf of his people.

Les MacFarlane met with criticism, triumph and trouble during a full and active life. But everyone who met him, friend and foe alike, will remember to the end of their days that they once dealt with Les MacFarlane, a real Territory battler'.

Mr Speaker, I am sure that all members of this Assembly will agree with me when I say that an appropriate memorial to Les MacFarlane's work in the Katherine area is necessary. To provide that, the government has decided to name a wing of the Katherine Rural Education College 'The Les MacFarlane Building'.

Mr B. COLLINS (Opposition Leader): Mr Speaker, it is a fairly commonplace occurrence these days in the Northern Territory for people in public life to talk about the need to diversify and expand the Northern Territory's economic base. I believe that, in 1986 in particular, we are embarking on a new era for the Northern Territory with the construction of the gas pipeline from Alice Springs to Darwin. Obviously, the supply of an indigenous and stable energy source for the Northern Territory will bring about a whole new era of development in terms of cheaper fuel for tourist infrastructure, and perhaps even manufacture with the establishment of the free trade zone. Indeed, across the Territory, there are monuments to the failures of attempts to diversify the Territory's economic base.

In the last century of the Northern Territory's history, the cattle industry has been the one industry whose economic viability has endured. For many years, it was the only thing the Northern Territory had going for it. It almost died on quite a number of occasions through natural adverse conditions, poor prices, the distance from markets etc. I know from personal experience that great hardships were endured by the people on the land during those years.

I do not think that the cattle industry had a more forthright or single-minded advocate than Les MacFarlane. I first met Les 20 years ago when I was an extension officer with the Department of Agriculture in Katherine, and I had a very close association with him through a mutual interest in supporting the Katherine Show, including the very first Katherine Show. Les was well-known over the years for his solid support for both the Katherine and Darwin Shows. Supporting such shows was not an easy matter because it often meant that people in Les' position, on isolated cattle stations, had to go to a considerable amount of trouble and expense to get the animals to the show. One of the things Les MacFarlane accomplished - which was a matter of considerable pride to him and said a great deal for his expertise as a breeder - was that, at those shows, and in the face of competition from far better financed and better resourced cattle properties, he was consistently successful in taking out prizes with cattle bred at Moroak.

In the days that I first met Les MacFarlane, the Northern Territory was a very different place. I was fortunate enough to arrive at the end of the 'Capricornia' era. It was a time when white Russian refugees were still farming peanuts down on the Katherine River - people like Jimmy Simintz and Long John Ivanetz who were remarkable and who had extraordinary stories to tell. On the Daly River, there were people like Squizzy Taylor and Charlie Dargy. I was fortunate enough to know them all. Another enduring character was Tiger Brennan. Of course, there was Les MacFarlane.
Even in those days, Mac was pre-eminent in his one-eyed advocacy of the viability of the Northern Territory cattle industry. Over the years, outside parliament, Les and I had a close association because of a common interest in promoting Northern Territory agriculture. Indeed, it was only shortly before his death that I received a letter from him — as I often had in the past — which contained a clipping from an agricultural magazine he thought would be of interest to me because it involved a particular facet of rural education. Over the years that Mac was a member of this Assembly, he and I had many discussions. He used to supply me, on a regular basis, with ancient and dog-eared copies of select committee reports from the federal parliament on the establishment of a rural college in the Northern Territory. At his funeral on Moroak Station, tribute was paid to him for the contribution that he had made to the establishment of such a college. I must say that I was delighted to hear that, as a tribute to Les MacFarlane, a wing of that college will be named after him. I could hardly think of a more appropriate tribute to him than that.

The other day, I heard some very interesting statistics in respect of a plant operators' course that the college conducted last year. I visited the college to see what was being done there and I was extremely interested to hear that, of the 50 young men and women who completed that course, 48 are in permanent employment. That is a pretty impressive record. It is something that I know that Les MacFarlane would have derived enormous personal satisfaction from.

Les had a unique debating style. Certainly, he commanded the Legislative Assembly with his presence. He had considerable presence even when he put his wig on back to front. Even before Les rose to his feet, members could be certain of one thing: the subject on which he would speak. It never varied — it was always about the cattle industry in the Northern Territory.

Obviously, Mac and I had our disagreements over the years, particularly in relation to Aboriginal affairs. It is reasonable, and I think accurate, to say that there was an enormous gulf between us on that subject, in particular the matter of secure land tenure for Aboriginal people. I recall that, when Sir Ninian Stephen was appointed as Australia's Governor-General, he travelled around Australia making the usual courtesy calls. I waited upon him along with various other dignitaries at Government House. Mac was there in full robes and his wig was on the right way round. The commanders of the armed services and various other people were there, including His Honour the Administrator dressed in his Neopolitan ice-cream vendor's suit. We were standing in the anteroom waiting to go in, and it was Mac's turn to be the cab off the rank. He turned around and said to Eric Johnston and myself: 'Well, when I go in there, I'm going to give it to him with both barrels'. About 15 pairs of eyebrows were raised to the ceiling and everyone said: 'Oh God, what about, Mac?' He said: 'I'm going to talk about Aboriginal land rights in the Northern Territory', and away he went.

He had no sooner disappeared around the corner than everyone said: 'Oh my God!' Of course, those occasions are normally reserved for 10 minutes of chat: 'How's your father, welcome to the Northern Territory, it's a nice day and glad to see you here'. 10 minutes went past, 15 minutes went past and 20 minutes went past, and he still had not come back. He appeared again around the doorway with a great grin on his face, marched inside and had the undivided attention of everyone in the room. Commodore Johnston said to him: 'Did you give it to him with both barrels, Mac?' Mac replied: 'Bloody oath, I did!'
I then went in and met Sir Ninian Stephen, a man for whom I have enormous respect. He had a funny little smile on his face. He invited me to sit down and have a cup of tea. He said: 'Mr MacFarlane has just been giving me the benefit of his views on Aboriginal affairs in the Northern Territory'. I said: 'Yes, we gathered that'. He said: 'I would imagine, Mr Collins, not that I have met you before, that your opinion would be somewhat different'. I replied that it was and I spent the next 15 minutes putting the other point of view.

That was the sort of bloke Les MacFarlane was. Even though I disagreed with his views on many things, one could never accuse him of hiding them. He was always extremely forthright about what he thought and what he did. The one thing I valued very greatly was the personal association I had with Mac, particularly when I came into the Assembly. Some of the more pleasant interludes that I have had outside the Chamber were with Mac in the Members Lounge discussing Territory agriculture, the Territory's pastoral industry and, particularly, his constant interest and concern about rural education in the Northern Territory. The one thing he was always preoccupied with - and he was right - was establishing a rural college in the Northern Territory which did not necessarily concentrate on providing people with degrees - although some day that may well be the case - but on providing young people who wanted to work on the land with practical experience which they could put to good use. That is exactly the kind of institution that KREC has become. I think that Mac must have gained enormous personal satisfaction in seeing that college established after years of striving for it and lobbying for it, particularly because of the successful job that it does.

I join with my parliamentary colleagues, the Chief Minister of the Northern Territory and the federal member in paying tribute to Les MacFarlane. He was a Territorian of real character. He had an individual and unique style which was not always agreeable to people, but it was a style which distinguished him from everyone else around him.

Peg MacFarlane also deserves a tribute in this debate for her presence and assistance in the parliamentary life of this parliament. Again, one of my pleasant memories as a member of parliament was attending the CPA functions which Les enjoyed hosting so much. Those members who have been around for a few years will remember the familiar sight of Mac and Peg standing at the doorway of whatever restaurant or hotel a dinner was being held and welcoming everyone and shaking their hands as they came in. That, of course, was an indication of the gentleman that Les MacFarlane was. He was extremely courteous and good humoured, and he was devoted to the Westminster system of parliament and to the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association.

The opposition joins with the government in expressing our condolences to Les' family, and pays tribute to a man who made an enormous contribution to the Northern Territory and who will be sadly missed.

Mr ROBERTSON (Leader of Government Business): Mr Speaker, I would like to join with my colleagues and also pay my respects to the late Les MacFarlane.

There were probably 3 sides to my relationship with the late Speaker of this place. The first and obvious one is the relationship I had with him in 1974 when I first came here as a member. Of course, that was a very diverse one.
When I first came here, Bernie Kilgariff was appointed to the Chair for a brief period prior to going to the Senate. Les MacFarlane succeeded him. It was at that time, prior to self-government, that I became his deputy. It was during that period as Deputy Speaker and Chairman of Committees that I first came to understand and learn about parliamentary practice and what the Westminster system really is.

My relationship with Mr Speaker MacFarlane progressed when I became Manager of Government Business and then Leader of the House, as it was wrongly called, and Leader of Government Business subsequent to that.

The Chief Minister alluded to the role of Mr Speaker MacFarlane as Speaker, as indeed did the Leader of the Opposition. I would just like to give briefly my views on his Speakership. It has often been bandied about that he conducted the affairs of the Assembly according to the Katherine rules of debate. Really, I do not accept that. I think that phrase typified Les' sense of humour rather than the reality of his conduct in the Chair. I am quite sure that the person whom I am about to name would not mind me naming him. He is still alive but has retired. He reminded me very much of Bob Hall who was a magistrate in Alice Springs. He would never drift beyond what the law dictated. He would always stay within the boundaries of the law - as did Mr Speaker MacFarlane - according to Hoyle. But in the unique circumstances in which they found themselves, each was able to adapt those rules to the realities in which they were placed. This is not the House of Commons; it is not the federal parliament of Australia. The circumstances are different and the level of decorum expected from the Chair and the conduct across the Chamber have generally been vastly different to that which prevails in those very large national legislatures. So it ought to be. We represent a small population; we are a small number. Nonetheless, we have wide duties. Because we have the duties of a full parliament in every respect, with a few powers removed from us by the Commonwealth, we have a job to do. Because we are few in number, I think that job requires a greater degree of application from each and every one of us than the public generally requires or expects of parliaments of 600 or 250 people. The function of people like Mr Speaker MacFarlane, and indeed his predecessor, Speaker Kilgariff and yourself, Sir, has been to insist upon that being carried out.

Nonetheless, we are Territorians and we perceive ourselves as having different attitudes and different lifestyles to our cousins in the south. The capacity of Mr Speaker MacFarlane to adapt to the circumstances of Territory life and to the nature of debate over Territory affairs and issues, and yet to keep within the rules of Pettifer, or the rules as applicable to the Westminster system, was remarkable.

The second Les MacFarlane I knew was the friend. I think it would be true to say that, of all the people elected to this Assembly since 1974, I would have been a closer friend of Les MacFarlane than anyone else, with the possible exception of Roger Steele because of his background in the pastoral industry. My friendship with Les MacFarlane had as its catalyst the fact that we were both returned servicemen. It is a remarkable bond which automatically exists as a result of overseas service. It was the same common background that led me to become particularly good friends with Jack Doolan. He, Les and I were the only people in this Assembly who had that common background. Les and I became very good friends indeed.

When I visited Moroak, by myself or with entourage, Peggy would usually flee. Occasionally she was there, extending the type of hospitality which the
Leader of the Opposition alluded to earlier. My sympathies also go to Peggy MacFarlane.

I remember the first time I landed the Cessna 210 on Les' strip. He came out to meet us, and 2 cartons of Carlton Draught were unloaded. Les looked at the 2 cartons which we had just put on the back of the vehicle. He looked in the hold of the aircraft and, seeing that there were no more, said: 'Ha! You are staying one night'. So, 2 cartons became a one night stand. I remember my next trip. I dropped my Cessna 210 on the same strip and, with the idea of repaying a little courtesy, I unloaded 8 cartons of beer. Les looked at them. He looked in the hold and determined there was no more. Then he said: 'Ha! You are staying 2 nights'.

Speaking of aviation, I am the only pilot ever to make Les MacFarlane sick in an aeroplane. After a few too many syrups the night before, we decided that, early in the morning, we would undertake a low-level survey of his property and also have a look at the potential of the Elsey flood area for tourism purposes which, as a result of proper vision from people like Les, may well be realised. Anyway, Les failed to have breakfast. Mac apparently was a chap whose stomach did not like the idea of flying when it was empty. I do not know the precise rules of courts of summary jurisdiction in relation to evidence voluntarily given in parliaments but I will proffer the view that, if I was 500 feet above the ground, then I had a lying altimeter. It is the only way to check cattle, and I do not have a low-level endorsement. It was quite rough. Les would have flown hundreds and hundreds of hours as a passenger and I have the distinction of being the only pilot to have made him ill.

No reminiscence of Les MacFarlane could be complete without a fishy tale. This fishy tale is about the one that did not get away. We packed a heap of rib bones in the esky - on the top of the ice which was on top of something else - and repaired to a nice waterhole on the Roper that was isolated by that time of the year. Robertson, being forever flashy, had his custom-built rod with a magnificent spinning reel on the end of it. Les MacFarlane was sitting there sizzling the rib bones and watching in amazement as I tried to catch trees very successfully. As the line wrapped around the tree, old Mac shook his head in absolute disgust. He went to the back of his ute and took out a 2 m length of 10 gauge fencing wire. He attached a Nilsmaster lure to the end of it and gave it to a chap named Peter Coney who was with us and said: 'Just flop this in that waterhole'. Of course, we all started to laugh. Coney flopped the thing in the waterhole, dragged it back with both hands and pulled out a 4 kg barramundi. We caught a saratoga by using the same method. Anyone who thinks you have to go to sporting shops and buy very expensive, sophisticated equipment to catch barramundi should take a leaf out of old Mac's book. He really did know what he was doing.

Mr Speaker, I referred earlier to my friendship with Mac. There is a funny myth about returned servicemen, and Mac typified the reason the myth was created. It is believed that returned servicemen do not like talking about their experiences. The fact is they do, but they usually talk about their experiences only to other returned servicemen. There is a fundamental reason for that. People who have not experienced it will think 1 of 2 things: either you are a crazy warmonger or you are blowing your own bags. It is not a reluctance to talk about the experience at all. It is a reluctance to talk to people who have not had the experience and who might get the wrong impression. After talking to Mac about some of his experiences, I realised how insignificant mine were. It is incredible that men can go through years of that kind of hell and come out at the other end of it with wisdom, compassion and a great sense of humour.
Mr Speaker, Les MacFarlane had all of those attributes. We honour here today a great Territorian and a great Australian, and I pay my respects to a great friend.

Mr LEO (Nhulunbuy): Mr Speaker, like most of the members on the opposition benches, I have not been in this parliament for all that long. I came here in 1980 and, suffice it to say, I am the second-longest serving member of the opposition in the Northern Territory. However, one of the first people whom I met when I came here in 1980 was the then Speaker, Les MacFarlane. He was the oldest member in the parliament; he was very much a father figure as far as the parliament was concerned. For many younger members, I think he played a very necessary productive role in perhaps quietening some of the more excessive passions that happened to surface during debate. Certainly, he was a very authoritarian Speaker.

Unfortunately, he is the first member of this Legislative Assembly whom I have had to speak about in relation to a condolence motion, and that saddens me greatly. In my opinion, Les MacFarlane was a great man. Certainly, he was a very authoritative figure who provided a steady influence within this parliament. He provided me, as a very junior member of this Assembly, with the considerable background knowledge and assistance that we all need when we come here.

Much has been said about Les MacFarlane's view of parliamentary procedure. I must agree with the Leader of the Opposition and the Chief Minister that, no matter what opinions one may have about Les MacFarlane's views on parliamentary procedures, he was even-handed to the point of being pedantic. He was extremely even-handed. Nobody in the opposition, certainly in the time that I have been a member of the Assembly, could ever claim otherwise.

Most that can be said about former Speaker MacFarlane has been said. I too pass on my sympathy to his wife, Mrs MacFarlane. I conclude by supporting this motion of condolence. Les MacFarlane was a true Territorian, a devoted cattleman and a very devoted Speaker.

Mr DONDAS (Deputy Chief Minister): Mr Speaker, I join with my parliamentary colleagues in paying tribute to Les MacFarlane in this condolence motion.

I had the pleasure and privilege of representing the Northern Territory government at Les' funeral at Moroak. Widespread flooding made it very difficult for people to attend. I was fortunate enough to be able to charter an aircraft, but many of Les' friends could not do that. Nevertheless, they made every attempt to get out to Moroak for the funeral. In fact, there were several hundred people there from all walks of life. I think that that is proof of the calibre of the man, Les MacFarlane, as an Australian and as a Territorian.

Many kind words were said at Les' funeral, and I remember saying that, whilst Les was a very serious person, he did have a sense of humour. Like my colleague, the Leader of Government Business, I was his deputy for a time. I can remember being put into the Speaker's Chair by Les on many occasions. This enabled him to argue for the pastoral industry and his electorate from the floor of the Assembly. I often asked myself: 'If Les oversteps the boundary, what does one do?' But he never did overstep that boundary, although we all know he sailed very close to the wind on a couple of occasions. The important thing was that he always played the game, and he played the game right.
I knew Les MacFarlane since 1974, when I was first elected to this Assembly. I found Les most helpful in my early days as a parliamentarian, as did many other members of the diminishing class of '74. I remember the occasion I was put into the Chair as a deputy chairman of committees. I really made a mess of the job. We all remember Gympie Lew Fatt, who was an attendant in this Assembly, walking past and saying: 'Can we help you?' Well, that broke up the whole Assembly. When Les came back into the Chamber as Speaker, and we reported progress on the bill, he was grinning from ear to ear, and he mumbled under his breath: 'The bastard has got you'.

He took me aside a little later and said: 'Look, you really have to get to understand these procedures'. He went through them with me and, in those very early days, I was able to grasp the fundamentals of the standing orders. After that, they never troubled me again. I got on top of the job of chairman of committees.

He played a very important part in the constitutional development of the Northern Territory. We heard that he first entered the Legislative Council in 1968 and then served in this Assembly until 1983. We would be all aware of the constitutional changes that have occurred between 1968 and the first fully-elected parliament in 1974. Whilst he played a very important part in the constitutional development of the Northern Territory, he also played a very prominent role in the development of the pastoral and cattle industry which was his first love.

One of the previous speakers mentioned the cattle spraying for which Les had become very famous and also the number of prizes that he won with his bulls at the Katherine and Darwin Shows. As Paul Everingham said, he started with 2 strong hands and guided Moroak Station into a viable position until very recently when portions of it were sold.

In talking about his sense of humour, I was fortunate enough in 1978 to attend the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association conference at Westminster. On that occasion, I was able to visit other branches in the United Kingdom, including Scotland. My wife travelled with me. Nine months after our return, we had a daughter named Katrina. Les used to always ask me how little Glasgow was going. There was always that smile on his face. I think it gave him as much enjoyment as it gave me when he asked that question.

Mr Speaker, I too offer my condolences to Peggy MacFarlane and the family. Peggy has become well-known to us as a very strong person who supported Les for most of his life. His sudden passing away, at what I consider to be a very young age, certainly will be a loss to Peggy and her family and to the Northern Territory. I once again join with my parliamentary colleagues in paying tribute to a fine man.

Mr BELL (MacDonnell): Mr Speaker, Les MacFarlane was Speaker of this Assembly when I entered it in 1981 and he continued as Speaker until his retirement in 1983. Therefore, he was Speaker for some 2½ years during my time in the Assembly. That is a comparatively short time, but I am sure that Les MacFarlane would have agreed with me that the relationship was not entirely colourless. Les and I had our share of clashes and disagreements. Perhaps less well-known to other members were the support and the assistance I received as a new member in this Assembly. It would be curmudgeonly of me not to place on record the assistance that I received from Les MacFarlane in that time.
Much has been said in the context of this condolence motion about Les MacFarlane's contribution to the Assembly, to public life and to industry in the Northern Territory. I can do naught but second those sentiments and say that, in my time as a member of this Assembly and in my relationship with him, he was certainly a forceful advocate, particularly of the cattle industry. I can remember my first sittings in this Assembly in June 1981 when all of a sudden I saw the Speaker doff his wig and stride over to that seat. I can remember his presence being entirely unable to be ignored. I can also recall the then Leader of the Opposition turning around and saying: 'Well, you know what this is going to be about?'. I said: 'No'. He said: 'Beef'. That was exactly it. Within 2 seconds of rising to his feet, Les said: 'Well, what I want...'. He had that inimitable way of coming out with words that commanded attention - and beef it was.

On a serious note, I appreciated the representations and the efforts he made in that regard. Mention has already been made of it. You, Sir, and other members of this Assembly know the fundamental contribution of the cattle industry in the social and economic life of the Northern Territory, a social and economic life that is participated in by all Territorians.

Mr Speaker, that brings me to the next point I wish to make in speaking to this condolence motion. I think Les MacFarlane, having been the character he was, would have been a little disappointed if this condolence motion were entirely free of controversy. I note with some interest that government speakers eschewed reference to Les MacFarlane's contribution to race relations in the Northern Territory. I note the comments about Aboriginal affairs made by the Leader of the Opposition. On one occasion, I was watching a television news item in which Mac was being interviewed. The interviewer said: 'Mr MacFarlane, what do you have to say to the accusation that you are a racist?' I must admit, Mr Speaker, that I was interested to hear his reply. I was fairly bowled over when he said: 'Well, Neil Bell says I am not. He says I see black men through white man's eyes'. I immediately went back through my recollections and I think that perhaps I may have said something like that. What I meant, and what I stand by, is that Les was certainly ethnocentric. But it is worth putting on record that I do not believe he was malicious; I believe he was a good man. I think that, in paying my respects to his family, I can do little better than close with the words of Robert Burns who said: 'A man's a man for a' that'.

Mr PERRON (Mines and Energy): Mr Speaker, as has been said by previous speakers, Les MacFarlane was indeed a man of principle who stated his views very strongly irrespective of whom he might be disagreeing with. I confess that, on a couple of occasions over the years, I have wondered why he stayed with the CLP because he used to give us such a hard time behind closed doors and indeed in this Assembly. He took the floor many times and availed himself of his opportunity to contribute to the debate of the Assembly. I have no doubt that it was very unusual parliamentary practice for the Speaker to step down from the Chair and take to the floor on a subject of his choice during the adjournment debate. But that would not have bothered Les at all. No doubt, he sized up that there were no rules against it being done and that he saw no reason why he should give up his right to speak from the floor.

He was a very strong believer in the potential of the Northern Territory once it obtained self-rule, and was one of those fighters in the Legislative Council who tried to get some constitutional advancement for the Territory. No doubt, he experienced during those days in the council and in his private life enormous frustration with the system, the frustration of trying to get
bureaucracies and indeed governments to act in the way that he felt would advance the Northern Territory's people.

He placed a great deal of store in the Northern Territory's geographic location with Asia. Indeed, on at least 2 occasions that I can recall, he went with the former Chief Minister to Asia on trade missions and came back each time wildly enthusiastic and spoke in this Assembly about what he saw as the potential for the Northern Territory in fostering relationships with Asia and trade with Asia.

He was seen by many as an opponent of Aboriginals. He spoke many times about what he saw as gross inequities foisted upon Territory society by things such as land rights as it exists today, the social security system and government waste. I did not see Les as an opponent of Aboriginals. I think the member for MacDonnell summed it up quite well. I think he was a very fair man in regard to his assessment of the plight of Aboriginals. That is reasonable to assume, having regard to the fact that he was associated with Aboriginals for many years of his life. But his concern for the injustice of some of the actions that have been taken over the past few years is shared by an enormous number of people, not only in the Territory but elsewhere in Australia as well. He could never comprehend a government which seemed to give things away for nothing.

I remember him talking in this Assembly about a fight that had developed in a Katherine street outside a hotel. Some Aboriginals had pulled up in a brand new Toyota 4-wheel drive and there was an altercation with some inebriated persons on the footpath. These persons supposedly were typical Territorians who had worked long and hard but who probably had gained very little advancement for that in their lives. As Les described it, the altercation was over their frustration about the perceived inequity of busting their guts - that is the term he would have used - for many years to try to get ahead and yet seeing taxpayers' money used in a very loose way in terms of some of the assistance that governments give so freely to Aboriginals. But I reiterate that I do not believe that Les MacFarlane was an opponent of Aboriginals. He saw that many of the things that the government had done were not necessarily in their best interests in the long term.

Les often gave us a lot of curry during budget debates. He did not have a lot of time for government spending on places like Darwin. He did not like to see too much money going towards propping up the public service. Many times, he told us of the things that could be done in his electorate for the amount of the subsidy we pay in Darwin to keep the public bus service running. He would use that to very good effect and made us feel a little guilty that perhaps we had a far cushier time in places like Darwin compared to the battlers out in the bush.

He was a great supporter for the establishment of the Katherine Rural Education College and, through his persistence, that college exists today. He harangued us on that subject for years. He did not want any high-flying college full of academics dishing out accredited courses that might be acceptable to other parts of the world. He wanted a practical college that taught the young people the things they needed to know to get on with the job. I understand that that is how the Katherine Rural Education College is being run at present and, hopefully, the board of that college will ensure that, as a result of the pressure from academia, it will not become involved in increasingly high-flying areas to the point where the people whom it is designed to serve will have to find somewhere else to learn the practical skills that people on the land must use.
He was a great advocate of the Katherine dam, a proposal which has not come to fruition. There have been studies on it and, certainly, there would be a great many difficulties, not the least of which would be land rights, if such a proposal were to be resurrected again. Les saw the potential of agricultural and pastoral development in the region of a Katherine dam.

Les was a politician who did not set aside the views of his electorate after an election. I think many politicians are guilty of setting aside those views. Whilst many people may have disagreed with his views, very few would disagree that they were the views of the majority of his electorate. During his term as Speaker, he maintained the dignity of the office and that was to the benefit of us all. I offer my condolences to his family.

Mr HARRIS (Education): Mr Speaker, I also rise to speak to this motion of condolence. I did not know Les, or Mac as I came to know him, all that well prior to becoming a member of the Legislative Assembly back in 1977. I had heard of this big man who spoke his piece but I had never met him. Over a period of 6 years, I came to like the man a lot. I might say here that that was not because he was the speaker who followed my maiden speech and commented that it was one of the best maiden speeches that he had heard. That was not the reason at all, Mr Speaker. It really was not until my second term in the Legislative Assembly, when I became his deputy and Chairman of Committees, that I came to know Mac. As has been mentioned by other members of this Assembly, he offered a great deal of assistance at that particular time. He always kept his eye on the situation. Even though he was not here on many occasions, I can assure you that he was very wary of what was happening in this Chamber. I can recall that, on a number of occasions when things became a little rough in here - and the member for MacDonnell has mentioned some of those occasions - Les would come in and relieve me from my post. He would say words to the effect of: 'I'll take it from here, Tom'. That was during my early period as Deputy Speaker.

Les was an interesting character. He was down to earth. He did not pull any punches. He also enjoyed a little humour. I would like to share 2 occasions that I will always remember. Les always had a little laugh about these 2 occasions.

The first occurred when I was in the Chair one night. It was rather late in the evening. I asked one of the attendants to telephone my wife and inform her that I would not be home for tea until later. Needless to say, my wife was not all that impressed with that information. Mac came back into the Chamber and, with a smile on his face, gave me the message from my wife which was that the fritz was in the fridge. I will always remember that.

The second occasion was when Les was speaking in the adjournment debate. I forget the subject that he was speaking on but he made reference to a young chap who was sitting in the gallery. He had a T-shirt on which had 'Daly Waters Pub' written across the front of it. Afterwards, we were speaking outside and Les said to me: 'Tom, that is the sort of young fellow we have in these communities - that chap sitting up there in the gallery with that shirt on'. I said: 'Les, that was my son'. He said: 'Oh well, that's what it's all about'. Mac had a sense of humour and I feel very fortunate in having been able to share with him those 2 incidents.

In closing, I could say that Mac was an open man. I think that probably would be the best way to describe him. He was another colourful Territorian. I am sure that he will be missed by many people in the Northern Territory. I
offer my condolences to Peg and family and I share with them the grief of the passing of Les MacFarlane.

Mr VALE (Braitling): Mr Speaker, I would like to join with other honourable members in speaking in support of the Chief Minister's condolence motion for the late Leslie John Stuart MacFarlane. I guess there are not many parliaments in the world, certainly not in Australia, where the Speaker was known to all and sundry as 'Mac' or 'Old Mac' or 'Big Mac'. I guess that shows that, in the Northern Territory, we still have a fair degree of informality. I hope that that can continue. I think that one thing that Les MacFarlane brought to this Assembly, and before it the Legislative Council, was a degree of informality.

Most members have spoken of Les MacFarlane's extensive knowledge of the pastoral industry. I do not intend to go over that except in relating a few incidents involving Les MacFarlane, some of them quite amusing. It was a known fact that, if Les MacFarlane set his mind to debate the cattle industry, then you could roll Winston Churchill, Robert Menzies, Gough Whitlam and everyone else into one ball, put them up against him and still never win a debate. No matter how lucid the argument and how well documented it was, once he had set a course, he would follow that through, sometimes to the bitter end. He had a wide and extensive knowledge of the cattle industry. That was shown in many debates both on the floor of this Assembly and in other venues within the Northern Territory.

Other members mentioned the fact that, on many occasions, Les would step down from the Chair to debate the cattle industry. Les' desire again to keep a high public profile in relation to the cattle industry and also the Katherine district was illustrated by the fact that, even though he was Speaker, he would continue to have questions without notice asked of the ministers and continue to have adjournment debates made for and on his behalf. As all members know, the first person off his chair in the Assembly normally gets the Speaker's attention. What members did not realise during the time that Les MacFarlane was Speaker was that I quite often walked into this Assembly with a pocketful of questions to ask on behalf of Les MacFarlane. For that reason, quite often I would get the call ahead of many other members and I asked many questions, not only on my own behalf but also on behalf of Les MacFarlane.

From time to time, he would decide that standing orders really dictated that he should stay in the Chair and not come down on the floor to debate issues so he would write speeches out for me. His handwriting was second only to a doctor's prescription. It was very difficult to follow. He would stuff it into my hand as I walked past. Quite often, it was accompanied with lots of photographs and documentation. One day, he was very concerned about flooding problems in the Katherine area and he handed me a huge envelope and said: 'Use these in the adjournment debate'. I said: 'I am not speaking'. He said: 'Yes, you are.' He then handed me a speech. I unfolded these large photographs which showed the main streets of Katherine under flood. They must have been taken in the 1950s, if my memory is correct.

As I said before, other members have mentioned Les MacFarlane's love of the cattle industry and also his broad knowledge. In fact, as the Leader of the Opposition said on many occasions, he entered the Katherine Show and scooped the pool. He threatened on many occasions to come to Alice Springs. In fact, he entered cattle but at the last minute scratched them. On a number of occasions, he brought cattle up to the Royal Darwin Show where he again
scooped the pool. Some years ago, I was asked to go to Katherine to judge the poultry section at the Katherine Show. Whilst cattle are readily identifiable with earmarks and brands, poultry are not. They are in unmarked cages and one just goes along and inspects with what one believes to be an unbiased view. I selected a big black Australorp rooster which I thought was the champion bird of the show. I told the stewards and they took all the records down. I then departed to have a look at the rest of the show. About half an hour after that, Les MacFarlane fronted up. He had a grin from ear to ear. He did not often grin. Quite often, I could not tell whether Les was frowning or smiling. He said: 'Guess what I have just won?' I said: 'Mac, I would not have a clue'. He said: 'Champion bird of the show'. I said: 'Oh my God, I judged it'. Within minutes, the Australian Broadcasting Commission - which had a van there - was announcing that MacFarlane had influenced the judge, while I vowed and declared that he had not. Les went on air to assure people that it was not his chook. It belonged to old Bert Nixon down the river and Les had only borrowed it as an alarm clock, and decided to enter it in the show at the last minute.

Mr Speaker, Les MacFarlane and I had one thing in common. The moment the sittings were over, we left town. I think Les beat me quite often. We always wanted to get back to our home patch. Quite often, I wondered why Les wanted to leave the Darwin climate to go back to Katherine, which has a similar climate. I am a desert man and I like to get back to central Australia. The answer would be obvious to members of the Assembly who attended Les' funeral at Moroak Station in January. The splendour of the pastoral property and homestead on the banks of the Roper River made it quite obvious why Les would bolt from the Assembly at the conclusion of a sittings. If any other member lived in a place like that, he would do likewise. I think it is very appropriate that Leslie John Stuart MacFarlane was laid to rest in a grave on the bank of a river in the cattle country that he loved so dearly.

Mr D.W. COLLINS (Sadadeen): Mr Speaker, I was a new boy in this Assembly in 1980. In fact, I was the only new member on the government side. The thing that struck me about Les MacFarlane was that he was so much older than the rest of us. He was a man who had a certain aura of wisdom about him - what I call wisdom of the years. He was obviously less ambitious than many of the younger members, and he was a very cool and calm person in many ways. As the only new boy, I was sometimes a little lonely. I made a few mistakes and was kicked around the bush a bit - and not only by the opposition. It was good to be able to go and talk with the Speaker. I could go around to his office and sit down there. He would not say much. I could chat away to him and, as one finds with people who have had a lot of experience, which in his case included wartime service and involvement in the pastoral industry around Katherine, I would come away with a far clearer perspective. I could see that the things which were upsetting me were not that important. He would calm me down and give me a greater sense of balance. He was indeed a father figure, and I will always remember him as such.

Another thing that struck me was his interest in speeches. Let us face it, some of the speeches that are made here are not intrinsically very interesting. Mine may well be amongst those, but I always had the impression that the Speaker was listening to what I had to say, and that he was taking it in. He was either genuine or a good actor. I have come to the conclusion, having known the man, that he was indeed genuinely interested.

I am delighted that the Katherine Rural Education College will have a wing named after Les MacFarlane as a mark of his great love for the cattle industry.
and agriculture, and his desire to see some practical training made available to the young people of the Territory to enable them to better participate in those fields. He realised that these industries now require business management skills, as well as the practical skills of stock and land management.

It has been said that our former Speaker was anti-Aboriginal. He was often denigrated along those lines, but I believe that was because of people playing politics. He had a very genuine interest in Aboriginal people. He did see land rights as not being in the best interests of Aboriginal people. That was his opinion, and he expressed it very forthrightly. It was very significant to me that a very large number of Aboriginal people attended Les’ funeral. I think such a tribute indicates that he had many friends amongst the Aborigines. Those many friends knew him and respected him for the man he was.

He was a man of example and a man of great determination. Anybody who could battle through the difficulties of the pastoral industry like he did must have had great determination. He was a battler. Many people think that, if you are a pastoralist, you have money running out of your pockets. I know that Les had to battle for every penny he had and to keep his family clothed and looked after.

He was a man of great principle, what I would call a true Territorian. He was a person who deserved great respect and a person whom we should try to emulate. I am grateful to have known him as a man and as a friend. I will remember him with a great deal of pride. I offer my condolences to Mrs MacFarlane, who was his helper and fellow battler along life’s way, and to the MacFarlane family.

Mr HATTON (Primary Production): Mr Speaker, I rise to support the condolence motion. The Northern Territory and the town of Katherine have both lost a fighter because of the death in January of Les MacFarlane. I did not have the privilege of serving in this Assembly during the time of Speaker MacFarlane. My contact and friendship with Les MacFarlane was outside of this Assembly. I would like to direct some comments towards that.

Not all Territorians agreed with the way he saw the world but I believe most of us respected his right to hold his own views and to express them publicly. Mr Speaker, as many other speakers have said today, Les certainly put forward his views, and he put them forward firmly and without fear or favour. On issues that he believed in, he was equally as hard on those he regarded as his friends as he was on those he regarded as his foes. He took his causes very seriously. As I said, he was not scared to put his case with all the force he considered necessary and through whatever medium he felt most effective.

Part of the folklore of the Northern Territory is the interesting experiences government officials often have when visiting Moroak Station. Les MacFarlane was never one for the fineries of government regulation and the importance of filling in forms. I well remember from my previous occupation a young inspector from the Industrial Relations Bureau coming back with a rather shattered and shaken look after having visited Moroak Station to carry out an inspection of Les MacFarlane’s wages records. That young inspector had spent a couple of weeks in a 4WD trouping around the bush and going from cattle station to cattle station. It was during the wetter period of the year. He had to drive through a couple of flooded creeks in his 4WD on the day he went
to Moroak Station. He turned up there in a pair of thongs, boxer shorts and T-shirt and he was covered in mud and was generally dishevelled after having camped out the night before. He met this giant, craggy pastoralist on the doorstep who looked down on him and said: 'That is no way to present yourself to do your job'. Les sent him off to get changed before he would speak with him. Les did not leave it at that. He felt that the approach of the inspector at that particular time was inappropriate and decided to take the matter up with the federal minister for the department that the inspector worked for. I can assure you, Mr Speaker, that, from then on, Industrial Relations Bureau inspectors treated Moroak Station with all the due respect that it deserved. Les quite rightly felt that they should adhere to the realities of life in the bush and in the pastoral industry. He tried to get the message through that visiting a small factory in Winnellie was not the same as turning up at a pastoral property and asking to go through wages records, meal allowances and the actual starting and finishing times in fine detail. Quite rightly, a working cattle station in the bush is different.

As has been mentioned, he was a champion of the pastoral industry and a prime mover behind the establishment of the Katherine Rural Education College. Without going too much into that, some enduring images come to my mind when I think of Les MacFarlane. I have an enduring image of a man in a white shirt and tie standing in the back of a truck addressing an audience in Katherine, expressing loudly and strongly, without fear or favour, his views in respect of what he regarded as the inequities of the Aboriginal Land Rights Act, despite the intense pressure that was being placed upon him. I have an image of a solid, craggy, big man who to me was always the archetypal representative of those hard, basic, no-nonsense men of the bush. We have heard today that he quite brilliantly represented those Territorians in this Assembly. I have an image of something I have seen many times on the southern entrance to Katherine. It is a cut-out billboard of a Brahman bull - it is now painted in the Territory colours - and written across it is: 'You are in cattle country, so eat beef, you bastards'. That was Les MacFarlane and his view on the cattle industry. He never stopped promoting it in any way that he could. Certainly, he was as basic, as blunt and as solid as that in promoting the cause of his industry.

At the age of 66, Les MacFarlane was taken from us too early but I am sure he faced death with the same courage he fronted up to life. It has been said many times today - and I believe it would be the way Les MacFarlane would like to be remembered - that the highest accolade that we could pay to such a person is to say that Les MacFarlane was a true Territorian.

Members: Hear, hear!

Mr SPEAKER: Honourable members, I support the motion of condolence which the Chief Minister has moved on the death of Les MacFarlane. In so doing, I speak not only on my own behalf but on behalf of all the people of the electorate of Elsey who mourn the passing of Les. I have also received messages of condolence from the Indonesian Consul and the President of the Indonesian Australian Association of the Northern Territory, copies of which have been given to Mrs MacFarlane.

Mac was a straight shooter. During his 15 years as the member for Elsey, he considered that he had 3 major responsibilities. Firstly, he represented the people of Elsey and did as much good for the electorate as was possible. Secondly, he represented the cattlemen's interests in the Northern Territory. Thirdly, he worked for the good of the Territory as a whole. He did all these.
things in a no-nonsense fashion. He was very forthright in all representations that he made. As Speaker of the Legislative Assembly, Les MacFarlane presided over the proceedings of this Assembly firmly but even-handedly. He did much to set the pattern which the Assembly follows today.

I thank the Chief Minister for having arranged for Mac to be commemorated in Katherine in such a fine way. The Les MacFarlane Building at the Katherine Rural Education College will always be a tribute to the memory of Mac and a reminder to the people of the electorate of Elsey of a man who served his people and the Northern Territory with great distinction. I extend my deepest sympathy to Peg and the MacFarlane family. I ask that honourable members signify their support of the motion by standing in silence.

Members stood in silence.

Mr SPEAKER: As a mark of respect to the memory of Les MacFarlane, the sitting of the Assembly is suspended until 2 pm.

STATEMENT
Hon J.M. Robertson - Impending Retirement

Mr ROBERTSON (Constitutional Development)(by leave): Mr Speaker, when the citizens of the electorate of Gillen saw fit to send me to this legislature in 1974, it was my intention to remain in that service until either I lost the confidence of my party or the people of my electorate or I felt that I no longer had any contribution of value to make to their welfare; that is, when I felt I had reached the stage where I thought that it was time to move aside, that new ideas were needed to replace old ones, and that a new and fresh approach by a new and fresh member was in the best interests of my electorate and that of the Territory. Sadly, for me at least, while none of those catalysing factors has yet been reached, I must nonetheless leave this place and the treasured institution it represents for me.

Mr Speaker, due to an attitude I have always had to parliamentary service, there has been repeated speculation since 1977 about my early departure from this legislature. I can only assume that that resulted from views I have often expressed publicly outside this Chamber. It is fitting now to put those views on the official record. Mr Speaker, you have heard many times the expression 'career' used in respect of parliamentary service. It is a word I have never used in respect of my service here and it is a word I have put down in public on a number of occasions. To say one has a political career or parliamentary career is to imply that one believes he has a possessive right or expectation to be in parliament. If we have any right to be here, it is a right given to us by the people we serve and not a right to which we ourselves have any claim.

Many people have misinterpreted the way I have explained that basic principle over the years as reflecting in me a lack of enthusiasm for the duties with which I have been charged. At each of the several preselection processes I have been through, I have made it clear to my party that I did not of right expect its re-endorsement; that if it were its view that another was more suitable than me, then that person and my party would have my total loyalty and support; that I would work for that person's election and would not countenance standing as an independent. This should never have been taken as an indication of a negative attitude of the task given, but rather an explanation of a fundamental philosophy.
Bearing in mind what I have just said, and if it were not for the difficulty I now face, it would still be my wish to continue because I believe I do have something to contribute to the welfare and progress of this great Territory, a Territory which has been so good to me and my family and which I have grown to love so much. After all, like so many other Territorians, I came here for a short visit and have spent the best part of my working life here.

But to carry out the duties with which we are charged here requires not only a will to serve well but the physical and mental capacities to discharge those duties with the highest degree of application. The Territory is an energetic, indeed dynamic, place and, in order to serve it well, its elected members must be the same in spirit and in fact. I am a minister in Her Majesty's Northern Territory government. To carry out the duties inherent therein requires a higher degree of application than it does for non-office holders. The duties of a minister simply cannot be carried out by a person who is constantly in varying degrees of pain and who averages about 4 hours sleep a night and whose general health is in rapid decline. Having said that, I do not intend going further into the realm of Robertson's woes because to do so would be to seek sympathy and that is one thing I shall not do.

I have come to my decision after a great deal of thought and after much discussion with the Chief Minister who has been so understanding and helpful in this matter. He suggested that, if it would help, he would be prepared to grant me 6 or even 12 months’ leave of absence. While such an arrangement indeed would have helped in the short term, the fact is that, 3 months after my return, I would find myself in precisely the same situation as now. I came to my decision to depart this place believing in total honesty that that decision is in the best interests of the parliament, the government, my party and, above all, the people of the Northern Territory - and, I might add, in the best interest of my family.

Finally, I wish to explain why I have no intention of following the advice given by many of my electors: namely, that, if I cannot maintain the degree of application required of a minister, I should at least continue to serve on the backbench. Mr Speaker, I will offer a little more philosophy. The backbench of a parliament is not a rack upon which old wine further matures in cool darkness. It is the very heart of the parliament. It is the people's watchdog over the executive. It is the arena from which creativity should stem, given that it is free from the day-to-day, administrative load of government. It is not for the purpose of sedentary semi-retirement and, accordingly, it is not for me. Let that new member I spoke of earlier come here as soon as possible. Let us have the benefit of his or her new ideas and new energy. The people of Araluen are entitled to nothing less.

Mr Speaker, I advise you and honourable members that, on Wednesday 26 March, I will attend upon His Honour the Administrator and advise him of my resignation as a member of the Legislative Assembly of the Northern Territory. I have requested the Chief Minister to advise His Honour of the termination of my commission on that same date. I advise you, Sir, with a great deal of sadness. I also do so with a feeling of satisfaction that I have done my best over the years. Whether that best was good enough is for others to judge.

Mr B. COLLINS (Opposition Leader): Mr Speaker, I move that the statement be noted and seek leave to continue my remarks at a later date.

Leave granted; debate adjourned.
COMMONWEALTH DAY MESSAGE

Mr SPEAKER: Honourable members, I lay on the table a copy of the Commonwealth Day message received from the Honourable Bal Ram Jakhar, Chairman of the Executive Committee of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association, copies of which have been distributed to all members. With the concurrence of honourable members, the message will be incorporated in Hansard:

'Though scattered over 6 continents, the members of the Commonwealth think in unison on many matters of common concern to humanity at large. Today, on Commonwealth Day, we take pride in belonging to a community where familiarity and friendship, cooperation and consultation are watchwords. It is the day for affirming our resolve to further strengthen the bonds that have held us together.

The Commonwealth has been the most successful example of international cooperation. It has served as a bridge between races and cultures, countries and continents, and has provided a sense of belonging among its members. In time of crisis a member finds some emotional security in not being alone. He is aware that an organisation of friends is behind him to lend a helping hand. The Commonwealth has tried to provide a healing touch whenever a crisis situation has developed in any part of the Commonwealth. It is a body bereft of any military force but, by its moral authority, it restrains the nations from straying into wrong paths. Its appeals have a significant bearing on world opinion and international relation.

The Commonwealth has engaged itself constructively in various fields and tried to better the lot of the deprived mass of humanity through a number of programs and a network of institutions and organisations working on the philosophy of mutual cooperation and consultation.

The Commonwealth Parliamentary Association is an organisation of legislators. Here they are engaged in a joint search for solutions to the problems of distrust, conflict and the arms race, as well as to the eradication of poverty, ignorance and disease. Here their hearts pulsate with the one thought of bettering our world. Brought together by history, they are devoted to the common ideals of peace, democracy and respect for the dignity of man. The CPA serves as an instrument to strengthen these ideals.

On this Commonwealth Day, therefore, let us each make a promise that we shall continue to do our utmost to create a society which is just and equitable, and that we shall stand by the people who are still oppressed by poverty, racial discrimination and colonial domination.

Dr the Hon. Bal Ram Jakhar, MP
Speaker of the Lok Sabha, India, and
Chairman of the Executive Committee
Commonwealth Parliamentary Association'.

STATEMENT
Presentation to ACT House of Assembly

Mr SPEAKER: Honourable members, on 10 February 1986, I presented a committee table to the ACT House of Assembly on behalf of the Northern
Territory Legislative Assembly. The committee table was made by Ghan Sleeper Craft Pty Ltd of Katherine. After discussions between the then Chief Minister, Hon Paul Everingham, and the Speaker of the ACT House of Assembly, Mr Harold Hurd MHA, and myself, the table was presented at a ceremony in the House of Assembly committee room in Canberra which was attended by members of the ACT Assembly, Paul Everingham and Senator Kilgariff. The presentation received wide publicity in Canberra, being covered by both television channels, and the table was very gratefully received by the ACT House of Assembly. The Speaker of the Assembly has written advising me of a resolution passed by the House of Assembly on 10 February 1986. The resolution reads as follows:

'The members of the Australian Capital Territory House of Assembly express their thanks to the members of the Legislative Assembly of the Northern Territory for the committee table they have presented to the Assembly. Your interest in the development of the Australian Capital Territory and its people has been evidenced by the presence of your Speaker at the presentation'.

Copies of the letter have been distributed to honourable members. In response to this presentation, the Speaker of the Assembly presented me with the gavel which is now on my desk. The gavel and stand are made from a local Canberra tree. On behalf of the Legislative Assembly, I thank the members of the House of Assembly for their kind gift at the time of this presentation.

TABLED PAPERS
Letters of Thanks from Catholic Church

Mr SPEAKER: Honourable members, I lay on the table a letter from Father Healy, Administrator of St Mary's Cathedral, thanking the Assembly for the motion of condolence on the death of Bishop O'Loughlin passed at the special sitting of the Assembly on Friday 22 November 1985. I also lay on the table letters received from the Bishops of Ballarat, Cairns, Sydney, Toowoomba and Wilcannia-Forbes thanking the Assembly for forwarding to them bound copies of extracts from the minutes and from parliamentary debates of that day. For the information of all honourable members, I advise that bound copies of the tribute were forwarded to the family of the late Bishop O'Loughlin, to St Mary's Cathedral and to all the archbishops and bishops who attended the special meeting.

PETITION
Proposed Provision of Pedestrian and Horse Bridge to the Water Gardens in Millner

Mr SMITH (Millner): Mr Speaker, I present a petition from 141 citizens of Darwin relating to the need for a pedestrian and horse bridge to link the Water Gardens with the suburb of Millner. The petition bears the Clerk's certificate that it conforms with the requirements of standing orders. I move that the petition be read.

Motion agreed to; petition read:
'To the Speaker and members of the Northern Territory Legislative Assembly, the humble petition of the undersigned citizens of Darwin respectfully sheweth that there is a need for a pedestrian-horse bridge to link the Water Gardens with the suburb of Millner. The Water Gardens is a community asset and the pedestrian bridge will make it much more accessible to the people of Millner. We ask that
money be allocated to allow construction of this bridge as soon as possible. Your petitioners therefore humbly pray that the Speaker and members of the Legislative Assembly give due consideration to the above, and your petitioners, as in duty bound, will ever pray'.

TABLED PAPER
Commentary on Martin Report

Mr B. COLLINS (Opposition Leader)(by leave): Mr Speaker, I table a paper entitled 'Commentary on Martin Report' prepared by Dr Andrew Charles Scott, Chief Forensic Biologist, Forensic Science Centre, Adelaide, dated 21 January 1986. I move that the Assembly take note of the paper.

Mr Speaker, I will keep my comments on this paper brief. There is no need to engage in lengthy debate. I gave a public undertaking that I would table this document in the Legislative Assembly and I seek to do no more than fulfil that undertaking even though I concede that the tabling of this document, to some extent, has been overtaken by events.

Members will recall last year's debate in the Assembly concerning the findings of the Martin Report, the report on the Chamberlain case by the Solicitor General of the Northern Territory. Members will also recall that I spoke at some length during that debate and raised a number of my profound and serious concerns about what I perceived to be the deficiencies of that report. Members will also recall that I qualified most of my remarks by saying that I had had only a short time to study the document and had been unable to obtain professional advice. My comments concerning forensic deficiencies obviously had to be qualified. Subsequently, I determined that I would seek some professional input as to whether my remarks and criticisms were valid or not.

I deliberately approached Dr Andrew Scott. I had had no previous personal contact with him. I approached him for the very clear reason that, when the trial itself was being conducted, Dr Andrew Scott had impressed me as being a prosecution forensic witness who was clear and concise in the information he presented. He was known to me, through the press in Adelaide, as a conservative and careful scientist. That he had appeared in the case as an expert witness for the Crown was an added advantage.

When I approached Dr Scott, he explained to me that the policy of the laboratory in which he worked, a policy which I understand had been implemented by the Labor government in power, was to take work on a normal commercial basis from outside. I was informed that, if I wished to avail myself of that facility, it would be available to me in so far as Dr Scott was competent to comment. I did so, and a copy of the Martin Report was forwarded to Dr Andrew Scott. It was logged in as a job and I have since received an account for the work that was carried out.

I commend the reading of this document to all honourable members of this Assembly. It is not a lengthy document; it is concise and clear in its language. It is not difficult to understand. I will point out some of the salient features of the report in order to draw members' attention to them.

In the summary of his report, which appears on page 1, Dr Scott says:

'The report contains a number of inaccuracies and errors. It is not for me to judge the significance of these points which I criticise, since that is a legal matter. However, my major concern is that it
appears to have been written from a prosecution perspective in that it is sometimes selective and biased in its treatment of the evidence. 'Nevertheless, most of the report upon which I comment is logical, reasonable and, in my opinion, correct'.

When Dr Scott made those remarks in the summary, he was well aware, as indeed I am, that the majority of the Martin Report is logical, reasonable and correct. When I addressed my remarks to the Martin Report, I addressed my remarks to about 10% of it. I did not even comment on the other 90% for the very reason that it contained copious copies of trial transcripts and reports from eye witnesses, which I had no dispute with. The disturbing aspect of the Scott Report is that its criticisms of the Martin Report, which are severe, go to the very heart of that report's credibility.

No one in this Assembly doubts for one minute that the most important section of the Martin Report dealt with the question of the Behringwerke reagent. The government does not doubt that. The government felt it was so important that it sent the Solicitor-General, accompanied by the former head of the NSW forensic laboratories, to Germany to visit the manufacturers of the reagent. Following the trip, a written report was received. I criticised publicly the actions of the government in doing that. I felt then, as I still feel, that it was outrageous. The government, whose preoccupation should have been to be seen to be completely independent, sent to Germany as a forensic expert and, to the best of my knowledge, as the only expert person employed to advise the Solicitor General during the whole course of his inquiry, the very person who had supervised the tests which were in dispute and under examination. Dr Andrew Scott describes as 'preposterous' the conclusions that the Solicitor General of the Northern Territory reached in respect of the Behringwerke Report. That is very strong language indeed from one who, among the Adelaide media and police reporters who deal with him frequently, has the reputation of being an extremely conservative person. It is a severe criticism.

Members would recall my concern about the language used in the Martin Report in respect of the interpretation of the Behringwerke material, and the extent to which the Solicitor General gilded the lily. That is the expression I think I used at the time; I will use it again. The Solicitor General was not satisfied with saying that the Behringwerke Report supported the prosecution case, which was all he needed to have said if he felt that was the correct interpretation. He had to go one step further and gild the lily by making a further statement to the effect that everything that had been discovered in Germany as a result of his visit had enhanced the prosecution's case. A simple reading of the Behringwerke Report indicates that that conclusion, as Dr Scott says, is indeed preposterous. I point out to the Attorney-General something which he himself knows to be true: if this were the only criticism of the Martin Report, and it could be sustained - as I believe it will be sustained - then it alone completely destroys the credibility of that report.

Unfortunately, it is not the only criticism that Dr Andrew Scott makes of the technical information. I must admit it was with some degree of satisfaction that I found that, in virtually every instance where I had made a technical criticism of the conclusions of the Martin Report, my criticisms have been vindicated professionally by Dr Scott. There is no need to detail all the criticisms; members can read them for themselves. However, I will point out a number of significant ones, apart from the one I have just mentioned.
I have covered my profound concerns about the gross misinterpretation placed upon the Behringwerke material by the Northern Territory Solicitor General. Those criticisms are contained on page 8 of the Scott Report. On page 11 of his analysis of the Martin Report, Dr Scott says:

"Again on page 11, Mr Martin states: "The professor...equates reproductive tract fluids with 'tissues'. The 2 things are completely different". Again, this statement is made without reference to any authority. In fact, the term "tissue" can be used in several senses and the professor is quite justified'.

Honourable members would recall by just using kindergarten biology - and I used that expression last year - that that unsupported assertion by the Northern Territory Solicitor General was arrant nonsense, and indeed it is. But there is a problem. Dr Scott says quite correctly that, even if that information was correct - if Martin was correct and Boettcher was wrong - the matter is completely trivial. Dr Scott goes on to say:

"Moreover, the matter is trivial and there appears to be no point in including the statement other than to attack Professor Boettcher. This is particularly surprising since, on the same page, he defends Mrs Kuhl for inaccuracies in her evidence'.

I would point out that they are inaccuracies which the Solicitor General acknowledged to be inaccuracies, but he defended those inaccuracies on the grounds that Mrs Kuhl was simply simplifying the matter for the benefit of the jury and those inaccuracies occurred in the process of that simplification. I point out very carefully that the significance is that Mr Martin had gone to considerable trouble in the Martin Report, with an extraordinary and dreadful degree of consistent bias which is evident in the report from one end to the other, to knock down whatever obstacle appeared in the way of supporting the evidence that had been presented to him. He disposed of any inconvenient problem with the evidence that supported the Crown's case. This happens to be a classic example. The Solicitor General of the Northern Territory raised a completely trivial matter in respect of criticising Professor Boettcher. He happens to be 100% wrong technically. Yet, on the same page of the report, he defends Mrs Kuhl for inaccuracies which the Solicitor General acknowledges were inaccurate.

On page 12 of the Scott analysis, it says:

"On the same page, Mr Martin states: "Support from a number of Australia's senior scientists is of no weight, given that only the professor presented the matters which led to their signature and we do not know what they were told. The scientists involved are some of the most eminent in their field in Australia. Thus, if their concern was properly founded, it would be a matter of great importance. In the circumstances, I believe that it was quite unacceptable to simply dismiss this in a rather cavalier fashion without making any attempt to even find out what they were told or put the Crown case to them'.

Mr Speaker, honourable members would recall a very crucial matter which was dismissed out of hand by the Solicitor General on the basis of the same completely unsubstantiated assertions which he engaged in in 20 or 30 other sections of his report: the desirability of re-examining the jumpsuit locked up in the High Court in Canberra. People who examined the colour plates provided to the Northern Territory's Attorney-General in respect of the
fragment of material that was found in that jumpsuit cannot help but be concerned that the physical appearance to the naked eye of a small fragment of material found in the fabric of the jumpsuit bears an amazing resemblance to a fragment of what was known to be goat flesh found in the test material after there had been an attack by a dog at the Adelaide Zoo.

In 1984 - that is, since the trial - a brand new procedure was developed. Indeed, I was interested to see the techniques being used here in Darwin at the Menzies School of Health Research laboratories in terms of a DNA procedure which not only could positively identify that fragment as being flesh or not being flesh, but indeed could accurately assert, if it is flesh, that it could be the issue of Lindy and Michael Chamberlain.

I do not think that anyone would doubt that that is a fairly serious matter for the Northern Territory government. The Solicitor General dismissed the need to re-examine that material with techniques that have been developed since the trial simply by saying once again that it was impossible - another one of his many sweeping statements in the report - that that material could possibly be flesh after 5 years. On the basis of that, he said that that material should not be re-examined. Dr Andrew Scott says this about that matter:

'On page 34, Mr Martin dismisses the possibility of retesting samples on the basis that they are now over 5 years old and the results would be inconclusive. This is rather surprising considering the fact that most of the denaturation occurs in the first few months and yet he is willing to accept the results obtained by Mrs Kuhl and I some 14 months after the event. This is, in my view, inconsistent. On the subject of aged samples, Mr Martin comments that material found on the Chamberlain jumpsuit could not be flesh as it would not last for 5 years. This is also inaccurate since biological tissues can be preserved for a very long time in a mummified state under appropriate conditions; that is, dry'.

Mr Speaker, I will not bother detailing the other criticisms made in the Scott Report except to say that the criticisms of Dr Scott substantiate and vindicate the deficiencies that I found as an ordinary lay reader of the Martin Report last year. They attack, as the Attorney-General knows full well, the entire basis of credibility upon which the Martin Report is based. There is no question that its credibility is in tatters.

I want to conclude by saying something which I feel needs to be said clearly. There has been some public controversy with the call I made recently for the Solicitor General to stand aside as the chief adviser of the Northern Territory's Attorney-General when this judicial inquiry is under way. I pointed out in the letter that I wrote that the Solicitor General, on the basis of his own judgment, could make a decision as to whether he should resign or not. I did not ask for that. What I asked for in the final paragraph of my letter is so obvious that it should happen: the Solicitor General should stand aside. I want to make it very clear to the Attorney-General that I was profoundly disturbed and remain disturbed at the commissioning by the Northern Territory's Attorney-General of the Solicitor General to conduct this inquiry in the first place. It should never have been done and the honourable Attorney-General knows that.

I might add that, despite the controversy, this matter has alarmed and concerned legal people far more expert than I in these areas - indeed members
of the judiciary around Australia. The cold, hard fact is that the Northern Territory's Solicitor General, and this is not a personal reflection on him in any way, has been involved on the prosecution side of this the most controversial case in Australia's criminal history since the second inquest. He steered the case for the prosecution as Solicitor General, as was his job, through the second inquest, through the Federal Court appeal, the High Court appeal and so on. He was a completely inappropriate person to have conducted what was meant to be a completely independent and detached examination of whether a judicial inquiry was required into this most controversial case. I make no bones about this and I do not resile from anything I have said on this matter: it was an invidious and unwelcome position into which the Attorney-General placed the Solicitor General of the Northern Territory by asking him to conduct an investigation into what was in fact his own case, and compounding that by sending with him to Germany to examine the most important part of the case, the very scientist who had supervised the tests that were in doubt. In terms of engaging on a course of action which should have appeared to have been completely independent, the government failed miserably.

I do not absolve - and I do not apologise for saying this - the Northern Territory Solicitor General himself from the responsibility that he should have had to decline that commission when it was given to him. There is no question that an obvious and clear conflict of interest existed at the time. The Attorney-General should never have given the Solicitor General of the Northern Territory the job of investigating that evidence, particularly as the government indicated clearly on many occasions that it would be a genuinely independent examination of the evidence. Last year, I described the Martin Report as being a brief for the prosecution and, indeed, that is exactly what it has proven to be.

Mr Speaker, there is also a degree of ethical responsibility on the Solicitor General. The Northern Territory's Attorney-General is not a lawyer and he has to rely completely on the Solicitor General for his legal advice in a way that a legally-trained Attorney-General would not have to completely. The Solicitor General should have advised the Attorney-General last year that he was not in a position to conduct an examination that would be seen to be independent into a case that he had seen through all of its prosecution stages from the second inquest and from the time that the charges were laid against the Chamberlains.

If I am to be condemned for saying something which is such glaring common sense and which has been the subject of much criticism throughout Australia, then I am perfectly happy to have that charge laid at my door. I make that charge again and I do not resile from it. What I feared would happen has now come to pass. As a result of the Solicitor General himself being asked to conduct an investigation into his own case, and particularly since he concluded that there should be no judicial inquiry - and presumably it was upon that basis that the Attorney-General decided that Mrs Chamberlain would not be released from prison - it was inevitable that his report would become subject to an inquiry itself. That is precisely the situation we are now in and it is not a situation from which I take any pleasure.

I commend the paper that I have tabled to honourable members. I ask all honourable members of this Assembly who have a genuine interest in this matter and who want to see justice done to read it as objectively as they possibly can, to stand it alongside the criticism that I made in this Assembly last year, to read the Behringwerke Report which is attached as an appendix to the Martin Report and to ask themselves honestly, even on a lay interpretation of
that report, whether Mr Martin's conclusions are not indeed 'preposterous', as
Dr Andrew Scott has described them.

Mr Speaker, the fact of the matter is that the Northern Territory is in an
extremely difficult position in respect of this matter. The reports are now
in the public domain where they are being examined by all and sundry. I dare
say that, in years to come, many learned papers will be written on this entire
affair by legal academics. All I say in conclusion is that I ask all those
members who took the trouble to read the Martin Report to give the same care
and attention to this report which I lay alongside it for comparison.

Mr PERRON (Attorney-General): Mr Speaker, the actions of the Leader of
the Opposition in tabling this report this afternoon further demonstrate his
paranoia in the matter of the Chamberlain case. He well knows that the
government has announced that an inquiry would be established into this
matter. Indeed, I am sure that he is aware that legislation will be
introduced into the Assembly...

Mr B. Collins: You have not even acknowledged the last 3 letters I sent
to you over the last month.

Mr PERRON: One would have thought that perhaps he would decide that
enough is enough: the Scott Report, the Martin Report and all the other
reports.

Mr B. Collins: I would if you would answer your mail, Marshall.

Mr PERRON: No doubt the matter will be the subject of some scrutiny or at
least presented to the inquiry. One would expect it to be anyway.
Notwithstanding that he has that information, he feels that it is still
appropriate to table the Scott Report in this Assembly. I feel that it is
incumbent on me, even without much preparation, to say just a few words about
the Scott Report and about the Leader of the Opposition's concluding remarks
about the Solicitor General.

The Scott Report is now hailed as the be-all and end-all to overshadow all
previous reports...

Mr B. Collins: Not by me.

Mr PERRON: ...by the Leader of the Opposition who tells us that here is
the concrete evidence that the Martin investigation went astray. Here it is -
absolutely. This cannot be questioned; only the items that it questions can
be questioned. He said it here many times: 'This is the authoritative
document'. He asked how we can possibly disagree.

Mr B. Collins: Rubbish. I have not said it here many times.

Mr PERRON: Mr Speaker, in his report, Dr Scott disagrees with
Professor Boettcher on a major matter of principle in the forensic examination
of blood and foetal haemoglobin. From recollection, Professor Boettcher was
hailed by the defence at the trial as a man who is greatly eminent in his
field. In the submission by the Chamberlains for an inquiry last year,
Professor Boettcher featured very prominently as the main cause and authority
upon which the submission was made to the Territory that the trial had erred
and that a new inquiry should be established. Professor Boettcher has been
afforded great importance in this exercise yet this latest expert, who was
reconsulted because he was a witness at the trial, disagrees with Professor Boettcher on a major blood-testing principle.

He also disagrees with Dr Baudner from the Behringwerke factory. We have heard a great deal from the Leader of the Opposition about the fact that, because of its involvement and the letters and reports from the Behringwerke factory, that also demonstrates that Mr Martin was quite wrong when he looked into it - he misunderstood it or he put a bias on it, but he got it all wrong because the Behringwerke people said so. Here we have Dr Scott, who is the latest guru put forward by the Leader of the Opposition as the be-all and end-all...

Mr B. Collins: You are so profoundly ignorant.

Mr PERRON: The professor disagrees with Dr Baudner from the Behringwerke factory in this report. Of course, he also disagrees with Brian Martin. Something has not dawned yet upon the Leader of the Opposition, and I guess it never will because he really is quite paranoid about this issue. He made up his mind a year ago and he allows nothing to interfere with what he has decided.

The Martin Report was written from the perspective that an application had been recieved which sought to substantiate sufficient new evidence that a jury trial and 2 courts of appeal either had been misled or had erred in the course of their activities. That is the perspective that Brian Martin took when he was examining the matter. That is what the Leader of the Opposition just cannot get through his head. It was not a retrial. He seems to think it was.

I notice that the Scott Report does not address the missing slide from Professor Boettcher's submissions either. It does not seem to mention that anywhere at all. That is quite surprising because it was a subject dealing directly with blood and that is what Dr Scott is on about.

I am dealing with a draft which was very conveniently sent to me by the Leader of the Opposition after he had done his round-Australia promotional tour on the Scott Report. He told us what a disaster it was for the Territory, but of course he did not give us a copy until he had arrived back in Darwin.

Mr B. Collins: You got it the same day I got it.

Mr PERRON: That was several days after the publicity had started about this disastrous report.

On page 4, in discussing testing of blood samples and the possibility of generalising in this field, Dr Scott says: 'This comes back to the competence of the operators which I am in no position to judge'. Of course, he does take a position in his report and judges the work of Mrs Kuhl. So in some cases he is not in a position to judge yet in other cases he is.

On page 5, Dr Scott says that the Martin Report was put together by clearly placing the onus of proof on the Chamberlains for the matters that they put forward. Again, I draw the honourable Leader of the Opposition's attention to the fact that the Martin Report dealt with a submission claiming that a trial process and an appeal process had erred. Surely, any party which is seeking to have a review of such an intrinsic part of our society should have the onus of proof placed upon it if it expects its arguments to be supported and an inquiry established.
On page 6, Dr Scott disagrees with Professor Boettcher on a fundamental principle in the testing of foetal haemoglobin in blood. I thought that was fairly interesting. On page 8, Dr Scott disagrees with the Germans from Behringwerke. I think that Dr Scott has probably confused the issue a little more rather than clarified it and shed light on the whole affair, as the Leader of the Opposition would have us believe.

Honourable members will recall that, in the former debate in this Assembly on the Martin Report, the Leader of the Opposition went on at great length about the importance as he saw it in the whole Chamberlain case of the blood under the dashboard of the car - whether or not there was blood there and whether or not that blood contained foetal haemoglobin. It is interesting to note that, on page 10, after a long section on the subject of the tests on blood from under the dash of the car, Dr Scott finally says: 'It appears to me that only one sample could be said to contain foetal haemoglobin'. Dr Scott seems to be concluding that, of all the samples taken from the car and tested by the Crown, there was only one spot of blood containing foetal haemoglobin from under the dash. If members link that conclusion with the attitude that the Leader of the Opposition took during the Martin Report debate, they will find it very curious that he hails this report as substantiating all his statements.

Dr Scott, after indicating that he feels Mr Martin took a one-eyed view of the whole affair, says on page 13: 'However, I believe that these are sufficient to show that Mr Martin is acting to some extent as an advocate for the Crown. This may well be justified'. I am very pleased that he qualified that. He is very wise in making that final qualification because, as Dr Scott says, he is not a lawyer. He feels that, if Mr Martin did in fact look at the matter from the Crown's point of view, then it may well be justified.

Let me conclude with the subject of the Leader of the Opposition's attempts to denigrate, and possibly assassinate, the Solicitor General of the Northern Territory through his calls for him to be stood aside because he is so biased. The Leader of the Opposition clearly misunderstands. He made up his mind last year. He was not content to await the findings of the Martin Report last year. He wanted an inquiry. Before the Martin Report was tabled in this Assembly, before he knew what was in the Martin Report, he decided...

Mr B. Collins: You had been leaking it to the Northern Territory News for a fortnight!

Mr SPEAKER: Order!

Mr B. Collins: And you know it.

Mr SPEAKER: Order!

Mr PERRON: ...that the Northern Territory should have an inquiry. He was not interested in any of what Mr Martin had to say. There is to be an inquiry now. The Leader of the Opposition knows it. He also knows that the inquiry is to be established on grounds other than those that he proposed. He is still not content. He does not want to await the outcome of an independent commission. The Leader of the Opposition wants some blood now. He has made up his mind and he is cranky that other people will not yet make up theirs. He wants the Solicitor General to be set aside because the Leader of the Opposition has judged him. His mind is made up. Certainly, nothing will change it. He has decided exactly what the inquiry should find. He wants the
Solicitor General to get it in the neck now. Thank goodness he is not the Attorney-General of the Territory. We would probably dispense with the inquiry altogether. After all, why let facts get in the way? Why not just sack the Solicitor General? That would ease his frustration - at least for a while. What about the Police Commissioner? What role has he to play? Surely he might be biased! Shall we remove him? What about the Crown prosecutors who were involved in the Chamberlain trial? They would be set aside because they might have some sort of biased view. What about the former Attorneys-General? Perhaps they have a role too. Perhaps we could set them aside somewhere so that they do not play any part.

If he casts enough mud around the place, he hopes some of it will stick. For some reason, he has homed in on the Solicitor General. If that were justice Collins' style, it would be a very sad day for the Northern Territory if we took any notice whatsoever of these ridiculous calls for the standing aside of the Solicitor General. It seems the Leader of the Opposition cannot comprehend what I told him in a letter when he was pushing for Brian Martin to be stood aside that, no matter where the advice came from, whether or not it came from a statutory or non-statutory office of the public service, the decisions on this case were made by the Attorney-General. The decision last year not to hold an inquiry on the Chamberlain submission was mine, purely mine. The Leader of the Opposition is not interested in that. He just could not care less. He wants to get...

Mr B. Collins: Have you read the recommendations in the Martin Report?

Mr PERRON: Many times.

Mr B. Collins: Obviously, you do not understand it.

Mr PERRON: I do not think there is much need for me to continue. I think it is unfortunate that the Leader of the Opposition introduced the matter. It was quite unnecessary. But, of course, he has all these frustrations. He simply wanted to get it into the Assembly to have another lash. If he will be a little patient, in a few more hours he will realise that the matter is to be examined quite thoroughly and he can play his role by sitting in the public gallery of the inquiry for as long as he likes.

Motion agreed to.

SPEAKER'S STATEMENT
Answers to Questions - Incorporation in Hansard

Mr SPEAKER: Honourable members, during the recess and the previous recess, a number of answers had been received to written questions which had, as attachments, voluminous tables, graphs and copies of reports. The wording of certain of the answers gave the impression that the attachments were part of the answer and, therefore, under normal circumstances, would be incorporated in Hansard. However, this cannot be done. In such cases, I have instructed that all material received be given to the member who asked the question but that only those parts of the answer which can be readily incorporated in Hansard should be so incorporated and that additional material, such as reports, graphs and certain tables, be excluded. I ask that ministers in having their answers to questions formulated take cognisance of the difficulties which are being experienced and the costs of attempting to overcome the difficulties in having such matter incorporated in Hansard. I suggest to members that, in many cases, the tabling of certain documents would overcome the problems presently being experienced.
Mr Speaker: Honourable members, I advise that, on 29 November 1985, His Honour the Administrator was pleased to appoint Mr Ian Bruce McNiell as Deputy Clerk of the Legislative Assembly. Mr McNiell comes from the Australian Senate in which he served for over 18 years.

PETROLEUM (SUBMERGED LANDS) AMENDMENT BILL
(Serial 159)

Continued from 21 November 1985.

Mr EDE (Stuart): Mr Speaker, as the minister stated, this bill is aimed at bringing Northern Territory legislation into line with that of the Commonwealth. We support this legislation which follows the federal legislation. All members are aware of the reasoned and enlightened legislation that has been emanating from that place during the last 3 years.

The Northern Territory government introduced this pursuant to an agreement between the Commonwealth and the states in respect of uniform legislation. The amendments are basically of a mechanical nature. In the main, they relate to retention leases, the transfer of mining rights and interests, and disclosure and confidentiality.

This bill contains detailed provisions on the procedures for applying for and granting retention leases in respect of areas where recovering petroleum is not commercially viable but is likely to be within a 15-year period. In recent months, we have seen the way that oil prices have moved up and down. It is very difficult for companies to be able to make the sort of judgments necessary to proceed to commercial production. This legislation will provide an ability for them to secure a lease for a period to determine whether it will become viable. The leases will be for 5 years and will be renewable. At any time, the minister can request a re-evaluation of the commercial viability and he can cancel it if he feels the lease is currently viable. This will overcome the problem of people who wish to gain super profits by holding off production on a lease which can be brought on line in a short period.

There are also lengthy provisions in respect of requirements to notify the minister of any transfer, variation or assignment of any right or interest in a lease or licence under the legislation. Such notice must be given within 3 months of the execution of the document and must be approved by the minister before it can be registered. Mr Speaker, it must be registered; it is not an optional item. These provisions also cover the granting of options, charges or debentures which note that the registration of the change will be at the rate of 1.5% of either the value of consideration of the transfer or the value of the title transferred, whichever is the greater.

There are exemption provisions in respect of an alteration of interest and rights where they represent a genuine corporate reorganisation rather than a transfer of interest or an attempt to avoid or reduce registration fees. Of course, this is very reasonable.

Mr Speaker, regarding the release of information, it says:

'The minister may release any information or samples submitted in reports and applications for a permit, lease or licence after
5 years. This does not include matters relating to trade secrets or which might adversely affect a person's business or affairs. A person may lodge an objection on these bases when the minister gazettes his intention to release the information or samples...'.

Again, that is not an option; the intention must be gazetted so people have the opportunity to see whether they believe their interests will be unfairly infringed upon. In respect of the period before the 5 years expires, the bill provides:

'The minister may release any information or sample to another state or Commonwealth minister, excluding concessions or opinions expressed in reports on the seabed, subsoil, petroleum and particulars of the technical qualifications or advice on the financial resources of the applicant. The minister may release any information or samples in the following time periods: (1) after 2 years of receipt, if there is a permit or lease in force, and the matter was submitted in respect of that or the preceding permit or lease; (2) after 12 months, if there is a licence in force and the matter was submitted in respect of that licence or the preceding permit or lease; or (3) immediately after a permit, lease or licence is surrendered or cancelled'.

Again, we agree with those provisions.

The bill introduces retention lease provisions into the legislation. The Northern Territory already has similar provisions in onshore petroleum legislation, and apparently they have been used as a model here.

The provisions in respect of registration and transfers will apparently clear up some existing uncertainties. Disclosure of such movement of interest is, we believe, in the public interest. Similarly, we believe that the freer disclosure provisions that have been introduced here are also in the public interest. The opposition recommends and supports this bill.

Mr VALE (Braitling): Mr Speaker, I wish also to speak in support of the legislation introduced by the honourable Minister for Mines and Energy. Some members would know the basis of this legislation goes back to the late 1960s when one hell of a brawl took place between the states and the then Prime Minister, the Hon John Gorton, concerning states' rights. It resulted in the demise of the former Prime Minister, and a subsequent High Court challenge, if my memory is correct, and was not resolved until the early 1970s. In fact, the legislation was not introduced into the federal parliament until the days of the Whitlam government. Of course, this complementary legislation before us today is a direct result of the 1967 states' rights fight, the subsequent High Court challenge and, ultimately, the federal legislation.

I guess I would probably place myself as a states righter. Having worked in the industry during that period of time with the various states, I have a great deal of sympathy for them. We found that, even though we were operating in the middle of central Australia, the states were much easier to deal with in terms of petroleum exploration than the federal government which, because of its enormous bureaucracy, made it difficult for the Joe Averages of the oil patch to make a go of it. Of course, that is very well illustrated by the fact that, in 1967, the companies that I worked for in central Australia proposed to build an oil refinery in central Australia and it was not until self-government that that moved from an almost disinterested status with the federal government to the front burners. The construction of the natural gas
pipeline and, in fact, the whole industry suffered as a result of remote control. But that is past history.

I am sorry to be in a position to say 'I told you so' but one of my major arguments over the years was that Australia should never have attached itself to the import parity oil scheme. I always argued with the following question: if the Arabs went ape and put the price up, what would happen if the Arabs went ape and put the price down? Of course, we are seeing the results of that in Australia today. Whilst the Australian motorist is certainly benefiting from the reduction in oil prices, the oil industry now is really staggering; it is in chaos. The economists are arguing that the reduction in oil prices will have a beneficial effect on the Australian economy with the exception of the oil industry. It is a very technical and sophisticated industry. It has a massive array of technical equipment which runs into millions and millions of dollars. If that industry is forced to wind down or partially shut down, which was the case in the early 1970s, then our self-sufficiency, for which Australia has strived for many years, will again be a long while coming.

I have never been opposed to a higher price than the ridiculously low price of $2.80 a barrel which existed in the early 1970s. But I think Australian crude should have been priced independently in Australia so that, whatever the overseas nations did, it would not have had an effect on us. We are now seeing the hell of a mess that the industry can be brought into within a few short, sharp, shiny weeks. I just hope that some type of sanity will prevail within the industry. I note already that the Kingfisher platform in Bass Strait has been shut down. That is a dramatic step. I note that the Mereenie partners in central Australia must now re-evaluate whether or not the refinery in central Australia - which I always dreamt about - is now placed in serious doubt, even though the oil is being produced. That production is earning valuable royalties for the Northern Territory coffers. But projects such as this, which took such a long time to develop, are again placed in serious doubt.

Mr Speaker, I indicate my support for the legislation.

Motion agreed to; bill read a second time.

Mr PERRON (Mines and Energy)(by leave): Mr Speaker, I move that the bill be now read a third time.

Motion agreed to; bill read a third time.

PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH (NORTHERN TERRITORY) PROPERTY TRUST BILL
(Serial 166)

Continued from 21 November 1985.

Mr B. COLLINS (Opposition Leader): Mr Speaker, this bill is before the Assembly at the request of the Presbyterian Church to regularise its administration in the Northern Territory. The opposition supports the bill.

Mr D.W. COLLINS (Sadadeen): Mr Speaker, this is a non-contentious bill. There is an unwritten basic freedom: the freedom of worship. It is interesting that a so-called bill of rights which is before another place does not allow for this particular freedom. That is very much a misnomer in my opinion.
Certain people in the Territory have decided to exercise their right to worship in a manner which they see right and fitting. Some of these folk would not have joined the Uniting Church which was a Presbyterian, Congregational and Methodist union. Others may have tried it and decided that it does not suit their taste. Some of these people may have incurred a considerable loss of property when the majority voted to join the Uniting Church. This bill will make this group a body corporate and allow it to own property and involve itself in property transactions.

I am pleased to support the wish of these members to set up on their own. If they can take the charter of one of the first Presbyterians in the Territory, the Reverend John Flynn of the inland, and model themselves upon the work that he did, then a lot of things are possible. I wish them every success in the future.

Mr BELL (MacDonnell): Mr Speaker, I wish to make a few comments in relation to this bill, having had considerable association with the Presbyterian Church and with the Uniting Church. It is perhaps with a strange mixture of emotions that I place some comments on the record today. It would have been quite easy for me to have made no comment whatsoever. However, I read the comments of the Attorney-General in his second-reading speech in which he gave a potted history of the non-conforming Protestant churches in the Northern Territory from the time of the Reverend John Flynn. He said:

'The year 1977 saw the advent of church union between the Presbyterian, Methodist and Congregational Churches. For all practical purposes, the Presbyterian interests in Darwin ceased at that time. Despite the union of 1977, many members wished to retain their Presbyterian identity'.

The issue of continuing Presbyterian churches, particularly in terms of property settlement, has been bitterly fought out in various places around the country. We have been quite free of that in the Northern Territory for various reasons that would take too long to explain in the context of this debate. Whereas my personal allegiance has continued to be with the Uniting Church, I have considerable respect for the people who have regard for their Presbyterian traditions as they were and who desire to continue those in some sort of form because they relate not only to a present day faith but also to a sense of history and a sense of the part of the individual church member in history. Along with the Leader of the Opposition and the member for Sadadeen, I welcome and support this bill. I trust that it will fulfil for the continuing Presbyterian congregation the wishes that they have for it.

Motion agreed to; bill read a second time.

See Minutes for amendment to clause 26 agreed to without debate.

Bill passed remaining stages without debate.

**CIGARETTE CONTAINERS (LABELLING) AMENDMENT BILL**

(Serial 167)

Continued from 21 November 1985.

Mr LANHUPUY (Arnhem): Mr Speaker, the opposition does not oppose this amendment. This bill merely seeks to provide for the health warnings on cigarette containers to be prescribed by regulation rather than by an act.
The Minister for Health explained that the government's reason for introducing this amendment is that there are likely to be various changes from time to time and that it would be impossible for the government to react rapidly to such changes if the health warnings are prescribed within the act. The approval of this Assembly would have to be sought each time a change is made. However, in view of the long debate that precedes any move on this issue, I would doubt that the need to 'react rapidly', as the honourable minister puts it, would arise. The opposition believes that the principle of prescription by regulation is generally sound and therefore it supports the bill.

Mr Finch (Wagaman): Mr Speaker, I rise to support the bill. There is no doubt that the bill makes a great deal of sense in that it provides an easy mechanism for the Northern Territory to keep in step with national proposals to change the labelling of cigarette packets. This in itself is commendable. Scientists have clearly established the relationship between cigarette smoking and lung cancer and heart disease. There are also personal and financial problems which may be associated with cigarette smoking. One needs to consider any move that can be made towards reducing or eliminating this extremely heavy cost to society as both commendable and wise.

The particular target area of such warnings about the health problems associated with smoking is our young people. Anything that can be done to reduce the potential damage to people's health is to be commended. Being a supporter of civil liberties, I believe that what people do to their own bodies is really up to themselves. However, one has to temper that with the realisation of the cost to society as a whole. Certainly, any measure to reduce the massive cost to health systems is to be commended.

The bill provides for the minister to keep in step with proposed changes. Of course, he would have input into proposed national packaging trends. It would be useless for us to try to impose our own labelling design; national manufacturers would have difficulty in providing for that. As indicated in the minister's second-reading speech, the safeguard for people can be provided through the subordinate legislation committee processes. I commend the bill.

Mr Ede (Stuart): Mr Speaker, I commend this bill. I think that markings which advise people about the problems brought on by smoking tailor-made cigarettes are quite commendable. I myself gave up smoking tailor-made cigarettes some 18 to 20 years ago. I changed to rolling my own. I do not intend to table this packet, but it contains no warning at all about any health hazards and I believe that the same situation applies to other brands of roll-your-own cigarettes and also to pipe tobacco. I do not know whether this leads us to the observation that roll-your-own cigarettes are better for you than tailor-mades or better for you than nothing at all. I could possibly abuse statistics by stating that the incidence of lung cancer noted by the medical profession before tailor-made cigarettes became popular was remarkably low. It would be drawing a fairly long bow to say that the introduction of tailor-mades led to the increase in lung cancer but that may be something we could look at. However, I think I remember reading in a journal that there was a difference in the temperature at which the 2 types of cigarettes burn. The tailor-made was some 3 times the heat of a roll-your-own. Various elements in the tobacco which are converted into carcinogens at higher temperatures may not be converted at lower temperatures.

While I commend this bill and am happy to see that the warnings do apply to tailor-made cigarettes, I will be happy to be advised by the minister whether it is true that the only danger in rolling one's own cigarettes is
repetitive strain injury. I am pleased to hear that he has given up smoking himself - whether for good or for the duration of his stay in the ministry, I do not know. With those few remarks, I commend the bill.

Mr MANZIE (Transport and Works): Mr Speaker, I support the legislation. The Northern Territory is part of Australia and, obviously, we have to be able to comply with what occurs on the national scene. However, I am rather concerned with the philosophy of labelling cigarette packets and drinks in such a way as to infringe on the purchaser's ability to make a decision. I think that all people who smoke cigarettes, including people who partially eat them, like the member for Stuart, in order to obtain the double enjoyment known to those who have rolled their own, are well aware of the reports about dangers to health. Obviously, we experience certain physical sensations when we exert ourselves, which may indicate that there are some problems with tobacco smoking and health.

However, when I buy a packet of cigarettes and read, 'Warning. Smoking is a Health Hazard', the information is not new to me. I believe bigger and larger signs on cigarette packets will do nothing except cost the consumer more money. They are there as a result of pressure from minority groups who have involvements in defacing signs and that sort of thing. I think that the dangers of cigarette smoking are well-known and well documented. People are well educated about the problem. I believe that forcing business to incur costs for no proven advantage is a detrimental step.

Mr SMITH (Millner): Mr Speaker, I have been provoked to respond to the comments of the last speaker. The logical extension of his arguments is that we would not have any seat belt legislation, we would not have any legislation concerning people who drink and drive, and we would not have any other socially desirable legislation. The community has made decisions, through parliaments at various stages, that there are socially desirable pieces of legislation that should be enforced because they contribute to saving people's lives.

I think it is fair to say that it has been the judgment of the community, as expressed through its parliamentary leaders, that we have reached the stage where it is desirable and useful to have signs put on cigarette packets saying that smoking is dangerous to one's health. I do not think anyone can deny that that is true. In fact, medical evidence is now overwhelming that, if you are a heavy and a regular smoker, your life expectancy is shortened quite considerably.

I am sure that the situation we have reached now in terms of signs on packets is just a step towards a more stringent policy on smoking in future. We all know that there are other aspects of current legislation concerning smoking. For example, you cannot advertise cigarettes on TV. I am personally convinced that the tide of opinion will mean that, in future, we will have even more stringent restrictions on the use of cigarettes. That can only be good because, like seat belt and drink driving legislation, it gives a message to people and it will have the effect of keeping more people alive for longer.

Mrs PADGAM-PURICH (Koolpinyah): Mr Deputy Speaker, I was not going to rise to speak today but I feel that somebody has to speak for the non-smokers in this Assembly. I speak as somebody who has endured the health hazards of smoking for years and years, and it is only recently that I have begun to object violently. I now carry with me at most times something which usually inhibits people from smoking in my presence.
I regret that this legislation is necessary. However, I say with some seriousness that it is not all fun and games if you are a non-smoker sitting next to somebody who is smoking. I regret that this legislation is necessary but, when we have such selfish, smelly people in the community, I feel that words are not strong enough to describe my loathing of their personal habits. I believe that the health hazard does not only apply to people who smoke cigarettes. It applies to me because their smoking is a hazard to my health as a non-smoker. It is of no concern to me whether smokers smoke. They can do it over there and smoke their way to death. I do not really give a damn whether they kill themselves with cancer or anything else, but only as long as they do it over there and do not injure my health as a non-smoker.

I also feel very strongly about the personal inconvenience that I suffer when I am in the company of smokers. My nose is rather sensitive to smoking. I can detect small quantities of smoke and it is a gross inconvenience. Many times I have dressed to go out to a meeting or a dinner or social occasion, taking care with choice of clothes and perfume to look and smell my nicest. When I go out to enjoy myself and have to sit in the presence of smokers, I come home reeking of cigarette smoke, much to my dismay. This occasions me some inconvenience.

I think that gradually the message is getting across that the smokers in the community are infringing on my civil liberties as a non-smoker. I am very pleased to say that airlines are now restricting the actions of smokers to the betterment of non-smokers. Smoking is forbidden in the Assembly, and that gives me a lot of pleasure.

The imbibing of alcohol and other pursuits carried to excess bring down the results of these excesses only on the heads of those people who indulge in them. The drinker gets cirrhosis of the liver and subsequently dies, and good luck to him if that is the way he wants to die. The people who indulge in drug taking to excess usually suffer the dire results of their drug taking. Unfortunately for non-smokers, the person who indulges in cigarette smoking brings down the results of his excesses on my head, the head of a non-smoker. This is what I resent very strongly when I am in the presence of non-smokers.

Mr Deputy Speaker, I could name honourable members of my own political party in whose presence I have sat from time to time and who have been smoking to my inconvenience. Anything that inhibits these smokers from smoking, whether it is this legislation or legislation in the future, I will wholeheartedly support.

Mr SETTER (Jingili): Mr Deputy Speaker, in rising to support this bill, I do not do so as a macho Marlboro man and nor am I trying to beat my own drum. However, I do so as a non-smoker. I am sure that the honourable member for Koolpinjyah will be pleased about that. I must admit that I have tried the odd cigarette or two. In fact, like most of us, my smoking career commenced down behind the shed puffing on crushed, dried paw paw leaves rolled up in newspaper. That was not very good for my health either because I understand that lead also does not do you any good.

Over the years, I progressed to having an occasional drag on the makings, as a hand-rolled cigarette was affectionately called around north Queensland at the time. In fact, rolling a smoke was quite an art in those days. While I speak, the honourable member for Stuart might be able to go through the actions. First of all, you pulled out your tin of Log Cabin, extracted a pinch of tobacco, placed it in the cup of your hand and then, with the other,
rubbed it around until it was fine enough to allow you to roll a fag easily. In fact, it had to be just as good as the ready-rubbed tobacco that was readily available but at a greater cost. Then, with some dexterity, whilst still holding the tobacco in one hand, you had to remove the packet of papers from your pocket. Having achieved this, whilst still holding the tobacco in the other hand, you licked the paper from the packet, leaving it sticking to your bottom lip. That was quite an art, I can assure you. The packet of papers together with the tin of tobacco was then replaced into your pocket. Once this exercise had been completed successfully, you then proceeded to roll a smoke. This was achieved by folding the paper to make a deep groove and then transferring the tobacco from one hand onto the paper. Then, with a rolling motion back and forth, the tobacco was formed into a cylinder until it filled the length of the paper. This was not an easy task because the shape was most important indeed. Unlike a parallel-sided cigar, the cigarette must be tapered. Some degree of skill is required. I must admit I seldom achieved the required standard. Nevertheless, upon reaching this stage of production—that is, rolled but not sealed—the cigarette was passed across the tongue in order to dampen the adhesive strip along one edge. A quick press with the finger and it was complete except for the final action to ensure that you had a first-class cigarette. That was to take out your tin of wax matches, extract a waxy and, using that, pack the tobacco firmly into each end. Within a couple of seconds, the cigarette was in your mouth, the wax match struck and you were puffing away and feeling pretty smug about it.

Well, you might ask, what has all this to do with the labelling of cigarette packets. I will answer that question. The experience I related occurred to me 30 years ago but what I have not told you is that I gave up smoking then because I could see what it did to others. In saying that, I do not mean any disrespect to the people who smoke—that is their right and their privilege. I can still clearly remember my father, who was a heavy smoker but who, I am pleased to say, gave it up, waking in the early morning coughing and coughing and coughing. The first thing he did each day was to have a cigarette. At least that settled down the coughing at the time. I can remember those people whose teeth and hands were stained brown by nicotine, whose breath smelled strongly of tobacco and the subsequent health problems most of them experienced—health problems like lung cancer, other chest complaints, cancer of the throat, larynx, mouth and lips and, wait for this, arteriosclerosis. They are all caused by tobacco smoking and they are all avoidable.

It is beyond my comprehension why people insist upon pursuing a habit which in the long term is most likely to result in permanent damage to their health or premature death. Having said that, I do not deny them the right to do so. Nevertheless, it is important that we as legislators ensure that those who do smoke, particularly the young, are fully aware of the potential hazard to their health.

Mr Deputy Speaker, this bill will allow for cigarette manufacturers to be compelled to market packaging with a warning message as prescribed. Because of the possibility of future change in the style of wording from time to time, it is impractical to amend the act to allow for each change. This bill makes provision for such changes to be implemented by regulations and ensures a much quicker and smoother transition to new regulations.

The Northern Territory decided to introduce this bill because of an agreement reached by health ministers that the warning labels on cigarette packets were inadequate and needed to be changed. I understand that there is
still some uncertainty with regard to the actual wording. However, whatever is agreed, it is essential that all details be uniform for all states and territories. It would be totally unreasonable to expect manufacturers to modify the warning message to suit each state's separate requirements.

I will not dwell on the detail of the various sections of the bill. Suffice it to say that they are quite straightforward and easily understood. I commend the bill to honourable members.

Mr BELL (MacDonnell): Mr Deputy Speaker, I wish to commend the previous speaker for a most extraordinarily well-researched, second-reading speech. In fact, it is the most extraordinarily well-researched speech I have had the pleasure to hear on a relatively uncontroversial bill.

There is one point that I would like to pick up from what the honourable Minister for Transport and Works had to say. He seemed to be somewhat pooh-poohing the need for such warnings on cigarette packets. With respect to my electorate and with respect to the use of tobacco on Aboriginal communities, particularly among the young kids, I wish to commend the use of any legislation that will enable such warnings to be more easily placed on these products in the Territory. I might say in passing that it is a matter of considerable concern to me that, whereas the whole anti-smoking campaign has had considerable effect on the conscience of the English-speaking community in Australia and right around the western world, in most sections of the community where English is not the first language, I doubt that those campaigns have as much effect.

Frankly, it bothers me that cigarette smoking is regarded as such a universally acceptable habit when it is patently as dangerous as it is. I probably say that with the zeal of a reformed smoker, but then some people are so unkind as to say that I was never a smoker to start with so I could not possibly have reformed.

I wish to register my support for the bill and to place on record quite properly in the context of a second-reading debate like this the matter that we do perhaps as a legislature have a responsibility to ensure that such warnings are universally able to be understood by Territorians. Contrary to the thoughts expressed by the Minister for Transport and Works, I would like to see such warnings in fact emblazoned in even broader letters across the packets. I do not agree with him that this will add to the cost of tobacco products because I imagine that there is a flat rate for printing on packets and what is actually printed on them does not contribute to greater costs.

With those few words - and I notice the honourable Minister for Health clearing his throat over there - I register my support for the legislation.

Mr HANRAHAN (Health): Mr Deputy Speaker, such frivolous and, admittedly, not so frivolous comment, probably has amounted to one thing only, and that is that my dinner has been delayed by about half an hour tonight. It was not a bad effort from honourable members considering that it was to be a 1-line piece of legislation.

I will attempt to obtain the scientific details that the honourable member for Stuart mentioned and make them available to him. I think honourable members should be aware of one sad development. This campaign to change the warning notices on cigarette packets has been underway for 3 years that I am aware of. The 2 bodies involved are poles apart: the smoking lobby, or the
manufacturers of cigarettes, and the anti-smoking lobby. They have sought warnings that say that smoking kills, smoking causes road accidents, smoking causes planes to crash and so on.

I would like honourable members to have the benefit of some details that have flowed between consultants and committees over the last 3 years while they have attempted to come to some logical conclusion on this issue. The waste of money is horrendous. The Drug Strategy Council was formed a couple of years ago. It is comprised of the Prime Minister and the Premiers of Australia. They met and decided on a strategy to combat drugs. The follow-up committee involved the Ministers for Health in Australia and, in my view, that was the worst thing that could have happened because all they have done for 2 years is talk about cigarettes and alcohol. It is a fact that that has been at the expense of coastal surveillance, the Federal Police and the fight against hard drugs. It is a very simple issue to resolve. The reality is that we do not have any major manufacturers of cigarettes here in the Territory and we are passing legislation which, by way of regulation, will allow us to comply with whatever warning notice the committee decides upon. Ultimately, we do not have a say at all.

Motion agreed to; bill read a second time.

Mr HANRAHAN (Health)(by leave): I move that the bill be now read a third time.

Motion agreed to; bill read a third time.

ADJOURNMENT

Mr ROBERTSON (Leader of Government Business): Mr Deputy Speaker, I move that the Assembly do now adjourn.

Mr BELL (MacDonnell): Mr Deputy Speaker, there are a couple of matters that I want to raise particularly in this evening's adjournment debate. Honourable members will recall that I asked the Chief Minister when his government would appoint a member to the Uluru Katatjuta Board of Management that has yet to meet. In answer to that question, the Chief Minister undertook to make a statement in that regard. I look forward to a statement of the government's position hopefully during these sittings because, apart from sundry news items, it is quite clear that considerable confusion has arisen as a result of the Territory government's toing and froing in this regard. I do not wish to labour that point this evening because it would appear that it is moving to some resolution, judging from some of the public statements that have emanated from the Chief Minister's office in the last few months. However, I would like to place on record that matters have reached a critical state.

There are 3 areas that are of particular concern. Firstly, there is the problem of the day-to-day management at the park consequent upon the title arrangements that were made culminating in the grant of title and the leaseback arrangements in October last year. There has been considerable uncertainty about the continuing involvement of the Conservation Commission and of the continuing involvement of the Australian National Parks and Wildlife Service. As the local member for that particular area, I am concerned that the future of my constituents who are employed by the Conservation Commission at Yulara and who are working at Ayers Rock is in some considerable doubt. Certainly, there is a degree of urgency with respect to
decisions about day-to-day management of the park and the future role of Conservation Commission rangers in that regard.

I should place on record in this Assembly that both those services, the ANPWS and the Conservation Commission, have many excellent people working for them. The Conservation Commission, having been involved in day-to-day management of the park for many years, has built up a body of expertise and it would be to the country's detriment if new administrative arrangements were to lose that expertise.

There has been some cross-fertilisation between the 2 services and honourable members may or may not be aware of that. Mr David Dalton-Morgan, who has recently taken up the position of park superintendent with the Australian National Parks and Wildlife Service, was previously employed with the Conservation Commission of the Northern Territory and did some excellent work - as I am quite sure the Minister for Conservation and perhaps even the Chief Minister would be prepared to attest - in the arrangements that have been made for the Kings Canyon National Park. That is also subject to development, change and improved facilities for visitors. There has been consideration of certain aspects of Aboriginal aspirations in that area. There has been cross-fertilisation involved in both these services but, quite clearly, the current situation in relation to day-to-day management of the park is undesirable because there is considerable confusion about the future of the people employed there.

The second matter I wish to raise in this regard is the constitution of the board of management under Commonwealth legislation. There is to be an 11-member board of management for the national park. Six of those members are to be traditional Aboriginal owners for that particular area. Of the other 5 members, there is to be a nominee from each of the Ministers for Tourism, Aboriginal Affairs and Home Affairs and the Environment. There are to be 2 nominees from this Assembly. Certainly, the difficulty that the Northern Territory government has had in nominating somebody for the board has caused some problems. I trust that these can be resolved and I look forward to the Chief Minister's statement in that regard.

The third problem relates to the difficulties with respect to the road out to the Olgas. There have been various public statements in respect of very real problems experienced by bus operators running between Yulara and Ayers Rock, between which there is now an excellent bitumen road, and the 20 miles from there to the Olgas. Only in the last few years has there been a bitumen road out to Ayers Rock. Many honourable members may have made a trip out to the Rock in the bad old days when it was a real bone-shattering ride. There have been improvements both within and without the park in terms of sealed roads. The Petermann Highway was sealed some 3 or 4 years ago and the ring road around Ayers Rock and the road from Yulara to the Rock itself have been sealed also and that has made life somewhat easier.

However, the problem of the road to the Olgas still remains. It is badly in need of reconstruction. It has been the subject of representations from me to the federal government for some time now. I note that it has been a matter of particular concern to the Bus Proprietors Association of the Northern Territory. It has been forced to take the decision not to run buses over that particular stretch of road because of the damage experienced. Bus operators have been forced into the situation of having to give refunds to some international visitors and to cut that section out of the tours that they offer.
It is to be hoped that, in the near future, the difficulties can be resolved. I would suggest that those are the 3 particular issues of concern. Quite clearly, the issue of the road is a dollars and cents issue. As we all know, in these straitened times, public coffers are not universally full. The federal government has spent considerable sums of money in the national park, not the least of which has been on bituminising roads, but it is certainly to be hoped that that particular stretch of road can be improved so that coach operators can use it with confidence.

In the few minutes that remain to me, I would like to place on record my concerns about the infrequent sittings of this Assembly. This year, 23 sitting days are planned. That is the smallest number I can recall since becoming a member of this Assembly. As a conscientious backbencher representing my electorate and as a conscientious opposition frontbencher in the areas of lands, housing and transport and works, it is going to be very difficult to carry out my job of putting the government under scrutiny. I would just like to run through a few of the issues - pages of them. They cannot and should not be conducted through the pages of newspapers, through press releases or just through correspondence with ministers. The Legislative Assembly exists as the final public forum in which such matters should be debated. Here, in no particular order, are some issues of concern. The Minister for Education's direction concerning the Caldicott visit to Alice Springs last week needs to be given some consideration. There is the question of caravan park surveys, of sorting out the problem of who are caravan tourists and who are permanent residents who are looking for permanent housing and cannot get it. We do not know whether this is because of caravan tourists and who are permanent residents who are looking for permanent housing and cannot get it. We do not know. There is the issue of the numbers of assistant teachers in Aboriginal schools in my electorate. There has been the active heightening of racial tension in Alice Springs by one of its less well-endowed local members. There is the question of the Northern Territory government dragging the chain on the Alice Springs structure plan. There have been the strange, not to say bizarre, circumstances that have occasioned the decision to construct an aquatic centre on what was previously public-purpose land in Alice Springs. There is the question of drought relief policies and their impact on the severe drought in my electorate. There is the question of the Araluen Arts Centre and its administration and the minister's failure to nominate trustees. There is the question of continuing epidemic unemployment on Aboriginal communities in my electorate. There is the question of the Territory government failing to take any constructive steps with respect to the town bus service in Alice Springs. I could go on but I see my time is running out. I think I have made my point that these 5 days of Assembly sittings will scarcely present enough time for adequate debate.

Mr McCarthy (Victoria River): Mr Deputy Speaker, I intend to speak only for a very short time. During question time this afternoon, I asked a question about the possible upgrading of the police presence in Batchelor. I was not particularly happy with the answer.

I raised the matter because I was handed a petition, unfortunately unsuitable for presentation to the Assembly, of 126 signatures from Batchelor - which is a pretty fair effort - all seeking the future presence of 2 policemen in Batchelor. The petition reads:
DEBATES - Tuesday 18 March 1986

'The humble petition of the undersigned citizens of the Northern Territory and the Batchelor area in particular respectfully showeth that, in view of the present workload and considering the potential for increase in workload, the Batchelor Police Station be upgraded to a 2-man station as soon as possible, that a 2-person station is essential to provide residents with immediate 24-hour access to law enforcement officers, that, in view of the professional implications for officers appointed to Batchelor, a 2-person station is essential'.

I strongly support those sentiments. Unfortunately, the petition missed out because 3 of the pages obviously did not comply and 2 pages were technically incorrect. I was not aware of the petition being circulated. Obviously, I was working elsewhere in the electorate at the time.

The Batchelor police area extends from Batchelor north to the Berry Springs road, west to Wagait and the sea, south-west to Channel Point which is on the mouth of the Daly River opposite the Peron Islands, and diagonally up to Tortilla Flats taking in the Marrakai Plains area east of the Stuart Highway. It includes a number of constituents of the member for Koolpinyah's electorate in the Darwin River and Berry Springs area. It is a very large region, and the Batchelor police station is often unmanned for fairly long periods. The single policeman has to go on patrol throughout that entire area on a regular basis.

I have seen in recent reports from people who should know better that the population of Batchelor is 300 persons. That is quite patently wrong. The permanent population of Batchelor alone, excluding those temporary residents who attend colleges there, is approximately 515 persons. The population of the college is a further 180-200 persons. The population of the surrounding rural area, which uses Batchelor for its services of school, health centre, post office, store and so on, is a further 150-200 persons. That totals in excess of 800 persons in the Batchelor area alone. The population of other parts of the police district of Batchelor extends quite far afield, into the very populous areas of Berry Springs, Tortilla and the Darwin River Dam area.

I intend to continue to seek to have the station at Batchelor upgraded to 2-man status because I think that the workload placed on the single policeman at Batchelor is simply more than one person should be expected to bear. There are call-outs at all times of the day or night. We have a fairly transient population and some of that transient population does not have the same regard for the peace and tranquillity of beautiful Batchelor as those who live there permanently. As a consequence, the police have a pretty heavy workload. That has been recognised in statistics that have been presented to the commissioner. The population increase in the area is quite dramatic, and it will increase even more dramatically when we finally convince the persons responsible that the road to Stapleton Park should go from Batchelor through to the park. I am sure that it is only a matter of time before we get that one worked out because it is obviously the only possible way to go.

The new hotel in Batchelor is about to be built. The hotel is worth about $2.2m and that will obviously bring a lot of extra work for the policeman in Batchelor. There is a new caravan park due to be opened shortly, which is potentially a 120-berth van park. Currently, stage 1 will be able to cater for 30 caravans. I understand that bookings are pretty heavy for that place at this particular time. The Meneling abattoir has just been reopened as an export abattoir. As a consequence, new people are being brought into the
town. The Housing Commission has completed in the last 2 years a further 30 dwellings and that is an ongoing program. It cannot keep up with the need in Batchelor for housing. There has been a second caravan park and takeaway food outlet built in Batchelor and that is about to open. All of those things indicate that the place is about to grow further. Further interest is being shown from another group which will develop 8 shops in the town. With that sort of development, the need for a second policeman in Batchelor is very clear. As I said, I intend to continue to push for that.

The member for MacDonnell raised a point a while ago. It is a matter that really concerns me a great deal. It has concerned me a great deal for a long time. It is easy enough to throw this one out as a problem for government but then provide no answers. I would be very interested to know if the member for MacDonnell has answers to the unemployment problem in Aboriginal communities. I certainly do not have the answers and I have worked very closely in Aboriginal communities for a long time and have attempted to overcome to a certain extent the unemployment problems in Aboriginal communities. It is not an easy task. The need for employment in Aboriginal communities is obvious. In many communities around the Territory, and I can think of a number in my own electorate, at least 80% of the employable population is out of work. I quite frankly say that the chances of them ever being employed in a remote community are pretty bleak.

I cannot come up with the answers for the chronic unemployment problems that exist in most Aboriginal communities. It is something that I think everybody regrets. I know that many of the people there would like to work. They would like a job that would pay them a reasonable wage and that would afford them some pride and achievement. Certainly, the results of unemployment are the very serious problems of vandalism and violence that are occurring in Aboriginal communities right now. There is so much of it that does not get into the press. Quite clearly, if half the violence in communities were reported in the press, most people would be horrified. It is something that concerns and shocks me.

Last night, a group of people spent an hour telling me about the violence in their community. I was aware that there had been violent outbursts down there but some of the things that are happening are beyond the pale. Obviously, unemployment is one of the causes of that. There are so many causes but how they are to be overcome I do not know. I would really appreciate some ideas from the member for MacDonnell. If he has some ideas on how to overcome that problem, I would really be pleased to hear them. I am sure the ministers responsible for various activities in Aboriginal communities would like to have the same answers.

I can think of a few that would employ some of them. Probably the greatest potential employer of Aboriginal people is tourism, but there would have to be an interest in Aboriginal people to get involved in tourist projects and to take a leading role in tourism in their areas. But to compete with the outside world or with the community in general for employment opportunities while locked away in remote communities is just not likely. I cannot see it happening.

The tyranny of distance alone is enough. The lack of skills is another problem. How do we teach skills to people in remote communities? How can we teach people in a remote community to build a house adequately? It is not easy to do in an Aboriginal community. I have tried it. I have also tried it in an urban situation. I have brought people in and have found it much more
successful. I believe that Aboriginal people must consider leaving their communities for training and for some time after training. They should work at least for a period in the outside community in their chosen profession or trade so that they can build up skills that are just not available to them currently in their own communities. They are just not there. It is impossible for a government or for the people who are living there and who have some skills to be able to teach those skills properly because of the lack of opportunity for building on the skills that exist in communities. They cannot be built up because they are just not viable within the communities.

There are a number of projects that would employ people that may not pay very much and may not be terribly attractive. Again, I would say that, in many Aboriginal communities, tidiness leaves a lot to be desired. If we were to see this standard of tidiness in towns in other parts of the Territory, we would be rather shocked, but we seem to be able to accept it in an Aboriginal situation. There is no reason at all why people could not employ themselves at least in keeping their communities tidy. At least, planting trees and planting grass is an interest — that is, if they want trees and grass. I do not know. Of course, it means that they would need water. Those communities which have trees and grass seem to be tidier than those which do not have trees and grass.

There must be responsibility on both sides. There is no way in the world that a government or any individual can provide opportunities for Aboriginal people unless Aboriginal people are prepared to accept the responsibility of maintaining what they have and building on what they have. Unfortunately, that is not happening to the level that most of us, including many of the Aboriginal people in communities, would like.

The vandalism that we currently see, even in individual homes, is unbelievable at times. It happens in people's own homes. It is everybody's responsibility to keep a community in a reasonable state. It is just not happening in so many cases.

This must have an effect on health. It must affect the attitude of people. It must affect so many things for the people in those communities. Until the people in the communities are prepared to address these problems, I do not think the problem of unemployment will be overcome. There are so many things that can be done for which little or no payment can be made but, nevertheless, they are there to be done. If the interest is there and if there is a clear indication on the part of the people that they are prepared to do something for themselves in their own communities, then they will get a tremendous amount of support from this government.

Mr VALE (Braitling): Mr Deputy Speaker, in this evening's adjournment debate, I would like to pay tribute to a former resident of central Australia, the late Milton Liddle, who was born at Maryvale Station, then known as Mount Burrell, in 1912. He died in Alice Springs on Saturday 23 November, aged 73. He did so much in a busy and crowded lifetime that it is little wonder that he became well-known as a fighter for the rights of all people, regardless of their kith or kin.

I first met Milton Liddle almost a quarter of a century ago when the population of the town of Alice Springs was approaching 3000 and starting to grow. It was then a town where everyone knew everyone else and, of course, knew what everyone else was doing. Whilst times have changed, Milton Liddle then and until his death was a man of firm opinions, high principles and a
quick sense of humour. He was a man who did not seek to offer advice but, if it was sought, he gave considered and firm opinions. It was this advice that I was to seek, appreciate and respect over a period of many years.

Milton Liddle's life can be divided into 4 areas: his family, his community involvement, his association with sporting groups and his business enterprises. There is no doubt that his family came first and foremost. His love for his wife, Polly, and his children and his pride in their successes and worry over their failures were obvious to all who knew him. His pride in his pioneer pastoralist father, William Liddle, and his mother, Mary, daughter of the old Telegraph Station's first blacksmith, was obvious to his many friends and his associates.

In his business ventures, Milton Liddle had a long a varied career: returned serviceman with his late brother, Harold, pastoralist with his brother, Arthur, miner at Hatches Creek, taxi and hire-car operator in Alice Springs, transport and tourist operator and one of a number of men who constructed Alice Springs' first racecourse in the now suburb of Braitling, and for many years Alice Springs' only wood merchant.

Many years ago, Milton Liddle's son Mickey and I used to go into the hills during the drought years and load up a big flat-top truck with mulga that he had Aboriginals stockpiling through the hills. We would haul it back into town. We loaded it log by log and then we would unload it log by log back in the woodyard on the flat south of where the motor registry is now. One night, I said to Mickey Liddle that this was a pretty detailed operation and that we ought to do something about mechanising the whole operation. I came up with the idea of laying cable on the flat-bed truck before we went into the hills. When we got up there, we would stack the mulga on it and then tie the mulga up. We were fit in those days because we played football. Of course, who would not be fit after loading 5 t or 6 t of mulga every Saturday before a game of football. It was no wonder the Aboriginals in the hills could play football. They spent all week pulling these logs. This was back in the drought days when you could walk up and shake these mulga logs or hit them with a bull-bar and just knock them out. The Aboriginal people that Milton had working for him up in the hill were extremely fit. Anyway, I decided to mechanise the trucking operation. Milton Liddle's woodyard in the flat had a camp for some of the Aboriginal people - a toilet, a woodshed, saws and various other pieces of equipment. We devised a cable system that we laid on the flat bed of the truck. When we got into the hills, we loaded the mulga wood then tied the cables round. Mickey then drove the truck back into town. Even that was taking your life into your own hands because the truck was not exactly that flash. The clutch slipped, the brakes were not that good and the old road into the foothills in those days was pretty rough and ready.

Anyway, when we got into Milton's woodyard, we backed up and I said to Mickey: 'You know, this is what you do. You get another cable and you tie it round that gumtree in the riverbed there and you drive away'. In theory, the load was supposed to drop off. Well, the clutch slipped, Mickey took off and something snagged up. In the end, the wood came off. It flattened the camp, flattened the dunny, flattened the tree and wrecked Milton's truck. He was only a little bloke about my height - a bit smaller than I am. He came storming in. At that stage, he was chairman of the Pioneer Football Club selection committee. He said: 'That's it. You blokes are not going to get to the football this Sunday'. Mickey would walk into a football team anytime, but I had to battle to get a game. I lived in fear for the next 12 to 15 hours until the team was named the following day. I remember coming around
the flank late in the afternoon and drop kicking the ball into the forward pocket. It was one of my normal brilliant dashes down the flank to clear the ball out of trouble. Old Milton leant across the fence and said: 'And don't you smile at me young fellow. You still have to repair the toilet and the woodshed'.

But he had a real sense of humour. He never held it against me. I was still most welcome in his house for many years, right up until his death. But at the time it occurred, he was not very pleased about it. Needless to say, Mickey and I never applied for a patent on that trucking operation.

With his retirement in 1979, after 33 years in business in central Australia, he had established a record, which still stands, of being the longest-serving, self-employed person of Aboriginal descent in Australia. In the area of community service, Milton Liddle's abiding philosophy was community harmony. It was something that he practised as well as preached. He was foundation member of the National Aboriginal Conference from 1973 to 1976, founding member of the Central Australian Aboriginal Legal Aid Service and Central Australian Aboriginal Congress and the first Vice-President of the Central Land Council in Alice Springs. In 1948, he was commended by the then Welfare Department for caring for and feeding more than 150 Aboriginal people at Angus Downs through a particularly difficult period.

Many years ago in Alice Springs, I heard a story of a couple of fellows whose vehicle broke down. They cracked something in the motor and the oil drained out. The story as I heard it was that they killed a bullock, boiled it down and used the fat from the bullock to pour into the motor. Every night when they drove slowly back into town, they would have to drain the oil out because it would congeal when it went cold. The next morning they would pour it back in. I can remember the story. It would be over 20 years ago that I first heard it. I cannot remember who told me. A few months back, someone loaned me a book called 'The Winds of Change in Central Australia'. Quite a lot of the Liddles' family history is documented in this book. I was reading through it and discovered that the 2 people involved in the killing of the animal and boiling it down were in fact Milton Liddle and his brother, Arthur. But it was not a bullock; it was a sheep. Sheep were very common in central Australia in the 1920s and 1930s. They boiled the sheep down and used the rendered fat in the motor to get them back into town. Obviously, in central Australia in particular, the people are very ingenious.

Despite a high public profile over a long period of time and despite the high office he held, Milton Liddle always retained the common touch. His friends were always welcome in his home. He first lived in Lindsay Avenue which, from memory, was just opposite what is now the Eastside Self-service. He spent his remaining days with his daughter, Barbara, and son-in-law, Steve, in Jarvis Street.

Some members would know that I am a diabetic. Milton Liddle was a diabetic and his wife, Polly, was a diabetic too. One of Milton Liddle's abiding passions was cooking. He was an excellent bush and town cook. The rural health sisters used to visit him every morning to give him and Polly insulin injections. On odd occasions, I would get Milton's arm in a grip and say: 'You know, it is not as painful as it looks and I am not as nervous as my hand indicates'. These nursing sisters used to visit Mr and Mrs Liddle every morning for the injections. I remember being around there early one morning. Milton had just cooked a big bunch of scones, which are not too bad for diabetics. However, there was also hot billy tea with lots of sugar which is
a no-no, and added to the scones were lots of jam which is a real no-no. You could never faze Milton when you got into an argument or a discussion with him. He had more front than Johnny Martin's. The door opened and one of the nursing sisters walked in and said: 'Oh no!' I thought that we were for it – the 3 diabetics had been caught and were certain to be sentenced to 6 weeks in the Alice Springs hospital. Without batting an eyelid, old Milton looked up and said: 'Sister Eileen, you are just in time. Would you like sugar with your tea and scones with cream and jam?' He took the steam out of her sails and there was no lecture for any of us. I took off very quickly afterwards just in case.

Milton Liddle's prominence in community affairs has been followed by his son Bob, an alderman with the Alice Springs Town Council, and his daughter, Pat, Director of the Aboriginal Legal Aid Service in central Australia which Milton helped found more than a decade ago.

By far and away, Milton's proudest moments were reserved for the sporting arenas where all of his children – Barbara, Bob, Tony, Mickey, Pat and Karen – excelled, and excelled would be a modest way of describing their successes. In football, basketball, hockey and boxing, all of them during their sporting careers represented the Northern Territory in interstate or national competition. To add further to his pride, his grandchildren have also excelled, with grandson, Murray, being named as captain of the next Northern Territory Teal Cup side for the national competition in Adelaide in 1986. In fact, Murray Liddle is in Melbourne training with the Hawthorn Football Club which he is to join next year after he finishes representing the Northern Territory in the Teal Cup squad this year.

Milton was a life member of the Pioneer Football Club, an avid spectator and supporter of the many sports in Alice Springs. It is little wonder that the Liddle name is now firmly written in the sporting records across the Northern Territory. If someone were to ask me to write about one of the most unforgettable characters I have met, then Milton Liddle would surely be that person.

He was firm but considerate, careful and caring and with an impish sense of humour. Milton Liddle will be missed, not only by his family and his friends in central Australia, not only by his friends elsewhere in the Northern Territory, but indeed by his friends and associates right across Australia. The work that he did in the community will live long after him.

Mr SMITH (Millner): Mr Deputy Speaker, I never cease to be amazed, particularly at adjournment time, by the completely different types of lives that members of this Assembly live. Tonight I want to speak on a few parochial issues that concern me in the electorate of Millner.

I was just contemplating the first 2 speakers who spoke in the adjournment debate. When the member for MacDonnell spoke about a parochial issue that concerns him in his electorate, he in fact was talking about one of the great national issues of today: Uluru National Park and who is to control it and its future in general. When the member for Victoria River spoke, he too spoke about an important national issue of today: the treatment of Aborigines. I cannot pretend that the matters that I will raise are of national importance or even of Territory importance, but certainly they are of importance to my constituents and I do not apologise for spending the time of this Assembly in raising them.
There are 2 things happening in my electorate at the moment. One is called Big Barc and the other is called Little Barc. Big Barc is the big pedestrian bridge to go across Rapid Creek mouth. I am pleased it has been put out to tender. If the announcement has not already been made as to who is the successful tenderer, I understand it will be made in the next couple of days. I am sure that members who have adjoining electorates will join with me in expressing their appreciation that it is to be built.

However, I was astounded the other day to learn that the bridge across the creek will not be lit and there are no plans at present to have a cycle path linking the bridge with either the Institute of Technology or Casuarina Beach. In other words, we face a prospect of people whipping over the bridge in darkness from the Rapid Creek side and then finding themselves faced with just a sandy track. I would think that that is a bit shortsighted. I think the bridge will be used quite extensively by people wanting to go to the Darwin Institute of Technology. As we all know, many lectures are held at night. I think it is very important that the bridge be lit to encourage that sort of use. I think it is equally as important that consideration be given to the provision of bicycle paths to Casuarina Beach and the Darwin Institute of Technology so that people are encouraged to make maximum use of that facility.

I am pleased that the Minister for Conservation is here because I understand the bicycle path part of the project falls into his portfolio area. I understand that the Conservation Commission has responsibility for that side of the creek.

Mr Hatton: Not that far down.

Mr SMITH: Not that far down? Who does? Transport and Works?

Mr Hatton: The Darwin City Council.

Mr SMITH: It would deny that. One of the problems is that government departments and the Darwin City Council have always denied any responsibility for that whole Rapid Creek area. Anyway, I have made the point and I would hope that the Minister for Conservation, who has some sort of electoral interest in that area too, would take up that point and ascertain who does have some responsibility and join with me in putting some pressure on them.

The second bridge, the Little Barc, is the subject of a petition tabled this morning. It is from residents of Millner asking for the provision of a much smaller bridge across Rapid Creek linking Millner with the Water Gardens. We all know that the Water Gardens has turned out to be a very useful and widely-used facility but there is a problem of convenient access from the Millner side to the Water Gardens. The provision of a simple bridge which would allow pedestrians and horses from the Craig Stables to cross the creek safely and conveniently would be of great assistance in advancing access for Millner residents. On the rough figures that I have, we are talking about $40 000 to $50 000, no more. No one is after a complicated structure. All we want is a simple, safe structure that can be put in place quickly and can be used effectively. I understand that there is a fair chance that the cost of the Big Barc at the mouth of the creek has been less than the anticipated price and the suggestion has been made to the Minister for Transport and Works that the money that is saved there could be diverted to the Little Barc. I would hope that he would take that matter up.
Mr Deputy Speaker, I would like to congratulate the Darwin City Council for the job it has done in upgrading the old speedway site. I think anybody who passes there will realise that it has been turned from an eyesore into one of the nicest parts of Darwin. It is showing the effects of quite a lot of money spent by the city council. It is now a nice green park area. The trees that were planted by residents in February last year have grown quite considerably and it is now a very pleasant place indeed.

The Darwin Amateur Cycling Club has done its part by doing extensive work to improve the surrounds of the velodrome area. Previously, that was a bit of an eyesore because of a 2 m fence in fairly bad shape surrounding the velodrome area. After discussions with the city council, it has agreed to take down the 2 m fence and replace it with a 1 m fence which is directly around the velodrome track itself. That work is well in progress. I think all of the 2 m fence has been taken down and work is well under way in putting up the 1 m fence around the velodrome. When that work and the landscaping associated with it are completed, the velodrome area will look much better and fit much better into the whole of the Bagot Park area. We will have a very good community asset right along that stretch of land.

Another small issue that caused great satisfaction to the residents has been the installation of a roundabout at the corner of Chrisp Street and Rylund Road. That intersection was a matter of major concern to residents who live in the area. A number of accidents - thankfully most of them minor, have occurred there over a period of years. It was through the efforts of residents, and particularly 2 residents, Lorraine Rose and Katja Cooper, that the city council was pressured into taking action. That resulted in the installation of a roundabout in January this year. It has had the desired effect of slowing down the traffic. There have not been any accidents reported at that intersection since the roundabout was installed. I think that everybody is very pleased with both the design of the roundabout and the action taken by the city council in approving the residents' requests.

I want to talk about a couple of matters concerning Rapid Creek School. Last year, discussions took place between the school council and the Department of Education about the prospect of the department's itinerant musicians moving from Nightcliff Primary School. In its negotiations, the school council extracted some promises from the Department of Education for the upgrading of facilities at Rapid Creek School. One of those promises was that the general purposes room behind the stage of the school would be air-conditioned. Again, I am sorry to single out the member for Nightcliff, but I know that the member, and particularly his wife, would have very hot impressions of the conditions in the general purposes room behind the stage at the Rapid Creek School. A commitment was given at that stage in those negotiations that that general purposes room would be air-conditioned. Unfortunately, it has not happened. The department seems to have backed away from its commitment. I ask the minister to look at that particular matter.

Another problem concerns drainage around the canteen area. I am not completely informed about it, but I understand written commitments that the problems would be rectified have been given to the school council over a period of years. I ask the minister to investigate that as well.

I conclude by congratulating the minister for his efforts in resolving the problems with the special school. I think everybody appreciated his personal interest when the matters were brought to his attention. Certainly, people who work in the special unit and the parents who send their kids there are
appreciative of the efforts of the minister and the Department of Education in improving the conditions under which they work.

Mr FIRMIN (Ludmilla): Mr Deputy Speaker, I also wish to speak about a couple of matters dear to my heart. As with the member for Millner and others before me, they tend to assume the dimensions of matters of national importance.

The first issue I would like to talk about relates to the composition of the board of AUSSAT Satellite Pty Ltd. Recently, I received a press release from the Minister for Communications in Canberra, the Hon Michael Duffy, to advise me that, as from 1 March this year, the makeup of the AUSSAT board was to change. Several people would resign, several people were being removed and the board was being restructured from 13 to 9. Ostensibly, the reason for this is that, after the launching of the first generation of satellites, AUSSAT will move into a totally different commercial phase.

AUSSAT's major claim to fame is that it exists to promote a general communications system, particularly for people in the outback and the remote areas of Australia. I will quote some of AUSSAT's corporate goals from its recent annual report:

'To make available to all Australians a broader and improved range of telecommunications and broadcasting services, with particular emphasis on those services and customers which will benefit most from the characteristics of satellite communications systems.

To provide a high quality service responsive to the full range of customer requirements.

To foster the concept and design and development of new types of telecommunications services making use of the special characteristics of satellite communication systems.

To develop a sensitive and responsible attitude towards the social needs and environmental issues of concern to the community'.

They are all wonderful corporate goals which would meet the requirements of outback dwellers. It was therefore with some concern that I read of the people who were being removed from the AUSSAT board and some of those who were being brought in. It was of particular concern to me and to the people in remote areas of the Northern Territory, particularly members of the Isolated Children's Parents' Association, that one of the most knowledgeable men in the early days of satellite technology, and certainly one of those who pushed very hard for people in the remote areas, Mr Rory Treweeke, a New South Wales grazier and until very recently the federal President of the Isolated Children's Parents' Association, received a message from the minister just prior to the press announcement to advise him that his services were no longer required on the board of AUSSAT. It is of great concern to me that the board is now composed predominantly of people from merchant banking and large business enterprises or people involved in esoteric professional duties. I cannot see one person on the AUSSAT board who speaks for the people whom AUSSAT purports to serve.

There is another matter in relation to the delivery of telecommunications services to people in the remote areas of Australia, and Northern Territorians in particular. Some of those receiving the ABC broadcast service via
satellite report that they are suffering difficulties in 2 fields. The first relates to manufactured components, particularly the MAC-B decoder receiver. Unfortunately, the federal government, particularly the minister, gave a manufacturer the sole right to make and distribute the MAC-B throughout Australia. That company is Plessey. I do not believe that it is doing enough for people in the bush. At the moment, I am led to believe that there is up to a 50% breakdown in the communication receiver decoders in the bush. Plessey denies that. It says that there is possibly only a 10% breakdown. According to my information, that may indeed be Plessey's position but, in fact, many local distributors are attempting to make minor repairs when the faults are brought to them locally. For people like you and I, who mostly live in urban areas close to repair workshops, telephones and other services, this would probably be just a painful problem but not one of great magnitude. However, the people buying this equipment are doing so to obtain a service which is supposed to lessen the tyranny of distance by enabling them to join the rest of us in receiving the services provided by the Australian Broadcasting Service. Nine times out of 10, they are hundreds of miles away from a main road, let alone a service centre!

Plessey says quite readily that, if a unit is giving problems, the purchaser can send it back. That is very simple except where the purchaser cannot easily send the unit to a centre which will return it to the manufacturer for repair. Plessey also fails to address the problem of the purchaser having to pay for the freight in both directions. Thus, the people in the outback, who have only had this service officially since 26 January 1986, a matter of some 6 or 8 weeks, are already suffering up to a 50% disruption to their viewing opportunities from the ABC.

On a more positive note are the responses from remote area viewers to ABC services. People have told me that they enjoy the television programs and the radio services. Also, the clarity that they are receiving is probably better than some of the clarity in the Darwin radiated television service area.

However, one thing is still worrying them greatly. During the original trial period, everybody was looking at what would be made available. ICPA members in the north coincidentally had their Northern Territory conference in Darwin at the time when trials were taking place, and we arranged a satisfactory viewing for them to see the sort of service they would receive. During that viewing period, a wide range of services were disseminated via satellite on behalf of the ABC. Unfortunately, now that full-scale services have commenced - and I have been out to see for myself - several parts of the teletex services are missing. They are not being transmitted at all. There are no radio program schedules at all on the teletex service. This is not a problem for us in the cities. We can buy a daily newspaper to find out whether a particular program is on tonight or tomorrow. But there is no way for the people in the bush to find out. They have an opportunity to receive 3 services: radio 1, radio 2 and FM105, but they have no way of finding out what the programs will be.

There is also a small problem with the program guide for the television service. I suppose people can be thankful for small mercies. At the moment, they are actually getting a guide to the service on weekly changeover. During the program promotion period, however, it was a daily changeover with an update so that one could at least look 5 or 6 days ahead. Unfortunately, this no longer happens. The program guide service for the television comes out on a weekly basis, on Thursdays, and, if you happen to be viewing on the following Wednesday, for example, you have to plough through considerable
numbers of help pages to find out what on earth you might be able to watch that evening. Also, you have no idea, until the following morning, what the next week's programs will be. It is not really working as it was intended to work. In addition, the help pages are missing entirely from the teletex at the moment, as are the emergency warning pages. I do not know the reasons for these problems, but I would like to see the ABC address them.

By and large, the ABC service is brilliant. People in the bush are enjoying it immensely. It is the first opportunity that most of them have had to view television in their own homes, other than through video recordings, and they are making the most of it. They are looking forward to the commercial service when it finally comes on line, hopefully in another 10 or 11 months' time.

There is one other matter that I would like to address in relation to this service. I understand that, within the next few days, there will be a redirection of the signal that has been received by outback persons from AUSSAT 1 to AUSSAT 2. For the uninitiated, that might seem similar to our changing channels on the ground but that is not quite the case. The AUSSAT 1 satellite and the AUSSAT 2 satellite are some 8° apart at the moment. Those who looked at the service earlier in the year will understand that a minor earth station is involved which requires some attitudinal and directional pointing to ensure that a reasonable signal is received. I would have expected that, by now, there would have been constant notes interspersed with the ABC satellite-delivered service to consumers in remote areas that this change was about to take place so that there would not be a loss of signal on the date of the intended changeover. Not only that, viewers should be reminded how they should go about redirecting their satellite dish to pick up the new signal form AUSSAT 2. Of course, we must remember that, in another 11 months, they will be switched to AUSSAT 3 so that they can receive both commercial and ABC services off the satellite.

There is one other disturbing aspect of that scenario. I do not quite know why the intermediate change from AUSSAT 1 to AUSSAT 2 is taking place right at this moment. Whilst it is a simple operation for minor earth station users to redirect a dish to receive a strong ABC signal at the moment, it is not so easy for those communities that are receiving community broadcasts and rebroadcasting around their own area. To redirect some dishes that they have installed in their communities will probably require some professional assistance which has to be sought from a major centre at considerable cost. There will be some timing problems also. The change to AUSSAT 3 back in November will require further professional assistance.

Mrs PADGHAM-PURICH (Koolpinyah): Mr Deputy Speaker, since this Assembly last met at the end of 1985, an event of some historical importance has occurred in the electorate of Koolpinyah. I refer to the formation of the Litchfield Shire and the election of officers to administer the newly-formed shire. One person was elected as president and 4 persons were elected as councillors. At the outset, I indicate that I am looking forward to legislation that the Minister for Community Development intends to introduce in these sittings to give the people in the rural area 2 things they have asked for in relation to the running of Litchfield Shire.

The first relates to nomenclature. In other local governments in the Northern Territory, the presiding officer is called a 'mayor' and the other members are called 'aldermen'. The minister has been told on many occasions, including by me, that the people in the rural area want the presiding officer
of the Litchfield Shire to be called 'president' and the 4 people elected to administer the shire to be called 'councillors' rather than 'aldermen'. Everybody believed that local government had to be conducted in a manner that was financially advantageous to the people. I am not knocking people from other local government areas, but we felt that the titles 'president' and 'councillors' would be much more in keeping with down-to-earth people who have to make their dollars stretch as far as possible.

Another important matter relates to the form of rating in the Litchfield Shire. I have spoken about this before but it is of great importance, both to me and to the 5 people who have been elected to administer the Litchfield Shire. Everybody in our area wants a differential flat rate between Rural Living 1 which is...

Mr D.W. Collins: How can you have a differential flat rate?

Mrs PADGHAM-PURICH: The people in the rural area will know exactly what I am talking about even if some honourable members do not.

The differential flat rate will be between RL1, which is in the centre of the area and which comprises areas of 5 acres in a few places and less than 5 acres, and RL2 which is comprised mainly of blocks of 20 acres. I would hope the area will pay a rate of about $100-odd. The people in the RL2 area would pay about half that.

What the people do not want, what I do not want and what the Litchfield Shire officers do not want is any hint at all of the introduction by this proposed legislation of unimproved capital value rating. I have heard rumours. I have asked if we will be getting something like a UCV rating introduced with this legislation. To date, I have not received any notice by letter or any other way in writing that this UCV rating will not be introduced. Therefore, it is doubly important that I speak now. I emphasise very strongly that nobody at all in our area wants a form of UCV rating.

There was an attempt by certain public servants to force it down our necks. Their excuse was that it was the most popular form of rating in other parts of Australia and what was good enough for the rest of Australia was good enough for us and other parts of the Northern Territory. But the people have stood strongly behind their views that a flat rating system is what they want. Whether it changes in the future and whether it has to change in the future are matters for the future. At the moment, they want a form of flat rating with differentials between the RL1 and RL2 areas.

The Litchfield Shire officers have been going about their business in a very conscientious and thorough way in the short time they have been operating. A point of interest is the fact that I was present at the swearing in of the 5 officers. I suppose it was rather typical of the rural area. I think I am correct in saying it took place under a stringy bark tree on Friday 13 December. I think that it is significant both for the date and the place.

The people who are holding office have set out in the right way to conduct their shire business, and that is by requesting people to tell them what they want in the rural area, having regard always to the value of the dollar. It has been made quite clear to people. I think most sensible people out our way realise that, if they ask for the moon, it will cost a fortune but, if they are prepared to moderate their demands, they most certainly will be able to live with the rating that will be levied on them.
I asked the Minister for Lands this morning a question on the proposed rural strategy plan. In the rural area, we are noted for agreeing or disagreeing very vocally with what the bureaucrats would have us do because they think it is best for us. I believe that it is one of the few places left in the Territory where free speech is welcomed. People speak their minds whether it is popular with the bureaucracy or not. One of the things about this rural strategy plan that is of grave importance to me and to the people out there is that this plan must give us what we want. I conceded some time ago that planning is necessary, that more and more people are living in the area and that there is less and less space between us. Therefore, certain rules of conduct must be introduced into our ordinary everyday living in the form of planning. However, the plan must be what we want. It must mirror our wishes entirely and it must not be foisted on us by the planners. My grave concern, and I hope that it is proved groundless, is that the planners will ask for our views, as the minister has said they would, then proceed to give us what they think we should have in the form of a plan.

There was a hint of this on one particular occasion. The planners knew my views quite clearly because I left them in no doubt about the representations that were made to me. It relates to a declaration of a district centre. The people in the area made their views plain that they wanted it on site A. The planners said it really should go on site B. Regardless of the fact that I was representing the people's views, I believed it should have gone on site A. Nevertheless, the planners struck out and said it should go on site B. It took about 3 representations to convince them that the people really wanted it to go on site A which is where it is now. I believe that was due to the good offices of the minister in recognising the fact that planners have to fulfil the wishes of the people. Planners exist for the people; the people do not exist for planners.

This rural strategy plan must take into account the people's wishes for the future and also their quality of living. The main point about the quality of living of people in the rural area is that we do not want to see continued subdivision down to smaller and smaller blocks so that we end up with another Darwin in the rural area with blocks of an eighth of an acre or less. The very thing that attracts people to the rural area is the amount of space that we have around our blocks. There are certain disadvantages too but space is becoming a rarer and more expensive commodity. If we are prepared to pay for this commodity, I do not believe our standard or our quality of living should be disturbed in any way by strangers who come in from the city and who wish to subdivide to smaller and smaller blocks. Our complete way of life will be changed in so many ways if this happens.

There are plenty of other places where these people can go if they wish to live on slightly larger than city blocks but certainly smaller blocks than ours. Cox Peninsula is yet to be subdivided. There is still land that could be subdivided in the Gunn Point area. There is still use that could be made of the 32-square-mile acquisition area round Yarrawonga where I live. There is still subdivision that I believe could take place around Palmerston. There is still subdivision that could take place between the Newtown area and Palmerston. There are still many areas where subdivision could occur without impinging on the lifestyle of the people already living in the rural area. I will not give up the fight in representing the views of the people in my electorate who do not want any smaller subdivisions.

I am not against subdivision per se. I am not against people making a few dollars from subdivision. However, when people have a quality of life which
they have established after some years of living in the rural area, I do not believe it should be disturbed. That is especially the case when there are other places where people can live on larger blocks than exist in Darwin but blocks which are still smaller than those in the rural area. I look forward to this strategy plan with some interest. The minister has assured me that there will be adequate time and opportunity for people to pass their comments to the planners.

There must also be provision somewhere for light industry because there is a strong call for light industry to be developed by different people in the rural area. I am never against people setting up their own small businesses. I believe that this has to be encouraged. There is a lot of it going on in the rural area. There are some light industrial businesses and there are some noxious industries that people have shown an interest in establishing. They must be directed away from the mainstream of rural life. I am looking forward to this strategy plan to see where these industries will be placed.

Also of grave concern to me is that, if subdivision were allowed continually, it would affect the agricultural land in the rural area. It might not be very good agricultural or horticultural land but any land can be made as fertile as one wishes by industry and a certain amount of financial investment. It would really concern me if the land is split up so much that the agricultural and horticultural potential of the rural area, which is pretty active at the moment, gradually wanes and dies. I do not want to see that.

Motion agreed to; the Assembly adjourned.