Stripped of their perks

YOU CALL THAT A KNIFING? ...

... LOL!

from cabinet and now effectively banished from the halls of power in Darwin, had been seething at Adam Giles for some time. She was close to Terry Mills – the only person Mills trusted to handle the Treasury portfolio despite her lack of experience, qualification and competence – and Alison Anderson, both casualties of the Giles reign in the CLP party room. During the past year, Lambley had also grown close to Westra van Holthe, the pair bonding as they dealt with the recent death of parents.

The retreat by former Chief Minister Terry Mills which is believed to have driven the chief minister, now the most remarkable political survivor in Australian political history, seems to believe he was the ultimate target of officeholders who blew the whistle on their commissioner.

Lambley steadily lost her influence under Giles. She became a bit-part player in cabinet, kept on for two reasons. The first was geography: she still spent the lion’s share of her time in Alice Springs, which was good PR for the government while Giles ran the show increasingly from his Darwin base. This week he said he hadn’t been “home” to Alice for more than two months.

The second reason Lambley wasn’t dumped earlier was the need to up the number of women in cabinet.

BOTH Conlan and Lambley are now in the gun of the party’s administration, where Giles holds significant influence. Despite public claims the party is united, the rank-and-file have also been at war, with the Alice Springs branch pitted against the Darwin branch.

The NT News understands this could be a significant problem for Solomon MP Natasha Griggs, who many on the Darwin side of that fence wanted replaced before the 2013 election. Griggs fits more neatly with blue-blood liberals than the powerful group of Giles and Indigenous Affairs Minister Nigel Scullion. Giles himself told reporters there was such a mass exodus of members over Westra van Holthe’s supposed ascension that the party may not have enough members left to be considered an official party.

“What we have seen as a result of last night is a party completely disintegrate in terms of different factions,” Giles said on Tuesday.

“That’s not a good place for any political party, whether that’s Labor or the CLP. It’s not good for stability.”

Lambley and Conlan are now set to drift into the political wilderness. It is unclear whether they’ll run from the CLP – or even from parliament altogether.

JOHN McRoberts was seen as close to Adam Giles. And the chief minister, now the most remarkable political survivor in Australian political history, seems to believe he was the ultimate target of officeholders who blew the whistle on their commissioner.

Hours before a wing meeting that would decide his fate, Giles raged: he said the political coup had been orchestrated by senior police “in cahoots with alleged politicians”.

His position retained, Giles toned down his statements and admitted that he had heard whispers but that “you don’t act on rumours”. At best – even if what he’s alleging is true – the words betray a double-standard.

All the more reason, especially now the police scandal has pervaded politics, to hold the police force and the government accountable for its confidence in both the police force and the government.

SO Terry is not the Chief Minister anymore?”

Francis Xavier Kurrupuwu didn’t realise – until it was too late – he had just helped topple Terry Mills. One MP recalls the conversation as Francis and others made their way out of the party room in March, 2013.

“Francis thought he was voting for leader of the party, not Chief Minister,” the MP said. “I thought to myself, God have mercy it will be a miracle if we make it through four years without collapsing.”

He left the CLP and then rejoined last year. After Lambley flew to the Tiwi Islands, Kurrupuwu agreed to join the coup.

As the numbers were re-evaluated on Tuesday, Francis was unreachable. He’d turned his phone off, plugged out of NT politics and gone fishing.

If only the rest of the Territorial was that lucky.

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'Infighting' cripples CLP: election looms

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