NORTHERN TERRITORY OF AUSTRALIA

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

First Assembly

Parliamentary Record

Tuesday 12 August 1975
Wednesday 13 August 1975
Thursday 14 August 1975
Wednesday 20 August 1975
Thursday 21 August 1975

Part I—Debates
Part II—Questions
Part III—Minutes
Part IV—Bills Introduced
PART I

THE DEBATES
The CLERK: I have to inform the Assembly that Mr Speaker on Wednesday 16 July resigned his office by writing under his hand delivered to the Administrator, and that on the same day Mr T. A. O'Brien, the Acting Administrator, pursuant to the powers vested in him by Section 4PB of the Northern Territory Administration Act appointed Mr J. L. S. MacFarlane to exercise the powers and perform the functions of the Speaker in the interim period. I lay on the table a copy of the instrument delivered by Mr Kilgariff and the instrument of appointment of Mr MacFarlane.

The appointment of Mr Kilgariff having ceased with this meeting of the Assembly, it is now the duty of the Assembly to elect a member to be Speaker. Are there any nominations?

Dr LETTS: I move that Mr J. L. S. MacFarlane, the honourable member for Elsey, do take the chair as Speaker of this House.

Mr KILGARIFF: I have the honour to second the motion.

Mr MacFARLANE: I accept the nomination.

The CLERK: Are there any further nominations? There being no further nominations, I declare Mr J. L. S. MacFarlane, the honourable member for Elsey, elected to be Speaker of this Assembly.

Mr MacFARLANE: I wish to express my grateful thanks for the high honour the Assembly has been pleased to confer on me.

Dr LETTS: Mr Speaker, I am pleased to have the opportunity to make the first speech in this Assembly with you in the Chair. My speech is simply one of congratulations to you on obtaining the highest office that the Assembly can bestow. I pass those congratulations to you on behalf of my colleagues in this house and I do so with mixed feelings, realising that we are losing one of our most forceful members from the floor on this side. Your contributions in the past in debate, particularly at adjournment time, have stamped you as a person of no mean influence on behalf of your electorate and this Assembly. However, our loss in that respect will be the Assembly’s gain because, with the independence of spirit which you have demonstrated in the past and your capacity for determined and fair judgment, I am certain that you will be an admirable choice for the Chair of this Assembly.

Mr WITHNALL: Mr Speaker, may I add my congratulations to those expressed by the honourable member for Victoria River and express an opinion that I am sure that you will grace the Chair as well as any other occupant of the Chair during the history of the Assembly or of the Legislative Council. We have seen you in your capacity as Chairman of Committees and I am sure that your experience in that office will lead you to execute the duties of Speaker with fairness and with wisdom. May I only add this, that I trust your elevation to this high office will not deprive me of your occasional company at breakfast.

Mrs LAWRIE: Mr Speaker, I rise to offer my congratulations. Having been a member of this Assembly when you served as Chairman of Committees, I am pleased that you are now Speaker and will follow the tradition set by previous Speakers, the member for Alice Springs, Mr Greatorex, Mr Chan, of the fairness of the Chair never having been in doubt. I congratulate you on your elevation.

Mr KILGARIFF: Mr Speaker, this is the first time in this Assembly that I have been able to address the Speaker. I congratulate you on your appointment, sir. You have had long experience in this Legislative Assembly and years before in the Legislative Council. For some considerable time now you have been Chairman of Committees; in that position you have gained much experience and I, like other members of this Assembly, look forward to being on the floor under your leadership. I would also like to take this opportunity to commend to you the staff of the Assembly whom you will find will be extremely loyal and helpful to you.

Mr TUXWORTH: Mr Speaker, I rise to congratulate you on behalf of the younger members of this Assembly who have been recently elected and on behalf of the country members of the Assembly. The new members of the Assembly did not know you before we were elected—or the majority of us did not—but in the last nine months we have come to know you very well. We hold you in the highest esteem and we find that you would be a most fitting person to occupy the Chair of the House. I would just like to mention that it is a point of special recognition that a person from a country electorate such as yours, a small one, has been able to be elevated to this
position. It gives confidence to people in all country areas to see this sort of thing happen. I congratulate you.

**ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN OF COMMITTEES**

Mr Speaker: Following my transfer to the office of Speaker, there is a vacancy in the office of Chairman of Committees and it is the duty of this Assembly to now elect a new Chairman of Committees. May I have nominations?

Dr Letts: Mr Speaker, I nominate Mr J. M. Robertson, the member for Gillen, for the office of Chairman of Committees.

Mr Kilgarriff: I second the nomination.

Mr Robertson: I accept the nomination.

Mr Speaker: Are there any further nominations?

There being no further nominations I declare Mr J. M. Robertson, the honourable member for Gillen, elected as Chairman of Committees.

Dr Letts: I rise again briefly to offer my congratulations and the congratulations of my colleagues to Mr Robertson on his election to this position. It is somewhat unusual to find a young member in his first term gaining the confidence of a legislature in a position of considerable importance such as Chairman of Committees. However, we do know that Mr Robertson has had the opportunity to act in this position on a number of occasions during the past six months and has demonstrated undoubtedly a flair for the work and I am confident that in his permanent occupancy of the position that this quality will be further demonstrated and will continue.

Mr Withnall: I offer my congratulations to the honourable member on his election to this office. As the honourable member for Victoria River has already said, we have seen Mr Robertson in operation in the Chair on the occasions when the Chairman of Committees has not been available, and his carrying out of that job on those occasions has been quite noteworthy. I think perhaps anyone elected to the office of Chairman of Committees in this Chamber had better look forward to a fairly difficult time because most of the hard work and indeed, most of the dirty work, goes on in Committee.

Miss Andrew: I rise in support of the previous speakers. I offer my congratulations to the honourable member for Gillen. His performance since 2 January at a time of total disaster both within the Assembly and without when he took over the position of Chairman of Committees was quite commendable. The rest of us who were elected only in the previous October were perhaps still floundering with the standing orders of this Assembly and most of the books recording those standing orders had been lost. I think that the honourable member for Gillen's youth is perhaps reflective of this Assembly. There are a number of us who are around his age group and I think it is vital that we are represented in some position of the Assembly itself. I congratulate him and wish him well.

Mr Kilgarriff: I too would like to congratulate the honourable member for Gillen on being appointed Chairman of Committees. As the previous Speaker, it was my pleasure to appoint him as Deputy Chairman and in that period, after he was appointed Deputy Chairman he proved his worth. In this short period, he has become a very able Chairman and I have no doubt that in the future the honourable member for Gillen will prove a very worthwhile Chairman.

Mrs Lawrie: I rise to offer my congratulations to the new Chairman of Committees and wish him well in what will probably be a difficult task during debates.

Mr Speaker: I would like to associate myself with the sentiments expressed by honourable members.

Mr Robertson: Mr Speaker, thank you for your closing words. I thank all honourable members for the confidence shown in me in electing me to this position. I am indeed honoured by it and to some extent humbled. I am quite sure that with the very able assistance of Mr Clerk and with your guidance, Mr Speaker, I will be able to conduct the committee stages in a manner which befits this House, in a manner of impartiality and fairness. I hold no great fear for the warnings given by the honourable members for Nightcliff and Port Darwin. However, I regard myself as somewhat cautioned by them. I thank honourable members.

**MOTION**

Report of Select Committee on Stabilisation of Land Prices

Mr Withnall: I present the report of the select committee appointed to enquire into the matter of securing the stabilisation of
land prices and I move that the report be noted.

Debate adjourned.

STATEMENT

Executive Responsibilities

Dr LETTS (by leave): It is my duty to officially inform the Assembly that Mr P. A. Everingham resigned his portfolio recently and that I have designated Mr B. F. Kilgariff as Executive Member for Finance and Law. With his long experience in this legislature and in other aspects of public administration in the Territory, I have every confidence that Mr Kilgariff will make a success of the portfolio. I would also like to thank the honourable member for Jingili for his valuable contribution to the Executive between November last and July this year.

I realise that these changes have been public knowledge for some time but as the executive positions are related to the standing orders of this Assembly, I wish to make that formal announcement here. We as an Assembly are still awaiting advice of the replacement appointment to fill the vacancy on the Administrator's Council created by the resignation of the honourable member for Jingili.

I wish also to advise honourable members that I communicated to the Minister for Northern Australia, Dr Rex Patterson, last week my intention to resign from the Darwin Reconstruction Commission at the earliest opportunity. The letter of resignation is now on its way to the Governor-General. It is hoped that it will be received and take effect during the current sittings so that the Assembly can make the appropriate replacement.

As I accepted nomination from this Assembly, some explanation should be given to the Assembly for my course of action. The nomination was originally to the interim commission before the act was passed and my membership continued on through the early formative days of the statutory body. As an elected representative on the commission, my aim was to secure a better balance in the composition of the Commission, more protection for the rights of people whose interest in the city had been affected by the cyclone, and the establishment of policies and plans which would be in the best public interest. I believe that the records will show that I had some success in these matters notwithstanding shortcomings which may be evident and the long uphill battle the Commission still has before it. I don't intend to explore at this junction the question of the shortcomings—these may, it appears, now be the subject of a more detailed analysis by this Assembly.

Increasingly in recent weeks, I have realised that the demands of the work of the Commission were coming into conflict with other executive responsibilities to the Territory in general and this Assembly in particular. I refer, by way of example, to the constant follow-up work in the matter of constitutional development and the Joint Parliamentary Committee's report, to the critical problems of our primary industries to which more time and effort must be given, and to the work of the Australian Constitutional Convention which is of vital importance to the long term future of the Territory. Within the past 2 weeks a meeting of that Convention's Standing Committee fell in Sydney on the same day as a meeting of the Reconstruction Commission in Darwin and reluctantly I was unable to attend the latter event. I shall return to the areas of executive responsibility in a few moments.

The decision to tender my resignation from the Reconstruction Commission was not taken lightly, but after a lot of thought and with the realisation that this Assembly can provide alternative representation well qualified to continue the difficult, worrying and important work of the commission. We have such a person in the Executive Member for Community Development whose portfolio is most closely involved with this statutory body. He combines quality with energy in his work and he has already provided invaluable assistance as my official deputy under the act. Any appointment of an Executive Member to the commission at present would add greatly to his or her work load and it is anticipated that some changes in particular duties within the portfolio would be necessary. These would have to be considered in relation to areas of executive responsibility which have emerged in recent weeks as requiring for the time being greater inputs of effort than others. To be more specific, activity in the field of environment, education and land use generally are intensifying at this time. This is a critical period for the Northern Territory in many ways and, while cyclone-ravaged Darwin has dominated the scene and been uppermost in most minds, other things demand attention and whatever support this Assembly can give.
The state of our economic industries is a cause for major concern. I realise that the plight of the pastoral industry is much graver than is generally appreciated by the non-rural public and some ministers. What was considered to be an unusually serious recession out of which the beef producers would struggle after 12 months or so has now assumed the proportions of a national disaster. Pastoral unemployment is rife and will worsen. Meatworks will be forced to close and go into receivership in many cases. Producers are unable to pay debts. There is serious talk, even in government official circles, of organised shooting of cattle in some areas including the Northern Territory in order to limit overstocking, and talk of assisting people to get off their properties, to give them up and so on. The reference of this problem to the Industries Assistance Commission is unlikely to significantly change the pattern. The time has come for all groups concerned, producers, abattoir interests, unions and people with political responsibilities, to jointly analyse all and any means of stemming the tide of depression in the beef industry and insisting on governmental action in the national interest.

Although it is not in my specific area of responsibility, I should also mention that the Territory’s mining, fishing, and other natural resource based industries are undergoing very serious trials and tribulations of special concern to the Executive Members who are in touch with them. If ever there was a time for the Australian Government to heed local voices, Territory voices, in these matters it is now. But when one looks at the matter of constitutional development for the Territory, feelings of anxiety and frustration understandably arise, not only in the minds of members of the Assembly but in the minds of the many Territorians who share the desire for a greater say in their own destiny irrespective of their politics. I am particularly concerned in this matter as my portfolio includes responsibilities for constitutional development. I also remind members that the Australian Labor Party Northern Territory Executive has recently expressed interest in seeing constitutional development take place and that talks have been held between our executive and their executive on the basis of common ground and common interest in this area. Some progress has been made. Executive members have become actively involved with government departments, statutory bodies and community groups, not only in relation to legislative requirements but in the formulation of policy and in limited areas of administrative action. I hope that these members will have the opportunity to report to the Assembly in more detail on the work that they are individually doing.

In fairness to the government, and in particular the Minister for Northern Australia, I should say that some new ground has been broken. The Assembly Executive should shortly have the assistance of administrative staff. We have been assisted with the provision of office space and equipment and a cooperative and helpful attitude has been evident from the Minister and senior departmental staff. Particularly worthy of mention is the fact that with the support of Dr Patterson and the cooperation of federal and state ministers several executive members have recently attended Commonwealth or state minister’s councils as observers and this is very useful progress in the field of constitutional recognition for the Territory. But some vital decisions are too slow in emerging. Until we have received the government’s attitude and decision on the Joint Parliamentary Committee’s report, until proper machinery for implementing that report is set up and until further amendments to the Northern Territory (Administration) Act are made, the constitutional vessel of a fully elected Assembly created last year will have a hollow ring.

On the other side of the ledger, it is painfully necessary for me to report that the government is relentlessly, even desperately, pursuing its erosive legislative policies of making laws for the Northern Territory without any consultation outside its own departments with the people of the Territory or their elected representatives. The introduction into the Australian Parliament of Aboriginal land legislation and legislation covering Aboriginal associations is imminent and, despite several requests, I have been unable to secure copies of drafts of this legislation for information and for public reaction. Whilst Aboriginal people will be most directly affected, I believe that all Territory people have a deep interest and a right to know about the detailed content of these laws in advance of their passage in Canberra.

I also know that the Attorney-General has a long list of other legislation to be made in that other place for our good and that we, like children, will have to swallow it, castor oil fashion, no matter what practical effects it will have on our system. The effects of earlier
legislation handled in this bulldozer way and without consultation can already be seen. The National Parks and Wildlife Act of some 10 months ago is a sorry example. Following the commencement of that legislation, the Northern Territory Reserves Board has been white-anted; it is proposed to declare parks under the act which have no real claim to be national but which are of considerable Territory significance; and the local wildlife service is in a state at the moment of complete confusion. No mention has been made by the Australian Government or the Minister of what is to happen to Territory legislation or whether the views of the Joint Committee on sharing these responsibilities and transferring these responsibilities are to be taken into account in any way. But what we do know is that a new army of senior public servants, already some 25 strong and mostly second division classifications, is being recruited in Canberra to duplicate by remote control what should be done here, presumably to administer our wildlife under an act which lays down no guidelines or principles in this field.

I dwell somewhat on these matters because of my executive responsibilities in the field of constitutional development and my realisation of the implications of this type of legislation being made in the Australian Parliament on our future hopes and aspirations here. I believe it will be necessary to redouble our efforts to combat this insufferable white-anting of our democratic rights and that, in transferring responsibilities relating to the operation of the Darwin Reconstruction Commission to other hands, I will be much better able to contribute to the Territory cause in other important directions. I remind honourable members that together with Mr Alan Reiber, the permanent head of the Department of Housing and Construction, I am the only original member left at this date on the commission. The many changes in commissioners have not helped maintain continuity in its operations but there is no doubt in my mind that I have to devote more attention to the other matters that I have referred to and the sooner the substitution can be made and the Commission settle down to something like its permanent composition the better, assuming it is going to go on for its statutory period.

I hope to provide the Assembly and the public with details of any consequential changes in the executive portfolios during the course of the current sittings.

**MOTION**

Statement on Executive Responsibilities

Mr KilgariFF: I move that the statement be noted.

I believe that this statement is one of importance to the Legislative Assembly and to the people of the Northern Territory. It is a statement of the state of affairs in the Northern Territory today and I think that it is quite timely that the Majority Leader should be able to indicate to the Assembly and to the people of the Territory the major things of concern to him today.

The Majority Leader has indicated that, having resigned as Speaker of this Assembly, I have taken up the position of Finance and Law. I would like to say that I take up this position with considerable regret because it has meant that the previous Executive Member for Finance and Law, Mr Paul Everingham, is no longer in this position. In those months as Executive Member for Finance and Law, when this executive responsibility was being developed from nothing to what it is now, the work that he achieved has a great deal to do with what is happening today. I say with regret that he has decided to step down from this portfolio. This report is an indication to the people of the Territory of what has been going on in these last few months, what is happening now and what will happen in the future. It is my pleasure to be able to return to the floor of the House to once more participate in the affairs of the Assembly. In doing so, I commend the executive for the work that they have done until now.

Coming in as a new executive member, I can appreciate the trials and tribulations that the executive have had over the last few months. There have been many criticisms of the Assembly and the executive. While one admits freely that they are newly elected members and completely raw to the job, what they have achieved in these last few months is a record of which they can be proud. They have started a new ball game; they have come into a situation where there have been no ground rules. In fact, there has been no equipment and they have had to begin from the ground roots. At the moment they do not know where they are going because there are many decisions to be made by Government before future action can be taken.
As the Honourable Majority Leader has said, there have been developments in recognition of the executive over the last few months and particularly in the last few weeks. Other executive members will outline their responsibilities and what has been achieved. The Honourable Majority Leader has referred to the fact that the Commonwealth and states are recognising the Northern Territory executive; it is a breakthrough that these members now go to state ministers’ conferences as full members.

With regard to finance and law, discussions with Dr Patterson were initiated by the honourable Mr Everingham and later taken up by the Majority Leader and myself. These related to the Member for Finance and Law being able to participate within government departments in matters of finance, estimates and so on. He made arrangements within his department that I should be allowed to go into the departments. This has been going on for some weeks now and I have had full cooperation from the officers in that particular branch. We have had discussions on finance and procedures with the result that next Wednesday in this Assembly I will be responsible for tabling the Northern Territory Budget which will be made public the night before. This will be in much more detail for the benefit of the Assembly and for the people of the Territory.

The Ministers for Health and Aboriginal Affairs have indicated that they are prepared to associate themselves with the move. We have not yet heard from the Minister for Education nor from the Minister for Police and Customs. Overall, with this new move which is being carried out now, people in the Territory might be given first hand information of what is going to happen in the Northern Territory in this financial year.

Other matters that have been conducted by this portfolio under the previous member included participation in the Darwin Trust Fund. Mr Everingham was one of the main people who drew up the original structure of the Darwin Trust Fund. This portfolio has also been involved in the Small Business Loan Section and the Legislative Assembly is still represented on that Board. In the period since the Small Business Loan Section has been in being, there have been a total of 359 applications for an amount of $7,762,595. To date, $5,000,000 has been put aside for these loans. It is anticipated that at the end of this year the Committee will receive no further applications because the funds will be exhausted and businesses in the area will have had time to make application for assistance.

One other matter that has been of concern to the Executive Member for Finance and Law was slow payment of accounts by the Government. There was considerable publicity given to this matter some months ago and many of those problems have been ironed out. It has been a very difficult period but, in some departments, this matter has been rectified to quite a degree. At the moment, I am discussing with the Department of Housing and Construction a means of overcoming the slow payment of accounts in areas such as Darwin, Katherine and Alice Springs. Hopefully, with the co-operation of the department, these matters will be rectified.

There have been many matters going on in regard to law and order. I do not think I need to say much more about that. We are concerned that law and order in the Northern Territory should be built up to a satisfactory standard. I say once again that if this growth restriction of 1½ per cent in the public service is applied to the Police Force then we will not have a satisfactory standard. If this restriction is carried out, it will certainly restrict the building up of those isolated one man police stations to two man posts. When it comes to public safety and the safety of the police force, it is ridiculous that this restriction should be carried out and enforced.

There is much legislation to be reviewed and I will make one point which gives me some concern. I refer to a bill that was passed in February—the Motor Vehicle Bill relating to third party insurance where the nominal insurer would be responsible for third party claims in the event of an insurance company collapsing. This was introduced by Mr Everingham yet it has not yet been assented to. I think that this is detrimental to the people of the Territory. There is every reason why government must recognise the principle that the people of the Northern Territory must have some safeguard. If the government is not going to assent to this bill, it must come forward with some other scheme to safeguard the people who have applied for insurance. I would hope that, in the near future, we will see action from the government departments responsible in this area.
Industrial affairs has been a part of this portfolio. It is a most interesting responsibility, particularly in the Darwin community, because there is awareness in the work force, the unions, the employees, the employers that better relations should develop. I commend the formation some weeks ago of the Industrial Relations Society. Its aims will be to organise and foster discussion, research, education and publications in the field of industrial relations. The unions, management, the public service, professionals and academics are participating in this organisation. This society will be affiliated with the Australian body and will bring about better relations in industry in the Northern Territory. As the member responsible in this Assembly for industrial affairs, I give it my full support.

DEBATES—Tuesday 12 August 1975

the unions, the employees, the employers that

If you have earlier criticism by the public of the operations of the executive in my particular case may have been justified because I do not have any areas of responsibility that are controversial or areas that are continually in the press so that the public could thereby get an impression of what I was doing. I would like to take this opportunity of presenting to the House and the public a résumé of the activities that I have been involved in and the particular areas of responsibility that I have.

Shortly after Cyclone Tracy, it was pointed out to me that the fishing potential of the Northern Territory had been cut in two, that there had been great losses of capital by the fishing industry and the fishermen. Many men had lost their opportunity to continue their employment in the fishing industry. As a result of this, I made an approach to the Chief Inspector of Fisheries to get an idea of just what state the industry was in, how his department was situated, and how it intended to deploy its inspectors to control the operation of fishing in the Northern Territory. I have had nothing but complete co-operation from the Fisheries Section in any matter that I have brought before them, and they advised me only too willingly that, although the operation had been moved to Gove as a matter of physical necessity, they do intend to deploy inspectors in the Darwin area and the other coastal areas and to maintain the surveillance that they had pre-cyclone. They went on to point out that they had had re-establishment problems of their own; they had lost their leader and it would be some time before they actually got into full operation. Subsequent to this I received a delegation from the fishermen themselves. They indicated they had problems of re-establishing and also had problems of selling their product in Darwin even at the price of 75c a pound. Evidence that was supplied to me by another member of this Assembly seems to suggest that poaching was in full swing and that there were indeed illegal operations thriving in the Darwin area and selling fish throughout the Territory that was not perhaps quite wholesome.

Other problems that were raised were in the area of shortage of capital. Many men had lost their boats and their buildings and had no method of getting back into business. There are no processing facilities available to fishermen and we have no wharf facilities for fishermen to operate from. We have no recognised health standards for the inspection of fish. We have no marketing expertise in the Northern Territory by which we may dispose of our surplus fish. We have a diminished home market that is consuming about 25% of the pre-cyclone quantities. We have an apparent upsurge in poaching activity. We have a lack of organised fishing areas. All these problems are compounded by the fact that
the industry itself is fragmented and disorganised. The Chief Inspector of Fisheries further confirmed my fears about the depression in the industry when he said that there was a need for stronger legislative backing in some areas of existing ordinances and that perhaps we have a need for new ordinances altogether to cater for areas that are not protected. There was an obvious lack of leadership within the industry and there was a great need for some decisions of a local and political nature to be made by some person so that the industry could have a look at itself. It could then be rationalised and become more profitable and stable in the future.

As a result of these talks, I went back to the department and we had further discussions on the problem. The departments involved in these discussions were the Northern Development Department before the amalgamation, the Health Department, the Port Authority, the Fisheries Branch here, the Fisheries Departments in 4 states and there was communication again with the fishermen in an effort to try to propose some solution to the problems facing the industry.

I was quite encouraged by the attitude of some of the local fishermen who are prepared to set their organisation on an industrial footing and as a result of this I chaired a meeting of interested fishermen 6 weeks ago. We have 70 registered fishermen still left in the Territory and at that meeting we posed to them solutions that they might consider as a method of overcoming their industry's problems. The essential part of these solutions was that they formed themselves into an industry organisation in the form of a co-operative or a marketing organisation so that they could help themselves and help protect themselves. The attitude towards the proposal was in my opinion most responsible and I feel that something will come of it. We have a further meeting with north Australian fishermen this week and I will be providing details to them, supplied by the various state departments and compiled with local expertise and knowledge by our own Fisheries Branch, of co-ops, fishing licences, fishing grounds, health standards, processing facilities, marketing details, etc., that would all be necessary information for any fishing industry here to get on its feet.

There is no doubt that fishermen are the greatest bunch of individualists that I have come across and, although their industry is depressed and they themselves are in a depressed state, I will persevere with the groundwork that I have begun in this area because I believe that their industry will survive and it will grow and it will make a very sound contribution to the development of the Northern Territory in the long term.

The fishing industry is not the only one in turmoil. The mining industry may perhaps eclipse the fishing industry in problems but the most serious problem we have confronting us is that the Northern Territory has become the graveyard for the mining industry in Australia in the last 18 months. I have found it very frustrating and most unfortunate that I was in this position without any executive responsibility. I have been unable to help or forestall such things as the closure of Frances Creek, the closure of the Peko smelter, the mothballing of the Palm Valley gasfield and oil operation and the subsequent possibility that an oil refinery will not be established in Alice Springs. I have seen the delay in the development of the McArthur River project which involves silver, lead and zinc and an enormous pilot programme that Mount Isa Mines had going on there to try and perfect a method of extracting the silver, lead and zinc. I have further witnessed the attempted nationalisation of the uranium province in Arnhem Land, surpassed only by the complete destruction or disappearance of our exploration industry which was formerly heavily involved in exploration for oil, gas and minerals in the Northern Territory. I have gone to great lengths to confer with the Chamber of Mines and their members as individuals at every opportunity. I regard my liaison with the Mines Branch as close and I take particular care to speak and confer with any organisation involved in the mining industry where I feel that I can be of support despite the fact that that support is only moral. It is most important that anybody in the industry be made aware of the majority party's attitude towards the industry, and I will take every effort and opportunity to instill confidence and to give our moral support to proposed mining developments.

The Federal Department of Minerals and Energy has not acknowledged the status of this Assembly but I am pleased to say that, despite this, local departmental advice is always forthcoming and encouraging. I do feel that I have achieved one thing as a result of my communications with the Minister, Mr Connor: I have always been able to get a reply and the reply is—"Don't call me, I'll call you". But there are industry heads and stock
exchange leaders in this country who don't receive a reply of any nature whatsoever from the Minister for Minerals and Energy. We have been recognised in that sense.

My colleagues, the member for Millner and the Executive Member for Education and myself recently completed a tour of Arnhem Land and made a close examination of the uranium province in its relationship to national parks, river systems and Aboriginal reserves. We took particular note of the financial contribution that each of these individual projects would make to the Northern Territory in the long term and also the possible environmental problems that would be encountered as mining operations developed. It would be foolish for us to say that there will be no repercussions from any development in Arnhem Land. History has proven that wherever man goes he leaves a mess of some sort behind him, whether it is beer cans or contaminated creeks. I have always endeavoured to promote the policy of the majority party and encourage mining in conjunction with environmental protection at every opportunity and have always stressed that under no circumstances will we support the rejection of a mining project so that total preservation of the environment may take precedence and this is something that some sections, and very minute sections, of our community would suggest that we do. In conjunction with the member for Fannie Bay, I have studied the future method of development of mining residential areas and the method of providing local government type services to these communities—who should pay what expenses and how they should be operated. It is my understanding that the honourable member will shortly release a statement of the majority party's attitude in this field and it will probably be one of the most important statements to be made on local government in many years.

It is my intention to introduce into this Assembly revision of the Mining Ordinance and Regulations as proposed in the Morley Report. The Morley Report was commissioned by the mining industry in the Northern Territory in conjunction with the Mines Branch and its sole purpose is to bring the safety and operational requirements into line with the standards enforced in other states and indeed other countries, such as Canada and South Africa, which 2 countries would perhaps be world leaders in the mining field. The new ordinance and regulations will enable the enforcement of laws that have not previously been covered in our legislation because of the advancement of technology and one such area would be environmental control on uranium production and uranium extraction. Needless to say, uranium has not been given a great deal of attention in the last 5 or 6 years, but legislation must be brought down to control the miners and prevent any environmental destruction. Preparation of this legislation has been going on for some time. I have no doubt that the bills will be welcomed by management and labour alike because it is in the interest of both parties to have many areas defined more clearly than they are at the moment.

The tourist industry in the Northern Territory has experienced several difficult seasons but there is no doubt in my mind that in the long term tourism is going to be one of our most stable industries and should receive the support of this Assembly at every opportunity. The majority party has had preliminary discussions with the Minister for Northern Australia and he has agreed that this function should be transferred to the new executive as soon as possible, particularly in the light of the fact that it is non-political and that it would be in the best interests of the Territory to have it transferred. In consideration of this, I have asked my own party for legislation amendments to be prepared to cater for this transfer. A department officer is currently preparing for me a management structure and budget proposal so that I may submit to the tourist industry in the Northern Territory a proposal for the method of operating any new tourist function under the local executive. This will probably be presented at a meeting of the Darwin Tourist Promotion Association next week and work will continue quietly on it until the Minister has given the green light.

I have involved myself wherever possible in attending and addressing regional tourist promotion associations and in some cases Chambers of Commerce that handle the affairs of tourist promotion in certain communities. It has been difficult for me to establish a contact with the Bureau and the Northern Territory Government Tourist Board. I hope that liaison in this area will improve and I can assure you, Mr Speaker, that I will be working to improve it.

Earlier this year, I had the pleasure of convening a meeting of bus operators in Melbourne, the first time the bus operators coming into the Northern Territory had ever sat
down around a table together. The purpose of the meeting was to try and form them into a body that could be represented by one spokesman so that the organisation could send their spokesman to Darwin to speak with government officials and try and have the permit system eased so that bus operators who had committed themselves to tours in Darwin over a 12 month period before the cyclone could in fact carry out these tours. The meeting was quite successful and it resulted in a further meeting with “Supremo” McHenry and bus operators from Melbourne who came to Darwin for this event. We did ultimately see a slight relaxation in the laws controlling the entry of people into the cyclone disaster area.

Tourism in the Northern Territory is very closely associated with the Reserves Board in the sense that the Reserves Board controls the area that the tourists like to see. In the past, there has not been a great deal of communication between these two bodies and it is my intention that a close liaison should be established as soon as possible because it is in the interests of both parties that they know what each other is doing. Later this month, I will be attending a meeting of state and federal ministers of tourism in Adelaide as an observer. I am hopeful that my representations to this body will enable any future Northern Territory representative to be admitted as a fully fledged member of the council. The admission of the Northern Territory to this conference has been assisted by the Minister for Northern Australia, Dr Patterson, and I acknowledge his assistance with gratitude; he has been most helpful in this instance.

Forestry operations are continuing in the Northern Territory although on a reduced scale. Since last Christmas, forestry activities have been somewhat changed. The 400 hectare annual planting program which was divided between Gunn Point and Melville Island has been transferred completely to Melville Island in order to take some of the work load off Darwin based staff. The forestry section of the Department have been appointed principal agents for the Darwin Reconstruction Commission in all landscape design and development projects associated with the reconstruction of Darwin. The Gunn Point Prison Farm was located on the forest reserve to provide worthwhile work in forestry activities for prisoners. This is a continuing function even though no actual planting operations will be undertaken this year.

The major forest areas in the Northern Territory are located within Aboriginal lands and since the Aboriginal Land Rights Commission there have been some uncertainties regarding the future of forestry on these lands and the conservation and protection of the forest resources. There are some difficulties which can be foreseen through the terms of the present draft bill for Aboriginal lands in the Northern Territory. The forest resources of the Territory, if placed in the form of private ownership by Aboriginals, will be in some jeopardy which parallels the destruction of private forests in other parts of Australia. The original recommendations of the Land Rights Commission were that forests within Aboriginal lands should be leased to the forestry authority at a nominal rental and that any development within these forests should provide opportunities for Aboriginal employment and enterprise. Everybody in this Assembly will appreciate that it will be increasingly difficult to get people to carry out forestry operations and planting programs when the people who are doing the work are in full knowledge that the whole thing could be a complete disaster and be destroyed from want of upkeep and care.

The activities of the Water Resources Branch have come under pressure in the Northern Territory as a result of the cyclone. The assessment, development and control of the Territory’s water resources is the job of the Water Resources Branch which is operating under difficult conditions in Darwin as its former offices have not yet become available since the cyclone yet it is carrying out all its normal functions. The great majority of its staff returned to work after the cyclone; a number were sent to work from the Alice Springs office; a full time presence has been established in Gove and Katherine and a small number engaged in computing work are temporarily located in Canberra. Because of the continued shortage of established positions, concentration has been given to work of the highest priority. While the Northern Territory is relatively undeveloped, it has a considerable proportion of the nation’s surface water resources. The Top End has considerable potential for water resource development subject to viability of projects making use of water. In the central part of the Territory, ground water is the main source and constant efforts are necessary to ensure its proper development to match the needs of the people. Work is in progress on projects aimed
at improving the current water supply and ensuring adequate reserves for the future of a large number of localities. These include Papunya, Warrabri, Tennant Creek, Alice Springs, Katherine, Pine Creek, Darwin and the uranium province.

Monitoring of the water supply and quality at Northern Territory communities is continuing and pollution studies in particular localities are being undertaken. An intensive study is continuing of possible effects on natural water systems of mining activities is planned and operated to cause the least practical harmful effect on the environment. This will be a continuing project for many years and a project which I feel will have the support of every member of this Assembly and in fact the support of every Territorian.

The demand for advice and assistance to land holders under the Water Supplies Development Ordinance continues. Most of this relates to bore locations and development but some interest is being shown in surface water supplies. A large part of the Water Resources Branch activity relates to the collection and interpretation of data on water resources. This includes the operation of a comprehensive stream gauging and rainfall recording network, data from which is used in flood prediction and investigation of water supply for domestic, pastoral, agricultural and industrial use. Regional studies, such as the Daly River and the McArthur River regions, will continue as a matter of course. Another activity of the branch through its laboratory services is the operation of an air monitoring network and assay and geochemical services of the Mines Branch.

In addition to this, I have been advised by the Minister, Dr Patterson, who has again been co-operative that I have his leave to attend the state and federal ministers’ conference on water conservation to be held in Western Australia later this year. The meeting had earlier been set to be held on 17 July but because various state ministers involved were unable to attend on that date it had been put back.

In concluding, I would just like to endorse the remarks of the Deputy Leader in saying that I too am glad to see the Majority Leader off the Darwin Reconstruction Commission because the members of the Executive look forward to working with him more closely as a result of the time that he will now have available.

Mr TAMBLING: It is very timely that we are considering the constitutional development of the Northern Territory, the various aspects of what is happening in our community, the relationships between the various statutory authorities such as the Darwin Reconstruction Commission, the Federal Cabinet and the Federal Minister’s operations in the Northern Territory, and our own Executive performance this year. I have taken the assumption that the Joint Parliamentary Committee report will be endorsed and in many areas I have acted in anticipation that most of the recommendations in clauses 70a and 70b will be carried out. Likewise, where the Executive responsibility for housing, urban land, town planning, recreation and culture, and local government has indicated that it will be my responsibility to administer these particular areas, I have wherever possible endeavoured to involve myself within the constraints that are imposed on us in being as effective as I could in each of those particular situations. I have the oversight of some 24 ordinances operating in the Northern Territory at this time, some 22 statutory authorities and miscellaneous boards and it is necessary that I have a strict and constant contact with some 5 administrative branches of the Department of Northern Australia and some 4 Federal Ministers who have an influence in the Territory in the areas in which I have an Executive responsibility.

The development of a parliamentary executive in the Northern Territory is a completely new system in that we have to find our feet and develop as we go and I believe that the performance to date has been very creditable, particularly when you look at it in the light of the dreadful and shocking office facilities that we have had to operate under and, for example, the fact that my secretary commenced duty today. We have not had the opportunity to operate with the resources and the scope of assistance that we would have liked and this has meant extremely personal demands on all members of the Executive. We have not had the opportunity to operate with the resources and the scope of assistance that we would have liked and this has meant extremely personal demands on all members of the Executive. Similarly, the Administrator’s Council has maintained a very high level of performance this year in that it has acted as an executive council would in a state. Many of the outstanding matters which were quite lengthy in their considerations when we took over have been cleared from the agenda papers of the Administrator’s Council and are now finding their way through performance as they should. I have recently established a personal
contact with the ALP spokesman—so-called, seeing that he has no parliamentary representation. I don’t envisage that this is going to be a continuing close, brotherly type arrangement. I am sure that he is going to come out soon with some big hammers and start hitting me over the head and starting to look closely and critically at the legislation that I will bring before this House. So far this year, I have brought 6 ordinances before this Assembly for consideration.

In the aftermath of Cyclone Tracy, I believe that all members of this Assembly took very strong and prominent roles of leadership throughout the Northern Territory and it was essential and timely that they did so because there was not available within the former bureaucratic public service similar qualities of leadership. I believe that the community accepted these areas of responsibility and they increased their involvements with it. If I can be a little more specific in areas where I have had a close arrangement of this nature, I will point to involvement with the various resident action groups that sprang up spontaneously and necessarily throughout the community, the interstate survivors clubs, the conferences that were conducted in all state capitals. I think you would find that an executive member of this Assembly made a point of attending. Similarly with the interim citizens’ council advisory body when it was necessary to start being public and critical. The leadership of this Assembly was very prominent in that area. There was the formation of the Darwin Disaster Welfare Council to look at the social issues and the performance of various groups in sociological areas—I have had a very close working relationship with the Executive Director there, as have several other members.

In looking through a list of voluntary agencies and community organisations, I stopped the other day when I got to 45 groups that have again reactivated in the Darwin Community and I believe that it was my responsibility to be very close and to be very influential in helping those particular groups become operational. In fact, I would say with a great majority of that 45 I have had a very close working arrangement this year. Similarly, to ensure that the vital fabric of this community is continued, I have made a point of keeping a strong liaison with groups such as the Master Builders Association and the various commercial organisations of the town.

I won’t speak for long on Darwin reconstruction because I believe in the next few days we are going to have ample opportunity to appraise particular organisations but I would like to say that our involvement in this area has been a very time consuming and often frustrating exercise. I think, when the historians get down to it and they finally get access to minutes of the various meetings of the interim commission and the commission, they will see that the elected representatives of this community have always been the prophets of what the community wanted; they have spear-headed the attacks for change but they have often been thwarted for some particular reason by the in-fighting, be it at an Australian Government level or be it just a bureaucratic red tape lack of performance.

One of the areas where I participated with the Majority Leader and the member for Port Darwin earlier this year was at the Australian Senate when it was necessary to look at the way in which the Darwin Reconstruction Act was being framed and I’m sure that if people take a close look at the Hansards of both this House and the Senate they will see that many of the problems that we are often alluding to today were brought out by the three of us at that time. I believe we achieved good results in that we did get a number of amendments made to the Darwin Reconstruction Act and to the way in which the DRC was to have some form of participation in this community. The weight of planning objections and submissions was very onerous for months because of the way in which these proposals were prepared and I believe that it was the executive responsibility that I had to perform in making sure that at least 1200 objections finally did come forward and I believe more than three-quarters of them were subsequently recognised. The Department of Housing and Construction has and had a very strong role to play in the remaking of this community. It has the resources of fine professional people. I believe that even the sociologists’ reports of the early months of this year, when we look at them in hindsight, gave many of the forecasts. In particular Dr Zula Nittim in her early visits to Darwin this year foresaw many of the problems with the structures that were brought about.

In the area of housing I have been able to develop a very close and good relationship with the Northern Territory Housing Commission. This commission has already accepted the recommendations of the Joint Parliamentary Committee report and has
established and is very keen to keep going a relationship with this executive and with constitutional development because the Housing Commission in the Northern Territory is charged with providing housing for people of limited means. When you look at the composition of that particular population and you look at their housing requirements and the costs of housing for the Northern Territory, it is very obvious that the Northern Territory Housing Commission has a very vital and full role to play. It is to be hoped that through party policy in the term of this Assembly we will be able to propose forms for a single housing authority utilizing the Northern Territory Housing Commission. The executive officers of that commission have all looked to us for leadership and I believe they have got it.

Other areas where we will propose legislation will be in the areas of strata titles, building societies and housing co-operatives. These are already in the drafting stages and early discussions. The housing co-operatives have often sprung up—I'm aware of three—in the Darwin community in recent months as the need arises. I have had a hand in helping these groups formulate their early constitutions and let us hope they will be compatible with what we can propose through legislation in time.

During the days of the emergency, a special committee was formulated called the “Accommodation Co-ordination Committee” to advise on the priorities of housing for both the public sector and the private sector. My membership and the membership of the member for Stuart Park on that particular committee I believe has played a very strong role in ensuring that community housing and temporary housing accommodation needs have been stressed and brought out. Also on that particular committee are representatives of government departments, the Housing Commission, the city corporation and various unions. The policy of that committee has many times influenced the Department although it has not always had the executive authority to see the performance carried out; the red tape has often tended to over-ride many of its decisions but nevertheless it has been a very demanding but a very effective committee.

I am particularly concerned in the area of Aboriginal housing throughout the Northern Territory. I have recently made visits to Yirrkala, Hooker Creek and Wave Hill where I have been able to observe at first hand the particular types of housing that have sprung up. And at this stage it is purely a Department of Aboriginal Affairs policy. Those communities do not have a legislative framework within which to operate or to work very effectively and, whilst I'm aware that the Minister for Aboriginal Affairs recently indicated that he may introduce in the Federal Parliament legislation to look at Aboriginal housing, he has not even bothered to talk here yet; he has not consulted the Northern Territory part of the Aboriginal community nor the Executive of this House where such legislation should take place.

In June of this year, I was invited by the Queensland Minister for Housing to attend the State Housing Ministers Conference in Brisbane. This again was a political milestone in that it was the first time political representation had been established on such an important body at such an important level. At that particular conference, the Northern Territory Housing Commission was admitted to membership of the Research Advisory Committee to the Australian Housing Research Council, again an important link and, I think, an important precedent looking to the future. At that conference, I was able to establish contacts with the Federal Minister for Housing and with the state ministers for housing. I am hopeful of obtaining membership to an indicative working party on housing that has been created by the Federal Minister for Housing.

In the fields of urban land and town planning, despite the activity of the Darwin Reconstruction Commission for the close environs of the Darwin area and all the frustrations and extra workload that it has brought, I have been able to maintain a very close relationship with the Department of Northern Australia's town planning officers and we have had a number of discussions with regard to continuing policies for other urban centres throughout the Northern Territory. The Nimmo report has been tabled in this Assembly and I have issued drafting instructions in an endeavour to implement those recommendations as soon as possible. The rural land areas out of Darwin have been subject to planning proposals for some time. You will recall that the 32 square mile acquisition took place some time ago and was the subject of extensive debate in the former Legislative Council. It has been essential to keep a very close eye on the development of
consultant's reports in that particular area and, as the Majority Leader's deputy, I did attend a number of Darwin Reconstruction Commission sub-committee meetings for this purpose and I believe that in the very close future a rural land area policy will be determined.

Aboriginal land claims are another area that has suddenly come to a degree of prominence that we had not anticipated so quickly. Before the implementation of federal legislation to implement recommendations of the Woodward Report, an Interim Land Commissioner has been appointed to look at the claims of Aboriginals throughout the Northern Territory and you will be aware through the press of a number of these claims having already been heard. We gave an early document to that interim commission on principles that we saw essential for urban land claim areas and at the moment it will be important to continue with these as they now extend into pastoral, rural and reserve areas throughout the Northern Territory. Again, it has been unfortunate that there hasn't been a great deal of consultation.

The Department of Northern Australia has also been concerned for some time about the zoning provisions of the current Town Planning Ordinance. I am conducting a number of detailed discussions at the moment with them in an endeavour to modify and to bring those proposals into a better form, if not perhaps a complete re-write of the Town Planning Ordinance. Also related to the urban land issue has been the Select Committee on Land Price Stabilisation where, fortunately, the Australian Senate has referred to us for consideration the bill that was proposed in the Federal Parliament. That report has been tabled in this House today.

In the area of local government, many members will be aware that I had a previous background involvement in local government and I have kept up those close contacts. In Darwin, local government has been faced with extreme difficulties and problems in the extent of carrying out its full normal municipal function. However, I think they have now jumped the hurdles. I think they can see the way to returning to a full influence and a full execution of the role that they should play. In fact, in the last few days, I have had some five requests for legislative consideration forwarded to me by the Darwin city council. I have made a number of visits to Alice Springs and on each occasion have met with the Mayor and the Town Clerk. Katherine and Tennant Creek were in 1974 looking forward to offers of local government at appropriate levels, at appropriate timetables, at appropriate budgets. The happenings of this year have perhaps delayed some of those implementations, but I see no reason why we should not continue to press for early introduction of full local government in both communities. The Katherine situation has the advantage of perhaps linking with a rural type shire and perhaps that may be the best way. We have a number of discussions with members of that board looking to the future. As mentioned by the Executive Member for Resource Development, he and I and members of the Tennant Creek Town Management Board and the Department of Northern Australia's Local Government Branch recently undertook a tour through the mining shires of central Queensland. This gave us the opportunity to look closely at the provisions and the types of legislation that may be necessary to implement local government on a shire type basis for Tennant Creek where we can set up appropriate systems to ensure that the mines and developers in those areas contribute fully to local government and the way in which they should be implemented.

The recreational and cultural groups in this community always go on doing their job because they are detached from any official forms of red tape. The Museums and Art Galleries Board, the Arts Council, the Brown's Mart community arts project, the various youth groups in Alice Springs, Tennant Creek and Katherine, and other community organisations like this, have kept me fully informed of all of their operational programs, their effective projects and their particular problems. Wherever possible, I have attempted to act as their intermediary with, I believe, very good results.

It is very obvious that the Northern Territory is going to go through an even faster period of change in the next six months. Not only is it having to struggle with weather problems, seasonal problems and with reconstruction activity, but it is also now going to progress to a much greater degree of autonomy through political and constitutional developments. I endorse the remarks of the previous speakers. I believe that it is timely that we have noted the comments of the Majority Leader and the efforts that he is taking and, whilst it has been indicated that I may be nominated for membership of the
Darwin Reconstruction Commission, I perhaps look at that with very mixed feelings, but I will certainly endeavour to bring to bear in that group extreme pressures representing what this community wants. I believe that the area of the Darwin reconstruction activity will be fully compatible with those responsibilities that I am currently answerable to you for.

Miss ANDREW: In rising to support the motion, I would like to say a few words on executive responsibilities in general and my own portfolio in particular. I feel that the history of executive positions in the Territory has been one of creation and development of the respective portfolios, initially situations of ombudsman-like activity. Steps have been taken both individually and collectively towards initiation and implementation of policy which will lead to the development of this Northern Territory in spite of the lack of encouragement, in fact ignorance in some cases, by many federal ministers and bodies of our existence. The executive positions, while receiving a high level of support from the people of the Northern Territory, have had to develop relations with various departments which have not always been receptive. During my days and nights in the Evacuation Centre immediately after the cyclone, I developed valuable relationships with members of various departments, particularly education, and the experiences of that period have provided an excellent communications base in my dealings with these people. I would like to take this opportunity to thank the people within the departments with which I most come in contact for their assistance and support.

The problems of my portfolio in its every aspect are the problems of a multicultural, multilingual, geographically isolated and geographically dispersed society. This is particularly embodied in education: the problem of children coming to the Territory from many states and overseas; the problem of centres self-contained and isolated from each other; the problem of accommodation both in terms of schools and in terms of housing teachers; the problems of isolated children whether they be on settlements, stations or in general camping areas with limited mail facilities or any form of communication; the problems of Canberra control with Big Daddy constantly looking over the shoulder endeavouring to provide a system for people 2000 miles away. All these problems were enlarged and accentuated by cyclone Tracy and are wound up in terms of the most outdated pieces of legislation, the Education Ordinance and the Schools Committee Ordinance. The close liaison which I have enjoyed with the Education Department has resulted in some developments towards the remedying of these problems. A large degree of regionalisation has occurred, partly accelerated by cyclone Tracy, with definite responsibilities being centred in Alice Springs, and a recognition of differences in culture between Aboriginal and white settlements in the formulation and operation of the semester system. Children are now taught while they are in the settlements and during the months while they are going out into the bush areas the teachers, as well as the children, enjoy a vacation.

The provision of housing officers, whilst it is at this stage rather miniscule in the overall problem of accommodation, has shown some signs of alleviation of this area. For example, under certain regulations, flats have been rented and maintained over the long school holiday period, providing a continuing source of accommodation for teachers.

In the field of teacher recruitment, I have spoken at length with the Schools Commission and with the Minister for Education outlining the areas where I think the Territory must update itself in gaining teachers to man its schools. A certain contractual basis would entice people to areas where communications and accommodation are particularly appalling. Secondly, an updated public relations type recruitment program must be considered and implemented in the near future to cover the problem of shortage of school teachers.

New schools in the terms of Tennant Creek East and the proposed Saderdeen High School—I have had close consultation with the Department in these areas. Along with the member for Alice Springs, we presented a written submission to the Public Works Committee hearing in Alice Springs on the Saderdeen High School proposal, applauding the idea and encouraging them to build the school as soon as possible. Other submissions, one covering education of children in isolated areas, will be presented to the Senate Committee on Education, Science and the Arts. I hope to present some time in October a second submission to a Select Committee on Specific Learning Difficulties. The involvement of the Assembly in education at the level of presentation of submissions is vital because it is one body that can, hopefully,
In my experience, are presented strictly from regional centres.

The Education Ordinance, whilst an outdated piece of legislation, would have to remain so for a time until greater Territory control can be organised in that area. However, the Schools Committee's Ordinance is apparently undergoing a thorough overhauling. I have sent papers and had discussions with most school committees around the Territory and I eagerly await their responses to my proposals for a much more realistic ordinance on the subject of school councils.

After discussion with the Minister for Education earlier this year, a meeting was held to set up an Advisory Council on Education in the Northern Territory. This is the first progress towards the establishment of a people's say in Territory education. A second aim of this body is to integrate the education program within the Territory ranging from pre-school through primary, secondary to the embryonic tertiary institutions which we have. The meeting was a great success and the resolutions are currently with the Minister. These resolutions advise him that it is the wish of the people in the Territory for a committee of 15 people interested in education, receivers of the educative product or producers of it, to form a committee to advise the Minister on policy making and planning of education in this area. I think that this is perhaps the greatest achievement in the Northern Territory field of education that has been achieved. Up till now, the constant problem of distant landlords overseeing an area which they know very little about or in some cases have very little interest in has been disastrous. I commend the Department of Education and the Minister on the formation of this committee. As the executive member responsible for education, I hope that I will be deeply involved in its progress towards a commission of education.

On the subject of rent and price control, the Price Control Ordinance has remained idle for a large number of years and, indeed, was only implemented in 1972. It has created problems such as South Australia encountered around the late forties. Inflation and the lack of freight subsidy have increased prices even more drastically since the implementation of this particular body. I am not about to be involved in an argument on protection versus free trade, however, I think that there are definite areas within this legislation which need review. Since last October, I have endeavoured to consult as many people as possible on the subject of the review of this legislation. Scheduling of building materials and other items have occurred since last October, however, in spite of this a review of all items scheduled will be forthcoming. I would like to foreshadow that at this sitting I will be presenting legislation for a tribunal of review with complete authority and much greater accessibility than the Administrator's Council has had in the past and I hope that this will bring a direct involvement of both business people and consumers.

In terms of rent, I have been involved since last October in a series of deputations from various areas of the community. Inadequacies that stunt the development of real estate exist in this legislation. They too need review.

I would like to commend the people from the water, electricity and sewerage services on their performance immediately following cyclone Tracy. Whilst my involvement with them has been limited because of their direct involvement with Housing and Construction and so coming under the responsibility of the transport portfolio, I have been involved at a consumer level in terms of charges for water and electricity and the alleviation of some problems since the cyclone. I reiterate a warning I issued some weeks ago of the danger of the electricity wiring in Darwin at the moment. The deaths that have occurred in recent weeks are a result of total lack of understanding and consideration by several selfish people in the community and I hope that it won't occur again. We must all take care and I do again commend these people on the job they have done.

Consumer protection legislation is totally inadequate for the protection of the public. They have no real power and are desperately in need of the new legislation which has long since been promised by the government. This legislation, I hope will be forthcoming before the end of the year. However, I commend the council on the excellent work that they have done in protection against bad services and prices with the restrictions they have had placed on them legislatively. In spite of The Trade Practices Act and Northern Territory Ordinances covering various areas of their field, these people have in many cases intercepted very bad treatment of the consumer. I have been very closely involved with them and worked very well with the secretary.
The Land and Business Agents Ordinance which was passed last year is perhaps a good example of the problems of the lack of staff which this executive suffers. It is bulky legislation and, with no staff, no regulations can be made nor can any of the discrepancies be removed. We are similarly endeavouring to review this with alternatives in mind and we hope to give the legislation some status and credence. However, there is the problem of staff.

In the field of libraries, I have had fairly close liaison, especially down the track, with the people actually involved in the day to day operation. I find the conditions appalling and the complete lack of resources is an insult to the Territory—perhaps another example of Canberra control. Libraries are a field laid down for very early transfer to the Territory and I hope this will be forthcoming. I recently presented a submission to a Select Committee on Libraries urging immediate greater mobility and greater resources, urging them to use facilities such as schools which we have available, urging them to provide information centres which will entice people to use the libraries and so give them a community involvement. Finally I asked them to consider the people in the outback areas; perhaps air mobiles could be used. This could only be achieved by Northern Territory control and dispersal. Only yesterday I spoke to Dr Patterson and Mr O'Brien again urging them to take immediate action to remedy this disastrous library system.

Almost immediately after the election, a controversial piece of legislation, the National Parks and Wildlife Bill, went through the House of Representatives. This has been touched on by Dr Letts in his statement and I support his remarks. At the time, much lobbying by the executive went on at the Canberra level. This was followed by a survey, after the passing of the act, on the various parks in the Northern Territory. At all times, we had complete co-operation with the Department of Northern Australia. When the take-over of several parks—Kakadu, Katherine Gorge, Finke Gorge and Simpson's Gap—were advertised in the Gazette, on behalf of the majority party of the Assembly. I sent a submission opposing the take-over. I opposed Kakadu on the grounds of Aboriginal lands contained therein and the unreasonable and ridiculous boundaries. Katherine Gorge, Finke Gorge and Simpson's Gap are strictly areas of local significance. Under the United Nations definition, they do not qualify as national parks. They are not unique and have some Aboriginal significance. These must wait until other legislation is passed in Canberra in terms of the Aborigines before any definite resolution can be made. The Reserves Board have my sympathy. They have been co-operative in their dealings in spite of their own internal problems as a result of this bill. I reiterate what Dr Letts said on the subject of the low morale and lack of understanding which they are receiving. This area has large constitutional development implications and will be very time consuming in the months to come.

After Cyclone Tracy, I was fairly heavily involved in the formulation of the environmental policy and the presentation of submissions in town planning. This involved a high degree of interaction with various people who, although not organised at the organisation level, were organised at the individual level around Darwin. Although the now to be adopted plans do not show a great degree of change, much of the work was accepted at the initial plan stage. Earlier this year Ranger released their environmental impact statement on their uranium reserves. After long discussions with Ranger and recently a visit to the mining area with the members for Millner and Barkly, I remain convinced that conservation can exist hand in hand with production and development. Mining is essential for the development of the Territory. Public opinion and general conservation concern has to safeguard the environment. This leads on to a plea to the government in Canberra to distinguish land uses of that particular area whether it be for parks, mining or other uses.

In Darwin since the cyclone, the litter situation has become disgusting. Immediately after, I find it is understandable but more recently, with the extensive clean up program organised by both government and voluntary organisations, people's tendency to continue after, I find it is understandable but more recently, with the extensive clean up program organised by both government and voluntary organisations, people's tendency to continue after the pattern that they have been operating on since Christmas is simply appalling. There is totally inadequate enforcement in spite of the pleats of voluntary organisations and individuals. During this sitting, I will be extending the Litter Ordinance in an attempt to alleviate this problem.

Since last October, we have been reviewing the ittybitty environmental protection legislation covered by such ordinances as the Prevention of Pollution by Oil in Waters
Ordinance, Police and Police Offences Ordinance etc. Environmental protection legislation exists in other states and it is collective for protection against all pollution. It is not simply a nuisance and it is combining and stratifying all legislation on the subject. Noise, water, litter, gas etc are all considered and a good example is the Tasmanian legislation. We aim for the protection of the environment, for the control of pollution and the co-ordination of activities.

Last week in spite of the MMA strike I managed to get myself to Perth and attended the Australian Environmental Council. The Northern Territory contingent of two, the other being a member of the Department of Northern Australia, was very well received. Such subjects as a review of nuclear warships, litter tax, uranium, Concord and the interaction of the environmental impact statements between states and the federal government were discussed. In spite of several state/federal disputes, joint assessments were made, for example, over the wood chip and mineral export issue. This particular conference was both educational and vital to the development of the Territory in the total acceptance which we received.

I think the cries of the Territory could well be those of the mid 18th century American settlers “No taxation without representation”. The doubts cast on our ability to run our affairs or even know our own minds are insulting. Slowly the recognition of the executive of this Assembly is being manifested. I trust this recognition will be of a more tangible nature in the ensuing weeks. I support the motion and applaud the decision taken by the member for Victoria River in resigning from his position as Legislative Assembly representative on the DRC. The time infringement this position has imposed has been immense. Because of the increasing demands by his other responsibilities, I feel his decision is both for the good of the Assembly and the executive. I wish his successor well.

Mr POLLOCK: We have heard a great deal about constitutional development and the Joint Parliamentary Committee Report and what is laid down in the report for early transfer to the Northern Territory executive. We have to face these facts fairly and squarely. At the moment, nothing has been transferred to this executive basically for executive responsibility. As the previous speaker has mentioned, we more or less play the part of an ombudsman between this Assembly and those various government departments which we have liaison with through our portfolios and the public.

In my particular portfolio of social affairs, it has been remarked that I do not have one matter of controversy. They only cover the subjects of Aboriginal Affairs, public health, liquor, licensing, lottery and gaming, social welfare, prisons, censorship and so forth. In each of these fields, I have been able to obtain with various government departments a very good working relationship and, although I don't have any particular executive responsibility directly, I have been able to get a very good understanding with these departments, in particular the Department of Health which is a national body. That particular department is preparing a working paper, which is expected to be available in the next few weeks, on the establishment of the Northern Territory health commission. This document is eagerly awaited and arises from the health enquiry of a couple of years ago under the former Legislative Council. The Health Department does have an extensive legislative program which it desires to get to this Assembly in the coming couple of years. There is a great variety of legislation designed to bring health matters more in line with Australian standards. There is some feeling that the health area in the last few years has been slightly neglected by the former Council but we are hoping that, with the establishment of the health commission and the liaison which we are building up at the moment, the problem will be overcome.

Aboriginal affairs is an area of which the government has endeavoured to take complete control. In many respects, there has not been a great amount of liaison between that department and myself even though I have personally involved myself in quite a number of areas involving Aboriginals. I have at least been recognised in my position by being invited to Wattie Creek next weekend for the transfer of the title deeds to the Gurindji people by the Prime Minister.

I have also been to Gove on two occasions to discuss with the Aboriginal people the subject of persons living on the mineral leases at Nabalco being able to move relatively freely into the Arnhem Land Reserve. I believe that these conferences between my self, the local member and the Aboriginal people will be quite fruitful even though they are quite protracted to the layman.
With reference to liquor and licensing, the former Legislative Council received a report on the liquor situation and we are waiting to produce for this Assembly a considerable amount of legislation for the establishment of a liquor commission and a general review of the liquor and licensing situation in the Northern Territory. However, the lack of staff is the principal problem in providing this legislation. Unfortunately, in the Northern Territory, we have a rather limited number of persons with expertise in preparing legislation and the time to be able to do the necessary research. Many matters of an urgent nature are sitting waiting at the moment. The executive member for Finance and Law is supporting me in my endeavour to get this legislation before this Assembly as quickly as possible.

One area in which I have had considerable negotiations since becoming the executive member for Social Affairs is in relation to our prisons. I have inspected all prison facilities in the Northern Territory since taking up my portfolio. I have been appointed to the Correctional Services Facilities Committee which has been recently established to inquire into what facilities are required, particularly following the cyclone in Darwin. The situation is quite serious. I was invited by the Administrator onto the interview board for the appointment of a director of correctional services. Even though this matter has been quite protracted, I am hopeful that an appointment will be made shortly and this will allow correctional services to move more in line with what the modern thinking people of today expect. It will also result in a considerable review of the Prisons Ordinance and Regulations.

The departments that I have been working with have been quite helpful. I am ready and willing and, I hope, able to get on with the job that will come across the table when constitutional development and the recommendations of the Joint Parliamentary Committee Report are accepted. Then we will be able to get on with the job and move forward with the Northern Territory.

Mr RYAN: Last, but I can assure you not least, I would like to support the resignation of the Majority Leader from the Reconstruction Commission. I feel that, as a Majority Leader, he has been compromised on many occasions to prevent him from commenting in the way that he would like to. It has also cut into the time that he has available for his other jobs as the executive leader. I feel that, as a result of this, the Legislative Assembly will be able to contribute more towards the criticising and the direction of the Darwin Reconstruction Commission. I would like to also support the replacement of the Majority Leader on the Reconstruction Commission by the executive member for Community Development. I am sure he has been a great help to the Majority Leader and will continue to see that the needs and thoughts of the community will be represented on that body.

With regard to the executive powers, the situation is frustrating for the executive members to achieve their aims when they aren't able to exert any authority. It is more of an ombudsman type situation. I guess we have to put up with this until such time as the government decides to give us some powers but I would like to say again that it is very frustrating not to be able to give answers to questions, and not to be able to give directions to people to do what we as an elected body feel should be done. Like everything, I guess it takes time and I am prepared to wait for a certain amount of time and then I will have a lot to say if the executive powers put forward by the Joint Parliamentary Committee are not forthcoming.

In my particular area of transport and secondary industry, I have attempted to liaise with all the people concerned with the transport industry in the Northern Territory. It is a very important part of the development of the Northern Territory. We have been able to work with the Department of Northern Australia Transport and Planning branch who have been most co-operative in supplying us with information and most co-operative with regard to pending government legislation which is the result of discussion between that particular department and myself. They are willing to listen to our points of view and to amend the draft legislation where we insist that it should be amended. This points towards the formation of executive powers where members of the Department of Northern Australia will be transferring across to the Northern Territory Public Service.

In addition, I have been in contact with state transport ministers and the federal minister concerning problems with roads into the Northern Territory. I am afraid that I can't say that I have been successful in my attempts to get some clarification of the situation regarding the roads into the Northern Territory. We are reasonably fortunate that our roads are not too bad but the approach roads
to the Northern Territory leave a lot to be desired and, with the discussions that I have had with the Minister of Transport in Queensland and in South Australia, it does not appear that we can look to a particularly short term solution to this problem of access to the Northern Territory. However, we are making contact with these people and I am putting the point of the Northern Territory Legislative Assembly that we need access to the Northern Territory.

I visited all the major centres in the Northern Territory and have spoken to citizens of these towns with regard to transport problems. Recently, the Minister for the Northern Territory has been most co-operative in allowing executive members to attend ministers' conferences between the federal and state ministers. I was able to attend the Australian Transport Advisory Council Conference in Adelaide. As an observer, I found that the meeting itself did not come up with a lot of answers for the Northern Territory. However, the important fact is that, in attending these conferences, we meet ministers from other states and we get a chance to talk to the Minister for Transport who is yet to visit the Northern Territory. In the discussions, while we don't get particularly satisfactory answers to our problems, if we get the chance to put the arguments forward often enough, we may eventually get some sort of benefit from this. As regards the state ministers, there is not a lot of knowledge of the situation in the Northern Territory; they are not particularly aware of what happens up here. I am sure that, with executive members attending these conferences and explaining to the state ministers the sort of problems we have up here, we will further our move towards some sort of executive power status because they are particularly sympathetic when we talk to them.

At the ATAC Conference, we were able to put a motion which was supported unanimously by the state ministers that the Executive Member for Transport from the Northern Territory would be able to present papers to ATAC. This is important because the only representation we have on ATAC at the moment is the Department of Northern Australia. While we do not argue with a lot of the points that they make, there may be occasions when we do not agree or when we feel that something else should be mentioned. As a result of that support, we are able now to present to the Australian Transport Advisory Council papers to indicate the feelings of the people of the Northern Territory and I think that this is a significant move in our steps towards executive power.

I presented to the Parliamentary Works Committee a submission giving the priorities as the major group saw them on the upgrading of the Stuart and Barkly Highways. It is important that we show solidarity when it comes to Public Works Committee hearings. This certainly gives the people on the committee an idea that we do have executive members and an interesting side issue was that one of the senators on the committee in questioning my evidence asked me for certain information and I advised her that I could not supply that information. Her answer was "Couldn't you get your department to get this information for you?" I was able to advise her that I don't have a department. This is an indication of the ignorance of the situation in the Northern Territory.

With regard to legislation on transport, control of roads, motor vehicles, traffic and ports, I have been keeping close liaison with the transport planning department. While a lot of the legislation is sponsored by them, it is only after a certain amount of discussion with me.

Commercial affairs is an area which does not involve a lot of legislation. I have kept in liaison with employer groups to try to find out what their problems are and to assist wherever possible. I advise them that I am available to attend discussions which may assist me to become more aware of their problems. It is my opinion that, without good solid industry in this town which is so overruled by the public sector, we cannot hope to achieve any sort of future prosperity. There will be a time when we will have to start production ourselves and, without a solid private sector, this cannot be achieved.

The branch of the Department of Northern Australia concerned with commercial affairs has been most cooperative. We have two completely new bills: one will be the Constructional Safety Bill and the other will be the Electrical Contractors Licensing Bill which will ensure that electrical contractors have the necessary expertise to carry out the type of operation that they are involved in. I am waiting for the transfer of the Machinery Ordinance from the Mines Branch to the Commercial Affairs Branch so that urgent updating of that particular ordinance can be carried out. I have had discussions with the
unions on this particular matter and we agree that there are areas of this ordinance which have to be upgraded.

The fire service is something in which I have attempted to become involved as much as possible. While realising that we do not have control, I liaise with the Chief Fire Officer and I have been involved in the Meeve Report which has not been acted upon and, in my opinion, can’t very well be acted upon until such time as we are given some sort of power.

I have recently been given the responsibility for statements on Works. This is not particularly difficult as Works is the Department of Housing and Construction in the Northern Territory. Because of my association on the transport side, this is not a difficult situation and I will be able to liaise with the Department of Housing and Construction in any areas concerning the works situation.

I no longer have the industrial relations portfolio. It is only several weeks since it has been given to my colleague the executive member for Finance and Law. While a lot of people don’t agree with what I did with regard to industrial relations, I must point out that the actions I took and the statements I made were based on what I thought best for the Northern Territory and I will continue to make statements on what I think is best for the Northern Territory because that is why I have been elected. I do not intend to be overruled by minority groups in any way, shape or form. I will continue to make statements on what I feel is important for the Northern Territory.

In the aftermath of the cyclone, I was the Legislative Assembly representative on the Disaster Committee. I was able to see at close hand the operations of the committee and it is fair to say that, under the circumstances, the people of Darwin performed well in the first few weeks after the disaster. I am still a representative, with the honourable member for Ludmilla, on the Disaster Committee and there will be an “Operation Warmup” towards the end of October to test our facilities once again to see if we could survive the same type of disaster.

I fully support the Majority Leader’s resignation from the Reconstruction Commission and I feel that this can only result in the Legislative Assembly being able to apply to the Reconstruction Commission more pressure to turn to turn this body into what it is supposed to be.

Mrs LAWRIE: The statement of the Majority Leader was relevant, informative and it has been used as a vehicle by the executive members to impress us, to give us a fascinating insight into their competence or incompetence, into their expertise or their ineptitude and into their communication with the people of Darwin and the Assembly or with their complete lack of dialogue. I shall demonstrate later that it varies greatly from executive member to executive member.

To get back to the Majority Leader’s statement which I think should have prime importance in a debate of this kind, we see that he is officially informing the Assembly that the member for Jingili is resigning his portfolio and the member for Alice Springs is to assume the responsibility for Finance and Law. Let me say that I regret that the member for Jingili has seen fit to remove himself from the arena. I welcome, however, the member for Alice Spring’s entry into the legislative process in gradual detail. I am only sorry that both of these people can’t be a member of the executive at the one time. There is no prescription in that but it would simply mean that another member would have to resign. I make no apology in saying that, if we had to have resignations at an early stage from the executive, I am sorry that it had to be the member for Jingili. In my opinion, only a few members of the executive have really shown, since October, that they intend to work in their area of responsibility and that they can communicate with the people of the Northern Territory in a two way effort and say what they are attempting to do and show how they are attempting to do it and invite meaningful representation from Northern Territory people.

The Majority Leader is one of those people. Obviously, his workload is excessive. Because of this, I accept his resignation from the Darwin Reconstruction Commission and I think that it can only be of benefit because now he can devote that portion of the time he was devoting to the DRC to other areas which have been sadly neglected because of the lack of interest or inability of other executive members. Another person who has earned my confidence has been the executive member for Community Development although on many issues I have no intention of ever agreeing with what he says or the way he says it. However, I give him full marks because he is
out working in the community stirring up informed opinion, presenting it and being prepared to talk to other members of this Assembly who may not necessarily agree with him about what he is doing. It is a courtesy which is not often extended by executive members. Perhaps that is their prerogative and they certainly have a majority in this House. However, if they forgive their own sweet ways without taking cognizance of local opinion, having been in the Territory in some cases a short time and not having travelled around, they are going to isolate themselves from the people they purport to represent and that would be most unfortunate. As far as it is unfortunate for them, I could not care less but, if it becomes unfortunate for the Territory, I do care most deeply.

I have spoken of my admiration for the way in which the Majority Leader and the executive member for Fannie Bay carried out their allotted tasks. Until his retirement, the honourable member for Finance and Law also exhibited an intense interest in his portfolio and an ability to disseminate this interest and to speak clearly and plainly and tell the people what he was doing and why.

In welcoming the honourable member for Alice Springs as an executive member, I would say that of all the members of the Country Liberal Party, with the possible exception of the Majority Leader, with whom I have had contact and discussion over the past 4 years, the greatest discussion would have been with the member for Alice Springs. That of course does not make him any better for it; it might make him worse, he might have been subject to some of my wicked ways. But the outstanding attribute of the member for Alice Springs is that even when he is disagreeing violently, he will listen, talk, communicate, argue, put his point of view and travel around the Territory to talk to the people. He does not sit in a castle saying "I am an executive member" or "Aren't I wonderful", as we have had exhibited in these incredible speeches today. The honourable member for Alice Springs will get off his backside and get out amongst the people and actually achieve something. As I have said, I am only sorry that both the member for Alice Springs and the member for Jingili are not both on the Executive.

The Majority Leader talked about his decision to tender his resignation from the commission and spoke of the need for another Assembly representative. I hope that the Assembly, through its representative, will take a much closer part in the activities of the Darwin Reconstruction Commission. The honourable member for Port Darwin and myself have asked many questions, not only at this sitting but at other sittings pertaining to the operation of that commission and it was rarely that we were able to get direct answers. They have to be referred to the commission. I don't regard this particularly as the fault of the Majority Leader; he has simply had far too much on his plate, especially with an inexperienced executive having to back him. For the future, whoever represents this Assembly on the commission has to understand that he is an Assembly representative, not the Country Liberal Party representative, not a person on the commission who is not required to report back to this Assembly. At the last sittings of this Assembly, I challenged the commission to show why its agenda items were not publicly displayed. Perhaps, Mr Speaker, in view of motions which are to be presented I should save further debate for a following day but, in acknowledging the tremendous work the Majority Leader has put into the commission and accepting his resignation, I do commend to honourable members my past comments. Whoever goes onto that commission is going to have a hell of a job and is going to be called to task by this Assembly—at least by myself and other sympathetic members if not by the Assembly as a whole—and will have to report most fully on what is happening in that incredible place, the DRC if it is permitted to continue.

The Majority Leader spoke of other areas of concern, the beef industry, primary industry, secondary industry; there would not be one person in the Territory who does not share his concern of the plight of industry generally. It is a pity, Mr Speaker, that you can't occupy two positions, one as Speaker of this Assembly and another on the Executive where you should have been from the beginning, dealing with primary industry and the problems facing this Territory. Primary production is not a field in which I have great expertise but, having lived here for many years and having travelled extensively through the outback and having many friends engaged in the primary industry right throughout this Territory, I have refused to be considered simply a Darwin based person. I am devastated at what faces primary industry in the coming few years. The honourable Majority Leader clearly is going to have to devote a
tremendous amount of time to this. I am only sorry Mr Speaker that he won’t have your expertise to draw on.

I want to turn to some of the remarks made in the course of this debate by executive members. The Majority Leader spoke of his concern for wildlife and conservation. It is probably of interest to the Assembly and the people of the Territory that at a recent visit to Canberra, when both the member for Victoria River and myself were there, we obtained an interview with the present Minister for Conservation and Environment Mr Berinson. It is my opinion that to have contact in the company of the Majority Leader with this Minister was of benefit to the Territory and most particularly to the cause of sensible environment protection within the Northern Territory. I don’t feel I can possibly speak on behalf of the Majority Leader, but from my assessment it was productive, informative and an indication of better things to come.

The Executive Member for Resource Development spoke of mining in Arnhem Land. I believe I am not being unfair when I précis his remarks as “Quick, let’s have mining in Arnhem Land”. Neither the Executive Member for Resource Development nor the honourable member with responsibility for the environment bothered to qualify it. Did they mean all mining in the Top End? That certainly was what one would gather listening to both of them. There was no qualification, no delineation of areas, simply, “We have a resource there, let us mine it”. There was no concern at all for any other aspects, any other land use, any other potential which might be upset. This is not going to be an anti-mining crusade by me. Mining is a vital industry but if ever I get up and say “Mining in toto must be permitted”, I hope it is the last speech I ever make. That is a most illogical one-sided view and one which I had never expected to hear expressed again in this Assembly. I hope that the Executive Member for Resource Development will qualify and amplify his remark or else say straightforward what I believe he implied in his speech, that all mining should go ahead regardless.

Most members of this Assembly, at least those who have lived here a while, would understand that in the top end of the Northern Territory uranium mining presents special problems and those problems are either mitigated or enhanced depending on the area which one is talking about. I don’t believe that it would be proper for me to name companies at this point—I may in future—or to name areas. Suffice it to say that some mining can probably go ahead with a minimal disturbance to the environment but I am not yet satisfied that that minimal disturbance can be as closely controlled as we would hope. I will also state unequivocally that certain other mining in the Top End must never be allowed to go ahead, that the land is so fragile and the results would be so dreadful that to consider mining certain parts is reprehensible but, as I have tried to point out, simply to say “mine” or “not mine” in the Top End is simplistic. One has to define, if one has executive responsibility, the level of mining and the areas.

The member for Fannie Bay made some reference to the magnificent leadership given by the Assembly following Tracy. What a lot of rot! If ever a place faded into the background, it was the Northern Territory Legislative Assembly, hand in hand with the Corporation of the City of Darwin, and that was most unfortunate. There were only a handful of Assembly members who actually went through the cyclone. I think there were 4 of us; there might have been 5. The others returned as soon as they could and we all did what we could, but no member of the Assembly—for God’s sake!—did one bit more than any other Darwin person. I don’t believe the Assembly showed the way and took control. Unhappily, it wasn’t within their province to assume control, I wonder what would have happened if it had been? There was control, firstly, by the local bureaucracy, who did a pretty good job, seeing the place was an absolute disaster area in a literal sense and everything was catastrophic. They were closely followed by control by Major-General Stretton who worked under intense pressure until he got out. We then had a sitting of this Assembly when I believe the Assembly gave away its democratic rights in accepting the legislation put before it, meekly swallowing whatever the bureaucracy put up. We suffered for 6 months under that legislation—not simply the Assembly but the people of the Territory and that was the fault of the majority party. I will not listen without replying
to statements that the Assembly was heroic and magnificent. What a lot of rot! We were no better and no worse than any one else.

Mr Withnall: We might have been a bit worse!

Mrs LAWRIE: We might have been a bit worse.

The honourable member also interested me when he, as a sort of throwaway line, mentioned that it was Country Liberal Party policy to have a single housing authority. A single housing authority, as the member for Alice Springs would know, is something about which I have been trying to get some information for the past four years and so has he. I commend to the Executive Member for Community Development and Housing the thought that, having incorporated that little throwaway line in a recital of how great the executive members are, he could amplify it, come down to tintacks and tell this Assembly just what is the policy of the Country Liberal Party, how it is to be implemented, how it will affect low income earners, specialist groups and the proposed transfer of public servants from the Commonwealth Public Service to a Northern Territory Public Service because the unions are going to be vitally interested. I doubt if the honourable member would have made such a statement without some backing, and I can assure him that I am eagerly awaiting a detailed statement of the policy on housing.

The Executive Member for Consumer Affairs spoke of deficiencies in consumer legislation. I guess anyone who sat through the debates in the old Legislative Council must have uttered hollow laughter with me. Tom Bell set up a committee to enquire into consumer protection some three years ago. It was a joint party committee; it devoted a tremendous amount of time to the subject and produced a most commendable report. I respectfully suggest that the honourable member having that area of responsibility read the report and look back with the aid of the librarian and other committee members at the material which that committee considered and presented in its report. She would save herself and some persons working on her behalf a hell of a lot of work. Consumer affairs has been well-researched. The basis of legislation was prepared in the old Council and full marks to Tom Bell for the tremendous amount of effort he put into it.

The executive member having responsibility for prisons spoke of his appointment to Correctional Services Committee. That’s great. All we need in the prison system is another blasted committee. I wish him well on it. I am aware of the committee’s existence.

Mr Pollock: You are on it too.

Mrs LAWRIE: No, I am not on it. I would like to know just how many committees have been established for the purpose of considering what is necessary in a prison system. I will give him one thing; there has been a cyclone and Fannie Bay to all intents and purposes blew away. But I also commend to the Executive Member for Social Affairs the thought that he can save his committee a hell of a lot of work. Just ask the Librarian and the Clerk, whose staff are ready, willing and able to assist, for all the reports of the various committees since 1938—would you believe it?—when a report was put in that we needed a new jail. He will save the present committee a lot of work. I advise him to talk to the member having executive responsibility for Finance and Law who travelled around Australia with me as a member of the committee chaired by Mr Justice Ward, the member for Ludmilla as he was then, inquiring into the problems facing people in the prison system in the Northern Territory.

He also mentioned that he had been invited to sit on the selection panel for a Controller of Prisons. I will give the honourable member, if he wants it, a copy of the debates which took place in this Chamber on the rapid turnover in the merry-go-round of various controllers. He has my best wishes, Mr Speaker, in hoping that a controller be appointed soon, and that that controller will be the best man for the job. For God’s sake let him get on with it because it is years now since we have had a controller.

He also mentioned, in another of those glorious throwaway lines by the executive members, a parole board. It is great to hear about the parole board too. The legislation for that was passed approximately three years ago. There have been questions asked at just about every sitting and in private: “Where is the parole board? Has the Administrator’s Council considered it?” The honourable member for Victoria River will know full well that I am going to get to my feet and ask him that tomorrow morning. I have asked it at every session so far. Why stop now? The legislation went through three years ago so let us not
assume that, because we have the honourable member for MacDonnell sitting in the chair, all of a sudden the Territory, thanks to him, has a parole board. If it is ever established, it will be because of the instigation and forethought shown by members of the old Council who continue as members of this Assembly.

Mr Withnall: No thanks to him.

Mrs LA WRIE: To get back to my original comment, I thank the Majority Leader for this report on the state of nation. I think that it is probably a worthwhile exercise to have one at the beginning of every sitting, a résumé of what is going on. If it is going to be used by all the executive members to stand up and say what a wonderful job they have done, then I suppose that we will all fall asleep when the Majority Leader sits down. His report has relevance, it is to the point, and I have made it clear that some members of his executive have earned my respect for the way in which they work. I will continue to offer my close cooperation and any undertaking I give to them will be honoured but I believe the people of the Territory as a whole should have faith in their executive, even though I readily acknowledge the powers which have not been thrust upon them. Remember that the people of the Territory are paying a fairly large amount of money for these executive members. I think that before I can join in their mutual plaudits, I must ask them to produce a little more work and a little less talk.

Mr WITHNALL: When I heard this morning from the honourable member for Victoria River that he proposed to resign as a member of the Darwin Reconstruction Commission, it would be trite to say that I was glad. I had wondered why he had taken the job in the first place because it seemed to me that being a member of this Assembly and being a member of the Darwin Reconstruction Commission were two jobs that simply would not mix. More particularly did I think that, being a Majority Leader responsible for policy, so far as there is any policy in the Northern Territory, he could not mix with a Reconstruction Commission created by a Commonwealth act and dominated by the Commonwealth Public Service and the Commonwealth Government itself. Therefore I express my pleasure at his announcement that he would resign. I do not express my pleasure, however, at this moment that he thinks that the honourable member for Fannie Bay ought to be appointed instead. The criticism I have just delivered against the appointment of the honourable member for Victoria River is just as effective a criticism if it is directed in respect of the honourable member for Fannie Bay. I do not see that any member of this Assembly should align himself by appointment to the Darwin Reconstruction Commission, particularly since I understand that the Commission has indicated and insisted that nothing that goes on at any meeting of the commission shall be disclosed to any member of the public. That seems to me to be quite ridiculous. That it is a fact seems also to be borne out by the fact that the honourable member for Victoria River has never reported to this Assembly or in public at any place, so far as I know, what has happened at the Darwin Reconstruction Commission. It seems to be a secret society and the honourable member for Victoria River seems to have gone along with that secrecy and has not been prepared to make any public statement about the decisions of the commission but has left any statements to the chairman of the commission itself. I for one disagree with that entirely. There are many things about the Darwin Reconstruction Commission that I disagree with, but I certainly disagree with the proposition that it should be a secret society.

I suggest, Mr Speaker, that it is quite improper for any member of this Assembly, whether he be an executive member or not, but especially if he be an executive member, to be a member of the Darwin Reconstruction Commission. No member of this Assembly was elected for this purpose and no member of this Assembly can possibly work and serve 2 masters. Members of the Assembly have certain objectives set out and they are not the same objectives as those of the Darwin Reconstruction Commission. Consequently, if you become a member of that commission and remain a member of this Assembly, then you are trying to serve 2 masters and it is a piece of nonsense to expect that you can. I think that, although the honourable member for Victoria River has not said so, this realisation may possibly have been 1 of the motives behind his resignation. I would think, that being the case, he is being a little unfair to wish upon the member for Fannie Bay the same sort of problems, the same sort of difficulties and the same sort of criticism that he is likely to get, at least from the opposition in this Assembly.

The Majority Leader announced the appointment of Mr Kilgariff as the Deputy
Leader and the executive member responsible for finance and law. I wish him well. I wish him well because he has a job which has to do about nothing. In point of fact, that is the whole story of the executive. The state to which executive authority has got in the Northern Territory today is much ado about nothing. At this stage, in spite of all sorts of assurances from the Minister and the Prime Minister and the Joint Committee, we have got exactly nowhere. I listened quite carefully to the Majority Leader to find out whether he had in fact got anywhere with the transfer of executive power but I find that he had no such statement to make. He did not even have any statement to make about any negotiations. Let's face it, when we talk about executive members, we are dealing with people who are trying to nibble at the edges of executive power of the Northern Territory and not succeeding at all because they have no executive power.

Statements made by executive members that they have been able to achieve this and achieve that don't represent any achievement at all. They represent only the fact that the Commonwealth Public Service is being gracious enough to talk to them, no more than that. When you look at the Urens and the Endebys and the Whitlams of this world and listen to them, you know that they are dedicated to ensure, not only that there will be no regional government in the Northern Territory but also that the states themselves will be phased out of power and authority. Where are we likely to get? Against this background of lack of authority, lack of function, lack of a job to do, I found the speeches of the executive members to be a little false. I rather thought they were endeavouring to make good what they had done or what they had not been able to do in order to justify their position. It reminds me of Little Jack Horner who sat in a corner eating his Christmas pie because they are sitting in a corner in which there is no authority available to them and where the best they can do is to eat the humble pie of the Commonwealth Public Service. This afternoon and this morning, they put in their thumb and they pulled out a plum and said "what a good boy am I". That's what it is all about: people talking about what they have tried to do, people talking about what they would like to do, but people who cannot possibly justify what they have done because they have not had authority to take one single decision. They have not had authority to tell one single person to do something or not to do something and I suggest that this will continue. This is the attitude that the Commonwealth Government insists upon and will insist upon. By making these remarks I am not criticising any individual member for this lack of effort; I am criticising the fact that we have 7 executive members who just simply don't have the jobs to do.

Mr Ryan: We present legislation.

Mr WITHNALL: I would agree with the honourable member for Nightcliff that some of them could not do the job anyhow but my chief criticism is against the fact that they simply don't have a job to do and that it is a sort of circus to ask them to get up and say what they have done. I don't know the answer; I don't know what I can do to achieve any result. It seems the Commonwealth Government is hellbent on a course which will leave the Northern Territory a sort of legislative playground for the Endebys and the Urens of this world, a playground in which they can exercise all their socialist tendencies which they can't exercise anywhere else because they don't have legislative authority. It seems that nobody in the Northern Territory is going to be able to say in the future what should be done from day to day, but some person in Canberra will issue an instruction, perhaps months after it ought to be done, perhaps after it's much too late for it to be done at all, as to what will be done in the Northern Territory. I can only do what I am doing now and cry "For God's sake let us try to stop this sort of thing. For God's sake let us try and get it across to somebody at some time that we do have some concern for our own affairs, that we are capable of looking after them, that we don't need a member for any electorate in Victoria or Tasmania or Queensland or Western Australia to look after us. We want some sort of local autonomy here!"

I was the chairman of a select committee in 1958 which produced the first report on constitutional development in the Northern Territory. I said that the greatest single objective was the creation of a local executive. Although subsequent committees have seen fit to think that the legislative authority was more important, and a fully elected legislature was much more to be desired, I have never changed my opinion. Many years from 1958, we are still without any local executive authority. I would be glad to hear, not the sort of speeches that I have heard today, but a
speech from some executive member of this Assembly, if I can use that curious term, saying that he had been to see a minister of the Crown and put a proposition about the sort of authority we want here. I would have liked to have heard a statement that there was some sort of consultation with the Commonwealth Government, not just statements such as: "We would like to co-operate with the public service; we have done this for the public service". It seems to me that that sort of action only firms the attitude of the public service and the Government. If you are going to get power, get out and get it; don't sit down and wait for it.

**Dr Letts:** I had not intended to speak on this debate that my earlier statement be noted but I think that I should say a couple of words, more by way of personal explanation than anything else, on the reference that the honourable member for Port Darwin made to what he suggested was a ruling of the Reconstruction Commission in some way binding the commissioners to refrain from speaking in public on the affairs of the commission. I say two things at this stage. The matter of pronouncements and statements from the commission has been discussed in the commission and some members had the view that perhaps only the chairman of the commission could make a statement relating to commission affairs. I have never subscribed to that ruling and I have made it quite clear in the commission that I am not willing to be bound by it for the very reason that I knew that I was going to be asked questions. I knew that matters would arise from time to time which it would be expected and proper for me to comment on.

The honourable member went further and suggested that I have never reported to the Assembly or the public on the affairs of the commission. I don't quite know where he has been for the last eight months but if he does cast his mind back, he will perhaps recall that the reversal of the original Town Plan for Darwin and the decision that rebuilding would take place in all suburbs and that the northern suburbs would not be excluded was made on a resolution, put forward by me and seconded by the mayor. That was public knowledge at the time as a result of a statement by myself and the mayor, even though it didn't get a great deal of prominence in the media. He may recall also that, on the occasion of the resignation of Sir Leslie Thiess, I made a statement which broadly covered some of the ills and problems of the commission at that time. He must have been absent from the Chamber on the occasions when I have given what I was pleased to call an account of my stewardship in the commission. While the act gives the Assembly the power to appoint a member to the commission, it does not provide for any accountability for that member back to this Assembly. I have done my best to do what I think the members of the public and this Assembly would want in giving whatever information I could. Finally, as far as making information public is concerned, I know that the members of the media are aware that the admission of the media to part of commission meetings is largely the result of my activities to get that done. There are other examples that I could give.

Concerning his suggestion about the difficulties of an Assembly member also being on the commission, especially if he happens to be an executive member, I can't agree with the honourable member for Port Darwin. I realise that there is no compulsion under the act for this Assembly to appoint a member to be a representative on the commission. However, from my knowledge of the commission affairs, I believe that it is very important that this should still be the case. Some of the reasons that I put forward for that are that the commission, including some members who have no knowledge of Northern Territory affairs and virtually no knowledge of the existence of this legislature, from time to time attempt to do things under the act, by way of regulation or by way of notice, which would cut clean across the proper responsibilities of this body. Unless there is somebody there who has close knowledge of the legislation and the operation of this legislature, these things might improperly slip through.

The question of the replies to questions would be made much more difficult. They may be far from perfect now but if somebody outside this Assembly was responsible for giving the information to interested members, I think everybody would agree that it would be much more difficult. If it was somebody other than an executive member, there would be complications in providing information which members so eagerly seek. It is quite probable that from time to time this Assembly will be called upon to provide legislature requirements to amend Northern Territory ordinances or regulations to meet genuine needs that do arise from the operation of the
commission. If that is so, it is much more convenient to promulgate that legislation by having an executive member who is in charge of that area of legislation.

Finally, it would be the height of absurdity, and contrary to the very principles that I know that the honourable member for Port Darwin believes in, to say that we should appoint somebody who is not an elected member of the Territory. There are too many appointed people associated with this commission now. At least, if we had somebody from this Assembly, he will be an elected person and not an appointed person to add to some of the flaws which may be in the composition of the commission.

Mr KILGARIFF: We have had a discussion to outline the state of affairs in the Northern Territory today. I believe the information presented has been genuine but, in some areas, it has not been accepted as such. There are one or two remarks that I would like to make. First, I would like to lend my weight to refute the suggestion that the Majority Leader has resigned because he cannot work under two masters. This is definitely not the situation. It has been clearly indicated that he resigned because of his workload and there is nothing else to it but that.

While the Majority Leader has been on the Darwin Reconstruction Committee, he has not operated in a secret way. I don’t know, but perhaps he might have made public statements outside this Assembly. Certainly, within the Legislative Assembly, he has answered questions that relate to the Darwin Reconstruction Commission. In answering those questions, he has made public any information that he has. I don’t think that we can say that his membership on the Darwin Reconstruction Commission has not been to the advantage of the Assembly or the people.

The honourable member for Port Darwin has said, and quite rightly so, that for many years he and others have been endeavouring to bring about constitutional change in the Northern Territory. I suppose that he has contributed as much as anyone else in this particular field and one of the targets has been a local executive. The local executive has been belittled this afternoon. Let us look at the situation and let us be fair under the present circumstances. The honourable members did not come in here to say that their little plums come popping out of a pudding or anything like that. They have come in to say fairly and squarely what their situation is today and they have indicated the problems that they are experiencing. The point that the honourable member for Port Darwin has put up is legitimate to the extent that the executive members have not got executive responsibilities as a state minister has. The state minister has the executive responsibility for looking after a department. He has told us to go out and get them. The situation is that we have gone out and we are going out to get it, but we are in this interim period. We have gone to the Minister. There have been many discussions with Dr Patterson and it is through him that many of the recommendations that have been made in the Northern Territory report have been followed up.

Mr Withnall: Tell us about those meetings and those recommendations.

Mr KILGARIFF: On several occasions, the honourable Majority Leader and myself have discussed the Northern Territory report and we have pressed for various things to be done. He has done these things. Before you go into an instant executive, some things have to happen. There has to be the setting up of an executive staff to back up responsibility. There has to be changes and legislative action has to be taken by the Australian Government. What has happened up to date? Through the representations of the Majority Leader, the Minister for the Northern Territory has agreed that certain things should be done to set up local executive staff. Advertisements have been placed throughout Australia and a large number of applications were received—over 200. There have been many interviews and recommendations are ready for them to be appointed. It is back into the Australian Government’s hands now; it is back into the Minister’s hands for the creation of these positions.

Mr Withnall: Forget about staff. We are talking about work and function. You must have the work before you have the staff.

Mr KILGARIFF: There has to be this interim period of change over. I would be most happy if the honourable member would indicate during this meeting what further action can be taken.

Mr Withnall: You haven’t told me what you have done yet.

Mr KILGARIFF: There have been discussions with the Minister, the Minister has gone back to Government and the
Government has indicated that a committee is being set up.

Mr Withnall: Another committee!

Mr KILGARIFF: It is my understanding that in this next short period, if it already hasn't happened, recommendations will go to Cabinet about the Northern Territory report. I'm all for going out and getting them, but, in this particular instance, it is back in the Australian Government's hands. I fail to see what more action can be taken because this is in the corner of the Australian Government.

Mr Withnall: Give me the job.

Mr KILGARIFF: The executive members have been treated quite harshly but they are executive members in this interim period. When responsibility comes, the executive will be in a position, because of a smooth transitional period, of accepting that responsibility. In this interim period, these executive members are shaping up and preparing for responsibility in accepting the responsibility of a state like minister. Now in the meantime—

Mr Withnall: They can't accept the responsibility. They haven't got power to do anything; there is no responsibility without authority.

Mr KILGARIFF: What are the executive members doing now? They have the responsibility of overseeing the various items of legislation, liaising with government departments, liaising with Australian Government ministers so that the laws of the Territory come into this Legislative Assembly from the various authorities. This is one of their responsibilities. At the same time, in this interim period, they are taking the viewpoint of the Northern Territory to various Australian state ministers' conferences. Surely this must be of some advantage. We have many statutory authorities in the Northern Territory and the executive members are liaising with them. Don't let us belittle the genuine preparation for a changeover into a fully fledged executive. Don't let us water it down and say that it is a poor effort.

Mrs Lawrie: It is a poor effort.

Mr KILGARIFF: Let us recognise that it is a genuine effort in preparing for this further executive responsibility.

Mr Withnall: Let us not boast about it either!

Mr KILGARIFF: It is not a matter of boasting about it. It has been said in public and in the press that the Legislative Assembly was not communicating and this is a genuine effort to let the people of the Northern Territory understand what was going on and what the executive members are endeavoursing to do. I do not believe that when an executive member who spoke today used the first person "I" that could be taken as boasting; it is just a personal indication of what he is endeavouring to do.

I noted the concern of the member for Nightcliff, particularly when she was speaking of the select committee that she participated in concerning consumer affairs. She was making a comment on the honourable member for Education and Consumer Affairs' statement. The consumer affairs report has not been lost and, some two weeks ago, action was commenced to read much of the select committee report.

Mrs Lawrie: That wasn't mentioned was it? There was not credit given where it was due.

Mr KILGARIFF: This select committee report has now been referred to the honourable member for Education and Consumer Affairs.

Mrs Lawrie: You never mentioned it; credit where credit is due.

Mr KILGARIFF: I'm sorry. I have misunderstood the interjection. All I was saying was that this particular report on consumer affairs has not been lost. It has been referred to executive members and, hopefully, this and many other reports will be processed. I believe that legislation—seeing that I was on the committee too—is one of the most modern pieces of legislation on consumer affairs in Australia. The best of state legislation has been put into this. What happened was that the Government, seeing that this was excellent legislation, did not agree with it because it would mean the creation of a statutory body and they preferred it to go into a Commonwealth Department.

I do not think that there is much more that I can say on the matter. Don't let us belittle what is being done in this interim period and don't let us lose sight of the fact that two things have to happen: first, the Australian Government has to give the authority for the executive staff.

Mr Withnall: Don't worry about the executive staff until they have a job to do.
Mr KILGARIFF: Hand in hand with this, I hope the Cabinet will give us authority to take over those various functions that have been indicated in the Northern Territory report.

Motion agreed to.

MOTION
Report of Select Committee on Stabilisation of Land Prices

Dr LETTS: I move that, notwithstanding the motion, "that the report of the select committee on the stabilisation of land prices be noted", was not moved by an executive member, the motion be considered as government business.

Motion agreed to.

MOTION
Inquiry—Lottery and Gaming Ordinance

Mr POLLOCK: I move that this Assembly, pursuant to section 4A of the Inquiries Ordinance, resolves that a board of inquiry or a person be appointed to inquire into, report on and make recommendations concerning all aspects of the administration and operation of the Lottery and Gaming Ordinance and, in particular:

(1) the adequacy of the Lottery and Gaming Ordinance and related legislation and the administration of that legislation;

(2) the needs of the racing industry in the Territory and the extent of assistance that is or could be provided under the legislation;

(3) the conditions and controls under which the present off-course betting operates;

(4) whether the present off-course betting system should be replaced by a totalisator system and the revenue potential of a totalisator system as against the present off-course betting system or that system paying a turnover tax; the relative benefits of each system to the racing industry and to the public;

(5) whether the present tax per betting ticket is adequate and the desirability of its replacement with a turnover tax;

(6) the uses and distribution of revenue raised under the legislation.

Dissatisfaction with the Lottery and Gaming Ordinance has been constant over the last fifteen years or so. The ordinance has been amended time after time to attempt to achieve a more comprehensive and effective system. Unfortunately, this has resulted in a most complex piece of legislation and no one would claim that it provides the best or most efficient piece of administration. A large share of the administration of the ordinance is rested in the police and it is questionable whether police activity should be diverted to this field to the extent required. The Administrator and the Administrator's Council are also involved and it is often doubtful that the matters referred to either body merit that reference. Controversy over betting systems has raged for a number of years. The present system is for off-course betting shops, and that system has many supporters. There are also strong proponents of a totalisator system. A select committee of the Legislative Council examined this problem in 1971 but it was not able to give any firm opinion or direction.

The amount of revenue that can be or should be raised from gambling should be examined. At present, there is a five cents per ticket tax. There has been strong argument for a turnover tax to relate the tax to the size of the bet. Against this is the potential revenue raising abilities of a totalisator agency system. For the Assembly to make the best decision in this matter, we need better information. With respect, I do not believe that the Assembly has the ability or experience in gathering that information.

Again, there is the question of the distribution of revenue raised under the ordinance. The present requirement is for the fixed 65% distribution to the racing industry and 35% distribution to charities. Both aspects of the distribution are laudable but we must now consider seriously the use of revenues raised in the Territory. Revenues flow from the racing industry and reasonable support is desirable but should the revenues from this source be devoted to the extent of 65% to that industry or should some money go to other necessary Territory purposes? Should 35% go as a matter of course to charity or can it possibly be spent in other ways that lessen the need for charity?

I have only posed some of the difficulties and questions raised by the ordinance and its present administration. I do not consider the answers to the questions that I have raised are ones that members of the Assembly are best suited to find. I consider that the whole position needs examination by a person or body of persons with expert knowledge in this field.
and the best way to get the use of that knowledge and experience is by the appointment of an inquiry under the Inquiries Ordinance. I move this motion in the sincere belief that, when the Assembly has an expert report on this matter, we will be able to sponsor legislation that will make for a more efficient control of gaming in the Northern Territory with the optimum return to the Territory of revenue and the most efficient use of the revenues. The inquiry will also fulfil an election pledge of this side of the House.

Debate adjourned.

ADJOURNMENT DEBATE

Dr LETTS: I move that the Assembly do now adjourn.

Mrs LA WRIE: I draw the attention of the House to a reply that I received to question No. 476 addressed to Dr Letts. The question was: “Does the Darwin Reconstruction Commission as a whole consider all tenders received or does it delegate this responsibility to a tender committee?” I received a reply to that part of the question but, unfortunately, the reply to that part is the only reply I have received and I shall now read it:

The Darwin Reconstruction Commission as a whole considers and approves all tenders and commitments in excess of one million dollars. For projects below one million dollars, certain officers within the commission are granted delegation to commit works following detailed reports on tenders received from commission agents. The agency for over 90% of such recommendations is the Department of Housing and Construction.

That is all very interesting but I would like to read out the rest of the question which has not been answered: “If the responsibility is delegated, who comprise the tender committee and who is the chairman? Are members of the tender committee able to nominate deputies to sit on that committee in their absence and, if so, on how many occasions have deputies sat on the committee and who were the deputies, for whom did they deputise, and what position was occupied by each deputy in or in relation to the Darwin Reconstruction Committee? Who is the deputy chairman of the committee and on how many occasions has he occupied the chair because of the absence of the chairman?”

The honourable Majority Leader would be one of the people who has stood in this place time and time again and fulminated against the paucity of answers to legitimate questions. Not for one minute, do I think that the Majority Leader would willingly submit such a stupid answer to a quite detailed, considered and relevant question asked on notice. The answer is completely inadequate. All it says is that, for tenders under one million dollars, “certain officers within the commission are granted delegation to commit works”. My question was most specific. If there is a delegation, to whom is it given? Are deputies of that delegation allowed to sit? Who chairs these meetings in the absence of the chairman of the commission; who sits on such a committee discussing tenders? No answer. I asked, “Have deputies ever sat and, if so, for whom were they deputising and who was chairing the tender discussion at which they were present?” No answer.

We have heard a lot of words this afternoon about open government, ha ha! about the Darwin Reconstruction Commission, about accountability, ha ha! I advise the House and the honourable member that tomorrow morning at question time I will repeat the question on notice, tying it also to questions I asked him without notice this morning and which he guaranteed to try and obtain information as to which members of the commission consider tenders, whether deputies have sat in that position and, if so, which deputies and of whom. And most importantly, who was in the chair when they first sat. This is legitimate information. There is no question of any confidence being breached. The public have a right to know and I as an elected representative of a proportion of the public have the right to question the activities of the commission properly and specifically. This is what I have done, Mr Speaker. The answer has not been forthcoming even when the question has been on notice with plenty of time for the couple of questions to be answered. I understand the answer very well; the answer is that “We will keep the information to ourselves; it is not your business”.

I repeat for the benefit for the Majority Leader that for projects above a million dollars, the commission sits as a whole. I still want to know if deputies are included in that. As for projects below one million: “Certain officers in the commission are granted delegation to commit works following detailed reports on tenders received from the commission’s agents”. What officers? How do
they exercise this delegation? Has the commission taken the proper interest when the contracts are being let, even when tenders are being let for less than one million dollars? Or have they given staff members the right to commit taxpayers' money simply because it is below the level of one million dollars?

I will recall tomorrow morning at question time my question of this morning in respect of which the Majority Leader gave an assurance publicly that he would do all he could to obtain the answer in the shortest possible time. I will refer again to the ridiculous answer that I have received, one which never in a thousand years would I have expected the Majority Leader to try and justify because, of all people present, he more than any one else has had most to say about the way the bureaucracy would not give answers to elected members when he was the leader of the Country-Liberal Party and sitting where the honourable member for Port Darwin sits now. I ask him to hold true to his principles and answer my proper questions.

Mr KENTISH: Listening to the report from the Executive Member for Community Development this morning, I heard him mention the Aboriginal land claims in the Northern Territory. He did mention that this was a thing about which he could get no information or very little information. This matter is vital to all the people in the Northern Territory, not just the Aboriginal people and the part-Aboriginal people and the part-part-Aboriginal people. It affects the whole of the Northern Territory yet we cannot get the right information on this subject. It has been either a law or a rule that has applied for a lifetime in the Territory, that every application for land in the Territory—and I think it would apply in Australia—is advertised and made public in Gazettes. Here we find a departure from the time-honoured requirement of people applying for land in the Northern Territory. Claims are made—the last I heard there were 58 but it could be well up towards 70 now—without those claims being advertised or publicised except a very short while before each hearing. It has been a requirement that all applications throughout the Northern Territory are published many weeks in advance of the case being heard.

We have a shroud of secrecy surrounding these claims in the top end of the Northern Territory. We wonder what there is hidden. Nothing is being heard or publicised about them. In fact, it is rather a peculiar thing that the government which is behind this, a year or two ago had a lot to say about the open government they would give to the people of Australia, when nothing would be hidden that was of any moment to the people. This is a thing of vital importance to the people of the Northern Territory and they seem to have moved away from their dedication to open government. In fact, what has been happening in the Northern Territory for some time past has been rather the reverse of open government, so much the reverse in fact that one of the things that is causing an exodus from the Northern Territory is the uncertainty concerning future government decisions. We are not getting the vital information. As a member of the Legislative Assembly, I have never had such reams of press statements. It is magnificent. I have basketsful of them about everything that you would like to imagine, but there is nothing in them; there is no real information there at all. Very seldom do I see anything I did not read in the newspaper a few days or a week before. You cannot find out about things the people want to know at all. We have this matter of the hidden land claims of the top end of the Northern Territory.

We wonder who is making these claims because the latest thing in the Territory is that everyone who can identify or wishes to call himself an Aboriginal becomes an Aboriginal. I have not claimed "Aboriginality" myself yet but there it is. This used not to apply but this definition has now come to us and it could apply to a full-blood Aboriginal or a part-Aboriginal or a part-part-Aboriginal or a part-part-part-Aboriginal. We do not know where it would end, but anyone in those categories which I have mentioned could claim land.

The Woodward Report defines very clearly that in the reserved areas, which are one fifth of the Northern Territory approximately, the claims for Aboriginal land would be confined almost entirely, if not entirely, to traditional owners who would almost always be Aboriginal people. We have no information about these claims in the top end. Where are they? Are they in Aboriginal reserves or are they a general application for all the free crown land in the top end of the Northern Territory? Where are they? Who is making these claims and what sort of land is involved? We do not know any of these things. The people of the Northern Territory and the Legislative Assembly should have more information
about this situation because land is vital to people of the Northern Territory.

We have seen in the past that the great Queen from over the seas in a moment of generosity created a great block of freehold grants from Darwin to Adelaide River—Queen Victoria’s freehold land grants. This caused stagnation and difficulty with land in the Northern Territory for a hundred years or more. There was no obligation to develop or do anything with this land; there were no taxes to pay. I have some misgivings that somewhere along the line we may be heading for another of these Queen Victoria situations which could cause another hundred years or more of utter stagnation in the Northern Territory. Like the honourable member for Port Darwin, I have not any confidence in the wisdom and foresight of the Whitlams, the Enderbys, the Urens and Bryants and the people who come to the Territory to show us how to do things up here and to hide from us the truth about what is going on.

Mr KILGARIFF: Since December 25 when Tracy visited Darwin, there have been a hundred and one newspaper articles and very many reports on the overall damage caused by Tracy and the experiences of the people have also been documented. What I would like to do this afternoon is to put in Hansard an expression of my esteem for the Northern Territory Legislative Assembly staff because there is no record in Hansard of what happened to the Assembly and to the staff or of the work that the staff carried out in those two weeks. As the honourable member for Nightcliff said today, all people in Darwin did a tremendous job and it would be very difficult to pick out one person from another, but I would like to speak briefly on the situation as I saw it as a mark of personal esteem for the staff when I was the Speaker for a brief few months.

My notes read: “At the time of the cyclone, the thirteen positions on the Legislative Assembly establishment were occupied with three of the staff on leave. The Clerk was in Guatemala, one stenographer was in Fiji, and the clerk Hansard was on local leave. Most of the staff reported to the Acting Clerk immediately after Christmas Day. One who had reported also announced his intention of going to Mount Isa for the remainder of the Christmas leave period but was unable to return; a permit was obtained in January and he returned to duty. All other staff in Darwin returned to work on 30 December.” I arrived in Darwin after the cyclone. I came up to see what had happened to the Assembly and what had happened to the staff. I arrived on Boxing Day to find that the whole of the staff that were in Darwin had reported to the Deputy Clerk, Mr Thompson, to indicate that they were alive. The Assembly was practically destroyed. The building was practically unroofed; the ceiling was down; the offices were destroyed; the trees were blown down; the printing section was completely demolished with the debris having blown completely across the grounds; the breezeway and all those buildings on the sea side were in a very poor condition; the members’ offices on the southern side were demolished; the lounge was unroofed and the ceiling was blown in; the members’ offices in the “black hole” was in a very poor condition. This whole complex was in a very poor condition.

As soon as the ABC was functioning again, a call was put out to the staff and every staff member in Darwin came to work on Sunday the thirtieth. They came to work, many of them injured, many of them in poor condition and I wish it to be placed on record that the whole staff turned out to assist in doing some recovery work on the Assembly when they could well have been at home looking after their own problems. The men were asked to turn up, but not only did the men turn up but the ladies asked if they could come too and they did. Throughout that whole period until the date of the first emergency meeting on 3 January, the staff disregarded their own personal affairs, disregarded their home conditions and toiled here to get the Assembly into some sort of condition sufficient for an emergency meeting on the third. That work continued and we had a third meeting on 7 January. That was when the Clerk arrived back from Guatemala. He had been in the jungles of Guatemala. He asked whether he should come back; I requested that he return and forthwith he travelled many thousands of miles to come back and assist the Assembly. Over the ensuing period when the staff of many government departments in Darwin went down from 100% down to 50%, 40%, 30%, the staff of the Legislative Assembly remained in full force and there was not anyone missing other than a person who had been on leave.

The staff, like most people, suffered extreme home damage. With two exceptions, all houses occupied by the staff suffered major damage. Three were totally destroyed, five
were uninhabitable and urgent work had to be done on the remainder to make them at least liveable to some degree during the wet.

In my few months as Speaker, I have found it an experience to work with the Legislative Assembly staff and the least I can do now, at last being in a position to speak on the floor, is to indicate my esteem for the manner in which they carried out their duties.

Mr POLLOCK: My first subject concerns the previous Speaker, the member for Alice Springs, Mr Kilgariff. I feel that this is something perhaps which has been overlooked to a degree today in that we have not actually recognised the great amount of work that he has put into his short term as Speaker of the Assembly and the great drive that he put into it right from the day that he was elected, right through the crisis period over Christmas and up until a couple of weeks ago when he stood down from the speakership to accept the deputy leadership of the parliamentary party. I don’t think that I need say more other than to record my personal appreciation of the work he has done and the advice that he was able to give me as a new member which I am sure that he gave all other new members and which gave them the confidence to move forward in their new positions.

The other matter I wanted to speak about briefly was raised this morning in question time and yesterday in the press in relation to police uniforms. I found the reply from the Commissioner of Police quite remarkable because, in all my experience with the force in the last ten years, it would be the first occasion when the uniforms for the coming year had actually been in Darwin or likely to be distributed on time. The police uniform entitlement comes on the first of January each year and in my long experience it has been in the latter half of the year that uniforms have actually turned up. To distribute 1975 uniforms on 24 December last year for this year was quite an achievement on past records. However, the situation is that police generally this year, in particular in the southern division, have not received their uniform entitlement. Recruits have been given piecemeal uniforms; I don’t think any of them have received a full issue; they have been given a couple of shirts and a couple of pairs of strides to go on with.

In the southern division, it is generally accepted that on 1 May, owing to the climatic conditions—and this year we have had many mornings with temperatures under 10 degrees for long periods—they wear a winter uniform. Not one winter uniform has been issued in the southern half of the Territory and that has absolutely nothing to do with what uniforms might have been here in Darwin on 24 December last year. It is now almost time to go back into summer uniforms in the southern region and not one winter uniform has been issued. As has been mentioned, during the recent visit of the Governor-General to Alice Springs and Central Australia, members for the sake of uniformity wore summer trousers and winter coats. I was approached by a couple of members one night to ask if I had a couple of spare coats or trousers that I might be able to lend them to help them along. In fact, at Ayers Rock the Acting Administrator congratulated the members of the Police Force on their new look uniform. He did not know that it was a compromise of summer and winter dress and he was considerably embarrassed when he found out.

Yesterday, we saw in the press that there would be a slight modification. My understanding of the new uniform is that it is a drastic change, a change from top to bottom almost—colour, style and everything else. I only hope that the Commissioner does rattle along these people who are supposed to be supplying these uniforms and get on with providing members of the Police Force with what they are justly entitled to and the public expect to see them wearing.

It is absolutely disgraceful when members of the Police Force have not got uniforms and have to go to work in plain clothes. They find themselves in all sorts of embarrassing positions as a consequence. Other members, because they have one part of the uniform or another, have to compromise in some other way to combat the freezing conditions. They have to wear jumpers, pullovers, anything they can get hold of. As it was remarked, some of them are referred to as "Dad’s Army".

Mr TUNGUTALUM: I would like to add to what the honourable member for Arnhem has said about the Northern Land Council. The Northern Land Council has claimed approximately 60 to 70 pieces of land and I personally don’t have any information about where they are, who is making the claim and what type of land tenure has been applied for. Members probably know that there is somebody who is really behind this and telling the real Aboriginal people to claim more land in
parts of Darwin. The Northern Land Council is probably claiming approximately 10 blocks of land around the Darwin area from here to Adelaide River. I am not positive but it could be that figure. One of the persons who is pushing this matter is not an Aboriginal; he is half-Indonesian and half-New Zealander. He was not born in Australia; he is not an Australian but he is calling himself an Aboriginal and he is pushing the real Aboriginal people to claim more land. Somebody ought to stop these types of people. One of them is a white boke and he ought to be stopped. He is a European and he is a communist, and he is turning these people into communists.

The Northern Land Council is claiming more land and they probably don't know what they are going to do with the 60 or 70 plots of land. There could be 20 or 30. Some could be on Aboriginal reserves. I was on that Northern Land Council once and I wasn’t really interested. There was always somebody behind pushing and telling. The Northern Land Council ought to give more thought to what land they are going to claim.

Mr VALE: I would like to raise a matter of concern to all residents of Alice Springs and indeed the larger area of Central Australia. I refer to the present position in that we have no private general medical practitioners in Central Australia. The only private GP is presently on a well-deserved 6 weeks leave.

I suggest that the Private Medical Practitioners Association and the medical authorities in the Northern Territory get together and publicise the Alice Springs plight and advertise for private doctors. The housing authorities may also be able, or required, to assist in the provision of accommodation and surgery facilities on a short term basis.

Alice Springs, with a permanent population of around 15,000 people and up to 1,500 visitors per week, cannot afford to be without private doctors. These remarks are in no way critical of the hospital medical staff who are overworked, underpaid and performing a service above and beyond the normal call of duty. The cost to industry, to employers, to employees and housewives in having to wait up to 5 hours in the outpatients clinic in the Alice Springs Hospital could be overcome if these facilities were upgraded, but the community would immediately benefit if at least one more private doctor was encouraged to set up private facilities in Alice Springs.

Dr LETTS: I refer to the remarks of the honourable member for Nightcliff in relation to a question she asked on notice and an answer which I passed to her by hand today in order to make sure that she got it as quickly as possible. I looked at the answer before she received it. I had to look twice to see quite what it meant and I believe that she has probably, through shortness of time, misconstrued the meaning or failed to examine it closely enough to understand what it does mean.

The fact is that the first question she asked is impossible to answer in the form in which she asked it. She asked: “Does the Darwin Reconstruction Commission as a whole consider tenders received or does it delegate this responsibility to a tender committee?” There are 2 questions there and the answer to the first one is no. The answer to the second one is also no. It is impossible to answer the question in the terms she has used. The truth is somewhere in between and this is what the commission is attempting to do in spelling out in descriptive terms what happens. As I understand the answer it says this: The Darwin Reconstruction Commission as a whole considers and approves all tenders and commitments in excess of $1m. That is to say, the commission as a whole, on matters over $1m sits virtually as a tender board for the final approval. The answer continues: If a project be below $1m, certain officers within the commission are granted delegation to commit work.

That is to say, they are authorising officers or officers responsible for signing a committal document following detailed reports on tenders received from Reconstruction Commission agents. The agency for over 90% of such recommendations is the Department of Housing and Construction. What the answer means to me is that for 90% of the items that come up below $1m the matter are referred to the Department of Housing and Construction under the act as an agent of the commission and the Department of Housing and Construction reports back to the authorising officer on what its evaluation of the various tenders or options is. As everybody knows, the Department of Housing and Construction, as do all government agencies of this type, has its own built-in tender board and tender system. What we are saying is that the Department of Housing and Construction, after examining the proposals, after having processed them through its tender system and having arrived at a result which is completely
in accord with Commonwealth audit and departmental practices, comes up with the information and a recommendation to the authorising officer.

I think that the honourable member for Nightcliff has not looked at this closely enough and has not understood what the answers say. She has gone off a bit half-cocked. The only gap in the information that I can really find is that when I look back again the other 10% of the work to be committed, there is no clear indication on what happens in relation to that 10%. I will endeavour to clarify that situation but I think I have satisfactorily answered the rest of the question.

Mr BALLANTYNE: I rise to say a few words about my electorate and also to add to what the Executive Member for Social Affairs said about past speaker Mr Kilgariff who is now Deputy Leader and also Executive Member for Finance and Law. He played the role of Speaker perfectly in my book. He was always helpful, particularly to the younger members, and for that I give him thanks.

In my electorate we are having a few problems. Since cyclone Tracy there have been a lot of hardships suffered there particularly from recent strikes and lack of some specialist treatment at the hospital. Although we have a very good flying doctor service, we have not got the specialists that we need.

There is a lack of a regular mail service. Although there are regular air flights, for some reason, we never get the mail on time. We might have to go back to Cobb and Co. and get more regular service with the mail. There is a lack of fresh fruit and vegetables and such things as fresh milk; things like this are at times lacking in the town. Most of the people there use powdered milk these days.

The people in Gove do not complain too much but they are probably the most isolated people in the Territory and they are the third largest population in the Territory. I can talk about freight charges through the shipping agents. The community is being charged for high air fares and there is the inconvenience to overseas travellers caused by the lack of aircraft facilities through Darwin from companies like Qantas, British Airlines and so on. This has all been brought about by the cyclone but that is a thing of the past now.

Moreover, there is the cost of sending children to southern schools—air fares during holiday periods. The educational standard there does not go beyond Grade II which is equal to Leaving Standard. Therefore parents are forced to send their children south when they reach that standard, but there is no help given to them. Quite recently, we lost 6 very keen men in the organisation of Nabalco because of that very thing. The people had to leave so that they could take their children down south to educate them because it was going to cost too much otherwise.

Two new wings are being built at the Nhulunbuy Area School. These extensions will provide open class rooms and library facilities. I had a look at the building recently and I think it is being built around the wrong way. The entrance is to the side of the school instead of facing in towards the centre of the core of the building and they have the facilities for the air conditioning system in the front of the area. Anyone with an eye at all could see that they have built the service facility in the front instead of at the back. They have also built a great stairway down through the centre of the library. This takes up about one square of the library which is very small for the size of the school. In recommendations recently on libraries, you will find that that has been under-catered for.

The main concern to me and the parents of Nhulunbuy at the moment is the complete lack of interest of the Education Department in beautifying the school's grounds. Because of the lack of interest by the Department, the school grounds and the oval have deteriorated so much over the last 18 months that it is getting back to the bare soil. There is no grass there and it makes it very difficult for children to play in these areas. I have spoken to the Education Department about it but there seems to be a lack of finance. There is no consideration for any maintenance scheme, no maintenance scheme has been drawn up or implemented so that these things can be looked after. It is no good building a school unless you have some facilities there to keep it in good working order.

On the oval they have a sprinkler system but when they started to build the new extensions for some reason or other they cut through the piping and destroyed all the sprinklers. All you get out of the people is: "We are going to do away with that because it never worked properly in the first place". That is a complete and utter distortion of the truth because I have seen that sprinkler system working very adequately. It was an automatic system and it kept the grass growing in the dry season. Over the last 18 months the
The whole of the grounds have deteriorated, the trees lack water and it is just getting back to nearly bare ground. They have started to water the quadrangle and the sections on the outside of the school by borrowing the equipment from the Nhulunbuy Corporation who have nothing to do with the school. This is purely a government responsibility but it has become such a problem that the teachers have taken it upon themselves to do the watering. I estimate, from some knowledge I have of these things, that to topdress that whole oval, replant seed and get the sprinkler system working again would cost something from $6,000 to $8,000. They will have to find the pipes, they have lost them all now, but a proper ground maintenance procedure could easily be implemented. However, it appears there is just no money to do the work. This sort of thing is not only happening to us, it is throughout the whole of the Territory and perhaps it might even get as far as some of the main states.

The pre-school at Gove is overcrowded now. It is bursting at the seams; there is not enough space and mothers are waiting anxiously to get their young children into preschool. What does the Education Department do? They get Nabalco to bring in a demountable unit, what you call a “crib room” in the mining industry, they mount it, line it all up, connect it up to electricity—all free. The Education Department have been asked to put a couple of steps to the entrance, to connect up the water supply and paint the interior. They say there is no money to do the job. I even said that, if they could get the paint, I would do it myself. They have not even come around to supply any paint. Nabalco installed this out of the goodness of their heart but there has been nothing done to it since it was first put there some 2 months ago.

If we can’t get these things done how, after the budget next week, are we going to get them done next year? We will have no money to do it.

Mr Kentish: Parents’ participation.

Mr BALLANTYNE: Parents participation—I think that is a very good thing. Recently they spent some $5,000 on the pre-school. It was a very good effort by the parents of the town. They bought all the equipment for this new pre-school demountable.

I have had problems in my electorate with permits to enter Arnhem Land. It has always been of great concern to people. We have had a few problems with regard to going to one particular area because, as the member for Tiwi just said a minute ago, someone has told these people that it is their land and they can stop people from going through it. Certainly we agree in principle with the Woodward Report but every week that goes by there seem to be new areas established. I would like to know in black and white where these areas are, what they are and where they appear in the Woodward Report. I don’t think anyone knows quite frankly.

I believe too that most of the permit system trouble is brought about by the local Social Welfare Ordinance which in the early days applied to the Nabalco land lease there and I agree with some part of that. We have another process to go through when we go into Gove, particularly the mines area. This is the third biggest town in the Territory and we have to have a medical clearance to go into the area. I believe that this was brought about, not only by the Social Welfare Ordinance, but also because it is classified as a suspect malaria area. There are certain mosquitoes in this area that could cause an epidemic of malaria. I was once pulled out of my bed very early in the morning and asked to go to the doctor to have a blood test because they thought that one of the members of the Nabalco staff had malaria. Because I was living in the same area, I had to have blood tests. It turned out we were both clear.

I would like to know about these statistics that they take, particularly this medical check. I think you first get the certificate or the piece of paper on the aircraft and you have to sign it. Every time I return there, I have to tell them that I don’t need it because I have just been checked over last week; it is only for people coming from outside Australia. You can fly from Darwin down to Alice or any other place in Australia and you don’t have to have this sort of thing.

The reason I am leading up to the query on this check is that we have a very capable Assistant Director of Health over there in Nhulunbuy. He has a complete hand in the function of the flying doctor service and he has also a complete control of the eradication of mosquitoes in that area, and this has been going on for some time. He is a very capable man and I am sure he would be keeping his eye on this thing. That is why I query this special medical check that you have to have going in and out of Nhulunbuy. I have full
faith in the ability of the medical staff; we have Medibank now and we have one of the best-equipped hospitals in the Territory, probably one of the most modern hospitals in the Territory. We haven’t the full services but we have most things needed for that type of area. There is also a very good health program for the Aboriginals in that area. Therefore I put forward this particular bug of mine about having to have a medical check or clearance before going into the town.

I would like to speak now about the new police boat which was recently brought into Darwin. I believe that before the Darwin disaster, the Government ordered some 5 or 6 or even more police boats to be allocated to certain areas in the Northern Territory. We are one of the biggest towns in the Territory and we have one of the best harbours in the Territory and we haven’t got a police boat . . .

Mr Robertson: Neither have we.

Mr BALLANTYNE: The honourable member for Gillen says they haven’t one either. I put it to this Assembly that there should be something done about that. I asked a question about it and they said that it wasn’t in the budget so I am a bit afraid what is going to happen after the next budget—we’ll be lucky to get a row boat. If the police want a boat to go out after someone in the Arafura Sea, they have to borrow a boat. It is quite on the cards that the borrowed boat could have a faulty engine. It could be a major catastrophe if police go out in this faulty boat; they may have more problems than the people who are lost. Quite often people have been stranded overnight on small islands. We have a full record at the police station, if anyone likes to have a look at it, of all the rescues with all the times and dates. One of the first things the Government ought to do is to look at supplying boats to these areas.

Mr STEELE: I would like to say a few words on the effects of some acts of parliament on the Darwin public, the Darwin Reconstruction Act in particular. Section 54 gives me a bit of concern: “For the purposes of the determination of compensation under the Lands Acquisition Act 1955-1973 in respect of the acquisition, by compulsory process, of land in the Darwin area during the prescribed period, the value of the land at the date of acquisition shall be deemed to be not less than the amount that would have been the value of the land on 23 December 1974, if the improvements on the land on the last-mentioned date had been the same as, and in the same condition as, the improvements on the land at the date of acquisition”. I don’t know how many lawyers there are in Darwin who can interpret that.

Mr Robertson: Lawyers don’t read Yiddish.

Mr STEELE: No, maybe they don’t read Hebrew either. It does seem that over a passage of time, with the continual delay as a result of the surge-line policy—I don’t think there is a surge-line policy—in about a year from now they will be trying to apply this section of the act to those poor people who are still waiting in the surge area to do something about a house that is either half-up or half-down. These acts of parliament are determined in other places away from here and affect our lives. Senator Cavanagh has said: “Most members of the Legislative Assembly do not live in Darwin; the majority live outside Darwin. The Leader of the Legislative Assembly lives at Victoria River which is 20 miles from Darwin; he is the representative on the Commission”. Even though the Senator thinks that Victoria River is 20 miles from Darwin, I think it is probably right that the Majority Leader is the representative on the Commission.

One of the things that worries me is the valuation aspect of this particular problem. We have people being offered $28,500 for a pre-valued block which was $32,500. I have had some information today that Services and Property have offered $8,500 for a block and a $1,000 for what was left of the house. The owners objected to that and said it was not good enough. Somebody came back—I don’t know who the heck it was—and offered $10,500 for the block and $1,000 for the house. An independent valuation has shown that the $1,000 they were offering for the house was $4,400 short of the mark. I don’t know what people think about that. I think it is absolutely ridiculous. People are not going to do much good with this sort of treatment.

Referring to the matter of co-operation from public servants in the town, I have written a couple of letters on matters such as this to a particular Assistant Secretary without receiving a reply. I know the Executive has no voice and its teeth are very blunt, but I think that it is getting to the stage where we might have to try a little bit harder and make these fellows face up to their responsibilities or get
some answers from the Commonwealth, if they call it that these days.

I did run into a small problem in the last couple of weeks about the transfer of small parks to the DRC. The DRC threw their hands up in the air and said, "We don't know what you are talking about", but according to the Town Clerk the aldermen have it all worked out: "We are going to give these 8 or 10 parks to the DRC". I could not quite work that one out so I sent a telegram to the Mayor and the Town Clerk. It was very thoughtful of him to write back to let me know what is going on. He said that none of the parks mentioned was in Ludmilla so I had a look at the map and there were Gilbert Street, Worgan Street and Parsons Street—all in the Ludmilla electorate. I don't know how long he has been in Darwin. This power we are talking about just can't come soon enough because really there are some people here who really need a fair sort of a boot in the backside.

Motion agreed to; the Assembly adjourned.