Mr Speaker Steele took the Chair at 10 am.

URGENCY

Education Amendment Bill (Serial 99)

Mr SPEAKER: Honourable members, I have received a letter from the Chief Minister requesting, pursuant to standing order 153, that I declare the Education Amendment Bill 1985 to be an urgent bill. The letter reads:

Pursuant to standing order 153, I request that you declare the above bill to be an urgent bill. Passage of the bill will formalise the various changes in post-school education announced by the Chief Minister in December 1984. Any delay in the passage of the Education Amendment Bill 1985 through all stages during this sittings will hold up the transfer of accreditation powers and thereby cause hardship to Territory students. Further arrangements for the Commonwealth-funded Associate Diploma in Teaching in Aboriginal Schools will be jeopardised resulting in the loss of employment opportunities for approximately 30 Aboriginal staff.

I have considered the request of the Chief Minister and, pursuant to standing order 153, I declare the Education Amendment Bill 1985 to be an urgent bill.

MOTION OF CONDOLENCE

Mr D.D. Smith OAM

Mr TUXWORTH (Chief Minister) (by leave): Mr Speaker, as this is the first full business sittings of the Assembly since the death of D.D. Smith, I wish to propose a formal motion of condolence. I move that this Assembly expresses its regret at the death on 7 July 1984 of David Douglas Smith, an elected member of the Legislative Council for the Division of Stuart in the Northern Territory between 8 December 1962 and 30 October 1965, and places on record its appreciation of his meritorious service to the Legislative Council and the people of the Territory and tenders its profound sympathy to his widow and family.

Mr Speaker, David Douglas Smith lived in Alice Springs for 58 years. 'D.D.' or Did, as he was affectionately known, was involved in Territory development at a time when our pioneering forefathers worked under extreme conditions and were literally choked by distant bureaucracies. He was one of the truly great men who laid the foundations for the Territory of the 1980s directing the Commonwealth Department of Works from the 1930s through to the post-war era. Did Smith first came to Alice in 1927 with the Commonwealth Railways and was in charge of rail surveys. He became the first resident engineer for the Commonwealth Department of Works in 1928 and, during the late 1930s, surveyed the track that was the road between Alice Springs and Darwin. Spurred on by the prospect of war in the 1930s Did Smith constantly overran his roadworks budget which brought him into considerable conflict with Canberra. He encouraged politicians and businessmen on the possibilities for development in the Territory and was an active force in the Northern Territory Development League. He was a community-minded man and for years assisted such organisations as the CWA, scouts, girl guides and the Bath Street School. From 8 December 1962 until 30 October 1965, he was the elected member for Stuart in the Northern Territory Legislative Council. In March 1983, he received the Medal of the Order of Australia for services to the community.

Mr Speaker, Did Smith was accorded a state funeral and this motion of condolence places on the parliamentary record our tribute to a truly great Territorian.
Mr EDE (Stuart): Mr Speaker, I wish to speak to the condolence motion moved by the Chief Minister. I do so, Sir, as the member for Stuart in the Legislative Assembly, a seat this true pioneer and old time Labor man, David Douglas Smith, occupied in the Legislative Council from December 1962 to October 1965. Although I have followed D.D. Smith's footsteps in this respect, I dare say I would find it rather difficult to accomplish as much as he did for the Territory. The headlines in the newspaper article which covered the funeral of David Douglas Smith on 11 July 1984 summed up this great Australian in a few words: 'A small man who made a large mark'.

D.D. Smith made a significant contribution to the development of central Australia and the Territory through his enthusiasm, dedication and commitment, both in his professional work and in his involvement with the community. He was not only a very tough man who endured tremendous hardships and conditions in the course of establishing roads throughout the harsh country of central Australia but also a caring man who recognised and accepted his duty to contribute time and effort to the community in which he lived.

Born in Perth in 1897, D.D. Smith came to Alice Springs in 1926 at the age of 29 as an employee of the Commonwealth Railways. He resigned his position when the Commonwealth Department of Works first set up operations in Alice Springs in 1928. He became the first resident engineer for central Australia and virtually ran the whole department, shouldering the administrative and technical work as well as his own duties.

We must appreciate the conditions this pioneer engineer worked under. He lived and worked from tents in those early days and expended tireless energy orchestrating the building of roads throughout the Centre for which he earned great respect from everyone in that area. In the late 1930s, D.D. Smith surveyed the road which was to run between Alice Springs and Darwin. His commitment and strength of character was evidenced by his determination to straighten and widen the track because he sensed the approaching war and recognised the vulnerability of our northern coastline. In so doing, he overspent the budget without obtaining prior approval from Canberra for which he was criticised by Canberra and praised by generations of Territorians. He was largely responsible for much of the work on the first real road to Ayers Rock. He is also recognised for setting out most of the original town of Alice Springs.

Like many other pioneer Territorians, D.D. Smith became involved in the cattle industry when he took on Mount Allan Station about 260 km north west of Alice Springs. This property has now been purchased by the traditional owners who are running it very successfully with the assistance of his son who is also named D.D. Smith.

D.D. Smith is not just remembered for his engineering achievements. He was also known for his involvement in community groups and services. He helped establish the scout and guide movements in Alice Springs and helped start the first pre-school in the town. He was awarded the Medal of the Order of Australia in 1983 for services to the community. The large mark D.D. Smith made in central Australia is indelibly printed in its history and development. The tribute of awarding D.D. Smith the honours of a state funeral was entirely right and proper. His achievements in helping the development and progress of the Territory will always be remembered.

Mr VALE (Braitling): Mr Speaker, I would like to speak in support of the condolence motion moved by the Chief Minister for the late David Douglas Smith who was born in Perth in November 1897 and died in Adelaide on 7 July 1984. David Douglas Smith was well known as D.D. from one end of the Northern
Territory to the other. In the words of the Reverend Fred McKay, who conducted D.D.'s funeral service, he was a man of small stature who made, and will leave, a big mark in the Northern Territory.

Mr Speaker, other speakers have detailed his earlier life in Western Australia and then later in Tasmania prior to his arrival in Alice Springs. I will devote some of my time to recording at least some of his many achievements in central Australia and elsewhere in the Territory. D.D. Smith arrived in Alice Springs in 1926, 3 years before the arrival of the first train from Oodnadatta. During his first 2 years in Alice Springs, he worked with what was then known as Commonwealth Railways. He was in charge of surveys with the railways and conducted many surveys, including possible railway lines between Daly Waters and Queensland, Dumarra and Wyndham, and one that was lesser known, a survey route from Bourke to Borroloola. Independently, he continued during these and later years to push for the construction of a rail line between Alice Springs and Darwin.

In 1928, D.D. became the first resident engineer when a branch of the Commonwealth Department of Works was opened in Alice Springs. Included in his broad range of duties was responsibility for roads, rail, animal industry, Aboriginal affairs and power supply to the small pioneering town of Alice Springs and the huge area of central Australia. D.D. Smith could be accurately described as the father of the Northern Territory's roads system because it was during his years as resident engineer that an embryonic Territory roads system was established. In those days, roads were no more than graded tracks because of the lack of men, money and machinery. Nonetheless, those roads became vital to the opening up of the Territory. In fact, they were to become the lifeblood of the Territory. The most famous of these roads was, of course, the Stuart Highway. It was the anticipation of war that encouraged Smith to straighten and widen the track. In doing so, he became famous or infamous for his constant budget overruns and his battles with Canberra-based bureaucrats. But it was a road the nation and her allies would come to appreciate within a few short years. This road was sealed during the war years. Under the supervision of D.D. Smith, it was sealed in record time.

In addition to this and many other roads, he is also credited with grading the first access road into Ayers Rock. I wonder if he ever envisaged the volume of traffic that the Lasseter Highway carries today or will carry when the sealing of the South Road is completed next year. In those early days, Smith lived in, and conducted an office from, tents on a site in Alice Springs, which is now appropriately named after him. D.D. Smith Park is situated on the corner of Hartley and Parsons Streets.

As well as his involvement in the Territory transport system, he was a foundation and active member of the Northern Territory Development League, an Alice Springs-based organisation whose membership included the late Dick Ward and Eddie Connellan. Smith encouraged businessmen and politicians to visit the Territory to see for themselves the potential for development. In addition to his huge workload, Smith still found time to devote to many community organisations, including the CWA - of which strangely enough, he was at one time secretary - the boy scouts, girl guides, the Hartley Street School - popularly known by many former pupils as Hartley Grammar - and he was on the establishing committee of Alice Springs' first kindergarten. Together with his son, Did, he took up a pastoral lease at Mount Allan, north west of Alice Springs, which is owned and operated today by Aboriginals. After his retirement in 1960, he was elected to the Legislative Council as a Labor member for Stuart, on 8 December 1962, and served until 30 October 1965.
Mr Smith is survived by his widow, Dylis, sons, Ben and Did, who live in Alice Springs, a third son Graham, who lives in Whyalla, and two daughters, Helen Clyne, who lives in America, and Margaret Murray who lives in Queensland. At the time of his death, D.D. Smith had lived in Alice Springs for 58 years, and it is a great pity that men such as Smith could not have lived for another decade to bear witness to the fruits of their energies, their early labour and their vision of the vast potential of the Northern Territory.

Mr Speaker, in the words of Jim Robertson, who spoke at Mr Smith's funeral: 'His deeds have outlived him and, by the grace of God, this country will have many more like him in the future'. To his widow Dylis, and to his children Ben, Did, Graham, Helen and Margaret, I join with the Chief Minister in extending my sympathy.

Mr BELL (MacDonnell): Mr Speaker, I would like to add my comments to those of the previous speakers. I did not meet D.D. Smith until 1981. I had been living in the bush until that time. It was only upon my election to this Assembly that I became aware of D.D. Smith and his part in the Labor tradition in the Northern Territory.

I want to place on record today what I gleaned from subsequent conversations with D.D. Smith. In addition to his obvious and courageous activities as an engineer and his ability to cope with isolation and the distant bureaucracy, I detected in the man a fundamental belief in human dignity and in the equality of all men. I think that there are relatively few people who have contributed to the Northern Territory in quite the full way that he did. As the Chief Minister remarked, it was unfortunate that D.D. Smith was elected only to the Eighth Legislative Council on 8 December 1962. I think that public life is a little the poorer because his contribution to public life, in a strict political sense, was so brief.

I note that the member for Braitling referred to the pioneering efforts of D.D. Smith in road building in the Northern Territory. It might be worth suggesting in the context of this condolence motion that, in seeking as we do from time to time for appropriate names to be used for roads and highways in the Territory, perhaps his might be borne in mind, given the highly important pioneering work that he carried out. I cannot help wondering, with something of a wry smile, if D.D. Smith would not be a little surprised to hear that the road he originally cut in to Ayers Rock now bears the name of the Lasseter Highway. That is idiosyncratic for reasons which I previously addressed in this Assembly.

I said earlier, Mr Speaker, that D.D. Smith belonged to a proud Labor tradition that included people such as Jock Nelson and Dick Ward and that, underneath that, there lay a fundamental belief in human dignity and equality. I do not think that was better demonstrated anywhere than in the views and attitudes that I heard him express personally in relation to Aboriginal people. I refer not only to his views and attitudes but also to his practical achievements in working closely with Aboriginal people and the current position of Mount Allan Station to which reference has already been made. I believe that that bears practical testimony to his work in that regard.

In those terms, Mr Speaker, I wish to address this condolence motion and express my regrets to his family and my appreciation for his work in public life in the Northern Territory.

Mr SPEAKER: I invite honourable members to signify their assent to the motion by standing in silence.
Members stood in silence.

PETITION
Development of Myilly Point

Mr Harris (Education): Mr Speaker, I present a petition from 1476 citizens of the Northern Territory relating to the development of the old Darwin Hospital site. The petition bears the Clerk's certificate that it conforms with the requirements of standing orders. Mr Speaker, I move that the petition be read.

Motion agreed to; petition read:

To the honourable Speaker and the members of the Legislative Assembly of the Northern Territory, the humble petition of the undersigned citizens of the Northern Territory respectfully petitions your Assembly to take action to ensure that the old Darwin Hospital site and nurses' quarters be not used for the proposed purpose of private development of casinos, hotels etc, but that this site be dedicated for truly public purposes such as educational, recreational and cultural uses and that Myilly Point residential area remain as is with the historic houses being restored for public tourist use, and your petitioners, as in duty bound, will ever pray.

PETITION
Pornographic Material

Mr Setter (Jingili): Mr Speaker, I present a petition from 62 citizens of the Northern Territory relating to pornographic material. The petition bears the Clerk's certificate that it conforms with the requirements of standing orders. Mr Speaker, I move that the petition be read.

Motion agreed to; petition read:

To the honourable Speaker and members of the Legislative Assembly of the Northern Territory, the humble petition of the undersigned citizens of the Northern Territory respectfully shows our belief that, because it causes serious harm to the community, the Legislative Assembly should make illegal and should not legalise, regardless of how the material is classified, the possession, sale, hire or supply of any publication or video tape, video disc, slide or any other recording which consists of or contains a pornographic visual image or from which a pornographic visual image can be produced being an image which displays: (a) degradation of any man, woman, child or animal; (b) scenes of explicit sexual relations or showing genitalia detail or unduly emphasising, prolonging, repeating or dwelling upon real or simulated sexual activity; (c) sodomy, bestiality, sadism, masochism, mutilation and any other form of sexual perversion; (d) the use and effect of illicit drug taking; (e) blasphemy, indecency or obscenity; (f) unnecessary, excessive or unduly prolonged or repeated violence, horror, crime, crudeness or coarseness; or (g) matters that are likely to cause offence, distress or harm to any reasonable, mature person. Your petitioners therefore humbly pray that you will give this matter earnest consideration, and your petitioners, as in duty bound, will ever pray.
CROWN LANDS AMENDMENT BILL
(Serial 105)

Bill presented and read a first time.

Mr HATTON (Lands): Mr Speaker, I move that the bill be now read a second
time.

The purpose of this bill is to correct a technical omission in the
procedures detailed in sections 10B and 59A of the Crown Lands Act whereby the
Registrar-General is required to register a memorandum on the title of a pastoral
lease relating to the addition or excision of land. Before addressing the
provisions of the bill, I wish to foreshadow to honourable members that I will
be seeking a suspension of standing orders to pass this legislation through all
stages at this sittings. I should say also, Mr Speaker, that I have discussed
this matter with the member for MacDonnell who is the opposition spokesman for
lands, advising him of this proposal and have offered to the member the services
of the Department of Lands to brief him fully on the details of this bill should
he so desire prior to its being proceeded with on Thursday.

Section 10B of the Crown Lands Act was amended in 1982 to simplify the
procedures whereby land constituting an uneconomic area could be added to a
pastoral lease without the formality of surrender of the existing lease and the
issue of a new lease which would incorporate the additional land. Subsections
(6) and (7) of section 10B describe how this amendment is achieved by the
process of requiring the Registrar-General to register the additional land by
way of memorandum on the existing title. The concept of this amendment was
adopted from a provision within subsections (8) and (9) of section 59A of the
act which had been introduced in 1972.

Unfortunately, there was an unknown flaw which was exposed only recently by
the Registrar-General. It is highly probable that a pastoral lease will have a
mortgage registered against the title. If this is the case, the mortgage is
deemed to refer only to the original area of the lease when the mortgage was
registered and cannot include the additional land. Technically, this would mean
that, if a mortgagee wished to exercise his right under section 24BA of the act
and take possession of and sell a mortgaged pastoral property, he may not sell
that part of the property over which a mortgage is not registered in his favour.
This is an absurd situation and, naturally enough, the Registrar-General holds a
firm view that, in the case of a section 10B action or, for that matter, action
taken under section 59A, any mortgages should be discharged before the
memorandum is registered as prescribed and the mortgage be reapplied to the
amended lease. This unforeseen cumbersome requirement, especially where there
are multiple mortgages, defeats the purposes of sections 10B and 59A which were
designed to remove unnecessary steps in the operation of the sections.

Action taken recently to rationalise the boundary between Mt Bundey and
Annaburroo pastoral leases, under the provisions of section 10B, were
unnecessarily complicated due to the difficulty of tracking down mortgagees to
give their consent to the addition of uneconomic vacant Crown land to the
properties. All parties concerned expressed their dismay at the unreasonable
time that it took to complete the discharge of existing mortgages and the
lodgement of fresh mortgages for addition of land that is only a fraction of the
value of the pastoral properties. In the immediate future, additions of land to
Annaburroo and Elizabeth Downs Stations are to be registered under section 10B
of the Crown Lands Act and the transfer of an area of land from Marrakai to
Annaburroo is to take place under section 59A. Other similar transfers are to
be undertaken at a later time. The same problems are inevitable unless simple
amendments are made to sections 10B and 59A which will allow an existing mortgage to include the land added on to a pastoral lease or not include land excised from a pastoral lease. I commend the bill to honourable members.

Debate adjourned.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT
Territory Insurance Office Annual Report 1983-84

Mr TUXWORTH (Treasurer) (by leave): Mr Speaker, in accordance with section 33 of the Territory Insurance Office Act, I present the annual report and financial statements of the TIO for the year 1983-84. The year's results disclose that the TIO made an operating profit of $2.4m in its direct general insurance business which, in terms of the size of the premium income, was a commendable result. However, this profit was more than offset by a loss of $3.4m in its inwards reinsurance business. The result was an overall loss of $960 000 for the year and this compares with a loss of $2.2m in the previous year.

Mr Speaker, it will be useful to take a moment to explain the terms 'direct general insurance' and 'inwards reinsurance', in case any member is not familiar with them. Direct general insurance is the normal retail insurance with which we are familiar: household insurance, insurance on pleasure craft, fire insurance, the loss of profits insurance etc. It is business that comes directly from clients or through brokers. Inwards reinsurance refers to the acceptance of insurance premiums for other insurers. Insurance companies rarely carry 100% of the risks. Normally, they spread them amongst a number of insurers, often under the terms of a formal agreement or treaty. When such risks are accepted from other insurers, the business is known as inwards reinsurance. When risks are passed on to others, it is known as outwards reinsurance. Reinsurance treaties indicate what percentage of the original risk each reinsurer is prepared to accept and commensurate proportions of the premium income are payable as risks acceded to individual reinsurers.

Mr Speaker, when presenting the 1982-83 annual report in the Assembly last year, my predecessor indicated that the TIO was experiencing an unfavourable trend in claims on its inwards reinsurance business. That trend continued in 1983-84 as the run-off on previous business further impacted the operating results. It was indicated also that the TIO Board had commenced action to cancel or not renew inwards reinsurance treaties as they fell due and effectively, therefore, the decision had been taken to get out of inwards reinsurance business entirely. This process has continued and, at present, there remain only a handful of treaties still current and these will expire during the year. Therefore, the exposure of the office will be limited to the past periods during which the treaties were in force.

It needs to be pointed out that, although the cause of the losses is now almost entirely removed, further losses could still occur in relation to the periods when the treaties were in force. It is the nature of inwards reinsurance that some types of claims take a long time to finalise. These are known in the insurance industry as long tail claims. For example, the full magnitude of a liability claim may be dependent on the outcome of a court proceeding between the insured and some other person. It is not uncommon for such proceedings to take 2 or 3 years to be settled finally and sometimes even longer. Not until then does the full extent of the TIO's liability, if any, become known. Because of the undesirability of allowing this run-off from long tail claims to impact the operating results for future years, the TIO Board has prudently decided to include, as an abnormal item in the accounts, a special
additional provision for run-off on long tail business. This will be over and above the loss of $960,000 on the operations for 1983-84. The provision is $4.5m and has been determined after lengthy consultations with the TIO's actuary and auditors and after examining the run-off patterns and the sizes of provisions that have been made in the past by other insurers that have experienced problems with inwards reinsurance.

Lest there be any confusion in the minds of honourable members that the cancellation of reinsurance treaties might affect TIO's ability to meet claims, let me emphasise that the treaties being cancelled are inwards reinsurance treaties and not outwards reinsurance treaties. The TIO's outward reinsurance treaties remain entirely in place and are totally unaffected by recent events. The office thus remains fully protected and able to meet all claims fully.

Mr Speaker, turning to the administration of the Motor Accidents (Compensation) Act, the adverse trend reported in the 1982-83 annual report continued in 1983-84 and the scheme recorded a loss of $7.4m. The main reason continued to be the size and volume of claims under subsection (5)(ii) dealing with compensation for pain and suffering. Amendments repealing this provision were prepared during the year but, due to the prorogation of the Assembly, could not be presented until March. Because of the importance of the amendments, it was essential that members of this Assembly had time to consider and debate them. Consequently, they were not passed until June and did not come into operation until after the end of the financial year under review. Since that amendment came into effect, trends are encouraging and it is hoped that further losses can be minimised and the previous adverse trend reversed. This will allow the government to continue to contain rates of contribution at levels which Territory motorists can afford. However, regular and relatively small increases can be expected in line with increases in levels of benefits under the scheme and the movement of costs generally.

Mr Speaker, I would draw honourable members' attention to the comments in the report dealing with road accident rates in the Territory. It is an inescapable fact that the scheme's lack of viability to date has been a direct reflection of the Territory's appalling road accident rates. Not only do we have the highest accident rates in Australia but they are the highest by a wide margin. Road fatalities per 10,000 vehicles are twice as high as in South Australia and 3 times as high as in the ACT. The government believes it has played its part over the years to reduce the road toll by its heavy expenditure on roads throughout the Territory and by numerous programs to promote road safety, and it will continue to do so. The TIO is also playing its part, as are the Road Safety Council, the police force and many other groups in the community concerned with road safety. However, when all is said and done, it is the motorists themselves who have this matter in their hands. So long as some continue to have a careless or irresponsible attitude on the roads, their own safety and that of others will be at risk and the Territory's notorious record of road fatalities and injury will continue.

Mr Speaker, it is to be noted that the TIO continues to be a major force for development in the Territory and its present and planned building programs, amounting to approximately $20m, represent by far its largest property development program to date. A new office building at Katherine, worth $1.2m, was completed only last week. Extensions to the TIO building in Alice Springs are under way and a major TIO office project in Mitchell Street, Darwin, will commence in a few months. Together with existing real estate investments, loans and mortgages in the Territory and holdings of Territory stock, they add up to a direct contribution to the Territory's development of $33m. These investments represent a major and highly desirable recycling of policy holders' funds in the
Territory's development. They reflect the tangible benefits the TIO achieves for the Territory.

Mr Speaker, I move that the Assembly take note of the report.

Mr B. COLLINS (Opposition Leader): Mr Speaker, the Deputy Leader of the Opposition will provide a detailed analysis of the report itself on behalf of the opposition. I want to make a few remarks about the impact of the losses which we now know have occurred to the TIO and the things that flow from that.

Last year, I was happy to put on the public record - and do so again now - my acknowledgement of the entirely scrupulous and non-partisan way in which you, Mr Speaker, conduct the affairs of this Assembly. However, by its actions and the actions of some of its members, the Northern Territory government continues to indicate its attitude towards the Northern Territory Legislative Assembly. The Northern Territory CLP continues to attempt, on every occasion, to treat this Assembly as a private CLP club and that has been demonstrated once again this morning by that irrepressible minister, the honourable member for Fannie Bay, through his interjections concerning the fact that, because of the motion of condolence and various other things that happened this morning, which cut short the normal period allowed for question time, we were...

Mr D.W. COLLINS (Sadadeen): A point of order, Mr Speaker!

Mr SPEAKER: What is the point of order?

Mr D.W. COLLINS: The honourable member is not addressing the statement.

Mr SPEAKER: The Leader of the Opposition will address himself to the statement.

Mr B. COLLINS: Mr Speaker, the remarks I am making are entirely relevant because the Northern Territory government not only treats its responsibilities to the Assembly with contempt but treats its very heavy responsibility of managing the financial affairs of the Northern Territory with equal contempt. The Northern Territory CLP attempts to treat the Assembly as a CLP club and, as it has demonstrated only too conclusively over the last 6 months, tries to treat the Treasury as the private CLP piggy bank for the exclusive use of the Chief Minister and Treasurer. Mr Speaker, I am not quite sure how much more relevant I need to make my remarks.

Mr Robertson: Are you implying dishonesty or theft?

Mr B. COLLINS: Mr Speaker, the Chief Minister confirmed in question time this morning - and the answer stands on the record - that he was quite happy to acknowledge finally that he had personally, and we now know this for the first time, as the Treasurer of the Northern Territory, directed the removal of funds from the Northern Territory Treasury. The question addressed specifically the $2.5m which will not be returned. Last year, I raised as a matter...

Mr D.W. COLLINS (Sadadeen): A point of order, Mr Speaker! Again, the Leader of the Opposition is not addressing the matter before us.

Mr SPEAKER: The Leader of the Opposition will address himself to the statement.

Mr B. COLLINS: Mr Speaker, the debate we are conducting at the moment is entirely relevant to the management by the Northern Territory government of the financial affairs of the Northern Territory.
Mr Robertson: TIO's annual report! I know you are illiterate but try it.

Mr B. COLLINS: It had a loss of $12m of public money.

Mr Robertson: The poorest performance ever, Bob.

Mr Perron: You are really clutching at straws now.

Mr Tuxworth: Hurry up.

Mr B. COLLINS: Mr Speaker, tell them to shut up and I will get on with it.

Mr Robertson: I hope he gets up and speaks. At least he will make some sense.

Mr B. COLLINS: It is interesting that the only contribution to the business of the Assembly that the minister has made during this sittings has been by way of interjection.

Last year, I predicted that the TIO would lose $14m. I can understand the lack of comfort in government benches opposite. I can understand why they are so sensitive on this issue this morning and would like to see me shut up. I confess I was slightly out. We now know from the statement in the Assembly this morning, and the attachment document, that we have lost $12m. The inescapable fact is that $4m of that $12m has been lost because of mismanagement and incompetence. I can understand the government's desire to gloss over that little fact because, so far, it has failed to address itself to it. Mr Speaker, although $8m of that sum can be attributed to our losses in the motor vehicle area - and I would be the last one to suggest that is unique to the Northern Territory - $4m of that $12m loss is due to mismanagement and incompetence in the management of the financial affairs of the TIO, through the bad decisions that were taken with reinsurance. That is a matter that has been canvassed in this Assembly again and again. It might be very comfortable and very satisfying for those opposite to leap up and down on points of order in an attempt to stop that fact from being driven home in this debate.

Mr Speaker, we know that the government considers the sum of $2.5m to be not worthy of comment. It can hand it over because of concessions it has to make, deliberately issue a statement to the effect that that has not been done and then consider it to be a matter of no importance - $2.5m of taxpayers' money. $4m has gone down the drain in respect of TIO losses, and that was entirely due to mismanagement and incompetence. That is something we heard nothing of this morning in the Chief Minister's statement. I am prepared to concede that the losses the TIO faces with motor vehicle insurance are losses that we must cop. However, even though it is easy enough for us to pass laws in the Northern Territory restricting the access of Territorians to benefits from accidents, the major problem is that we cannot at the moment prevent claims from being made by people from interstate on the funds of the TIO. That means Territorians will be in the very happy position of footing the bill for the premiums and then being denied access to those common law claims that are available to other Australians whilst people from interstate make those claims on the Territory Insurance Office. That is not a particularly comfortable position. I hope that the government of the Northern Territory is addressing the issue.

Mr Speaker, I want also to say a few things about motor vehicle accidents in the Northern Territory, particularly in respect of some recent statements about 0.05. As far as I am concerned - and I said this publicly at the time -
0.05 will be unnecessary until we start getting fair dinkum about 0.08. I would just like to drive that home to the government. There is a ridiculous philosophy abroad in the community relating to the police operating effectively on behalf of non-drinking drivers, who deserve every degree of protection on the roads, with a view to cutting down the horrendous drain on public resources that the actions of those irresponsible, indeed criminal people, who drink and drive cause. But there is this ridiculous philosophy abroad in the community that, if the police pick you up for 0.08, it must be a fair cop. It is not a question of whether you have broken the law, whether you are guilty of the offence or whether you are endangering yourself and every other road user. It must be a fair cop; there are howls of outrage if it is not a fair cop. It means the police must set themselves up on a highway with flashing blue lights so that people can turn off at the first corner before they get to the roadblock. That happens all the time. The police must give plenty of evidence that they are there. I have no dispute with that particular aspect of it. But then you hear the howls of outrage when, because of their statistics and because they pinpoint areas which have serious accident rates, they set up too close to a pub. We read that in the public press just a short time ago. There were outrageous claims by the publican concerned about some sort of agreement that existed between himself and the then Northern Territory government.

As far as I am concerned, if we are serious about getting drunks off the roads, the police have an obligation and a legitimate right to park their random breath-testing machines in the parking lots adjacent to every hotel in Darwin. I am not suggesting that, if you go to an hotel, you will leave in your car necessarily. You can make those arrangements yourself. As far as I am concerned, I look forward to the day when the random breath-testing machine is parked right next to the driveway of every hotel in Darwin and the police start checking the people who get into cars and drive out the gateway. The logic of that is inescapable. The police should operate random breath tests in those areas which police statistics indicate are serious causes for concern in terms of the accident rate involving alcohol.

Mr Speaker, I have spoken on this subject in this Assembly on many occasions. I am totally unembarrassed about the personal connection I have had with road fatalities in the Northern Territory. I have said honestly that, in 8 years, I cannot remember an accident involving death or serious injury in which alcohol has not been involved. We have heard the statistics again this morning from the government. We keep hearing these statistics: 3 times higher than there, 4 times higher than there and 5 times higher than somewhere else. Although it is getting better, those statistics still stand. We still have the worst road accident statistics of any place in Australia. That causes an enormous financial drain on our slender resources.

Mr Speaker, can I assure the Chief Minister that, when the government of the Northern Territory is prepared to get fair dinkum about random breath tests, instead of the current 'it's a fair cop' philosophy, the opposition will give full-blooded support to the government's actions. We are in a situation of crisis in the Northern Territory. We continue to play with the problem; we are not fair dinkum about it. We know from the losses indicated in this TIO report that we cannot afford it financially and we cannot afford the human misery that is caused by the aftermath of those needless accidents. I would ask the Chief Minister, as minister responsible for police, if he would be willing to conduct some bipartisan discussions with the opposition to try to implement a regime in the Northern Territory which will considerably increase the efficiency of the current breath tests that are being carried out. The Northern Territory government should make it clear that it will unashamedly allow the police to station random breath test stations adjacent to whichever points in the Northern
Territory the police are convinced - because of their own statistics and figures - cause trouble. That way we can finally wipe out this business of drink driving in the Northern Territory instead of simply playing around with it as we are at the moment. If we don't do that, I think we must all share some degree of corporate responsibility for every death and injury that occurs on the roads of the Northern Territory.

Debate adjourned.

SUPREME COURT (JUDGES PENSIONS) AMENDMENT BILL
(Serial 89)

Bill presented and read a first time.

Mr PERRON (Attorney-General): Mr Speaker, I move that the bill be now read a second time.

The purpose of this bill is to amend the Supreme Court (Judges Pensions) Act which contains an anomaly. The act provides that, in the case of a normal retirement, a judge is entitled to a pension provided he has served at least 10 years on the bench. If he has served for any lesser period, he receives no pension at all. However, if at any time he retires for reasons of ill-health, he is entitled to receive his full pension entitlement. Currently, this entitlement is 60% of the judge's final salary.

Mr Speaker, the need for this amendment comes about because the Supreme Court Act provides that the existing retirement age for judges is 70 and it would not be out of the ordinary for a person to be appointed to the Supreme Court who is, say, 61 or 62. This person would be incapable of serving the 10-year minimum period necessary to qualify for a pension. This anomaly came about because, at self-government, the Territory inherited the existing Supreme Court structure and therefore was obliged to follow the Commonwealth Judges Pensions Act in such matters. In fact, the Commonwealth amended its act in 1981 to alter this situation. That amendment provided for the payment of a normal retirement pension provided 6 years had been served. After 6 years service, the rate of the pension is pro rata reaching the full pension after 10 years of service. Through this bill the Territory proposes to do likewise. At the same time, the government considers it appropriate to adjust the pension entitlements for retirement through reasons of ill-health on a basis similar to that which applies to normal retirement by reason of this amendment. A judge retiring for health reasons at any age will receive a pension. Those who can serve 10 years or more will receive the full pension. Those whose respective service, including prior qualifying service, is less than 10 years, will receive a proportion according to the length of their respective service based on the formula of the bill. In order to preserve the existing entitlements of the present Supreme Court judges, there is a provision in the amending bill providing that alteration of the ill-health pension will apply only in respect of judges appointed after the amendment. I commend the bill to the Assembly.

Debate adjourned.

HOSPITAL MANAGEMENT BOARDS AMENDMENT BILL
(Serial 97)

Continued from 26 February 1985.

Mr ROBERTSON (Health): Mr Speaker, I move that the bill be now read a second time.
The amendments set out in this bill are intended to give hospital management boards more control of their own funds and to assist the boards to carry out their supervisory role more effectively. The present act gives the boards authority to raise money for approved use in their hospitals but does not allow the boards to control or to expend such money. I believe that this was an unintentional effect which was not appreciated when the legislation was drafted. This bill will correct the situation. The bill also provides for acceptance of and expenditure of any donations which may be made to hospitals.

The bill makes a further adjustment to functions of boards by providing that inspections of hospitals may be carried out by such number of members of boards as the boards determine from time to time. The present act requires inspections to be carried out at least once every 3 months by full boards and, in practice, this has been found to cause considerable difficulties to members and the hospitals. Boards have not always been able to arrange inspections at the most suitable time because of the unavailability of their members. Because of this, the boards have requested the changes which are now set out in the bill.

Debate adjourned.

AGRICULTURAL DEVELOPMENT AND MARKETING AMENDMENT BILL
(Serial 67)

Continued from 29 August 1984.

Mr HATTON (Primary Production): Mr Speaker, I formally advise the Assembly that I now have charge of the passage of this bill.

Mr LEO (Nhulunbuy): Mr Speaker, at the outset, I would like to make clear to the Assembly and to the minister that the opposition supports this bill. It has arisen from a recommendation of the so-called Martin Report that was commissioned by a previous minister. In fact, that report made a number of observations on the operation of ADMA and, in order to make a long-term evaluation, it has been deemed necessary to extend the life of the authority until 30 June 1990 - that is, for a further 5 years. The Martin Report commented on some of the projects that ADMA has supported in the Territory, including the Douglas-Daly projects, and makes observations about the financial viability of those projects. There has been some advancement in broadacre farming within the Northern Territory. Optimistically, we can hope that, in the future, that type of farming will be contributing in a major way to the Northern Territory economy. At the moment, the Northern Territory's economy has a very narrow base. The broader we make our base, the more we will be able to support further development in the Northern Territory.

The Martin Report pointed out the need for the public to be aware of the degree of support which is given to farmers and the need to keep a careful eye on the degree to which farmers become dependent on ADMA. It would be unfortunate if we developed an agricultural sector within our economy to find that it could be sustained only by continuous government support. That section of the economy needs to be independent and needs to contribute not only to employment but also to the broad financial aspects of the Northern Territory's economy.

The Martin Report also commented on the range of agricultural projects which are currently supported by ADMA. I appreciate that there are financial constraints but, as a general policy, all experimental agricultural projects within the Northern Territory should receive the attention of ADMA. If projects exhibit a potential for contributing to the Northern Territory's economy, they
should be supported by ADMA with the hope that some experimental projects will be able to take their place alongside the more traditional agricultural projects. With those few remarks, I indicate the opposition's support for the amendments.

Mr D.W. COLLINS (Sadadeen): Mr Speaker, ADMA was set up in May 1980. It was envisaged as a 2-stage project. Stage 1 was wisely seen as a pilot stage to prove the viability, at least in the short term, of a few small projects before proceeding to stage 2. The act provided that stage 2 would not be allowed to start until stage 1 was considered to be successful. The legislation has a sunset clause which has forced close scrutiny of ADMA's 5-year term from 1980. That ends in May this year and has prompted this bill. The Martin Report recommendation was prompted by the sunset clause which I consider to be an excellent legislative vehicle. I wish we would use sunset clauses more often to force close scrutiny.

The Martin Report contained a key recommendation that 5 more years are needed before we can be sure, one way or the other, of the effects of stage 1. What does this mean? It means that we are definitely not ready for stage 2 of ADMA. It also means that the pilot stage is not considered to be a failure but one might consider it to be a borderline situation. Definitely, we want a clear result and hope to obtain it within the next 5 years or, hopefully, in a shorter time. I am optimistic, as is the Minister for Mines and Energy, about the future of agriculture and horticulture in the Territory and I hope that clear results will come to hand so that stage 2 may be started well before 5 years have elapsed.

The other option is that, if the financial situation is such that the cost to the taxpayer of ADMA, which I see basically as infrastructure to allow agriculture to develop, is such that we will not make good our financial investment and see a profit then, hopefully, the courage will be shown to close down ADMA. I hope that will not be the situation but it is one of the options that we must look at. I agree fully with the member for Nhulunbuy that, if we are to keep injecting funds into agriculture and it does not return more than is put into it, at least in the long run, then we should bow out. There is no point in trying to produce grain in the Territory if we can buy it cheaper elsewhere.

I realise, of course, that one of our big problems relates to economies of scale. The ultimate goal for ADMA is for it to cease and wind down over time. One of the functions of ADMA is that of marketing. We are entering a computer age. It will not be very long until information on world markets will be available from satellites. The grape or grain prices in Singapore or Sydney will be readily obtainable and buying and selling should be able to be something which the farmers themselves can organise. The danger I see with ADMA is that, as with many of these organisations set up by governments, it will tend to be self-sustaining and become a prop to the farmer. We need to develop a situation where farmers are independent of the support of the government through ADMA and the NTDC. Only then will we have reached the stage where agriculture has become a complete success in the Territory. I believe that, if ADMA is successful, it will work itself out of a job over a period of time. I wish ADMA every success.

Mr McCARTHY (Victoria River): Mr Speaker, this amendment to the Agricultural Development and Marketing Act gives me considerable pleasure in that I am able to be here to speak in support of it. For a century or more, people with a pioneering spirit have provided a living for themselves on small and large holdings throughout the Territory. The very isolation of their farms and stations dictated the need to grow much of their own food. One such
holding, about 100 km from Darwin was described by Grenville Pike in a publication issued around 1953 in this way: 'On the good soil near the homestead, they grew rice, sugar, coffee, arrowroot, cotton, tobacco, maize, bananas and a variety of vegetables'. Almost any book that relates tales of the early farmers will tell of the crops that were grown. Described in a number of publications was the Daly River area not so far from the present Douglas-Daly ADMA farms.

There is no doubt that the Territory has been harsh to its farmers over the years. Many have come and gone and only the very toughest and the most determined of the early settlers in the rural Northern Territory met with any degree of success. Many things have changed since those hard times. Motorised machinery has replaced the horse and the hand plough. Roads have been built. Cars that can carry the farmer into town in an hour or 2 have appeared and aircraft which can take in goods, bring in a doctor or carry out a patient in a few minutes are now the normal thing. In some of these places, such as at the Douglas-Daly, telephones are available. Last, but not least, new crops and new strains of old crops have been developed. All of these improvements have turned the tide for agriculture in the Territory. What was once a harsh existence has become no more than a hard-working livelihood. Most of the farmers in the Territory and in Australia thrive on hard work. The seasons are still harsh and I for one am aware of the heartbreaks of farming: seasons, pests, sheer bad luck, poor seed or good seed can be the difference between a poor, a mediocre or a bumper harvest. This is the case in almost every state in this Commonwealth.

Just this year, at the Douglas-Daly farms, there appeared to be the makings of a very poor harvest. In fact, a number of farmers had to resow their crops 2 and 3 times. I was down there one week and, by the following week, the situation had changed considerably. The crop is now looking quite good in most cases. Some did not get in as much as they wanted to, but it is looking pretty good. The seasons in the Territory are probably harsher than in most other parts of Australia but that can be a blessing in disguise because we can grow things at times when they cannot be grown in more temperate regions. More than anything else, new seed varieties are the catalysts for renewed hope in agriculture in the Territory. Many seed varieties tried in the past just could not adapt to the harsh Territory conditions. Extensive work has been done in various parts of the world to develop tropical varieties. The Northern Territory is now a beneficiary of that scientific work. There is still much to be done and the Northern Territory must be in the vanguard, making sure that we have an input into the development of new varieties. It would be useful if further work could be done on sorghum to develop a variety better suited to Territory conditions. In recent years, there has been a lack of interest in sorghum on the part of ADMA and other farmers in the Territory because the varieties available do not provide the yield that is required to make them worth while growing. Some people are still growing it, of course. It seems to do very well here but the return is not very good compared with some other crops.

With the establishment of ADMA in 1980, the Northern Territory government recognised the need to diversify the Territory's economy. It also signified a belief of many Territorians that agriculture could be a significant producer in the Territory. I do not believe that that confidence is unfounded. However, I accept that there is much more work to be done before absolute proof that agriculture is here to stay will be recognised by all.

There have been some problems during the development of the Douglas-Daly farms. There may have been overexuberance in the early stages or it may have been the perceived need to get up and running in a hurry, but I suspect that neither the farms nor the farmers were really ready in the first couple of years of production. Delays were caused by the non-performance of 2 farmers.
Fortunately, that problem has been overcome but the damage to the forward momentum of the project has left some scars. The development of the ADMA blocks at the Douglas-Daly has provided an incentive for other producers, both old and new, to get into the act. The crop contract scheme has been a valuable boost to these farmers outside the ADMA net and, hopefully, will be continued and broadened to encourage more and more landholders with experience to get into agriculture.

It is absolutely essential that agriculture in the Territory increases in both numbers of growers and quality of harvests if it is to reach its full potential. The present small number of farmers and the limited harvest make both growing and selling of crops more expensive. The small size of the industry in the Territory at present makes the cost of importing fertiliser a significant cash drain on the farmer - the smaller the shipment, the dearer the freight per tonne. The selling of small quantities of grain overseas makes shipping cost-prohibitive. The dumb barge operation in the Territory might alleviate that problem if it is allowed to continue. The availability of machinery in the Territory is hindered by the small demand. It is difficult for a supplier in the Territory to be able to provide all the necessary spare parts and back-up service required if he is selling only 1 or 2 machines of a particular kind each year. The industry needs to expand before that situation will improve.

Of course, if agriculture in the Territory continues to grow, it will require the government to provide more infrastructure, such as grain storage, which will involve further cost to government. However, if it becomes big enough, private industry will involve itself in the area as well. The Agricultural Development and Marketing Authority has built up considerable expertise over the last 5 years in developing, marketing and, not least, farming. The 4 farmers presently at the Douglas-Daly have gained a very valuable understanding of the land that they work, the climate that they work in and the crops that they grow. These farmers and the many private growers now marketing through ADMA have a firm belief in Territory agriculture in its many forms. The Territory cannot afford to lose these people. If we want agriculture to continue to develop as quickly as it has been developing over the last 5 years, we must keep the experienced people that we have now.

I am a little concerned that, unless the Department of Primary Production and ADMA decide that they must set a price and a time-scale for the purchase of those farms, we might see the disillusionment of some of those farmers. I think it is imperative that we set a time-limit and a fair price, one that they can afford. I think we will be in trouble if we do not come up with that fairly soon.

I am not saying that we must sell the farms immediately but we must have an agreement that takes into account the length of service of the farmer under the scheme, his track record, the fact that he has put in place much infrastructure himself - machinery and seed etc - and the fact that he has operated with the idea that he will one day own the farm. Those things must be taken into account. I cannot agree with parts 65 and 67 of the Martin Report. Part 65 says:

*It is not possible to ascribe a realistic value to the farms at this stage. Eventual purchase price should be based on the maintainable earnings of each farm, calculated with reference to the standard budget to ensure that operating costs are not excessive if and when the viability of the farms has been proven.*

Part 67 says:
The farms should not be sold until their income-earning capacity has been proven. Strict covenants that require full cooperation with ADMA should be applied.

With the exception of perhaps the last sentence of part 67, I would disagree with those 2 points. If we want to set a price based on these premises, then there is a good chance that we will lose forever the vast experience of these men from the Territory's agricultural scene. There is little chance of recouping anything like the real value of those properties from the farmers who are now operating them. I do not believe that there was any intention to recoup that sort of money. If the Territory wants a privately-owned agricultural industry, as it will be in time, then it must be prepared to wear some development costs. In the meantime, I suggest that the farmers should be encouraged to diversify. There is much that is wasted at present that could be used. Certainly, I think that there is land on most of those farms that could run cattle. There is a lot of stubble that could be used, even if only for agistment purposes at first. I believe that the farmers should have the right to run their own cattle there eventually. Failed crops could be used in that area. Also I think there is tremendous scope for pasture improvement, perhaps on a small scale initially but that would grow with time.

A number of debatable points were raised in the Martin Report. In some areas, it was lopsided, but the general thrust was that the authority required more time to evaluate the scheme. I would agree with that. There is more work to be done. However, I believe that agriculture will play a very real part in the Territory's economy and that we will provide for many of our own needs and export in significant quantities to South-east Asia and beyond. I was pleased to hear in the minister's response to the Administrator during the address-in-reply debate that he saw ADMA becoming more of a marketing authority and less of a developer. I support that view and I suspect the need for a marketing authority will go far beyond the year 1990. Mr Speaker, I support the bill.

Mrs PADGHAM-PURICH (Koolpinyah): Mr Speaker, in rising to support this amending legislation, I would like to say that the beginnings of ADMA go back further than most honourable members realise. The beginnings of ADMA go back to 1959. I have before me a very old copy of the Forster Report. A press statement was released by the then Minister for Territories, the Hon Paul Hasluck, in Darwin on 25 July 1959. I will read out the terms of reference for that committee and from that honourable members will see that they represent closely what ADMA is doing today. The terms of reference were:

To survey the present state of agriculture in the Northern Territory including the results of experiments and field trials and to report to the Minister for Territories on the prospects of promoting agricultural settlement on an economic basis in the Territory and the major factors to be considered in shaping an agriculture policy for the Territory including the areas best suited to agricultural settlement, the crops most likely to prove economic, the relationship of agriculture to the expansion of the pastoral industry, the availability of land and the distribution and tenure of land, credit and other forms of assistance to the primary producer, marketing opportunities, research and agricultural extension work, water use and conservation.

Mr Speaker, it is clear from the work that ADMA has been doing since its formation in 1980 that it has copied the terms of reference put forward for consideration by the Forster Committee in 1959. Before I go further, I would like to comment first on the members of that committee. There were 3 members:
H.C. Forster, C.R. Kelly and D.B. Williams. C.R. Kelly is known to everybody who reads the Bulletin as 'The Modest Farmer', Bert Kelly, who will be the guest speaker at an Australian Institute of Agricultural Science dinner to be held in the Territory soon. All honourable members and others who attend that dinner will hear something interesting. He is a gentleman. At that time, he had the Territory at heart. I think he has always had the interests of sensible down-to-earth agriculturalists at heart. It well behoves people engaged in agriculture and the administration of agricultural policies to look back occasionally at what Bert Kelly has said over the years.

In the recommendations of the Forster Committee, several things were covered: government policies for rural industries in the Northern Territory, pilot farms, research and experiment programs and government scientific services. As a result of the Forster Report, if my memory serves me correctly, 3 pilot farms were established in the Tortilla Flats area, one of which is still in existence as a private farm. The member for Victoria River commented on the fact that it would be highly unlikely that the government would recoup the cost of development of the farms in the ADMA scheme if the farmers buy them from the government at a later date. Mr Speaker, in this case, those farmers could be said to be in a situation similar to that of the original 3 pilot farmers in the Tortilla Flats area and, when the government has the development of agriculture in the Territory as its sole reason for setting up these farms, it is incumbent on the government to bear the cost of the development. In order to encourage the present farmers and others who will come after them, it is the responsibility of the government to sell the farms to them at a reasonable cost, which I know will happen.

Mr Speaker, when ADMA was set up in late 1980, a portion of Douglas Station was acquired and it was used for 2.5 farms. Ooloo Station was acquired and 3.5 farms were established. Further areas are under investigation. The first 2 farmers, who came from interstate, were on site to plant some crops in the 1981-82 wet season. A local farmer went on to the third farm during 1982 but he left the farm before the 1982-83 cropping season. 4 more farmers were in place for the 1982-83 season but, in that year, the wet season was very poor and there were many crop failures. I think it is to the credit of ADMA that it has continued with the scheme at the Douglas-Daly. The farmers stuck it out even though there was a very poor season that year. There was a dispute with 2 farmers over crop underwriting during 1983. Contracts with these 2 farmers were terminated in November 1983. Long legal action followed and they departed from the scheme in November 1984. Currently, one farm is vacant and will be advertised shortly. The other farm is being operated on a share-farming basis by 2 local farmers who grow peanuts and sesame.

The honourable member for Victoria River spoke about diversification. I would agree with him wholeheartedly. He mentioned improved pastures and cattle. Rice was also mentioned as a crop that could be looked at for the Douglas-Daly. I think it is very necessary to establish solid ground rules of conduct on these farms before other crops are considered. The farm where sesame is grown represents the beginning of the diversification that the member for Victoria River spoke about.

Mr Speaker, as honourable members know, project farmers are protected from loss by crop underwriting and guaranteed minimum price schemes. This underwriting is restricted to a standard cost which is determined by ADMA. It is not open-ended. Crop production statistics bear out that the development of agriculture is well under way with 4 main crops being grown at the Douglas-Daly. This is due to the part ADMA has played. In 1979-80, 780 ha of sorghum were sown. In 1983-84, 2343 ha were sown to sorghum. In 1978-79, 81 ha of maize
were sown. In 1983-84, 1369 ha were sown. In 1978-79, 55 ha of mung beans were sown. In 1983-84, 1109 ha were sown to mung beans. In 1982-83, 328 ha of soya beans were sown; in 1983-84, there were 641 ha.

As honourable members can see, the size of crop areas has increased dramatically. What is more important, due to experimentation undertaken by ADMA and the Department of Primary Production, the yield has increased also. The yield of sorghum has increased from 0.96 t/ha in 1979-80 to 1.74 t/ha in 1983-84. Maize has increased from 1.09 t/ha in 1979-80 to 2.09 t/ha in 1983-84. The mung bean yield has increased from 0.35 t/ha in 1978-79 to 0.64 t/ha in 1983-84. The soya bean yield has increased from 0.72 t/ha in 1982-83 to 1.17 t/ha in 1983-84. Again, that is a dramatic increase in tonnes per hectare which augurs well for the continuation of agricultural development in the Douglas-Daly area.

More important to the end user in the Territory is the amount of produce produced at the Douglas-Daly by the ADMA farmers which is used in local products. The end users are the pig and poultry producers in the Territory. In 1981-82 and 1983-84, there was a dramatic increase in the amounts of maize, sorghum, soya bean and mung bean used locally. Further improvement in the NT grower share of the market can be expected in 1984-85 because of the establishment of additional feed milling capacity in Darwin. I think it is necessary for the sunset clause of the act to be extended another 5 years to give the Agricultural Development and Marketing Authority a new lease of life. I think it can only go from strength to strength.

I have been known to disagree with my colleagues in the past on certain matters. I must disagree with the honourable member for Sadadeen who said that he would like to see the Agricultural Development and Marketing Authority put itself out of business by allowing the farmers or other people to take over the marketing of products. This would be well down the line of development. With the pioneering situation in the Northern Territory, I think it would be so far down the line as to be practically out of sight at the moment. I envisage ADMA continuing for another term after the proposed term has finished. This is only the start of development in the Northern Territory. Other areas are already being looked at. ADMA has a role to play and not only in the Top End. It has been active a bit further south. I think we will see its involvement in parts of the Territory which have not even been considered for development. I support the bill.

Mr BELL (MacDonnell): Mr Speaker, I commence by repeating the words of the Leader of the Opposition who advised me that the Douglas-Daly was some thousands of miles from the extensive electorate of MacDonnell. Whatever its propensities for agricultural development may be, I think it is meet and right for me to place on record that not only is the potential thereof particularly rich but, in many cases, that potential is being actualised. Mr Speaker, I will not be specific about particular development, for example the extremely successful lucerne crops on Orange Creek Station and the considerable interest that has been taken in that by a variety of landholders in my electorate. I could take up considerable time and I believe it would be fruitful to continue the debate in a similar vein. However, I will leave those comments for a later day and, fairly briefly, I will ask some questions in relation to the comments and inspiration, dare I say, of the member for Sadadeen in his contribution to this debate. The far less extensive electorate of Sadadeen is considerably further from the Douglas-Daly than the extensive electorate which I am most fortunate to represent in this Assembly.

Mr Speaker, this is not the first time that I have noticed that the member for Sadadeen has taken a considerable interest in things agricultural. In fact,
I was very fortunate to bid him good morning at the field day recently organised at the Arid Zone Research Institute. I am not sure if I saw the Chief Minister there, in fact, but let me assure him that it was enjoyable and informative. I saw a considerable array of backbenchers there with more time on their hands than they knew what to do with. Suffice it to say, the Arid Zone Research Institute is not north of Alice Springs but south of it and their electorates are a good 1000 miles to the north of the Arid Zone Research Institute.

To come to the nub of the question, I refer to a particular firm that has been negotiating with the Department of Primary Production and the Department of Lands for some considerable time now in order to commence cropping grapes in the Ti Tree area. You will be aware, Mr Speaker, that there has been considerable success with early table grapes that have been produced in that area. From your tenure as Minister for Primary Production, I am sure that you would be well aware of that particular venture and its imminent success. I dare say you are also aware of the interest, activity and investment of the member for Sadadeen in that particular area.

I understand that, over a period of several years, the Department of Primary Production has carried out research on the economic viability of growing early table grapes in that particular vicinity. My understanding is that, after these many years of expensive research, a particular area on Pine Hill Station has been isolated and is to be excised from that head lease for the purpose of growing early table grapes. My understanding of the figures is that there may still be plans to grow some 50 ha of table grapes this winter which would, over a period of several years, grow to an area of 300 ha. Expert agricultural economics advice in this regard informs me that the gross turnover of this area, in time, would come to be something in the vicinity of $8m to $12m. I do not think I need to remind you, Mr Speaker, representing an electorate such as Elsey in this Assembly, of the importance that represents for agricultural development in the Northern Territory. In round figures, I think the beef industry is worth something in the vicinity of $65m to $70m to the Territory. On the figures that have been projected in this way, that means that early table grapes are likely to represent something like 15% of the value of the beef industry which is the premier primary industry in the Northern Territory. This is of considerable importance to all members here and to the Territory as a whole.

Mr Speaker, the reason why I mentioned the member for Sadadeen in this regard was because of his connections with the early table grapes industry and the development thereof in the Ti Tree region. At the outset, let me be quite categorical about what I am not saying. I am not saying that the honourable member has no right to invest in that way, although many have been so unkind as to ask me how a man who is supported from the public purse in such a fulsome fashion finds time to be involved in primary production to quite the extent that he is. However, along with you, Mr Speaker, I would regard such criticism as curmudgeonly in the extreme.

However, what I am saying is that it has been suggested that the honourable member has put undue pressure on the Minister for Primary Production, the Minister for Lands and public servants within both those departments because he believes that the future of his particular enterprise - which I do not begrudge him in the slightest - may be threatened by the considerable investment that Territory Grape Farms Pty Ltd is likely to put into this area. I would like a clear indication from the Minister for Primary Production so I hope that the public address system extends to his particular warren across the street.

Mr Perron: He is in Canberra.
Mr BELL: I find it difficult to imagine that the public address system extends quite that far. However, if I speak loudly enough, perhaps he will be able to hear me.

I should add that the importance of this particular venture is that it will not only return a gross turnover in the terms that I have described but it will also employ some 25 people on a permanent basis and up to 125 people on a casual basis. My understanding is that Territory Grape Farms Pty Ltd, and the principals thereof, have been operating in the area of Menindee in New South Wales, frequently referred to as a socialist heaven by members opposite. Suffice it to say that this particular company has not only been financially successful in that area but has operated in such a way as to provide jobs for many people who otherwise would be unemployed. Many of those people are Aboriginals and I do not need to rehearse unemployment figures in that area. I am quite sure that I have raised them sufficiently frequently in this Assembly for them to be etched on the brain of everybody, frontbench or backbench alike. It would be sad indeed in these terms if this particular company had not been able to come and work in the Territory. I would like some explanation from the minister when he makes his reply in this second-reading debate as to exactly what sort of representations he received in this way. Have the representations made by the honourable member for Sadadeen delayed this project? If they have, it would be a matter of particular concern. That is the first matter.

The second matter I wish to raise refers to the connection of an electricity supply in this particular area. I am pleased that the Chief Minister has returned to the Chamber because this part of the saga involves him. I am not sure that the honourable member for Koolpinyah is in fact knitting over there. I dare say that, given her concern about the connection of power in the rural area, it will be of some interest to her. My understanding is that there was a connection of power at this particular grape farming area and that it was done quite unbeknownst to the Dahlenburgs who have been working there. My understanding is that servicemen from the Northern Territory Electricity Commission arrived on a particular day saying: 'Where do you want the transformer put?' The Dahlenburgs were most surprised to have this power installed because they had not requested it. I am sure that the member for Koolpinyah, representing as she does, and so fulsomely, Mr Speaker, the rural pioneers - those who work hard and do without for the golden future - will be most surprised to find that the policy of providing power in different corners of the Territory is somewhat less than uniform, shall we say. The relevant minister, the member for Fannie Bay, should now give us some explanation as to whether a request for such power was lodged. That is my first question in that regard. My second question is again with respect to the honourable member for Sadadeen. Exactly what representations did he make to the Minister for Mines and Energy or any other relevant government minister for the connection of power in that way because I understand that his particular properties are very well serviced in that regard as well?

To return to the Dahlenburg farm and its blessing of unasked for rural power, I understand that a letter was written by the Chief Minister to the Dahlenburgs. Whether it was written in his capacity as Chief Minister or in his former capacity as Minister for Mines and Energy, I am not too sure. I understand a letter was written by the Chief Minister to the Dahlenburgs. It said that the cost of running the power down to their farm, power which they did not ask for, had come to $90 000.

Mr D.W. Collins: Try $55 000.

Mr BELL: That is very good. I hope the people in Hansard recorded that because, quite clearly, the member for Sadadeen is quite au fait with the
subject. I look forward to his contribution and explanation and those of the backbenchers and a few of the frontbenchers who are also involved.

Mr Tuxworth: What about the attendants? Shall I let them have a run too?

Mr BELL: The honourable Chief Minister thrashed around here all last week and it is nice to see him doing it this week. I am quite happy for this particular matter to be elucidated here and now, provided it is able to be elucidated. However, under duress from interjectors, Mr Speaker, I digress.

My third point was that I wished some explanation for the Chief Minister's letter saying: 'Look, this has cost us $90 000. We know you did not ask for it but is there a possibility of a contribution?' That I understand was the tenor of the letter. I would very much appreciate the Chief Minister confirming or denying that particular accusation by tabling the letter in this Assembly. I look forward to his response in due course. That is about the sum total of my comments in this regard.

To return to the bill before us, as a representative of an electorate which covers the vast open spaces, areas which will become increasingly rural if ADMA is allowed to pursue its endeavours in the manner it has, I support the bill.

Motion agreed to; bill read a second time.

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

Mr LEO (Nhulunbuy): Mr Speaker, I do not wish to make any more pertinent comments on this bill. I think it is a shame, and that perhaps the Assembly should reflect on it, that this is the minister's first piece of legislation to pass through this Assembly and, unfortunately, he is not here. I appreciate that ministers have many demands on their time but I would have thought that the passage of a minister's first piece of legislation through this Legislative Assembly would have taken some degree of precedence over whatever other activities he may have. I would like to place on the public record my disappointment that the minister is not here for the passage of his first piece of legislation.

Mr HARRIS (Education): Mr Speaker, I can assure honourable members that the remarks that have been made by the member for MacDonnell will be addressed at some later stage by the honourable minister. Unfortunately, Mr Speaker, the minister was unable to be here. He wanted to take part in this debate and I do not really consider that the comments made by the member for Nhulunbuy are warranted.

Mr B. COLLINS (Opposition Leader): Mr Speaker, I would point out to the honourable minister that the statement he has just made is a complete nonsense. As we all know, the business of how the Assembly operates is entirely in the hands of the government. Like the honourable member for Nhulunbuy, I think it is most unfortunate that a new minister of the government does not see through personally the carriage of his first piece of legislation. The point made by the Minister for Education is nonsense because he knows full well that how the business proceeds through this Assembly is entirely in the hands of the government. The passage of this bill need not have taken place at this moment at all. There was no reason whatever to move the third reading at this stage; it could simply have been deferred for 24 hours. I think that the point made by the honourable member for Nhulunbuy is well made.
Mr D.W. COLLINS (Sadadeen): Mr Speaker, I would point out that, when the Assembly adjourned for lunch, the honourable minister was on his feet to make his response to this bill.

Motion agreed to; bill read a third time.

SUSPENSION OF STANDING ORDERS

Mr SMITH (Millner): Mr Speaker, I move that so much of standing orders be suspended as would prevent my moving a motion without notice to disapprove those parts of Remuneration Tribunal Determination No 3 of 1984 relating to basic salaries, additional salaries and special expenses of office allowances for members of the Legislative Assembly, which determination was tabled in the Assembly on 16 October 1984.

Motion agreed to.

MOTION
Disapproval of Parts of Remuneration Tribunal Determination No 3 of 1984

Mr SMITH (Millner): Mr Speaker, I move that this Assembly disapproves those parts of Remuneration Tribunal Determination No 3 of 1984 relating to basic salaries, additional salaries and special expenses of office allowances for members of the Legislative Assembly, which determination was tabled in the Assembly on 16 October 1984.

Mr Speaker, I want to make it clear from the outset that, with my background in industrial relations, it is with some reluctance...

Mr D.W. Collins: I could tell you a story about that.

Mr SMITH: You will get your opportunity.

It is with some reluctance that I move to disapprove a determination made by an independent wage-fixing tribunal. I have always been of the view that, if independent wage-fixing tribunals are set up, the results should be abided by whether those results are good or bad. I think that the record of this opposition has been that it shares that view. Mr Speaker, this is the first time that the opposition has moved to disapprove a recommendation of the Remuneration Tribunal. Of course, there have been times when Remuneration Tribunal decisions have been criticised heavily and the opposition has accepted that the Remuneration Tribunal is an independent wage-fixing body and its reports should be accepted. For those of us who were here in November 1981, that was probably the hardest time of all. I have very vivid memories of it because it happened in my very first sittings. At that stage, the Remuneration Tribunal recommended a salary increase for parliamentarians from something like $24,000 to something like $33,000 - a very significant increase indeed. At that stage, the opposition took the view that that increase in salary was justified and that it resulted from a detailed work study which the Remuneration Tribunal had carried out. Also, it was in line with community movements in wages and salaries that were occurring at that time.

However, now we have a completely different situation. Since March 1983, a quite successful prices and incomes accord has been in operation in Australia. This prices and incomes accord has been very successful in keeping down wage demands from union groups and in reducing the amount of industrial disputation in Australia. There is no doubt about that. The reason why that has happened
is that, in return for cooperation in those 2 areas, the union movement has been given concessions or trade-offs in other areas which have been to the benefit of the whole Australian community.

In my view and in the view of the opposition, what we have in the 11.7% increase awarded to us is a very clear breach of the prices and incomes accord and a breach so blatant that it is inflammatory and has already made it more difficult to persuade the unions in the Northern Territory that the prices and incomes accord has some meaning and should continue. It is very difficult for politicians in the Northern Territory to say: "You should have wage restraints but we will accept the 11.7% increase". What makes it even more difficult is that, in the submissions made by both this side of the Assembly and the government, the increase argued for was 4.1% which represented the movement in the consumer price index since the last decision. That case was presented for the government by the Government Whip, the member for Sadadeen, and for the opposition by myself, unbeknown to each other. That reinforces the point that, separately, the government and the opposition assessed the political climate at the time and, in the light of that political climate, came up with the same recommendation to the Remuneration Tribunal for a 4.1% increase. What we received, Mr Speaker, was an 11.7% increase.

Mr Speaker, let us look at the reasoning given by the tribunal in coming to its decision. Basically, it said that it agreed with the Commonwealth Remuneration Tribunal that 11.7% was necessary to establish a firm and equitable base for politicians' salaries. I have no objections to that if, indeed, it believes that it is a firm and equitable base for politicians' salaries. However, the Commonwealth tribunal, operating in a political climate as does the Northern Territory Remuneration Tribunal, recommended that that 11.7% increase should be introduced in 2 separate sums: a 6% increase on 1 July 1984 and a 5.7% increase on 1 January 1985. But then, what happened, Mr Speaker? The federal government, operating in a political environment and having regard to the political factors and to things like the prices and incomes accord, overruled the decision of its remuneration tribunal. We had the situation where the Commonwealth Remuneration Tribunal was overruled. Federal politicians have received nothing and, quite obviously, the reason for that is that the Commonwealth government recognises the political realities at this time. Unfortunately, the Northern Territory government has not seen fit so far to recognise those same political realities but, hopefully, it will take the opportunity presented to it today.

Mr Speaker, I will quote an interesting extract from the Report of the Remuneration Tribunal in the Northern Territory: "The tribunal can see no basis in industrial principle, wage justice or work value terms for politicians to suffer a singular burden of wage restraint not shared by the community generally or their wage peers". Again, I have no objection to that principle, but what has happened is that it is the community that has been under a very severe form of wage restraint since the beginning of 1983, and in fact earlier, under the wage freeze of the Fraser government. The community suffered under the wage restraint and the politicians in the Northern Territory have not had to suffer that wage restraint, as is evidenced by this 11.7% increase - if we accept it. In that particular instance, the tribunal's recommendations does not make sense. It is the community that has made the sacrifices at this time in Australia's history when we all want to get the economy moving again and when there is a particular and special onus on politicians to show the way in things like wage restraints.

Mr Speaker, another rationale given by the Remuneration Tribunal was that we had a problem with relativities between the Chief Minister and the Chief
Justice of the Supreme Court. If it had gone on to award the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court an 11.7% increase and the Chief Minister something less, the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court would have been paid more than the Chief Minister. I accept that that is an unhealthy state of affairs but, more importantly, there are other relativities that have been shot to pieces by this 11.7% increase. I will refer to a few of them. The Chief Minister receives more than the Prime Minister of Australia in terms of basic salary. No one is going to tell me that, however hard the Chief Minister works and however good he is for the Northern Territory, he has a more responsible and a more demanding job than the Prime Minister of Australia. The relativity is not there to grant the Chief Minister of the Northern Territory a higher base salary than that of the Prime Minister of Australia. Quite clearly, it should be the reverse.

As well as that, a backbencher in the Northern Territory gets more than any other backbencher in the whole of Australia. That is staggering enough on its own but it is even more staggering when those same backbenchers have the smallest electorates in the whole of Australia in terms of population and sit for the least number of days of any parliament in the whole of Australia. Again, the relativities, which should be important in this exercise, would indicate that backbench politicians elsewhere should receive more than backbench politicians in the Northern Territory. Instead, we have a situation where we are each accepting $45 000 a year and federal politicians receive $42 000 a year. I do not think anyone would doubt that the federal member for the Northern Territory, whoever he is and whatever his political party, has a harder and a more demanding job than a backbencher in this Assembly. That is what Paul Everingham says and I agree with him. I can vividly remember speaking to Mr Grant Tambling when he was our federal member and he indicated that, in the previous 12 months, he had spent something like 200 nights away from home. That is the sort of life that federal backbenchers lead, particularly the ones serving electorates like the Northern Territory. To argue that they deserve less money than a backbencher in the Northern Territory Assembly is absolutely ridiculous. We should do something about it and we have the ability to do something about it right now.

Mr Speaker, I want to make quite clear what my motion does. It moves to disapprove the salary increase and the additional allowances connected with salary that are officially called the 'special expenses of office allowances'. It does not impinge on travel or electorate allowances in any way whatsoever because it is the view of this opposition that travelling and electorate allowances are extremely worthwhile. Whilst being generous, the Remuneration Tribunal has been most realistic about the needs of Territorian parliamentarians. We have no problems with the proposed increases in relation to travelling and electorate allowances. The success of my motion would not impinge on those 2 areas at all. Further, if my motion were passed, it would not apply retrospectively but from today. Members would not be looking at having to pay back $2000 or $3000. Thirdly, the wording of the legislation as it stands at present means that we are arguing for the complete disapproval of the 11.7% increase granted by the Remuneration Tribunal. We do not have the option under the present wording of the legislation to move for a 4.1% increase only. I want to make it clear that, if members approve this motion, they will be approving a return to the salary level that applied before the Remuneration Tribunal made its report.

Mr Speaker, I think the issues are very clear. Quite clearly, the 11.7% salary increase is outside the terms of the prices and incomes accord. It is inflammatory in our present political climate where so much emphasis has been placed on wage restraint and on encouraging unions to abide by that wage restraint. It destroys important relativities that have so far prevailed.
between ourselves and politicians in other states. The opportunity is here for politicians in the Northern Territory, for once in their lives, to be statesman-like and present an example to the rest of the Northern Territory and Australia.

Mr ROBERTSON (Health): Mr Speaker, on any reasonable analysis of what the member for Millner had to say, one would find that the majority of people on my side of the Assembly would agree with the majority of what he has said. I have difficulty in attacking the major part of the honourable member's proposition. Quite frankly, the increase given to us as politicians is perceived by the community as inflammatory. One would have to be blind not to realise that. It does more than that: it converts perfectly good Northern Territory dollars into perfectly bad Keating dollars by way of the ridiculous level of taxation which is applied to it because it is a salary component. I agree that, as was implied by the member for Millner, if the tribunal were to look at allowances to cover rises in costs and expenditures and could justify those by way of taxation within the rules of the taxation system, that would be fair enough. What this has done has been damned embarrassing, in my view. I have been highly embarrassed by it, and humiliated in fact. Wherever you go people rightly say: 'What sort of a farce is this 11.7% increase?' Of course, the people we are dealing with have not had the opportunity that we have had to read the tribunal's report and probably do not have the capacity in industrial relations terms to analyse what the reasons behind the grant were. But, to me, it has been a very embarrassing exercise. There are 2 sorts of embarrassment as I see it, Mr Speaker, and I will come to what I think this motion is really all about.

The member for Millner said that, in the 1981 determination, the opposition had regard to the political climate which existed at that time and thought that that increase was okay. Incidentally, in percentage terms, the 1981 increase was significantly larger than this one. What the opposition did then - and what it is doing now, but for different motives - was making an independent assessment of an independent determination. In 1981, a huge increase was quite acceptable. It was an increase from $17,000 to $33,000. It was a huge increase but, in the honourable member's own words, it was quite acceptable in that political climate.

When did the statement from the opposition concerning the disapproval of the latest determination first arise? It is fascinating that it was one week before the by-election for the seat of Jingili. That was when the announcement was first made in the media that the opposition would be moving for disapproval. That was the first time that the pious people opposite mentioned this unholy move in this place. It had nothing to do with their genuine concern about industrial relations or the pious utterances about its being inflammatory in terms of the maintenance of understandings or the accord. In fact, it was a political manoeuvre designed for one purpose and for one purpose only: to assist their forlorn hope of winning that by-election. Of course, they are now stuck with it. The opposition member has said that, in industrial relations, you abide by the findings of a tribunal whether or not those results are good or bad. I quote directly from him. The only thing that went wrong is that the result of the by-election was very bad for the opposition indeed and, for it to maintain any semblance of credibility, it has been forced to play out this farce. On the admission of the honourable member himself, on every occasion the opposition has been quite happy to go along with the tribunal's determinations.

I have no idea at what stage the Commonwealth intervened in its tribunal's system but, on each side of this Assembly, we have consistently said that we would maintain the attitude, as put forward a little while ago by the member for Millner, that we would abide by the referee's decision whether it was good or bad. I would not be standing up in this Assembly and complaining if no increase
had been given to us. As a matter of fact, given the 'political climate' at the
time - to quote the honourable member - I would have thought that a good thing
because, quite frankly, we are well paid. I agree that it is absurd to suggest
that a federal MHR should receive less money than a backbencher in this
Assembly - that would be a ridiculous proposition if anyone should be silly
enough to put it forward. Nonetheless, we have an act which both sides of this
Assembly agree is proper. We agreed that the appointment of Mr Campbell was
proper. We have always abided, without question, by the decisions of the
tribunal. Each and every one of us, including yourself, Mr Speaker, has been
embarrassed by the result that has occurred this time. This side of the
Assembly did not, for political expediency, create its own definition of the
words 'political climate' - to use the words of the member opposite - to twist
around during the last week of an election campaign and then come up with the
fraudulent motion which we have before us.

Mr Speaker, I do not like what happened either. We argued for 4.1% and
that is all we wanted. We put it to an independent arbitrator approved by both
sides of the Assembly pursuant to an act unanimously passed by every one of us
here, with the exception of the member who won the particular by-election that
this whole thing was about. We do not like it either. The referee has made his
decision. If we do not like the decisions that the referee makes, we sack the
referee or we tear up the act. We do not fiddle with the independent assessment
of a tribunal which we have agreed to unanimously and the determinations of
which we have always abided by unanimously.

Mr B. COLLINS (Opposition Leader): Mr Speaker, I commend the honourable
minister, as I have done on previous occasions, for the very good job he does in
trying to defend the indefensible. Mr Speaker, it is very nice to see him back
in harness.

Mr Robertson: Now you'll tear it to bits?

Mr B. COLLINS: Yes. Unfortunately, the argument does not stand up because
it was based on 2 false premises. The first was that the opposition had raised
this matter purely for the purpose of the Jingili by-election. I have my press
releases in front of me. To quote the honourable minister, we raised this a
week before the Jingili by-election for the first time. That statement was made
not once but 4 times during his speech. The other foundation upon which the
argument was predicated was an even more extraordinary one and that is that, in
some strange way, acts of parliament are now set in concrete and are never to be
changed. 'Tear it up' were the words used. The words used were: 'We voted
unanimously for the act and we supported the act so why are we complaining
about it now?'

Mr Speaker, in a debate which is to occur shortly, I will vote in favour of
a thing we call an amendment to an act. I voted happily in favour of the
original bill for that act. The cold hard facts are, and the minister knows
them, that we, as public people, have a responsibility to respond to our
perception of the reaction of the electorate on issues. That is our job. We
also need to provide some degree of leadership, particularly in the areas of
industrial relations and wage restraints. In all the areas of political life,
there are 2 basic decision-making mechanisms which control our kind of free
enterprise society: the law and the marketplace. The 2 interact constantly.
Leadership is required very largely of politicians in the area of industrial
relations, particularly when wage restraints are involved. Indeed, we voted for
the act when it was passed. Indeed, we supported it then. We think now that it
needs to be changed. That is why I gave notice this morning that I would
introduce a bill to effect the changes that we think are required.
Unfortunately, the minister's arguments, though well delivered, fall down fairly quickly.

The honourable minister also referred to a former dramatic increase in salaries. That is perfectly true. As the honourable minister knows, that dramatic increase in salaries was required because, at the time it was granted - and I remember it well - the members of this Assembly were paid at a rate which was far below that offered to the rest of the community. In 1974, the salary for a member of the Legislative Council was $7,000 per year. When I came into the Assembly in 1977, that had increased to $12,000 per year. I personally dropped $6,000 a year from my previous salary. We acknowledged that, up until that point - and it was simply a factor of the political development of the Territory - it was considered to be a part-time job. Upon the development of self-government for the Northern Territory, it stopped being a part-time job and became the full-time job that it is today.

Mr Speaker, I cannot quote the exact figures but the salary increase referred to was from about $24,000 a year, which at that time grossly behind the rest of the community, to $33,000. The minister is perfectly correct when he says that it was a far greater hike in percentage terms than the current increase. The significance of that change was that it was the final recognition of the full-time nature of the positions in here and it put us on a parity with equivalent positions in the rest of the community. It is really quite fallacious to compare that particular increase to that under debate because the two simply cannot be compared.

The rationale used by the Remuneration Tribunal in determining the increases for members of the Assembly was based largely on the same arguments that were used by the Remuneration Tribunal in the federal sphere. What happened in that case is a matter of public record. The tribunal itself determined that the increases should not be delivered at once but that they should be spaced over a period of a year. Mr Speaker, I agree with most of the arguments put by the honourable minister. However, the federal government finally rejected the pay increases completely, as it has a political right to do when the political climate and demands of the day require it. It overrode that decision in the interests of the country, the economy and wage restraint. We have an equal obligation to do that in the Northern Territory.

I would point out that the federal government was in the position then that the Northern Territory government is very largely in now. The federal government had instituted an accord, an accord which has worked very successfully indeed. In respect of the leadership expected of it, it would have put the government in a totally impossible position had it attempted to peg everyone else back to 4.1% but allowed itself almost the equivalent of the salaries increase seen in the Territory. It took the right decision in rejecting it: It had no choice if it wished to act responsibly.

Mr Speaker, we have already seen Northern Territory public servants use total and utter logic, a logic which, from what the minister has just said, cannot be refuted. But it makes no sense whatever for members of the Northern Territory government to say publicly now that a pay increase cannot be justified and will not be given when they are not prepared to take the action which is available to them in the Legislative Assembly. They have the numbers and they can exercise them at their complete discretion. In fact, they can do so in about 10 minutes if they wish to show some leadership. When saying to those unions that an increase of 8% is unreasonable and unrealistic, the government should show some leadership by not accepting the 11.7% increase which has just been recommended. I would not think anyone would have to be too smart to work
out that, while this government indicates that it will not make any move to change the decision of the Remuneration Tribunal, as the federal government did, it has absolutely no argument whatsoever on which to oppose pay increases for the Northern Territory Public Service at an equal level. That is a fact. It does not matter what kind of twisted logic the government tries to apply - that fact stands. It will be a fact of industrial life in the Territory after today if the government does not act responsibly in this matter.

Mr Speaker, during the early stages of the debate this morning, the government indicated by its interjections and behaviour that it considers this whole thing to be a big joke. In the letters that he sent to members of the opposition, the Chief Minister certainly indicated that he thought it was a huge joke. I said before that this government has been typecast. The Everingham government had its particular and recognisable behaviour. This government is recognisable already by one thing: a totally irresponsible attitude in respect of the custody that it has of taxpayers' money and the way in which it spends that money. It has exhibited again and again during this sittings of the Assembly, that it has an extremely laid-back attitude about how seriously it takes the job of responsibly administering the Treasury. Nothing could in fact cement that attitude more into place than the letter that I and all opposition caucus members received from the Chief Minister in respect of these pay rises. Before I read the letter I would just point out to the minister that the first statement that I made in respect of opposing this pay increase was on 16 October, fully 2 months before the Jingili by-election. I would suggest that he have a look at the public records. In fact, I made that statement at the very first opportunity that was available to me after we had received the determination that there were to be salary increases. Mr Speaker, I will read the letter:

Dear Mr Collins,

I note that, in the forthcoming Legislative Assembly sittings, you intend to move to disallow the latest pay rise awarded to Territory members of parliament by the Remuneration Tribunal. I note too that you and your colleagues have had no qualms about collecting this rise since it came into effect. You are well aware, of course, that there are established procedures to deduct this money from your salary. Given your strong feelings on the matter, I am amazed that you have not resorted to those procedures. Enclosed please find a form to deduct the rise from your salary. I shall be delighted to process it through the appropriate channels as soon as you complete it and send it back to me.

Yours sincerely,
Ian Tuxworth.

Mr Speaker, I rang the minister's office and complained about it. The letter, with the attached form, was supplied to the press before I received my copy. I had a telephone call from an amused journalist who said: 'I have a copy of a letter to you from the Chief Minister which says...'. I said: 'It would be nice if I had the letter to me from the Chief Minister before the press got it'. I complained about it. Mr Speaker, I was intrigued by this letter because it made references to 'established procedures' and so on for deducting this increase and pegging it at 4.1%. I made inquiries and, not surprisingly, found that no such procedures existed. It was no surprise then to turn the page over and find attached to the letter, not a government form reflecting established procedures, but simply a letter that had been dummied up in the office of the Chief Minister himself.
Mr Speaker, that is something straight out of a trick shop. That was a really half-smart and - if I can use the word - juvenile attitude towards what we considered to be an extremely serious position in which the Northern Territory government put itself in respect of what we knew would be demands from the Northern Territory Public Service for significant pay rises which the government has now indicated publicly it will oppose. Those pay rises would be a full 4% less than the pay rises the government has indicated that its members would accept. The Chief Minister's response to that is to send this half-smart letter, not a form using established procedures at all, but a letter dummied up in his office to the Speaker of the Legislative Assembly telling us that the government will deduct a certain amount.

Mr Speaker, the Treasury people I spoke to about implementing that sort of procedure were entirely unimpressed with the suggestions of the Chief Minister and I do not think that this kind of approach to serious matters of economic responsibility reflects very well on either the Chief Minister's competence, in terms of his position as both Chief Minister and Treasurer, or his capacity adequately to carry out the job that he has been given a mandate to do by the people of the Northern Territory. That is not entirely correct either, is it, Mr Speaker? He has not been given that mandate at all; he inherited the job because the former Chief Minister left.

Mr Speaker, we know the reality of the new Chief Minister's hold on his job. We know that the vote that was taken for Chief Minister in the Northern Territory was in fact 10 to 8. I was most amused to see that Patrick Cusack got it wrong. He had it at 12 to 8 which gave the members opposite one more member than they possess in the Legislative Assembly. There were 2 votes in it and we know from the honourable member for Jingili's contribution the other day, that he will help us. The real numbers in the Assembly now, Mr Speaker, would be not 19 to 6 but Dondas 8, Tuxworth 10, opposition 6 and Rick Setter.

Mr Speaker, it is about time that the government showed a far more responsible attitude than it has demonstrated so far towards its economic responsibility in terms of spending the money that is entrusted to it by the taxpayers. It was announced that we had lost $12m this morning, of which $4m was lost due to incompetence, which the government tried to brush over. We have lost in the vicinity of $10m in respect of the entire casino transaction and, as we discovered this morning again, we are likely to lose a good deal more. The Chief Minister of the Northern Territory treats the whole question of establishing the pay rates for all members of the Legislative Assembly, 25 of us irrespective of political party affiliation, as a joke, as something that he can hand out to the press for a bit of a giggle.

Mr Speaker, the opposition supports the existence of the Remuneration Tribunal. One of the commendable things that that particular tribunal has done was to break up the rigid demarcation line that existed between urban and rural seats. Formerly, we had a situation whereby there were urban seats and rural seats that got so much money and so on and, of course, a level of financial injustice existed between people with big rural electorates and those who had small rural electorates. The tribunal has been invaluable in the attitude that it has taken in listening to individual representations, supported by evidence, as to the problems members have in their electorates and the costs involved in carrying out the job that they have to do on behalf of their electors, attending meetings and so on. We support that the Remuneration Tribunal should continue but we think, and I say it unblushingly, that it is time for a change. We think this act needs to be amended, as do so many other acts. We intend to introduce legislation to do that.
If the wages accord had been a failure, one could say that was just nonsense and had not worked. Mr Speaker, the accord has been a dramatic success. We had inflation touching 11% and going through the roof. Unemployment was doing the same thing. We had that frightening thing called 'stagflation', the nightmare of all mixed economies like ours, where inflation and unemployment were both rising together. But, as a result of that accord, a substantial level of wage restraint has been shown over the last 18 months which has resulted in inflation being halved and unemployment, although certainly not reaching the level that we desire it to reach, going down instead of up.

All politicians, not just those in Canberra, have a corporate responsibility to show some degree of leadership in industrial affairs and not to place unnecessary strains on a valuable accord which has contributed greatly to the economic recovery of this country, and certainly not the type of stresses and strains that the Northern Territory government is currently creating. We will introduce legislation to allow the tribunal to continue but to give guidelines on how it should determine basic salary packages so that those packages will not be greater than the rest of the community expects to get. Mr Speaker, is that unreasonable? We want a degree of responsibility and we do not want an absurd situation with 2 levels of salaries for politicians, as suggested by the Chief Minister. We want a responsible attitude on the part of every member of this Assembly to give some lead, particularly, if to no one else, to the Northern Territory Public Service. If we do not take the opportunity to do that this afternoon, in any future negotiations on salary levels between the Northern Territory government and the Northern Territory Public Service, the government will not have a leg to stand on.

Mr TUXWORTH (Chief Minister): Mr Speaker, there are a couple of points that I would like to put into perspective this afternoon for the honourable member whose memory seems to have lapsed a little since the last day of the last sittings last year. Mr Speaker, late in the afternoon on that day, the Leader of the Opposition said to me: 'What are you fellows doing with the Remuneration Tribunal's report?' I said: 'We will accept it. We have appointed a tribunal and it has handed down a decision. I have not opened the cover of it but, whatever it says, we will accept'. The Leader of the Opposition did not tell me what he was going to do and I do not think I asked him, not that that is important.

But the reality was that, if it was such a terrible problem, the Leader of the Opposition that day had 10 hours in which to get his dander up and raise some hell about it, to go out into the streets and the byways... Mr Speaker, the Leader of the Opposition said that he had 5 other people to talk to about it first.

Mr TUXWORTH: Mr Speaker, the Leader of the Opposition said that he had 5 other people to talk to about it. Mr Speaker, would it take you 10 hours to talk to 5 other people about it? Setting all of that aside, if the Leader of the Opposition were sincere, he could have risen that day and said something about it to give his position some credibility. He did not do that, Mr Speaker. He was quite prepared to let it lie.

Mr Speaker, a couple of days later, because of the impending federal election, it became very important to jump up and down about the impropriety of pay rises that had just been granted to parliamentarians because they were so outrageous. He would be the first to agree with us that we all bid for a 4.1%
increase because we felt that that was fair and reasonable. The tribunal said that, in terms of relativity and so on, it thought we should have more, and it gave us 11%. I think it should be made plain that one of the reasons why we appointed a tribunal to consider the issue of parliamentary salaries was that there is no way that we can credibly determine those salaries ourselves and it would not be fair to the rest of the community if we did so. If, having gone to the trouble of appointing a tribunal which has sat for a period of 2 or 3 years to consider the issue of payments to people in this Assembly, we then turn around and put its determination aside, we might as well sack the tribunal and say to it: 'We do not like the figures that you have come up with. It is politically embarrassing for us to take what you have given us'.

Mr Speaker, I would make the point that the action of the Deputy Leader of the Opposition this afternoon in moving this motion would achieve 2 things: it would set aside and invalidate the proposals of the tribunal totally because it is not a minor amendment and it would put aside, in my view, the concept of having a tribunal. If we are not to have it, then let us consider the proposition that we have something else. That position has never been raised. The speakers from the other side this afternoon have not said whether they think we should continue with the tribunal or whether it should have certain constraints placed on it or whether, when we give our submissions to the tribunal, we should say: 'We are asking for 4% and we are telling you that, if you give us a cracker more, we will overturn your decision'. The whole object is to present the case that we think is reasonable and let the tribunal determine what it thinks it is fair for us to receive.

Mr Speaker, I am one of those people who have never put a personal proposition to the tribunal. I will take what it gives me. I will be quiet and say nothing if I get no increase at all. I just cop it the way it comes. Most of the members here feel the same. So really, we are considering whether we want to have a tribunal, whether we want to listen to it or whether we want to put it aside and do something else.

This morning, the member for Stuart asked a question of the Minister for Mines and Energy about the Sessional Committee on the Environment that we have for the uranium province. The Leader of the Opposition interjected by saying: 'If you are not going to take any notice of it, why have it?' I wrote it down as he said it because it was just so relevant. Mr Speaker...

Mr B. Collins: You are scratching today.

Mr TUXWORTH: I am not scratching. We now have a very interesting political situation. The boys must front up to the comrades and explain how they happen to have come into possession of an 11.7% increase in salary.

Mr B. Collins: No, we don't.

Mr TUXWORTH: But they do, Mr Speaker.

Mr B. Collins: No, we don't. You are the ones who have to front up.

Mr TUXWORTH: Mr Speaker, how can they go to a meeting of the comrades and explain to the brothers how they happened to cop 11.7%?

Mr B. Collins: You are not distinguishing yourself at all.

Mr TUXWORTH: Mr Speaker, that is what this is all about. They thought they would get political mileage out of it before the election by showing what Goody Two-Shoes they were.

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I sent the Leader of the Opposition and his colleagues that letter because I was serious. I accept that some people find it objectionable to receive money, to receive a rise or to have a promotion. They want to be left alone. That is great. If the Leader of the Opposition and his colleagues fit into that category, I am not going to argue with them. But there is no need for them to be the captains of the world and to organise everybody else according to their standards. I am sincere when I say that, if the Leader of the Opposition does not want to receive the increase, I do not have any problem. That is a personal matter for him. He can do a couple of things. He can send it to charity. He can write to you, Mr Speaker, and tell you he does not want it. He can write to the tribunal and tell it that he is embarrassed by the increase.

However, as an Assembly, we appointed the tribunal to review the salaries of everybody. The opposition has the right to disagree with it and set it aside. I do not believe it has the right to tell everybody else in the community what to do just because its members think they are the captains of the world, the Goody Two-Shoes and the political hypocrites that they are from time to time. We will not hear of this issue again until there is another election.

Mr B. Collins: You are not advancing your cause.

Mr TUXWORTH: I am not interested in advancing my cause. What I am saying to the Leader of the Opposition is, if he wants to be what he is, then be it. Leave everyone else alone. We will accept what we are given and what we are not given.

Mr Speaker, all I can say to you is that the Leader of the Opposition had plenty of time to raise this issue if he had wanted to. He raised it in a political context to try to get a few votes for a federal election and a by-election. You will notice, Mr Speaker, that the issue did not die down during either of the elections. He would also like to put forward a proposition that totally disregards the activities of the tribunal. If we are going to tell the tribunal that we do not want 11% and that we only want 4%, we might as well tell it that it is sacked and that we have no regard for its deliberations at all. This Assembly passed the legislation. We appointed the tribunal by concurrence, I believe. We have accepted its rulings until now. We felt that they were fair and reasonable. Embarrassing it may be, and uncomfortable it may be, but it is the award that we received. If we go through this year and next year without getting anything, well that is too bad. Mr Speaker, this whole thing is a preposterous political exercise and nothing more.

Mr SMITH (Millner): Mr Speaker, as the Leader of the Opposition has just whispered in an aside, there is one way to stop it being a political exercise and that is for the government to agree to this motion. Any political points that we may have scored would be completely undone by the government accepting this attitude and endorsing this motion.

I want to refer to a comment made by the now Chief Minister in relation to the tabling of the tribunal's report in a sittings last year. The government was so embarrassed by this report that it landed unannounced, together with a heap of other papers, on each member's desk midway through the afternoon. No announcement was made. No courtesy was extended to the Leader of the Opposition before the Assembly sat to tell him what was in it. No courtesy was extended to him during the course of the day before the thing was placed on our desks. It just landed on our desks in the middle of the afternoon of a 1-day sittings, of which we also were not told and, therefore, did not know about. We had a whole course of action planned and many things we wanted to do at that sittings. That ground, too, was cut from under us before we started those sittings. The way
this government has handled this whole thing is just typical of the respect it has for parliamentary practice.

Mr Speaker, we come to the very cute Minister for Health who talks about being embarrassed and even humiliated. It is easy to put up with that sort of humiliation and it is the sort of humiliation that has one smiling all the way to the bank. If he were serious about being humiliated or embarrassed, he would do something about it instead of just opening a separate bank account. He would do something constructive about it.

Then we heard this strange argument that the act is there and we ought to obey the act. Section 9(4) of the act provides that, within 10 sitting days after the tabling of a determination made by the tribunal, the Assembly can move a resolution to disapprove the determination or any part of the determination. The reason why that was put there was to provide an escape clause to this Assembly if, in the Assembly's view, the Remuneration Tribunal came down with something that was embarrassing or humiliating, to use the words of the Minister for Health. I put it to you that we have exactly this circumstance here; it is embarrassing and humiliating. We have all felt that. That is why that section is there. There is nothing wrong with the legislation in that context. It is there.

The government does not have the guts to use the legislation for the purpose for which it has been put there. It is content to make polite noises and say: 'You must keep with what is in the act'. The act quite clearly provides for a situation like this where we are embarrassed or humiliated. There is something we can do about it. That side of the Assembly is not game to do anything about it because it does not have any respect for the public purse and it is quite happy to take the extra money.

Mr Speaker, we were asked what we are going to do about this in future. The opposition has already given notice that it intends to move an amendment to the legislation at the next sittings. The reason why we want to move an amendment to the legislation is that circumstances have changed since it was first introduced in that we have a prices and incomes accord which is working satisfactorily and an official federal government and Territory government policy of wage restraint. Both of those things are new since the legislation was first introduced. We believe it appropriate that this independent wage-fixing body, when it considers its position on parliamentary salaries in the Northern Territory, should be forced to pay due and proper regard to the prices and incomes accord and to the wage restraint principles practised by both the federal and Northern Territory governments. That is the guts of the amendment that we propose to introduce at the next sittings. We believe that to be a perfectly reasonable and sensible practice which, hopefully, will solve this embarrassing and humiliating position that we find ourselves in at present.

Mr Perron: You are the one who seems to be embarrassed and humiliated.

Mr SMITH: I would expect that the honourable member for Fannie Bay would not be embarrassed and humiliated by this. He does not have a record of sharing the common concerns of other members of this Assembly and the general public. He seems to think that he is one off and that he can reject the practices of this Assembly and use his power to do what he wants. However, I must admit that some other people on his side of the Assembly say that they are embarrassed and humiliated and I am sure that they are much more in touch with what is going on in this community than is the honourable member for Fannie Bay.

Mr Speaker, I will go over the ground again. This 11.7% increase is quite clearly outside the prices and incomes accord. Clearly, in the present climate,
it has been an inflammatory exercise. It will become even more inflammatory if, after today, we accept this 11.7% increase. It quite clearly destroys the relativities that previously existed in parliamentary salaries throughout Australia and the only conclusion that we can draw from all that is that it is unjustified.

On the other hand, we have this opportunity today to show that we are serious about the most important economic issue facing Australia today: to get the economy moving, to keep wages down as much as we can and to keep employment up as much as we can. We have the opportunity to show, through this debate and our decision at the end of it, that those things are at the forefront of our minds and that, furthermore, being the public figures that we are, we recognise that we have an obligation not only to talk about these matters, but also to be serious about them and to put our money where our mouth is. Mr Speaker, quite clearly, the government is not prepared to take this step and that will be to the detriment of politics in the Northern Territory. I think the community in the Northern Territory and the public of Australia will feel betrayed by the fact that this government is not prepared to show a very clear example of what should be done at this time.

The Assembly divided:

Ayes 6
Mr Bell
Mr B. Collins
Mr Ede
Mr Lanhupuy
Mr Leo
Mr Smith

Noes 18
Mr D.W. Collins
Mr Coulter
Mr Dale
Mr Dondas
Mr Finch
Mr Firmin
Mr Hanrahan
Mr Harris
Mr Manzie
Mr McCarthy
Mrs Padgham-Purich
Mr Palmer
Mr Perron
Mr Robertson
Mr Setter
Mr Steele
Mr Tuxworth
Mr Vale

Motion negatived.

ADDRESS IN REPLY

Continued from 28 February 1985.

Mr COULTER (Community Development): Mr Deputy Speaker, the Northern Territory has experienced remarkable growth and development since the first days of self-government in 1978. Roads, bridges and the Gardens Hill development, which I am sure the Deputy Leader of the Opposition would also agree with, are going ahead and all show that development in the Northern Territory is proceeding quite well. However, in rising to speak in the address-in-reply debate today, I would like to refer to another aspect of development that is perhaps less tangible but, nevertheless, equally important and expresses itself in programs and policies which enhance the quality of life of individuals and
groups in our community rather than in the bricks and mortar of construction work.

We are told that the Northern Territory now has a population of 138,900 people, that 11.5% of the families have single parents, that in 50% of families both parents work, that no less than 35% of the population in the Northern Territory is under 18 years of age and that the Aboriginal percentage of the population is around 24%. The Northern Territory population is made up of 45 distinct nationalities and ethnic groups. This is interesting information which builds up a picture of a community which has a young and dynamic population with needs and desires probably unique in all of Australia.

The term 'community development' expresses the government's commitment to the welfare and aspirations of the people of the Territory. The Department of Community Development is responsible for a wide range of functional areas which reflect the government's desire to improve the quality of life of Territorians. These functions include: community welfare, Aboriginal development, women's affairs, local government, community government and consumer affairs. Honourable members will recall that the department has recently undergone a major review of its roles and functions and a number of initiatives have been taken to restructure it. The department has been restructured along regional lines with decentralised management. These 2 steps are designed to ensure that it is responsive to issues and program delivery at the local or regional level.

In order to maintain the direction now being taken, it has been necessary to embark on a comprehensive employee training and development program. Initiatives in this area include: skills training and development, organisational change in planning workshops and an ongoing assessment of organisation and management development which is necessary to achieve the overall objectives and aims of the department. Officers with a wider range of management skills and expertise have been recruited and the latest computer technology has been acquired. This will allow better access to information for planning, program evaluation and decision-making.

Mr Deputy Speaker, before I outline some of the important programs and initiatives, either in hand or planned, you would be aware that the Chief Minister announced last December his new administrative arrangements. These included the transfer of the Office of Aboriginal Liaison to the Department of Community Development. The Office of Aboriginal Liaison has been integrated within the department and will assume all responsibilities for Aboriginal development. The government is undertaking a major review of its role in assisting Aboriginal development in the Northern Territory. In the Department of Community Development Organisational Review Report of last July, it was stated: 'There is an emphasis on the provision and maintenance of essential services to Aboriginal communities sometimes at the exclusion of broader social concerns'.

The government sees the need to develop a better understanding of what it is that Aboriginal people want for themselves and their communities. It sees the need for a greater depth of socio-economic analysis and for the recasting of values and objectives. There is a clear need for strategies which deal less with the provision of services and more with policies addressing all issues affecting Aboriginal communities and which directly empower the communities to address those issues. The government should now begin to shift its orientation from that of a servicing agent to one of a facilitator or collaborator in community endeavour. By adopting this role and using community profiles being built up, it should be possible to help communities to identify and establish sets of short and intermediate-term goals that are realistic and achievable.
Then, the task will be one of helping to set up action strategies which are relevant to communities and which they are capable of implementing. This approach is not meant to imply that anything a community wants it gets but, by discussion and agreement, goals that have relevance within the government's policy of self-management and within the budget context can be established, with the community accepting various degrees of responsibility for their achievement.

To coordinate and oversee the review of government policies in this area, I am pleased to announce the appointment of a new Director of Aboriginal Development in the Northern Territory. He is Mr Peter Plummer who comes to this post from Batchelor College where he has been a distinguished and innovative principal. Mr Plummer has considerable experience in the area of Aboriginal education and training. A significant advantage of the new arrangements will be to integrate Aboriginal development alongside other areas of the department and this will have a positive impact in the areas of Aboriginal development for which the Northern Territory government has responsibility. These arrangements should achieve a marked enhancement of Aboriginal policies and programs throughout the Territory. Importantly, priority will be given to projects which provide increasing employment opportunities for youth and other unemployed people in communities.

Mr B. COLLINS (Opposition Leader): Mr Deputy Speaker, I hesitate to interrupt this speech because I think it is an excellent one. However, I wish to draw your attention to the lack of a quorum in this Assembly.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Ring the bells.

Mr COULTER (Community Development): I thank the Leader of the Opposition for his kind remark on the substance of my speech.

As I was saying, Mr Deputy Speaker, priority will be given to projects which provide increased employment opportunities for youth. I think this is very important. One has only to visit some of the Aboriginal communities to see what a problem the Northern Territory will have in these areas. Answers must be found to employment problems for young Aboriginals. They must be given worthwhile employment and opportunities to determine their priorities and where they are going. The Department of Aboriginal Development will establish a futures committee to address that very problem. As I said before, the problems of youth are not restricted to Aboriginals. 35% of our population is now under the age of 18 years and we really have to get on top of those problems very soon.

Increased priority will be given by field staff to consultation, education and encouragement of Aboriginal community councils towards their establishment as community government councils under part XX of the Local Government Act. This is a logical step in the progress of community councils towards self-management of their affairs. However, there will be no imposition of the community government scheme on any community. Introduction will be only at the request of the residents of a community and will proceed through proper and adequate consultation.

The government has established the Northern Territory Coordination of Aboriginal Programs Committee, called NT CAP. It comprises departmental heads of Community Development, Treasury, Health, Transport and Works, Education and Lands. Regional committees have been established in both Darwin and Alice Springs. NT CAP has the potential to develop into a major focal point for Aboriginal affairs programs in the Northern Territory. A major task being undertaken by this committee is the development of standardised Aboriginal
community profiles, which will allow more effective monitoring and evaluation of them, and other community information to facilitate the development of appropriate plans and action strategies.

Mr Deputy Speaker, I will take this opportunity to outline some of the programs and initiatives to be undertaken by other divisions within the department. In the area of welfare, a high standard of support services to individuals and families in crisis, including child protection and the provision of substitute care for children, services to juvenile offenders, and emergency financial assistance, will continue. A departmental welfare presence at Palmerston will also be provided to cater directly for the welfare needs of that rapidly developing community. There will be continuation of funding to voluntary welfare organisations and community groups through the grants-in-aid program. There will be an emphasis on programs aimed at addressing the significant social problems prevalent in many remote Aboriginal communities. A particular focus will be on the establishment of community resource centres and the employment of local Aboriginal people to provide preventative and remedial programs on a community basis. Continuing emphasis will be given to funding local government and voluntary organisations to provide individual and family counselling services.

Last year, the new community welfare and juvenile justice legislation came into effect in the Territory. The legislation has received favourable attention in other states and some are enacting similar legal provisions. The Juvenile Justice Act is about to be reviewed by a committee chaired by the Chief Magistrate. That review is to be completed by August and it will determine the effectiveness of the legislation. Work is still proceeding on the implementation of some parts of the legislation, in particular those relating to the licensing of children's homes, and Aboriginal child welfare. The Task Force on Juvenile Crime has held its initial meeting and will report to the government by the end of May on the incidence of juvenile crime, particularly in the Darwin area. It will suggest approaches to reduce the magnitude of this significant community problem. Population projections and demographic studies suggest that the potential of the problem is increasing all the time. The percentage of our population under the age of 15 is increasing and, in fact, will peak in 1986-87. In my own electorate, the percentage of the population of Palmerston under 15 is currently as high as 30%. I am confident that the task force has the expertise and the common sense to address this problem realistically and I look forward to receiving its recommendations.

Another important initiative is the review of the pensioners' concession scheme. This provides a range of benefits to Territory pensioners and has been in operation for almost 6 years. It has been extended progressively and modified during that period but the time has come for a full review of the scheme to ensure that it remains in tune with current and future needs. It is intended that that review will be completed by the end of August.

The Supported Accommodation Assistance Program started in January as a joint Commonwealth state program involving the integration of existing Commonwealth and NT crisis accommodation including sub-programs for youth, women, and homeless people in general. The first meeting of the SAAP Commonwealth Territory Supporting Accommodation Program Coordinating Committee took place on 21 February and that body will be making recommendations to me shortly, and to my federal counterpart, on program guidelines and funding applications for the remainder of 1984-85. The Children's Services Bureau will continue to plan for the provision of child care and related children's services for the Territory's rapidly expanding population. 11 new child-care centres are in the planning or construction stages and they will provide more than 300 additional child-care places by the end of July next year.
In relation to women's affairs, there have been some new administrative arrangements in the Territory. Under the new arrangements announced by the Chief Minister on 21 December last year, the Office of Women's Affairs was transferred from the Department of the Chief Minister to the Department of Community Development. Before I go on to speak about the role and functions of the Division of Women's Affairs, I must clear up some misinformation about this new arrangement. It has been said in the media that the changes mean a downgrading of the government's commitment to women's issues, that women's affairs will become a welfare annexe and that the division will act as a typing pool for the Women's Advisory Council. These criticisms were made without knowledge of the government's action in this area. They are unfair and, in the case of the chief critic, most unworthy. The fact is that the changes will mean a significant upgrading of the government's commitment and, in particular, the new arrangements will ensure that skilled resources will be allocated to programs affecting all women in the Territory. Honourable members will see that the new arrangements will bring together important avenues of information and ideas for the benefit of the government in its shaping of policies for women generally.

Mr Deputy Speaker, the Women's Affairs Division will now have a greatly expanded role. Included in it will be a full-time secretariat and research functions for the Women's Advisory Council which will result in the council having access to better and properly researched information and efficient preparation facilities for input to government policies. The Women's Affairs Division will now have a greatly expanded role which will result in the Women's Advisory Council having greater access to the information that it needs most. Secondly, the government will have under one umbrella a broad range of functions in which women are vitally interested. In addition to the Women's Advisory Council Secretariat and Research Unit, the Women's Affairs Division will have responsibility for the Women's Information Centres, Children's Services Bureau, temporary accommodation centres for women and the coordination of the Homemaker Program. For the information of honourable members, I will outline the functions of these units.

The Women's Information Centres provide an immediate reference point for women seeking information on any topic of concern to them. They are located in shopfront premises, making them easily accessible. The Children's Services Bureau, which will be functioning within its full charter by July this year, plans the development of child-care services, provides support and in-service training for child-care centres and coordinates government policy on child-care matters. The Homemaker Service is a community-based preventative welfare service which aims to minimise family breakdown and reduce the need for financial assistance, institutional care and substitute care. This service will be devolved on community organisations and local government authorities by the end of June this year. Departmental officers already servicing these functions will be transferred to the Women's Affairs Division and there will be no downgrading of or reduction of positions as a consequence.

These changes reflect the high priority this government continues to place on issues of concern to women. The Women's Advisory Council which, in the past, has laboured under some difficulties through a lack of full-time research support, will now have access, through its Secretariat and Research Unit, to information on matters that are of considerable significance to all women in the Territory. Given this access to information and with the full-time Secretariat and Research Unit now working solely for the council, the council will continue to be able to give to the government recommendations on a range of issues that it considers to be of importance to women in the Territory. The council, together with the secretariat, will be able to work to ensure that the
government is made fully aware of issues affecting Territory women in all walks of life. As the functions within the division are now linked, the government will be able to obtain, through its information network, a more comprehensive picture of issues that affect women. The new and expanded role of the Women's Affairs Division will result in greater administrative cohesion and strength. It will enable advice and coordination of policies and programs of direct relevance to women to be more effective than ever before.

In the area of local government, the emergence of new and developing centres throughout the Territory has made local government a major focal point for my department's activities. Current initiatives in local government include the finalisation of a new local government act which is designed to widen and clarify the powers and functions of existing local government authorities. In the final stages, and indeed throughout the review of the act, considerable consultation has taken place with council members and officials to ensure the widest possible consensus on the provisions of the new legislation. Undertakings have been given for further consultation with these bodies on the development of the supporting regulations. Honourable members will note that the consultation process has been expanded to maximise input from user bodies while maintaining impetus to allow the earliest possible implementation of the new act.

Mr Deputy Speaker, the desires of those councils to incorporate changes in their rating structure for 1985-86 will be accommodated. The development of a form of local government known as community government is well under way in proclaimed towns. The scheme for Mataranka is now complete and the statutory procedures for its incorporation are in the final stages. I am pleased to advise that I had a constructive meeting in February with Elliott residents who also wish to act along these lines.

A proposal for a fully-elected local government council in Palmerston is progressing. Resolution of an appropriate and representative form of local government in the outer Darwin area is under consideration and, as I emphasised before, consultation has been the key in the determination of this process. I will be convening a 2-day conference on local government beginning on 25 March at which issues relevant to legislation, the need for boundary changes, new local government and other important matters will be discussed by elected members, officials and interested organisations.

At the next Local Government Ministers' Conference, it is my intention to pursue with my federal and state colleagues the need for special attention to be given to the creation of the necessary infrastructure to increase both physical and social resources essential for new town development. This is increasingly relevant to the Territory with its exceptional growth rate. This expanded focus on local government will lead to greater input by beneficiaries and providers alike to the planning and provision of services.

I have already mentioned the encouragement and support my department is giving to Aboriginal community councils to achieve self-management through the establishment of community government. The government is equally committed to the development of community government in established centres in the Territory and interest in this is being shown in communities such as Pine Creek and Borroloola.

The department will continue to place emphasis on promoting and protecting the interests of consumers through education and resolution of complaints through negotiation. Recently, I appointed a new Consumer Affairs Council comprising a balanced membership from all regions of the Territory. Consumer
affairs initiatives already in place or planned include a review of the Motor Vehicles Act as part of the ongoing review of all consumer protection legislation. The Consumer Affairs Branch now provides secretariat support to the Territory Anti-litter Committee which will endeavour to maintain the admirable results achieved to date in litter awareness and control throughout the Territory. To further assist the efforts of the Territory Anti-litter Committee and Keep Australia Beautiful Council, the department is preparing new litter and pollution control legislation.

For the benefit of honourable members, I will outline legislative proposals currently under consideration or in preparation. It must be emphasised that this is merely an interim list and priorities may alter. There is the Local Government Act which I have spoken about. Amending legislation dealing with caravan parks, hawkers, dogs, tenancy, weights and measures, motor vehicle dealers, litter and waste, credit, the National Trust and cemeteries is under consideration.

Mr Deputy Speaker, I have provided an outline of some of the aims of the Department of Community Development and some of the initiatives which are planned or have been put in place already. It is my intention that the department will continue to look ahead to determine the needs and desires of a rapidly growing Territory community and to act to meet them, not in a passive or reactive manner but with an informed awareness of those needs before they occur. This year will be one of demand and challenges in this area and I look forward to the role I can play in that process.

Mr B. COLLINS (Opposition Leader): Mr Deputy Speaker, there are several matters I wish to raise today in relation to the address in reply. I would like to begin with a matter that was given some emphasis by the Minister for Community Development. The whole question of women's affairs is a very political issue in terms of the emphasis that has to be given to what has been, for many years, largely a neglected area. It is a fact of life that no matter what sort of face the government wants to put on it, if it moves an area of responsibility from the Department of the Chief Minister to that of the most junior minister in the government, it is a serious downgrading of the political emphasis being given to that particular subject. Mr Deputy Speaker, it does not take a Sherlock Holmes to realise that the government's failure even to mention its plans for removing disadvantages for women or raising the status of women in the address in reply, reveals its true attitude to this important issue. I suggest that the Tuxworth government has not bothered to address this in its first parliamentary statement to the people of the Northern Territory either because it does not care or, as recent press comments indicate, its members cannot agree amongst themselves on what should be done - or both. I refer honourable members' attention to a most curious interview on ABC radio recently. A codicil was attached to the interview on Territory Extra by the Chief Minister. It said that another statement would be made later clarifying what turned out to be some inaccuracies in the Chief Minister's statement on ABC radio.

Mr Deputy Speaker, as honourable members would remember, the opposition was heavily critical for many years of the former Chief Minister for failing for so long to address this issue seriously. That issue was taken up particularly by the former members for Nightcliff, Fannie Bay and Sanderson. To his credit and, I suspect, largely because he was a lot more astute politically than the current Chief Minister, a few months before the last Northern Territory election, he took some very decisive steps. Cynical though some of us were about the timing - and we have heard a lot about timing today - there is little doubt that, once committed, he tried to establish a structure and a system that would benefit both
the government and Territory women. He appointed a Women's Advisor to the Chief Minister. He established the Office of Women's Affairs under the Department of the Chief Minister and he appointed a Women's Advisory Council.

Given a year in which to review its operation, the new Chief Minister was justified in increasing support services to the hard-working members of the voluntary Women's Advisory Council. We have no argument with that. We acknowledge the important work that the council does and the broad section of the community that it represents. But, the new Chief Minister did much more than that. He announced not only that the entire office was there only to serve the council but also took the Office of the Chief Minister's Adviser on Women's Affairs and the Women's Advisory Council and handed them over to the Minister for Community Development. As I said, and it is no personal reflection, he put it under the stewardship of the Territory government's most junior minister. Effectively, he gave the Office of Women's Affairs a 'welfare tag'. Whether the Chief Minister likes it or not, and whether he realises it or not, he has downgraded the status and thus the effect of the entire system significantly. If recent press reports are correct, I am pleased to hear that the honourable Minister for Community Development intends to try to redress the situation to some extent. The fact is that the Chief Minister has placed on the public record a statement that seems to be severely at odds with the statement made in the Assembly today by the Minister for Community Development.

Mr Deputy Speaker, I am pleased that the minister intends to ensure that the Women's Affairs Division will provide both effective servicing to the Women's Advisory Council and the staff resources to allow the division itself to initiate programs and advise on a broad range of issues affecting women. But, no amount of rhetoric or rearrangement, however positive, will undo what the new Chief Minister has done, which is to downgrade and push aside the status and importance of women in the Northern Territory community. If ever there was a Chief Minister who needed to have responsible people who were sensitive to the needs of the electorate directly advising him, it is this Chief Minister. We have seen all too quickly the mess and misunderstanding that has resulted from that Chief Minister's unilateral decision-making, without consultation even with his own responsible ministers. The entire structure set up by the former Chief Minister was designed for women to have direct and quick access - and that was the way it actually worked - to the head of government, not to a junior minister.

Mr Deputy Speaker, the downgrading of the Office of Women's Affairs is not the only issue affecting Northern Territory women which concerns the opposition in regard to this government's attitude and its record. We are still waiting for the government to introduce sex discrimination legislation to complement the federal act. We are one of the few governments in Australia that have not moved to do this. The new Chief Minister may well discover, to his political peril, that memories in this community are not so short. After all, he is the person remembered first of all for cutting off funding to the Women's Centre and then for closing that centre down. Now he has the added and dubious distinction of being the person responsible for downgrading the Office of Women's Affairs and all the benefits it could provide far more effectively with direct access to the head of government himself.

As honourable members may well know, Northern Territory women, along with those of South Australia, were the first to receive the vote in this country in 1894. Since then, we have seen women take an increasingly active role in the political and social development of the Northern Territory. They include: Lyn Berlowitz, who was the first woman member of the then Legislative Council in the 1960s; Lillian Dean who was the first woman elected to the Darwin City Council; Ella Stack, the first woman to be elected as Mayor of Darwin; and many others.
Another distinguished woman who served the Northern Territory was Pam O’Neil, the former member for Fannie Bay, who became the first woman in Australia to achieve the frontbench rank of Deputy Leader of the Opposition. A great deal of hard work has been put in by the women I have mentioned and others. It was to the great detriment of the Territory, in my view, that the Legislative Assembly lost the contributions of the former members for Fannie Bay, Sanderson and Nightcliff - and by that I mean no reflection on the current holders of those seats. Largely because of the efforts of those women over the years, we seemed to be breaking ground and making some headway when the former Chief Minister began to address seriously the needs of Territory women. The opposition deeply regrets the retrograde steps taken by the government to undo what the former Chief Minister for the Northern Territory set in place. We advise the government that we intend to pursue the matter and we shall monitor its actions in this area very closely and do what we can to redress the damage done by this Chief Minister.

Mr Deputy Speaker, I would like to comment on a number of issues that were mentioned in His Honour's speech. I have just canvassed the one that was not. Mention was made of the Agricultural Development and Marketing Authority's activities on the Douglas-Daly. I think there is a definite need for continued support by the government for ADMA and that development should continue slowly without the razzamatazz of unreal expectations being built up as we have seen in past years. It should maintain quiet and effective support for the operations of the farmers who are there at the moment without unnecessarily raising the expectations of the Northern Territory community or, indeed, of the farmers themselves. I think it is important at least to maintain the progress that has been made.

Mr Deputy Speaker, I commend the government on the decision that it has taken to create the new Department of Ports and Fisheries. In comparison with the states, we are not exploiting to the fullest extent the potential that exists in the waters off the Northern Territory's coast in respect of fishing activities. We look forward to seeing far greater development of the Territory's fishing potential in future years and there is no question at all that now is the right time to create this separate department. I commend the government on its decision.

Some mention was made of amendments to be made to land rights legislation in the Northern Territory. I will not go into that in detail this afternoon for the simple reason that it has been canvassed at such inordinate length in numerous debates and, without doubt, will be canvassed again at length in this Legislative Assembly. I wish to say simply that the opposition recognises, and has recognised for a considerable time, that amendments are required to that act. We put in a considerable effort in terms of negotiating with all of the relevant groups, including extensive consultations with the mining industry and the cattle industry of the Northern Territory, in respect of amendments which we considered should have been made a number of years ago. It is a matter of extreme personal regret to me that the opportunity to put at least some of those amendments into place was squandered and thrown away by the intransient attitude of the former Northern Territory government. Had the Northern Territory government been pragmatic enough to acknowledge that everything that was wanted at that time would not be accomplished, about 80% of the proposed amendments would now be part of the act if they had been pursued independently rather than as a package.

It is with a great deal of cynicism that I observe the activities of the senator representing the Northern Territory for the CLP. After 7 years, he has discovered that a land rights act exists. I sat through a number of land claim
hearings in the days when Justice Toohey was the Aboriginal Land Commissioner and witnessed the anomalies in the Act. They have been around for an awfully long time and received a great deal of comment from the judge himself and from barristers appearing for various parties. I do not think that it reflects any particular credit on the senator that, during the period when he was a senator in the government which introduced this legislation, he did not make the slightest effort to amend it during that time but is now making moves in that direction.

Mr Deputy Speaker, the position I have on land rights legislation is pretty simple in respect of its major point - the whole question of the mining veto. Although the many amendments required to the Act - and there are glaring anomalies and problems - have been canvassed in detail, the mining veto can be covered very simply. A veto used by Aboriginal people, not in an attempt to prevent mining from taking place on land, but as - and they have an absolute right so to use it; this is not a criticism of the groups involved - a bargaining counter to extract further money from mining companies, in my view, cannot be sustained or supported. I am sure that some honourable members at least will see that what I am saying is not in any way a criticism of Aboriginal land councils. Like any of them, they use what is available. However, I think the time has now come when that lever should not be provided.

However, there is not the slightest doubt that there are many Aboriginal people in the Northern Territory, some of whom I know very well, who could not care less about the CLP, the ALP, the Northern Land Council, the Central Land Council, mining companies or anyone else. As one of them from Gapuwiyak said to me recently, they simply wish to be left alone. They are not interested in mining royalties; they are not interested in money; they are not interested in political parties, politicians or anything else; they just want an opportunity to pursue the lifestyle that they are pursuing at the moment and to be left alone. Those are the people whose interests I want protected and preserved by whatever changes are made to the Land Rights Act.

I have been to meetings ad infinitum and yet I still cannot help being moved by the real issues of human justice involved. This particular gentleman from Gapuwiyak, a man of prominence, promise and distinction, a traditional Aboriginal person in every respect, said recently to myself and a group of people: 'We are living here. We do not want mining. We do not want money. We do not want politicians coming to talk to us. You know what you blokes are going to do to us; we know what you are going to do to us. What you are going to do is come in and muck up our lives. You are going to bring mining and all these other things in' - I had never heard this expressed like that before - 'then you are going to make us sick. We are going to get sick and then you are going to send doctors in to fix us up'. Mr Deputy Speaker, having gone away and had a bit of a think about that, it was pretty hard for me to refute the perception that that particular Aboriginal person had about the reality of what has happened in terms of the impact of government on Aboriginal communities.

I believe the Land Rights Act requires amendment. I do not think that the mining veto as it exists, and in the way it has been used, can be supported any longer. But whatever else happens to the act - and I believe that there will be a broad level of support for this position from the government - those people who are living in a traditional manner are entitled to continue to live in that way if that is what they wish to do. Having said that, I wish to endorse the current government's attitude in this process and the quite dramatic action it has taken in removing those bills from the notice paper and allowing this debate to continue.
Mr Deputy Speaker, if you were looking for the major points in His Honour's speech which distinguished this government from the last one, you could find them in 2 places. One was the reference to the Land Rights Act and the other the reference to the National Crimes Authority. The National Crimes Authority is a body which was firmly opposed by the former government of the Northern Territory and has now been supported by the current one. I shared the concerns the former Chief Minister had concerning the National Crimes Authority. I am concerned, as he was, that the authority is not used in some manner to intrude or trample upon the rights of individual people. From that point of view, its actions will have to be watched carefully. I think we all have to accept that, in today's world, such a body is required urgently, particularly in respect of drugs.

I was somewhat taken aback, particularly by the drafting of that part of His Honour's speech which dealt with the government's proposals in respect of national parks. With due respect to whoever prepared that particular section of the speech, I must say that perhaps he could have concentrated - not that I am here to give advice to government speech writers - on what the government may be attempting to do. I would suggest that the way in which it was delivered would strike a bit of a shiver into the hearts even of CLP supporters in the Northern Territory. Perhaps I could just quote its opening shot: 'My government has examined the requirements for approval of exploration and mining in national parks'. Mr Deputy Speaker, when you read on, you find that the government is discussing the need to remove duplication in controls over mining between the mining legislation and the necessary national parks legislation. The entire emphasis in the speech - and I fear that it may be the reality - is placed on simply expediting, at the cost of every other consideration, mining in the Territory's national parks. Can I say very firmly that this will be a very shortsighted policy, not simply economically but socially as well, for those of us who intend to stick around the Northern Territory for the rest of our lives. The Territory has 54 national parks under its control - a bare minimum, in my view. Indeed, we do not stand up very well to the national average. A little over 1% of our land mass is devoted to national park use as against the national average of 3%. Those parks have to be preserved at all costs for the future recreation and enjoyment of Territorians. It is difficult to reconcile mining activities with the use and enjoyment of national parks.

Mr Deputy Speaker, I will give a quick example. Those people who enjoy tramping around Kakadu and sitting in an Australian bush setting with all the solitude and quiet that that provides, apart from the odd crocodile and brown snake, have a considerable distance to travel in Kakadu before they lose completely the sound of the mining operations at Ranger. Because of the size of the park, the current mining operations in Kakadu are not all that intrusive. However, some degree of moderation will need to be observed if mining is to be allowed unfettered in Kakadu National Park and the place ends up looking like a piece of Swiss cheese. It is not simply, as people in government and the miners would have us believe, the physical damage created by the actual hole in the ground that is the problem but the associated activity and, indeed, even noise that goes along with the operation. As a bottom line, I do not think that it can be argued that, at the very least, the one thing that has to be in place, before mining or any other operation is undertaken in our national parks, is a plan of management. That applies to tourist development as much as mining development. There must be a coordinated plan for the future use of the park before any kind of ad hoc development can take place because, what might seem right and reasonable this year could turn out to be a serious mistake in 10 years' time, and everyone will regret having made it. The position the opposition will be taking in respect of this legislation is that, as a minimum
requirement, a plan of management needs to be put into place before a mining
operation, or any other operation, including tourist development, proceeds in a
national park.

Mr Deputy Speaker, we are pleased to see the TAB. We have spoken about its
introduction for 2 years. It is always with a great sense of interest that I go
back over debates in Hansard. I reread the contributions of the former
Treasurer of the Northern Territory, the honourable member for Fannie Bay. He
told us at length in the Legislative Assembly how little we knew about the TAB
and how totally ridiculous it was to suggest that such a thing could be brought
into the Northern Territory. He told us all of the problems associated with
lack of broadcasting facilities and everything else and how absolutely asinine
it was to suggest it and that, economically, it showed we had no sense
whatsoever. Those debates are only about 12 months old and they make very
interesting reading today. I am delighted to see the government take this up,
as it did the TIO and various other initiatives suggested by this opposition.
We support it. We look forward to seeing poker machines freed of the monopoly
control of the casino operators and put in sporting clubs in the Northern
Territory also.

Mr Deputy Speaker, I am running out of time so I will not be able to cover
as much ground as I had intended. I simply conclude on 2 things. I think that
one of the most exciting developments that is in the offing in the Northern
Territory is the gas pipeline and the great potential it has to establish
eventually something that is sadly lacking in the Northern Territory:
manufacturing industry. I conclude by saying that it is a matter of extreme
regret to me to see during this sittings of the Legislative Assembly proof
positive that the Northern Territory is in the hands of a distinctly less
competent government than it was formerly.

Mr PALMER (Leanyer): Mr Deputy Speaker, I was pleased to note in the
Administrator's speech mention of the government's ongoing commitment to the
expansion and development of the Northern Territory's primary industries.
Historically, on-farm production has accounted for between 35% and 50% of
Australia's export earnings, earnings which enable Australia to service its
fast growing foreign debt and inject the capital into the economy which is
necessary to support our principles of growth economics. Although the major
contributor to the standard of living most Australians enjoy, governments of all
ilks have allowed the farm sector to run down to a point where it is no longer
a sound economic proposition for farmers to stay on the land and in production.
For example, the average level of farm investment in Australia is in the order
of $450 000, yet this year's average farm income will be $12 000 or less, a
return on investment of less than 3%. Even our most strident critics on the
other side of the Assembly would have to accept that as an unreasonably low
level of return. To further illustrate the point, farm terms of trade, the
ratios of prices received to prices paid, are declining at about 2.4% per annum.
This is happening when Australia is facing a foreign debt that exceeds 24% of
our gross domestic product.

The usual reaction to producers' pleas for assistance is to tell them to
become more efficient. It is all very well for governments and suburban critics
of the so-called cow cockies to state politely that primary producers must
improve their efficiency. In terms of production, Australia already has the
most efficient producers in the world. It is time governments recognised where
the wealth of the nation is generated and will continue to be generated: on the
farms. It is time governments readdressed those policies that have contributed
to the run down of the farm sector. It is time also that positive policies and
programs were implemented and directed at returning our primary products to a competitive level on the international market. The problems facing our primary producers will not be overcome unless there is a commitment on the part of governments, and those unions which rely heavily on the primary producer for their livelihood, to face the economic reality that any further erosion of farming income will propel this great nation of ours headlong into the third world.

Let us look at some of the policies that do or will severely disaffect the primary producer. Firstly, there is the indexed excise on fuel. Whilst not disagreeing with the principle of import parity pricing, it is counter-productive for the federal government to apply it to offroad, export-income-generating uses, especially where fuel costs are a major contributing factor to the cost of production. A perfect example of the gross stupidity of the current fuel pricing policy is the recent federal government treatment of the Japanese tuna fishing fleet. The Japanese fishermen fish international waters in the Indian Ocean and have been using Australian ports for reprovisioning and rest and recreation purposes. By changing the definition of 'international voyage' to exclude foreign fishing vessels leaving and returning to Australian ports, whether or not they are fishing Australian waters, the federal government has endangered foreign revenue earnings by somewhere in the order of $25m per annum.

Mr Deputy Speaker, primary producers are faced also with tariffs on farm machinery. Whilst costing producers many millions of dollars, these tariffs are in place to protect a relatively small number of jobs. The tariff on headers alone costs producers $15m per annum to protect 260 jobs whereas a $2m bounty on their production would achieve the same result. Primary producers are now faced with the spectre of a wealth tax, aimed at appeasing the Labor left, with little or no consideration being given to the irreparable damage it will do to the industry and, therefore, to the economy in general. Rising farm costs contribute more than anything else to the malaise facing the industry yet many of these costs could be held easily at the current level and, in most instances, substantially reduced. In the past 4 years, although returns to producers have increased by 19%, inflation and government taxes on farmers have risen by 45% and 70% respectively. If that is not biting the hand that feeds you, then I do not know what is.

Apart from government taxes and charges, increasing industrial lawlessness is further pushing the producers' backs to the wall. The recent New South Wales rail strike cost wheat producers many millions. Union bans on the export of live sheep to the Middle East - a market that can be satisfied no other way - and, closer to home, strikes and industrial disputes in the beef slaughter industry, are classic examples of the unions' failure to recognise that the livelihoods of their members are directly dependent on the strength, competitiveness and viability of our primary producers.

Mr Deputy Speaker, the problems that I have outlined are so diverse and complicated that they can only really be confronted on a national level. However, we in the Territory, with our fledgling grain, horticultural and fishing industries, can learn from the mistakes and misdirected policies of other governments and implement policies that will assist the producer to be more competitive in a hostile international marketplace.

Notwithstanding the imposts placed on the industry by governments, the primary producers and their industry bodies and organisations must also share some of the responsibility for the state the industry finds itself in. The industry needs to recognise that, in today's world, products do not sell themselves. Effective and high-powered marketing strategies must be implemented.
I was pleased to note that the Minister for Primary Production foreshadowed a role for ADMA more akin to that of a marketing than a research and development organisation, a move that I loudly applaud. The term 'marketing' addresses many more issues than just advertising the availability of a particular product. The product must hit the market in a form acceptable to the consumer, be consistently of high quality and be packaged or presented in a visually-appealing form. It must be at a price acceptable to the market at which it is directed and, above all, after it is established on the market, continuity of supply must be guaranteed. The term 'marketing' also encompasses the identification of potential markets and the organisation of wholesale and, if necessary, retail outlets. It means the education of a market to new or different varieties of product. In fact, the term 'marketing' applies to almost everything that happens to a product after it is harvested or transported out of the farm gate. Producers cannot, and should not, be expected to assume the role of a marketer. Just as cattle raising, crop growing and fishing are complex and time-consuming occupations in themselves, so is that of the professional marketer. In assuming the role of the marketer, ADMA must work closely with the producers to ensure Territory products meet all market requirements. It must formulate and implement positive market strategies and actively seek new markets for Territory products. Although it is not directly involved in industry research and development, ADMA, as a marketing authority, must have a strong voice in the direction that research and development take.

Mr Deputy Speaker, it is essential that the thrust of our research and development is towards products for which markets are available or for which there are good prospects of markets opening up. ADMA must also address itself to the potential of adding value to Territory products within the Northern Territory. I have spoken previously of losses to the Territory economy incurred through the transportation interstate of live cattle for immediate slaughter. In a similar vein, why should we sell our grain when it can be converted into pig meat and then sold? The Territory is well placed to take advantage of the expanding Asian markets and the focus of our marketing must be to the north. To the immediate north and west, we have Brunei which is dependent on imports for about 80% of its food requirements. Singapore imports about 75% of its vegetable and fish requirements and, as a result of pressures placed on its limited land resources, combined with effluent control difficulties, it is moving to close down its pig-growing industry. That is a good example of a market that could open up to Territory producers. In 1982, Singapore imported 76,000 live pigs. That figure can be expected to be in excess of 1.2 million by the end of the decade. A Territory pig-growing industry, geared up to supply 20% of that market, would account for all Territory-produced grains for the foreseeable future.

Mr Deputy Speaker, the Singapore pig market is but one prospect. Korean oilseed production cannot keep pace with the increased domestic demand brought about by the rapid expansion of its beef cattle herd. In 1982, Hong Kong imported food products to a value of $US2300m and, in the same year, Brunei imported food and live animals worth $US80m and animal fats and vegetable oils worth $US2.2m.

Not only is there enormous potential for our farm products, the fishing industry also presents exciting development prospects. Australia imports 60% of its fish product requirements and, if Australian eating habits follow US trends, as they normally do, we can expect to see fish occupying an increasingly important place in the Australian diet. The government must be prepared to provide the fishing industry with the necessary onshore infrastructure. It must fund continued research into, and monitoring of, the resource and it must...
provide training and assistance for young Territorians wishing to get into the industry. A fishing fleet, operating out of Territory ports and of sufficient size to take full advantage of our economic exploitation zone would provide employment opportunities for thousands of young Territorians, and I do mean literally thousands. I spoke previously of the necessity to remove the indexed excise on off-road diesel. For the Australian fishing fleet to become competitive with foreign fleets, the removal of this most stupid of all imposts is essential.

The role of a marketing authority in the fishing industry is crucial to the industry's success. Fish products more than any other require professional handling and packaging. They are highly perishable and subject to inconsistencies of quality. The establishment of a fish marketing authority, whether as an independent body, part of ADMA or a division of the Department of Ports and Fisheries, should be a matter of high priority. I am in no way advocating the establishment of a fish marketing authority along the lines of those in some states where fishermen are required by law to sell their products to the authority. I find that principle abhorrent. What I would like to see established is an organisation designed to provide a wide range of services to the industry without the tight legislative controls in force elsewhere in Australia. A fish marketing authority could provide the industry with centralised handling, packaging and storage facilities. It could monitor the quality of NT products with a view to ensuring that they continue to be held in high regard in the marketplace. Given a degree of entrepreneurial freedom, a fish marketing authority could provide support to the industry by way of minimum price schemes. Such schemes would be of enormous benefit, encourage the development of new fisheries and help to ease the way in raising finance for the construction and outfitting of new vessels entering the fishery.

Mr Deputy Speaker, underpinning a major expansion of the Territory's fishing industry, there must be an ongoing commitment to research into all aspects of the industry and, in time, the government will be forced to look at the acquisition of a research and training vessel. The long-term success of the industry will depend largely on the quality of young Territorians entering it and an early commitment by government to the establishment of suitable training facilities is a necessary adjunct to any proposal for the provision of industrial infrastructure. The exciting prospects presented to the Territory by the fishing industry can best be seen in the catches already being taken in our waters by foreign vessels and the fact that, for every fisherman on the water, up to a further 9 jobs are created on shore.

The enormous value of fishing to the Territory is not limited to the commercial sector. Amateur fishing supports a number of business operations and a well-managed amateur fishery adds immeasurably to the Top End's tourist potential. Commercial and amateur fishermen can, and do, operate in a cooperative spirit and that is no better evidenced than by the recent constructive and fruitful discussions regarding the possible damage done by the taking of barramundi in roe at the opening of the commercial season. I have been asked by members of the Amateur Fishermen's Association of the Northern Territory to express their gratitude to the Minister for Ports and Fisheries for his handling of the affair. A common interest exists between the commercial and the amateur fishermen in the preservation of adequate stock levels and, given the sensible and logical manner in which the barramundi issue was resolved, their willingness to sit down and discuss issues of mutual concern can only augur well for the future of the Northern Territory fishery.

Mr Deputy Speaker, in closing, I endorse the comments made by the Administrator in his speech and commend it to honourable members.
Mr HARRIS (Education): Mr Deputy Speaker, it gives me a great deal of pleasure to rise today to speak in the address in reply. Whilst most of my remarks will relate specifically to my portfolio responsibilities, I would like to begin by addressing some comments that have been made by honourable members throughout this debate and also to government initiatives which will have a bearing on my electorate of Port Darwin.

In His Honour's speech, mention was made of the current review of the Local Government Act, a review that is long overdue and one that many members in this Assembly have commented on in the past. The aim of this government has been to support the devolution of powers and there has been no argument about that. The devolution of powers from Canberra to the Northern Territory through the Assembly was hard won by the people of the Territory. The devolution of powers continued from the Territory government down to the various councils and the communities.

My concern, however, is that the local governments should not see the amendments which will enable them to set different rating systems, as a means to force government and business into contributing unreasonably to their coffers. A great deal of discussion has taken place on rating systems. There is no doubt in my mind that the rating system that we have at present is inequitable. Many people have commented to that effect. However, when setting rating systems, you have to be very careful that you do not stifle development. This government has again placed a great deal of emphasis on setting a climate that will generate development. It takes a lot of work to do that.

The suggestion to introduce an improved capital value rating system is seen by me and by many others as a disincentive to development. The more someone spends on a development, the more he has to pay. That type of rating system is one that has to be looked at very carefully indeed. There are many other systems that can be looked at that can support development and dispose of the inequities that exist with the present rating system. I ask all of those aldermen who will be involved to make sure that they take into account the comments that I have just made when they make decisions in relation to rating systems. We need to continue to develop and it is not reasonable to expect people, who are prepared to spend millions of dollars in providing jobs, to be placed in a position where they are driven out because, the higher the cost of their development, the more they have to pay. I believe that aspect has to be looked at very carefully indeed. All I am saying is for them to be careful. Obviously, there will be more said about the various rating systems. I guess it will be an interesting session when the bill comes up for debate.

Mr Deputy Speaker, I would also like to refer to some remarks made by the member for Koolpinyah on the suggestion that some form of contribution should be made by the people who live in the rural area. I am not going to become involved in the argument of what usage someone makes of a particular road or where people dump their rubbish. I believe that the honourable member realises that, at some stage in the future - and I can assure members that it is only a matter of time - the people in the rural area will have to pay. We all realise that, in most states, areas such as the rural area of Darwin contribute in some way to government taxes, whether it is by rates or whatever.

We are required to make a reasonable revenue-raising effort in the Northern Territory. It is a responsibility we have not shirked. We make an effort in the accepted revenue-raising areas. I believe that we must look to having some form of rate return from that large area just outside Darwin. I have a property there. I am not looking forward to the day when I have to contribute by way of rates, but I acknowledge that eventually it must come. It is far
better that the people who live in the rural area set the terms on which they will pay, argue the issues and look for a satisfactory solution to the problems rather than have a system foisted upon them by people who do not live in the area. Rather than say that they never want to pay, it would be far better for those people to look at the problems and to realise that they must contribute in some way in the future. Then they can bring forward a method by which a form of rate can be implemented that is acceptable to them.

Mr Deputy Speaker, I move to the areas that are covered by my portfolio. The year ahead will be of great importance to education in the Northern Territory. As well as developments following from the major structural changes in the post-school sector, there will be significant variations in Aboriginal education and many important initiatives in other areas. I realise the time limitations but I would have liked to have heard some comment in relation to the initiatives on and development of post-secondary education in the Northern Territory from the opposition spokesman on education. I guess that I will hear his views in due course.

In the post-school sector, the new NT Council of Higher Education will be taking up the challenge of planning the coordinated development of the university and advanced education areas in preparation for expected growth and the development of a university college. The health sciences, nursing, teaching and business studies are 4 particular areas where expansion is expected to occur. In view of the increasing importance to the Territory of teacher training, the Council of Higher Education will be looking into the possibility of establishing a separate school of education at the Darwin Institute of Technology. The institute is already making a significant contribution in educating and training primary school teachers and this year it is introducing a graduate diploma in secondary school teaching which will begin to meet the needs for secondary maths and science teachers.

Mr Deputy Speaker, in keeping with the institute's new name, I will also be asking the Council of Higher Education to investigate future needs in the applied sciences, electrical and mechanical engineering areas and other subjects of particular interest to the Northern Territory, such as relevant aspects of marine biology. At Batchelor College, a training program will start this year for Aboriginal adult educators. It will be a 3-year program aimed primarily at training Aboriginal people to become adult educators and thus qualify them to apply for existing adult educator positions in Aboriginal communities. A second aim is for the first and second years of the program to provide Aboriginal adult education assistants with skills to enable them to be more efficient in their work. Action is to be taken to have this program submitted for accreditation as an advanced education program.

The challenge in the technical and further education area will be taken up by the Department of Education and the new TAFE Advisory Council on a Territory-wide level and, at the local level, by the various college councils which are being given increased powers.

Another area which has been touched upon throughout the course of the address-in-reply debate is that of tourism and hospitality. The member for Millner raised this particular issue. I would like to say that this government is very keen to ensure that provision is made for local people to become trained to service that vital industry in the Northern Territory. I might say here that, as the honourable member for Millner would be aware, it was not through want of trying that applications to the Commonwealth government through CTEC were unsuccessful. We put forward a proposal to develop a purpose-built tourism and
hospitality training centre in Darwin at a cost of $2m. Unfortunately, the TAFE Advisory Council of CTEC did not see its way clear to support that particular proposal. We were looking to provide short-term courses to give local people the opportunity to enter this exciting industry. The industry has indicated that it is looking at short-term courses specifically. I hope that such courses will be available to local people later on this year.

I also make the point that the Northern Territory government has made it very clear that we see Gillen House in Alice Springs as the main training centre for tourism and hospitality in the Northern Territory. We have spent over $5m there and can understand why the Commonwealth has not been all that supportive of our putting money into a purpose-built facility here in Darwin. However, we acknowledge that there is a need for training, and that we need to involve local people in this vital industry. We are moving in that direction. The construction of stage 2 of Gillen House is well under way. This will comprise a butchery, bakery, food science laboratory and extra teaching facilities. To make it easier for students from other parts of the Territory to take advantage of the training which the school provides, residential accommodation has been opened at the site this year. While this accommodation is available to students of the Community College of Central Australia in general, tourism and hospitality students are being given first preference.

Mr Deputy Speaker, appropriate capital works are continuing to be developed to meet the increasing demands in the TAFE area. Following delays in the early stages, work is now about 50% complete on stage 2 of the Community College of Central Australia, which comprises an administration block, a library, student-staff amenities, lecture rooms and facilities for arts, crafts, hairdressing, secretarial studies and computer studies.

At Katherine Rural College, where stage 2 has just been completed at a cost of $1.75m, a third stage costing $2m will be built this year. It will provide agricultural science laboratories and additional residential accommodation for students. This college is going ahead at a great rate and is destined, I believe, to make a major impact on the Territory's developing rural sector.

In Aboriginal education, an area of great concern to me, a major effort is being made to increase community involvement by expanding the role of FEPPPI, the Aboriginal consultative group on education matters. This year, the Commonwealth is providing funds which will enable 3 FEPPPI positions to be created, with provision for a full-time chairman, research officer and field liaison officer. FEPPPI has also been invited to nominate representatives to chair promotional panels for Aboriginal schools during 1985. New committee members will also be appointed to FEPPPI, which will work with the Department of Education this year in developing a program to improve student attendance at Aboriginal community schools. This program is being developed in parallel with the anti-truancy campaign which has just started in urban areas.

Mr Deputy Speaker, many other important initiatives will be undertaken in Territory education this year. Subject to the availability of funds, a satellite education service will be introduced on a staged basis, beginning with a number of communications trials this year for staff training. The initial trials will use the existing telephone system but actual satellite operations are expected by 1986-87. The satellite service may be used for a wide range of activities, including School of the Air programs, in-service activities for teachers and administrators, information exchange, training of Aboriginal teachers, adult education, tutorial sessions for groups of students and presentation of lessons and extension activities for under-serviced groups of students.
Mr Deputy Speaker, there are many more areas which could be covered which would indicate to honourable members the tremendous development that is taking place in education in the Northern Territory. Coupled with the continued increase in the Northern Territory's population and the tremendous growth of Territory industries, this all points to a very exciting period ahead in the development of the Northern Territory. His Honour's speech, once again, indicated that this government has tremendous confidence in the directions in which it is heading. I welcome the opportunity of speaking in the address-in-reply debate.

Mr LANHUPUY (Arnhem): Mr Speaker, in rising to speak to the address in reply, I would like to say that, following the recent shadow cabinet rearrangements, I now have responsibility for the areas of health and conservation. Unfortunately, the Administrator's speech to this Assembly the other day did not emphasise these areas which, I believe, are most important to the Northern Territory. The absolutely vital portfolio of health, which has been badly managed by this government for so many years, did not even rate a mention. This is an area which affects every Territorian. I find it disturbing indeed that the government has not seen fit to address any of the issues which concern so many Territorians. It would seem that, once again, the government is putting health in the too-hard basket. There are so many unanswered questions that must be addressed by this government.

For instance, as the Minister for Health must be aware, the Alice Springs Hospital is at present facing a serious crisis. The hospital has had to cut down its services and close down wards, at least in part, because of a shortage of nurses. This is due partly to difficulties in recruiting nurses to remain in the Alice Springs area. As the honourable member for Stuart, and former shadow minister for health, has suggested, a nurses education scheme planned for Alice Springs could help to alleviate the problem. The Department of Health has relied on a surplus of nurses from other states for too long and has neglected to plan for an independent approach to staffing. In this regard, the Labor Party welcomes the move to transfer basic nursing training to the Darwin Institute of Technology from the Royal Darwin Hospital. It is our hope that the government will move quickly to ensure that Alice Springs nurses will be trained in a similar fashion. It is widely accepted that a high percentage of nurses who train in their local area are more inclined to remain in the area because they maintain family links and so on. Apart from the shortage of staff, I am aware that there is a lack of essential equipment at the Alice Springs Hospital, and that also is a matter for concern.

Mr Speaker, the current problems in Alice Springs are only some of the issues which the parliamentary Labor Party wants the government to address. As I said, there are many unanswered questions. What is happening in relation to the government's proposed children's hospital? What progress has been made there? Is the Darwin Hospital Patient Care Committee able to deal effectively with the complaints it receives, and what other avenues has the government made available to members of the public with concerns and complaints about hospital services? What has the Department of Health done to streamline administrative procedures in hospitals throughout the Northern Territory? What does the government intend to do to improve facilities for the delivery of adequate psychiatric services in the Territory?

Mr Speaker, I intend to deal with those issues later in the sittings but I want to raise one more health-related matter which is of particular concern to me and my constituents: the serious problem of petrol sniffing in many of the remote communities. I would very much like to see the government assist with
funding of community-based programs to combat this problem. For instance, I would like the government to consider the funding of videos specifically to raise awareness of this issue in the communities to help them to tackle this problem. There is no doubt that the programs which have been most successful have been those initiated and managed by the communities themselves.

Mr Speaker, I will now move on to some other matters but, once again, I would express this opposition's disappointment and concern that the government has not seen fit even to mention the area of health in the announcement of the Tuxworth government's plans for the Northern Territory. I hope that the government's performance will improve dramatically in this regard.

Mr Speaker, I want to turn now to my shadow portfolio of conservation and again express my concern at the government's attitude and approach. I regard the government's proposals to change the laws governing mining in Northern Territory parks and reserves as a recipe for the destruction of those areas. I believe it poses a serious threat to the Territory's tourist industry. The proposed changes will mean that the Minister for Mines and Energy will have control over all mining activity in our parks. Not only does this create a complete conflict of interest for the minister, but the proposals are completely contrary to both national and world approaches to park management. The government's own statement that the purpose of the proposals is to accommodate and attract mining to parks is a complete reversal of the normal procedures in park management.

Potentially, the most serious change is the removal of the requirement for a plan of management to be in place for parks and reserve areas. The tourist industry has a unique capacity to generate local employment and provide extensive spin-offs for our local businesses. The legislative changes would allow the Northern Territory Minister for Mines and Energy to make a decision without a plan of management. This could destroy a park's potential as a major tourist attraction. The government says that tourism is our greatest potential industry, but moves like this hardly support such statements. One of the reasons the government gives for these changes is the length of time it takes to prepare plans of management. Surely that problem could be alleviated if more funds and resources were provided to the Conservation Commission to do the job quickly. Mr Speaker, this would be a far more acceptable arrangement, particularly for the long-term protection of our heritage and tourist industry. There are other conservation issues which the opposition will be looking at closely and monitoring the performance of the government on, but I will deal with those later on.

Mr Speaker, on a more positive note, I was pleased to see the government's initiatives on the development of tourism. In particular, I was pleased to find the government is making Aboriginal participation an integral part of that development. As many public surveys have shown, the Aboriginality of the Territory's heritage is one of the greatest tourist attractions and Aboriginal involvement in the tourist industry is essential to ensure that this heritage is properly protected and effectively promoted.

Mr Speaker, I now turn to the most controversial issue that has concerned this Assembly and people living in the Northern Territory generally: land rights. There is no doubt that many members of the Assembly, myself included, will be discussing this matter during the life of this Assembly and over the years to come. For some time, it has been interesting to note the performance of some of our members in this Assembly who are very much aware of the fact that the Territory's population, 30% in fact, is Aboriginal. This government has a
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responsibility to protect some areas of land on which Aborigines may want to live and areas of land which they may not want to have mined. As the Leader of the Opposition said earlier, there are people living in my constituency who do not give a hoot about mining. They are happy living out there and this issue has been a thorn in the side of the Northern Territory government. I was pleased to hear the announcement by His Honour the Administrator the other day that, in line with the policy of the federal government, the government has decided to drop the 9 bills in relation to land which were introduced into the Assembly last year. That certainly has my support and I would advise the federal Minister for Aboriginal Affairs to ensure that consultation occurs on the proposed national Aboriginal land rights title which he is trying to impose. I am against it personally because of my personal commitments to some of the people whom I represent in this Assembly. I shall certainly ensure that those views are heard by the federal Minister for Aboriginal Affairs and by this government when it proposes amendments in line with those of the federal government.

Mr Speaker, once again, I look forward to working with members of the Assembly during this year and I hope we can achieve something that will be worth while for both black and white.

Mr FIRMIN (Ludmilla): Mr Deputy Speaker, I am pleased to speak in support of the address in reply to His Honour the Administrator's speech in the Assembly. I would like to commence with some remarks on developments in my electorate.

The electorate of Ludmilla has seen considerable changes in the last 12 months to the betterment of a large proportion of residents. The staged closure and removal of the 2½ mile depot and associated workshops to allow for residential development has moved ahead considerably since last year and the Floreat Plumbing development of 74 two and three-bedroom units at the northern end of the area has nearly been completed. The second stage, the development of the south-west corner of that site, will probably occur within the next 12 months. The Tropicana units, sited on the corner of Hudson Fysh and Ross Smith Avenues, a very high-quality home-unit development of some 70 units, has been completed and the owners are to be commended on the beautiful landscaping surrounding the site and also on the landscaping that is being undertaken on the road opposite and at the road closure points.

The industrial area at Coconut Grove saw some further work with the completion of a small industrial subdivision on lot 8723, Dick Ward Drive, just before Christmas. This industrial subdivision, consisting of 16 lots, will provide suitably-serviced and reasonably-priced land for the development of small warehouses, attracting a large range of small business and industrial users. I understand also that a $0.5m development of glass-fronted showrooms on the front 2 blocks is currently under design for retail and wholesale outlets. This will assist in lifting the profile of this industrial area to a much higher level.

Other new developments in the electorate include a medical centre on the corner of Dick Ward and Progress Drives. This is under construction. Those members who drive down Bagot Road may have noticed, on the corner of old McMillans Road and Bagot Road, an area of cleared land which is being developed for tennis courts and associated clubrooms. This development will include 6 courts, a kiosk, a storage area and parking areas, and will be open to the public for hire by private individuals and club members.

During the last year, the electorate of Ludmilla worked very hard, in conjunction with the Keep Australia Beautiful Committee and our Territory Tidy...
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Towns Committee, to attempt to re-beautify the electorate. Considerable activity has taken place, including tree planting. One of the more notable projects has been undertaken at Bagot Reserve over the year. During the current wet season, more than 200 trees have been planted. An association called 'Friends of Bagot' is working hard with the community leaders on this project and further planting will take place during the year.

Mr Deputy Speaker, we are working together also to attempt to beautify the area which is visible to all traffic on both Dick Ward Drive and Bagot Road entering and leaving the northern suburbs. I refer to the Kulaluk area. Considerable work was done by community members in the electorate and culminated in the Ludmilla area winning a special award in the Territory Tidy Towns 1984 competition. I congratulate all the people who worked on that committee, and the people of the electorate on the response they gave.

Unfortunately, during the dry season, a large open area on the Kulaluk reserve suffered the usual, uncontrolled, grass fire burn off which created a very undesirable and unattractive blackened area for the latter part of the season. This particular problem is being addressed by myself and the electorate generally in conjunction with the Conservation Commission. The Kulaluk residents and council are attempting to ensure that this illicit lighting of fires within that large area does not occur during the coming dry season.

The Coconut Grove area has seen a considerable increase in housing numbers over the last 12 months, particularly through the activities of the Housing Commission in and around the Hazel Court and Reynolds Court area. This development is very attractive. Unfortunately, there are considerable problems in this area which are being addressed by myself and departmental authorities at the moment. These problems derive from activities at a hotel nearby and include noise and harassment caused by clients of that hotel. There has been illegal drinking and fights have occurred, including a very serious knife fight less than 3 weeks ago. Hazel Court is predominantly occupied by pensioners and they feel particularly threatened by the activities that are occurring around them. Another problem that concerns them greatly is that, whilst we have seen the completion of very attractive bicycle paths and footpaths through the electorate, particularly so from the McMillans Road junction to the Ross Smith Avenue area, the footpath area from McMillans Road through to Trower Road is in a deplorable state. These matters are being given high priority by myself.

During the year, the Fannie Bay racecourse committee and the Northern Territory Touch Football Association committee have reached agreement on the development of the Fannie Bay racecourse inner boundary area for the provision of touch football ovals. A joint submission to the Northern Territory government for funds to allow this course of action was successful. A grant was made for the development of the ovals, lighting and ancillary facilities. The Northern Territory Touch Football Association is one of the fastest growing sports associations in the Northern Territory. The activities of the group will reach a high point when the national finals are held in Darwin later in the year.

Mr Deputy Speaker, turning away from electorate matters, it has been my pleasure this year to travel extensively throughout the Northern Territory and other parts of Australia on matters of government interest and importance. During this period, I have learnt a considerable amount about the needs and aspirations of Territorians. I am impressed greatly by the provision of services for the tourist industry and, in particular, the considerable number of accommodation units being provided at this time. I would like to commend the
Northern Territory Tourist Commission on the activities that it has undertaken to fill the new developments and its promotions, both in Australia and overseas, of our tourist facilities and attractions.

While we have had considerable success in the Australian domestic market, nonetheless we need to extend ourselves overseas to attract a better proportion of overseas visitors to the Territory. I believe that the Northern Territory has a unique potential as a destination for overseas visitors which is curtailed at the moment only by inadequate air services. We need to push very hard for additional services by overseas airlines and create a climate whereby charter operators will find it economically viable to bring in a larger number of overseas visitors. To that end, I was able to assist in bringing to Darwin a group of sales promotion consultants from interstate and overseas for discussions with the Tourist Commission. I trust they have success.

Mr Deputy Speaker, despite comments made in some quarters suggesting Australia's future in agriculture is diminishing, I believe it will continue to prosper. At the recent Arid Zone Research Institute field day in Alice Springs, which I attended, several Territory and some interstate companies demonstrated equipment associated with solar and wind-power generation, conventional and wind-operated pumps, water purification plants, a range of computer satellite communications equipment and an extensive display of new farming equipment. The Central Australian Institute of Technology and some private companies demonstrated the use of computers in farm management and provided practical hands-on tuition for the producers. Australian farmers are among the world leaders in their acceptance and application of new technologies and it is only by fully exploiting these advances that we will be able to compete effectively on world markets in the future. While primary industry in the Northern Territory is confined mainly to large-scale cattle production on native pastures, there is a rapid and considerable expansion of arable farming programs into areas other than cattle. Two of the new programs being looked at are the expansion of the table grape industry in the Ti Tree area and date farming south of Alice Springs.

Mr Deputy Speaker, already the 'Territory-Made' symbol is well known in southern markets. For some products, such as tropical fruit and vegetables, it is even sought out specifically as the symbol of a reliably good product. With only 2 seasons, both of which are generally more predictable than the southern 4 seasons, the Territory is in the enviable situation of being able to create and hold its position on markets both in southern states and overseas in neighbouring Indonesia and Malaysia. Many small horticulturalists have invested in the well-known tropical fruits such as mango, banana and pineapple, but new varieties are under trial also and new markets must be developed for them if they prove successful.

There is no doubt in my mind that at least parts of the Territory will be devoted to intense farming operations. We are capable of producing a very wide variety of crops and we have the advantage of being much closer geographically to overseas markets than the rest of the nation. With predictable seasons, proven crops and available markets, a major problem still exists which should be addressed with urgency: the high cost of freight, in particular that portion concerned with handling. Through travelling widely this year and talking to residents of remote areas of the Territory, Queensland, South Australia and Western Australia, it has become obvious to me that these people suffer greatly from a lack of services in many areas. Isolation from major centres not only causes additional strain on their transport mediums but also considerable strain on, and sometimes disruption to, family lifestyles.
Mr Deputy Speaker, a suitable, modern and operational private telephone service is probably the most desperately needed facility for some 200,000 remote area residents today. The disruption, dislocation and despair in households and communities caused by the inability of these people to contact immediate family, relatives and friends in other parts of the country when illness strikes or when comfort and support is needed has to be seen at first hand to be fully appreciated. On one visit to an outback community, I was told by a young woman, whose mother had died in New South Wales, of the total despair she suffered and from which she has not yet recovered, on realising that the first message she received of her mother’s illness was 3 days old and that, by the time she had arranged a message out of the area to obtain air transport, joined the commuter network and arrived home, she was not even in time to attend the funeral which took place 9 days from the day that the first message was sent.

The provision of 1920s' technology in remote areas is deplorable in the 1980s. I was pleased when Telecom announced its digital radio service and its digital concentrator radio service to provide 1000 voice links within the Northern Territory by the year 1990. I applaud the announcement. However, I believe that demand from the remote areas may outstrip Telecom's ability to supply and or complete the service within its time frame. As a government, we will be doing all we can to ensure that all remote areas receive an adequate service as soon as possible.

Late 1985 will see a marked change to outback lifestyles with the launch of Aussat's domestic satellite communication system and the launching of the first 2 satellites. Almost 40,000 of the Territory's population will be able to receive, for the first time, an ABC television program and an ABC radio broadcast, provided they have installed a receiving dish. The possible provision of a commercial television service is being debated through the Australian Broadcasting Tribunal hearings. In discussions with the Department of Communications, the Territory government is working hard to ensure that a truly commercial, professional and appropriate service will be delivered to the approximately 60,000 Territorians who have not yet had this facility which has been available to most other Australians for nearly 20 years. Mr Deputy Speaker, I support the motion.

Mr MANZIE (Transport and Works): Mr Deputy Speaker, in rising to make some comments in the address in reply, I was very pleased to note that the Administrator pointed out the government's commitment to continued development in the Northern Territory because development will ensure employment, both now and in the future, for our children. It is important for us all to be aware of the number of young people still attending school in the Northern Territory. It actually amounts to about 30% of the population. It is very relevant that this government has created a situation where people are now making the Territory their home. People are staying; they are not coming here for 2 to 3 years and then heading off down south again. As a result, their children are staying here and those children will expect jobs when they finish their schooling. Unfortunately, those jobs will not grow on trees although sometimes, from the comments that opposition members make in relation to certain things, I wonder whether possibly they might expect that to happen. Those jobs will occur only if the government creates a climate which will accelerate development and create them. If that means that, as a government, we have to make some unorthodox decisions or some politically difficult decisions, we will not hesitate to make them, because we are looking ahead to the year 2000 and beyond. We are looking to the future for our children and their children too.

I have often seen raised eyebrows or heard comments from the other side of the Assembly in relation to development in the Territory and the initiatives of
this government. Rather than go through the list of government projects and initiatives that the opposition has rubbished, I will simply comment that even the concept of self-government was considered by the opposition to be something that was not relevant in the Territory. It is a good thing that the opposition was not in power in 1978 otherwise it would be 1978 still and we would be going backwards at a rapid rate.

It might be appropriate to make some comment in relation to one of the projects that is on the go in Darwin at the moment, and that is the performing arts centre. The member for Millner commented yesterday on what he saw as a Singapore-based architect who had made some mistakes as a result of which, he insinuated, the ceilings were so low in the Japanese restaurant that we would all have difficulty walking in there without touching our heads. He said also that there had been a special team of concrete gougers engaged to work day and night to make room for services such as air-conditioning and electrical fittings. As usual, his comments contained only a little bit of fact. They were about as accurate as they normally are: entirely inaccurate or untrue. Even though the honourable member is not present in the Assembly, I presume that he will read Hansard. The truth is that a mistake was made though not by a Singapore-based architect. It was made by a contractor. The actual concrete ceiling will end up 60 cm lower than it was supposed to be. However, there is a gap above the concrete floor, between the theatre seating area and the concrete ceiling, that varies from 1 m to 30 cm. The services will go in this gap. In fact, the ceiling height will remain at exactly the level that the architect designed. The Japanese restaurant is on the opposite side of the building to that ...

Mr B. Collins: The gap is above the concrete floor?

Mr MANZIE: The Leader of the Opposition is obviously having some problems there, so I will just go through that. The floor of the theatre is designed in such a way that people are seated higher at the rear of the theatre than people at the front. To achieve that effect, it is required to have a slope to the floor. For obvious reasons, the floor is not made of solid cement; it is hollow. The theatre floor is over 1 m higher at the rear than it is at the front. Therefore, there is a gap between that and the floor proper. That is where the services will go. As I said, the Deputy Leader of the Opposition was wrong as usual. The Japanese restaurant is on the opposite side of the building. Actually, I had an opportunity to go through the performing arts centre and it will definitely be quite a significant building for the Darwin community and for all Territorians.

As pointed out in the Administrator's speech, tourism is the major thrust of the government program. A great deal of work is being carried out by the Department of Transport and Works which will dovetail with the tourism initiatives that are being taken. No departmental project which will benefit tourism will disadvantage any Territory residents. Indeed, all residents will benefit from those initiatives. I will name a few. In relation to roads, the Kakadu road will be fully sealed between Pine Creek and Jabiru. Obviously, this will play a very important part in tourist infrastructure in the Kakadu area. We have spoken in this Assembly about the planned road from the Yulara area to Kings Canyon. The development at Kings Canyon will be an extremely successful one. The concept of a ring route for tourists from Alice Springs through Yulara back through Kings Canyon to Alice Springs again is certain to be significant in relation to the bituminising of the South Road from Adelaide which will see a great increase in tourist traffic from the southern areas of Australia. There is a continuation of road improvements throughout the Territory. There is an
ongoing program in the rural area. Obviously, the member for Koolpinyah would like to see it speeded up but these programs must be taken in relation to the overall development of the Territory and spending that will benefit all people throughout the Territory.

There are other areas that probably deserve some mention. Mr Deputy Speaker, you raised some problems in relation to the salt content of the water in the Alice Springs area. Obviously, that is developing into quite a problem and one that the government must address in order to prevent a disaster of the magnitude that is becoming apparent near the Murray River in the southern areas of Australia.

In relation to sewage disposal in the Alice Springs area, I think it might be worth while mentioning that I have asked the Department of Transport and Works to prepare a detailed submission in relation to the removal of the effluent treatment and disposal system, which is presently situated near the Ilpapa Swamp, to the Brewer Plain area. I believe it will cost around $6m. It will certainly create a sweeter-smelling environment than exists presently. I have been told also that it may help to alleviate some of the problems caused by mosquitoes which breed in that swamp area. I have been informed that the water levels in that area will definitely be a lot lower than they are now.

In relation to aviation, Mr Deputy Speaker, obviously the government will continue discussions with Canberra on the rebuilding of the Darwin Airport at the present rate and also concerning the development of the Alice Springs Airport and our proposal for a tripartite scheme of management there. At this stage, I must express some concern about a recently released report, resulting from the Independent Inquiry into Aviation Costs, which is commonly known as the Bosch report. This inquiry was set up to look at the costs of all aviation facilities. Some of its recommendations cause me some concern. The inquiry recommended that the federal government adopt a policy of full recovery of attributable costs to be progressively implemented from 1985-86 and achieved by 1994-95. Thereafter, full cost recovery should continue. This means that the whole range of aviation industry charges, which includes airport and airways charges, aviation fuel taxes, airport rents etc, will progressively increase in real terms and these sources of revenue will possibly include passenger service charges. It means that the cost of the industry will be expected to be completely recovered where those facilities are situated. Implications in relation to Darwin could be quite frightening with the capital cost of the redevelopment of Darwin Airport at $95m. There is a possibility that there will be suggestions that that be recovered from Darwin Airport users. One can imagine the absolute impossibility of that occurring and the airport remaining open to the public. It also creates problems in relation to the development of Alice Springs Airport.

This is only a recommendation to the federal government. Obviously, there will be a tremendous amount of debate in relation to the inquiry. I am sure Darwin, Alice Springs, Tennant Creek and Katherine will not be the only areas of Australia to be affected. However, I think it is worth while indicating in this Assembly what is being recommended to the federal government. I can assure all members that we have already commenced a dialogue with the federal government in relation to the development of airports.

Mr Deputy Speaker, turning to the Housing Commission and its role in the Northern Territory, I indicate that I am very pleased to have been made Minister for Housing. I consider the Northern Territory Housing Commission to be by far the most effective housing authority in Australia. We are quite proud of the
houses that are built by the commission. Also, it is common knowledge that, on a per capita basis, the commission provides far more accommodation than any other housing authority in Australia. January saw the signing of the Commonwealth States Housing Agreement in relation to all states, the territories and the Commonwealth. There are some problems that I see in that agreement but there will be continued negotiation for the life of that agreement in relation to those problems and I am sure that they can be solved. One concern is the move towards a per capita funding basis under the agreement which, obviously, will cause great problems in the Territory with our small population and the much greater building costs which result from isolation and a number of other factors.

I have directed the Housing Commission to examine the development of a singles housing policy. There is a requirement under the Commonwealth States Housing Agreement that signatories to the agreement supply accommodation to people regardless of their marital status, sex or whatever. This also points to single person housing which has to be provided on a needs basis. There are a number of problems in relation to developing a singles housing policy that will be effective in the Territory. On one side of the coin, the extreme would be to open up a list and have every person over the age of 16 place his or her name on that list regardless of what accommodation they have now, whether they live at home or whatever, and end up with a list of 10,000 or 15,000 people looking to get themselves a flat each. We also have to look at the other end of the spectrum. There are a number of people in our community who are single and who, due to various circumstances, are unable to house themselves. Obviously, we must make provision for those sorts of people. That particular policy is being examined. I have asked the commission to take all aspects of the situation into consideration while this policy is being developed and, hopefully at the next Assembly sittings, I will be in a position to place that policy in front of all members.

It must be borne in mind that, under the provisions of the Northern Territory Home Purchase Assistance Scheme, which has been in operation since Christmas, quite an excellent loan situation is available with a repayment schedule involving a maximum of 20% of salary. It is obviously a scheme that puts reasonable finance well within the grasp of a number of single people in our community. Certainly, it provides a good opportunity for people to become established in a house early in their lives.

Mr Deputy Speaker, the situation with housing in the Darwin area has reached a stage now where the commission has only some 38 blocks of land left to build on. After those blocks have been built on, all future commission development will occur in the Palmerston area. That shows how rapidly our community is developing. I must say again that it is the policies of this government that have brought about this rapid development. We have to proceed with these policies in order to provide opportunities for our children.

Mr TUXWORTH (Chief Minister): Mr Speaker, in his address to this Assembly, His Honour the Administrator outlined a legislative program to which the government is fully committed. The achievement of the objectives of further growth and development in the Territory which His Honour indicated and the completion of the legislative program requires us to establish proper priorities and to conduct our business in an orderly and responsible way. The changes in the administrative arrangements which have been announced represent the first step in the creation of some new departments and the reorganisation of others. They are essential to the efficient implementation of our legislative program and the realisation of our objectives.
Mr Speaker, the administrative arrangements and the grouping of ministerial portfolios reflect the government's views on efficient public administration in the circumstances which now face the Territory. A major review was in order because circumstances had changed over the years since self-government. New issues have emerged, new problems need to be resolved and new approaches are called for in some areas. I do not suggest for one minute that the current arrangements should remain in place for all time. There is no doubt that it will be appropriate to introduce further changes in the years ahead, and there is nothing dramatic or extraordinary about that. I would expect that, over time, circumstances will again change. The issues to be faced will likewise change and the most appropriate structure of public administration will need to change accordingly.

In his speech, His Honour indicated some of the areas where changes have occurred and the reasons for these changes. It is appropriate for me to expand on those matters. There has been some public comment about changes to the education portfolio. In all the furore which some people have tried to create, there has been very little criticism of the direction of the changes which have been announced. This is because the changes take us forward as we address the main issues in education at this time. The government has provided an administrative structure which will provide for better coordination of post-school education, remove inefficient and costly duplication and achieve a more effective delivery of services with clear lines of responsibility and control. The changes in the post-school area were necessary to develop cost-effective government structures which were efficient. I am pleased to say that, in the first budget review, the anticipated annual savings of $0.8m - or $400,000 in the first half-year of 1985 - have been achieved. Changes in the post-school sector include the abolition of the Vocational Training Commission, the Post-school Advisory Council and the Administration Unit of the University Planning Authority. At the same time, Darwin Community College has been redesignated as the Darwin Institute of Technology with the former college council becoming the new Northern Territory Council of Higher Education. Its task is to chart future directions in higher education in areas such as medicine, education, nursing, tourism and the trades. These are areas that are vital to the Territory's expanding industries.

Mr Speaker, the Territory is making progress towards the establishment of university opportunities in the Territory for Territorians. The University Planning Advisory Committee will continue to press strongly for the early establishment of a university college. As a practical first step, drawing together the University Planning Authority's activities and linking them with the advanced education activities of the Darwin Institute of Technology will provide a basis for a rational and coordinated approach to the university objective. There is no doubt that this integrated approach to higher education will create significant academic benefits for Territory students and, in my view, that is the issue which counts.

Mr Speaker, I wish to inform honourable members that, in order to formalise these changes, the Minister for Education will be proceeding with the legislation to amend the Education Act that was announced earlier in this sittings. Unfortunately, these very positive and sensible moves have been obscured by people who have sought to generate unnecessary controversy and have done so with very little regard for the interests of the students. The appointment of a new principal for the Darwin Institute of Technology followed perfectly normal procedures. I note that the procedures followed in this instance were very similar to those recently adopted in Queensland, which has moved to draw together its technical and further education arrangements.
The public debate which has proceeded over the Darwin Institute of Technology has provided us with some quite extraordinary insights into the former Darwin Community College. I am extremely concerned that the evidence which has emerged suggests that improprieties may have occurred in the manner of assessing students and determining academic results. The Darwin Institute of Technology has been operating for some 12 years and I have come to the view that it is time that the government reviewed very carefully the performance of the institute and its achievements. Against the background of considerable resources which have been made available, the Minister for Education will be making further announcements during this sittings on the Darwin Institute of Technology.

Mr Speaker, other important changes in the structure of government departments and authorities result similarly from the government's view of our current circumstances and priorities. Small businesses constitute the backbone of the private sector in the Territory and will continue to do so for a very long time to come. The creation of the Department of Industry and Small Business is a recognition of this fact. The department has not been established to regulate small businesses. Quite the contrary, it has been set up to ensure a sympathetic ear is available, to advise small businesses on financial, marketing and other matters and to offer appropriate assistance. Its charter is to promote, encourage and assist, not to regulate and control.

Mr Speaker, His Honour noted the establishment of a Department of Ports and Fisheries as a reflection of the government's view that the fishing industry has the potential to become a major Territory industry. I confirm that view and I underline the government's commitment to seek new ways to promote the Territory's fishing industry. A major study into the potential for developing the fishing industry has been under way for some time and, so far, indications are encouraging. The Minister for Ports and Fisheries will be outlining the priorities in this area during this sittings of the Assembly.

Mr Speaker, I repeat that the new administrative arrangements set the pattern for the development of objectives and programs and, where necessary, the bringing forward of legislation to achieve our goals. I would now like to highlight some of the issues which the government believes need to be addressed with some urgency and to which I personally attach considerable priority. His Honour the Administrator referred to the establishment of a Department of Youth, Sport, Recreation and Ethnic Affairs. I wish to underscore His Honour's comments. All governments in Australia must face up to the difficulties which will be experienced in the years ahead as young people move through the education system and into the work force. The Territory is no exception. Youth unemployment continues at unacceptable levels. Imagination and vision will be needed to ensure that future generations of young people will have suitable opportunities for productive and meaningful employment. The Territory cannot solve these issues on its own, but will work with the Commonwealth and the states in the development of suitable policies and programs.

Mr Speaker, I would like also to highlight the expanded role of the Department of Community Development because it also indicates the way in which the government is seeking to focus on community issues. In addition to its former responsibilities, this department now has responsibility for Aboriginal matters and the Minister for Community Development also receives advice directly from the very effective and successful Women's Advisory Council. It is appropriate for issues of particular concern and interest in these areas to be dealt with in the community development portfolio. The relocation of the former Office of Aboriginal Liaison and the Office of Women's Affairs has been represented by some as a downgrading of the government's commitment in these
areas. Mr Speaker, I reject that. The truth is that quite the opposite effect has been achieved. These officers have work to do which relates to the bringing forward of community issues and the officers have now been provided with a better opportunity to do just that.

I believe that some benefits are already apparent from these changes. Territory ministers, myself included, have had discussions with the Commonwealth and with Aboriginal organisations on a range of issues of concern to Aboriginals. We are making progress in some areas. His Honour indicated that the government will not be proceeding with certain bills relating to land which have been the subject of considerable discussion and debate, not all of which has been informed. I do not wish to minimise the importance of Aboriginal land concerns, nor do I wish to understate the significance of some problems which remain. However, it is my unshakeable view that progress can be made through consultation and the government is committed to that course.

Mr Speaker, His Honour the Administrator referred to a number of developments in relation to tourism. Honourable members will be aware of the increased emphasis which has been given to tourism over recent years. More importantly, the entire Territory community is now beginning to see the benefits of this strategy. Major hotel and other facilities are now in place and tourist numbers are increasing as the capacity to handle visitors is expanding. This means more money spent in the Territory and, of course, more jobs. The government is convinced that its strategies are correct and priority will continue to be given to the expansion of tourism. His Honour referred to the government's overall objectives in tourism and the Deputy Chief Minister will be expanding on this aspect in the days ahead. I believe we need to have realistic goals. One realistic goal for the Territory would be for 1 million tourists to visit the Northern Territory every year after 1990. The benefits of that would be enormous.

Mr Speaker, Territory progress is evident in more than just tourism. The Territory and Commonwealth governments and a consortium of major private sector organisations have now reached agreement for the development of the gas-fired power-station for Darwin, with gas to be provided by a pipeline from the centre of Australia. This is a major national project with very significant benefits for the Territory and for Australia generally. The Minister for Mines and Energy will report to the Assembly on the progress of this project.

Another major project which has been the subject of considerable discussion in this Assembly is the Alice Springs to Darwin railway. I believe that all honourable members would share my view that this project should proceed as quickly as possible. The government is continuing to explore every avenue to bring the project to fruition and I am encouraged by recent comments which have been made to me. I believe considerable interest is being shown in the project by the private sector and there is significant support in the federal parliament for the proposition. It would not be helpful for me to go into details at this stage, but I assure the Assembly that we are working constructively and cooperatively with private sector organisations and with other governments to secure an early start to this project. I will keep the Assembly fully informed as matters progress.

His Honour also referred to developments in primary production and, particularly, the close links between the Department of Primary Production and ADMA. Agricultural development has never been easy in the Northern Territory. There have been failures in the past but, more recently, we have been encouraged by some successes. Admittedly, these are small but, nonetheless, they are significant. The development of smaller-scale agriculture through ADMA has
shown the potential for crop development in the Territory provided that there is careful management and selection of crops. Certainly it is clear that there is very good potential for horticulture. Again, I believe we need to set goals. Our aim should be self-sufficiency in the production of those crops and horticultural products which can be grown in the Territory. The ability of Territory farmers to market Territory produce out of season in southern and overseas markets will further enhance the viability of agriculture in the Territory. Closer cooperation between the Department of Primary Production and the Agricultural Development and Marketing Authority will help make this work.

Mr Speaker, the Brucellosis and Tuberculosis Eradication Campaign has been in effect in the Territory for some time and much progress has been achieved. The government recognises that the program presents some difficulties for pastoralists. We are sympathetic but I must emphasise the absolute necessity for the campaign. We are faced with a very real prospect of losing our major export markets for beef if we do not pursue the program vigorously. While some argue that the campaign is destroying the Northern Territory's pastoral industry through its impact on the viability of some properties, the more important point is that, without a successful eradication campaign, the future of the entire industry is at risk. We are prepared to work with the Commonwealth and the pastoralists to overcome the problems and to assist wherever possible in restocking to promote the viability of the industry for the long term. The bull purchase incentive scheme which we have introduced is an example of the government's support in this area.

Mr Speaker, over the next few years, we in the Northern Territory will benefit from a number of very important developments in the area of communications. This Assembly established a Select Committee on Communications Technology which will issue its report shortly and I am sure that we are all eagerly awaiting its findings. I have no doubt that new opportunities for Territorians, which will result from the launching of the domestic satellite and through improved telecommunication facilities, will significantly improve the quality of life in all parts of the Territory, particularly in the more remote areas. Honourable members will recall that an Office of Technology and Communications has been established within the Department of the Chief Minister to coordinate the interests of the government and the Territory and to promote our participation in those new communications opportunities.

Later this year, people in the remote areas will be able to receive ABC television and radio through the Homestead and Community Broadcasting Satellite Service. The Territory government is working also to encourage transmission of commercial television and radio services to remote areas and we hope this will come to pass very quickly. Telecom has commenced a program to extend its Digital Radio Concentrator System throughout the Territory by 1990. The Territory government is now exploring ways to improve telecommunications facilities, particularly in the remote areas, as cheaply as possible using the capabilities of the satellite. In the second half of this year, a new ABC short-wave radio service will be in place and this will enable improved communication links in areas which could not be serviced formerly - for example, enabling fishing vessels off the Territory coast to keep in touch. Over and above the entertainment and normal communications issues, the Territory government is actively examining how we can best use the new communications opportunities for the delivery of government services in more effective ways. I believe that the satellite, in particular, will revolutionise the way we provide services in such areas as education and health and will also have important benefits for agencies such as the police.

His Honour the Administrator outlined the legislative program which the government will pursue in the coming session. The responsible ministers will be
giving further details of this at the appropriate time. One matter which requires comment is the introduction of TAB in the Territory. Honourable members are aware that the government has decided to introduce TAB and arrangements are well in hand for this. We have entered into an arrangement with the Australian Capital Territory TAB to provide a service incorporating the amalgamation of totalisator polls. A manager for TAB in the Territory has now been appointed and the various other administrative matters are progressing towards the commencement date of 1 July 1985. I believe this initiative will have the support of the Assembly.

Mr Speaker, His Honour referred to the need to secure appropriate financial arrangements between the Commonwealth and the Territory. In this regard, I believe the next 6 months will be important in shaping future financial relationships and relations with the Commonwealth and with local governments. Honourable members will be aware that the new revenue-sharing arrangements between the Commonwealth and the states are to be put in place from the commencement of the next financial year. The Commonwealth Grants Commission is completing its inquiry into appropriate tax-sharing relativities between the states. While the Territory continues to hold the view that it is not appropriate for it to be included in any review of tax-sharing arrangements with the states, we have nonetheless participated constructively in the exercise. The Territory has argued that its present stage of economic, social and political development make it inappropriate for it to be included in any ongoing arrangements which may be determined between the Commonwealth and the states for the distribution of taxation revenue. The simple fact is that the Territory's needs are still being identified. It has become somewhat commonplace to say so, but the Territory is still different in many ways. The cost of services in almost all areas of government is unavoidably higher than in the standard states of New South Wales and Victoria. The Northern Territory has an area 70% larger than New South Wales but with only one-fiftieth of the population.

The Commonwealth Grants Commission has accepted that the Territory suffers disadvantages relative to the states because of demographic factors which give rise to the need for extra services in departments such as police and correctional services. The proportion of Aboriginals in the Northern Territory population is 57 times as great as the average in New South Wales and Victoria, and this has serious implications for funding needs. The Territory has to maintain 23 times the per capita road length that the New South Wales and Victoria governments have to maintain.

Mr Speaker, I could go on at much greater length by citing other examples. However, the point is very simple. The Territory's financial arrangements with the Commonwealth are essential to our continued progress and arrangements must be agreed to which do not jeopardise that progress. The Territory government believes that the financial arrangements agreed on in the Memorandum of Understanding should be maintained and we will be working with the Commonwealth to that end. However, if the Commonwealth determines that the arrangements are to change in a manner which will be detrimental to the Territory, then we will have no option but to give early consideration to the development of further constitutional change.

Mr Speaker, His Honour referred to the record of growth and achievement in the Territory in the years since self-government. This needs no elaboration by me. The record is quite clear. The government accepts the charge from His Honour to continue to pursue the goals of growth and development for the wellbeing of the people of the Territory. The various matters which I have touched on today, and which will be brought forward by the relevant ministers at the appropriate time, will ensure that we move forward in a positive and worthwhile direction.
Motion agreed to.

Mr SPEAKER: Honourable members, I intend to present the address in reply to His Honour the Administrator at Government House at 11.30 am tomorrow. I invite all honourable members to accompany me at that time.

ADJOURNMENT

Mr DONNAS (Deputy Chief Minister): Mr Speaker, I move that the Assembly do now adjourn.

Mr Speaker, I seek to provide some additional information to the honourable Leader of the Opposition about trust investments and loan payments for the casino. The Leader of the Opposition referred to line 55 of schedule 3 of the operators agreement which related to trust outgoings by way of loans at an estimated 14%. These loans have been obtained by the trust from the Australia Bank at cost. There is no correlation between those expenses and the returns to equity holders in the trust. Equity holders in the trust accrue a return of 10% on their investment plus CPI after 2 years. They also participate in the distribution of surpluses determined as an override on casino corporation taxes, being 50% of that amount for the first 5 years and one-third thereafter.

A particular arrangement has been set in place with the Australia Bank to warehouse $5m worth of shares which consists of an operator's option of investors. A provision exists for the shortfall between the cost of those borrowings and the return on those trust units to be met by the NTDC. As a general observation, as has already been mentioned in the statement by the Chief Minister, provision exists for the government to waive the base casino tax and for the NTDC to make repayable loans to ensure that the operators have sufficient income to meet their obligations by way of rental to the trust which enables the trust in turn to meet its obligations to the shareholders.

Mr B. COLLINS (Opposition Leader): Mr Speaker, I wish to touch on 2 matters this afternoon. I will be brief. Firstly, I wish to speak now because of the presence of the Attorney-General in the Assembly at the moment. I take this opportunity to raise the extremely serious issue, which has been the subject of publicity for some weeks now, of the crisis occurring in the Northern Territory's lower courts.

Mr Speaker, the lower courts of the Northern Territory, as I guess they do elsewhere in Australia, must handle by far the lion's share of the workload of the entire judicial system. It is becoming increasingly obvious that the lower courts are in a condition of some crisis. At the moment, 2 of the Northern Territory's magistrates are reputed to be taking sick leave as a direct result of the stress occasioned by the workload which the magistrates are currently being forced to handle. Indeed, I could do no better than to quote the headlines in today's Northern Territory News which used the word 'chaos' in respect of the current situation of the Territory's lower courts. This word 'chaos' in the headline was occasioned by the fact that over 40 cases were adjourned today because of the problems resulting from magistrates being absent due to ill-health, and the small number of magistrates available in the Northern Territory. I ask the honourable Attorney-General to place on the record of this Assembly some indication of what attention the government is giving to this matter and what remedies it intends to institute in order to alleviate the problem.

Mr Speaker, the second matter I wish to raise is far less serious in its immediate terms but it is of some annoyance to me. Last night, along with many
other interested people, I watched the premiere episode of the ABC National news service. I had some misgivings initially when I heard the format that was proposed for the National in that, allegedly, the Territory was to be given a 10-minute window for news at the end. I think that somebody had better get the cleaners in as far as that window is concerned or open it a little more widely than it is at present. Whilst I do not think that the kind of editorial-type news presented on the National will be everybody's cup of tea, I certainly welcome it. As a politician I find the editorial-discussion approach very welcome. Whilst I had no particular argument with the national content of the program, I thought that the treatment the Territory received last night was abysmal. Indeed, if it was a portent of things to come, I think that considerable protest ought to be made, at least initially, by honourable members of this Assembly, in respect of the treatment we received.

Mr Speaker, we were shown 2 or 3 minutes of news through that window. I was a bit curious about the sporting content. We had 2 minutes of sport in the news which consisted of hearing the results of last weekend's football matches. I hardly saw the relevance of that because, if you followed football, the news you were getting was 48 hours old. If you did not follow football, you did not care anyway. I could not quite see the relevance of that 2 minutes being used in that way. Of course, the national part of the program intruded at the end of it anyway. The upshot was that the Northern Territory window contained exactly 2 stories. There were 2 news items in the entire broadcast.

The previous service that was offered by the ABC in Darwin contained an excellent mixture of international and local news in the same program. People were able to maintain their interest. I thought it was a good service. If you have a look at the current service being offered by the commercial television channel, it is even more obvious that the new, much-vaunted news service of the ABC does not stand up very well by comparison at all. If the service that ABC National provides for the Northern Territory continues to be as poor as it was last night, then it is quite obvious that potential viewers of it in the Northern Territory will either watch Channel 8 instead, and get their entire news from Channel 8, or they will watch the national part of ABC National and, at the end of that national news, go and make a cup of coffee.

We seem to be always in this position in respect of the Australian Broadcasting Commission and I think it is extremely disappointing that, once again, we are getting the rough end of the deal, while people in the southern parts of Australia seem to be coping it sweet, as they always do. I am a great supporter of Auntie. I am a regular listener to ABC radio, particularly in the early hours of the morning when a very high standard of public affairs broadcasting is maintained. I thought that one of the prime purposes of the ABC was to make up as a national broadcaster for the deficiencies that obviously exist in commercial broadcasting where there is a lack of market. There seems to be a progressive downgrading of the services that are provided by the ABC in respect of the Northern Territory.

I would like to go on the public record as making some kind of protest about the appallingly poor quality of the Territory's news segment in the inaugural program of ABC National last night. I hope that other members of this Assembly will indicate their feelings on the matter. Perhaps some people here were satisfied with it. I intend to take up the matter with the management of the ABC, as I have done on past occasions, and try to obtain some improvement on what was a very poor effort last night in terms of Territory news.

Mr FIRMIN (Ludmilla): Mr Speaker, tonight I would like to touch briefly on the recent commemoration of the bombing of Darwin. For some time now, it has
concerned me that attendance at the commemoration service in Darwin has been confined mainly to what appear to be government officials, service chiefs, public servants and a very small contingent of returned servicemen and servicewomen. It seems to me that the day is losing much of its traditional importance. Recently, I found that one of my constituents, together with another person, had started to research the history of the bombing of Darwin. I would like to pay tribute to their activities. They are Sister Ellen Kettle MBE and Mr Sid Hawks. In fact, I would like to read a letter that has come into my possession. It was sent to them recently by a survivor of the bombing of the Neptuna. It is not without its humour in a time of great crisis. I am hoping that, in due course, Sister Kettle and possibly Sid Hawks will contribute some of the material they are receiving to be included in a book that, hopefully, we can place in the hands of our schoolchildren so that the history of this particularly important event is not lost. With your indulgence, I would like to read this letter:

Dear Miss Kettle,

Your letter came as something of a shock to me as I was convinced that the Neptuna had been forgotten by all but those who sailed in her. I fear I can supply little that would be of consequence to the history of the health service of the Northern Territory; my contribution would be more in the nature of a personality sketch of John Hyde.

John Hyde was a New Zealander, an FRCS London, who in earlier times, specialised in a certain bowel operation. His thoroughness bordered on the extreme as was demonstrated when he joined a dancing academy as a beginner and finished up by winning a ballroom championship while partnering his teacher. He spoke rather quickly, which is unusual in a man who spoke softly, and he had the knack of being completely at ease in vice-regal company or in any other in which he found himself. He had a wonderful sense of humour and took an impish delight in knocking over hardened drinkers with his cocktails. He was an accepted authority on wines, but just why he chose the mantle of a somewhat poorly paid ship's doctor, no one knows.

When the raid started, he prepared the dispensary as best he could before joining a number of us who were sheltering in the saloon vestibule. The first warning had come in the form of a near miss, which caused some underwater damage in the engine room. After 15 minutes or so, I developed an acute attack of claustrophobia and went out on deck while the doctor and a few of the others moved down the stairs to D deck. A minute later the vestibule took a direct hit. I make no attempt to describe the utter destruction except to say that some incendiary material had been used and the whole pile of rubble was alight. A minute later she received another in almost the same spot, followed by a third some seconds later. Hearing no more dive bombers I ceased trying to claw my way into a 4 inch teak deck and set about doing something.

When the first bomb dropped cadet Knight and the doctor each became pinned down by the legs and were unable to move and, whilst in this desperate situation, the doctor was wondering if death by burning was as horrifyingly painful as his medical training had led him to believe. The second bomb shook the whole burning mass up so much that they were able to free themselves and hobble to relative safety. On the other side of the deck my first discovery was the captain lying in the scuppers.
Cadet Kent showed up so I sent him off to get the doctor and immediately afterwards I dispatched cadet Rothery to the engine rooms to get the engineers to start the pumps in an endeavour to put out the fire. He came back with the news that the pumps could not be operated so now it was a race against time. A burst oil main under the wharf was spewing crude oil by the tonne. Something had set it alight and the early ebb tide was taking it slowly along to our point of escape. The 'doc', visibly distressed, attended the captain but it was too late - he died a few moments later.

By this time, the list was such that it would have been impossible to launch the starboard boats, even if I could have spared the hands to do it. Everyone in sight was needed to help the wounded. The doctor attended many victims, one of whom we managed to dig out from the saloon rubble with a thumb and index finger of one hand hanging uselessly on the end of a thread of skin. The doctor snipped them off, threw them over the side, and told the wharfie to get going. The last time I saw him he was swimming in fine style.

On reaching the end of the saloon deck, I came upon an unrecognisable figure covered in blood from head to toe. It was cadet Knight and, when he realised that he was not alone and that help was at hand, he started to 'give' at the knees. I half seriously told him that he could not collapse just now because so many needed attention and he would become a bloody nuisance. I still marvel at his response. You could actually see the resolve moving through him as he straightened up and, under his own steam, made for the improvised gangway. At this point we heard a cry of 'water, water' coming from the other side of the ship. In spite of his wound, the 'doc' was right on my heels and it was to discover cadet Stobo (we carried 4 of them) sitting on the deck with his hands supporting the weight of his torso, one leg below the knee smashed to pulp and half his intestines in his lap. In this condition he had dragged himself about 100 feet from where he had suffered his injuries. The doctor now gave his undivided attention to the boy. A plank was used to support the leg and sheets from a cabin were used to secure the rest of him and make the unfortunate lad as comfortable as was possible at the time. After we got the boy ashore, I had to leave them to attend to other things so we lost contact for a while.

By this time the burning oil had passed the gangway and so we were actually moving about over the flames. After satisfying myself that there were no living beings left on board, I went to the end of the wharf, kicked off my white shoes, threw my cap into the water and, like Lot's wife, felt compelled to turn and view the awful spectacle. The fire was getting uncomfortably close to the end of the wharf so diving into a sea of crude oil was not a difficult choice. After swimming for a few minutes I spotted a Qantas launch not far off and a spirited dash of a minute or so enabled me to intercept and grab her stern. The cox decided that he could make better time by stopping and taking me on board than leaving me where I was. After climbing in, I was delighted to see that cadet Knight was already there, together with a couple of our Chinese crew.

When standing in the launch I was able to see the doctor and his charge about 100 yards or so out into the harbour and had no difficulty in getting the cox to alter course to pick them up. When he saw the boy's condition, he decided to take us to
HMAS Platypus and then come back again. I helped Knight up the gangway with a fireman's lift while many willing Navy hands took Stobo to the sick bay. A petty officer directed myself and Knight to a companionway that led down to the wardroom which had been converted to a temporary sick bay. On laying the boy down, I said to him: 'OK Knight, you can now do what you like'. He literally went out like a light.

The navy medics were wonderful. I am sure our doctor appreciated their efforts for he was now showing signs of collapse. After all, he was not a youngster, having been a major in the first war. Unfortunately, Stobo was beyond their help and he died an hour or so after boarding. The tragic side to this story was the fact that his own father had been lost at sea a few months earlier and the boy was symbolically taking on his father's role. It was his first trip to sea. One can only imagine how his mother felt.

Knight and the doctor were transferred to the hospital ship Manunda that evening. Later on, I had the pleasure of sailing with John Hyde for more than 3 years and, during this period, he told me about his time on that ship. To say that the treatment they received was perfunctory would be praise indeed. They were down in the bowels of the ship somewhere until one day a senior surgeon, whilst on his rounds, stopped and said: 'Don't I know you from somewhere?' Hyde replied: 'Yes, in Yvonne's cafe in Vienna in 1912 when you were so drunk we had to leave you under the table. Mitzi said she'd look after you'. A deck cabin was immediately laid on with royal treatment but Hyde would not move an inch until similar treatment had been afforded to Knight.

After that the trip was quite pleasant. I got ashore from the Platypus about 4 in the afternoon and found my way to the Burns Philp office where quite a number of crew had gathered. The manager had few ideas and little information but we did glean the fact that a new hospital had been opened a short time before and that the old one was vacant. 'But', he warned us, 'no one is allowed in there'. We found it easily enough and promptly staked our claim to part of it. All it contained were beds and mattresses and a few mosquito nets. I returned to the office with the idea of getting some food for the crew but the manager would not even accept my signature as senior surviving officer of the ship. I can't imagine who broke into his bulk store later that night. Whoever it was didn't leave his name.

Some of the crew had minor injuries but they did not go near any hospital that day as we were all well aware that they would be far too busy getting the injured to the Manunda and treating other more serious cases. The following day, they all received prompt and friendly treatment and came away feeling that, in spite of all the havoc, some people actually cared about those who had only minor wounds. I would claim that as a large plus for the NT nursing service.

I spent the next day thumbing lifts to Bagot and Berrimah and other places trying to locate our surviving Chinese, and the final tally showed that we had lost 11 Europeans out of 22, and 25 Chinese out of 104. It was more than 2 days before we got regular food. No one wanted to take us over. The Navy had no spare food (it was all
in the Neptuna) and the civilian administration had broken down completely. We each received one piece of bread (if you were within 30 of the head of the queue you could also get a little bit of butter) and a ladle of baked beans. You got the same issue for dinner - there was no lunch. In the early hours one morning, we had discharged a ship of lorries and other military equipment and returned her to her anchorage and were coming back when we pulled alongside a small vessel to pick up some badly burned victims (I think they came from the Don Isidoro on Melville Island).

Seeing them was shock enough but it was as nothing compared with the abuse we received from the medical officer in charge. I've forgotten just what he said, but the substance of it was that we were a mob of loafers with no sense of responsibility. We were taking up space that he wanted for fighting men and if we did not get out he would throw us into the water. I think he might even have called into question the sleeping habits of our parents, but I am not sure. Strangely enough, not one of us uttered a word! I think it was because the outburst was so irrational that we sensed he was under great stress. As it turned out, he had been working for 3 days almost non stop and with no sleep at all. I met him a few days later - he was charming - and I said not a word. He was truly a dedicated doctor.

Ballots had been drawn for seats on the first train out of Darwin and cadet Kent had secured one but he relinquished it to join me in helping to man the Tulagi - cadet Rothery came too. We left with a very mixed crew about midnight on 28 February, I think. She carried her own master while the mate from the sunken 'British Motorist' signed on as mate. I filled the second mate's spot and the third officer from the BM came as the third mate. The Tulagi's purser took on the job of chief cook and her second radio operator filled in as second cook and baker - and I can vouch for the bread he made with Enos. The Tulagi's own engineers were all there and 3 from the Neptuna acted as supernumeries as there were no greasies or other engine room crew. The other 2 radio men did all the radio watches. The 2 cadets from the Neptuna acted as wheel hands while the Navy loaned us 2 more. One of them could steer but we had to teach the other. The Navy also provided a spare man who had never been afloat before, and with this merry mix we reached Sydney.

There have been many articles and books published by journalists and others and much of it is sheer rubbish. In 'Darwin 1942' Timothy Hall states that the Neptuna was 'loaded down to the gunwhales with explosives'. Had this been so, Darwin would have been another Halifax of the first war or a Bombay of the last one. No, so far as I can calculate, she carried no more than 80 tons of explosives. As for the wharfies who 'felt rumblings under their feet' just before she blew up, I am quite safe in saying that the nearest wharfie at the time was the one who was minus a finger and thumb and, when I last saw him, he was swimming to such purpose that I was convinced that not only did he intend to get away from the Neptuna but from the Port of Darwin too.
I think I have covered your 5 questions but, as I said earlier, I can contribute little to the history of medical services in the NT. I can only repeat that whenever or wherever we sought medical aid, it was forthcoming in the friendliest way and left each one feeling that someone cared. I must thank you for writing because it made me put a few of my thoughts on paper (a thing I should have done years ago). I have many more, of course, but they involve serious criticisms of many people so perhaps it is as well to let sleeping culprits lie and, in any case, most of them would be dead by now or, at best, very old men.

Mr Speaker, I thank you for the time that you have given me to read that.

Mr VALE (Braitling): I would like to raise a few points very briefly tonight but, before I start on them, I will join with the Leader of the Opposition in his criticism of the much-vaunted news service of the ABC that went to air last night. Whilst I do not think any blame can be apportioned to ABC personnel in the Northern Territory, I think that, after all the hullabaloo in recent months of what we were to get, last night's service was very disappointing. In fact, in recent months, I believe the ABC has abdicated its national responsibility for providing regional news services throughout the Northern Territory because, several weeks ago, the ABC Alice Springs local news, which we used to receive at 6.25 pm, was thrown overboard. Where the ABC has the men and equipment and the ability to provide such a service, I believe it is duty bound to provide that service in those more remote areas. Mr Deputy Speaker, I can only say that I hope that the national service that we saw last night improves in the coming weeks. I believe that, as the Leader of the Opposition has said, possibly more pressure will need to be applied to the ABC if it is to lift its game, particularly in this part of Australia.

Mr Deputy Speaker, there are 3 brief points that I want to raise tonight. All of them relate to federal responsibilities. I believe I have a responsibility to bring these 3 issues to the public's attention tonight. One relates to Telecom's provision of telephones in central Australia. For many years in central Australia, telephone connections were performed almost within a matter of days or hours of an application being made. It is quite obvious that, in recent times, Telecom has not been able to keep abreast of the tremendous rate of development in central Australia. The delay for the provision of telephone services in and around Alice Springs has gone from several weeks to several months. I think that Telecom should smarten up its operation.

Another concern is much more serious. It involves safety at the Alice Springs airport. In recent days, there have been 2 near misses due to people wandering on to the unsecured tarmac area where the planes taxi. Large commercial aircraft have been required to brake or stop their movements on to the taxiway there. In past days, the gates on to the airport taxiway were looked after by security people employed by the Department of Aviation. For some reason, in recent weeks, that service has been abolished and it has been up to the airline companies to keep an eye on the people coming and going through the gates. At least during the loading of aeroplanes there, the airline company concerned had hostesses or stewardesses out at the gate to watch who went out. The 2 near misses that I spoke about occurred prior to loading of aircraft. No airline company personnel were there. I think that urgent action is required before someone really comes to grief.

The third point relates to customs clearance in the Top End. Some friends of mine came back from overseas several weeks ago with 2 young children. They arrived in Darwin at 3 or 4 o'clock in the morning and were several hours
getting through customs. The time it takes to pass through customs has been the subject of much criticism in this Assembly in recent years. I wonder why the airlines and customs officials bring passengers in through the bottom deck where there is no air-conditioning. I make the suggestion that it might be possible for passengers to be brought back in through the upstairs lounge where they can sit in some comfort in the air-conditioned rooms. The kiosk could be opened. In addition, perhaps customs could engage casual labour to assist with the clearance of passengers through that terminal instead of having people wait 3 or 4 hours in the early hours of the morning. It is difficult enough for adults who are tired at the end of a trip but it is more frustrating if they have young children in tow and are kept for that length of time at the end of a long trip.

Mr Deputy Speaker, I wish to welcome the newly-appointed General Manager of the TAB, Mr Des Healey. Whilst I am not necessarily a supporter of the TAB, I am a fairly one-eyed supporter of Australian rules football. In particular, the Melbourne Football Club is one that I have followed for many years. I just wish that Mr Des Healey could bring his sons with him because he has 2 lads who play for the Melbourne Football Club - Greg and Gerard Healey. One of them played for the interstate side last year. If he could be convinced to bring them to the Northern Territory and leave them at Alice Springs on the way through, then I am certain we could put them to a lot of good use.

Mr EDE (Stuart): Mr Deputy Speaker, I rise in today's adjournment to make some remarks concerning tertiary and further education or TAFE, as it is generally known. The allocation of funds to TAFE for utilisation by adult educators is a matter of particular concern to me. It is important because, more often than not, the projects have been of a developmental nature either in terms of an individual's personal development or in terms of community development. Community development theory recognises that community development is a process which builds on individual collective achievements. It is a learning process. Where a developmental process is involved, it is critical that continuity of input be maintained. In simple terms, for the benefit of honourable members opposite, it is important that something, once started, is finished, that a commitment made is, in fact, fulfilled. In community development terms, it is disastrous to build up individual and community expectations, through starting a process or making a promise of commitment, and then not fulfilling it.

That is precisely what has happened in relation to adult education, as I now point out to the Chief Minister. I make 2 points, Mr Deputy Speaker. Firstly, once community or individual expectations have been raised and then dashed, it is immensely difficult - if not impossible - to start again. Secondly, I draw attention to this government's lack of commitment to provide the marginal increase in funding which would mean the difference between success and failure. I submit that the social cost of involving people in half-hearted or token efforts is far in excess of the present dollar cost of facilitating a viable community development process.

Mr Deputy Speaker, I will now draw on several examples from particular localities. In one locality, there has been a major loss of resources since 1984. The vehicle which was available to the adult educator in 1984 is no longer exclusively available to him. Supposedly, it has to be shared with 2 other communities which are literally many hundreds of kilometres apart. In practice, it is an impossible situation. The loss of the vehicle has several implications. Firstly, it means that 2 smaller communities, which were serviced in 1984, will not be serviced in 1985 unless the adult educator's private vehicle is used. When confronted with the adult educator's dilemma, the response of a senior bureaucrat was along the lines that he did not have to go if he didn't want to. At one of the communities, about 20 students were
involved in classes which had cultural significance and commercial potential. Several part-time instructors were employed. In the other locality, about 25 students and several part-time instructors were involved. Similar numbers of students and instructors had been lined up for 1985. Expectations have been built up in good faith and have been dashed. The response is both pathetic and indicative of the government's commitment.

Secondly, loss of the vehicle meant that artifact classes, which involved 5 PTIs in 1984, will not be held in 1985. For the information of honourable members, PTIs are part-time instructors. Thirdly, loss of the vehicle meant that driver education classes will not be held in 1985. As honourable members would be aware, most employment opportunities in Aboriginal communities involve having a driving licence. Concurrent with the loss of the vehicle, funds for employment of PTIs have been slashed to the extent that they virtually do not exist. I believe that the amount allocated for the whole southern region for the next 6 months was initially about $465. I found this out only about 2 days ago, but I understand that belatedly there has been a further allocation. However, that allocation coming in March has meant that the PTIs have already ceased to work, the program has stopped and the whole thing has to be set going again. So much for commitment, Mr Deputy Speaker, and so much for understanding the nature of the community development process which the Chief Minister felt he knew something about.

Mr Deputy Speaker, I will also refer by way of example to the adult education program at Yuendumu, which is a very successful program. In 1984, 5 Walpiri teachers were used in the various classes. There were a total of over 7000 pupil attendances that year. In the second semester, the average weekly attendance was 148. In the third semester, it rose to 168 and, by the fourth semester, it had risen to 194 student attendances per week. I find those figures to be most impressive. In 1985, those programs are severely threatened because of lack of funds which, in my view, equates with lack of commitment. In 1984, part-time instructors were able to be paid $18 an hour for 20 hours per fortnight. In 1985, the rate is just over $9 per hour for whatever hours are now available given this cut in funding. Mr Deputy Speaker, dare I say that, to argue about pay rates for part-time educators is probably academic at this stage given that the funding is not available.

Mr Deputy Speaker, I would like to make a couple of remarks about the bureaucracy involved in this particular program. Service delivery is continually frustrated by a number of arrangements that are required to get a new program going. I will just go through them. There are 8 steps. The PTI has to fill in a registration form which goes to the regional senior education officer, TAFE. Secondly, the submission by the adult educator goes to the senior education officer, TAFE, to employ. Thirdly, the course is approved by the senior education officer and the commitment is raised. Those stages take 4 to 5 weeks. Fourthly, the PTI then has to maintain statistical details of the first session for each of the students. Fifthly, the PTI makes a salary claim and has it verified by the adult educator. It then goes to the salaries section with duplicates to the regional manager. They still have to do their fortnightly reports which were about all that were required before. Every 6 weeks of the program, there is a massive review. Forms have to be filled in in relation to each of the programs. Eventually, at the end of the term or at the program's completion, they have to work through the following items: attendance statements, estimated versus actual attendances, aims and objectives, recommended changes to curricula, tangible results and cost. Eighthly, there are evaluation reports to be sent to the central office each quarter.

Mr Deputy Speaker, it may seem quite apt to have that system in a town situation with people who have teaching degrees, diplomas or apprenticeships etc
but, when applied in the bush, it takes away the ability of Aboriginal PTIs who often are very well versed in the particular things they want to teach, but may not have the necessary skills in the English language. They are being cut out through this process and have been downgraded from the previous $18 per hour down to $9 because they are unable to fill in all these forms.

Mr Deputy Speaker, I also note the aim of the adult educator at Yuendumu was to make himself redundant over a 3 to 4-year period. It was his aim, and he was on target, to hand over the educator's role completely to Aboriginal people. A very important principle is at the essence of community development theory and I doubt if the principle is really understood by members opposite; it is certainly not reflected in their policies. The cuts in the amounts of money that were available for that program have meant that those programs have had to stop. The adult educator now has to apply to find out if this money is available and if it is enough to get the whole thing going again. However, effectively, it means that the program has been put back at least 6 months to a year - if it can be geared up again. It is just not good enough, Mr Deputy Speaker. Planning has to go into these programs so they can continue through the number of years required so that we can actually train Aboriginal part-time instructors in the bush and get them to take over delivery of those services to their own people.

Mr Deputy Speaker, in conclusion, I make 2 references to a NARU study into Aboriginal adult education in the Northern Territory by Loveday and Young. I have been waiting and hoping that this would be tabled in this Assembly because it is a very interesting book. When an adult educator asked the senior staff from head office for advice, he was led to conclude that his superior had neither theory nor advice on how to handle the job. That is a sad state of affairs. Secondly, the senior education officer was reported as saying that Aboriginal adult educators were largely a forgotten group and the fact that they have particular and pertinent skills and important roles to play in their community's development is beyond question. The report, the community and the adult educators have recognised the importance of adult education, but it seems to have fallen on deaf ears with this government.

I put forward these arguments, not as a destructive exercise to irritate the minister and the government but as a matter of importance for all to reassess just what level of success we want to achieve in regard to adult education as it applies to Aboriginal people in this community. As I have highlighted, the present system is just not coming up with the goods.

Mr PERRON (Attorney-General): Mr Deputy Speaker, this is an unexpected pleasure. Firstly, I would like to touch on a matter that the Leader of the Opposition raised this afternoon, a matter which indeed I and the government are taking very seriously, and that is the situation in relation to magistrates in Darwin at present. As honourable members would be aware, the government decided a short time ago to increase the number of magistrates in the Northern Territory. We have been advertising for persons who wish to become magistrates. Unfortunately, the response has not been as satisfactory as I would have liked. One of the magistrates in Darwin is on sick leave and may be off work for a couple of months. To aggravate that situation, the Chief Magistrate, as recently as yesterday, also found himself off work on medical grounds. Thus, the ranks are severely diminished somewhat unexpectedly. I do not wish to pre-empt His Honour the Administrator but I guess it is appropriate for me to inform the Assembly that I will be making recommendations to the Administrator, hopefully tomorrow, to appoint an acting magistrate for a period of time to help overcome the existing problems. The government is examining further options of additional acting magistrates to be appointed at the earliest possible time. I
will keep that matter under daily review. I hope honourable members appreciate that we are concerned. However, it is not simply a matter of waving a wand. The selection of people as magistrates and judges is very important. The administration of justice is a most serious matter and will not be taken lightly.

Mr Deputy Speaker, the main reason I rise in the adjournment today is to say a few words about one of the Territory's true characters, one of the people who helped make the Territory uniquely famous or infamous, both interstate and overseas. That person is Carl Atkinson who passed away recently. Carl was surrounded by mystique and rumour even when he was with us in Darwin over the past many years. It seems no one really knew where Carl was born although Germany and Canada appear to be the favourite rumours. I think Carl may have fostered a little bit of the mystique about his background and some of his exploits. Just the same, they were part of what made him such a character. Whilst we do not know very much for certain, we do know that he was an engineer, an adventurer and a salvage diver.

There have always been so many amazing stories about Carl that you do not know whether to believe any of them or all of them. It was claimed he was the first person to water ski in Australia.

Mr Dondas: That is true - 1948.

Mr PERRON: That was in Sydney. My colleague says that it was in 1948 but I think I could get half a dozen people to quote other dates. Certainly, it was in the 1940s. Somehow, during his stay in Darwin, he obtained title to all of the shipping wrecks that were sunk in Darwin harbour during the war. Ironically, the salvage rights to these were sold to the Japanese. In the mid-1950s, they spent a period here cutting those wrecks up and taking them away for scrap steel. That was after Carl had spent a considerable period in bringing ashore tonnes and tonnes of relics and valuables from the wrecks himself. As owner, he was certainly entitled to those.

It is either a brave or a foolish diver who dives alone. Carl Atkinson probably did most of his wreck diving alone. When I was a boy, I remember witnessing a boat anchored not very far from where we were fishing in Darwin Harbour. It was near the spot where lay what was left of the United States destroyer, the Peary. The boat was unmanned with just a compressor on board running and a hose over the side. While we were there that day, Carl made several trips to and from the wreck alone with bits and pieces. He was working in 100 feet of murky water amid the dangers of diving on a shipwreck with all that entails - wires, loose material and so on. Certainly, it was a very risky pastime for anyone, let alone doing it alone in a place like Darwin harbour with its currents and poor visibility. For many years, Carl was the only person who knew where the Peary was because it had drifted down current from the place where it had disappeared beneath the surface during the war. Rumour had it that the Peary had gold bullion on board and that rumour persists until this day. Everyone thought that the gold ended up in Carl's hands. I wonder if any of us will ever know.

The giant groper, which frequents wrecks, is several times bigger than man. It used to be considered responsible for the deaths of many hard-helmet and pearl divers in the past. Carl told me that he never considered them a danger but rather magnificent, curious creatures. They used to follow him around a wreck and have their sides scratched. As we know today, the giant groper is indeed a very curious animal and likes to have its sides scratched. It is quite common knowledge. When Carl was diving alone on these wrecks 35 years ago, one was considered almost insane to hold a view that these giant gropers were really
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quite harmless to man and that one should take some interest in them rather than kill them which we always seem to do. He was a brave man in that regard.

One common story had Carl bringing 2 jeeps ashore. After a period of use in Darwin, he was told that he would have to pay customs duty on those jeeps. Rather than pay, Carl drove them back into the sea and left them there. It was only 2 years ago that Carl told me that the 2 jeeps in question were in shallow water below the low-tide mark off Doctor's Gully. One of these days I might get curious enough to see if I can find them. I am not sure whether the story has any truth in it at all. It was one that Carl told many people and which people associate with Carl instantly.

Another newsworthy story had Carl donning his diving gear and walking across the floor of Darwin Harbour towing his boat over his shoulder on the anchor rope after the motor had failed. He claimed that he had been stung by box jellyfish so often that he was immune to the danger and he would pick them up in his hands to demonstrate to people. Mind you, he was very careful how he picked them up. Just the same, it was one of those stories that really made the legend of Carl Atkinson. Probably the only decompression chamber for 2000 miles was a primitive machine made by Carl himself. I believe it is now in the hands of the museum in Darwin. It was said that many men owe their lives to a stay inside that decompression chamber under Carl's instructions.

I am sure that a fascinating book could be written on the saga of Carl Atkinson and a luxury yacht called the Sea Fox if anyone ever has the time to research the events. The millionaire's yacht, supposedly built for Errol Flynn, went aground north of Darwin. After Carl had retrieved it and brought it to Darwin, a bitter row flared over ownership with Carl guarding the vessel, at that time beached at Doctor's Gully, with a rifle. The saga raged on for so long that the vessel deteriorated to the point where it was eventually burned to recover salvageable items, including several tonnes of lead that had been used as ballast. One of the 100-foot tapered steel masts that came off the Sea Fox is now in the hands of the Navy at the patrol boat base in Darwin. I hope they find the resources to erect it as a monument to the Sea Fox saga.

Carl was one of the foundation members of the Northern Territory Water Ski Club at Vesteys Beach. I am told it was 25 years ago this year that a small band of Darwinites, who were keen on water skiing, formed that club which has survived over the years. About 10 years ago, Carl suffered a stroke which left him partially paralysed. He refused to lie down, however, and continued to enjoy his great love of the sea by driving his speedboat and towing anyone who wanted to water ski. Six days a week he would get out of bed at about 5 am and drive to 2 bakeries to collect stale bread to feed the fish of Doctor's Gully, a pastime which has made the place very well known.

Just over 5 years ago, Carl decided to move south and, after a spate on the Gold Coast, he settled at Tumbulgum in northern NSW where he died on Sunday 17 February. I understand that the Oral History Unit has interviewed Carl, as did 1 or 2 local journalists a couple of years ago, to take note of some of his exploits. I hope that someone takes the trouble to write about a big man who lived a full life and left his mark on the Territory as one of those irrepressible characters who did everything his way.

Mr COULTER (Berrimah): Mr Speaker, in rising to speak in tonight's adjournment, I would like to speak about a portion of my electorate which has undergone unbelievable growth in the last 2 years. We have heard tonight in the address in reply from the Minister for Transport and Works that there are only 38 building blocks left in Darwin available to the Housing Commission. After they are expended, all development will take place at Palmerston.
Mr Perron: And a good place too.

Mr COULTER: A top little place to be. I would like to draw this Assembly's attention not only to some of the developments at Palmerston but also to how progressive this government is in setting aside land in the Noonamah area for the new town to be named New Town.

Mr Perron: We can get a better name than that. That is unimaginative.

Mr COULTER: A new town is to be built out there. Perhaps a better name than New Town may be suggested in time. There are many new towns around Australia.

The growth within the Palmerston area really is unbelievable. In 1976, the only construction that one could see in the area was a motorcycle track which was operated by the Top End Junior Motorcycle Club. Today it houses some 3000 people. As I indicated in the address-in-reply debate, 30% of the population out there is under 15 years of age. Also, I understand the number of children in the 0-5 age group is more than twice the Northern Territory average. As examples of the growth rate that has occurred out there, the Gray School, which was opened some 13 months ago, is now full to capacity and we await with interest the development and the opening of the new Driver Primary School to relieve the overloading which is occurring within the Gray School. Already we are talking about emergency accommodation within the school to accommodate the number of students who are enrolled there.

The high school has not yet been opened. It is under construction and it is hoped to be opened in January 1986. We believe some 300 students travel from the Palmerston area into the Darwin area as well as to Taminmin High School in the Humpty Doo area. It is believed that we will have to accommodate Years 8, 9 and 10 when the high school first opens. There is talk already of a second high school for the Palmerston area.

The 9-hole golf links has recently been completed there. We are awaiting the opening of that particular facility. Of course, Marlow's Lagoon, which is a recreational lake of some 3 ha, is to be opened soon with 2 small islands, jogging tracks and footbridges over the water. It is a very picturesque development for any town. We also believe that the amount of water that is available from the Marlow's Lagoon area is unbelievable. Some of the test bores have released water in the vicinity of 40,000 gallons an hour. This type of saving may be available for the sporting and recreational reserves in the Palmerston area which could bring about a big cost reduction in the development of those areas within Palmerston boundaries itself. The rural subdivisions are going ahead around the Marlow's Lagoon area. They are up to 3 ha in size which will bring a magnificent contribution to the variation in lifestyle which can be enjoyed within the Palmerston area. The first release of those should occur within a few short months.

660 houses have been built in Palmerston in the last 2 years. People currently enter the Palmerston area at the rate of about 6 families a week. I think that these figures are not well known to honourable members who should be made aware of the type of development which is occurring there. I understand that some 250 blocks are available for private development within the Darwin area before all private development will be restricted to the Palmerston area. That includes places like Brinkin, Northlakes and Woodleigh Gardens. It is only a matter of time before all that type of private housing development is situated at Palmerston itself.
The development of recreational facilities, in particular the youth recreational facilities, at Palmerston are well in hand. We hope to be making some announcements soon on the types of facilities that will be available for our young people. Sporting bodies are starting to come out to the Palmerston area. We believe that all the infrastructure that goes with the development of a community is not that far down the line. Local government is also well advanced. Elections are to be held in May this year for its own form of local government, which augurs well for grass roots democracy in a town that 2 years ago did not exist. To give you an example of the development, there will be 12 km of bicycle tracks by mid-1985.

For the last 2 years, the development of Palmerston has been in the hands of the Palmerston Development Authority which has been largely involved in the infrastructure and the engineering works at Palmerston. We believe that we are now entering a stage where we have to address some of the people issues within the Palmerston area. I look forward to some of those developments with interest because the people make up neighbourhoods, not buildings. Post offices, cinema and employment generators, such as small industries, are also proceeding well. We believe it will only be a short time before it becomes self-sufficient with those employment generators becoming well entrenched. Already we had the opening of the supermarket. That type of facility did not exist 12 months ago. These are all welcomed by the people in the area.

Mr Deputy Speaker, it is also interesting to note that some of the federal agencies are now also interested in the area. Organisations such as the Commonwealth Employment Service, the Department of Social Security, the post office and a host of other Commonwealth departments are now interested in coming to the Palmerston area. I know that it is a little way down the track and some members do not go that far south on their holidays, but I suggest that, if honourable members do get the opportunity, they have a look at the types of facilities that the Northern Territory government has put in place at Palmerston. I believe that it demonstrates how committed the Northern Territory is to development of communities such as Palmerston.

I would also like to mention the construction of the bridge across the Elizabeth River. It is nearing completion and people will soon be able to drive through Palmerston, across the Elizabeth River to Channel Island. That is the site of the other fantastic development which is being constructed by the Northern Territory government - the gas turbine electricity generating plant.

On their way out there, if honourable members take the time to traverse that part of the country, they will witness another interesting development which has taken place and which can clearly be seen from the air - the aquaculture project conducted by General Prawn Pty Ltd which is the Taiwanese-Australian joint venture. Already hatcheries are established and 4 ha of prawn ponds are operational and simply waiting for the gravid females, which are the pregnant females, to be harvested from the sea so that that project can reach fruition. It represents an investment of almost $1.5m. If it is successful, and I have spoken about it in this Assembly from time to time, we could be looking at something like 3.5 t of prawns per hectare every 90 days. What that means for the Territory is a large export market of prawns plus the use of our own primary production in terms of soya bean and corn fishmeal. For 1 kg of prawn, you need 2 kg of feed. You do not have to be an economist to work out just how beneficial that will be to the Northern Territory.

I would also like to mention the other industries planned in the area adjacent to the Palmerston development. I look down the line not very far to the establishment of a university. I am pleased to hear that the Minister for
Education has entered into negotiations with Queensland University to develop a university college. I am sure it will only be a short time before such an establishment reaches fruition. I was interested to note that the Minister for Small Business and Industry spoke about the development of the trade zone within the electorate at Berrimah. I believe that demonstrates the confidence that people have in the area and the development which can take place there. BHP has already spent $1m within the electorate of Berrimah for the development of its facilities.

I look forward to listening to the contribution to an adjournment debate by the member for New Town, whoever he may be, in a few short years, when he is in this Assembly speaking of development similar to that I have spoken of tonight. I believe that, with that type of visionary approach to things, all bodes well for development in the Northern Territory as it echoes the principles of this government on development. That is what it is all about.

Mr SMITH (Millner): Mr Deputy Speaker, I wish to do 2 things tonight. First of all I wish to talk about a parochial electorate issue and then something a bit wider. My parochial electorate issue is the Territory Tidy Towns Competition as it affects my electorate. I do not think the suburb has had a very high rank in the beautification stakes over the last few years but it was a true honour to the people in the Millner Territory Tidy Towns Committee that Millner took second place in its section and, in fact, took second place to the overall winner, Jabiru. I think that deserves some comment tonight. Considerable beautification work has been done in the Millner electorate over the past few years, both by residents and also by organisations such as the Darwin City Council and the Conservation Commission.

I guess the biggest achievement has been the saving of the old Bagot speedway site from a promised supermarket that the council wished to inflict on us at one stage. Instead it has been turned into a very nice park which is being developed at present. The good thing was that, throughout the entire process, the council consulted very actively with residents. Residents have been involved on tree planting days and it is now a feature of which we can all be proud. Last year in the Territory Tidy Towns Competition, the committee organised tree planting among several nature strips in the electorate. A group of people surrounding a small park in the electorate organised themselves into a watering roster which kept the park green and lush right through the Dry. All in all, the Territory Tidy Towns Competition last year was a very worthwhile activity and has significantly improved the appearance of the area.

Mr Deputy Speaker, turning to my wider issue, I want to talk about what I consider to be the most startling effect of the new administrative arrangements and that is the virtual emasculation of the Public Service Commissioner's Office. I must admit that I find what the government has done to the Public Service Commissioner's Office very strange indeed. Under the Public Service Act, the Public Service Commissioner is in fact the linchpin of the public service. His responsibilities include employment, promotion, discipline and conditions of service. As well, the Public Service Commissioner issues determinations and is the respondent on behalf of the government for a large number of awards. Under the new arrangements, we find that he has largely been shorn of his powers.

Industrial relations has gone to the Department of Industry and Small Business, despite the fact that, in my view, it is in contravention of the legislation and has caused considerable confusion. The sort of confusion that I am talking about is well demonstrated in a press release issued by the Northern Territory Trades and Labour Council. I want to read into the record a few paragraphs:
A 3-page document has emerged that is guaranteed to confuse, confound and collapse the existing industrial framework which, although not perfect, at least provided a reasonably coherent avenue of communication. What we now have is a situation where personnel matters go to one autonomous area and industrial matters to another, and that areas of conflict will be settled by consultation. The fact is, of course, that many industrial disputes arise out of personnel decisions. It is imperative that unions know where to address their problems and to divorce such matters is impractical and absurd. This is not just a case of hiving off an unrelated function to a more appropriate area. It is an action that will inevitably lead to a division of the most disruptive proportions.

The purpose of industrial relations is to facilitate the resolution of employer employee problems. The legislation clearly indicates that the Public Service Commissioner is the employer. Why then should the unions have to go elsewhere for decisions and, furthermore, why should the unions have to make a decision on content to determine where they have to refer and then probably find it requires joint consideration by 2 government areas, neither of whom can make a binding decision?

As stated earlier, the rearrangement is unworkable and a piece of administrative lunacy. It is an arrangement which has been introduced with no regard to legislation and also with little care and thought. Rather than binding parties together, it will lead to even greater rifts between the government, the public service and the public service unions.

Mr Deputy Speaker, as I said, that refers to a document jointly issued by the Secretary of the Department of Industry and Small Business and the Public Service Commissioner headed: 'New Administrative Arrangements Industrial Relations Activities'. The sorts of problems that this artificial split has caused are amply demonstrated by the fact that the circular has to provide a definition of 'industrial relations'. It goes on from there to say that, basically, industrial relations matters will be dealt with by the Department of Industry and Small Business and personnel matters will be dealt with by the Public Service Commissioner's Office. But then, we have this terrific part on page 3: 'On occasion it will be necessary for the commissioner to refer a matter to the new unit' - that is the new industrial relations unit in the Department of Industry and Small Business - 'even though it addresses an issue outside the definition provided. Such occasions will arise if the issue is one which has industrial relations and or policy implications'. Earlier in this document, it says very clearly that personnel-type matters are clearly in the bailiwick of the Public Service Commissioner. Obviously, in dealing with personnel-type matters, policy matters need to be dealt with also. Yet here it is said that, if there are policy matters to be discussed in the personnel area and there is a possible conflict, the Public Service Commissioner does not have the power to do what he thinks appropriate. It goes on to say: 'In these cases, the matter will be referred immediately to the Secretary of the Department of Industry and Small Business and all parties notified accordingly'. Once a matter has been so referred, all further discussions will be the responsibility of the Secretary of the Department of Industry and Small Business who will advise the Public Service Commissioner.

That is a very clear pecking order indeed. What one can read into that is that, in 99 cases out of 100, the Public Service Commissioner will have to refer personnel matters to the Secretary of the Department of Industry and Small
Business and then the secretary has carriage of the matter. Mr Deputy Speaker, it does not make any sense. There is no administrative sense in my view in putting together the industrial relations functions of private industry and the public sector. They are completely different aspects of the industrial relations exercise. They have worked quite satisfactorily in the past with different spheres of responsibility and there does not seem to be any rational reason why it has been done.

The only conclusion one can come to is that it has been done, not for purposes of rationalisation but because the government, for whatever reason, has been most dissatisfied with the performance of the Public Service Commissioner. It is common knowledge that the government offered to buy the Public Service Commissioner out of his contract but that the Public Service Commissioner, for his own reasons, refused to go. We have a situation where, because the government is unhappy with the Public Service Commissioner and his operations, it has been prepared to wreck a perfectly acceptable set up, one that has worked well, simply to take away these responsibilities from that person. It is quite clear that the illogicality of the present arrangement is such that, once the present Public Service Commissioner goes, the present arrangement will be reverted to. Mr Deputy Speaker, if you want any evidence of that, you have only to acknowledge the lack of legislation that has been presented to the Assembly this week by the government to amend the Public Service Act, to put its administrative changes into proper legal effect. I think that reveals quite clearly what its true attitude is on this particular matter. I conclude by saying that it is a high price to pay in terms of the efficiency of the public service, it is a high price to pay in terms of increasing the possibility of serious disruption and disputation with the union movement for the government to take the attitude that it has on this particular matter.

Mr D.W. COLLINS (Sadadeen): Mr Deputy Speaker, this morning, I asked 2 questions of the Minister for Education. The first one related to just how easy or how difficult it is for parents to obtain details of the syllabi in schools. The second question related to what checks the minister has to know that the syllabi are actually taught in full and that they are treated in a fair manner, particularly in regard to time allotment. I will come back to those points shortly.

With respect, the minister did not answer the first question. That was because he spoke about curriculum. A curriculum is a much bigger document than a syllabus. It contains the rhyme and reason of a course, the rationale, teaching hints and a whole host of things. In fact, often the curriculum of a particular course would come in a booklet form and, indeed, when a student has many subjects to take, to provide the curriculum of all of those courses would be an extremely costly exercise. It was good to know that these 'curriculae' are available in libraries.

Mr Bell: Curricula!

Mr D.W. COLLINS: Belt up!

I am sure that will be useful information. Certainly, I did not know that one could get them there. I hope they are available in all the libraries throughout the Territory. On the other hand, a syllabus is a brief document of about 1 page. It is a list of topics and sub-topics. It has a time frame and an indication of the depth of study. Basically, what I am thinking of there would be called by most teachers the timetable for teaching a particular subject.

The second question asked what the guarantees the minister has that a syllabus is taught and taught fairly. The answer that I was given was that,
firstly, the principal has the key role within a school to see that that happens. Of course, he delegates the oversight of that particular area to his senior staff, assistant principals and senior subject teachers. The minister also mentioned the Education Officer from the Regional Office. However, it is a pretty big job to get around all the secondary and primary schools and so forth and keep an eye on what is being taught.

The minister suggested that school councils play a role. This was echoed by the Leader of the Opposition: 'Go and join a council'. My experience of councils in my electorate, and there are quite a few of them, is that they are doing a great job. But let us look very carefully at what the powers of the councils are. As we know, any school council can take on a number of areas which it feels capable of handling: finance, canteens, uniforms etc. But, the fundamental questions parents ask are: what is my child being taught and how well? The Leader of the Opposition boasted this morning that he had a great deal to do with drafting the Education Bill. I can see his hand in it because I know from my brief spate with the Teachers Federation that he was very much in cahoots with it. The federation's greatest fear is that parents might know what is going on or question what is being taught. That is the area which is most important to parents and it is one in which councils have only peripheral input.

The minister said that, apart from actually sitting in a classroom, he could not guarantee just what went on, how well things were being taught and whether they were being taught according to a syllabus. That of course is exactly right. I have a confession, Mr Deputy Speaker. As senior physics teacher at the Alice Springs High School some years ago, I had a junior colleague who was teaching pre-matriculation physics. I accepted him as a professional colleague. Occasionally, he knew what his course was. It was sent out in the syllabus provided by the Adelaide University which set out the matriculation and pre-matriculation courses. I would chat with him on occasion as to progress. I received assurances from him; I trusted his word. However, I wore the result because, towards the end of the year, I discovered that he had left several sections of the syllabus out, which of course meant that those kids going into matriculation were behind the 8-ball. I had them in matriculation the next year. We had to pressurise the whole course to finish off what was left out of Year 11 before we could get on with the matriculation work. That was grossly unfair and unprofessional on his part. I was close to it so I can fully understand the minister's dilemma.

Another thing happened in my time as a teacher. There was much hoo-ha about approved courses. Particularly for internal Year 12, schools had to set up approved courses which had to be accredited. I remember one internal Year 12 science course which, when you read its syllabus, was fantastic. It was a very demanding course. In fact, I would dare to suggest that it seemed on a par with some of the matriculation work. For internal Year 12, that is a fairly high level. I was not in charge of the area as a whole; another senior was in charge of that. Towards the end of the year, I came to learn 2 things about that course: firstly, by no means was it taught in full and, secondly, the standard had been watered down. In fact, much of the work was done using Year 10 science books. It was a gross deception of the department, the parents and, worst of all, the students. I call it criminal.

I mentioned time allotment. For 2 years in a row, I was told by students about time management in a matriculation course. That was after I came to the Assembly. That particular course had 6 parts to it, each of which was expected to be allocated almost the same amount of time. One of the topics was a favourite of a particular teacher and it was taught for 50% of the time. I was told that by various individuals; I did not know about it. I mentioned it to
some other young people and they said that the same thing happened the next year: 50% of the time was devoted to one unit, another 25% was devoted to another unit and the remaining 4 topics had to share the rest of the time. That is criminal; the students were not getting a fair deal. I know this teacher personally and I had a great deal of respect for him. I certainly do not have a great deal of respect for him now. I could say more on this subject; it would make interesting reading. If I ever need to, I will certainly raise it.

The minister also mentioned Greg Sheridan's article in the Weekend Australian: 'The Lies They Teach Our Children'. That was followed throughout that week by a whole host of replies supporting or denigrating Sheridan. The following Weekend Australian had 2 articles from federation people, from both private schools and public schools, and many more articles as well. It was a great debate in many ways although there was much vitriol and personal attack on Sheridan. I found it very interesting that many of those who attacked him personally had very little substance in their opposition to what he had actually said. There were also many supporters. I believe it was very healthy for education; it is a very important topic.

I tried to put myself in the position of a parent who has children at school. After reading all this material, who does one believe? Children are either getting the most marvellous education possible or are getting the worst possible education there is. I am prepared to suggest a possible solution. It is one of those things that comes to you when you are doing boring jobs among the grapevines at Ti Tree. If parents were provided with the syllabi for their children's courses - perhaps on one sheet of paper for each course - indicating what topics would be taught, the approximate timetable, the depth of study and which textbooks would be used, parents would then know what is planned. They could even buy the textbooks. Providing parents with the syllabi would not cost the school very much. I always provided my physics and maths students with the particular syllabus so that they could help plan their study and work ahead. It would be quite easy for schools to provide syllabi to parents. The parents would know what it is planned to teach the children because the syllabus really is the teaching plan. They would be able to follow the progress by picking up their children's books. There would need to be avenues open to the parents to ask teachers about progress. Some constraints would be needed because some parents would not take to the spirit of the thing and become obnoxious. However, the majority would do the right thing. They would welcome the chance to know what their children were actually being taught and would take a much greater interest.

I believe also that most teachers would welcome the attention of the parents. The truly professional teachers, those competent, hard-working teachers who take a responsible attitude to their teaching, are becoming sick of the blanket criticism which the public often heaps upon teachers. I believe that most of them would welcome the chance to prove their unquestionable worth. I would support the minister in that.

It would generate keen parental interest. School councils and the teachers cry out for this interest. The parents would show a far greater interest in the school. The only people who would fear this would be the incompetent, lazy teachers or those who wanted to teach their own particular curriculum. You can read into that exactly what you wish. I recommend to the minister this course of action. It would be a very worthwhile exercise to prove that our education is indeed as good as what he says it is.

Mr SETTER (Jingili): Mr Deputy Speaker, last Thursday evening, I spoke on the issue of juvenile crime and identified problem areas which I believe should
be addressed by the Task Force on Juvenile Crime. Regrettably, on that evening, my time ran out before I was able to finish. However, I would like briefly this evening to continue the comments that I wished to make.

My suggestions at that time were based on comments made to me by numerous members of the community, people who have been the victims of break and enters, others who work with young people through schools and various community welfare groups. All these people agreed that we have a major problem to address and believe the government, after the task force report, must take whatever action is necessary to solve the problem. The role of the task force will be difficult indeed as it has not only to identify the causes of our young people turning to crime but to come up with the answers on how to solve the problems as well. The problem areas identified and the solutions offered were meant to be constructive and of assistance to the task force. I do not suggest that these are the only problem areas or the only solution. Doubtless, many other individuals and organisations will make submissions and I am sure that they will all be considered on their merits. In these genuine and constructive submissions, I am confident that the range of answers that the minister has requested will be found.

I was amazed and disappointed by the comments that same evening by the Deputy Leader of the Opposition who chose to criticise my remarks. I found his comments negative in the extreme. For one who is a member of the task force, and from his frequent media releases concerning juvenile crime, I believed he would accept my comments in the manner I intended them. This was not the case however. In his negative manner, he scorned my suggestions. He proceeded to waffle on, quoting examples of juvenile problems in his electorate. I suspect that, by the time he had finished, he was as confused as I was. I would suggest that the honourable member spend his time in this Assembly putting forward his own views on how to attack the problems rather than wasting our time as he did on that occasion.

Last Thursday evening, I identified a number of problem areas and put forward some suggestions as to how these could be remedied. At the time, I was referring to the need to develop further our system of institutions suitable for accommodating juveniles. Whilst most will agree, and I am certainly one of those, that committing young people to detention institutions is undesirable, at times it is unavoidable. Currently, the only such facility in the Northern Territory is Giles House in Alice Springs which has a capacity of only 24 inmates. I am pleased to report that I have visited Giles House and must compliment Matron Daff on her conduct of that institution under, I might add, difficult circumstances.

I would recommend that consideration be given to constructing a detention centre in the Top End to relieve the pressure on Giles House and to provide for the behaviour modification of those who are now being continually recycled through our courts. We require a facility with sufficient land available for farming and the construction of trade training schools. This would provide a much greater scope for young offenders to be trained in some skills in a healthy, outdoor atmosphere. I consider this project should be undertaken as a matter of urgency.

Mr Deputy Speaker, to sum up, we must address the following matters: parental responsibility in relation to child neglect and restitution; the employment of additional social workers; the removal of the root cause of the need for juveniles to obtain large amounts of cash - for example, pinball machines; the provision for young people of meeting places and supervised entertainment facilities throughout the suburbs; the revision of penalties in
the Juvenile Justice Act; and the construction of a juvenile rehabilitation centre in the Top End. Mr Deputy Speaker, I commend these recommendations to you.

While I am on my feet, Sir, I would like quickly to draw to your attention something that has been of concern to me while I have sat in this Assembly for the last few days. I refer to the paintwork on the walls. Regrettably, the paintwork in some areas is in quite disgraceful condition. Perhaps we are waiting until we build a new Assembly. However, perhaps I could be forgiven for mistaking some of the paintwork in the area as a fresco or a collage or perhaps just a plain mutation. Nevertheless, I do draw your attention to this matter in the hope that it may be attended to in the near future.

Mr BELL (MacDonnell): Mr Deputy Speaker, I wish to raise 3 matters in this evening's adjournment debate. Firstly, I want to add a little to what I had to say last week in relation to the 16-mile stock reserve and the proposal that it be used for the storage of dangerous goods even though a claim under the Aboriginal Land Rights Act has been made over the area. I referred to that matter last Thursday afternoon. I do not want to recapitulate except to put once more on record the 2 questions I wanted answered by the Minister for Lands. He is not here but I hope that, by placing them on record, somebody will draw them to his attention. Why has his department decided not to provide a special purpose lease over Northern Territory portion 1948 for the storage and disposal of these dangerous goods and decided instead to provide it over Northern Territory portion 2410? Secondly, was the minister aware that there was a claim under the Aboriginal Land Rights (Northern Territory) Act over Northern Territory portion 2410 before he issued his notice of determination under the special purpose leases act on 20 February this year?

I wish to add a third question which relates to the fact that these dangerous goods that are proposed to be stored there are not just any dangerous goods. My understanding is that the dangerous goods involved are mutagenic poisons, specifically 24D. That, of course, would be familiar to you, Mr Deputy Speaker. It is a particularly noxious form of chemical. It can be used as a herbicide. I understand that it either is or is related to Agent Orange which would be well known to us. If these particular chemicals are to be stored, I would like to know exactly what sort of assessment has been carried out of the environmental impact that the storage of these goods might have.

Incidentally I am particularly disappointed that there are only 6 sitting days and I do not think I have been able to ask a question in the 4 days we have had so far. We have only had one question time and that was this morning. The only chance for a humble backbencher like me to obtain answers to questions is by raising them in a grievance debate of this sort.

Mr Perron: You could write him a letter.

Mr BELL: The honourable member for Fannie Bay chooses to waste my time and your time, Mr Deputy Speaker, and the time of other honourable members, not to mention the staff of this establishment, by interjecting with absurdities like that. Of course I could write him a letter but I think it is indicative of the sort of contempt that a character like the honourable member for Fannie Bay has for the deliberations of this Assembly that he decides to interject in this fashion. This place is for debate and the elucidation of issues of importance not only to our electorates but to the Territory as a whole and I trust the honourable member will treat it as such in future and respond to reasonable requests in a suitable fashion.
The second matter I wish to address in fact concerns the member for Fannie Bay in his capacity as Minister for Mines and Energy. I hope he does not fall asleep because I will not be writing a letter to him. I hope he will be able to respond during this sittings. He may have visited Palm Valley, one of the prize places in the Northern Territory, which attracts many visitors. Last Thursday in the adjournment, I mentioned the fact that Palm Valley can be mined or explored at ministerial discretion. I believe that therein lies a problem. I believe that there should be some stronger statutory requirement. Mr Deputy Speaker, as somebody with an interest in the mining industry yourself, I doubt that you would disagree with me in this regard. I am sure that you would feel that such a premier attraction in the Northern Territory should be protected in some slightly stronger way.

You also recall, Mr Deputy Speaker, that I referred to drilling in Ellery Creek. I do not propose to repeat that again but I would like answers. Evidently, these questions were not drawn to the attention of the Minister for Conservation. Specifically, I am curious to find out when he was advised, as minister responsible for national parks in the Territory, when this drilling was about to take place. Secondly, as a matter of policy, I would like to know whether the Northern Territory government feels that mining at Palm Valley should be subject only to ministerial discretion. There is a key policy question involved here and I believe that we are entitled to a straight answer on that question. I am disappointed that either the minister has not taken up these questions that I raised or deputed somebody else to answer them for him. Given the relative paucity of sitting days available to members to prosecute these answers, I think it is a shame that they have not been answered hitherto. If anomalies exist in the Territory Parks and Wildlife Conservation Act in the way that I have described, what action does the Northern Territory government, and specifically the minister, plan to remove these very anomalies so that delightful places like Palm Valley can be adequately protected?

The third and final matter I wish to address this evening is the matter of the government leasing private property in Alice Springs. I am indeed pleased that the Minister for Transport and Works has returned to the Chamber because I intend placing a question on notice in this regard. The minister will recall that there was a news item indicating that this would happen. I believe it is important for me to place on record that I do not say this for any malign purpose whatsoever. I fear that the Minister for Transport and Works rather took the wrong side of my interest in bringing this matter to the attention of Territorians. Members may be aware that there are privately-owned buildings rented or leased by the government. I have no complaint about that. Let me get that quite clear because I have been misrepresented in this regard. I have no complaints about the government leasing properties owned by rank and file members of the governing party. My only concern is that those rents be charged at the right price. Members would appreciate the possibilities that such an arrangement would have for abuse of public funds. I will not go into other examples of such abuse that have occurred in the life of the previous Assembly. I do hope that those transgressions are not part of the Tuxworth style.

I have one further matter in exactly that context that I wish to address, Mr Deputy Speaker. It refers to a column in the NT News that was published subsequent to my raising this issue. Mr Deputy Speaker, you will be as aware and no doubt as concerned as I am about the Berrimah-line thinking that characterises this particular journal. When I raised this particular matter, I was derided by Mr Peter Wilson as being impetuous because I had somehow disturbed some sort of deal that was being worked out between what Mr Wilson referred to as 'a Darwin ALP businessman' and the government. This article said that a Darwin ALP businessman was involved in negotiations with the government.
to let office space in a new building he is putting up in Alice Springs with partners. The article said that the net toll of the Bell outburst was that the Darwin businessman and his partners lost the government lease in Alice Springs. I find that extraordinary, Mr Deputy Speaker. I am sure you will find that as extraordinary as I did. I would be interested if the Minister for Transport and Works is able to elucidate in this regard. Incidentally, to this day, I have neither heard nor seen hide nor hair of the Darwin ALP businessman but obviously the honourable Minister for Transport and Works has heard of him.

I would briefly like to place on record that I wrote to the editor of the Northern Territory News saying: 'Look, this is quite a story. If the government is going to chop off negotiations on a rental deal because a humble backbencher, such as I, places a question on notice, I am sure that you would consider that newsworthy in the extreme'. However, the Northern Territory News did not choose to chase up the subject, nor did I receive a reply from the editor. I look forward then to hearing from the Minister for Transport and Works on that subject. I do not have his press release with me but my recollection is that it was something less than a gem of wisdom. Of course, it made the same sort of suggestion that I was somehow disagreeing with the idea of the NT government leasing office space in Alice Springs. Of course, that is patently absurd. However, I will look forward to hearing the explanation that the honourable minister is able to provide.

Mr MANZIE (Transport and Works): Mr Deputy Speaker, I have tried very hard to follow the member for MacDonnell's drift and I believe his suggestion is that the government is paying some sort of extra rental to alleged members of the CLP. I find that allegation to be pretty serious and I believe that, if the member for MacDonnell is making it, I certainly hope that he has some factual basis for it.

There has been a very conscious effort by the government to involve Alice Springs far more in its own destiny, if I may use that phrase, rather than perpetuate the myth that the place is a poor relation to Darwin. Obviously, this sort of action by the government leads to a demand for more office space which, as we hear from the member for MacDonnell time and time again, is a commodity that is in short supply in Alice Springs. As I mentioned in response to criticisms of favoured treatment for property owners who have CLP affiliations, all I can say is the Department of Transport and Works has responsibility for housing government departments. Presently it has plans to occupy space in 2 new developments in Alice Springs. One, which has yet to be built, is the Australian Fixed Trust Building in Gregory Terrace and the other is the extension to the TIO facility. Mr Deputy Speaker, I can assure you that neither of those facilities has any associations with the CLP. It might be worth mentioning that the sort of people who are erecting office buildings in Alice Springs are people with vision, people who have faith in the Territory's future. If, by chance, it happens that the only sort of people in Alice Springs with those sorts of visions are either members of or affiliated with the CLP, it probably indicates why there are only 6 members on the other side of the Assembly. Obviously, people in the ALP should be getting out into the business world, spending a bit of money and showing a bit of faith in the Territory and they would construct some buildings which the government could take over.

In regard to the rental of buildings, the member for MacDonnell has made a very serious allegation. The rentals of buildings that the government leases are set by the Valuer-General. The government has no input into how the Valuer-General establishes office space rentals in Alice Springs. The allegation does not wash. It is a malicious one. I feel rather sad that the member for MacDonnell has stooped as low as to make it.
Mr HARRIS (Education): Mr Deputy Speaker, I must also start with the honourable member for MacDonnell. The honourable member implied that he was not able to ask a question because the government had not allowed question time. I might draw the honourable member for MacDonnell's attention to the fact that the Assembly opened last Tuesday and, on the following 2 days, we had censure motions. When we have a censure motion, we do not have question time. To imply that it is the result of an action of the government is a nonsense.

Mr Deputy Speaker, this evening we have had an interesting adjournment debate. Two issues of specific concern to me have been raised. One was raised by the member for Sadadeen in relation to questions that he asked this morning. I do not want to take up a lot of time but I can say at this stage that I will read his remarks carefully with a view to taking some action in that regard. That is all I can offer to the member for Sadadeen. I would like to reiterate what I said this morning: the government is very proud of its record in education. A lot of work has gone into that particular field. The curriculum is available and I emphasise again to members of the Assembly that, if they want copies, I can make them available but, at this stage, costs prohibit making them available to everyone in the community. The material is available.

Mr Deputy Speaker, the honourable member for Stuart raised issues concerning adult education and TAFE. I will be addressing the issues that he raised in more detail at a later stage. When the honourable member talks about promises and projects not being finished, all I can say is that it cuts both ways. There has to be a commitment by the communities concerned and by the government. To make an allegation that this government lacks commitment to Aboriginal communities is incredible. This government and the Commonwealth government have spent a fortune in Aboriginal communities throughout the Northern Territory. Quite frankly, I am disappointed that the honourable member feels that this government lacks commitment. Clearly, we have a commitment to Aboriginal education. Clearly, we have a commitment in the TAFE area in Aboriginal education and we will continue to honour those commitments.

I might also say that one of the problems we have is lack of funds, and people seem to forget this. Aboriginal education is a very expensive exercise and I can assure the Assembly that it is an effort. The other night the member for Millner said that he would support trying to obtain extra funds for these disadvantaged schools. It happens right across the board. Aboriginal education is a very expensive exercise and the Commonwealth governments together with the Northern Territory government, must play a role and make a commitment.

Mr Deputy Speaker, it is a huge area. I can only say to the members for Stuart and MacDonnell that we must address the problem of funding in Aboriginal communities. The implications are horrendous.

The reason I rose to speak in the adjournment was to join the Minister for Mines and Energy in making a few remarks in relation to Carl Atkinson's death. I start by offering my condolences to Wendy Atkinson on the death of Carl Atkinson. He was a dear friend to many people, in Darwin in particular, and he was one of the Territory's 'colourful characters', as I call them. No matter where he was, he was noticed by everyone. When the minister mentioned the jeeps, I recalled Carl driving down Smith Street with his jeep and his German shepherd and I think that many Darwin people would recall that as a familiar sight.

Mr Deputy Speaker, my first recollection of Carl Atkinson goes back to my boyhood. I am not exactly sure when Carl Atkinson arrived in Darwin. When I was 9 or 10 years old, about 1949-50, Carl Atkinson was down at Doctor's Gully. We used to play down there regularly. In fact, Doctor's Gully was a second home.
to me. That was borne out by the fact that, if ever I was missing from my house, my mother would go down to Doctor's Gully to look for me. There are few people in the Territory who had as long an association with Carl Atkinson as I had. In fact, I could be one of the few who could boast that, when I was a boy, I was chased away from Doctor's Gully for fishing and, some 30 years later, my son was also chased away from Doctor's Gully for the same reason and by the same man.

Carl was a big man and he used to get angry on occasions. I guess he had every reason to become angry. A number of the activities that we used to become involved in were very dangerous indeed. On reflection, it is a wonder that I am here today to be able to reminisce. We used to swim all year round. We would take off from Doctor's Gully and use the currents and go past Lameroo. It did not matter if it was the dry season or the wet season. We would use the currents and come back into Doctor's Gully. We would obtain the ammunition that was dumped at Doctor's Gully after the war and proceed to remove the cordite from the shells. The way we used to do this was to hang the head of the bullet to loosen it and then remove the cordite. Carl used to chase us away from the area. I can see him now. We would run up that hill towards where the YWCA is now. At the time, all of that area was bush and there was a little creek that went down into Doctor's Gully. It is a place that holds many memories for me.

He was a strong man and he enjoyed life. I do not believe that he had a day of sickness until he had that first stroke some 10 years ago. That set him back somewhat but he was able to fight and recover to be an active man again. One of the last memories I have of Carl, and I guess it bears out just how much drive he had, was seeing him at Doctor's Gully in a diving cage. I went to see him on that occasion. He was downstairs and he said: 'Tom, you go upstairs and I will be up in a minute'. I went upstairs and I was sitting down with Wendy Atkinson when the next minute the whole floor started to shudder. There was a roar and a terrible grinding noise and, blow me down, Carl appeared in this diving cage. It was his method of getting from the downstairs section to the upstairs section. He had made a lift. That was one of the last memories that I have of Carl. I also saw him on the Gold Coast a couple of years ago. He was still looking well at that time. I will always have a place in my memory for my boyhood days in Darwin and my association with Carl Atkinson. I believe that Carl Atkinson will be remembered in the Territory's history as one of those colourful Territorians who are fast disappearing from our ranks.

Motion agreed to; the Assembly adjourned.