

areas in the Northern Territory Aboriginal lands and the Land Rights Commission. There are some uncertainties about forestry on these lands and protection of the area are some difficulties through the terms of the Aboriginal lands in the Territory. The forest resources of the Territory in the form of private land, will be in some areas the destruction of parts of Australia. The actions of the Land Rights Commission within Aboriginal lands leased to the forestry industry rental and that any these forests should provide Aboriginal employment. Everybody in this Territory that it will be to get people to carry out and planting programs are doing the work are that the whole thing could be destroyed from the area.

The Water Resources Branch is under pressure in the Territory as a result of the cyclone. The development and control of water resources is the job of the Water Resources Branch which is operating under conditions in Darwin as its work has not yet become available. It is carrying out all its work after the cyclone; a great majority of its work from the Alice Springs area has been done by the Katherine and a number of computing work are done in Canberra. Because of the lack of established positions, it has been given to work in the Territory. While the Northern Territory is undeveloped, it has a number of the nation's surplus water resource. The Top End has considerable water resource. The availability of projects is a central part of the Territory. The main source of water is to ensure its availability to the needs of the Territory. Projects aimed at improving the current water supply and ensuring adequate reserves for the future of a large number of localities. These include Papunya, Warrabri, Tennant Creek, Alice Springs, Katherine, Pine Creek, Darwin and the uranium province.

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

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

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

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

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

The development of a parliamentary executive in the Northern Territory is a completely new system in that we have to find our feet and develop as we go and I believe that the performance to date has been very creditable, particularly when you look at it in the light of the dreadful and shocking office facilities that we have had to operate under and, for example, the fact that my secretary commenced duty today. We have not had the opportunity to operate with the resources and the scope of assistance that we would have liked and this has meant extremely personal demands on all members of the Executive. Similarly, the Administrator's Council has maintained a very high level of performance this year in that it has acted as an executive council would in a state. Many of the outstanding matters which were quite lengthy in their considerations when we took over have been cleared from the agenda papers of the Administrator's Council and are now finding their way through performance as they should. I have recently established a personal



contact with the ALP spokesman—so-called, seeing that he has no parliamentary representation. I don't envisage that this is going to be a continuing close, brotherly type arrangement. I am sure that he is going to come out soon with some big hammers and start hitting me over the head and starting to look closely and critically at the legislation that I will bring before this House. So far this year, I have brought 6 ordinances before this Assembly for consideration.

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

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

I won't speak for long on Darwin reconstruction because I believe in the next few

days we are going to have ample opportunity to appraise particular organisations but I would like to say that our involvement in this area has been a very time consuming and often frustrating exercise. I think, when the historians get down to it and they finally get access to minutes of the various meetings of the interim commission and the commission, they will see that the elected representatives of this community have always been the prophets of what the community wanted; they have spear-headed the attacks for change but they have often been thwarted for some particular reason by the in-fighting, be it at an Australian Government level or be it just a bureaucratic red tape lack of performance.

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

In the area of housing I have been able to develop a very close and good relationship with the Northern Territory Housing Commission. This commission has already accepted the recommendations of the Joint Parliamentary Committee report and has



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

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

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

I am particularly concerned in the area of Aboriginal housing throughout the Northern Territory. I have recently made visits to Yirrkala, Hooker Creek and Wave Hill where

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

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

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



consultant's reports in that particular area and, as the Majority Leader's deputy, I did attend a number of Darwin Reconstruction Commission sub-committee meetings for this purpose and I believe that in the very close future a rural land area policy will be determined.

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

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

In the area of local government, many members will be aware that I had a previous background involvement in local government and I have kept up those close contacts. In Darwin, local government has been faced with extreme difficulties and problems in the extent of carrying out its full normal municipal function. However, I think they have now jumped the hurdles. I think they can see the way to returning to a full influence and a full execution of the role that they should play. In fact, in the last few days, I have had some five requests for legislative consideration forwarded to me by the Darwin city council. I have made a number of visits to Alice Springs and on each occasion have met with the

Mayor and the Town Clerk. Katherine and Tennant Creek were in 1974 looking forward to offers of local government at appropriate levels, at appropriate timetables, at appropriate budgets. The happenings of this year have perhaps delayed some of those implementations, but I see no reason why we should not continue to press for early introduction of full local government in both communities. The Katherine situation has the advantage of perhaps linking with a rural type shire and perhaps that may be the best way. We have a number of discussions with members of the board looking to the future. As mentioned by the Executive Member for Resource Development, he and I and members of the Tennant Creek Town Management Board and the Department of Northern Australia's Local Government Branch recently undertook a tour through the mining shires of central Queensland. This gave us the opportunity to look closely at the provisions and the types of legislation that may be necessary to implement local government on a shire type basis for Tennant Creek where we can set up appropriate systems to ensure that the mines and developers in those areas contribute fully to local government and the way in which they should be implemented.

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

It is very obvious that the Northern Territory is going to go through an even faster period of change in the next six months. Not only is it having to struggle with weather problems, seasonal problems and with reconstruction activity, but it is also now going to progress to a much greater degree of autonomy through political and constitutional developments. I endorse the remarks of the previous speakers. I believe that it is timely that we have noted the comments of the Majority Leader and the efforts that he is taking and, whilst it has been indicated that I may be nominated for membership of the



Clerk, Katherine and 1974 looking forward to appropriate arrangements at appropriate times of this year have been of those implementing why we should not introduce of full communities. The has the advantage of a rural type shire and the best way. We have a with members of that future. As mentioned by for Resource Development members of the Tennant Board and the Department Australia's Local recently undertook a shires of central is the opportunity to divisions and the types of may be necessary to on a shire type where we can set up to ensure that the mines areas contribute fully and the way in which mented.

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Darwin Reconstruction Commission. I perhaps look at that with very mixed feelings, but I will certainly endeavour to bring to bear in that group extreme pressures representing what this community wants. I believe that the area of the Darwin reconstruction activity will be fully compatible with those responsibilities that I am currently answerable to you for.

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

The problems of my portfolio in its every aspect are the problems of a multicultural, multilingual, geographically isolated and geographically dispersed society. This is particularly embodied in education: the problem of children coming to the Territory from many states and overseas; the problem of centres self-contained and isolated from each other; the problem of accommodation both in terms of schools and in terms of housing teachers; the problems of isolated children whether they be on settlements, stations or in general camping areas with limited mail facilities or any form of communication; the problems of Canberra control with Big Daddy constantly looking over the shoulder endeavouring to provide a system for people 2000 miles away. All these problems were enlarged and accentuated by cyclone Tracy

and are wound up in terms of the most outdated pieces of legislation, the Education Ordinance and the Schools Committee Ordinance. The close liaison which I have enjoyed with the Education Department has resulted in some developments towards the remedying of these problems. A large degree of regionalisation has occurred, partly accelerated by cyclone Tracy, with definite responsibilities being centred in Alice Springs, and a recognition of differences in culture between Aboriginal and white settlements in the formulation and operation of the semester system. Children are now taught while they are in the settlements and during the months while they are going out into the bush areas the teachers, as well as the children, enjoy a vacation.

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

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

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



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the reason for which it was convened. Those matters on the notice paper which may be proceeded with at this sittings may be dealt with but, where further research or consideration or discussion is necessary, pressure of other events has made this impossible and some of those items will have to be deferred. I thought it desirable to make this statement at the commencement of the sittings so that all members would understand the position.

#### PRIME MINISTER'S STATEMENT ON ABORIGINAL LAND LEGISLATION

Dr LETTS (by leave): I table a statement released by the Prime Minister, the Right Honourable Malcolm Fraser, on Wednesday 24 March 1976.

I move that the statement be noted; that the Northern Territory Legislative Assembly reaffirm its support for the passage of appropriate Aboriginal land legislation during 1976 after adequate consultation with the people of the Territory; that in keeping with the principles and practices adopted within Australia's federal system, and in keeping with the policy of future statehood for the Northern Territory, the Assembly should play its proper part in the making of such legislation as it has done in the past, and as would be the case in the states; and that, as the 1967 referendum concerning Australian Aborigines and the subsequent amendments to the Constitution made no change in the relationships between the Federal and Territory legislatures, there is no case now to deny the Assembly its proper role in making land legislation.

I ask leave to continue my remarks at a later hour.

Leave granted.

Debate adjourned.

#### DISCUSSION OF MATTER OF PUBLIC IMPORTANCE

Mr SPEAKER: I have received from the Executive Member for Finance and Community Development a letter proposing that a matter of public importance be discussed, namely: "The effects of the

Federal Government's financial policy on the present economy and future development of the Territory". Is the proposal supported?

Proposal supported.

Mr TAMBLING: I intend to make my comments constructive and, hopefully, dispel much of the quite hysterical nonsense and irresponsible distortion that has surrounded the so-called cuts in Northern Territory capital works and civil works programs. I have been particularly appalled by the loose treatment of facts and information by independent members of this Assembly and some sectors of the media. In fact, I would go so far as to say that I believe their actions have caused unwarranted distress and, in many instances, done incalculable harm in the Territory. The independent members obviously rely on inexperienced press reporters - that is, certainly inexperienced in financial matters - and scandalmongers for issues to promote. I am disgusted that neither member has bothered to discuss these matters with me since the last meeting of this Assembly and I would be very doubtful that they have made any personal approaches to the Minister for the Northern Territory either. The criticism fed to the press, talk of cuts to the order of hundreds of millions, is deceitful: it is calculated by design or in ignorance by making unwarranted assumptions and showing a complete lack of an even elementary understanding of appropriation estimates and the machinery of government adopted by a new, responsible administration. What a lack of courtesy and confidence, to use figures taken out of context without even first discussing them with the appropriate minister.

Yes, Mr Speaker, there are major financial problems facing the Territory. But, first, let us get things into proper perspective. The Australian economy is in a very sad and sick state: indeed, the Premier of Queensland has been provoked to proclaim that Australia is bankrupt. This has resulted from massive, unrestrained increases in government expenditure over 2 or 3 years, from the



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depression of the private sector, from  
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unemployment. The ineptitude of the  
Labor Government created unbelievable  
problems and deficits. Recovery  
depends on getting inflation under  
control, getting the private sector  
operating, and turning our growth in  
gross domestic product from decline to  
increase.

Because of the snowball effect on  
transport and service charges, the  
Territory is more savagely hit by  
inflation than perhaps any other part  
of the nation. Because of the lack of  
alternative employment and the loss to  
the Territory of skills and expertise  
by unemployed leaving the Territory, we  
have a crucial interest in beating  
unemployment. The special situation in  
the Territory must be considered in the  
necessary task of getting the private  
sector moving nationally and getting  
extravagant government expenditure  
under control. It is realised that the  
private sector in the Northern Terri-  
tory relies for its viability on a high  
level of government expenditure. If  
government expenditure is substantially  
reduced and the direction of the reduc-  
tion is not carefully directed, the  
private sector will not only fail to  
receive a stimulus, it will receive a  
severe setback.

Let us study carefully the drama of  
events so far. In February, the Mini-  
ster advised that there would be a de-  
ferral or slow down in some works be-  
cause of the crucial economic  
situation. He patiently explained that  
the deferrals would be until the 30  
June, that they would be minimal, that  
he was ensuring that they would be  
evenly spread throughout the Territory  
to prevent localised distress or  
crises. At the February session of  
this Assembly, details of possible  
expenditure cuts were sought, and the  
Minister subsequently advised in early  
March that, until reports by the  
various involved departments had been  
completed and considered by the  
Government, it would not be possible to  
announce which projects in the Civil  
Works Program would proceed to contract  
in 1975-76 or be deferred until next  
financial year. The Minister indicated

that a review has been in progress to  
ensure that tenders and planning at  
least can be examined to give industry  
an opportunity to plan for the future.  
Because these are Cabinet submissions  
and because the Minister has had to  
present and discuss these things in  
Cabinet, I am sure that even our vocal  
independent member for Nightcliff knows  
that the Minister cannot and will not  
release final details until he can do  
so with authority and certainty.

In the second and third weeks of Mar-  
ch, I became aware that the Master  
Builders Association had made sub-  
missions to the Government on the  
effects on the construction industry of  
possible government expenditure re-  
straint; they had well-reasoned argu-  
ments and the submissions were ex-  
cellent. They will, I am sure, have  
considerable bearing on all ministerial  
decisions. I also made strong personal  
representation to the Minister for the  
Northern Territory about that time. It  
was based on my study of the issues  
affecting the Northern Territory and  
the Labor Government's budget papers  
for 1975-76, not on any so-called  
"official" information that the  
independent members falsely claimed in  
the press that I was privy to. I  
stressed that early decisions were  
necessary in order to recognise that 80  
per cent of all construction activity  
in the Northern Territory is federal  
government initiated, that there is no  
state government contribution, and the  
effect of local government spending is  
insignificant. The other issues which  
I detailed were: unemployment implica-  
tions, particularly in centres out of  
Darwin; construction industry stabili-  
ty; the future re-establishment costs  
and administrative problems of  
contractors; the provision of services  
that were well justified for community  
needs; design lead times and tender  
arrangements; associated professional  
and public service infrastructures; and  
seasonal contract and financial manage-  
ment due to wet season constraints  
which could further complicate the  
subsequent 1976-77 program.

In the last week, I have become aware  
from my discussions with Mr Adermann  
and other federal parliamentarians that  
the message is getting through about



[illegible]

I have been advised by the Minister for the Northern Territory that there is currently an urgent review to see which projects can be put to tender without making further demands or difference to the cash flow in this financial year. I believe that is the news that the Master Builders Association and the contracting industry of the Northern Territory is looking for; there will be a number of contracts going out to tender in the next few months.

It is also interesting to look at the previous announcements as far as the Department of the Northern Territory is concerned. The original would amount to the very worst of the slowdown in this slow was a mere \$60 million - somewhere about 10% what we are requested cash flow. It has been stated that this year's program will cost \$100 million. I think that is a very good estimate. The Government of Canada has said that it will contribute \$100 million to the program. The Government of Canada has said that it will contribute \$100 million to the program. The Government of Canada has said that it will contribute \$100 million to the program.



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was provided and yet we have had the sickening approach that money has been cut off from the Territory when in fact in the Department of the Northern Territory there has been approximately \$16m net increase in cash flow. I am not aware of any other area of responsibility that has received an increase in cash appropriation.

Let us have some fair play and some honesty for a change. Of course the Minister is concerned that there has to be some deferral and he is concerned to see that the special needs of the Territory are understood and considered. He has clearly shown that. He has come to the Territory and talked with anyone who wanted to talk to him and received any submission or point of view which anyone desired to present. The urgent and critical areas are under review and when he can give further specific figures he most certainly will. We have seen what could only be interpreted as an attempt to undermine all he is trying to do and to scuttle every endeavour to protect the interests of the Territory. Let it be clear who will be blameworthy for the rundown in confidence and retrenchments. It will be those who seek political notoriety, who peddle sensational scare stories and who do the Territory the greatest possible disservice.

Members: Hear, hear!

Mrs LAWRIE: I had expected that this debate would have been adjourned with time to study the statement made by the honourable member. Since that is not possible, Mr Speaker, I am willing to stand and speak immediately. Honourable members would be aware that the only interjection I made in listening to the speech was at one point to ask the honourable member to speak a little more slowly as I was trying to take longhand notes of what he was saying. I do not have the facility of shorthand. I expect that the majority party will show me the same courtesy.

I was waiting for what I expected to be the guts of the speech of the Executive Member for Finance and Community Development, and that was a detailed account of what works are to

be deferred and where those particular capital works are placed in the Northern Territory. Unfortunately that did not ensue. It may well be that other honourable members are able to give that information, although I would be surprised if they were if it has not been alluded to by the Executive Member for Finance and Community Development. It appears that he is unable to give the advice which we are all seeking even now. I shall elaborate on that in a moment.

The first part of the honourable member's speech I will ignore. The second part I will deal with. That was when the honourable member was speaking about a cash flow increase and said that the capital works programs were under review and had only been deferred. The point has been made well, and clearly and publicly, by many people in many organisations, that deferral of commitment of works is equally as important as the actual cash flow. The honourable member said that people criticising the non-information on this subject seem to be unaware of government funding and the way it works. I believe him to be wrong. Some people may be unaware but it is the old saw coming through: you can fool some of the people some of the time, but not all of the people all of the time. Contractors throughout the Territory are vitally interested in the deferrals, because deferral itself is an imprecise word. It had been hoped that the honourable member, following his consultations with members of the Federal House, could have stated clearly whether these deferrals of capital works commitments were to be taken up in the next financial year or whether, in fact, they were to be deferred, some until the next financial year, some into the following financial year. That information has not been forthcoming - I believe, for the very good reason that the honourable member does not have it, that in fact the Australian Government still has not decided on the time schedule for the deferments.

The Capital Works Program was freely debated in the Budget debate. We have now had, again from the honourable member, notification that some of those



budget proposals are deferred, but we are not told until when. Most importantly, we are not told which capital works have been deferred, and it is this statement that I was hoping the honourable member would be able to give this Assembly. I had expected, of course, that he would have had a roneoed sheet he could have tabled and circulated to members, because the people of the Northern Territory, the people of Alice Springs and Tennant Creek and Katherine, still do not know, officially, whether the capital works programs scheduled for their areas are to be committed, whether they are to be deferred and - most importantly - if they are to be deferred, at what date they will be brought on. Is it to be next year, or is it to be the following year?

I believe that Darwin will not be as affected as the out-of-town centres. The Master Builders, quite properly, raised the problems of contractors in smaller centres not being able to continue their commitments on plant and equipment, not being able to continue their workforce, if they were unable to know precisely when the scheduled capital works program will be commenced. They are aware, as we all are, that a capital works program in Katherine, for example, of \$5.4m, which may have appeared in this year's budget, does not mean that \$5.4m will be spent this year but it means, hopefully, that the tenders will be let, contracts will be called and the commitment will be entered into. I think the honourable member for Fannie Bay, in having a shot at the independent members, was playing down the intelligence of the people of the Northern Territory if he thought they believed otherwise. They are quite aware of the difference between cash flow and commitment of large scale contracts.

The honourable member referred quickly to the deferring of the commencement of new projects to a total of \$50.9m, reducing projects which had a total value of \$58.8m to \$7.9m. I think his quick glossing over of that deserves comment. This is the very part of the budget on which the independent members and certain organisations have been

seeking specific information. Of the program worth \$50.9m deferred - I know it is not \$50.9m to be spent this year - what are the works referred to? For a figure to have been reached - \$50.9m, a precise figure - someone, somewhere, must know what those capital works are. Why cannot that information be given in this House? That is what I expected of honourable executive members. If the Executive Member for Transport and Industry has the information, I hope he will make it freely available because it is that commitment that is worrying the contractors, especially out of Darwin. The honourable member also stated that an urgent review is going on to see which projects can be put to tender without increasing the cash flow. I understand that review has been going on practically since the new government took office, since the Treasurer and the Prime Minister made it clear that there would be restraint in government spending. It is most unfortunate that the honourable member has still not been able to give details of which projects can be put to tender.

Unlike the honourable member, I am not going to waste my time attacking members of this Assembly because I am fully aware that all these decisions are being taken in Canberra, but it is not right for the honourable member to talk of scaremongering, of sensationalism. I took down a few of his comments, they were lyrical: "inexperienced press reporters", "unwarranted assumptions", "unwarranted distress". It is not fair of the honourable member to speak so glibly of these things if he cannot dispel such distress as being unwarranted by stating clearly what "deferral" means, which projects are being deferred in which centres. He went quickly through figures relating to the various government departments in the Northern Territory. It was those figures I was not able to catch; he was speaking too quickly. It appears that most government departments operating here, not simply the Department of the Northern Territory, are having their expenditure reviewed. I hope Hansard print "expenditure reviewed" in inverted commas, because that is how I am alluding to it. Despite the months of pressure from people both within and



formation. Of the deferred - I know we spent this year deferred to? For a reached - \$50.9m, a someone, somewhere, capital works are. Information be given in that I expected of members. If the r Transport and mation, I hope he available because that is worrying pecially out of la member also review is going sts can be put to easing the cash t review has been since the new fice, since the me Minister made ould be restraint g. It is most honourable member to give details e to put to tender.

member, I am y time attacking ly because I am these decisions berra, but it is urable member to ngering, of down a few of were lyrical: "un-porteders", "un-arranted" means, g deferred in quickly through various govern- Northern Terri- res I was not speaking too that most operating here, ment of the having their hope Hansard eviewed" in that is how I te the months oth within and

without this Assembly, all the information we can get, is "deferrals and reviews".

I am bitterly disappointed with the tenor of this debate; we have not been given the information that we deserve. It is now my intention to put a series of questions on notice, which I had hoped to avoid, asking specifically about capital works programs in each centre in the Territory. I make no apologies to members outside Darwin for doing this because all members of this Assembly in this debate are concerned with the Territory as a whole. I am going to put a series of questions on notice asking if it is a fact that "x" capital works program in "x" centre has been deferred and, if so, what is the date of deferral? This is a laborious and time-consuming way of trying to extract information.

I admire the honourable member's loyalty to his party and, as I said, I am aware that the decisions are not made locally; they are made in the Treasurer's office. It would have been more to the point if the Treasurer had seen fit to give details of the \$50.9m deferral to the Honourable Executive Members of this Assembly.

I think this debate is very poor. We have not been given the information we had hoped for. Judging from press reports written by those same inexperienced reporters, it appears that senior members of the public service have been called to Canberra to discuss the Territory's program and are there today.

Mr Kendish : Next year's program.

Mrs LAWRIE : I had understood they were also discussing deferrals and I must assume that deferrals from this year's program would be discussed in the context of next year. It may well be that, as a result of the advice being tendered by those gentlemen to the Australian Government Ministers, more precise information may be made available. It would be worth while reconvening this Assembly next week to get that information if it is not going to be made available today.

The honourable member's speech was admirable in its defence of his party. It shed a lot of heat but, most unfortunately, very little light. I hope that the Executive Member for Transport and Secondary Industries will shed more light and less heat.

Mr ROBERTSON : I had intended speaking at length on this but it would seem that the person fleeing out of the door has expressed most of the matters of concern to me. I realise it is a very difficult situation which the present Federal Government finds itself in as a result of the shambles it has inherited. On the other hand, it is also a fact that the large number of construction companies, both big and small, throughout the Territory, and particularly outside of Darwin, have had to plan over a series of years the manner in which they are going to conduct their business. They do not plan from one 6-month period to the next; they do not plan merely on the basis of one current fiscal year. They have planned their plant, equipment, staff and some have even bought light aircraft, all based upon the information which has been given to them over the last 3 years on projected expenditure. Unless a substantial part of the expenditure continues in this Territory, and particularly in places like Alice Springs, the result will be catastrophic.

I have spent quite some time in personal conversation with the Minister for the Northern Territory and I have raised the issue with the Leader of the House in Federal Parliament, the honourable Ian Sinclair. I explained the position to him while I was in Canberra on two different occasions, one as a member of a select committee of this House and another as a private delegate of my party. I lost no opportunity on either occasion to lobby as strongly as I possibly could with these ministers. I am not going to be kind to my colleagues. I found the Minister for the Northern Territory, Mr Adermann, to be very familiar with our problems and very keen to do something about them, but some other senior members, of the Liberal Party particularly, lack an understanding of what the economy of the Northern Territory is all



Wednesday 18 August 1976

Mr Speaker MacFarlane took the Chair at 10 am.

FEDERAL BUDGET 1976-77

Mr TAMBLING: Mr Speaker, I seek leave to present papers and make a statement with regard to the National Budget.

Leave granted.

Mr TAMBLING: I am pleased to present details of the 1976-77 Budget brought down by the Treasurer in the House of Representatives last night.

I now table the Treasury White Papers for the 1976-77 Budget. Honourable members have been given papers relating to the provisions made for the Department of the Northern Territory. A summary covering the whole range of government expenditure by all departments in the Northern Territory is now tabled.

I move that the papers be noted.

The Budget has been framed within a context of concern for the national economy. It is presented at a time of high inflation and rising unemployment. It remains a most important consideration that the need to restrict growth of public sector outlays is vital to the Government's top priority task of curbing inflation. The Government's strategy recognises the absence of soft options and accepts as inevitable that all sectors of the economy must share the burden if economic stability is to be restored.

The main areas of interest to honourable members in the white papers will be the Appropriation Bills Nos. 1 and 2, the Budget Speech by the honourable Treasurer, the Civil Works Program, the estimates of receipts, and the estimated expenditures for the year ended 30 June 1977.

I would draw the attention of honourable members to page 17 of the latter document where the actual receipts for the Department of the Northern Territory and details of the estimated receipts in 1976-77 totalling \$32.054m are shown. On page 12 under the heading

"Taxation" are the estimated receipts in respect of stamp duties in the Northern Territory. Receipts for hospital charges for 1976-77 are estimated to be \$11,654,000.

Details of the proposed expenditures on the operational costs of running government departments may be found in Appropriation Bill No. 1 under the following headings: Aboriginal Affairs, page 10; Administrative Services, page 13; Attorney-General's, page 29; Construction, page 44; Defence, page 49; Education, page 55; Health, page 79; Northern Territory, page 94; Postal and Telecommunications, page 102; Transport, page 126.

Expenditure on capital works and services is provided for under Appropriation Bill No. 2. I would draw honourable members' attention to Budget Paper No. 4 where on page 34 are shown the special appropriations under control of the Department of the Northern Territory.

One of the papers available to honourable members is a table which gives details of the amounts provided in the Civil Works Program for each centre in the Northern Territory in the various development categories sponsored by the Department of the Northern Territory and compared with similar details in 1975-76.

I am sure that honourable members will find all the papers tabled informative and of assistance in the ensuing debate.

It should be noted that the new administrative arrangements which applied from 1 January 1976 re-created the Department of the Northern Territory and transferred the functions of Registrar-General (formerly Attorney-General) and Police (formerly Police and Customs) to that department. The expenditure figures for Police in the Appropriation Bills Nos. 1 and 2 reflect only expenditures for the period 1 January 1976 to 30 June 1976. Further information on these expenditures is contained in papers relating to provisions for the Department of the Northern Territory.



The provisions made for the Northern Territory, which is even more adversely affected by inflation and rising costs than most other areas in Australia, will still ensure initiatives in all essential fields of government spending in the Northern Territory. The reconstruction of Darwin remains as the top priority program in the Northern Territory.

The stated objective of the Government is to meet its continuing responsibility for the special needs and circumstances of the Territory where the economy is still heavily dependent on a range of government expenditures and where the private sector has not yet developed to the level found elsewhere in Australia.

In the past year, several advances have been made in the constitutional development of the Northern Territory, the main landmark being the passage of the Northern Territory (Administration) Amendment Bill through the Federal Parliament. This new act will enable the Government to implement its commitment to progressively transfer executive responsibility to the Legislative Assembly for the Northern Territory with the ultimate objective of statehood.

#### Assistance to industry

The Government has provided support to the primary industries of the Northern Territory in the provision of \$7,209,500 for the operation of the Resources Development Division of the Department of the Northern Territory, including an amount of \$889,500 for the continuation of the bovine tuberculosis and brucellosis eradication campaign, and \$691,000 for the operations of the Mines Branch, consistent with the Government's intention to encourage mineral exploration in the Territory.

In addition, \$1,000,000 has been provided for assistance through the Primary Producers Board, of which \$600,000 is for carry-on finance; \$65,000 to allow for extension of the existing rural reconstruction scheme to 31 December 1976 while the Commonwealth negotiates a new agreement with the states; and \$335,000 for other loans. The special problems facing cattle pro-

ducers in the Northern Territory have been recognised in the form of government assistance totalling \$400,000 to producers to offset transport costs of moving cattle for sale during the remainder of the 1976 season. A coastal shipping service subsidy of \$48,000 and assistance of \$55,000 under the Water Supplies Development Ordinance has also been provided.

#### Loans and grants to organisations

The Government has again supported the activities of community groups this financial year to the extent of \$112,000. Contributions have been made to the YMCA, YWCA and other young people's organisations. Funds of \$84,000 have been provided for loans to church organisations for the development of hostel accommodation for young working people. Contributions have also been made to show societies and for the development, upkeep and operation of public recreation reserves under the control of trustees throughout the Territory.

#### Assistance to local government authorities

\$1,000,000 has been made available in the form of operational assistance to the Corporation of the City of Darwin - \$632,500, and to the Corporation of the Municipality of Alice Springs - \$367,500. Assistance to the Darwin corporation includes a special grant of \$325,000 made available to the corporation to assist in the restoration of essential public amenities damaged by Cyclone Tracy. The grant meets the increased costs of restoration arising from standards set in the new building code. Expenditure in 1976-77 is estimated to be \$125,000. An amount of \$362,000 has been provided for payment in lieu of general rates (including street lighting) in respect of government staff residences at Darwin, Alice Springs and Nhulunbuy.

Assistance has also been provided for the construction of roads, footpaths and drainage works: Darwin - \$317,000 and Alice Springs - \$683,000, a total of \$1,000,000.

Overall assistance to local government authorities totals \$2,362,000.

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## Boards

The programs envisaged by the various boards for development, maintenance and operation have attracted a total appropriation of \$2,128,600 made up of:

	\$	\$
NT Museums and Art Galleries Board - operational expenditure		352,600
NT Reserves Board - capital expenditure	102,000	
operational expenditure	1,082,000	
less estimated revenue	<u>248,000</u>	936,000
NT Betting Control Board - payments to racing clubs and charities	271,470	
operational expenditure	<u>8,530</u>	280,000
NT Tourist Board - operational expenditure		500,000
NT Advisory Boards -		4,000
Land Board and Land and Valuation Tribunal		
Town Management Boards (Katherine and Tennant Creek)		2,500
Building Board		2,000
Town Planning Board		5,000
Consumers Protection Council		8,000
Workers Compensation Tribunal		2,000
Primary Producers Board		17,700
Plumbers and Drainers Board		1,300
Soil Conservation Committee		4,000
NT Architects Board		1,000
NT Parole Board		6,000
Hospital Advisory Boards		5,000
Other boards -		
Veterinary Surgeons Registration Board )		
Electricians Registration Board )		1,500
Place Names Committee )		

Overall assistance to local government authorities totals \$2,362,000.

## Social welfare

A total of \$903,000 has been made available this year for general welfare services under the control of the Social and Commercial Affairs Division of the Department of the Northern Territory against an actual expenditure in 1975-76 of \$870,428. This provides for the maintenance of state wards and other children, assistance to missions for the care of children and the care of those people in necessitous circumstances.

## Cyclone relief

As mentioned earlier, a special grant of \$325,000, attracting cash of \$125,000, will be made available to the Corporation of the City of Darwin. In addition, specific provision under the Department of the Northern Territory allows for expenditure in 1976-77 on -

Reimbursement of restoration and additional administrative costs in-



incurred by Northern Territory Port Authority	335,000
Storage of personal effects from cyclone damaged dwellings	50,000
Repatriation of population to Darwin	30,000
Hire of the "Parris"	23,000
Incidental and other expenditure	50,000

This gives a total of \$488,000.

#### Darwin Reconstruction Commission

The Darwin Reconstruction Commission is directly responsible to the Minister for the Northern Territory for all projects in relation to the reconstruction of Darwin within an area of 40 kilometres around Darwin, with the exception of those required for autonomous government authorities and the Corporation of the City of Darwin.

The financial responsibilities of the commission are provided for in the following manner:

	\$
Administrative expenses	3,020,000
Capital works and services - general	139,500,000
- defence	3,470,000

This totals \$145,990,000.

Honourable members are referred to Budget Paper No. 5, the Civil Works Program, where the commission's program is outlined at pages 79-93, and to the attached table: Darwin Reconstruction Commission - Housing Accommodation Program.

#### Home Finance Trustee

The Government has approved of a financial scheme for assistance to home owners in rebuilding or repairing cyclone damage residences in Darwin. The cut-off date for lodgement of applications for loans is 31 December 1976.

The 1976-77 Budget provides a further \$11.5m for these loans, making a total of \$21m since the inception of the scheme.

The Government has reiterated a clear commitment that the scheme will continue and that eligible borrowers can utilize funds advanced under the scheme at any time up to 31 December 1980.

The Home Loans Scheme for other categories of persons is still available for all centres in the Northern Territory to a maximum of \$15 000 at 2½% interest.

#### Northern Territory Housing Commission

The funding arrangements for the Housing Commission in respect of assistance grants have been brought into line with the assistance currently given to the states under the States Grants (Housing) Act 1971.

This involves the following:

##### (1) Basic grant

The commission will continue to obtain its finances by way of an annual budgetary appropriation and receive a non-repayable annual grant to compensate for the loss of concessional interest, equal to 1/30 of the difference between amortising the principal and interest over 53 years at the long term bond rate and the former concessional rate.

##### (2) Rent rebate grant

A separate non-repayable annual grant will be paid to the commission to enable it to operate a system of rental rebate to assist needy tenants. The criteria for tenants' eligibility will be in accordance with the formula suggested by the commission and based on that in the 1945 Commonwealth-States Housing Agreement.

#### Housing commission

The Northern Territory Housing Commission provides for persons of limited means to obtain adequately housed officers of the Territory Public Service. The commission may also sell

The commission's program has been broadened in 1975 to include provision of housing for approved industrial workers and their employees.

From 1972-73, the commission's operating expenses are operated by the Government. Advances made by the commission for housing are attracting 4% and repayable

The commission's program of construction for which cash is appropriated is with expenditure 1975-76, \$4,295,000; 1972-73, \$2,766

The repairs and

The total program of the Northern Territory Housing Commission is \$40,940,000, which requires a cash expenditure of \$36,960,000. Electricity supply at Barkly Highway, in this program, is to improve the urban section which is a local traffic North Australian Highway works will be at Castle Waters, the Cullen River

I now table members those papers on the expenditure of the Territory.



### Housing construction program

The Northern Territory Housing Commission provides housing for rental to persons of limited means who are not adequately housed and who are not officers of the Government or Northern Territory Public Service. The Commission may also sell houses to tenants.

The commission's functions were broadened in 1968 to permit construction of housing for rental or sale to approved industrial enterprises and/or their employees.

From 1972-73, finance for the commission's operations were advanced by the Government in a similar way to the advances made available by the Government for housing in the states; that is, attracting interest at the rate of 4% and repayable over 53 years.

The commission is now undertaking a program of construction and rebuilding for which cash of \$21.2m has been appropriated in 1976-77. This compares with expenditure in previous years of: 1975-76, \$13,000,000; 1974-75, \$4,295,000; 1973-74, \$1,700,000; 1972-73, \$2,766,471.

### The repairs and maintenance program

The total program for the Department of the Northern Territory in 1976-77 is \$40,940,000, which is estimated to require a cash expenditure in 1976-77 of \$36,960,000. The program for the Electricity Supply Undertaking totals \$19,165,000 and for the Stuart and Barkly Highways, \$16,538,000. Included in this program are works selected having regard to a need to preserve and improve the useability of these roads in the wet season and to improve the section which will be subject to additional traffic following closure of the North Australia Railway. Major bridging works will be carried out at Newcastle Waters, between Pine Creek and the Cullen River and at Wycliffe Creek.

I now table for the information of members those extracts from the Budget papers on the civil works and other expenditure as they affect the Northern Territory.

In particular, I would draw members' attention to these schedules which detail the Darwin Reconstruction Commission's Housing Accommodation Program, the Civil Works Program, in particular the new works, and the Darwin Reconstruction Civil Works Program which is detailed and broken up into the items of Land Servicing; Roads, Bridges and Traffic Control; Public Utilities; Housing; Education; Public Health and Welfare; Cultural and Recreational Facilities; Commercial and Industrial Facilities; Legislature, Law and Order and Public Safety; and General Administration.

The schedules also include details of the Department of the Northern Territory Repairs and Maintenance Program with regard to rental dwellings, the Stuart and Barkly Highways repairs and maintenance, other roads and stock routes, operational undertakings and other repairs and maintenance.

There are comparative figures in the Civil Works Program for the major departments operating in the Northern Territory, between the centres of Darwin, Alice Springs, Tennant Creek, Katherine and other centres, including settlements and missions. Also detailed in the schedules are the proposed new works for the Department of the Northern Territory under the various divisions that it operates.

The final 2 schedules relate to appropriations, firstly of the Department of the Northern Territory related to that department, and then to a summary of the major departments operating in the Northern Territory and their various appropriations under Appropriation Act No. 1 and Appropriation Act No. 2. You will note that these schedules indicate for those major departments - and I stress "major departments" because there are a number of others where there are minor appropriations under smaller departments - but this envisages a total appropriation for 1976-77 of \$441,460,900 for expenditure in the Northern Territory.

Mr Speaker, I would now like to turn to my own personal and political comments with relation to this Budget as distinct from the official departmental report which I have just given.



I see this Budget as a good, practical and realistic Budget for the Northern Territory.

Members: Hear, hear!

Mr TAMBLING: In Mr Lynch's Budget Speech, it is interesting to note what is the underlying government philosophy of the intent of the Budget. Obviously it has a very 2-sided emphasis of positive stimulation for economic recovery in Australia. Firstly, it provides areas of major social impact. You will note that additional expenditure is in the area of most need - that is, the lower-income family. But it is also directed to areas where the most consumer and sales activity will generate. Secondly, there are significant incentives encouraging business community investment, and freeing considerable moneys for this purpose.

The impact in the Northern Territory will be seen, I believe, in the effect of the recirculation of considerable funds through all areas of the Northern Territory, at least \$440m and possibly a great deal more. The Budget should not be assessed only in terms of the Civil Works Program, but also in the totality of expenditure, including the massive salary and administrative votes of the departments operating in the Northern Territory. There are tremendous cash flow implications through domestic and commercial activities, such as through the outlets of retailing, suppliers etc.

The significant Budget highlights and new policies affecting the Northern Territory, I believe, fall into a number of categories. Firstly, and probably most importantly, are the areas of social reform. You will be aware, Mr Speaker, that a number of announcements were made in May of the initiatives that have now been put into action in this Budget. Let me detail some because they are very relevant to the Northern Territory. There are the new family allowances and the full personal income tax indexation. For aged persons, there are a number of highlights: the removal of property means tests for pensioners; the pension rate is to be adjusted automatically for movements in the consumer prices index; and there is to be

special assistance for provision of aged persons' homes and hostels. There are new exemptions from estate duty for estates passing to a spouse. There is special assistance to handicapped people. There will be a greater review of the Aboriginal housing priorities. I would draw honourable members' attention to the statement on page 17 of the Budget Speech that it has been necessary to look carefully at a number of Aboriginal housing programs. It is stated very clearly that pending further reviews of the objectives, priorities and past administration of these programs and in the light of those reviews, additional funds will be provided. A further area of social reform is the continued support of community service and voluntary agencies.

Another significant aspect of this Budget is the encouragement it gives to small business. Let us not shy away from the fact that small business is a tremendously vital and important part of the fabric of the Northern Territory. There are literally hundreds of small businesses and companies operating; this Budget will create additional funds for business and investment activities and it is going to reverse the Labor policy of strangling business initiative, incentive and progress. Thank goodness for that.

We see introduced the first stage of company tax indexation through trading stock valuation adjustments for 1976/77 company income. There is also a relaxation of the distribution or retention allowance requirements for private companies, and the payroll tax exemption level, particularly in the Northern Territory, has been doubled. These particular incentives will have a phenomenal impact on commercial viability and activity in the Northern Territory.

In the area of transport, you will note from the Treasurer's speech on pages 19 and 20 that a further \$36.1m is included to finance the capital program of the Australian National Railways Commission and, most importantly, this amount includes provisions to continue the construction of the standard-gauge railway between Taroona and Alice Springs. The subsidy for the

"Darwin Trader" in there is a special loan to Connair to air services through Northern Territory.

In the area of development, we see concessions for mini-companies and we see \$2 per barrel levies on discoveries. Again a major encouragement to the Northern Territory that once played a role in its development years, they were Labor policy and are going to reverse are going to see of activity in the

With relation to the Budget providing beef industry, export construction and producers for the moving of cattle.

Let me turn to an aspect of this Budget the collection of raisings that are applicable to the In my first appointment papers of the Northern Territory, Health, Education and the of stamp duty, I to be raised in the Northern Territory the very significant tax, company tax and excise - and mention what the allocation the Northern Territory make a significant sales and other believe the total whilst they are not in the Budget paper \$100m in the Northern

I would like to see Works and the Regional Programs. Last year in the Northern Territory stress the word 'more than \$200m. for civil works, the



"Darwin Trader" has been retained and there is a special appropriation of a loan to Connair to continue those vital air services throughout outback Northern Territory.

In the area of mineral and energy development, we see new taxation concessions for mining and petroleum companies and we see the abolition of the \$2 per barrel levy on crude oil for new discoveries. Again, this will give major encouragement for the return to the Northern Territory of companies that once played a very significant role in its development. For the last 3 years, they were forced out by direct Labor policy and action. This Budget is going to reverse that and I believe we are going to see a tremendous resurgence of activity in this particular area.

With relation to the rural industry, the Budget provides assistance to the beef industry, expenditure on rural reconstruction and special assistance to producers for transport costs in the moving of cattle.

Let me turn to another very important aspect of this Budget and that is on the collection side, the revenue raisings that are appropriate and applicable to the Northern Territory. In my first appraisal of these budget papers of the Departments of Northern Territory, Health, Attorney-General, Education and the taxation provisions of stamp duty, I believe that \$46m is to be raised in these specific charges in the Northern Territory. Add to this, the very significant factor of personal tax, company tax, payroll tax, customs and excise - and I do not need to mention what the alcohol consumption in the Northern Territory is like; we must make a significant input in that area - sales and other indirect taxes. I believe the total revenue raisings, whilst they are not shown specifically in the Budget papers, could well exceed \$100m in the Northern Territory.

I would like to turn to the Civil Works and the Repair and Maintenance Programs. Last year, the cash expenditure in the Northern Territory - and I stress the word "cash" - was slightly more than \$200m. This year, the figure for civil works, repair and maintenance

is in excess of \$230m. Let me quote you some figures. With regard to the commitment value of work, we had work in progress at 1 July on capital works of some \$235m and we add to this new authorisations for new works to commence in program value of another \$103m. The cash expenditure on that \$338m capital works program is to be of the order of \$184m. In the repair and maintenance program, we see amongst the various departments in the Northern Territory, work in progress at 1 July of \$7m, new authorisations proposed for repairs and maintenance, including the Stuart and Barkly Highways and other stock routes, and the operation of the electricity undertaking, was \$47m. That gives a total program value of \$54m with cash expenditure of \$45m. The revotes that will result from this particular program in cash terms will necessitate in the following financial year, that is 1977/78, at least a further \$150m expenditure.

There are significant works programs that have been initiated but I will leave these to other Executive Members to outline. It is interesting to note, when you look at the Civil Works Program, the percentage of the cake that we are taking in the Northern Territory of what is the Australian Government's civil works commitment. If you disregard the NCDC or the Canberra operation, of the work in progress at 1 July, we held 55%; of the commitment of the new works proposed we obtain in this Budget 37%; and in terms of cash expenditure of the total program we obtain 49%. If you do include the NCDC, naturally these figures are reduced because of the significance of that vote. However, they only reduce to: for the work in progress 34% of the total for the Territory, 24% for the new works commitment and 32% for the estimated expenditure in the Northern Territory. These are very substantial and significant cuts of the cake that we get to utilise in the Northern Territory.

In addition to the figures that I have been mentioning, we should also take into account the grants to local government, to other town services, to the various statutory authorities, to the Home Finance Trustee, and to



Aboriginal communities. In fact, the grants that are made to Aboriginal communities will exceed \$20m themselves.

I would like to mention specifically those areas that will relate to my own portfolio and that is, generally, the area of housing. The Darwin Reconstruction Commission has a very high proportion of its vote dedicated to housing. Basically, it is the Government's insurance policy and the commitment to pick up the important tab of reconstructing this city following its devastation. The Northern Territory Housing Commission has been voted over \$21m and, whilst a significant proportion of this fund is also an insurance policy replacement, it is also very important that that commission has been recognised as having a vital role. The Home Finance Trustee appropriation of \$11m for the special scheme and the provision for the other loans scheme is also very welcome. There are a number of communities outside of Darwin that have received housing commitments; Alice Springs and Katherine, in particular, have received excellent new program commitments.

If we turn to the administrative and operational votes of all the departments, I ascertain, just by quickly looking through the documents, that at least \$173m - and I think you will find in one of the tables that it suggests that it is considerably more - was allocated in the following manner: the Department of Northern Territory, including the Northern Territory statutory authorities \$60m; the Department of Construction, \$20m; the Department of Health, \$43m; the Department of Education and the Darwin Community College, \$45m; the Department of Aboriginal Affairs \$5m; and in addition, the community grants that I mentioned earlier of \$20m. There are of course a number of other smaller departments such as Attorney-General's. It is a very important aspect to look at this Budget in terms of what the amount of money - the \$200 million - will generate in this particular community.

There are a number of areas about which I would like to express criticism

and they are basically linked to the manner in which the Budget was prepared. You will note in the votes for the Department of the Northern Territory that the statutory authorities have been dealt a rather severe blow. The heavy hand of bureaucracy, where political decisions are made by public servants, and the lack of consultation on priorities with these particular authorities obviously necessitates a particular view of that system. I believe it will change as constitutional development comes about in the Northern Territory.

My second area of criticism is with regard to the liaison with the Treasury. This has not been good. There is a brick wall in trying to get information there. And I must apologize to honourable members for the manner in which they obtained the white papers relating to this Budget.

Mrs Lawrie: I should think so.

Mr TAMBLING: To have the papers handed them like little boys at 9.30 pm at the end of the Treasurer's speech is, to say the least, insulting.

There needs to be a better identification by the Treasury in the Budget papers of all statelike functions. I do not know how much time other members were able to spend in studying these papers last night, but it took me until 3 am to get the appraisal that I felt I had to give them and just to go through the numerous areas that were involved.

It also shows that, linked with constitutional development, we have to improve a system of coordination between departments, not only to find out where the money is being spent and how it is being spent but to affect the priorities in a more appropriate community manner. We are living with a Labor Party legacy here in that the splitting of these departments and the responsibilities certainly does not help in any consideration of finances on an annual Budget day.

I think it is important to look at the types of criticism that will come out of this particular Budget in the

media. I anticipate areas that will appear in the Civil Works will be questions of programs that Government Budget appear in this works. In effect deferred or cut changes or they appear by a political number of areas but I believe, have had with officers, that in context of the policies of the Government for the urgency of all those particular

I would challenge that exercise program and see come on, and then ones. Let me re Mr Speaker. The has gone up to 40 think, only 20 in It was back to at is now back to 100 significant changes. I accept is the been made; new established in ional Budget on very fair percent they fully recognize needs and the per of the Northern sure that we academic exercise.

Finally, I have of people in confirm that this Particularly, I respect for the for the Northern in obtaining the he did get. I erable effort the to, both in the pleading our case his strong and would probably late.

I am also aware the House of Calder, and Sen



media. I anticipate that one of the areas that will be brought out will be in the Civil Works Program where there will be questions asked of the number of programs that appeared in the Labor Government Budget last year and do not appear in this Budget in proposed new works. In effect, they were either deferred or cut out in the mid-year changes or they have now been dropped by a political decision. There are a number of areas where this has happened but I believe, from the discussions I have had with all departmental officers, that it has happened in the context of the anti-inflationary policies of the Government and the need for the urgency and the essentiality of all those particular programs.

I would challenge anybody who is doing that exercise to look also at the program and see what new projects have come on, and there are a number of new ones. Let me refer to your home town, Mr Speaker. The housing program there has gone up to 40 houses; there were, I think, only 20 in last year's program. It was back to about 10 but at least it is now back to 40. There are significant changes. What we have got to accept is the reality; decisions have been made; new programs have been established in the context of the national Budget on what I believe is a very fair percentage of the total, and they fully recognise the development needs and the personal and social needs of the Northern Territory. Let us make sure that we do not conduct just academic exercises for media publicity.

Finally, I have praise for a number of people in connection with the final form that this Budget has taken. Particularly, I have a great deal of respect for the role that the Minister for the Northern Territory has played in obtaining the size of the cake which he did get. I am aware of the considerable effort that this has taken him to, both in the Cabinet room and in pleading our case. Had it not been for his strong and personal effort, we would probably have suffered a harder fate.

I am also aware that our member in the House of Representatives, Sam Calder, and Senator Bernie Kilgarriff

have been consulted, as have the members of this Northern Territory Executive with regard to the establishment of the priorities and the actual need in a lot of these programs. I would not say so much for the other senator; I do not believe that any of his lobbying, if there has been any - and from what I have heard he seeks not to consult with Government - has had any effect.

I am personally very grateful for the assistance that officers of the Department of the Northern Territory have given to me in compiling my notes and my discussions of this particular Budget. However, I would like to close by saying I see an important functioning role being developed that is going to be far more important in the future in the link of constitutional development. Sure, we have got \$400m-odd of cash expenditure in the Northern Territory but it is interesting to note who still makes the authorisation - and it is not yet the Northern Territory Executive. I will be much happier when a larger proportion of the decisions relating to that \$400m - or hopefully next year well in excess of \$500m - will be made in this Assembly and by this Executive.

Members: Hear, hear!

Mr TUXWORTH: In noting the annual Budget and the appropriations for the Northern Territory, it is with pleasure that I say that resource development has fared extremely well except for one particular area which is tourism. I will deal with that first.

As the Executive Member for Finance and Community Development has already outlined, the appropriation this year to the Tourist Board of \$500,000 is \$50,000 less than the board had last year and is \$125,000 less than the board sought. I believe that the reason for this cut is primarily that there was not adequate consultation between the board and the department in formulating this Budget estimate. The main areas of expenditure for the Tourist Board will be administration expenses of \$356,000, operational expenses of \$142,000 and promotional expenses of \$25,000 coupled with advertising expenses of \$43,000. I believe I