

place. I can assure the member for Katherine there will be no delays in government programs. There will be no delays in capital works expenditure in roads or the grants. That is moving ahead with great focus and great direction. I do not think that, because he needed to fill some time on this debate, nitpicking his way through the Supply Bill and trying, like Henny Penny - saying every line meant the sky was falling - was really making a very constructive contribution to the debate.

The hypocrisy of trying to pretend that he does not know why things have been tough is quite extraordinary also. He is the man who was Treasurer for many years; he is the man who fudged the bottom lines; who put us year after year deeper into debt. He is then trying to pretend that, as we indicated in the mini-budget, we are slowing down growth but growth in government expenditure is the fault of anyone but the previous administration. It simply is. But this government is responsible; we are getting the budget back to a sustainable position. Every business and community organisation in the Northern Territory understands that budgets must be run in a sustainable way.

Again, I am not whingeing. We have done the hard work and we are working with Territorians to make sure that we can run sustainable budgets. However, let me say with great certainty that there is growth in this budget, and what we are doing is managing that in a responsible way. So any Henny Penny attitude from the member for Katherine is irrelevant to this debate. We are moving forward. The Supply Bill will come down in August, but expenditure for every area will carry on. The importance of building and construction in the Dry Season is recognised by this government.

I thank the member for his words; I wish they were more constructive. They do seem decidedly hypocritical considering what position he has held previously for many years.

Motion agreed to; bill read a second time.

Ms MARTIN (Treasurer): Madam Speaker, I move that the bill be now read a third time.

Motion agreed to; bill read a third time.

**CRIMINAL PROPERTY FORFEITURE BILL
(Serial 60)
CRIMINAL PROPERTY FORFEITURE
(CONSEQUENTIAL AMENDMENTS) BILL
(Serial 61)**

Continued from 16 May 2002.

Mr MALEY (Goyder): Madam Speaker, I rise to place on the *Parliamentary Record* the opposition's observations, some criticism and eventually its support for the Criminal Property Forfeiture Bill (Serial 60).

I first put on the record that none of the observations or criticisms I intend to make in relation to this draft bill in any way reflect upon the calibre and professionalism of legal practitioners - one of whom I worked for for several years - who have had some input into the drafting of this bill. It goes without saying that they are, of course, creatures of construction who are bound to draft the clumsy and poorly articulated instructions from the Attorney-General.

I will start, using as a reference point the Attorney-General's second reading speech. The Attorney-General, in that speech on 16 May this year made a number of assertions which, when read at first blush, create the impression that the bill was introducing a raft of new measures unheard of in the history of the Northern Territory. Indeed, the opening sentence of the second reading speech begins with:

The existing Northern Territory legislation in this area, the Crimes (Forfeiture of Proceeds) Act is ineffective and outdated.

The basis of this very bold assertion is that the Attorney-General has requested some scribes to review the statistics which reveal that there were only 64 cases where offenders were arrested or summonsed for matters involving possession or receipt of proceeds of crime under the existing legislation. Of these matters, only three proceeded to a court hearing, and of those only two resulted in the confiscation of proceeds. Indeed, only one of these matters involved the proceeds of a drug crime and, in that case, only \$7000 in cash was successfully confiscated.

There may be a number of possible rationales for this seemingly startling statistic but, according to the Attorney-General, there is a mountain of assets which could fall to come under the scope of this new net which has been cast. Members of the Federal Police and the Northern Territory Drug Squad are most certainly aware of the unfortunate reality, however, that the average drug offender - if there is any such thing - is most likely an unemployed 28 to 35-year-old Anglo-Saxon male who lives in a unit in an inner city suburb. Of course, that is not taken to be a reflection upon any of those areas; it is just a dry statistic which is often bandied about by criminal lawyers.