

Today, the office of public notary is still important. In general, the function of a public notary is to witness the execution of documents or to make certified copies in order to render them authentic for overseas uses. They are employed principally in mercantile matters, such as making protests of bills of exchange and notices of dishonour. The need for notaries also arises where there is a concentration of workers from overseas who need to carry out transactions in their home countries.

The bill provides for the appointment of public notaries, the oath or affirmation to be given by a public notary, the maintenance of a roll listing the names of public notaries, which is to be available for inspection by the public, the powers of public notaries, the cancellation and suspension of a public notary's appointment, cessation of a public notary's appointment and other consequential matters. Whilst the present act contains no legal anomalies, it is drafted in 18th century language which is cumbersome. In addition, the procedure by which the Supreme Court appoints a person as a public notary is at variance with the new Supreme Court Rules. The bill will re-enact the legislation in a simpler and more straightforward manner and will enable the procedure for appointment as a public notary to be covered by the Supreme Court Rules. I commend the bill to honourable members.

Debate adjourned.

PASTORAL LAND BILL (Serial 105)

Continued from 3 March 1992.

Mr PALMER ((Karama)): Mr Speaker, I am pleased that we have been able to reach this bill at such an early hour today.

Mr Bell: And, like so many others, you have been speaking. You must be tired by now.

Mr PALMER: I am dreadfully tired.

Mr Speaker, in my view, the Pastoral Land Bill achieves what the minister stated it sets out to achieve - that is, firstly, to place the primary emphasis on pastoral land administration on land care and, secondly, to get rid of the prescriptive covenant conditions that applied previously to pastoral leases. As a leap forward in pastoral land administration in the Territory, even as a quantum leap - which I must explain is a very small leap - it does not achieve much. In terms of the development of the pastoral industry of the Northern Territory, this legislation does not achieve much. It is a change from the previous Crown Lands Act. It achieves what the minister said it sets out to achieve but, in terms of encouraging the further and better development of the pastoral industry in the Northern Territory, I do not think it will achieve much at all.

For far too long, the best pastoral lands in the Northern Territory have been tied up in a few of the larger pastoral houses, and held exclusively by a few pastoralists ...

Mrs Padgham-Furich: Is that going to change?

Mr PALMER: It hasn't in the last 75 years, but one hopes that it will in the next 75 years.