HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

QUESTION

TIMETABLES AND FUNCTIONS TO BE TRANSFERRED

Procedural Text

PROCEDURAL TEXT

Wednesday, 14 September 1977

BY AUTHORITY OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Commonwealth-State Consultative Machinery

The establishment of a self-governing Northern Territory as a new political entity within the Commonwealth will have implications for Commonwealth-State consultative machinery. At present executive members of the Legislative Assembly attend most, if not all, of the Commonwealth-State standing ministerial councils and committees with the status of observer. It is appropriate that where executive members presently have observer status at Commonwealth-State ministerial meetings, the Ministers of the Northern Territory government should be accorded full membership of such bodies upon that government assuming responsibility for the relevant function. The Commonwealth Government will sponsor such membership at the relevant time.

As I indicated at the beginning of this statement the proposed establishment of a Northern Territory government is further confirmation of the Government's determination to give effect to its undertakings on the constitutional development of the Northern Territory. The move is fully consistent with the Government's underlying philosophy of devolving authority in government to those areas which can best meet the needs of the community. It is also consistent with our policies on co-operative federalism and with the inevitable march of the Northern Territory towards Statehood.

I present the following paper

Northern Territory- Self-Government- Ministerial Statement, 14 September 1977

Motion (by Mr Sinclair) proposed:

That the House take note of the paper.

Mr LIONEL BOWEN (Kingsford Smith) The Opposition welcomes this statement particularly as it is being made to the Parliament. We are always anxious that statements, particularly statements relating to important matters such as the one before us, be made in the Parliament. We are hopeful that a statement proposed in respect of the Australian Capital Territory also will be made in this Parliament tomorrow. Although we welcome that statement we wish to express here today some of the fears that people of the Northern Territory have about statehood. The big emphasis being made in this statement is one of responsible autonomy. The Opposition welcomes that objective. In fact, the Opposition's record has always been to espouse the cause of the people of the Northern Territory. We want to make that point very clear. The point that has to be emphasised -

Mr Hodgman (—) (NaN.NaN pm) - By centralism; the big boss.