COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

QUESTION

NORTHERN TERRITORY SELF-GOVERNMENT

SPEECH

Wednesday, 14 September 1977

BY AUTHORITY OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Mr ADERMANN (Fisher—Minister for the Northern Territory) (NaN.NaN pm) - by leave—In making this statement to the Parliament today I acknowledge with considerable pleasure the presence in the gallery of Mr Paul Everingham, the newly appointed Majority Leader and therefore the incoming Chief-Secretary of the Northern Territory Legislative Assembly, and other Executive members. It is certainly very appropriate that a statement of such great importance for the Northern Territory happily coincides with his presence in the House today.

In a public statement dated 17 July 1977 I gave a broad outline of the Government's decision to confer responsible self-government on the Northern Territory in the period to 1 July 1979. The decisions taken by the Government resulted from consultations and agreement with Executive members of the Northern Territory Legislative Assembly. Following the election for the Legislative Assembly held on 13 August 1977 there were significant changes in the composition of the Executive and I considered it appropriate to obtain a reaction from the new Executive on the proposals. I am now able to confirm that the previously announced program for constitutional reform in the Northern Territory is acceptable to the new Northern Territory Executive and the Government will proceed with the implementation of that program.

Because of their historical significance and the implications which they will have for the Parliament itself, it is appropriate that a detailed statement of the proposals for the conferral of responsible self-government on the Northern Territory be made in the Parliament. Before coming to office the Government made a policy commitment to devolve executive responsibility on the Northern Territory Legislative Assembly and to bring the Northern Territory to ultimate Statehood. We have acted quickly to give effect to that undertaking. The Northern Territory (Administration) Act was amended in 1976 to facilitate the transfer of executive responsibility to the Northern Territory Legislative Assembly and to bring the Northern Territory to ultimate Statehood. We have acted quickly to give effect to that undertaking. The Northern Territory (Administration) Act was amended in 1976 to facilitate the transfer of executive responsibility to the Northern Territory Legislative Assembly and to bring the Northern Territory to ultimate Statehood. We have acted quickly to give effect to that undertaking.

Establishment of a Government of the Northern Territory

It is proposed to introduce legislation during the autumn sittings to formally establish a government of the Northern Territory. Provision will be made for the appointment of Ministers to administer Northern Territory Public Service departments and for the establishment of a separate consolidated revenue fund for the Northern Territory. After self-government the office and title of the Administrator of the Northern Territory will remain. The Administrator will continue to be appointed by the Governor-General and shall hold office at the Governor-General's pleasure. However, in matters pertaining to the appointment or withdrawal of the commission of the Administrator, the Commonwealth will consult with the leader of the Northern Territory government.