

EDITORIAL, December 14, 1988

# Labor must get on with job

**T**HE Territory Labor Party has had a rare opportunity to re-examine its public perception in the past 11 days.

It certainly has not been easy being involved in a brawl of such public proportions.

Personalities, factions and individuals have been put under the microscope in the process.

But despite the apparent turmoil of the past week-and-a-half, it does not spell a major split in the Labor Party in the Territory.

It is probably more of a new beginning for a party which has been sitting just off the boiling point for a long time.

What has been said publicly in the past 11 days is what many people have been thinking for years but have been afraid to say.

Now the problems are out in the open.

And if ALP management is serious about winning Government at the next Territory election, it can start addressing the issues.

It is true that members have been effectively gagged from debating the matter further in the public arena and some may see that as destructive to the democratic process.

But the party, particularly the right wing, has put in train a formal factional process which will hopefully set the agenda for more co-operation between the Left, the Centre Left and the Right.

Using this process to sort out small problems before they become major issues is surely less destructive than all-in, personal brawls which can lead only to the appearance of turmoil within the party.

This newspaper believes it is time for the Labor Party to put the past 11 days behind it.

## **Factions**

It is time for the Labor factions to behave as one party rather than three separate parties.

Because whether you are Labor or conservative, you must admit that the Territory as a whole can become a winning team only with at least two effective political parties.

Good government needs good opposition to keep it on its toes.

And good opposition will not be provided by a team of self-interest factions pushing their own barrows.

This newspaper supports the prominent right-winger, Mr John Reeves, in his push for a place in the Territory Legislative Assembly.

We believe he could contribute a great deal to our political process.

But he cannot help the cause with further public outbursts.

That is why his decision to refrain from further comment on the leadership issue should be applauded and understood.

Now he and the rest of his party can get on with job of helping provide good government in the Territory — regardless of which party is actually holding it.