

# NORTHERN Territory News

Phone 82 8200  
CLASSIFIEDS: 82 8300

DARWIN: Wednesday, March 28, 1990

50c\* ( COUNTRY )  
35 cents

# TURMOIL

## Top three resign from NT Nationals

By FRANK ALCORTA

### The NT Nationals are in turmoil.

This follows the simultaneous resignation of the party president, Mr Jim Petrich, the secretary, Mrs Joan Small, and the treasurer, Mrs Margaret Eedle, last weekend.

The Opposition Leader, Mr Smith, said today the Nationals were suffering organisational disarray.

The party had gone so far up a blind alley it had little chance of regaining credibility in time for the next NT election.

Mr Petrich made an impassioned plea this morning for unity among the conservative forces in the NT.

"If the conservatives want to win the next election there will have to be a close alliance between the CLP and NT Nationals or a new party with a different name," he said.

### 'No crisis'

"I'll be working towards that in the future."

Mr Petrich, who founded the party in 1986, confirmed he would resign as from April 28 but denied the party was in crisis or faced any difficulties.

"I am stepping down as president because the constitution, which I wrote, says party presidents cannot continue after three consecutive terms," Mr Petrich said.

But he admitted the constitution came into effect only in 1988 which would allow him another term and his sudden resignation in an election year might be seen as creating problems for the party.

The party's parliamentary leader, Mr Tuxworth, also strongly denied the NT Nationals

were in disarray. He said the resignations were dictated by the constitution.

"It is part of the process, that's all. It has nothing to do with a crisis. There will soon be another president who will do as good or better a job than Jim Petrich," he said.

The CLP president, Mr Shane Stone, said this morning it was "obvious the NT Nationals have problems" but he hoped talks between the parties would continue.

Mr Stone drew strong parallels between the NT Nationals and the National Party in the States saying the decline was similar.

"The NT Nationals,

despite Mr Tuxworth's denials, were a creation of Joh Bjelke-Petersen and have been more closely associated with the disgraced Queensland Nationals than any other party in Australia," Mr Stone said.

This morning the Chief Minister, Mr Perren, poured cold water on any peace initiatives between himself and Mr Tuxworth.

"I haven't got any plans at this moment to hold conversations with Mr Tuxworth," Mr Perren said.

He said Mr Tuxworth had given CLP candidates little support during the federal election. Mr Tuxworth denied he had been unhelpful.