

**LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF SASKATCHEWAN**  
**April 21, 1983**

**EVENING SESSION**

**COMMITTEE OF FINANCE**

**CONSOLIDATED FUND BUDGETARY EXPENDITURE**

**DEPARTMENT OF NORTHERN SASKATCHEWAN**

**Ordinary Expenditure - Vote 26**

**Item 1 (continued)**

**Hon. Mr. McLeod:** — Yes, Mr. Chairman. Beside me on my right is Dick Bailey, the acting deputy minister of Northern Saskatchewan. Directly behind me, Gerry Stinson, acting director of municipal advisory and the training branch. Behind Dick is Marcel L'Heureux, the acting executive director of the economic development branch. We have Jim Paul over two to my right, the acting manager of the financial administrative services, and behind him, Bill Worster. He's the acting director of support services division.

**Mr. Yew:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. It's kind of unfortunate that I had to rush for supper break, Mr. Chairman, and probably could be fortunate for the minister in charge of DNS. However, I just can't help but comment on the nice weather out there tonight. My colleague from Athabasca and I were commenting on such a nice warm spring weather. In fact, you know, with the way of life that we've been accustomed to, it would be nice to be out there . . . the shores of Lac La Ronge or Durocher Lake, and smell the camp-fire burning, and the tea boiling. It would certainly be nice, but unfortunately for some of us, we have been given the responsibility of answers to some questions. And tonight I would like to take that opportunity to raise some very serious matters and questions with the Minister of Northern Saskatchewan.

As an opening statement, Mr. Chairman, I would like to repeat what I have said in the past in this Legislative Assembly, that the Conservative government of Grant Devine is neglecting the North. It's shrunk the province by half, Mr. Chairman. It has shrunk the province by half. And I would like to go and put this on the record: that no one would deny the members opposite the right to put their stamp in northern Saskatchewan. If the Conservatives did not like the concept of DNS, that's fine; that's fine. But, for Heaven's sake don't dismantle one solution without offering another.

Last July the minister said he had a plan for northern Saskatchewan. Where is it? Where is this vision? I'll bet a hundred dollars that he does not have a vision for northern Saskatchewan. Members of this Assembly have heard me; you are my witnesses.

He doesn't know what to do with northern Saskatchewan. Maybe DNS wasn't so bad after all, Mr. Minister. It sure is a lot better than having 90 per cent or 100 per cent unemployment in some of those communities, a high welfare dependency rate for northern communities, poor housing. In fact, in 1982 and '83 there was no housing starts whatsoever. There was no construction. There was a major curtailment of major capital construction programs in northern Saskatchewan in the last year, and I'm sure that the minister can't deny that. Alcoholism is high, Mr. Minister, in northern

Saskatchewan.

I would like to bring a point of importance into this Legislative Assembly, Mr. Speaker, a point that was initiated by the minister himself. There is a letter here dated July 16th, 1982 whereas the minister talked about economic self-sufficiency for northern Saskatchewan. In fact I won't take the valuable time of this Legislative Assembly to read the whole contents of the letter but I will point out to the legislative members of this Assembly a few specific points that I would like to raise in this legislature.

The second paragraph states that his government will put a great emphasis on local self-government and also the development of economic self-sufficiency, Mr. Speaker and Mr. Chairman. He proposed a long-term comprehensive economic strategy for northern Saskatchewan.

In this letter he proposed a comprehensive plan which had, at the time, already been put forward to all his provincial departments. But to date, Mr. Chairman, I ask where that comprehensive plan is for the residents, for the 30-some-odd residents of northern Saskatchewan. Where is that comprehensive plan for economic self-sufficiency and for local self-government? He goes on to state, Mr. Chairman, that number one, 'a continuation of a northern emphasis and northern presence of the provincial line departments.' I would like to dispute that because today people in northern Saskatchewan, the total population in the northern administration district are very confused. They are very concerned; they don't know what to expect from this administration in terms of the services and the programs that they had become accustomed to in the past decade. They don't know what the objective is with respect to the members opposite.

Secondly, he goes on to state, 'a continuation of the highest level of services to residents of northern Saskatchewan,' Mr. Chairman. 'A continuation of the highest levels of services.' Well, I dispute that, Mr. Chairman, I dispute that very strenuously. I go back to the budget that the Conservatives introduced just recently, and I take an example of the former administration which budgeted \$99.8 million for the northern administration district. \$99.8 million in one year and in two Conservative budgets by the members opposite - they have introduced two budgets - one, the initial budget was down from \$99.8 million to \$64 million, and in their recent budget they have a token \$18 million, \$18.6 million.

So you see, Mr. Chairman, this gives me the opportunity to raise some very dire concerns of the people now resident in the northern administration district.

You can see for yourselves the facts and figures of the emphasis that they were supposed to place for the people that the minister is supposed to be responsible for, for the people that he is placed with the responsibility to advocate for in terms of the social, the cultural, and economic disparities in that region. So you can see for yourself, Mr. Chairman, why I take this opportunity to raise, with the limited amount of education that I have, to try to raise them in the best format possible - the disparities of those people that the member of Athabasca and I represent.

And I go on to that third point, Mr. Chairman. He also emphasized in that letter the development of responsible and effective municipal self-government for Northerners. While in the last throne speech, Mr. Chairman, the member can be proud in terms of their Tories, Conservative attitude towards Northerners. He only had two lines that referred to the northern administration district, to the people, the communities of the

top half of this province. And that was the fact that referred to introducing a bill with revisions. I believe he called it Bill 61. He called in Bill 61; it was tabled here initially as Bill 61 but now in his throne speech he refers to it as a revised revision of local government that will be introduced in this House. But, to this point in time, we have not seen Bill 61 and its revised form. In fact, Mr. Chairman, I doubt if any of the local community authorities in northern Saskatchewan, and there is nine of them, I doubt very much if the 34 local advisory councils have seen Bill 61 in its revised form. I doubt very much if the three incorporated centres in northern Saskatchewan have seen Bill 61 in its revised form, and I doubt very much if any of the various local organizations have seen Bill 61, and that would include people that are directly involved in local economic development initiatives like the Northern Contractors Association.

I doubt it very much if SANC (Saskatchewan Association of Northern Communities) has looked into this concept of Bill 61 in its revised form. I doubt very much if SLANG (Saskatchewan Association of Northern Local Governments) has seen Bill 61 in its revised form. And I doubt very much if the local traditional organizations have seen Bill 61 in its revised form. The trappers' association, the fishermen's federation co-operatives, and the wild rice harvesters' co-operatives, the various other organizations that we have, like the northern outfitters association, the northern teachers' association.

Then again, Mr. Speaker, he talks about the utilization of the renewable and non-renewable resources existent in the northern part of the province in order to build a sound economic base for the benefit of residents in northern Saskatchewan. But, then he goes on to tell the people in northern Saskatchewan that we are simply looking at viable, feasible projects. Well I tell the minister opposite that many of our traditional resource uses today are not viable and feasible to the extent that they would endorse your blessing to support and encourage those traditional resource uses, because you know very well, and this Legislative Assembly knows very well, that people in the northern administration district have been accustomed to that way of life.

They have been accustomed to that way of life and we can't expect them to maintain a reasonable livelihood from those uses, but we can certainly, as members of this Legislative Assembly, support and encourage those traditional resource uses, because for one reason they supplement the income of those people in the northern administration district.

They not only supplement the income of those people living in the North, but they also provide another means of retaining their culture, Mr. Minister. They retain a traditional way of life, and I hope that members opposite would be able to appreciate, would be able to understand some of that, because in my opening comment . . . The member, my colleague from Athabasca, and I, know what it is to live in northern Saskatchewan. We know because we've experienced the hardships of living in the North, and a great majority of our people have experienced the value of living in northern Saskatchewan. We have experienced the hardships - that way of life. I would hope that the members of this Legislative Assembly would give it some thought to be able to recognize it, and to be able to appreciate that way of life.

**An Hon. Member:** — Lawrence, is this a filibuster?

**Mr. Yew:** — No, it's not, chairman of the caucus for the government side of the House, Mr. Klein. It's not a filibuster, but it gives me an opportunity, and a sense of satisfaction,

to be able at least to relate to the members on that side of the House the disparities that exist in northern Saskatchewan. It gives me an opportunity, and I hope that you won't deprive me of that opportunity, and deprive the Northerners of that opportunity.

And finally, Mr. Chairman, the minister goes on in his letter to discuss and to state that as a result of this realignment, minimal disruption of staff is expected to occur in northern Saskatchewan. This letter was dated July 16, 1982, and in that last, the fifth closing comment of that letter, he says, 'And as a result of this realignment, minimal disruption to staff is expected to occur.' Well, I want to raise with the minister today that there was - and I want to dispute - that there was a maximum disruption of staff, a maximum disruption of services, and a maximum disruption of programs for the people living in the northern administration district, and just to point that out once again. It seems that members opposite tend to want to neglect or ignore comments like this one. It's written in black and white. Under the former administration, \$99.8 million for the North - down to \$64 million, and down today to \$18 million, \$18.6 million. That's a shame, Mr. Chairman - it is a crying shame.

And I also question the minister: there has been a considerable amount of staff dismissed from the Department of Northern Saskatchewan. Just recently, another 22 people dismissed. I want to know, Mr. Minister, what are the alternative employment and economic opportunities for those people that were dismissed? I say, and I said at the outset, and I've said it before, that your government is neglecting the North. Your government is neglecting the North, while on one hand it is your responsibility, it is your responsibility to help northern residents.

But I want to go on, Mr. Minister, and point out an example of how you have neglected your responsibility. We attended a meeting with local government that was represented by at least 33, 30 . . . Pardon me, let me correct that for the record, Mr. Chairman. This meeting was represented by 24 out of 36 local communities, which were represented by LACs and LCAs. Okay, at that meeting, people came into this conference with an open mind, with a spirit of co-operation. Okay. They wanted to discuss issues that were of prime importance to them. They wanted to discuss social, cultural and economic development issues. They wanted to discuss local government. But you perpetuated - and I've accused you of perpetuating confrontation at one point, at one time or another, and I just want to clarify that statement. I stated that you perpetuated confrontation on the basis that you did not answer any of their questions.

There were questions there in respect to the surface lease agreements. There were questions there in respect to the new bill that your government is proposed to introduce in this House, in this Legislative Assembly. There were questions there regarding housing programs. There were questions there regarding training and education. There was numerous questions, but rather than answer them in a direct fashion with an open mind and an open spirit of co-operation, you neglected to answer those specific questions. You neglected to answer those specific questions based on the fact that you had no answers. Why don't you face that, Mr. Minister? You had no answers.

I challenge you, Mr. Minister, and I challenge members of this Assembly, particularly the members of the Conservative government today, to come out with their self-sufficiency, economic development program for northern Saskatchewan. I challenge you. I challenge you to outline your program. I challenge you to wipe out the social and economic problems of northern Saskatchewan.

There are problems in northern Saskatchewan, Mr. Minister and Mr. Chairman. There are problems - grave problems. I've stated earlier during one or two debates in this legislature that your administration will leave behind the highest record of unemployment, and the highest record of welfare dependency, and the highest record of social unrest in northern Saskatchewan. And to go on . . .

Pardon me, Mr. Chairman. Not to belabour the point so strenuously as I have, but in order to get on with the work, I will be making some of my own suggestions with regards to the problems up in northern Saskatchewan. But to begin with, before I do, I want to raise a few questions with respect to the budget that is under review by the Legislative Assembly.

I want to begin, Mr. Chairman, with questions which relate to the minister's view in terms of the dismantling of DNS, in terms of the realignment process now that has been under way since this administration took office. I'd like to ask the minister how that process is today. Is it complete, or are there still some functions and activities that are still to be realigned with respect to the Department of Northern Saskatchewan? And I'll maybe begin with my line of questioning in that respect.

**Hon. Mr. McLeod:** — Well, Mr. Chairman, a couple of remarks just . . . I'm not sure just how many questions there were in some of the earlier remarks, but a couple of remarks in reply to that. First of all, I would say, as I've said to the hon. member before, and to his colleague from Athabasca, we on this side of the House certainly recognize the social problems in northern Saskatchewan; there is no question about that. We recognize the level of unemployment; we recognize the social problems of alcoholism and early drop-out from schools and all of those kinds of things. We don't deny that. I heard the member say, 'I challenge you to wipe out the social and economic problems of the north.' I would say that that's a fine statement for a rhetoric statement here in the Legislature. There's a member who, by his own statements, has said that he's lived there for a good number of years and I know that he has, and I know that he referred also to the member from Athabasca, and I know that he has lived in northern Saskatchewan for a long time, and they both know that I've lived in northern Saskatchewan for an awful long time. And I understand, as well, the problems that are there and that they're not to be wiped out in one fell swoop, and everybody would recognize that, and I think in fairness.

Now, the member made references to several programs or several steps that we've taken. First of all, the realignment of the North, saying that the people of the North are feeling confused with the realignment process. That's according to that member. I would say that that is not the case. That is not what we hear in many, many of the communities in northern Saskatchewan. He says that there was a great deal of staff disruption. I would say to the hon. member that the record is clear. The record has been clear since we took office less than a year ago now and we came to the decision that we were going to take that all-encompassing, overwhelming department that it had become . . . Hon. members opposite who were here before know very well that they were involved, and I forget the word . . . The word they used was 'decanting.' They were going to decant northern Saskatchewan, the department. No decanting I know is used in the wineries where you allow the dregs to fall to the bottom and so on, and that was the sort of thing they were doing. We changed that and we said we're not going to decant these departments; we're going to realign, and we're going to do it in a positive way, and we're going to accelerate the process that they had in mind because it was a process that had to go on so we could get on with the job with dealing with the issues of

northern Saskatchewan without the duplication of administration that was going on there for some period of time.

The hon. member makes reference to us cutting the size of the province in half, Mr. Chairman. We look at it in a much more positive way than that, and we say to the people of northern Saskatchewan, 'We have doubled the size of the province and you are now a part of Saskatchewan.' And many people in northern Saskatchewan when we tell them that are very happy to be that.

The hon. member also talks about the disparities of the communities in northern Saskatchewan. We know that that's true, and by being a part of this province and a full-fledged part of this province, and not stuck under one all encompassing department - we think that that's much better; much, much better.

I also notice that my hon. friend from Quill Lakes is into it again, talking about northern Saskatchewan, and it always makes me smile to see that, Mr. Chairman, and I'm sure it does you, as well.

The hon. member made some reference to what was called Bill 61 in the former session, that didn't make it; it died on the order paper and we've given the assurance that that bill will be reintroduced in a slightly revised form. Our intention is to have that reintroduced by the end of April or very close to that, if . . . You know, and I would ask you not to hold me to that particular date, the last day of April, but certainly very, very close to the end of April that bill will be here.

As well, I think some reference was made to the fact that there's a lack of consultation. That's certainly not the case either, and I'll dispute that, and people in northern Saskatchewan don't agree with that. We have had extensive consultation regarding the whole process leading up to the drafting of what was Bill 61. That consultation has continued and the revised form of Bill 61, once it's introduced here - certainly that is the place where it is to be introduced first - and when it's introduced here, a revised copy of that bill, certainly, and I'll give the member that assurance will go to every local government in northern Saskatchewan, and they know that and they've been assured of that.

And the last thing I would say, and this is something that needs to be taken special note of: I think there was some reference to the fact that the budget that is spent within that district, within the northern administration district as it has been known, and saying that there have been drastic cuts in that area. That is absolutely not the case. This particular budget shows, after the realignment process, through the Department of Social Services and of Health, and all of the other receiving departments that now have the mandate to deliver services in the North, as they do in the rest of the province.

**An Hon. Member:** — As they did.

**Hon. Mr. McLeod:** — In 1981-82, there was a budget of less than \$100 million, less than \$100 million in DNS, and in this particular budget there is \$102 million. There will be \$102 million spent in northern Saskatchewan, so it's an absolute fallacy to stand here and say that the money is not being spent in northern Saskatchewan as it always has been.

There will be services continued; there have been no services cut from northern Saskatchewan; all of the people . . . You say that there was great staff disruption. The

former department had a staff of somewhere in the order of 700 people; it's now, under this budget, down to 126 people and there has been very little staff disruption, and that would be attested to by everyone within the province who watches public affairs and the workings of government. And I'm sure if the hon. member would search his own heart he would know that's the case.

I will take a breath and I'll leave it for the hon. member to carry on with his line of questioning.

**Mr. Yew:** — In a general way, Mr. Chairman, the minister responsible for the northern administration district has stated that the record is clear. I said to the minister in charge to advocate on behalf of northern residents that certainly the record is clear. The record is clear, Mr. Chairman, and the fact that the budgets have been cut - \$99.8 million down to \$18.6 million - the record is clear, Mr. Chairman. You can see for yourself, the record is clear. The record is clear, Mr. Chairman, the record is clear.

And I want to remind the member from Regina North is it, that I can yell louder than you when it comes down to concern with respect to the disparities in northern Saskatchewan. I can yell louder than the minister that is responsible for that department as well as his colleague . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Oh, I yelled in 1982 on April 26th, that is why I got the hugest majority in the election. Right . . . oh yes. Because we proved that there were certain programs and services that were in northern Saskatchewan that were of importance to us. But, we also talked about being involved . . . But are we involved with this government?

Anyway, I want to ask the minister a few questions. He started off by stating that the record is clear, and he went on to discuss the decanting process that was initially proposed by the former administration. I want to tell the minister responsible for the North that the decanting process that was introduced by the former administration was a heck of a lot better than what is being introduced today. It was done in consultation, perhaps not with the majority of the northern population, but at least it was done in a consultation process with local government. Many people in the northern administration district knew that the decanting process was introduced at that point in time by the administration - by the bureaucrats that worked for the department. I say that with no feeling of alienation because I was one of those bureaucrats. I want to go on and say that that decanting process was questioned. It was questioned to the extent where 'Well, what is the government going to do? Is it going to eliminate DNS today, tomorrow, five years or 10 years down the line?'

And we stated at that point in time and I was in government. I was a . . . simply a resident of northern Saskatchewan. And my colleagues at the community level wanted to see decanting over a phase of . . . gradual phase of six, eight perhaps, 10 years at the most. That was acceptable to us; we didn't see DNS in the northern administration district as having total influence on us. Certainly not. I agree with the minister in that respect.

But the point that I want to argue with the minister and that administration that we have today, the Conservative government of this province, is that you've done it without consultation; you've done it without public participation on behalf of Northerners. You've done it in a phase of cutting everything down in a matter of five months. In a matter of five months, you've eliminated the department without getting proper feedback from the people that were affected, the people that were affected by the services and programs that you've cut back. Now you go on to state that the budget cuts

to Northerners is not the case. Well, Mr. Minister, I say to you: you can look at your records.

I refer back to our 1982 budget presented last March. There were major budget allocations there for economic development, major budget allocations there for local government, major budget allocations there for capital construction, for training and education. And I may remind the minister and the members in government that there was a major initiative there placed for northern Saskatchewan, for the native population. There was, in that budget, Mr. Minister, a northern and a southern economic development foundation for the native people. I ask the minister today, where is that native economic development foundation?

Rather than put emphasis in an area that the minister had, in his letter at least, stated that they were going to look after the economic self-sufficiency of the northern half of this province - rather than go ahead with this economic self-sufficiency, this paper states very bluntly where the priority of that Conservative government lies. Our budget, a couple of years ago, was \$2.3 million for economic development. It's down now to \$1.4 million.

Mr. Chairman, those records that we have in front of us, that the only instrument by which we can judge in terms of the performance of the Conservative government, are in front of us in black and white. They're submitted to this Legislative Assembly for all to see. They are also from the documents that we review on a day-to-day basis, are recorded on papers throughout the province, and you can see for yourself. And I have to question today where those priorities and those emphases and those recognitions of the social disparities, the economic disparities, are in this province. Because there has been no special priorities or budget allocations given.

But I want to ask the minister tonight: what is the economic development plan for northern Saskatchewan?

**Hon. Mr. McLeod:** — Well, Mr. Chairman, the member persists in discussing the fact that there have been some cuts and slashing and so on, of the budget in northern Saskatchewan. I pointed out clearly that in this particular budget, through the realignment process, through the Minister of Health who is very well received in northern Saskatchewan I might add, for the people who receive health services there . . . The Minister of Education, and just today at lunch I heard representatives of the northern school board stand in public and say to our Minister of Education, who is sitting over here tonight, how much they appreciated the quick way in which he responded, in which his department responded to specific concerns that they had, and that it was something that they were very, very impressed by.

Now, that isn't the sort of story you're telling here tonight. So what I want to point out to you, that that's what the people that are representing some of these local governments that you mention that have not been consulted and are feeling so left out - that's what they're saying themselves to us. Now, that happened today, just this very day at noon.

Now, as far as the cuts are concerned, I pointed out very clearly that we are spending in this government \$102 million in northern Saskatchewan. Your budget, any budget presented by the former administration, even under DNS, was not \$100 million. We can argue the process of realignment for a long time here. The fact is that realignment is something that did take place. The fact is that the health services in northern



Saskatchewan, to give an example, are now under the Department of Health, and the Department of Health which presumably, and which certainly does, have the expertise and the resources that should be in a department to deal with health services, whether it be in northern or southern or any part of Saskatchewan.

And that's why we've realigned and brought to your people - I could say that; your people are the people that you represent, your constituency - into the mainstream of this province. The same thing goes for education. The same thing goes for social services. The same thing goes for the various central agencies of government, government services and all of those things. We could see no reason to carry on with a duplication of all of the administrative services which was a great cost to government, regardless of whose party was in power. That sort of duplication is a great cost to the taxpayers of the province. So if our budget in fact has gone up, which it is - \$102 million as compared to less than \$100 million. You made the reference to \$99 million, I believe it was. It's gone up. And you take into consideration the savings for the duplication of administration services, and it augurs very, very well for people in northern Saskatchewan.

Now, all of that notwithstanding, as I've said to you before, as I've said to you before, we understand the particular social problems. We understand the problems of alcoholism and unemployment, and all of the things that very often do stem directly from unemployment, those social problems. But I say that my colleagues, the ministers in those other problems in the social development sector, are addressing those things very, very seriously, and they, as well, take those concerns to be very, very important. So I don't know what more I could say about that.

**Mr. Yew:** — Mr. Minister, you talk about health and education. That's an area that I really have no other alternative again but to dispute because of the fact that in the former administration the minister knows full well that a new hospital was approved by the former administration for the region around La Ronge.

But, in effect, there was a budget that was passed by this Assembly. Why was that project cut back? There was also a proposal to begin a nursing care home facility for the elderly. So I have to dispute the argument placed by us by the minister in charge of northern Saskatchewan and go back and tell him that the records prove themselves. The records speak for themselves.

I again want to get back to the initial question that I raised in this Assembly. I may have to repeat those questions for the minister. In terms of the realignment processes, Mr. Minister, are they now complete or are there still more functions and activities that are yet to be aligned?

**Hon. Mr. McLeod:** — Mr. Chairman, I would say that the realignment process is not complete, because as was stated clearly when we entered into this process and accelerated the process that the former administration had under way . . . We said we were going to accelerate it, do it much more quickly than what had been anticipated. I can't put a time frame on it because these last functions . . . The development of local government which the member has referred to and which I have referred to as well is an evolutionary process. We believe we're getting very, very close to some good agreement. I think we'll see that when the bill comes in, and I know the hon. member is

interested in that. So there's a process that we have left in the Department of Northern Saskatchewan because that process must be complete. In our minds that process must be complete before local government administration comes under a line department and becomes a part of the rest of the province.

There is the other function of economic development. I can't put a date on that either but that was another function that we left within DNS for that very good reason; we think that there would be some specific things that we would like to at least get under way before we realign with economic development, which is a province-wide emphasis that this government has entered into.

You heard my colleague from Regina South here talk about economic development in his new department as we went through the new reorganization bills today. I noticed in that discussion this afternoon that there was a little disagreement from yourself or any of your colleagues to the direction that we're going with our economic development strategy, province-wide, and we don't exclude northern Saskatchewan in any of them. We believe that northern Saskatchewan has very great potential in the whole of our economic development strategies.

So I can't give you a date, and I wouldn't pretend to say that I would know the date at which there would no longer be a DNS, but I can say that the ultimate goal certainly of this government would be that that department as a department would probably no longer exist and there may well exist in its place . . . This is not a final decision or anything, but there may well exist in its place some type of a liaison secretariat or something like that to be sure that northern concerns and specific concerns of some of our more remote communities are brought to the cabinet table. So that's about all I can say to you about that.

**Mr. Yew:** — In terms of the question, Mr. Minister, in terms of the realignment process, do you foresee at some point in time in the future the complete dismantling of that department?

**Hon. Mr. McLeod:** — Yes.

**Mr. Yew:** — Do you foresee the complete dismantling of services and programs currently administered for once? And, also, do you foresee the dismantling process being completed in terms of economic development?

**Hon. Mr. McLeod:** — Well, as I've said before, the dismantling of an administrative unit that carries out the programs on behalf of the people within the government - that's one question. But to dismantle the Department of Northern Saskatchewan certainly doesn't mean, as has been demonstrated in health and education and social services, and others that I've mentioned, it doesn't mean the dismantling of the services, so you're comparing apples and oranges. Certainly, we don't see any type of cutting back of the services available to northern people, and there have been no cut-backs in the services available to northern people. The only thing that has changed is that it's a different department that those same employees, by and large, are reporting to now. And there are some cost efficiencies in that and we don't apologize for cost efficiency. One of the reasons we came here is because we advocated that, and we talk about efficiency in the operations of government for delivering services for less cost to the taxpayers. We don't apologize for that, nor will we begin to.

**Mr. Yew:** — I don't suppose you have to apologize very much, Mr. Minister, because

when it comes right down to it, you didn't have any commitments to northern Saskatchewan to begin with. But in terms of a government, I must remind the minister that your government, yourself particularly, and that government, the cabinet that you have yourself aligned with, have a responsibility to the residents of this province. And I want to remind the minister opposite that there are today 30,000 people, perhaps less, maybe 28,000 people in the northern administration district that you are responsible for, as well as the rest of this province, the southern half of this province.

Sometimes during debates and questions in this Legislative Assembly, it seems to me that members opposite only recognize the province to be south of Prince Albert and south of Meadow Lake. I must remind the minister again that there is a population north of P.A. and north of Meadow Lake. There are people and there are people that are having problems, there are people that are having social and economic problems, and those problems you must recognize, because you have been placed with the responsibility to advocate and to look after the health and welfare of those residents. I told the minister at one time or another in a discussion in this Legislative Assembly, that I will remind you of that responsibility time and time again, and I don't intend to back down from that commitment.

Getting back to economic development, Mr. Minister, I want to raise the question: have you any intention of completely dismantling the economic development program for northern Saskatchewan?

**Hon. Mr. McLeod:** — Well, just to comment on the earlier remarks, you know as far as talking about the responsibilities here, I certainly accept that. I accept the responsibility that we have as a government. All of us accept that, our Premier accepts that, we as a government accept responsibility for all citizens of Saskatchewan. I would say to the hon. member, and I believe this as strongly as I believe anything, that you do your people no service - the people who live in northern Saskatchewan, or, as you continue to call it, the northern administration district, and as you also know, I know many of them personally - you do people of northern Saskatchewan no service by continuing to keep the line, what I have called both in the North and South, the jack pine curtain. You do no service to any people who live there by keeping that line and continuing to maintain that barrier and calling people who live south of - I forget the terminology used, now - south of Prince Albert and Meadow Lake and Nipawin or whatever . . . You do no service to people who live in the northern half of our province by continuing to build on that barrier that was created by your administration, and now allowing them to become a part of this province.

The most important thing that can happen for services, and we've seen it within our other departments . . . The most important thing that can happen for the delivery of good service to people in that area is that they become a part of the mainstream of the province. We believe that strongly, and that's exactly where we're going with this. And that's why it's been so well accepted in almost every community of northern Saskatchewan, with the possible exception of La Ronge, that maybe lost a little bit of, or stands to lose a bit of the size and status as the capital of the North - with that possible exception. And even in La Ronge now, there's a recognition that things are not happening as was suggested by . . . And I believe you were a part of that as well, during the heated election campaigns, and so on, and I don't disagree with that; we do the same thing. We do the same thing.

All of us as politicians get into the election campaigns, and we all have our own processes. Once that is over, and it's a year over now, and we all have to accept the

responsibility as legislators, to govern and to deal with people in a reasonable way. And if you continue with that disparity thing of Northerners versus Southerners and the rumour-mongering kind of thing about this government - what they'll do and what they'll cut and what they'll slash - you do your people no service. And I would say to you, to the hon. member, Mr. Chairman, that to get into that gloom and doom sort of attitude that we see emanating from that little corner of this legislature day in and day out, at a time when we have a strong economy, a stronger economy than there is in the other parts of the country . . . And the only thing that can help the northern people is as our economy will grow and develop, that that will augur very, very well for northern people.

And the weaker the economy is, and the more gloom and doom that emanates from you people, the harder it's going to be. So I would ask you in sincerity: get off that kick. Forget the election campaign and the rumours and all of the sort of stories that you once told around the North, and let's get on with working together to develop it.

**Mr. Yew:** — I want to . . . I'll say, Mr. Chairman, that I would probably want to endorse and agree with the minister with this response that he has given me - that I don't do any service to the people of the northern administration district by only simply pointing out the doom and gloom and the disparities. But, I have a reason for doing so because of the fact that this administration, that this Conservative government, has yet to prove itself a record. I stated that in my opening comments tonight - that you still have room to place your stamp in northern Saskatchewan.

And I also stated to you, Mr. Minister, that I challenged you to bring forth your self-sufficiency economic plan for northern residents. And until I see such specific, some specific achievements, or specific plans that are concrete, that are recognized and used to benefit those residents living in the northern administration district, I will never stop preaching the doom and gloom and the disparities of the North because that is factual information, Mr. Minister - that is factual information. And today, if you'd dispute that information, I ask you, Mr. Minister, I took a quick look at the stats today, and in February of 1982, we had 1,404 welfare cases in northern Saskatchewan as compared to your administration of 1,826 - an increase by 30 per cent.

Now you contend that I shouldn't talk about the disparities in northern Saskatchewan, but when we have figures like this, one must bring those problems out to the open. I look at the unemployment stats in northern Saskatchewan and they are significantly higher than that of southern Saskatchewan, and that . . . In many northern communities the unemployment rate at the very minimum, Mr. Minister, at the very minimum is 85 per cent unemployment - 85 per cent unemployment, and I wish that your colleagues would begin to recognize that. I wish that your colleagues in government, in cabinet, would begin to recognize that fact. At the minimum, 85 per cent, and at the maximum I would say in many of the smaller communities, at least 98 per cent unemployment.

Now, I would sincerely ask you, Mr. Minister, that you must have had a plan on July 16th when you wrote your memo to the people in your administration at the time regarding the five-phase plan that you had. But I don't want to go through the five phases. I want to be able to find out from you, and from your administration, what that economic self-sufficiency plan was directed for northern residents. You talked about northern residents in your memo, and I won't let you get off the hook on that particular one, Mr. Minister.

**Hon. Mr. McLeod:** — Okay. Mr. Chairman, the hon. member talks about our administration putting a stamp on the North, so whatever you want to call it. We think and we know . . . I think that we'll have our stamp on this province for some period of time as times goes on, and including the North. I would say also to the hon. member that I believe that when his reference is to our stamp on the northern part of the province, he is comparing us once again to the stamp that was left there by the former administration. I don't want to get into this much except to say that there were 11 years for their stamp to be placed on the northern part of our map. It's rather indelible almost, but we believe that we can remove it, and for the benefit of residents there, by the way.

I would pick up once again on the suggestion that I was making to the hon. member - and Mr. Chairman, I've know that member, I respect him for the way in which he represents his people here, up to a certain point - but I would pick up once again on the theme that I said to him before when he talks about unemployment statistics being higher than they are in the South. Yes, that's true, and they were higher two years ago, and they were higher five years ago, and they were higher nine years ago, and they were higher 11 years ago in the northern part of our province in the remote communities where we have some of the social problems we talked about earlier. We understand that. And I know the hon. member understands it. And that's what I'm saying to you: don't get tied into that doom and gloom sort of negative attitude that I see coming because that's not the attitude that you came to this House with. And you're not doing your people any service by developing that attitude now. You'll do a lot more service to your people by saying, 'Okay. We understand there's a great drop-out rate in the schools of northern Saskatchewan. We understand the need for retraining,' as my colleague, the Minister of Advanced Education and Manpower talked about. And I've heard you, in this House, talk about the sincere way in which that minister addresses schools and the training and retraining of people so that they can be ready for the jobs of this decade and of the future. And I don't mean jobs in some very nebulous types of projects which I won't get into now.

So what I'm saying to you is: come with some suggestions. You've said yourself, you've lived there. You've experienced some of the hardships. I must say that . . . Well, I won't get into that. I know many people who have as well. But they don't have that doom and gloom attitude and I would I just ask the hon. member: don't get into that too much.

Now the . . . Well, I'll leave it at that for a moment. I see the hon. member has some more questions to ask.

**Mr. Yew:** — Before, Mr. Minister, I get on with my line of questioning in terms of your economic development package for northern Saskatchewan, I noted that you have allotted perhaps not as much as the former government had allotted for northern Saskatchewan. But you certainly have allotted some dollars - nothing to be commended about, though.

I wanted to go back to your statement about the Minister of Education. Certainly I don't dispute your statement. I have my respect and I have and would again extend my cordial appreciation for his efforts. At least I got from the Minister of Education a specific write-up of what was appropriated for the northern administration district in terms of basic education: adult education, basic skill training. Northern Careers program, the native outfitters and the trapper training program. And I also got information in respect to the West Side, the North East and the La Ronge Community College and also the Athabasca region.

But I haven't had that courtesy extended to me by the minister that is responsible for the northern administration district, the minister responsible for DNS. My colleague and I probably have tons of paper coming from you to try to give us a clear insight as to what your plans are for the North and what you have been able to do to date. But I, at the same time, wonder if in fact you have done any service, if in fact you have advocated for the people of the northern administration district. And I've said it before and I'll say it again: that we are going to have to find a concrete evidence of your achievements, of your successes, in terms of dealing with the social and economic disparities of northern Saskatchewan.

Now I want to go back in specific terms. With respect to your budget, you have allotted for economic development \$1.4 million. I want to ask the minister, in terms of that program, what is the mandate of that program?

**Hon. Mr. McLeod:** — Okay. I've got the specific information regarding the, and I note that the hon. member refers to the grants for economic development on that side, I believe page 62, is that right? Page 62 of the estimate book, okay. On the mandate of that grant, and I'll give you that specific in a minute.

I would say one thing further regarding the strategy and the development of the strategy of the economic development, and I know I have said this to the hon. member before, I've said it to people in northern Saskatchewan before, and there's a very serious coming-to-terms that must take place in northern Saskatchewan with some of the people that have been involved in the traditional resource use.

I give you an example: for economic development to take place anywhere, which means jobs for people who live in the area, which as we've said in our earlier dialogue here about the unemployment problem and so on, in order for that economic development to take place there must be something built, something for somebody to work at. And in order for someone to build something concrete, they must have, we believe very strongly on this side, and we have seen the results of people not being allowed to own the land that it sits on, and I believe the people in northern Saskatchewan, a good number of people in northern Saskatchewan, must come to grips with that very serious sort of conflict. And I really believe that you agree with that, that there's a serious conflict as the economy changes, and we are in a changing economy especially in that area, remote area. And if someone is going to have jobs for the communities, there must be something built, and in order to have it built they must own the land that it's on.

In order to own the land that it's on, people that are traditional resource users for example, or at least whose grandfather was a traditional resource user, must be able to say, 'Well there's changing economy and my job will be different than my grandfather's job was.' And that's something that people throughout the world have come to grips with, and it doesn't happen overnight and we know we can't, you know that those kinds of changes and the understanding of those kinds of changes don't take place overnight. But I would say, you will do your people, you will do the people that you represent from your constituency, more service if you take that line and try to help with the understanding of that, than you will with complaining and complaining and complaining about somebody who is going to build something on grandpa's trap line that nobody's been on for the last 20 years. And that's extremely important and it's a long-term type of strategy.

Now, to get to your specific question regarding the 1.4 million and the grants for

economic development . . . The major portion of that - as I told you in the former budget process estimates just not too long ago it seems - the major portion of that is for the Special ARDA (Agriculture and Rural Development Act) grant program. It's for bridge financing regarding the Special ARDA program which is a good deal of federal money and there's cost-sharing in federal and provincial. This million dollars is there as bridge financing to give a jump-start to some of the programs that come under Special ARDA for native people.

There are other things - small-scale food program, wild rice industry, some development of some co-operative development for people in the communities with . . . Well, there are various things we might get into - fishing or whatever. And then there is room under that as well for community-initiated projects where people can come in and apply for a grant and if it's, as I said to you before and I will emphasize again - if the proposal is viable and feasible. Those are words that we don't apologize for telling people about either. Bring us with something that's feasible, something that's viable, something that has some long-term benefit to it, and we will look seriously at it. Don't come to us with Mickey-Mouse proposals that people will . . . that you'd be back with next year and next year and next year and next year again for the same kinds of money and there's nothing developing from it.

So, that's the mandate of it as per your specific question.

**Mr. Yew:** — Mr. Chairman, I must ask the minister then what he categorizes as Mickey-Mouse projects and programs. I want to ask him specifically: does he classify the traditional resource uses, such as commercial fishing, such as trapping, such as forestry, such as wild rice harvesting as Mickey-Mouse projects and programs?

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Hon. Mr. McLeod:** — No, certainly not and I made that very clear when I was giving the specific answer. I talked about the wild rice industry and I talked about the development of co-ops for example in the fishing industry. So, I don't include that, but as you will know if you admit you also know that there are some extremely capable . . . I don't know the word to use here. There are some people who have become very adept at filling out grant applications, and they've been nurtured by a former government for about 11 years and I must say by your cousins in Ottawa for years before that. I see the hon. member from Athabasca smiling and he knows many of them personally as well as I do. In fact, he's nodding his head now and I can see that. I appreciate the support.

Anyway, the hon. member also knows, Mr. Chairman, people who have become very adept at filling out these application forms and knowing how to deal with the various avenues of bureaucracy and so on, and I must say that they've done a very, very good job of it - if you can categorize the receiving of money for no reasonable type of endeavour as success. And there have been some that have done that and I know . . . Well, like I say, we all know some of them personally, and some of us know them better than others. Let's put it that way, and I won't say much more about that.

**Mr. Yew:** — Mr. Chairman, I'd like to get into specifics then and ask the minister: do you hope to diminish the role of the traditional resource users like, for an example, you have 534 active commercial fishermen in northern Saskatchewan. Do you hope to diminish those commercial fishermen which are now active in that industry and promote your tourism package rather than supporting and encouraging those people that have

barely made . . . I don't know how to phrase this, Mr. Minister . . . But people that have been for years and years actively involved in this industry but seem to have no significant impact into your administration - they would like to save their way of life, their only means of a livelihood, of an income. How does the minister see the role of the commercial fishing industry in northern Saskatchewan? Is your policy to diminish that role and put high priority in tourism rather than the traditional resource users?

**Hon. Mr. McLeod:** — No, it certainly is not our suggestion that those traditional resource use - and you use the specific example of commercial fishing - no, it's not our policy at all. In fact, we would like to do the opposite. We would like, and I have said to your colleague and I've said in this House several times when I was minister responsible for fisheries and wildlife and that sort of thing . . . Now my colleague, Mr. Hardy, has that responsibility. It's our policy, as a government, within the renewable resources side of things - and that's exactly where the fishing industry falls into, whether it be sport fishing or whether it be the commercial fishing side . . . We believe there's a very great need for the enhancement of the fish stock in the lakes, and that enhancement we believe, as well, will - and that's also a long-term type of a proposal as you will well know - but that enhancement of the fish stock can also help to alleviate some of the concerns and some of the conflict that inevitably arises between commercial fishermen on one hand, the traditional users of that resource, and potential users in the sport fishing side, as we develop another very important industry, tourism.

So it isn't our intention to reduce the commercial fishery - not at all. Where the commercial fishery is viable . . . And you will also know there are some lakes and there are lakes that are a good, a great distance from the markets. I know you're also very well aware of the problem we have with the distance from our commercial fishing lakes in northern Saskatchewan to Transcona, where the freshwater fishing marketing corporation does the processing. That's been an ongoing problem for an awful long time. It's dealing with a federal crown corporation which, as we all know, is not the easiest thing to do for anybody or any government - any provincial government. It's something that we're addressing on a continuing basis. And the short answer is certainly no. We would, in fact, rather than diminish, we would like to see us enhance the fishing industry to something that'll be a paying proposition. And part of the enhancing is to go out and develop markets and so on, which is our strategy for economic development for all parts of the province.

**Mr. Yew:** — Well, I certainly, for the record, Mr. Chairman, want to extend my appreciation for the fact that the minister has stated in this House that they don't want to diminish the traditional resource use in this province. However, there's been many a meeting out there in the province that have led to a great number of people in the northern administration district to dispute and get very concerned about your administration.

With respect to the wild rice harvesters in northern Saskatchewan, I understand, Mr. Minister, that you have some 420 permits, leases to wild rice harvesters in the northern administration district. My question is: you had an application here some time ago by the Keewatin Wild Rice Independent Co-operative Enterprises for buying shares into this new processing plant venture. What is the position of your administration to this effect?

**Hon. Mr. McLeod:** — Well yes, I know of that: I believe the Keewatin wild rice co-operative, I believe two Indian bands, I believe one at La Ronge and I'm not sure, I think it



was the Peter Ballantyne Band, as well as some private developer, a private developer, at least one and maybe several. There is a proposal for development of a wild rice processing plant which is something people have thought about and talked about for an awful long time in northern Saskatchewan. And now, under this government it is now almost a reality, and will become a reality under this administration. Those are the kinds of things that we think will be long lasting and in fact, will be long lasting and viable for a good length of time.

We hope that this processing plant that's proposed for La Ronge will be the first of several in the northern part of this province. And we also know that it's one thing to harvest wild rice as it is any crop, and it's another thing to process it - and that's fine - but the ultimate end must be marketing, and we know we have to go out and develop some markets, and that we're actively pursuing that and developing markets and there appears to be a good deal of potential for wild rice. As has been talked about for a good length of time by the former government that there was very little action, now there's action in all ends but we also look at all ends of the equation. The harvesting is one side; the processing which is coming about in La Ronge and then the marketing which we think is a very important and in fact is the ultimately important. We must sell out product or there's not much use processing or harvesting it.

**Mr. Yew:** — Mr. Chairman, I didn't get the initial response there, Mr. Minister, and my apologies. But, I raised the question: you had an application for \$25,000 - understand to begin with that you have extended to the various wild rice harvesters, harvester groups, extend \$25,000 to various bands and that is certainly commendable. That is certainly commendable, Mr. Minister.

I understand also that you have received an application by the Keewatin wild rice harvester's co-operative for 25,000 to enable that group to buy shares into this new venture. Have you extended your approval for that \$25,000 or haven't you?

**Hon. Mr. McLeod:** — Well, I believe that that application went to my colleague, the Attorney-General, who's in charge of the native Affairs Secretariat here in the government. But I will say to you that I am aware of an application coming in from the Keewatin wild rice co-operative and it's somewhere in the mill of government and being processed. I can't give you any more indication than that just now.

**Mr. Yew:** — What then, Mr. Minister, is the status of this venture in northern Saskatchewan? Do you see the Keewatin wild rice harvester's association as taking an opportunity and being a part of this new venture? Do you feel that there is still time for that new co-operative to join this new venture?

**Hon. Mr. McLeod:** — Well, I'm not sure of the exact stage that it's at but I think that there is time, certainly. I think there's time for . . . You mentioned that group specifically, but I think there's time for other shareholders or whoever may well be interested in putting some money into the venture. And there are a good number of people who are interested, it seems, in the proposal. So, sure, I think there's still more time, but I will reiterate again that I'm not exactly sure where that sits and I would be . . . Well, I just can't say anything more than that because I'm not sure.

**Mr. Yew:** — Getting back to the economic development . . . I believe we're still on the economic development branch, Mr. Minister. In respect to the fisheries sector of that program, what is the involvement with respect to the transportation subsidies that was

available to the commercial fishing industry up North? Is that still being maintained and encouraged by your government?

**Hon. Mr. McLeod:** — I will say that yes, the fish transportation subsidy program still is in existence but I will point out to you that it's with the Department of Parks and Renewable Resources, with fish transportation, as is the whole fishing industry, wildlife, forestry and those renewable resources. Okay? But it certainly does still exist and it's our proposal that it would continue to exist.

**Mr. Yew:** — What is the current involvement then, with the freshwater fish marketing corporation, Mr. Minister?

**Hon. Mr. McLeod:** — Our department once again has no involvement with that, but the government, through the Department of Parks and Renewable Resources, will have the same involvement as what was there under the former administration. And I know there's . . . You know, we've looked at the whole involvement of freshwater in our province. Well, in fact I know that nothing has changed and the status remains the same as it has for a number of years.

**Mr. Yew:** — With respect to the . . . Some time ago, we questioned the northern, the NEED program. There was a proposal approved by the federal government for the various provinces, and in it, there was a fairly large sum of money appropriated for Saskatchewan. I believe this was moneys appropriated for a three-phase program, the renovations of plant equipment, the docks, the harvesting of ice for various lakes in northern Saskatchewan. I wonder if, Mr. Minister, you may give this Assembly some information with respect to the venture of that program by this province, what has been appropriated and used with respect to that program by the commercial fishing industry,.

**Hon. Mr. McLeod:** — Well, as far as that program is concerned, if you mention the NEED program, which is federal. In our particular government, the program we have is, I believe, called JOBS. It's administered by my colleague, the Minister of Social Services. Since it doesn't come under the auspices of our department, we don't have those kinds of statistics here with us tonight. But, you know, to make things go along, and I know you could ask those questions in Social Services estimates, but also, you know, I would undertake to provide you with whatever you need as it relates to the North. I know that it will be a couple of ministers, but I mean we'll undertake to provide you with whatever you ask for there - well, up to a certain point.

**Mr. Yew:** — You said, 'up to a certain point.' Well, I certainly don't want to get any information that is not necessary, Mr. Minister. I want to take you up on your offer though and request for written information in respect to the question I raised in the legislature some time ago. You stated to me at that point in time that \$320,000 had been earmarked for various fisheries activities in northern Saskatchewan related to the rebuilding of plant, dock facilities, and also the harvesting of ice. I wonder if you might be able to provide me with that information at a later date.

Also, I want to go on with respect to economic development, Mr. Minister. I noted that sawmills in Weyakwin, on the north-east side, sawmills at Cumberland House, and at La Ronge had burned down, and that people at the local level were concerned about replacing such projects to accommodate the need for employment, training and employment in those areas.

I wonder, Mr. Minister, if you can inform the House what has been done to date with respect to the replacement of those projects.

**Hon. Mr. McLeod:** — Well, I'm informed at the present time we are operating as we have in the past with those various mills. I think you specifically mentioned Weyakwin, the one that had burned some time ago now in fact, and Chisholm logs are being produced there now, it's my understanding, and it's back in operation. I believe you mentioned the La Ronge Sawmill, Cumberland House and so on. They're operating and continuing to saw lumber.

**Mr. Yew:** — Can the minister advise me how many people are employed on each sawmill the, and what length of an operational season your department sees the mills operating?

**Hon. Mr. McLeod:** — Okay, the specifics on that and . . . There are direct jobs in the mills, and there are certainly some spin-off jobs in hauling of the product to the mills and so on. So I could just read those down: Cumberland House Sawmill - 7.5 person-years of employment, Green Lake Sawmill - 17 person-years, La Ronge Sawmill - 4 person-years, Weyakwin-Chisholm Mill - 3 person-years, six . . . I can't make it out, but anyway it's three people working in the actual plane, the direct jobs. Meadow Lake Planer Mill - 9.7 man-years, 240 semi-loads of hauling there for example, and the planer mill at La Ronge, 40 semi-loads of hauling and 2 person-years of employment.

So the mills are operating much as they have, and I should point out to the hon. member that, and I don't think I have to point out to the hon. member the very severe downturn in the forest industry, whether it's in the economic development branch of Northern Saskatchewan in some of these mills, or whether it's within Sask Forest Products or within MacMillan Bloedel or Simpson Timber. The whole industry within our province and throughout the world as a matter of fact is in a severe downturn. We see some light in that area. I'm told by my colleague, Mr. Hardy, that there's some room for hope in that area. Then again, it may well be that it depends on which economist you listen to on which day, as we all know. So we're operating as usual up till now.

**Mr. Yew:** — Thank you, Mr. Minister. I wonder if I may be able to get that information in writing, and also following that, I want to ask what other projects does the economic development branch sponsor or support at present?

**Hon. Mr. McLeod:** — Okay, the specific answer to that is: we support through the way in which we see our goal, as that of a catalyst in some of these things. I'll give you an example of something that we have done for several communities in northern Saskatchewan through basically just a change in policy that made so much common sense and it just wasn't there before, under the former administration. And that was that the former department of finance wouldn't allow money under Northlands agreement, which as you'll know, is a federal cost-sharing agreement, to go into projects that were administered by crown corporations. And what we have done and just by the change of policy and through some co-operation between our Minister of Finance and my colleague here, the minister responsible for Sask Power and myself, the acceleration of the construction of the northern power grid system to those communities: Patuanak, Dillon, Michel, St. George's Hill, and Pinehouse - total cost \$3.5 million, cost shared by SPC and the federal government, under the Northlands agreement. And, these projects will create about 50 northern jobs.

Those are the kinds of things that we see our economic development branch doing,

recognizing where there are areas that there are some jobs can be created, and where some long-term benefit will result, and certainly no one will argue that the extension of the power grid to some of the communities, is a long-term benefit. Wild rice processing, which I just mentioned earlier, we're actively investigating that to the point where, as I said just a little earlier, there will be, you know, barring some very unforeseen thing, there will be a wild rice processing facility in La Ronge. So, sure we're supporting, as I said to you before, we're supporting viable and feasible projects, that will have long-term benefit.

**Mr. Yew:** — I started raising questions with respect to the economic development program, Mr. Minister, in respect of what the mandate of this program is. Now, we've outlined some of the objectives and some of the involvement that the program has been actively involved in. I want to ask the minister whether or not he thinks, or whether or not his government feels, that this program is sufficient at present, and whether or not this is the program that he has always continuously referred to in terms of establishing a self-sufficiency economic base for northern Saskatchewan?

**Hon. Mr. McLeod:** — Well, I guess, you know that the short answer would be that I don't think there's enough activity on in northern Saskatchewan, in terms of economic development. I certainly don't think there is enough activity taking place that would create long-term jobs, and so on. We stated that before. I think as far as what we as a government are doing, in terms of direct expenditure of money and so on, I think that, yes we are doing enough, because I don't see it as our role to do that.

But, we won't rest at that, we think that there are, and we will continue to pursue avenues, and pursue projects that can have some long-term benefit. We will continue to do that, and we see that as our role, certainly, we see that as our role as a catalyst, as a facilitator to get things to happen. And, you know, that shouldn't come as a surprise to anyone, because we see that as our role throughout the province, in an economic development strategy that has been reiterated by our Premier many times, and by my colleague, the Minister of Economic Development and Trade and others.

When we say that very little in the economic development field will happen and that's something that I know that you . . . you know, I'm speaking now, Mr. Chairman, directly to the hon. member, but I know the hon. member has been to some extent nurtured on this idea that economic development is just a cliché, that's there to talk about how many government dollars will be spent. Well, there's no economic development in the expenditure of government dollars or the recycling of tax dollars within our own economy. We believe that strongly, and that's not what we see as our role in economic development.

Having said that, we do know that there's a little jump start needed for some of the more remote areas, and that's why we recognize the economic development branch of DNS as something, at this stage at least, a little different than the approach that we would take in the South, and that's why we will be opening the economic development loan fund with some different and more stringent guide-liens, but certainly, we will be opening that for the benefit of communities. That's why we have this grant fund, which provides bridge financing for Special ARDA projects. So, I guess really, that's all I can say. But I guess in honesty, no one. You can always say that there's always more we can do, and there's certainly a good deal more we intend to do.

**Mr. Yew:** — That slogan that you just mentioned a while ago there, Mr. Minister, is quite popular with your leader, Mr. Devine. I wish that he would use that to a more

serious tone and expression and commitment when it comes down to northern Saskatchewan. Because the people in the North are no different from people in the South, and I just want to reiterate what some of your slogans have been. And it seems to me that when we raised the question about the problems in northern Saskatchewan, you come back to us and state: 'Well, the people up there are no different than the people in the southern administration district.'

But when it comes down to serious economic development for those communities - for those particular communities, communities that want to expand or try to build an economic base for the future of the communities, for the future of their families and children - it seems that, Mr. Minister, and you may dispute this, it seems that you have no self-sufficiency economic plan for the North.

Am I correct or am I to be disputed?

**Hon. Mr. McLeod:** — Well, if you continue to carry on that line of gloom and doom . . . You mentioned the slogan that our leader uses often, and I said that to you in another way a little while ago that . . . Listen to it carefully and maybe go to your constituents in northern Saskatchewan and let's talk in some positive terms, as I've said to you before. And I know that you're not by nature a negative type of a fellow. So I would say, Mr. Chairman, to the hon. member that let's get together here, and any suggestions that you might have with your firsthand knowledge be sure to get them to me. Perhaps by a very short time we can nurture you in a philosophy that would say, let some people with some risk capital go into the North and let's develop something so that there can be some jobs for the people of your home community of Jans Bay, for example, and others.

And that's extremely important to us and as I know it's important to you. So, yes, we have a strategy and that strategy is that there must be some type of a climate in northern Saskatchewan as there must be a climate within this whole province for investment capital to feel comfortable here, or investors to feel comfortable about taking their venture capital and putting it into projects.

**Mr. Yew:** — I want to go on, Mr. Minister, in terms of the realignment again. Just one final question in terms of a realignment process that you have adopted and the expedient way that you have adopted such a process with very minimal involvement of the people, and very minimal consultation with the people, I must say.

And I want to ask - just recently there were another ten people dismissed in the department. I want to say to you, Mr. Minister, that those people will be looking for work, no doubt. I want to ask you in respect to your responsibility for the north, what do you foresee them as taking on in terms of alternative work?

**Hon. Mr. McLeod:** — I believe, Mr. Chairman, what the hon. member's referring to are some positions that were abolished within our department as part of the budgetary process. There were nine - not 10. My understanding is that a number of these people have bumping rights under the union agreement and so on, and a number of them may very well be moving into other departments because of their seniority, etc. And other than that, there's little I can say, except to reiterate once again to you that we ventured into a major undertaking to realign a large and all-encompassing department, and through all of that I will say again - and I think there will be no one here who will dispute - that it has happened with a very, very minimal disruption in staff and personal disruption for individuals.

And, sure I . . . We look at a government of 29,000 people or something, and it's the numbers that you people, that yourself and your colleagues continue to bring up the numbers like nine and eight and seven people . . . Certainly we feel a compassion for those individuals, but on the other hand, through the savings that we have in the budgetary process of our government, we were enabled to create some very, very good programs. In job creation, we talked in terms of 4,000 jobs created here and 2,000 jobs created there. And so when you compare those kinds of numbers, we think that the administration of this government is going along very, very well and some very great cost efficiencies have been realized.

**Mr. Yew:** — I was quite amazed that you didn't give me that line about the private sector taking into account the people that have been dismissed, and hiring those people, because I was going to get back at you, Mr. Minister, and find out what those economic spin-offs have been in terms of the private sector in northern Saskatchewan. Because I have seen probably nothing in terms of any economic spin-offs from the private sector; rather, it's reverse.

From what I hear happening at the Nipawin hydro project development, there's been quite an influx of people from Alberta, Ontario, and people from the United States taking advantage of those job opportunities, whereas prior to this date, the Minister of Labour had quoted me a figure of somewhere . . . 95 to 98 per cent of northern content in terms of the labour, in terms of the training and employment practices. But, anyway, I won't belabour that point.

I want to go on, Mr. Minister, with respect to the surface lease agreements in northern Saskatchewan. Has there or has there been no changes with respect to Cluff Lake in terms of the surface lease agreements?

**Hon. Mr. McLeod:** — Well, there was a rather rambling suggestion there. And I believe the Nipawin power project and some of these were mentioned. The Nipawin power project, I know, is a major development for our province - a major creator of jobs, an excellent project. There's no question about that. I am informed that there will be something in the order of 1,100 people working there this summer, residents of Saskatchewan, and I think most, and I'm not sure of the percentages, but a great number of those people, we hired right here from our province. There'll be a pay-roll in our province that wasn't here last year. It's excellent. There's no question about it. And once again, rather than to divide the province into fragments and so on, what we say is that if the people are working and the pay-rolls are here, and the cheques are cashed, and people are working, it certainly augurs well for the economy. And when the economy is doing well, certainly people in all corners of the province are doing well.

As far as specific northern projects, there's a proposal for an expansion at Cluff Lake, for amine expansion at Cluff Lake and the Amok site. There is an expansion under way and a surface lease agreement's been signed with Eldor Resources, formerly Gulf Minerals, at Rabbit Lake. The Key Lake project is under way and going. I'm not just sure of the number of people working there now, but I know it's a major project. I don't think, like I say . . .

Once again, while we understand that there is acute unemployment in many northern communities, we also think it's a disservice. And the hon. member, Mr. Chairman, does a disservice to the perception of northern Saskatchewan and that great expanse of the best of this province, in my view, and I'm sure yours. You do a disservice to it to give the

gloom-and-doom attitude that there's nothing going on, because there are some very substantial projects under way there and those substantial projects translate into a substantial number of jobs.

**Mr. Yew:** — I want to reiterate to you again, Mr. Minister, that I dispute the allegation that you made just a while ago that I simply do a disservice in terms of pointing out the gloom and doom in northern Saskatchewan. I'm not simply pointing out the gloom and doom in northern Saskatchewan, Mr. Minister. I am simply pointing out the facts that there is high unemployment in northern Saskatchewan, that there is a high welfare case-load in northern Saskatchewan, that there are serious doubts and serious concerns about the adequacy of government services and programs in northern Saskatchewan. I just want to make that point clear.

Getting back to my original question, one that the minister hasn't responded to in terms of my question, which was referred to the Cluff Lake project . . . I raised the question with respect to the status of the surface lease agreement at Cluff Lake and what the status is. Is the minister responsible for northern Saskatchewan prepared to state at this time if in fact he will make changes to the surface lease agreement at Cluff Lake? I'm not talking about Key Lake or Rabbit Lake or any of the other mines. I'm talking specifically about Cluff Lake for the time being.

**Hon. Mr. McLeod:** — The Cluff Lake surface lease remains in effect.

**Mr. Yew:** — Do you or do you not foresee any changes with respect to that surface lease agreement, Mr. Minister?

**Hon. Mr. McLeod:** — As the hon. member will know - and I will, by necessity, refer to the Eldor Resources surface lease agreement that we have signed very recently - we think it's a little different direction that what has been taken by the former government and still, through the section 3 of that agreement, guarantees jobs or augurs well for the employment of northern people as that Eldor lease does for the people of the Athabasca basin. I would say that, sure, there could well be some changes in the Amok surface lease agreement at Cluff Lake. But those will, you know . . . We will wait for a request from the mining companies for a reopening of the thing and look at it. I would give the assurance to the hon. member, as I will to all members of the House, that when we look at that and at the whole concept of surface lease agreements . . . We are looking at them in our study of the regulations and the burdensome regulations that are around government and that have been built up over a good period of years. So in a deregulation process, we look at those lease agreements as well and they could well be reopened for some little different direction.

**Mr. Yew:** — Initially, I was pleased that some indication there in some words that you uttered there, Mr. Minister, that the surface lease agreement for Cluff Lake would remain intact as is. And I would certainly hope that the government of the day would agree with your initial statements. However, if you in fact, in conjunction with the mining firm, discussed the possibilities of changing those surface lease agreements with Cluff Lake, do you then dispute the fact that we have a stringent, a very tough and very specific agreement there with respect to northern residents and the employment of such? And I'll just name a few. I have here the surface lease agreement with respect to the existing mining operations. The one in question is, 'All first-year apprentices must be Northerners.' Secondly, 'At least 15 per cent of all work in apprenticeable trades, such as electrical, carpentry, plumbing, must be done by Northerners.' Third, 'At least 10 per cent of all administrative work must be done by Northerners.' And finally,

‘At least 60 per cent of all work in non-apprenticeable trades such as heavy equipment operation, iron work, labourers, must be done by Northerners.’

Is the minister disputing the current surface lease agreement then, with the Cluff Lake mine?

**Hon. Mr. McLeod:** — Well, I would say as far as the Cluff Lake mine goes, I believe there’s an application to the Department of Environment for environmental impact, for that process to take place for an expansion of the Cluff Lake mine by Amok, zone (b) or the second phase, or whatever it’s called. And there will be some negotiation there for a surface lease agreement for that aspect. The hon. member read off some figures and some quotas, and so on that are part of the existing surface lease agreement dealing with Amok. I’m not really prepared to get into the details of that right now, but I would reiterate to you what I said earlier: should Cluff Lake approach us with specific proposals or with the request that we reopen the negotiations or open the surface lease for some relooking, I think we would accept that, we would accept the concept of doing that.

And we could get into a long discussion here I’m sure, regarding the pros and cons of how - not the ultimate goal, because I believe our ultimate goal is the same, and that is to employ as many people from the local areas as possible. That’s a goal certainly, because there’s a training aspect there. But the method whereby your administration, who believed that you could legislate everything from who you must hire to morality and everything else, to the way in which our administration would approach that, and that is in the co-operative, reasonable approach with companies that are hiring people and that are providing employment. So we can get into an awful long discussion about that, and I don’t believe we’ll come to any resolution of it here in these estimates. But I will give you the assurance that one of our goals as well, as well as your stated goal, is that we employ local people and that that employment is for the benefit of local communities. And I won’t say any more than that because I could get into a fairly long discussion about it.

**Mr. Yew:** — No doubt my colleagues will want to get into discussion as well with respect to the surface lease agreements, Mr. Minister, in terms of the Rabbit Lake mining firms as well as the Key Lake one, and the one that you mentioned just a brief moment ago. And no doubt that we will have some discussions at a later date as well.

But my concern, using that as an example, was the fact that this was raised at a meeting of northern local governments. And again, just the other day a member, or the chairman, of this Saskatchewan Association of Northern Local Governments stated a dire concern that northerners will be subjected to perpetual welfare. Well, I’ll go on to state the content of that paragraph: ‘We are concerned that the kids will grow up to be perpetual welfare recipients,’ says Mr. Blackman.

Certainly you have your reservations about the leadership of that association, Mr. Minister, and I recognize that. But I must also tell you, Mr. Minister, that that association represents 30, which is about 80 per cent of the northern communities. And certainly, Mr. Chairman and Mr. Minister, when the association voices concern about a certain project or certain issue in northern Saskatchewan, regardless of what the association’s politics are, there are at times very serious issues that are raised. And at times if we differ in our politics we must take into account the seriousness of those allegations.



And I want to raise with respect to the issue that was raised yesterday, or the day before, a question with respect to those mining ventures.

I want to go on, Mr. Minister. With respect to the health services in northern Saskatchewan, the minister will know that a large amount of the health programs and health services in northern Saskatchewan were under the Department of Northern Saskatchewan. And I note from your budget presentation here that there is nothing allocated here for health services and programs. My question to the minister being responsible for northern Saskatchewan is: do you have any intention of maintaining the existing programs in northern Saskatchewan like the community health worker program?

And I also want to get . . . I see the Minister of Health raising a question or two there, or raising some concern . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Well, someone did. Maybe the member for Moosomin, I don't know.

I may ask also - the La Ronge Hospital - what state of the administration of your government, what is the state of that La Ronge Hospital? . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . I raised two questions. I'll leave it at that for now.

**Hon. Mr. McLeod:** — Well, I'll say to the hon. member that the specific questions about the health worker program and so on . . . And I know when we first started this system tonight in the estimates, the hon. member said something about the people of northern Saskatchewan being confused by the realignment process. It's not been my experience in talking to them; it's not been the experience of the Minister of Health when he talks to the people in northern communities about health; it's not been his experience or mine that the people in northern Saskatchewan are confused about it, but I now have it confirmed that the hon. member for Cumberland is very confused about this whole situation. And I don't know, I guess I extend my sympathies.

But I would say that if you have questions about the La Ronge Hospital for example, if you have questions about the northern health worker program, about all services that come under the auspices of Health and the expertise that the Health department has for southern residents as well as northern, then ask my colleague the Minister of Health. And as you well know, he'll have a very succinct and clear answer for you.

**Mr. Yew:** — I caught an accusation that the minister stated just a while ago that I was confused about certain services and programs. I want to tell the minister responsible for northern Saskatchewan that I am a bit frustrated at the contents of your budget seeing as how there is a realignment of the department. And I must say that you have at least 20 pages where a portion of the subvote was also included in the vote DNS. I take for example here Advanced Education and Manpower. Certainly, Mr. Minister, I have to say that I am, and the people of northern Saskatchewan are a bit confused with respect to the various areas of the North that is emphasized here in your budget. It's not as clear and concise as the original administration had for the northern administration district in terms of the budget allocations.

I also wanted to tell the minister that in terms of health and medical staff in northern Saskatchewan, over the last decade that health and medical staff has tripled in northern Saskatchewan. And in terms of the community health worker program, we had nine communities serviced by that program in the past year. Now I want to know

from the minister: is that program being expanded . . . First of all, is it being maintained or is it being expanded or is it being deleted?

**Hon. Mr. McLeod:** — With respect, Mr. Chairman, I would say that this is one of the things that the realignment process was meant for. So we didn't have all-encompassing, every aspect of government under one minister and one department where it was unmanageable. That's what you guys had. That's what we don't have any more. So if you have questions about Health, ask the Minister of Health, please. And that's really all I can say. I can't tell you. What I will say in a general way about services and programs in the North . . . You say that health staff tripled over a period of years. I will say to you that there have been no cuts in services for health, there have been no cuts in services for social services, there have been no cuts in services in education - any of those areas - and we saw that in the budget. And if you have questions about Health, ask my capable colleague, the Minister of Health.

**Mr. Yew:** — I certainly will be asking them, Mr. Minister, when the estimates come up for Health - the areas that I've raised, the dental programs for northern Saskatchewan, the community health centres for Sandy Bay and Pinehouse.

I want at this time, Mr. Minister, I want to raise a question with respect to the perishable food transportation subsidy that we had with the former administration for five fly-in communities, five remote, isolated communities. Does this fit in with your department? Do you have any say in terms of that aspect of the program that was there prior to your administration?

**Hon. Mr. McLeod:** — No, I believe that I answered a similar question in the estimates, the last estimates that we did here. And it was exactly the same thing. And that program is administered by the Department of Health as it was by the health services branch of DNS formerly. But now it's in the Department of Health.

**Mr. Yew:** — I want to raise a question with you. I know this is not in your department but, Mr. Minister, I can't help but raise it again because of the importance of that particular project. Does the minister agree with the statements made on February by the *DENOSA* published by your own department, that the major problems at the La Ronge Hospital are a small underequipped lab, out-of-date X-ray equipment, which is not good enough for accurate diagnosis, and an inadequate out-patient department. Do you agree that there are inadequate facilities for isolation and no proper recovery room, and that there are not enough maternity beds for the 180 or so maternity cases per year? I want to raise that question with you. Do you agree that we need a new hospital for that region that is in question right now?

**Hon. Mr. McLeod:** — Well, first of all, you quote from *DENOSA* magazine, and the views represented in *DENOSA* aren't necessarily the views of our department. I'm not sure if they used to be the views of the department when it was a propaganda tool, but it isn't now. And secondly, once again it's a concern for the Department of Health, but I believe that there are many areas in Saskatchewan that need upgrading in terms of health services, in terms of nursing homes, and in terms of ambulance service - in terms of all of these things. Various of my colleagues have been conducting studies; I know the member from Moosomin conducted a study regarding ambulance service, and very well done, and the report came in and we've acted on it to some extent already.

All of those social programs, certainly there's room, and in fact had your administration not just talked about those things for so long, and had in fact acted on some of those

facilities and infrastructure, we wouldn't be in the situation where we're in such dire need. So I would say sure, that there are places in Saskatchewan that need new facilities, and there also is the reality of a recessionary time and the reality of a budget that's in a deficit position, the reality of some downturn in the oil economy, all of those things. But as soon as that economy turns around and we have our priorities straight, which is something you didn't do either, and we will be looking after many, many of those facilities.

**Mr. Yew:** — I'd like to turn now to local government, Mr. Minister. And again, the facts speak for themselves in terms of your priorities for local government in the northern administration district.

You stated in your letter of July 16th that you placed high priority on local government, high priority on economic self-sufficiency. But, again the records speak for themselves. The former administration had \$6.5 million allocated for local government, for northern revenue sharing. Your budget allocation last year was 4.8; now there is no significant change at this point in time. Do you have \$4.9 million allotted here for local government? I want to ask the minister with respect to a revenue-sharing formula for northern Saskatchewan: can he advise this Legislative Assembly what the amounts will be for each community? What amounts will be available for each community and when will he make the announcement?

**Hon. Mr. McLeod:** — I would say to the hon. member you mention \$4.9 million. We believe that's a very, very substantial amount for revenue sharing that will come under the . . . once the new northern municipalities act is passed. \$4.9 million in revenue sharing is a very sweet pot compared to, you know, equivalents in the South, and that's fine, and we understand that because of the northern factor that's necessary and the low tax base, and so on, which I've talked about on many occasions with local government representatives from northern Saskatchewan.

You're asking for a specific list - how much money available to each community. I'm not in a position to give you that, but I will say this: that I will be giving that to each of the individual communities once the bill is passed. I once again give you the assurance that it's our intention to have that bill introduced here very close to the end of this month, and like I say once again, don't hold me to that. If it's the 4th or 5th of May, well, so be it. But, we're going as quickly as possible with a few little amendments, and we'll have the bill there. If you people don't hold it up in any undue way, we'll have the bill finished and the revenue-sharing project can take place. We'll be informing each community of what they're eligible for, and at the same time, we'll inform the hon. member and his colleague who represent those two constituencies.

**Mr. Yew:** — Thank you very much. I understand, then, you'll be providing us with clearer details in terms of the revenue-sharing program for northern Saskatchewan.

I want to go on, Mr. Minister, and ask you a question with respect to the former administration. I was not with the former administration, in terms of being a cabinet member or a back-bencher or whatever, but I did recognize the fact that the former administration advocated very strongly and very strenuously on behalf of minority groups such as we have in this province. I say minority groups because of the fact that the North seems to be a very small minority with your administration. The former administration had proposed a \$55.8 million program with respect to a revenue-sharing formula. Will the minister agree then that in fact your budget allocation today is much less than that \$55.9 million that was there earmarked for the northern

administration district to promote and develop local government?

**Hon. Mr. McLeod:** — Well, the most significant difference between what was proposed by your former colleague and my predecessor and so on, is that we don't agree and never will agree with the concept of a regional government concept which was proposed under the 55-point-something million. We don't see the need for the regional government concept, because as it was proposed under the Options '80 paper and on the former proposed municipalities act, the regional government concept, what it really did was give the Minister of Northern Saskatchewan far more discretionary power over the operations of communities that he was professing to be providing with autonomy. And so I don't see any need for that, and we as a Progressive Conservative Party and a Progressive Conservative government certainly don't think that if we're going to talk about autonomy, we talk only one other thing that goes with that, and that's responsibility. Those two things go hand in glove, but the minister and the government getting involved in the administration of the new councils and the communities - we don't see any need for that and so we pulled out the regional concept and that was a saving, and I say this, a saving to the taxpayers of the province, of \$10 million - \$10 million that wasn't necessary just for a power trip for the minister and for the former government. Besides that, it was a saving in terms of the development of responsibility and autonomy for residents of northern communities. So it's been good on two counts.

**Mr. Yew:** — Okay, minus \$10 million out of that \$55.8 million, Mr. Minister. Do you agree or do you disagree that your administration has decreased its funding for northern local government?

**Hon. Mr. McLeod:** — No, we don't. We don't deny that there's been a reduction from that very rich program that was proposed before. And I might add that the reason that the program was so rich, from everything that I can gather, was to buy - and I say this in very serious terms - was to buy the consent of northern people to the regional government concept, which they didn't agree with. And that's exactly what it was all about and the hon. member, having been a staff member to that often daily and consultative process, or so-called consultative process, will know that that's exactly what was going on.

So, number one, we've provided enough money. We've provided enough money for the development of local government. We believe we've provided sufficient money for good development and for to actually take place and for responsibility of locally elected people to take place. We don't believe at all in putting government money up in front and literally buying the consent for something the people don't agree with. And that's what was going on. And we will never agree with that kind of a concept for the use of taxpayers' dollars.

**Mr. Yew:** — I don't want to dispute the fact that perhaps as the minister in . . . with the minister's allegations that perhaps some money was used by former administrations, not particularly the former administration, but former administrations, that money was used to kind of lure the public toward some political incentive with existing administrations, before my day.

However, I raised a question, and my figures are such: with the former administration there was \$55.8 million earmarked for northern Saskatchewan. Minus the \$10 million that the minister speaks about there is a balance of \$45.8 million. Now, the budget that the administration proposes is \$4.9 million. That amounts, in my records . . . The five-

year northern revenue-sharing program . . . The 4.9 million multiplied by five gives me a total of \$24.5 million now to be earmarked for northern Saskatchewan. I say to the minister that you have diminished your support for local government in the North. And I want the minister to dispute that.

**Hon. Mr. McLeod:** — Well, I believe if you . . . We could get into some long discussion, but if you take into account the total program that we propose, you're right in your arithmetic in saying that the 55-odd dollars - 55 million - that was proposed in that big purchase package that I referred to in my earlier answer, and take off the 10 million-odd that I talked about before the deletion of the regional government concept, and the numbers that you use, I believe, are 24 million. The actual number is . . . the revenue-sharing, 4.9; the capital grants program, 1.5 million, for a total of 6.4 million in '83-84 for . . . plus the grants for water and sewer upgrading which you'll see on page 61, 845,000, close to \$1 million. But in total - just to get back to the total so that we're comparing apples with apples here - in total the amount that we are proposing is something in the order of \$31 million. And the difference between the \$44 million and the \$31 million is as, and I was pleased to hear you stand and agree, that the former administration, and I used the word 'buy' and you used the word 'lure' . . .

**An Hon. Member:** — I said former administration.

**Hon. Mr. McLeod:** — . . . and you used the word 'lure,' so I don't care which word you want to use. I would say that it's an irresponsible use of taxpayers' dollars to put out a sweet package like that to get people to consent to something that they don't agree with and that they oppose. We would never carry on that sort of thing. So what I say is: we have substantial money there for revenue sharing, for the development of northern local government. There is no jiggery-pokery being played and there is no buying off of attitudes or buying off of ideas or buying off of people or communities.

**Mr. Yew:** — In terms of your northern capital grants program, Mr. Minister, I can only detect and see that you only have earmarked here \$450,000 for capital grants . . . capital construction programs in northern Saskatchewan. I wonder if the minister can give us a better performance than what you have earmarked here in your budget.

**Hon. Mr. McLeod:** — No, you mentioned . . . Mr. Chairman, the hon. member mentions the capital grants program as it appears in here - \$450,000 - and I would add that, and I was sure the hon. member knew that the northern trust account also contributes to this - the northern Saskatchewan trust account, and that's \$1.025 million added to that - capital grants.

**Mr. Yew:** — Your northern trust account. Where in your budget estimate then, Mr. Minister, does that portion of the budget, where is it recorded?

**Hon. Mr. McLeod:** — The northern trust account are revenues that come from leases and the various other revenues that accrue to the government and that was the agreement under the other package, as a matter of fact. It's the same structure (I believe) that was proposed under the package that you referred to and that I have called extra sweet.

**Mr. Yew:** — I see that the northern capital construction program in the total budget of last March had earmarked a substantial amount of money. The northern capital grants program has earmarked \$1.2 million, the northern revenue sharing to begin with was \$6.5 million. Northern capital grants program, \$1.2 million; grants to northern

communities for the upgrading and maintenance of sewer and water systems, another 790,000; grants to northern communities for improving and renovating recreation facilities, another \$1.1 million. Mr. Minister, I wonder if you can identify to this Assembly what specifically you're talking about when you refer to this northern trust fund. What projects are you looking at? What type of community facilities is that money earmarked for? Could you give me that information please?

**Hon. Mr. McLeod:** — Well, the northern trust account is similar . . . And communities are able to apply to that for grants similar to what we know in the southern part of Saskatchewan that is administered by the urban affairs act under the community capital fund grants which . . . (inaudible) . . . per capita grants, and there are other aspects to that formula. This in the North is the equivalent type of program to that and it's called a northern trust account.

**Mr. Yew:** — Could you provide written, detailed information on it?

**Hon. Mr. McLeod:** — Yes, we certainly would do that. We'll provide it to you.

**Mr. Yew:** — Thank you, Mr. Minister. I noted in your portion of the community programs, grants to local authorities and third parties, you have in your budget of November earmarked 1,073,000 and again, the former administration had earmarked 2.1 million. That is down again. I just want to point the fact that your administration has decreased its support, its funding support for those various programs, Mr. Minister, because the records again speak for themselves. But I give you the opportunity, Mr. Minister, to advise the House what you have earmarked for say, community programs - day care, services to the elderly, employment support programs, and community recreation.

**Hon. Mr. McLeod:** — Well, the hon. member will notice on the page 61, which I believe he's referring to in the estimates book, under '83-84 estimated expenditure, you will know they are all blanks. You will notice that they are all the programs - you mentioned day care services to the elderly - they all come under the Department of Social Services. I would say to you, you know, it's obvious to me there and it's written in as clear and as succinct a way as it's possible to write the budget book. So my colleague, the Minister of Social Services, is the person to ask about that. But I would say in a general way, as well, that you are painting a very inaccurate picture if you're trying to suggest that there have been cuts in programs in the northern part of the province or in any part of the province in terms of social programs, because that is absolutely not the case. It's not the case and it doesn't show in the book in any way at all.

So, I don't understand just, you know, the basis on which you are trying to paint this picture, because it's an inaccurate one.

**Mr. Yew:** — Okay, Mr. Minister. I ask you then, what is your total budget for the northern administration district?

**Hon. Mr. McLeod:** — For the northern region, you know, what you call the northern administration district, the total budget, I believe I indicated to you earlier in this discussion tonight, is about \$102 million, which is more money being spent in that area than was ever spent by your administration. And when you take away the cost inefficiencies of the duplication of administration and so on, it augurs that much better for the people in the communities and the families in the various communities in northern Saskatchewan. So that's why I say I can't understand how you can look at this

blue book or the various other books that you've been comparing this to tonight from the former administration, and paint the picture that there's less money being spent on programs, because the programs are there.

What is missing, to a large degree, is the over-burdening administration that was there. And we don't make any apologies for that; in fact, we're quite proud of the fact that we've been able to come with a cost-efficient system and still deliver programs.

**Mr. Yew:** — In terms of your total budget allocation, Mr. Minister, I then would request you to verify that in writing, if in fact you have proved the total amount earmarked for northern Saskatchewan. I would ask the minister, in all sincerity, to provide me with the written confirmation of this budget that has been earmarked for northern Saskatchewan.

**Hon. Mr. McLeod:** — Well, I want to clear this, and just to be sure that there's no confusion here, we are in the estimates of the Department of Northern Saskatchewan. Now I have no way indicated that the budget of the Department of Northern Saskatchewan is \$102 million. The budget of the Department of Northern Saskatchewan, as is indicated here, is \$18,635,960. But what the question was, or at least what I understood your question to be, for comparison's sake during this transition type of year in the budget process - and I'll admit that there are some, you know - you have to go back and leaf back and forth in the pages. So to expedite that for you, I use the \$102 million figure because that is the amount that is being spent by the Government of Saskatchewan through all its various departments after realignment in the district that you know as the northern administration district, and the district that you continue to try to keep that barrier built and higher and higher and wider and wider.

And what I say, and as I've said to you before, for comparison's sake in this transition year, that's fair. But over the long haul, and I would ask you very sincerely, let's try to break that barrier down together and for all the people who are concerned about northern people at all, try to break that barrier down and let's get on with being citizens of the best province in the country.

**Mr. Yew:** — Mr. Minister, I'll take up your challenge and advise you at the same time that it is your responsibility to take that barrier down. And the only way that you're going to take that barrier down, Mr. Minister, is to in fact provide the type of services, provide the type of programs that are direly needed for that particular area. I refer to the northern administration district in those terms - the very terms that I just said - because of the fact that many, many people seem to not recognize that people exist north of Prince Albert and north of Meadow Lake. They seem to not recognize the fact that there are some 46-odd communities out there.

And that is my reason for stating to you in my reference to the North as the northern administration district. I take up your challenge and we'll work as hard as possible to remove that barrier. But until such time as you acknowledge the fact that there is high unemployment in northern Saskatchewan, acknowledge the fact that the rate of the welfare case-load is higher in that particular region, until the fact that you can come about and bring your self-sufficiency economic development plan, until the fact that you can put into being a sound local government structure - one that can be used by the communities in that particular region - I will just have to keep banging my hand over my desk to try to make your government, the members on the opposite side of this House recognize that fact - recognize the fact that people exist in the northern

administration district.

And until such time, Mr. Minister, I challenge you to break that barrier down and come about with some sound, good sound local government and like your memo of July 16th. Bring about a self-sufficiency economic development plan, one that we can work with, one that is acceptable to the North, and one that will bring the northern administration district out of depression, because that is basically what we have at present, considering the high unemployment and the high welfare case-load, the lack of services, the lack of programs.

And I just want to go on then with the estimates, Mr. Minister. I want to ask the minister at this point in time: who is responsible for community colleges in northern Saskatchewan?

**Hon. Mr. McLeod:** — Well, it's a specific question and answer, and that is that the Minister of Advanced Education and Manpower is responsible for community colleges in northern Saskatchewan, as he is in other parts of Saskatchewan, so please ask him when his time comes.

I would say to you, that in terms of your dressing me down for not recognizing that people do exist in the North and so on, I don't think that it really merits an answer. I've talked to you in terms of how I understand the feelings and the frustrations and the unemployment and all of the other social problems that come from that and that stem from that problem. I say that we can discuss for an awful long time the philosophical differences we have in terms of how to solve those problems. I say that we've been here a year, and we plan to continue to address them.

I would ask you very, very clearly, once again, as a member representing a constituency there, please know, and I've told you this before, my door is open to discuss specifics about proposals for the way in which we can carry these things out. I would say once again, as well, I had a great deal of respect for your predecessor, the member for Cumberland, Mr. MacAuley. I have seen him in my office, well, certainly more times since we've been elected and since I've been the minister, than I have seen you there, talking about specific proposals for the North. Even though he is not the member, and he is retired, and so on, he does come to see me, and he does contact me, and I've always had an open door for him because he's sincere, as he always has been. I believe you are sincere, as well, but I would say to you once again, break down that barrier, get rid of it, forget that doom and gloom stuff, forget the political rhetoric that you use, if you're going to use that back home, and say, 'This government's this, and those people in Regina, and that minister's an ogre, and he doesn't recognize you, and doesn't know anything about your community . . .' If you want to tell them that with your political rhetoric, that's fine, go there and tell them, but you don't do those people or those communities any service with it, and I would say that, better yet, get on with the co-operation for solving some of the acute problems that exist in your area.

**Mr. Yew:** — I wanted to read a fair amount of questions regarding to the training and education in northern Saskatchewan, but then in respect to your last response, Mr. Minister, I see that that particular responsibility lies then with the Minister of Education and I suppose I'll have no other choice than to table those questions.

I'll get back then to the status of the major capital construction projects that you have for northern Saskatchewan. A while back, a few days ago, you stated that your government would improve the sewer and water systems in northern Saskatchewan. I



understand, if I am correct, that you will expand the system for Cumberland House, Sandy Bay, Pelican Narrows, and I may have missed several other communities. Mr. Minister, what communities do you foresee in that particular portion of your budget as having an expansion of sewer and water systems?

**Hon. Mr. McLeod:** — Okay, in answer to the specific communities, that . . . We have some communities, and I did mention them in my remarks in the budget debate and I did mention Sandy Bay and Cumberland House as being priorities that we would have. As a government, we see them as priorities, because of the serious problems in the water systems, but we don't rule out other communities that will be coming with various proposals. The total on that is \$845,300 and to be specific, the Sandy Bay water supply, and you'll remember the questions you had in the earlier session about Sandy Bay, and some of the problems that were there and we said we would get on with it. In this year's budget, we look at \$158,000 to solve that problem, and I know it's well received by the Sandy Bay community. Cumberland House sewage pumping station and the force main, which is the major problem there, as the hon. member will well know - we've proposed to allocate \$379,000 for that. And I will add to you that I'm meeting with the local government representatives of Cumberland House tomorrow in Saskatoon to talk specifics about that. And they have received that meeting very, very well and preliminary remarks we've had from them is that they're getting the kind of response from this government that they very much appreciate.

**Mr. Yew:** — Considering the fact that you will be meeting with residents in Cumberland House, then, Mr. Minister, I would ask you: what is your position with respect to the fact that that one particular community, being the oldest community in this province, has on two seasons throughout the year been in fact isolated? - mainly when freeze-up comes upon us in the fall and also come spring time, that community has been isolated, and the fact that last fall we had some problems in Cumberland House with respect to various freight and commodities that were direly needed in the community. And recognizing the fact, not only because it's the oldest community, but because of the fact that it's an isolated area, what are your plans then, for a bridge? Also, aside from the bridge, the community was direly concerned about a weir. And it came . . . I don't know . . . but Harvey Young, the overseer came out with the point about a weir. And I've known about this problem for the past year and a half or so. And I wondered at this point in time, Mr. Minister, if you would point out what your position is, what the objective is, with respect to improving those two particular areas.

**Hon. Mr. McLeod:** — Well, you will know that the bridge construction and so on is something under the purview of my colleague, the Minister of Highways. I will say this though, that the minister of rural affairs, who is responsible for the ferry services, and that's one of the problems that's been expressed by Cumberland House community, met with them just very recently. And as I indicated to you, I will be meeting with representatives of Cumberland House tomorrow, afternoon I believe it is.

There was an article in last night's *Star-Phoenix*, I believe it was last night, but it's very recent, within the last couple of days. Harvey Young, the overseer at Cumberland House - his reaction was, and I quote this, 'The reception given the delegation surprised Young.' And the here's the quotation from the overseer: 'We didn't expect this reaction,' he said. 'At least someone is listening.'

And that was the reaction after a meeting with my colleague, the Minister of Rural Development. And once again, these community people, local government people are expressing that to us each time we meet with them - that they appreciate the way in

which we're concerned and looking into their problems. So I can't say any more about that, and I'm not able to give an opinion or a position of the government in terms of the construction of a bridge or a weir, but we have given them the undertaking that in June there will be representatives of several of our departments going to Cumberland House to spend some time looking at the various problems.

**Mr. Yew:** — Getting back then, Mr. Minister, to your sewer and water program, do you have any proposal to establish a system for Pelican Narrows?

**Hon. Mr. McLeod:** — Okay, the other programs that I referred to, Cumberland House, Sandy Bay, were grants. And the projects now that we refer to - Pelican Narrows would be constructed directly by the department, I guess, or through private contractors, but the contracts let by the department. The new project for this year - Pelican Narrows sewer and water system - \$700,000, and that's to go ahead this year. And much to the delight of the people of Pelican Narrows, I might add.

**Mr. Yew:** — I'm a bit concerned about the specifics in this respect, Mr. Minister. There was a proposal in place prior to your administration and my concern . . . I want to commend the minister and people responsible for such, of the fact that work has been carried out in this respect.

However, the area that I'm concerned about is the Metis side of the settlement. Is that in fact part of the program that is being supported?

**Hon. Mr. McLeod:** — Yes, your raise a good point there. The \$700,000 project we're talking about, is in fact on the Metis side of the Pelican Narrows community, and certainly the status or treaty part of the community is looked after by the Department of Indian Affairs as the member well knows.

**Mr. Yew:** — With respect to the maintenance: if there is an upkeep of sewer and water systems, Mr. Minister, is the \$450,000 earmarked for the total of the 33-some-odd communities in northern Saskatchewan?

**Hon. Mr. McLeod:** — I'm not sure if I understood the question properly or not, but the revenue-sharing grant that which we referred to earlier contains a component that would deal with maintenance and up-grading of sewer and water facilities in the various communities. So, there is an element of sewer and water in the revenue-sharing grant as well as the capital grants in the sewer and water projects I've mentioned in the two previous answers.

**Mr. Yew:** — Well, pardon me, Mr. Minister, I have my figures incorrect at that last question. I noted that you have earmarked here, two categories for sewer and water - one for up-grading and another here for capital grants programs. However, getting back to the questioning on capital works, capital projects - do you have, in terms of your subvote 44, item 14, what is your project array for fire halls and for the provision of fire-fighting equipment, etc. for northern Saskatchewan.

**Hon. Mr. McLeod:** — Would the hon. member accept it if I say that I would just send that over to you in writing - the various details about the fire halls and projects like that?

**Mr. Yew:** — Well, that would be certainly appreciated, Mr. Minister. I just had a

concern with respect to the need for fire trucks at Pelican Narrows, Weyakwin and Sandy Bay. And I wonder if you may want to comment if there is any provisions being made for such.

**Hon. Mr. McLeod:** — I'll send you information regarding the specifics, but I would say the three that you have mentioned, Pelican Narrows, Weyakwin and Sandy Bay, all of those trucks will be in this year and there will be fire trucks in all three communities.

**Mr. Yew:** — Well that's certainly commendable, Mr. Minister.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. Yew:** — Under item 9, subvote 40, you have earmarked \$796,020. For what specific purposes is this budget for, Mr. Minister?

**Hon. Mr. McLeod:** — Okay, the number you refer to under item 9 is a projected loss on some of these economic development projects, and I talked to you about the forestry and the situation with the forest industry, and you mentioned earlier the various sawmills at Cumberland, La Ronge, Green Lake, Weyakwin and so on. Those economic development structures - the farms, the northern farms at Cumberland House, Ile-a-la-Crosse, Green Lake, two of them - all of those projects that are there under economic development and provisions of jobs and that's the projected loss for this year.

**Mr. Yew:** — Under item 10, Mr. Minister, subvote 41, you have a revolving fund earmarked - \$6,000, I believe. What purpose is this revolving fund for, Mr. Minister?

**Hon. Mr. McLeod:** — Okay, what the \$6,000 on page 60 under the revolving fund is a \$6,000 loss. We expect that to be a loss in what we recover from the programs, the direct delivery sewer and water projects where there's about \$4 million spent and \$6,000 is the amount that we project that won't be able to be recovered from it, which is not a lot of money when you consider the \$4 million expenditure.

**Mr. Yew:** — I wonder, Mr. Minister, what role you see the Saskatchewan western northlands agreement playing. I noticed you budgeted 88,920 under subvote 24. To my understanding, that DREE (Department of Regional Economic Expansion) western northlands agreement has expired, in fact, and the question is: are certain projects still in existence, that haven't been completed? Is this what your 88,000 is for?

**Hon. Mr. McLeod:** — That 88,000 referred to is administration costs of the program. We will, under the northlands work program this year . . . And this year's budget will be expenditure of approximately \$10 million, 60 per cent of which will be recovered from the federal government under that cost-sharing Northlands agreement. I guess that depends to some extent on what remains after the '82-83 claims are all finalized. But it's approximately \$10 million there.

And while we're talking about a Northlands agreement, I would say to you that we will be actively pursuing another agreement with the federal government, whether it takes the same form or not. But certainly we'll be . . . Depending on what's available now, and we haven't had an opportunity to look into the new federal budget that was just announced last night, in terms of what may well be available. But we will be actively pursuing anything that we can get in terms of cost-shared agreements with the federal government for the development and continuing and ongoing development in our North.

**Mr. Yew:** — Well, that certainly is a bit enlightening to learn that you will be pursuing an extension of the agreement, because the fact is the former agreement, although it has brought about a tremendous amount of improvements, the North has recognized the fact that a federal-provincial program, as such, has brought about a tremendous amount of improvements in terms of the socio-economic aspects of development in northern Saskatchewan.

And also, I just want to state to the minister, and to this Assembly, in terms of numerous capital projects such as sewer and water systems, housing, etc., many of those programs were earmarked for larger populated centres such as La Ronge, Creighton, Uranium City, Buffalo Narrows, etc. But many of the smaller communities are still behind in terms of adequate provision of services, like the numerous community facilities that were brought about in terms of improvement in those areas. So, I just want to place a word of caution with the minister, to recognize the fact that we have to try to concentrate a fair amount on the smaller populated areas in northern Saskatchewan, if in fact such an agreement will come about.

In terms of the 'Northern News,' Mr. Minister, I understand that you have eliminated or dismissed quite a number of personnel from this branch - from 13.5 staff down to 3 people, 3 staff members. And also, you have diminished the budget for this particular program from 140 down to 20,000 . . . 40,000, pardon me. How do you justify doing away with the communications for northern Saskatchewan, seeing as how the fact is many of the communities up north are isolated? In fact, places like east of Deschambault Lake and Sturgeon Landing, Denare Beach, Creighton, Sandy Bay, Pelican Narrows, and that area, is still quite isolated from the rest of the province in terms of communications - in terms of knowing what is happening in our province. How can you justify the fact that you have budgeted almost nothing for communications and for information for the northern administration district?

**Hon. Mr. McLeod:** — We just didn't see ourselves being in the broadcast business, and you know, we . . . I know that there have been 'Northern News' and a dissemination of information is important to people wherever they live. We know that the CBC, the federal crown corporation, has, with their station in La Ronge and with rebroadcast on FM, it is in most of the stations. I've done open-line shows from CBC here in Regina as a matter of fact, and had people phoning me from virtually every community in the North. So I would say that . . . I know there may be some isolated cases of communities not having access to that, but I think most have. And we just didn't see ourselves as a government being involved in the dissemination of news.

**Mr. Yew:** — What then, Mr. Minister, do you foresee as improving the communication and information aspects of that particular region that I just described to you? And I, as well, could have included places like Brabant, Southend, Kinosao and Wollaston Lake. Those are very isolated in terms of information, in terms of communication, in terms of being part of Saskatchewan like your government has emphasized so often.

**Hon. Mr. McLeod:** — Well, I would say in a general way that, yes, we recognize what you're saying in terms of that the more isolated a community is, the less access we have to various communications outlets. We understand that. We just didn't see it as our role as a government to provide those, number one, because it's not our role to do that, although the minister of communications, the Attorney-General . . . You know, maybe you could ask that question of him. But, in terms of being the . . . running the news station and that sort of thing, we don't believe in having a propaganda arm of the

government.

**Mr. Yew:** — I have a real concern for the northern information communication network, Mr. Minister, and I certainly hope . . . Just a while back we mentioned the fact that we have . . . Well, you mentioned the fact that you anticipate another DREE (Department of Regional Economic Expansion) western northlands agreement. I would certainly hope that that aspect of a lack of service is included in that next round of agreements with the federal-provincial people that will be involved in drafting such an agreement, because that is a serious problem. The other serious problem, Mr. Minister, is the fact that our network of highways in those remote areas I've just mentioned like Deschambault, Sandy Bay, Cumberland House, Sturgeon Landing, Kinoosao, Wollaston Lake, Brabant - you know, the highway network is just not there. There is a great need to improve the highway system. And no doubt by colleague from Athabasca will be coming out with specific points, concerns and issues with respect to communication information and highway improvements and community improvements that are direly needed.

I wonder, Mr. Minister, what you have planned for the highways network for that particular region.

**Hon. Mr. McLeod:** — I would suggest you ask the Minister of Highways. His estimates are not finished and when he comes back in, ask him that question.

**Mr. Yew:** — I guess, Mr. Minister, we're running out of time here with respect to the estimates on DNS. I understand that I must apologize to my colleague that I've taken all the time that has been standard practice to use in terms of evening sessions. However, I believe that we propose to resume the estimates for tomorrow.

I want to go with a question here just before we run out of time. With respect to the La Ronge park, Mr. Minister, I noted in *DENOSA* . . . I'm getting to the member from Moosomin here. My favourite member on the opposite side of the House. In terms of the park, Mr. Minister, the La Ronge park, what is the status of this park?

**Hon. Mr. McLeod:** — Well you know the hon. member says that, you know, the time is taken up and so on, but here's another example. I mean that's a question for my colleague, the Minister of Parks and Renewable Resources. Ask him when his estimates come up and if you have any other questions regarding the Department of Northern Saskatchewan, please ask him.

**Mr. Yew:** — Seeing that it's late, Mr. Chairman, I guess I have some encouragement here to call it 10 o'clock. I don't know whether or not that is my responsibility.

I want to ask the minister then, what is the status, the plan, and necessary funding arrangements for the La Ronge park. I understand from the article on *DENOSA*, and the minister may agree with the statement, that plans for expanding the park and redefining its functions appear to be bogged down in the paperwork in your administration here in Regina.

**Hon. Mr. McLeod:** — Well my answer was, Mr. Chairman, that that comes under the purview of Parks and Renewable Resources. I would ask that the question be asked under that department's estimates.

**Mr. Yew:** — With respect to this new . . . A question that is direly important and is of great concern, Mr. Minister, with respect to this new branch that your government has adopted or introduced this last budget presentation. I refer to the Indian and Native

Secretariat branch. How does the Minister for Northern Saskatchewan perceive co-ordinating that branch with concerns related to us by the people of native ancestry in northern Saskatchewan?

**Hon. Mr. McLeod:** — There is close co-ordination between the departments at both the ministerial and the officials level.

**Mr. Yew:** — I'm sorry, Mr. Chairman, I didn't get the . . .

**Hon. Mr. McLeod:** — There's close co-ordination between that branch and our department at both the ministerial and the officials level.

The Assembly adjourned at 10:02 p.m.