

EVENING SITTING

ADJOURNED DEBATES

MOTIONS

Extended Hours
(continued)

Mr. Heppner: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm continuing where I was at about two hours ago, and relating, as I said I would, some of the things that are happening in my constituency that relate to the motion that's here and the need to maintain the time for discussion, because with 118-plus pieces of legislation we need a lot of time for that discussion.

And just around 5 o'clock, I was introducing my section on highways and I'd like to briefly go through the various communities and some of the difficulties that are there. I did mention the acceleration/deceleration situation that's there and I also passed on an oblique compliment to the Department of Highways for the twinning it to Warman and Martensville, and I see it was picked up. However, I think the attention to twinning needs to be carried on because the last series of fatalities that have happened have happened on the sections that aren't twinned in my constituency, and then moving over into the Shellbrook-Spiritwood area, I think the last two fatalities were in the Shellbrook-Spiritwood area that were there.

The situations that develop in a number of these communities — and probably the ones I'm thinking of specifically would be the Osler, the Hague, the Rosthern, the Duck Lake ones — in those three situations the communities are situated on a curve situation so the traffic coming through there is only slowed down in the community of Hague. In the other communities they're going through at full highway speeds and being on a curved situation has created accidents in all of those communities. Two of them also have some dips that are there. In my own town, we've lost a number of people to that plus we have a few people in wheelchairs, just because of those dangerous situations that exist.

A little situation that's coming along, that's going to exacerbate this whole thing, is the fact that our highway patrol section of the RCMP (Royal Canadian Mounted Police) will probably be moved into the cities and that will mean that they'll be handing out the speeding tickets and all those sorts of things not too far from the doughnut shops. And these small communities don't have doughnut shops so we won't get very much patrolling in that particular area.

A few of these towns are going to have a definite road and pothole problem, and I'm thinking of two or three towns in particular. One is Dalmeny, which is situated off of the highways, and all the grain that moves into those elevators — because Dalmeny has quite a large elevator — and out as well has to go on lightly oiled surfaces. And those are things that we need to discuss and we need to have the time here. And that's why that motion is of critical situation tonight.

Laird is another community that is off the highway and will have some of those problems with the roadway as well. Highway 312, which is an east-west road, was upgraded but the upgraded hasn't been finished. And in very short order, I'm sure, the large trucks that are coming through there will have that part hammered out in a very serious manner. In fact, as I did have some . . . one senior gentleman talked to me on Saturday about that very same issue, and said he'd gone through a particular pothole, his car had bottomed out, he was actually concerned that he might have almost lost control of his car. And that's going on what we would call a numbered highway.

Two other issues that — and maybe three — that I'd like to deal with tonight that relate to the need for more discussion than what we're being allowed, because of this particular motion that we have in front of us today.

I think we need a full and comprehensive discussion on the funding for Christian Counselling. It is one of those counselling services that has initiated in Saskatchewan an excellent system of handling adoptions. And those are situations that are filled with a lot of emotion and a lot of concern for the adoptive parents, for the birth mother, and then later on for the adopted child as well when they start looking for their parents.

And the way that Christian Counselling has worked, they have set up a model system, and it's too bad that we take the organization that has created a model system and take their funding away and then try and get bureaucrats to operate that, who may not have quite the same concern, attention, for that as the people that organized Christian Counselling originally. And I think we need to look at that, revisit that discussion and make sure the decisions that are made here are the kinds of decisions that the people back in our constituencies are interested in.

The other item . . . and on this one, it seems at this point that the House is fairly united but I think we need more discussion and more direction on this, is the situation of the gun control. And we've had some good speakers from all parties speak on that issue. And as I said, I think we're fairly united on that, but I think we need to find out not just the fact that we're united in our opposition to that Bill, but exactly what direction we're going to go in our objection as a province to that Bill. And I think on that one is where we need the discussion of the House. We need that particular time that has been taken away from us on this particular issue.

The last issue that I'd like to deal with this evening is the concept that I think . . . it's a new initiative, relatively new as far as government's concerned, and that's the whole direction that we've taken in our province with regards to gambling. It was a new area and we moved into different aspects with it. We had very little experience. The information that we did have on that was going to be information that we gathered from outside and some of that information may have been good, some may not have been. We've now initiated it.

There seems to be a fair bit of money coming in and there's no shortage of directions as to where that money can go. But what

we need to look at very closely when we deal with this whole area of gambling — and maybe more specifically even, VLTs (video lottery terminal) — is how are we going to deal with the families that are hurting because of addictions that are taking place.

And for that one there is a hot line. There is counselling services available. But having a hot line and having counselling services is a long way from taking someone who has a problem and getting that problem out of his life, restoring his business which he may have lost — and that's virtually impossible to do — restoring the person's family which may be impossible to do. What are we going to do with those kinds of things?

Are we as legislators going to say we take no responsibility for what has gone wrong here? I don't think we want to do that. We need to spend more time in this particular House looking at dealing with that aspect of the gambling situation in such a way that we can go back to our constituents, each one of us, hold our heads up high, and say we know there's a problem but the solutions we've put in place are such that we are confident we can deal with every difficult situation and bring it to a solution that we can all live with, our consciences, our neighbours, and those particular families.

And on that one I know we need a lot more time.

We've allotted very little time to that particular issue and this motion really cuts all time off of that completely. And we need to look at that very closely. Along with that and the funding and where it goes is an aspect. We know that the municipalities, both rural and urban, were hoping to have some money out of that. They are not getting any of the money out of it.

And I know they're upset. It's caused a financial shortfall for them. And that is something we need to look at as well. But that is not as big a problem as the lives that we've done some damage to. And I think, as I said earlier, the items I want to deal with specifically were the education one — I mentioned those — especially when looking at options that school boards have for dealing with the shortfall of the funding.

We talked about the Christian Counselling one, the highways. I spent quite a bit of time on the hospitals and the health care situation that's out there and the concerns that are there that we have to deal with. Money can't be found but solutions can often be found. And maybe a different allotment of finances needs to be looked at. So I strongly support the objection that there is to limiting the discussion in this particular House.

And with that I will turn it over to our next speaker. Thank you.

Mr. Belanger: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Again I concur with the objection on the motion in terms of the attempt by the government to limit the amount of good discussion on issues that pertain to the people of Saskatchewan.

I think the effort we are trying to undertake here is basically an effort and a message that it's very important that we quit the gamesmanship. We all became involved with politics for the one purpose of serving the people, and I'm very disillusioned

and disheartened to see the type of effort we must put into playing the games that are necessary to prove our point. I think on both the issue of the hours and the procedures and the processes, I think we're doing a disservice to the Saskatchewan people because not only are we wasting certainly valuable time here, but you're certainly wasting a lot of the people's time as well.

I think some of the issues, if I may, Mr. Speaker, talk about why I think it's important that we start doing the business that we're all elected to do. There is a number of problems in northern Saskatchewan that deal with why government must change their system, and why they must change the different ways of serving the people. I've said it on countless occasions, Mr. Speaker, that northern Saskatchewan is largely a wasteland of opportunity. Many northern people are not being involved with the development of northern Saskatchewan. In every sense they could certainly be involved more.

(1915)

And these are some of the issues I believe we should be speaking about in relationship to being a member of the Legislative Assembly and being involved with government. I want to basically explain what I think the government should be doing in terms of its system and why this motion isn't fair to the people that we serve. Take, for example, the small community in northern Saskatchewan called Camsell Portage. We speak on many occasions of how the people of the small community of 40 people are able to do a tremendous job in managing their dollars. They have a small council there that looks at every way, every possible means, in which they could serve their residents. And whether it's four people or 40 people, I think Camsell Portage epitomizes the spirit and the cooperation of people in Saskatchewan, and that government themselves must really begin to realize that the Saskatchewan people are indeed able to meet any challenges as long as you provide them with the tools and the freedom necessary to gain the best of both worlds.

And we head a little east of Camsell Portage, Mr. Speaker, and we come up to the old boom town in the early '70s of Uranium City. Uranium City, at one time, had a population of 3,500 people, and now we have just over 200 people left in Uranium City. And again this shows that government must again have to re-energize and re-priorize their efforts as to how we could best serve northern Saskatchewan, the people, and the communities.

And I remember in 1990, I . . . or '89 . . . I'm sorry, '79, I travelled up to Uranium City to work there as an expediter. And just being fresh out of school, I didn't realize what an expediter was. I thought I'd be in charge of this massive operation and here an expediter is a fancy name for gofer.

You basically had to call in these exploration camps and see what they wanted, whether they wanted food or extra pair of boots, cigarettes, or fuel, or core boxes. And the reason why I'm explaining this, Mr. Speaker, is that again to understand how we can serve people we must understand the dynamics of industry, and a bit of this nature, or most of this nature, really is contrary to what people are trying to do out there.

And again I go back to Uranium City, and I worked there every day of the week, Sunday's included. There were some pretty rough Sunday's, I admit, but we had to go there every day and check.

And the amazing thing about Uranium City, Mr. Speaker, is that in its heyday you'd see vehicles and planes and everything just be buzzing around the community. And I mentioned the population figure of 3,500 people, and you could just see in the middle of practically nowhere, it's this huge city. It had a fantastic airport; it had a mayor and council; it had a beautiful rink; and it was basically a city.

And when I first got to Uranium City we looked at . . . I was kind of in awe of what was out there. And of course, as you know, there was various changes in the way the one company operated in terms of how the Uranium City was built, is that during the early '80s there was a change in the way the uranium was being developed. There was richer deposits elsewhere and all of a sudden the Uranium City deposit was less attractive. But to see a city gradually and slowly die, such as Uranium City, with very little government support, and very little government help, really had a devastating effect on me as a young person.

And one day, walking down the street, you meet 50 vehicles, and they do all . . . you know of course of a booming economy. And the next day . . . a couple of years later, you go back there and you see there's two or three street lights working, and you walk two blocks down the downtown core and you can't hear a sound at 10 o'clock at night. You can hear a dog barking in a distance. And it's really a stark contrast of the boom times of Uranium City versus the downfall of Uranium City.

And that's our whole point as government, is we must never let a Uranium City happen ever again. There are a lot of lives that were destroyed as a result of some of the policies instituted and that ultimately led to the death of Uranium City. And both provincial and certainly federal governments could have done more.

In essence, there was a lot of poor planning as well on the part of shutting down the mine. The year I was there they were doing a massive renovation and construction of buildings to accommodate new workers coming into Uranium City. And had we taken the time maybe then to really study the impacts of this, instead of wasting time on motions of this nature, then perhaps as government we could have saved Uranium City in some way, shape, or form.

So as a result, when you see all the expansion and all the money and all the costs and the incredible infrastructure that was developed in Uranium City, all that went to waste, Mr. Speaker. And again, you know, when you see Uranium City in its heyday of the early or the late '70s, and then you go back there in the late '80s and you see beautiful buildings — just fantastically beautiful buildings — all torn apart; the huge investment and the huge losses that people took as a result of the mine shutting down was just incredible. The pressure of walking into that community after it became somewhat of a ghost town was just enormous, especially if you learned to

appreciate Uranium City when it was really moving.

And there's all kinds of stories of what people lost, of the personal losses and the business losses. There's even a story of one of the hotel owners had a nice offer to buy his hotel, and he said no, that he wanted to keep it. And a few months later the mine announced its closure, and as a result this guy of course also lost his hotel.

And, Mr. Speaker, there's a thousand stories of how governments failed Uranium City, and how that we shouldn't make efforts of wasting our time on motions of this nature.

Having spent four months in Uranium City I got to know quite a few people there. And some of the people that were there prior to the mine coming in, which were the native people, many of the 200-and-some that did stay on in Uranium City after losing 3,300 people, are now back, I guess you could say, in charge of Uranium City. And they have a chairperson of a local advisory council and they have a committee and they have a small contingent of business people there.

There's a gentleman up there has been up there for many, many years. He runs Holland's Motel. And Mr. Holland has seen Uranium City in its heyday and he's seen the decline of Uranium City. Yet I have nothing but respect for the man because he continues working in the place that he loves and the business that he owns.

And if one were to go up to Uranium City to do business there, then the only place that they have at this point in time is Holland's Motel. And certainly I think we should show extra tribute and extra special recognition of the efforts of people like Mr. Holland that stayed on and showed resolve to try and keep his hopes and his dreams and his business alive.

And you know these are some of the people and some of the stories that must be told in the Legislative Assembly because these are the impacted people — the people whose lives have been drastically, adversely affected by governments that were not committed to them.

And, Mr. Speaker, the important, crucial part about Camsell Portage and Uranium City is in the fact that in these communities live Saskatchewan people. These people are very much part of our province. They are very much part of the province as you and I are. So the important thing to remember in any of our deliberations is the fact that these are Saskatchewan people and they deserve Saskatchewan's respect.

A couple of the issues facing Uranium City, Mr. Speaker, and we elaborated on this time and time again, is basically two things. One is the supply of food and gas and all the necessities of life. I understand that barge service that would usually come into Lake Athabasca to drop off supplies for the winter to some of these communities will be discontinued, Mr. Speaker, within several years. From what I can understand the Canadian Coast Guard will no longer be travelling into these communities to be dropping off their food and their supplies to stock them up for winter. And you look at the cost of a litre of gas being at \$1.17 per litre, you know, and you can see the incredible

transportation costs. It's just phenomenal the amount of challenge that a business community and people in general have to face.

Just a bit of history, Mr. Speaker, again of how we've failed places like Uranium City is usually in the summertime they come up the . . . Fort McMurray has a river that goes up to Lake Athabasca on the Alberta side and the Canadian . . .

The Speaker: — Order, order. Now I've been listening very carefully to the remarks of the hon. member for Athabasca, and I'm having a difficult time appreciating his remarks and their relationship to the motion which is before the House. I know the hon. member for Athabasca will want to make his remarks relevant to the motion, and I'll ask him to remind the House of the relevance of his remarks to the motion before us.

Mr. Belanger: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I guess the relevance here, Mr. Speaker, is . . . the point is, I'm trying to give the historical perspective of how governments have failed people of the north-west by going through silly motions and silly efforts of this nature, while at the same time ignoring the real issues. We feel that we have to get into the issues, and something of this nature doesn't help the process. And when we talk about the process of serving people, these are the issues. We want to talk about these Bills, we want to talk about these issues, and we need the time. That's the key thing here, and this is the whole relevance.

And I go back to the Uranium City situation. Had we taken the time, Mr. Speaker, had we taken the time to talk about these things very thoroughly, then we would be able to be in a position to understand what these northern communities really want. And that's the whole process that we speak about here. And the key thing here, Mr. Speaker, if we take the time to understand, if we take the time to really begin to realize how we are not serving people, then that certainly is not doing justice if we don't do it properly.

So I need to explain the necessary logic behind taking the time to understand the issues that I speak about. And heading back to the Uranium City issue, at this point in time, had we taken the time to really understand how the Fort McMurray river system that used to allow the Canadian Coast Guard to go up there every year . . . and they'd have to dredge the river of course to allow the big ships to go through and to drop off the supplies to the Uranium City community and the other communities in that area.

Had we taken the time then we would have had a long-term plan that would have allowed for a road to be constructed to serve these northern communities. Again I go back to the point, is why is the Canadian Coast Guard spending millions of dollars putting supplies up to these northern communities when many, many years ago, had we taken the time to properly assess the situation, we would have had a road up there.

So in that sense, Mr. Speaker, there is a lot of relevance into the intent of the motion and the effect we're having when we're not taking the time to talk about these issues.

Now again, from what I can gather, many years ago the provincial government was made an offer to contribute so many millions of dollars to the construction of a road. Canadian Coast Guard did offer some settlement to try and get a road built, but at that time during the Tory years, the Tories again forgot about the North and looked at the North as a place for the rich and powerful to come in and extract all the resources.

Now had the Tories taken the time, Mr. Speaker, had they made the effort to really understand the issues that I'm trying to make the House understand tonight, they would have known that in the long run, doing a cost/benefit analysis, that this road to Uranium City, Stony Rapids, and Fond-du-Lac would have been the perfect solution to the many problems.

(1930)

Now because we're rushing through this process, we're not taking the time to understand, we're faced with a deadline — 1997. Many of these northern communities will no longer be served. What happens to the 3,000 people in that region? How will they be served? Are you going to fly in the supplies, which is a very expensive proposition? Or are you going to continue to hope that somebody comes up with a magical solution to this problem.

1997 is the deadline, Mr. Speaker, in which we have to find a resolution to the long-standing problem of a dependable, cost-efficient method of transferring goods and supplies to the far northern communities, and have we got a dependable and cost-efficient system that could help the economies of these communities as well.

And Uranium City is like any other town in Saskatchewan. The only problem that they have is that way up North. And that's the whole thing about being up North, is many times you feel that you're not part of the province.

Again you look at the . . . just going further east, Mr. Speaker, we're all familiar with Uranium City and the devastating effects of the shut-down and all the problems that they had over the years, and the hurt and the suffering and the confusion endured by many, many fine people of Saskatchewan.

And we go on down to the community of Fond-du-Lac. It's actually, I would say — I wouldn't say a stone's throw from Uranium City, but it's certainly within quick flying distance of Uranium City. And it's of course being . . . it's an Indian reserve. It's being administered by a band chief and band council. And just recently they had a woman chief elected to the post of the top chief job in that particular community.

Caroline Isadore was elected chief of the Fond-du-Lac Indian band. And I talked to Caroline a few weeks ago and I tell her, make you take the time, Mr. Speaker, you take the time to go through your government business as a first nations government to really try and serve the people. The people know when they're being toyed with, so it's quite important that we take the time to understand.

And Fond-du-Lac is much like the other communities in the

area. They feel that they're being under-served. There's no proper representation in terms of their business concerns, in terms of their social concerns, and their economic concerns, and certainly from their political concerns. And we're trying to change that.

The big thing with Fond-du-Lac, if you look at the situation as it is, is they have a number of people on the north shore of Lake Athabasca that certainly have dreams and aspirations. As yourself and I have for our children, they have for theirs. And I'm most aware that many of the parents are taking the time to study the decisions that will impact on their children's lives and, of course, the environment around their community.

And the community of Fond-du-Lac is a really well-kept, well-maintained community. The former chief, and of course the new chief as well, have done a tremendous job in instilling pride in people. They've taken the time to really clean up the community. There's nice services. There's nice buildings. The people are really friendly. Again I remind you these are Saskatchewan people. And when you go there, Mr. Speaker, you really get a brand-new impression and you get a fresh perspective of what pride can certainly do for a community and for its residents.

And Fond-du-Lac again, of course, wants to be heavily involved with the economy of the North. We talk about the mining sector and the mining industry. Many of the band membership really wants to see economic development happen in the North and see the development of our resources.

But, Mr. Speaker, it's not likely to happen very quickly but certainly, at their insistence, I think government should take the time to really understand their aspirations and to really understand their predicament, to respect the particular situation that they may be in.

So certainly I can't say enough about Fond-du-Lac. Fond-du-Lac has been a good example of how a northern community has fought the odds and has instilled a lot of pride in their people. And, Mr. Speaker, I remind you that it's in spite of some of these social and economic problems that they have suffered and went through for many years. And it just shows that the Saskatchewan spirit is alive and well and that communities like Fond-du-Lac are able to respond to the challenges of the 1990s.

I guess to the chief, Caroline Isadore, and her band council out there, their number one priority is to be treated with respect and to be treated fairly, and to be consulted on any changes affecting their band membership and certainly their region. And like anybody else, they are most certainly concerned about the situation of the supplying of these northern communities for the goods and services. There's certainly concern about the situation with the challenges of developing a business.

And one good example is: suppose you want to set up a contracting business and, you know, do some either renovations to your house, or to do other people's houses, and to construct a house. Imagine the tremendous cost, Mr. Speaker, of transferring . . .

The Speaker: — Why is the member on his feet?

Mr. Van Mulligen: — Point of order, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — I'll ask the hon. member to put his point of order.

Mr. Van Mulligen: — Mr. Speaker, I've listened with interest to the member's discourse on problems in northern Saskatchewan, in great detail about the situation in Uranium City and now in Fond-du-Lac, but none of it seems to be related to the motion that's before us. And that is my point of order.

The Speaker: — I've been listening to the words of the hon. member for Athabasca and I certainly take with its honourable intention the point of order raised by the hon. member for Regina Victoria. It is my view that the hon. member for Athabasca has made reference to the subject he's dealing with in the context of the amendment — or I'm sorry — of the motion which is before the House and the point of order is not well taken.

Mr. Belanger: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Again, contrary to popular opinion, I think had we taken the time, Mr. Speaker, and continued taking the time . . . this is the perfect example of how we must sit through the effort of educating legislatures in terms of what's happening. So I thank you for your ruling. We must take the time . . .

The Speaker: — Order. Order, order. Now the hon. member for Athabasca knows that it's not appropriate to comment on the ruling of the Speaker. And I'll simply ask him to carry on his debate without commenting on the rulings of the Chair.

Mr. Belanger: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Again going back to Fond-du-Lac and I was talking about construction. You look at the situation, and had we taken the time to really assess the impacts of . . . or the potential of anybody getting involved with any business venture, what's the first thing that comes to mind, Mr. Speaker, for everybody? It's not incorporation, incorporating a company. No, it's not even finding labourers.

Mr. Speaker, the biggest challenge now facing these communities and every resident of Fond-du-Lac and all the far northern communities is the cost of transporting all the goods and services that you need.

Now I'll give you an example I've used on many, many occasions. And be it a litre of gas being \$1.17, or a quart of milk being a really high amount. There's no way that you can develop an economy with those type of costs.

So we have to take the time to assess, Mr. Speaker, to assess the challenges facing these northern Saskatchewan communities, especially the far northern Saskatchewan communities, in really addressing the economic development challenges. So we have to make the effort of recognizing the time factor.

So I can't say much about Fond-du-Lac in terms of certainly what the future holds. But I know the vision and the attempt and the effort of not only the band chief and the band council

but the people themselves in addressing the social and economic challenges of living in an isolated community that Saskatchewan has not taken the time to recognize and to support.

And so I really think that, you know, this opportunity will provide us with the audience to explain the aspirations and the shortcomings that many of these northern communities currently suffer under.

Now we'll go a little further east, Mr. Speaker, to the fourth community in the far northern part of my constituency, which is Stony Rapids. Mr. Speaker, recently I was up in Stony Rapids opening up an airport, an extension that was put in to accommodate the heavy traffic that's going to be, of course, landing at the airstrip. They've got a beautiful airport in Stony Rapids. They've got several companies operating in Stony Rapids. They have different people with different business plans in Stony Rapids. They have RCMP services in Stony Rapids.

But the amazing thing is, Mr. Speaker, is we did not take the time nor did we make the effort to really understand what Stony Rapids wanted for many, many years. What they wanted was the same basic, essential things that you and I take for granted, Mr. Speaker, every day. Stony Rapids wanted water and sewer for their residents.

The key thing here when you talk about health, Mr. Speaker, is no proper service of clean water. Clean, healthy water and a safe disposal of sewage is not an opportunity that Stony Rapids people enjoy. And this day and age of 1996, isn't it time that we took the time to make an effort, a concerted effort, to go to Stony Rapids and say, why can't we provide this community with the basic service of water and sewer?

And, Mr. Speaker, I make the same point again. These are Saskatchewan people, Saskatchewan people that really want to be recognized and supported and respected by their government.

Again the council and mayor in Stony Rapids have more than adequately advised government of their concern. Time and time again they've told them: take the time to come up here; take the time to plan; take the time to even put in this system, even if it takes you three or four years; but for crying out loud, give us the basic, essential service that the rest of the Saskatchewan people enjoy, which is safe running water and sewer services.

And of course being in the far northern communities a lot of times their voices have not been heard. And how many more years must we scream at the top of our lungs, Mr. Speaker, to tell the government that Stony Rapids needs water and sewer? They need to be treated the same way and in the same fashion as the rest of the Saskatchewan . . . and the population. And we know that we look at the number of companies and the industry in northern Saskatchewan and the millions that they make. Certainly Stony Rapids, being a relatively small community of 300 people, why can't we provide water and sewer service to these people in spite of the money that is being made in northern Saskatchewan?

So Stony Rapids, for the 1970s, for the 1980s, and now for the 1990s are again calling on governments to provide them with basic water and sewer service — a service that we all enjoy. So I certainly urge the government to take the time to not only hear this message but to do the planning and to ultimately provide Stony Rapids with their one dream and one aspiration, of having water and sewer.

I think the issues of economic and social development as well, Stony Rapids is looking at. And I share a couple of points with you, Mr. Speaker. In reference to a potential contractor in the far North, where he's made mention that . . . he's listed a couple of challenges that they've had in trying to set up his business. And we will certainly locate that for you.

But he mentions that to get a case of shingles transported from Prince Albert into Stony Rapids to do a house costs more for the transportation of the shingles than the actual shingles themselves. So being in his particular business, how's he supposed to give an adequate bid to get this work done?

So again what happens is these companies from down South come in there and they do all the work and all the construction. And this government should be ashamed that they can't put people in at the local level of Stony Rapids in charge of renovating and constructing houses, and by supporting them by putting some kind of subsidy in place so that people like the one I mention here can actually have an equal business opportunity. Had we taken the opportunity and the time, Mr. Speaker, to really study the challenges again — I speak about establishing some kind of employment opportunity for the people of Stony Rapids — then maybe today, 1996, we wouldn't have this reoccurring problem.

But none the less, Mr. Speaker, the Stony Rapids issue is not going to go away. And if somebody asks what the Stony Rapids need, Stony Rapids needs water and sewer. So take the time to understand them, take the time to hear their concern, and take the time for planning the installation of basic water and sewer to the Saskatchewan people that we are all supposed to be committed to serve.

(1945)

And going a little further east, we're going to Black Lake. And Black Lake of course is also being administered by a band council and band chief. And Donald Sayazie I believe is the chief up there. And when I was up there visiting last, Mr. Speaker, they had a beautiful band hall — beautiful band hall. It's just a tremendous opportunity and I guess a tremendous show of how the northern people can really, you know, build their future.

And like the other communities I mentioned, some of the big issues facing the community of Black Lake is the adequate supply of goods and services. And the Indian band — with all credit going to the Black Lake Indian Band — they are working very, very hard to provide basic water and sewer services to their residents.

They're working very, very hard to show what a good northern

government could do if they have the opportunity by building a beautiful structure — a beautiful band hall — which is a tribute to their people. It's an example of what they could be as opposed to an example of what they were, which was a powerless people that could not change the future for their children.

But, Mr. Speaker, because of the band settlements and the agreements and the treaty land process . . . treaty entitlement process rather, we're seeing that the band council and the chief of the Black Lake Indian nations is certainly realizing that he's got to serve his people. He's taken the time and they're taking the time and making the effort to really make a difference economically and socially.

So to that end, I couldn't say anything more about the Black Lake people except to say that they're one of the largest communities in the far northern collection of communities. They've got the same concerns of adequate supply of goods and services, the huge cost of some of the basic essentials like food and fuel and power. It's just a tremendous challenge living up there.

But again I go to the point from every man, woman, and child within the Black Lake community — these are Saskatchewan people that we're forgetting. And I know the provincial governments have their fingers crossed when it comes to places like the Black Lake community where they want the first nations to do the best job they can because that takes them off the hook. And they say, well gee whiz, you guys are getting all this money. Do good for it and supply water and sewer, do your economic planning, your social planning, provide all the facilities, and because you're in Saskatchewan we're really behind you, we support you. But in essence, Mr. Speaker, they just have their fingers crossed hoping that Black Lake can do all this with no cost to the Saskatchewan government.

So really we have to take the time to appreciate and understand what the first nations are doing in communities like Black Lake. And I think eventually this government will be forced to recognize that these northern Saskatchewan communities, especially Black Lake, will certainly rise up to the challenge of making them accountable to assist in the efforts of serving these Saskatchewan people.

So, Mr. Speaker, to kind of summarize what's been happening in the far North . . . and many of these communities are only 80, 90 kilometres from the Northwest Territories border. Camsell Portage, 40 people, a lot of dreams, a lot of aspirations, good, solid managers, and a fine bunch of friendly people.

Uranium City, they've seen their highs and their lows. They've taken the time to really begin to try and develop a future for their community and we've recently had discussions with them where they're urging the provincial government to take the time to try and help them attract a new gold mine to that community, a gold mine that could provide 150 to 200 jobs, Mr. Speaker. It's a junior mining company. I feel the government needs to do more to attract this company.

So the biggest problems I know . . . some of the problems with

this mining company is of course the cost. The same problem all these communities have been harping about for years is the cost of transporting goods and services such as fuel and food and power and on and on and on. Again Uranium City's proud past. So whether you're in Camsell Portage or Uranium City or Fond-du-Lac or Stony Rapids or Black Lake, take the time to understand what these communities are facing: the high food prices, the huge cost of getting fuel and goods and services up there to develop an economy, the particular problems they're having with isolation, Mr. Speaker, and the fact that in 1997 the barge service will be discontinued. So how are you going to provide goods and services to these five Saskatchewan towns? Are we going to hope that somebody again magically appears to solve the problem? Well no, they aren't going to magically appear.

So I'm urging the provincial government to get heavily involved in the discussions and in the negotiations and to take the time to do a thorough impact study on how we can serve these communities as we serve any other Saskatchewan communities in a fair and consistent manner, and get to the bottom of the problem and find a successful resolution to the very issues that these northern communities have spoken about in reference to transportation of goods and services and energy and supplies.

So whether you live in Camsell Portage or Uranium City or Fond-du-Lac or Stony Rapids or Black Lake, I urge every member of this Assembly to go out there and spend two or three days or two or three weeks, to sit down and talk to the people

There's beautiful country out there. Take the time to understand their problems; take the time to really understand their dreams and hear their aspirations. Take the time to recognize their accomplishments. And take the time to plan a future for them together, provincial government and the far northern communities, so that their children have a future, Mr. Speaker. So whether you're in Camsell Portage, Uranium City, Fond-du-Lac, Stony Rapids, or Black Lake, the far North has waited long enough. So I urge the government to take the time to understand these issues.

So to continue jogging down the map here, Mr. Speaker, and highlighting some of the other communities that we need to take time to understand, and we go to a small community just north of La Loche. It's a small community called Descherm Lake. And they have a mayor, Ivan Janvier, and Mr. Janvier has been doing a tremendous job. He's a young, serious man that's taken the time, again, to see the effects of the provincial economy on his small community.

And I really admire his stamina, Mr. Speaker, and his resolve, again, to try and get involved with the province, get services and get respect and get support for his community. That's what government is supposed to do. They're supposed to serve the people of Saskatchewan's best interests. And Mr. Janvier and the people that he serves in Descherm Lake certainly are waiting for the government to come along and give them successful support. And whether it's developing opportunity in terms of tourism or the fishing industry, then Descherm Lake

is like any other community to have aspirations and dreams.

So I urge the provincial government to take the time to really begin to understand what communities like Descherm Lake aspire to become. They aspire to become a self-sufficient, proud people that can develop employment opportunities and a future for their children. They have high hopes and dreams for their children much like you and I do.

And just a little bit of history, Mr. Speaker. The first five years of my life I spent in Descherm Lake. I was born in Ile-a-la-Crosse and my father and mother and the family were living in Descherm Lake. And my father was a bush pilot transporting fish from the northern lakes into La Loche and Buffalo. So we lived out in Descherm Lake. And I'm proud to say that Descherm Lake was my home town. And I guess my mayor resigned, Ivan Janvier, but when we were there it was just a fantastic place to be in. The best memories of my childhood was living in Descherm Lake amongst my family and amongst the people of Descherm Lake.

I guess the other community as we go — I'll just jump over La Loche here for a minute, Mr. Speaker — I'll go to Garson Lake. And here, Mr. Speaker, I'm trying to get the government to take the time to talk about Garson Lake. And one of the Highways ministers, several years ago, was . . . We spoke about Garson Lake, and we asked them to take the time to study the impacts and the supports and the effects that could happen if we make the Garson Lake road happen.

This is a community of 100 people in Garson Lake that want to be connected to the rest of the province. And no, Garson Lake is not in the far northern communities. No, they're not thousands of miles or hundreds of kilometres away from any community. Mr. Speaker, Garson Lake is probably only 40 kilometres from La Loche — 40 kilometres. And I made a point earlier about this Highways minister that said we are not going to make a road to a northern Alberta town. And, Mr. Speaker, Garson Lake is in Saskatchewan.

So the point is that had he taken the time to come up there and understood the issue, then he would have known Garson Lake is a Saskatchewan town that's near the Alberta border. And La Loche — the community has been fighting and supporting the efforts of the mayor out there, Donald Laprise, of Garson Lake. He's been fighting for years along with his father, George, to get a highway built into Garson Lake.

In fact I made a reference earlier in my member's statement just . . . three years ago they finally got power in that community. The power that you and I . . . electricity that you and I enjoy. They finally got that three years ago. And so again this is a Saskatchewan community, with Saskatchewan people in there, that just most recently got power service.

And the third point we raise is in reference to the Garson Lake road; they've been fighting for this. And what's the importance of the Garson Lake road? What's so important for the provincial government to build a road to Garson Lake? Well number one, again, I'm going back to the point, these are Saskatchewan people. Number two is there's always been the

effort of the entire west side to support a Garson Lake, La Loche, Fort McMurray road so they could kind of get the tourism industry and the oil industry and all the employment opportunities to start flowing towards northern Saskatchewan.

And that's the relevance from an economic perspective, Mr. Speaker, of why the north-west communities really want to see a Garson Lake-Fort McMurray-La Loche connection, because this is their dreams they've been working on many, many years. And I think it's high time the government take the time to understand this, to really understand the impacts and the effect, the positive effects, that could happen if we have Garson Lake connected to the province and on to Fort McMurray.

The other point, in reference to Garson Lake, Mr. Speaker, is you look at the oil industry in northern Alberta and the recent announcement that the Prime Minister is out there signing major agreements with the oil industry. And earlier estimates go, Mr. Speaker, that this particular deal in the industry near and around Fort McMurray pegged the potential cost of \$4 billion, Mr. Speaker. That's \$4 billion and that's in northern Alberta, and we know that the natural gas and the oil do not end at the border, Mr. Speaker. Obviously natural gas and oil probably extends into Saskatchewan, and I think the key thing here is that Garson Lake recognizes that, La Loche recognized that, and even Fort McMurray recognizes that there's an incredible amount of potential here for natural gas and explorations.

And again, Mr. Speaker, I go back to my earlier point about the open and accountable government. When I asked the government the following question which was answered by the hon. member from Cumberland, and I asked, have any permits been allowed for exploration of natural gas in the northern administration district, and he said, yes, a large part of the area between Meadow Lake Provincial Park and the Primrose Air Weapons Range is covered by oil and gas exploration permits and leases.

What does that say, Mr. Speaker? That goes back to the earlier point that the people of La Loche and Garson Lake have been saying for many, many years — put a road in there to help develop natural gas and perhaps oil exploration for the entire region.

And again we go and ask which companies are involved? Is it one company or is it two company? Well, Mr. Speaker, I'll have you know there's one, two, three, four, five, six, seven, eight companies, Mr. Speaker, with exploration permits all throughout that region. So we have not one company taking an awful chance at trying to find natural gas or oil and taking the time to assess the industry; we have eight. So we have eight companies in the region. Obviously these companies must know something's up.

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So Garson Lake, in its very huge efforts of getting the government to understand and to take the time to build a road into Garson Lake and on to Fort McMurray so you have a Fort McMurray-Garson Lake-La Loche connection that will not only

help out with tourism but it's also going to help out with natural gas, it's going to help out with employment opportunity, it's going to help out with forestry.

And who needs the employment, Mr. Speaker? The Saskatchewan people and that region. And we have to take the time to understand communities like La Loche who suffer from a 70 to 80 to 90 per cent unemployment rate. They need the employment opportunities associated with this Garson Lake road.

So, Mr. Speaker, we look at a small community of Garson Lake. What significant impact can a small road, a 30 or 40 kilometre piece of road, have on the Saskatchewan economy? Well, Mr. Speaker, it's right here in black and white. If that road comes through, the opportunities can indeed flow from a \$4 billion industry located in Fort McMurray into Garson Lake and onto La Loche and onto Buffalo Narrows and onto Beauval, Ile-a-la-Crosse, and so on.

So, Mr. Speaker, we have a tremendous economic opportunity here. We know that there's gas exploration happening. Eight companies are involved. The community wants a road in there. There's a booming industry next door. So really, why can't they put that in place? And this is the reason why, Mr. Speaker, we must take the time to hear the people of Garson Lake and to hear the people of La Loche when they say, give us this road. Take the time, government, to give us this road.

And the last time that the community did come in here, Mr. Speaker, to ask for support, they didn't ask for support of \$10 billion or \$4 million. That's not what they asked for, Mr. Speaker. What the community of La Loche and Garson Lake come to the government for, Mr. Speaker, is they urge them, take the time, take the time to understand what the costs are.

And what we want to do, Mr. Government, is we want you to put in training dollars so they can train the people of La Loche and the people of Garson Lake — through a welfare reform program or through training dollars — on how to operate heavy equipment. And this heavy equipment training that they'll get, they'll build a road.

It's not going to cost you millions and millions, Mr. Government; it's going to cost you guys a small amount. And then you're going to be potentially tapping into a \$4 billion industry, Mr. Speaker. For what? For the simple act and for a simple request from the people of La Loche and Garson Lake to use training dollars for training people in heavy equipment to build that road.

It's not asking for millions. All they asked, Mr. Speaker, was \$250,000 a year for three years. And of course the same old tune — it's the federal Liberals in Ottawa.

Well, Mr. Speaker, that has some bearing and some significance. But sooner or later that excuse and that strategy will dry out. And it's quickly drying out because people of the North — Garson Lake and La Loche — these are very intelligent people. They know what's going on. But they must go through the motions of pretending that they don't know,

because for the longest time they're asking for support, for a government that's supposed to serve, not dictate to people.

So Garson Lake, and the request for a road, can have tremendous economic opportunity. Not just for Garson Lake, and La Loche, and the people of the north-west, but for the whole, entire province. And, Mr. Speaker, I urge the government to take the time to understand this issue because this is only a 30 kilometre stretch — not 300 — 30 kilometres.

And so on behalf of the mayor, Donald Laprise, and the many fine people in this community, I urge the government to take the time to understand; and I urge the government to take the time to go there and do a proper assessment of where the road should go; and I urge that the government to take the time to understand what exactly people are asking for — to recycle welfare dollars, and to use training dollars to train their own people, so they can build that road on their own.

And if that isn't a win-win situation, Mr. Speaker, I don't know what is. That's a win-win situation and I can't understand for the life of me why the Saskatchewan government will not take the time to study the impacts of this. Is there a larger agenda out there? We don't know.

So Garson Lake, again I commend them for their fight and their will to have this road become a reality. And it goes back to if you can't understand the logistics of serving your own people by providing them access to the Saskatchewan road system, then at the very least, from the economic perspective, support that. So Garson Lake is certainly hoping this government has a change of heart and really begins to understand what is needed out there.

So going on to La Loche, Mr. Speaker. We've all heard the negative aspects of that community time and time again. La Loche's situation with the hospital that we spoke about, it was featured in the *Star-Phoenix* article. And this is the largest community in the North, Mr. Speaker, the largest village. It has a population of roughly 3,000 to 3,500 people — 3,000 to 3,500 people on a small plot of land.

And, Mr. Speaker, what are some of the concerns of La Loche? Plenty. Social development, housing, and the economic development. Right now, Mr. Speaker, the mayor of . . .

The Speaker: — Order, order. Order. I've been listening for quite some time, very carefully, to the words of the hon. member for Athabasca and I'm having a great deal of difficulty getting the direct relationship between the remarks that he's bringing to debate and the motion that is before the Assembly.

And I will ask the hon. member to give the direct relationship between the words that he's bringing, the ideas he's bringing, and the precise motion that is before the Assembly. I know the hon. member will want to be relevant in his debate and I'll ask him to direct his remarks in that way.

Mr. Belanger: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And again I go back to the points of the purpose of governing is we have to take the time to understand these issues. And this opportunity

allows me that time to explain to us why we are wasting time, and wasting people of Saskatchewan's time, by going through motions of this nature.

The intent of the motion here is to obviously stall the whole process. As MLAs (Member of the Legislative Assembly) we're here to serve the people — not play games and not try to outmanoeuvre each other. So if we're doing that, we're doing a disservice. We're doing a disservice to not taking the time to understand these issues. We should have motions here every day to understand the effects of health care, to understand the effects of a non-thinking economic strategy. We should have to have the . . . study the effects and take the time to look at social problems in northern Saskatchewan and many communities.

So if we'd take the time, Mr. Speaker, instead of going through silly motions of this nature trying to prove our point. We are doing a disservice to Saskatchewan people. So I'm taking the time now to explain to the government why we're missing the boat on this issue, why we must not play these types of games at the expense of the Saskatchewan constituencies.

And certainly as MLA for the Athabasca constituency I'm not going to waste my time. I'm going to make sure that this Assembly is aware of the concerns of the people and that a motion of this nature certainly does not harm that process.

Now you talk about overkill, Mr. Speaker. I'll continue on. I think the key thing here, Mr. Speaker, back to La Loche. The funny thing is too many times the people of La Loche have been struggling and fighting for one thing. They've been asking the government to finance a drug and alcohol rehabilitation centre.

For many months and for many years, a group of concerned people that got together and met and met and met. And they knew if they took the time to understand community development and the problems associated with alcohol and drug abuse within that community, that they'll be doing a service to their people.

And months after months after months of negotiations and meeting, they asked, we need a rehabilitation centre, a proper facility to really serve the people. You have to take the time to understand our problems. We need to have these counsellors in here. We need to have social development issues raised and we also have to make sure that we take the time to help our people.

So after years and years and years of that, the government kept on saying: we have no money; we have no money; we have no money; we have no money. And, Mr. Speaker, in the middle of that "we-have-no-money tune" the provincial government built a brand-new Liquor Board store — brand-new, state-of-the-art.

Now, Mr. Speaker, if we haven't got the time, we haven't got the money, at the very least we should understand one thing — we shouldn't perpetuate problems or complicate the process that many local people . . . or what they're trying to do.

What is totally, totally beyond me, Mr. Speaker, is we did not take the time to understand. What is more important for the

community of La Loche? Was it a brand-new Liquor Board store or was it a drug and alcohol abuse centre, something the people are calling for?

So what do we do, Mr. Speaker? What do we do, Mr. Speaker? We sit down and we ask the people, well how do you feel about it? And we say, what else can we do? We shrug our shoulders and we said, well we wish somebody had taken the time to listen.

Well, Mr. Speaker, I asked the government to take the time to put in a brand-new alcohol and drug abuse centre and the support programs that people of La Loche have asked for many years. And I asked the community to challenge the government to provide that for them so they're able to help themselves. They have the counsellors locally but they haven't got the system in which they can operate under.

Secondly, Mr. Speaker, I asked the government, in terms of La Loche, to help a ladies group in town that are also fighting for a shelter for women and children. As a result of some of the social problems, the big losers are the women and children. So this group of women are taking the time to try and urge the governments to do something to help them locally.

So, Mr. Speaker, we've got to take the time to understand what these people need and what these people want. And for the life of me be able to find the money for a brand-new police station and brand-new Liquor Board store, why can't you find the money for a brand-new drug and alcohol abuse centre, and why can you find the money for a women and child's shelter?

So our priorities are a bit mixed up, Mr. Speaker, and the reason why they're mixed up is we have not taken the time to understand the North. So I challenge every socialist in this building to understand La Loche's predicament. They're not asking for hundreds of millions of dollars again; they're asking to be treated with decency and they're asking to be given some control over their lives. And they're asking to be heard and they're urging the government to take the time to understand their particular problems.

Now, Mr. Speaker, again La Loche, we touch on another issue here in terms of taking the time. Well the people of La Loche have taken many, many years. Their patience has been there for government for many years. They have taken the time, Mr. Speaker.

And one time they put in — what? — 16, 17 trailers together and they said, we will call this a hospital on a temporary basis. Temporary basis. Well, Mr. Speaker, it's now 1996 and this temporary hospital is still serving the people of that particular community. La Loche has still got the trailers as a hospital. And I think that's a monument to the fact that the government has not taken the time to really go out there and assess what is being done to these people.

And the amazing thing, Mr. Speaker, is the people of La Loche have not backed down. They have continued to pressure the government for that. And the way things . . . and the amazing thing that I find is that in spite of our very efforts to try and get

this issue highlighted, and Eisler's column done that, I got a few calls from a few people saying, that was a good effort that you done, Buckley, to highlight this particular problem, but gee whiz, we wish it wasn't so negative.

What that tells me, Mr. Speaker, is in spite of all the indifference that these people have suffered from the government, they still have a tremendous amount of pride, not only in themselves but in their children and their community. They did not want to be portrayed any more as a bad community.

So what does that say to you, Mr. Speaker? That says to you that the people at this particular community, La Loche people, are fighting for their very existence every day and they're not going to change their mind when it comes to taking on a government that will not change the system that they currently dictate to for the people of the North.

So what do we have here? We have a need for a new hospital. And I ask the government to take their time to listen to that. La Loche needs a new hospital. And they're not asking for a \$50 million facility; they're asking for a facility that would serve their people. A decent one. Treat them with decency and respect.

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And the final thing when it comes to that particular health issue, Mr. Speaker, is that you can go to that building there and you could talk to the nurses and to the doctors, and this is a system that's just being overrun with problems. And have these people quit? No, they haven't, Mr. Speaker. The resolve of the La Loche people to handle their social problems is something that we should all look at as a fine example of the Saskatchewan spirit that exists in northern Saskatchewan.

And let me tell you, the people of La Loche are not going to quit. They're going to continue pursuing this matter and they are going to continue fighting for a decent health care facility. They're going to continue fighting for a shelter for their women and their children. They're going to continue fighting for an alcohol and drug abuse centre. And to top it all off, they're going to continue fighting for the Garson Lake road. They're going to continue fighting for employment opportunity, economic opportunity, and social development at its very highest sense. And you cannot stop them, Mr. Speaker. So if I was the government I'd get on the bandwagon and benefit from the energy of the people of this particular community, because they can show you what determination, pride, and planning is all about.

So I guess the other factor when you talk about La Loche is, the two bright lights in that particular community, Mr. Speaker, are the two schools: Dene High School and the Ducharme Elementary School. And these two schools, Mr. Speaker, are the shining and saving light of that particular community. They have over a thousand students — over 1,000 students — registered in those two schools. And it's the teachers, it's the teachers, Mr. Speaker, and the staff of these schools that are going to really make a significant effort to the social

development of that community.

And I can't say anything better about the staff, Mr. Speaker. When you go in there you can sense a pride amongst the students. You can see the value that they have for their school and the respect they have for their staff. And this is a tremendous job.

The staff and the teachers of both the elementary school, Ducharme Elementary School, and the Dene High School are the one group of people that are really doing extra hard work to save the people of this particular community. They're the ones that are working hand in hand with the local leaders to come up with a successful resolution to the many years of problems that this community has suffered from — many years.

I'm not going to argue all night. The problems are there. Check the facts. I always say, the point I make is check the facts, Mr. Speaker, and you will see the amount of problems that are there. These are facts and nobody can argue with facts. If the facts are there, then there's something wrong somewhere, Mr. Speaker.

But again I go back to the educational effort of the people of La Loche — 3,500 people — they're pinning their hopes and their dreams and their aspirations on educating their young people. So 5 to 10 to 15 years from now when these young people are in charge of the community, all the problems that they've encountered in the past and to this day will be something that's marked in the history books, because these people are going to come out motivated, educated, and tired of waiting.

So that's my message to government, is you do not take these people for granted any more. They're not going to sit back and continue taking the type of treatment that they've taken for many, many years. Patience is wearing thin.

So La Loche again, they're fully support of the Garson Lake road. They see employment opportunity there. They've trained many heavy-equipment workers to work at various mine sites, and they want to build this road by training other people and get them off welfare and give them employment opportunity and give them back their pride and their drive and their ambition. That's what it's all about, Mr. Speaker. It's about developing a proud, disciplined, smart people and that's what La Loche wants for their people and they'll get that. If it doesn't come sooner, it'll certainly come.

Now I'll just go, I'll jump a little towards to the La Loche Indian Reserve, Mr. Speaker. The Clearwater Dene Nation is being governed by Chief Roy Cheecham and his band councillors, and there's another example of the determination, Mr. Speaker, of the first nations group. The Clearwater Dene Nation is doing a whole pile of work, Mr. Speaker. They're getting heavily involved with economic development; they're getting heavily involved with social development; they're getting heavily involved with educational planning and housing construction; and they're really taking charge of their lives, Mr. Speaker.

But really you ask the question, is how are they managing to do

that, and yet La Loche next door actually, you know, hasn't done comparably well? Well the fact of the matter is, Mr. Speaker, is the Dene first nations are in charge of their own financing. This is an Indian reserve and they get federal funding to do that. But more so, the federal funding is under their control.

The difference between the Clearwater Dene Nation and the northern village of La Loche is that the village does not control their funding, does not control anything but their small amount of municipal allocation, while the Dene first nations control all the funding.

So you can see the contrast is that these two groups of people that share the same town — one is successful, the other wants to be successful — it's simply because the only difference is one is in charge of its financing and the other is just a creature of government.

So the point is that the Clearwater Dene Nation is actually teaching many people in Saskatchewan — certainly have taught me — how to run government and how to serve your people. And in fact the Clearwater Dene Nation can probably teach the provincial government a heck of a lot more of serving people than they can teach anybody else in this province.

So I ask the provincial government to go to listen to some of the chiefs in the north-west and to Chief Roy Cheecham at the Clearwater Dene Nation on how to govern and how to serve people; and he can certainly share a lot of insight and can give you guys a lot of valuable lessons. So the people of the Clearwater Dene Nation can certainly teach this provincial government about service to people.

So we'll just continue travelling along down Highway 155, Mr. Speaker, and asking the government to take the time, which I'm making them do this evening, to understand what the issues are in each of these communities.

Turnor Lake. Turnor Lake is a community of about 1,200 people, and these 1,200 people, they're much like the rest of the northern communities. They want to take the time to also develop an economy. And their big issue, Turnor Lake's big issue at this point in time, Mr. Speaker, is the fact that they want 30 kilometres of road fixed. This year a 4X4 truck couldn't make it through to a town of 1,200 people. And this is only 30 kilometres.

And I'd like to share a story of one of the councillors there, Louis Morin, he's an elder. And Louis has told many people, the government should have taken the time to listen to us. They should have taken the time to listen to us. We asked for a road to connect our community because there's a lot of people there that have health problems; there's many people that travel out for groceries and for fuel; and there's many things that they need from the outside world.

And they asked, 30 kilometres to be fixed up. And year after year, government after government has told the people of Turnor Lake, you're on the list to get this road fixed. But 1996 they finally realized that you can't travel on a list. And Mr.

Morin certainly pointed that thing out very eloquently.

So I ask the people here, when we talk about highways we're not talking about 5,000 kilometres of road; we're talking about 30-kilometre stretches, 40-kilometre stretches, and 60-kilometres stretches that for years have been promised by this government and has never been delivered.

And furthermore they make the effort, the communities make the effort. Like, Turnor Lake has said many times, give us something; give us even a grader that we can control here locally so we can send the grader man out there to at least do some work on the road. Give us a little bit more gravel, please, you know. And they've even said, give us a training program; we'll train some guys here too, the same process that La Loche is doing. And then we'll build our own road. But for crying out loud, do something.

So when we get up here and we talk about the Turnor Lake road, the press doesn't take notice of it. The people in the House just sit back and they say, okay. So what do we do now, Mr. Speaker? Now we're taking the time to explain why Turnor Lake road needs to be fixed, so everybody in this House could understand that.

So when you have an entire community of 1,200 people that have been isolated and the road has not been fixed for years, what do we say? Well, let them be patient, you know, we're in debt here. The federal government cut us back.

Well, Mr. Speaker, the time for excuses is over. They've been promised a road and that promise should be delivered. And I urge you, Mr. Speaker, to take the time yourself to instruct as many people as you can in your lifetime to go there and listen to some of the concerns.

So the issue of housing and employment and social development and the road — similar issues, Mr. Speaker, of many northern communities. And Turnor Lake is like no other community. They are the ones that have been calling for a decent road, they've been calling for decent housing, they've been calling for opportunity to participate in industries operating in their backyards, and they've been asking for respect. But time after time after time, promises have been broken and nobody's listening or hearing the concerns of people of Turnor Lake. But, Mr. Speaker, tonight we're taking the time to tell them, to explain to them, so they can go back and say, oh, we didn't know; we didn't know. *Hansard* will show that they did know. And when you make a promise, it's a promise you should keep.

Okay, then we'll go a little further, Mr. Speaker. We'll go to the community of Patuanak, and Patuanak is also a Dene community of roughly 1,200 people. There's 200-and-some people being governed by a mayor and council. It's a hamlet. And the neighbouring English River First Nation Reserve has about 1,000 people. And the mayor there is Ernest Laliberte and the chief there is Archie Campbell. Both the mayor and chief have been working very, very hard to serve their people and these two individuals, along with their councils, are taking the time to try and come up with some exciting and innovative

ways to better serve their people.

And take a wild guess, Mr. Speaker, what some of the concerns are. And it may sound like a real echo in here, but we have to take time to listen. The concerns of Patuanak are a) a new road; b) employment opportunities; c) social development; and d) respect. Mr. Speaker, another group of 1,200 people on the Patuanak community are isolated because of their road. The Patuanak road has been having so many problems over so many years that in the springtime for three or four weeks at a time, traffic can't get through. Five or six wash-outs, no problem. But do we listen as a province? No, we don't. Time after time, year after year, we make promises, promises that we don't keep.

So how much more longer do we have to continue banging that drum, Mr. Speaker? How many more times must we urge the government to listen to the people of Patuanak and get that road fixed? Give them decent housing and help them with social and economic planning so they have a bright future for themselves and their children. This is the overwhelming message from many northern communities. So Patuanak is like no other community. They have their needs and I think it's time the government started taking the time and meeting those needs. After 10, 20, 25 years, don't you think we should change our approach, Mr. Speaker? Don't you think we should have an approach of respect for the northern communities?

Well, Mr. Speaker, Patuanak again, many, many years ago they had a very exciting hockey team. The Patuanak Pats won many, many tournaments throughout Saskatchewan. And they had three players on that team that had some junior hockey experience. In fact one of the players played for the East Coast Hockey League. And on a per capita basis, Patuanak's probably put out the best hockey players in the North-west — hockey players like Abe Apesis, like Moe Apesis, like August George Sr., August George Jr. All these players that come out and they made it in the big leagues.

Mr. Speaker, they never made it to the NHL (National Hockey League), but had they had the proper support — and they certainly had the ability — they would've made it. And had the government taken time to even support social development, cultural awareness, and sport programs, these people would've been in the NHL and you would've seen less problems now.

So had you taken the time to support such teams as the Patuanak Pats and communities like Patuanak . . . you know, you just don't realize the potential of people out there.

And again I go back to my earlier points. These are Saskatchewan people. They're not way out in the boondocks like some hill-billies we're not going to pay attention to. They're Saskatchewan people. They belong to Saskatchewan. They belong to this Assembly. They vote for provincial elections. They also vote for federal elections. So for crying out loud, treat these people like Saskatchewan residents . . .

An Hon. Member: — They count as much as anyone else.

(2030)

Mr. Belanger: — Because they count as much as anybody else. Thank you very much, hon. member from Humboldt.

So we look at the other aspect of Patuanak. We have the English River First Nation. And they just recently signed their own policing force. They're doing some work with educational programs, they're looking at health care. They're really playing a very positive role with their people.

Chief Archie Campbell and his councillors are doing a tremendous job. They're really trying their very best to change things, to better the opportunities that the residents of Patuanak face.

And you look at all the issues that we speak about. People like our chief, Archie Campbell, and all his councillors, they have also went through a lot of tough times in their life, Mr. Speaker. They've seen the indifference of government and they've seen the fact that roads to their communities don't receive high priority. So they know that and they realize that. So I urge the government again to respect these people and take the time to go visit them and understand their issues.

And again, 1,200 people have a lot of dreams, have a lot of aspirations, a lot of plans, but again, they feel very ignored by this government when the very simple issue of building a decent road that can connect them to the rest of the province has been an ongoing problem, and in 1996 the problem has not been fixed.

So Patuanak needs a road; Patuanak needs respect; Patuanak needs to be consulted. So we're asking and urging the government to take the time to listen.

Now we'll just jump across and head west now, Mr. Speaker. We'll go into two communities: Michel Village and St. George's Hill. Now these two communities are also managed or administered by mayors and councillors. And the big problem . . . I'll tell you again, Mr. Speaker, what their problem is. They need a decent road, Mr. Speaker. They need some decent housing and they need social and economic development.

That's what they asked for, these small communities. There's about 200 people in each of the communities, and again they're asking for decent roads; they're asking for a say in the forestry; they're asking for some support in developing a fishing industry; tourism opportunity; forestry opportunity.

And does this government hear them? No. And what kind of road do they want, Mr. Speaker? Again, it's not 200 kilometres or 400 kilometres, Mr. Speaker; this is a 60 kilometre stretch — 60 kilometres. This is what the people of Michel Village and St. George's Hill have been asking.

And there's many taxi operators and people that drive on these roads and they really wreck their vehicles. And they ask governments time and time again: we pay our licence fees; we buy our plates; we pay taxes. We do our part for the Saskatchewan economy. We provide a service; we create our own employment; we provide transportation for our people. So why can't we get our government to fix up this road? Why is it

that our issues and our priorities are way off? Why haven't they heard us?

Well, Mr. Speaker, the government has heard them but they continue to ignore them. And again, you go there and ask St. George's Hill and Michel Village, ask them what they want. Number one, a road, a decent road to connect us to the main highway. Give us a decent road. That's what they're saying, Mr. Speaker.

And then the housing situation comes into effect and the social and economic development planning. But they don't want government coming there and trying to control everything and do everything for them. They want to have some control and power over their own lives. But they want the basic thing of infrastructure, which is roads and housing, and they want the basic service and opportunity associated with economic and social development planning.

So Michel Village and St. George's Hill, again they're being administered by a mayor and council and they're certainly doing all they can to help their local people. But again, I'll give you some prices of these small communities. Their annual budget, Mr. Speaker, the annual budget of some of these hamlets in northern Saskatchewan to collect garbage, to maintain the streets, provide street lights, provide recreation facility funding, provide a recreation director, hold council meetings — the annual budgets of some of these communities like Michel Village and St. George's Hill and the hamlet of Patuanak and Descharme Lake — some of them are as low as 30,000. The highest I believe is 50,000. So what kind of community can you run with \$50,000, Mr. Speaker? You can't build one house for \$50,000 and you can't fix up 1 kilometre of road for \$50,000.

So the real question is: how do they expect these mayors and these councillors to change the system that they live under and change the system for the betterment of their people with such a small amount of money? Fifty thousand dollars, Mr. Speaker; that is basically what they get to work with. And I think it's a crying shame that they are expected to fulfil all their community's needs with not one iota or level of support for extra financing from the province.

So St. George's Hill and Michel Village, the road issue is something that's been terribly pressing. And yet forestry is happening all around them. We have natural gas and exploration happening all around them. We have the mining sector that's happening all around the North. And yet the basic, essential needs of 3 per cent of the provincial population we can't meet.

What kind of government are we? Where's our compassion and where's our commitment to northern Saskatchewan? You and I know where they went. They went out the window. So the apathy that is being suffered right now, that the government is suffering from right now towards the North, has got to stop. It's got to end. We've been patient with you, been working with you, been trying to impress upon you our needs. But once again they fall on deaf ears.

So how much more can we expect the northern Saskatchewan people and the communities to take? Like any other community, Mr. Speaker, Michel Village, St. George's Hill, have children in them. And these children represent the future of their communities, and they are doing that on a \$50,000 budget as a community. So you tell me how much chance and how much opportunity that they have to develop a better future.

I would suggest, Mr. Speaker, that this government take the time to go there and sit down with these Saskatchewan people and say, what can we do to help? What can you guys do to become partners with us in developing a brand-new Saskatchewan so the spirit of Saskatchewan can also work in northern communities?

And again, Mr. Speaker, you just don't know the dreams and the aspirations and the abilities of some of the mayors and the councillors and the people like the communities of Michel Village and St. George's Hill. Henry Laplante and Emilian Desjarlais are the mayors of both these small communities and they also have their councillors as well.

Located next to the northern hamlets of Michel and St. George's Hill is the Indian reserve of Dillon, and I believe it's called the Birch Narrows First Nation and it's being governed by Chief Elmer Campbell and his band of councillors.

Again the first nations government, Mr. Speaker, is doing a heck of lot more for their treaty membership than Michel Village and St. George's Hill could ever hope to do. For one specific reason — is that they have control over their funding.

They have control over their decision-making ability. And people like Chief Elmer Campbell at the Birch Narrows First Nation, in Dillon, is a good example of how the young people that have become educated, they come back to these northern communities, and have taken over control of these communities so that they can develop a future on their own. Governments can't do that for them. What they ask for is, they ask for support of government, and they ask for respect of government, and they ask to be consulted by government.

And Dillon's the same boat. They're supporting Michel Village and St. George's Hill and have called for a decent road. Because many people on medical emergencies, on taxi trips, or just generally going out to visit neighbouring communities, have to go through some terrible roads. And another 1,200 Saskatchewan people are being isolated because this government did not take the time, through this legislature, to try and understand what the issues and the concerns are.

So just to quickly recap. You look at the 60 kilometres for the Dillon road, the 30 kilometres for the Garson Lake road, the 30 kilometres for the Turnor Lake road, and the 80 kilometres for the Patuanak road, if you connected those 4 towns, Mr. Speaker, those 4 communities, you're in essence connecting 4,000 people to the rest of the province with decent roads — 4,000 men, women, and children.

And this is why every day that I have the opportunity to bring up northern roads, I do. Because this is no small issue, Mr.

Speaker; this has been ongoing issue and these are real problems. So when I bring them up the press doesn't pick it up, the government doesn't respond, and then their issues get put away for another day.

So this is the reason why, Mr. Speaker, going through silly motions of this nature, we are forced, literally forced, to play games that don't get anybody anywhere. Much like you, and much like most members of this House, I tire of this process. If we can get together and show the people as legislators . . . then why go through the motions of pretending to govern.

So we must pick the time, Mr. Speaker, to understand how to serve our people better. And whether it's Patuanak, or Michel, or St. George's Hill, or Stony Rapids, today you know what those issues are. And they're only one-third finished.

I guess in the . . . as you go further south down the road from Michel and Dillon, we'll hit . . . not south, sorry, we're heading east. We'll come to the community of Buffalo Narrows. And Buffalo Narrows is probably one of the larger communities in the north-west. The people of the whole region got together and supported Buffalo Narrows and established the North West Credit Union which is a banking service to serve the whole area.

And Buffalo Narrows has approximately 14 to 1500 people. It's a vibrant economy. It's being governed by Mayor Bobby Woods, and a council of six people. And Mayor Woods and the council have been doing a tremendous amount of work, Mr. Speaker. They have been beautifying the community; they've been talking about social development; they've been talking about economic development. They've hired a worker to look at the economic opportunities associated with the Buffalo Narrows area and the north-west in general. And they're doing their very best. They're doing their very best with the limited amount of dollars that they have, that the government gives them control over, to try and develop an economy at the community level.

So the question we have here, is how does Mayor Woods and the council of Buffalo Narrows do it? It's because they have the drive and the ambition and the pride in themselves to say, well this is what we are given, a meagre amount of money. We're going to do the best we can with this money to develop the best attitude at the community level.

And yes, Mr. Speaker, they have needs as well, even though they're in the middle of the main highway. They have employment problems. They have social development plans that they want to see done. And this is where we go back to the earlier statement, is that if you give Buffalo Narrows more support, more financial support to do economic planning and social development planning, then you will see that this community indeed has the intelligence to go a long ways. They have somewhat of an economy, Mr. Speaker, that can really begin to develop and build if you take away the restrictions and you support the local community, much more so than you have been supporting them from this date.

So I think when we look at the whole community development

scenario, Buffalo Narrows is a shining example of how well a community can get organized if it's got a good, solid leader; it's got good, solid councillors; it's got a plan; it's got some kind of economy developing; and that it can get the support and the efforts of government to really support what they want to do.

Mr. Speaker, Buffalo Narrows is home of formerly the Westside Community College. And it was here in 1982 that somebody took the time to put together a program to teach people on television and radio production. And I was one of the fortunate candidates that took this TV and radio production, and I went to travel into Buffalo Narrows.

And we stayed there with many other people. At this time . . . at this point in time it's called the Westside Community College. And the Westside Community College more or less served the region.

And Buffalo Narrows was a fine host community. They had . . . they put up some of the instructors, and they brought students in from outside, and they tried to bring training to the west side as best as they could. And there have been many, many students in the Westside Community College that has benefited from Buffalo Narrows' hospitality and Buffalo Narrows' efforts at treating the young people throughout the North.

And what happens today, Mr. Speaker? We have a government that goes in there, and after many years of griping, we build . . . the government builds a new training institution, a centre that will house students and classrooms, accommodate the students. But, Mr. Speaker, while the building is a nice, nice, brand-new building — and both federal and provincial government should be thanked for that, you know — and certainly the community had a lot of work and effort to get that thing built . . . What's the next step, Mr. Speaker? The next step is financing for training. They have a nice building there, but if you don't have the appropriate budgets and the appropriate financing for that building, then what's the use of having the building?

(2045)

So therefore there you go again, you did not consult. You should have sat down with the community and say, what can we do to address these problems. Let us take the time to sit down with you guys. Whatever it takes us, one day, two days, three weeks, or three months, let us find a way to change things around so that the Westside Community College can be re-established. The Westside Community College can then really begin to benefit the north-west as it did for many years. And the Westside Community College can stay in Buffalo Narrows and serve the whole, entire region. That's what they should have done.

But again we did not understand the impacts or we did not understand that the transition of the training dollar . . . We did not take the time. And this is the reason why, today, Buffalo Narrows . . . if I had any of my wish, if I had any opportunity to wish what I would have, I would say they should have never, ever amalgamated the Westside Community College with the Northlands Career College out of La Ronge . . . (inaudible) . . . \$300-and-some-thousand building or just for a canoe.

And I don't know how many millions that facility cost, and how many more years it had taken to build the one in Buffalo Narrows. Now the question that I have is, how much of the Westside Community College budget was taken out of Buffalo Narrows and put in La Ronge to centre the Northlands Career College in La Ronge.

Well, Mr. Speaker, I have no problem with the community of La Ronge, but they should not advance, nor should they benefit, at the Westside Community College expense or the people or the community of Buffalo Narrows. There's no bloody way they should have benefited from that. And this is where it goes, Mr. Speaker, that they did not take the time to study the issue of amalgamation. They just went ahead and done it. And this is where we failed as government.

We failed to help the people of Buffalo Narrows, the staff of the Westside Community College, and more importantly, Mr. Speaker, the potential trainees, the students that could be here every day studying their sciences, studying opportunity in the mining sector, studying community development. And the list goes on and on and on.

Well, Mr. Speaker, the people of Buffalo Narrows are telling this government, you give back every red cent you bilked from Northlands Career College for the construction of that building in La Ronge; you put it back into the Westside Community College and you give us back the adequate funding we once had so we can train our people.

Mr. Speaker, again Buffalo Narrows is one of the busiest communities and one of the larger communities in the west side. They have a beautiful airport. They've got a number of services there and they've got a number of businesses there as well. And again there are many friends and family that I have in Buffalo Narrows. But really, Mr. Speaker, if you really want to support the community of Buffalo Narrows, then you should spend time, take the time to govern properly, take the time to listen to these guys, take the time to involve in their process.

And the most important thing is, don't ever, ever take out any money out of Buffalo Narrows that is planned for the Westside Community College and place them somewhere else. The Westside Community College is in Buffalo Narrows. They want that college to stay there. They support that college 100 per cent. There's a need for the college to be there. So the big thing is, listen to the people of Buffalo Narrows and support their efforts on economic development, social development, and of course educational and institutional training.

And again, we'll go just a little further west of that, Mr. Speaker, the community of Pinehouse, Pinehouse Lake. Pinehouse, Mr. Speaker, as I just mentioned today in a member's statement, that it's just an excellent community. We have 1,200 people there as well, Mr. Speaker. For some odd reason the number 1,200 always pops up in my head because these are roughly the population figures of the people of Pinehouse.

And this past weekend, Mr. Speaker, I had the pleasure of attending their first ever grade 12 graduation in Pinehouse. The

first ever grade 12 graduation. That's a tremendous accomplishment, Mr. Speaker. Tremendous accomplishment. And I could see it in the audience that the parents and the grandparents were so proud of the seven people that were up on the head table there as grade 12 grads.

Well, Mr. Speaker, let me give you just a brief history of Pinehouse. What does Pinehouse want, Mr. Speaker? They want a decent road, they want economic and they want social development, and they want respect. That's what they want, Mr. Speaker.

That road, Mr. Speaker, is about 100 kilometres. That's probably the longest stretch of road we need fixed in northern Saskatchewan. And you look at the history of Pinehouse Lake in general. It's got a lot of tourism potential, a lot of forestry development that could be planned for the area. And their mayor of course, Greg Ross, and their councillors are working very hard to try and develop an economy for their communities.

And what do they have for the economy, Mr. Speaker? What do they have to work with to develop an economy? They probably have a \$200,000 operating grant from the provincial government. Now what kind of community economy can you develop with \$200,000 when you have all the other services that you have to deliver to the residents of Pinehouse?

Well, Mr. Speaker, it's just simply not financially possible to do any kind of economic planning or develop any economy with no money. But, Mr. Speaker, somebody forgot to tell that to Pinehouse. Somebody did not pick a time to tell the mayor and council and the people of Pinehouse that they couldn't do it without money, without governmental support.

Well, Mr. Speaker, they're trying their darnedest. They're using every available penny that they can to try and develop an economy in forestry.

And you look at the whole situation again with Pinehouse, Mr. Speaker. I mention again, road, social development, economic planning, and respect. That's what they asked for from this government, and for years and years they have not gotten it.

I had the fortune, Mr. Speaker, of again attending the graduation ceremony this past weekend at Pinehouse. And I spoke to the people, and I told them what an accomplishment it was that the parents took the time to listen to the kids, not like this government not taking the time to listen and govern according to what the people want in this province.

And the seven people that graduated, Mr. Speaker, you know, I couldn't say anything more about the level of pride in that community. And many years ago, about five years ago, they had an excellent hockey team — very good hockey team. And somebody asked them how come they'd done so well; they must have had a coach. They said no, we didn't have a coach. But the funny thing is, Mr. Speaker, they didn't even have a rink and these guys are winning hockey tournaments.

Imagine, Mr. Speaker, if this government would have taken the time to put adequate financing for the people of Pinehouse and

put in an arena out there for sport development, for cultural development, from the millions they made, the 20 or 30 years that they played in the North in terms of economic development.

Now imagine for a moment . . . we're talking about the Patuanak Pats, Mr. Speaker. I'd also like to talk about the Pinehouse hockey team. The big thing here, Mr. Speaker, is that had these people got the proper coaching, the proper facility, they'd be a very, very competitive hockey team. And you never know whether one of them could have made the NHL. Never know. These guys were good skaters but they didn't have a rink, Mr. Speaker. And that goes back all . . . all goes back to an earlier point, is for the last 20, 30 years, we have been speaking to deaf people when we tell them this is what we want; because consistently, Mr. Speaker, on a constant basis, the government has ignored our wishes.

When I was standing up in front speaking to the people of Pinehouse, the one message I got is that they're ready for change; they're ready for challenge. And not to put a damper on the whole proceedings here, Mr. Speaker, but some of the social problems, some of the social problems of the suicide rate in northern Saskatchewan, this is a very depressing fact, Mr. Speaker. There are many, many suicides in northern Saskatchewan.

And you look at many of these communities, they're all the same. They're powerless. They sit in these communities, they have no control over the economies that operates in their backyard, they have no control over the housing stock, they have no money for social development, they have no money for economic planning. They get \$300,000, or 80,000, or 50,000 at their community level to operate their community. How do you expect these people to develop an economy and rise up, and pick themselves up by the bootstraps, when they have absolutely no control, no say, over what goes on in their lives?

How could they be expected to develop an economy when they have a system of disincentives, Mr. Speaker, everything from the social services system to the housing system that we live under, total disincentives. The whole system in the North penalizes the working people, it discourages people from becoming independent, simply because this government has not taken the time to govern accordingly to what the people want.

Again, Pinehouse, another example of the spirit of the Saskatchewan people and the great human potential of northern Saskatchewan people, lies in none other than a person by the name of Gary Tinker. Gary Tinker was on walking crutches. Gary Tinker is a small person with a big, big heart. And many years ago you could understand one thing, Mr. Speaker, is Mr. Tinker was a disabled person in northern Saskatchewan and he walked down the streets of Pinehouse with his canes. He couldn't use his legs at all.

What did this person do, from Pinehouse, Mr. Speaker? He planned a trek right from Pinehouse to La Ronge to Regina. He took the time, Mr. Speaker, to raise the issues that are facing many disabled people in northern Saskatchewan. This was the greatest example of social development that I've ever seen. And

as this small person was walking down the highways, gravel roads and hot cement roads . . . hot paved roads as well, he epitomized the hopes and dreams that many people of Pinehouse had for their own children. They raised the awareness. And the days and days and days of being out in that sun, and the many sores that he had on his arms and his feet, he did not quit. Not once did he quit, Mr. Speaker. He felt many times like giving up, but he did not quit.

And that just goes to show you the amount of resolve that northern Saskatchewan people have, the fact that people like Gary Tinker . . . there's many thousands of Gary Tinkers out there. And whether their fight is in economic development or disability awareness or social development, they're going to keep coming and coming and coming unless this government starts waking up and taking the time to try doing something differently in northern Saskatchewan.

Well Mr. Tinker dipped his canes at the Wascana Creek when he arrived in the city, and he met with various officials. And after two years of negotiations and arguing — he said the trip wasn't too bad but it was the negotiations after that that finally wore me down — they established a Gary Tinker federation.

And, Mr. Speaker, today I really can't tell you what the status of the Gary Tinker federation is. A great effort. And you just can't comprehend the amount of hope that Gary gave a lot of disabled people in northern Saskatchewan. He finally raised the level of awareness. What does the government do? It doesn't recognize it.

These are severe challenges, Mr. Speaker. And we're not making up these things. These are real life stories.

So you look at the fact the Pinehouse hockey team come out of nowhere with nothing to use — great hockey team. Gary Tinker came out of nowhere with just his canes to use to prove his point. He proved his point. And this last weekend, going to attend their graduation ceremony, it showed that Pinehouse is determined to change the path that they're on despite this government's regressive policies and despite this government's inaction to direct finance local economic and social development agencies so that they can begin to change the system that they live under; they have the control.

Mr. Speaker, I cannot speak enough of the creativity of the Pinehouse people and the pride that the parents had in those seven kids that were sitting there getting their diplomas. This was their future, something that they worked for for many, many years. And as I sat there, I couldn't help but feeling a bit of scepticism there, because after these people are done grade 12 they're going to travel out of their community to get training. What if they don't get employment? What if they have student loan problems? Or what if they have housing problems? What if they have no employment opportunity? Where are they? Well they're back on the Pinehouse streets, waiting for something to happen.

Well, Mr. Speaker, I urge the government to take the time to listen to people. Take the time to talk to the people of Pinehouse. And like many other communities here, they want a

decent road, local economic development, social development support, and they want respect.

And that's the whole thing that we mentioned when I was there, is do not wait for government. They will not wait for government. They're positive, powerful people. And if not the graduation, if not their hockey team, if not Gary Tinker . . . and their mayor and council are trying hard to work with limited funds to try and basically do one thing, is to provide hope, provide hope for the people.

Now again I made an earlier point, and I'll make it 10,000 times in this House, is the fact of the matter is if this province cannot help out 3 per cent of its population that is suffering from severe social and economic problems, then where in the heck has our compassion gone to? Where is our soul? Where is our mind? Where is our very being gone to if we can't help out 3 per cent of this provincial population? There's something wrong somewhere and this is not a fair treatment of the people of the North.

(2100)

Mr. Speaker, I was indeed very pleased to be a guest speaker at the Pinehouse grad. I had fully intended to spent two or three days in each of these communities and perhaps two or three weeks to hear more stories of accomplishments, of support. And certainly Pinehouse is one community that's not short on inspiration. Twelve hundred people, Mr. Speaker, have had many challenges every day of their life. They don't live in cushy places. They don't have nice, big, beautiful house to go home to. They've got severe problems.

And you can hear all the chatter from across the room. Well that's fine. They've had good lives. They've had good times. They've had some struggles. But, Mr. Speaker, at the very least they have opportunity afforded to them. And that's what the northern Saskatchewan people want; they want opportunity as well.

Again I'll go from Pinehouse. I'll go into my home community of Ile-a-la-Crosse. Ile-a-la-Crosse has a population base of 1,500 people. It's home of the Ile-a-la-Crosse Selects hockey team which I'm the captain of, Mr. Speaker.

I tried out for the regular tournament team in Ile-a-la-Crosse, which were the Ile-a-la-Crosse Colts, but I had no ability, Mr. Speaker. I was not an effective player enough. So what I've done is, after I was cut from the Colts, the first day in fact, I took the time and I said, if I can't play on this team, I'm going to make my own team. And furthermore I'm going to select the players I want and I'm going to call them the Ile-a-la-Crosse Selects.

Well, Mr. Speaker, the last four years the Ile-a-la-Crosse Selects have not won one game . . . in the last 10 years, Mr. Speaker. The Ile-a-la-Crosse Selects have always been known to never play on Sunday on a weekend tournament. And many people believed because we weren't good enough to make the next day, we'd be out the first day of the tournament. A lot of people didn't know that we insisted on attending church

Sunday morning. So if we had to choose between church and hockey, obviously church was more important.

But the key thing here, Mr. Speaker, is we took the time amongst ourselves, a band of unwanted hockey players, and we played our hearts out, we played our minds out, and we also fund-raised on our own, Mr. Speaker. We never won one game, never won no prize money, but we played every tournament, Mr. Speaker. That just goes to show the determination, Mr. Speaker. And again . . .

The Deputy Speaker: — Order, order. I've been listening for quite a while to the speaker for a great length of time and I've given him a fair amount of latitude to what's been going on. And I'm having a little problem tying in to the motion that's before the Assembly, of what I've been hearing. And I would ask the speaker to keep the debate relevant to the motion that's before the House now.

Mr. Belanger: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And I guess the point of the matter, Mr. Speaker, is the whole process here that I'm trying to do, Mr. Speaker, is I'm not trying to stall the whole process here. What I'm trying to do, Mr. Speaker, is do one thing, is I'm trying to explain to government that they must take the time to understand what governing is all about. We cannot be pushed out through rules and motions — rules and motions of this nature — for the simple fact of politics.

We're here to serve the Saskatchewan people and we must take the time to understand what the Saskatchewan people want. And I hope to do that, Mr. Speaker, by the constant reference of taking the time to understand the Saskatchewan people, taking the time to understand the northern Saskatchewan communities, and what they suffer through.

So in relevance to the issue we're here, Mr. Speaker, the point is, we shall make the effort to understand. We shall take the time to serve our constituents, to explain to them what the problem is. And we go on and on about these northern communities. Well I'm urging the Assembly to take the time now — now — for no politics but for taking the time to understand what the northern Saskatchewan communities in my constituency are going through. And if we can't take the time for that, Mr. Speaker, then what are we in government for?

The second point, Mr. Speaker, in terms of Ile-a-la-Crosse, it's of historical significance that Louis Riel Sr., the father of Riel, was born in Ile-a-la-Crosse. And in fact Louis's sister, Sister Sara, is also buried in Ile-a-la-Crosse cemetery. And obviously the communities of Ile-a-la-Crosse took the time to research their history and found out that Louis Riel Sr. was born in Ile-a-la-Crosse and Sister Sara Riel is buried in that cemetery.

So we took the time, as a local community, to understand our history and that there is some connections of the Riel Rebellion that goes right back to Ile-a-la-Crosse when people wanted to fight for the basic thing we're continuing to fight today; that's the control of land and to realize the great human potential in the North. So in essence, Mr. Speaker, understand and take the time to understand the dynamics and the history of all of these communities.

And today I look at my home town community of Ile-a-la-Crosse and the many people there. The many husbands and the wives and the children there that I know, all personally know, by their first name basis. They've all had a significant, positive influence on my life, Mr. Speaker — from the day that I was elected mayor of Ile-a-la-Crosse to the day I stepped down. The big point is that these people certainly built my life and I owe to them as much of mine that I could give back as possible.

So looking at Ile-a-la-Crosse, again it's one of the larger centres in the community. It's got 1,500 people; it's got a friendship centre; it's got a hospital; it's got a nice arena; it's got artificial ice in the curling rink. The significant things about Ile-a-la-Crosse is 95 per cent of the local businesses are owned by local native people of Ile-a-la-Crosse. So again, it goes to show you the resolve of some of the northern Saskatchewan people.

And today, Mr. Speaker, even though my body and my mind is certainly here in Regina, my heart is still certainly back at home with all the people, and especially the older people there that I miss dearly every day that I'm sitting here talking about things that we should all have known many years ago, and going through motions that are meaningless to them.

To continue on, going down to Beauval, Mr. Speaker. Beauval again has a population of about a thousand people. And the same situation, Mr. Speaker, is they want some social development support and they want economic development planning. Their mayor, Mayor Joe Daigneault, is one of the longest-serving mayors in the north-west and he is a very intelligent person. And as well, his councillors and the economic development people in that community have been working very hard to try and develop an economy for Beauval.

And housing situation is also a big problem. And the key thing here with the Beauval is that they, like many of the other communities, have no tax base, very little funding from government, to try and solve the economic and social problems of the North. Well good luck. When we ask government for support, good luck.

And several years ago, Mr. Daigneault, along with other mayors in the north-west, they came and met with the province. They came and met with the province here and they said, change the system or there could be civil disobedience. And that's the whole thing, is that the civil disobedience thing was said, and it was made out of frustration because he could see that there was very little support being offered to communities like his and to many other communities out there.

So in essence, Mr. Speaker, Beauval has a lot of potential for tourism, have a lot of potential for educational institutions, and has a lot of need for housing, social development, economic development, and respect. Again when these guys come to meet with you, meet with ministers on the government side, they're not talking for nothing, Mr. Speaker. They're seeing the everyday, real-life problems that exist in many of these northern communities.

They see the problem with housing. Mayor Daigneault sees a problem with housing. He sees a problem with youth. He sees a problem with family support systems. He sees a problem with violence, and drug and alcohol abuse. He sees all these problems. Then he comes up here and nothing happens. So we talk about governing and taking the time to understand what government's all about instead of going through silly motions of this nature.

Again, Mr. Speaker, we'll head out to Jans Bay and Cole Bay which is west of Beauval. And Jans Bay, of course their mayor there is Louis Morin. And Mr. Morin has worked many, many years with another former mayor and they had a lot of things on the go for Jans Bay. Jans Bay had under 200 people and their annual budget was somewhere like 60 or \$70,000 per year. But 200 people and you should see the tremendous amount of work that they've done, Mr. Speaker.

They've developed a new school there, they went after water and sewer — heavy, heavy lobbying and a lot of tough negotiations. And Mayor Morin and also Mike Blackman was a former mayor there as well, and the many other councillors, they worked hard. They worked hard for, you know, for the people, and now we see things are happening.

And certainly if you look at Jans Bay, Mr. Speaker, for years and years and years they've been asking for a highway. And well, Mr. Speaker, today if you travel on Beauval to Jans Bay there is no highway. It's the same road that's been in there for the last 20 years, the same road that any member opposite will travel if they went from Beauval to Jans Bay. There is no brand-new road there.

Now they can certainly say they're building it, but how long it's going to take to build and when it's going to be done remains another story.

Cole Bay mayor, Danny Bouvier, same thing. A lot of tourism potential, Mr. Speaker, in Cole Bay. They had been talking about fishing camps and they were talking about eco-tourism and they've been talking about housing problems and social problems. And all of these discussions that they're having, they're the only ones initiating anything, and despite the fact of the matter is you only have about a \$60,000 budget that the town has. What are you supposed to do with \$60,000? That hires one consultant to do a study that'll tell you they need \$800,000 to develop 50 jobs.

So in essence, Mr. Speaker, Cole Bay and their mayor and their councillors, much like Jans Bay, they're small; they have limited control; they have no extra income. And the government has not taken the time to go there and study with them what the opportunities and what the potential for change could be, working hand in hand, in partnership, with government. They haven't done that. They have not taken the time.

Now you wonder, Mr. Speaker, how many more years these communities can wait. Well they can't wait any longer, Mr. Speaker. The problem is here today. And when I hear government talk about the 21st century — things are going to

go great; we all got to prepare for that — what happens to the problems today? Are they swept under the rug for another hundred years.?

So when I hear 21st century, Mr. Speaker, I urge the government, come back to 1996 and take the time to come here and look at these communities and see what their problems are. Today's problems will certainly become tomorrow's problems.

Next door to Cole Bay and Jans Bay is the village of Canoe Narrows. It's a first nations Indian band, Mr. Speaker, and this government, this first nations government, went through incredible turmoil several years ago. They were involved with the forest industry and through negotiations and cooperation and ongoing dialogue they successfully resolved this huge blockade they had out there regarding forestry.

And the Canoe Lake first nations have taken the time to sit down with their people — every individual family resident in that community — they're saying, what can we do to straighten out the problem. They didn't hold filibusters to prove their point; they went right to the solution, right to the people that had the answers, and they worked to put the answers in motion.

And the chief there is Guy Lariviere, and Guy has been working constantly with his council. And several weeks ago I attended their first ever graduation as well, in Canoe Narrows — first ever graduation there as well, much like Pinehouse.

And again the situation is the same. They've been asking for a road, they've been asking for economic and social development, and they've been asking for respect. And the whole situation here, Mr. Speaker, is this is a first nations Indian reserve. They have control of their money and they're doing well. They're doing well. You can see the level of optimism in people, because again they have control of their system. They have control of what they want to do. And I think Canoe Lake First Nation is a good example — another good example — of a northern reserve that can teach this government lessons on how to manage and how to serve people that they're supposed to serve from day one.

And we head into Green Lake, Mr. Speaker. Green Lake is . . . Of course, we're all familiar with Green Lake. They've been on the news for many, many years fighting for one thing — access to wood for their sawmill.

(2115)

Their local sawmill, Mr. Speaker, for a small community of 700 people, employs 30 families. And this sawmill under the recent . . . or in recent history was not guaranteed a wood supply. They asked for 30,000 cubic meters and just recently the government finally gave in because the government had no choice but to give in. So Green Lake, the mayor, Fred McAllum, and certainly his councillors, worked very hard to get some of these things in place.

And we certainly can't forget about their past mayor, Mr. Rod Bishop, who's troubled many years, is now having health problems. But he committed himself to the people in the

community of Green Lake for many years to try and get some of these things settled. And talking about the 12 townships of land that they're fighting for; talking about the agreement for the forestry industry; and talking about trying to protect jobs in Green Lake — that's what this was all about, Mr. Speaker, just asking for control of things, of the nature of land, 12 townships which the government knew they owed to the Green Lake people, and about the 30,000 cubic meters of wood that the government knew the community of Green Lake needed to survive. That's what he was fighting for. And they've only gone one-tenth of the distance they have to go, but that's basically — basically all — on the part of the local government; both the mayor, Fred McAllum, his councillors, and of course past efforts of people like Mr. Bishop.

And certainly Green Lake, like any other community, they have social development problems; they want to work on that. They have economic aspirations; they want support on that. And of course they want respect. The government should be here to serve, Mr. Speaker, to serve the people of Green Lake. And how do you do that? You give them some control over their lives. You give them some opportunity. And this is why we talk about a fair share. We talk fair support and fair effort and respect.

Again, I go back to the point of Green Lake. These guys have been asking for years for better housing. They've been asking for the situation with the wood to be resolved. They've been asking about their 12 townships. They've also been asking for a home care centre for their elders.

Many elders in that community are living in very poor housing, and they're also living in crowded houses along with their families. And you can't have elders raised in this fashion. And this is why I talk about governance, Mr. Speaker, about taking the time to listen to what the people have to say. Going through the motions of what we're doing tonight is contrary to good government, Mr. Speaker. What's the purpose of sitting here if we can't have good government and good choices?

Just west of . . . or east of Green Lake of course is Dore Lake and Sled Lake, and Dore Lake is a small settlement as well as Sled Lake, and Richard Lafleur, I believe, is the mayor of Sled Lake. And Mr. Lafleur has of course been around for many, many years and he's been involved with logging and with fishing and with trapping.

And they basically have a lot of potential there for tourism, Mr. Speaker. They've been talking about tourism quite a bit. And the whole tourism aspect that they have is based on getting the people from the South to go and enjoy the nature, nature in that region. They have a nice, beautiful lake and nice wooded areas, and of course they're trying to have a balance between logging and tourism. And they're taking the time to get involved heavily in forestry. They've got a lot of concerns on forestry and they let us know that.

And of course just north of Sled Lake is Dore Lake, and again Dore Lake is primarily a small centre with very little money to operate with and they're basically just doing volunteer work at the community level to keep the community operational and

certainly keep the community viable.

And Dore Lake is a huge lake in itself. There's a lot of fishing opportunity and potential. In fact people from Beauval migrate into Dore Lake to do some fishing. Of course Dore Lake residents themselves also fish, so fishing industry and wild rice and tourism are areas that Dore Lake could certainly benefit.

But again you go back to the earlier point of Dore Lake, is that they have no control and no say and no economic support, nor do they have any value added processing when you talk about the issues associated with the fishing industry.

So, Mr. Speaker, we have just a few of the communities in my constituency that I wanted to make sure that the Assembly was aware of in terms of what their aspirations are. And I want to make it very, abundantly clear, is that this is what governance is about — about explaining to this government what these communities are facing day in and day out, of the economic problems, and more so, Mr. Speaker, of the social, human suffering that's happening out there. Every day we hear of somebody that either has committed suicide or has attempted suicide or has been burnt out from alcohol or drug abuse.

When you have people in the North that cannot be treated differently, it's because we're not taking the time to understand one thing. What is government? Government is serving people and if you don't take the time to understand people and understand their issues then what are you in government for? And I go back to that same point — if we cannot help out 3 per cent of our provincial population despite our economic might, and where's our compassion gone to? Right from the streets of La Loche to the streets of Pinehouse to the streets of Patuanak to the streets of Black Lake, there is young people — enormous potential — that is being wasted because we are not governing as best as we should.

So my point, Mr. Speaker, is when you think about the North, don't think of Buckley Belanger, don't think of any political party . . .

The Speaker: — Order, order. Now the hon. member realizes of course that rules of the House do not permit reference by proper name to any sitting members of the House, and that in fact applies to himself as well. And I know that the hon. member will want to avoid doing that and I'll ask him to continue his debate.

Mr. Belanger: — Mr. Speaker, you may have misinterpreted me. I said Bucky Belanger; he's my twin brother.

The Speaker: — Order. I just simply ask the hon. member to avoid reference that might be interpreted as reference to himself by proper name, and proceed with his debate.

Mr. Belanger: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I guess in essence — we talk about some of these problems in northern Saskatchewan — it's kind of a situation where we need to start really assessing where we're heading when it comes to northern Saskatchewan. And I urge the government to take the time to really understand what the whole situation is about northern

Saskatchewan.

It's about direct financing of local social development agencies so the people — the children and the women that are in these communities — can really begin to do their own planning. Not going through social government structures, because they get eaten up by huge wages and a government that's not transferring responsibility as best as they should.

And I go back to my point, Mr. Speaker. I got a letter here from Cecile Caisse, who is an outreach worker in Pinehouse. And she indicates to me that there's absolutely no support whatsoever for social development; that she's applied for some summer students' work, and that wasn't there. And there was only one position — half-time, for six weeks — that was really an insult to the people of Pinehouse. And that goes to show you, the Cecile Caisse of this world should be heard in this legislature. The stories that she has, we should take time to hear that, of how we need to really reassess as to a direction we're going when it comes to northern Saskatchewan communities. We haven't got a choice.

Well, Mr. Speaker, I refer to two articles here for exhibition, and I can certainly share it with the members opposite if they'd like. One is the oil sands project in northern Alberta, Fort McMurray in fact. When I said there was a \$4 billion industry just 40 kilometres away from Garson Lake, I wasn't kidding, Mr. Speaker. Here's the article right here. Now we have a \$4 billion booming economy in Fort McMurray — jobs for everyone — and right across the way in Saskatchewan we have a community that suffers 80 per cent unemployment and tremendous social problems.

Now what difference does 40 kilometres make, Mr. Speaker? It's really a question of priority. It's really a question of taking the time to go there and talk to the people of La Loche and say what you want.

So I'd really like . . . If anybody wants to share this article here, I am more than happy to send it over to them so they can see firsthand the incredible opportunity happening in northern Alberta. And why it isn't happening in northern Saskatchewan is totally beyond me.

Mr. Speaker, the other fact of the matter is we look at another article here. This is of June 3, 1996. It says, "Hot' fortune hidden." That's the headline. And this is in reference to McArthur River mine, Mr. Speaker. McArthur River mine is located in northern Saskatchewan, the far North, just around Black Lake and Wollaston Post area. And I quote from this thing, Mr. Speaker. Right here, it says here:

"We're 30-times richer than the richest gold mine in Canada. When you realize that, you see we have an extremely valuable property," says (mine chief) engineer Doug Beattie.

And further, as you go along, further down, he says that the potential opportunity in terms of what this thing could actually do is the figure of \$8 billion industry, Mr. Speaker.

So we have a \$4 billion opportunity just miles away from a Saskatchewan community, 25 miles, and then you have a northern mine site that says \$8 billion could happen out of that. So when you add 8 billion plus 4 billion gives you \$12 billion, Mr. Speaker. Twelve billion dollars that you could possibly potentially benefit from.

Now if \$12 billion cannot assist 3 per cent of the population of this provincial . . . of people, then where's the problem? Why are we having a problem? Eight billion dollars. That's a tremendous amount of money, Mr. Speaker. And yet we can't get 200 kilometres of road fixed up? We can't address the chronic housing shortage in many of these northern Saskatchewan communities? We can't even begin to look at the impacts of direct financing of local economic and social development agencies, of respect, of giving them decent support?

See, this is the whole issue I'm talking about, Mr. Speaker. For years the people of the North have been saying one common theme, is we don't mind northern development but allow us to benefit from it — not through welfare, because welfare is killing our people, but through some good, solid economic planning, through some very thoughtful social development planning. And above all else, let us in on that system so we can design together a good system so that we can become contributors.

And, Mr. Speaker, the point is, if this government can do that, if this government can do that, then the people of the North will certainly respect that. If this government cannot do that, then we've certainly got some problems.

The real question you've got to ask is, why aren't you taking the time? Why aren't you sending out bureaucrats or teams of MLAs to go there and learn what's happening so they come back and they can form policy on it, design a new system. And they go back to your same point, Mr. Speaker. I go back to the "Hot' fortune hidden" property, and it talks about the international spot market prices for uranium now sitting at about \$16.50 U.S. (United States) a pound, and expected to climb higher. And again, McArthur River's high grade ore "is over an 8 billion resource right now," Beattie adds.

Now this is as plain as the nose on my face, Mr. Speaker, that if anybody says that the northern economy is not contributing to the provincial economy, then they have to have their heads examined. And if you think for one minute that the people of the North are totally benefiting from the mining sector and the forestry sector happening in the North, this is not the case. Otherwise why would we have a recurring problem? Why would Jans Bay have a \$60,000 budget to operate their whole community with? Why would Turnor Lake be struggling for a 30-kilometre stretch of road to be fixed up for years? You know, why would we have problems setting up a construction company in Stony Rapids? It's because we're not listening to the people, Mr. Speaker. We're not taking the time.

(2130)

And these projects aren't billions and billions in cost, Mr.

Speaker. They're just asking for their fair share. You know, and the other . . . some of the things that they've been talking about, Mr. Speaker, is earlier on I heard some of the comments that people made throughout time. And what they're asking the government to do is one thing, is we can appreciate that it will take you time to understand our particular situation, but for years the government has been basing their development of the economy on looking at the mining sector coming in and creating jobs, and of course they're trying to get the forestry companies to do the same.

Now the big problem that the people of northern Saskatchewan say is that that's fine; you can develop the mining sector now, but as long as you base the economy of northern Saskatchewan on the development of a non-renewable resource industry, 30 or 40 years from now you are going to end up with holes in the ground and the mining company's gone.

Now that's a short-term answer to some of Saskatchewan's provincial financial problems, and the northern Saskatchewan people are more than happy to share their wealth with the rest of the world. But what they're asking for in small exchange — and this is why the government's got to hear it, Mr. Speaker, they ought to take time to hear it and to listen — is they're asking them to take a portion of those revenues that they get, and direct finance local economic development corporations or social development agencies, so that the communities themselves can become a self-sustaining community. So that they can design a system in which they can have a social safety net and a social support system in place for their young people. So they can have an educational opportunity for their young people.

And the second part of the equation, Mr. Speaker, is of course economic development. They can develop opportunity in the renewable resource industries such as tourism, manufacturing, forestry, agriculture, communication, transportation, fishing, wild rice, and the list goes on and on and on, Mr. Speaker. And this is what they've been saying on a consistent basis. In order for these northern communities to come out of the situation that they're under, you must have corresponding economic and social development planning. One works hand in hand with the other.

And secondly, you must empower people to develop that system and to develop the whole process where they can benefit not only from the jobs created but they can also decide . . . the decision making lies with them, and more so the profits come back to them, so they can use that profits for other ventures.

And it makes economic sense as well, Mr. Speaker, because so far the system has failed northern Saskatchewan people. You see the stats again. I'm not going to argue all day with members opposite, but the stats, you know, speak for themselves. If you don't start doing that, giving people the responsibility over their own lives, then you're really doing them an injustice. You're making them more dependent on your system and that's not good. No socialist in the world would want people to be dependent on them; they want them to become independent.

And you give the communities one specific task — manage the

money as best you can in the same fashion that you'd manage money for your municipalities. We'll give you the rules but you guys manage it according to these rules. But don't make those rules, you know, too heavy because they won't be able to have the freedom and the imagination that they wish.

And the second thing is, you look at the situation as you develop the renewable base industries at the community level. Don't compete with the mining sector. Certainly the people of the North can't compete with large mining companies, Mr. Speaker.

So we must get rid of that myth that the government creates the economy. Really, private sector creates the economy. But government must put policies in there to make the environment exist; and secondly, government must put policies in there to make sure that benefits flow to the people on an even basis.

So in reference to taking the time to understand what governance is about, is really relevant to this motion, Mr. Speaker. So the effort of doing one thing, is set up a fund or collect revenues from the northern mining companies or all the leases you have, channel a portion of that to social development under local control, a portion of that to economic development on a local control, so that the communities, over the next 5, 10, 15 years, can develop opportunity and can develop control and employment for themselves.

And then no longer will this government have to come up and bang on a table and say, we want you mining companies to put out 50 per cent on northern native employment. Now, Mr. Speaker, we could have a hundred per cent native employment in the North, not only native employment but native ownership and native control. And then, Mr. Speaker, you will see that the native people will rise to the challenge and we will no longer be wards of the province.

So the issue is clear. We all know what needs to be done in the North. Everybody agrees. But leave the how to the imagination, the innovation, and the creativity of the people of Saskatchewan's North because they're just tired of the same old system. The madness must stop, Mr. Speaker.

And the other thing that's kind of bothersome here, and I've made reference to it time and time again, is . . . you know, the insult to injury, Mr. Speaker, is when you have political parties use the native people for their advantage.

In this past election I was very appalled and certainly very disheartened when it come to politics in general when I see in one of the platforms of the Conservative Party was to put a tax on the Indians off reserve. And right away the point came up to me that, you know, there should never, ever be a political agenda at the expense of a minority people.

The people of the North and the first nations government know that this was pure politics. They know that the Tories mismanaged this province to the tune of 14 or \$15 billion. And they tried to deflect that very problem by focusing this taxation issue on the first nations people. They know. Every time it comes time to beat up somebody, let's go to the first nations.

Now certainly myself as a Metis member of this House, I encourage the government to go, sit down with the people and talk about the treaty situation, talk about the taxation issue. It was only through successful negotiations and really hard-hitting negotiations at times that we can come up with a resolution. And the treaty people do want to pay their fair share, Mr. Speaker. They want to be part of the contributors of this provincial economy, but you can't do that by throwing politics into the mix and saying well, you know, maybe we put \$15 billion in debt here, you know, we got 9 per cent and we're not paying 9 per cent sales tax.

Well, Mr. Speaker, I don't know about you, but it doesn't take a rocket scientist to figure out that 9 per cent of our provincial population paying an extra 9 per cent on very limited buying power will certainly not create any leverage to cover the debt created by the Conservative government. So when I hear them talk about high and mighty and how they should tax the Indians here and there and trying to put all the people in a position of compromise . . . not compromise, but difficulty, for political gain, it really does sadden me. And I say, what level have we come to as a Saskatchewan people to look at that.

I guess the other thing, you know, when you look at, Mr. Speaker, just to give you a background of the reasons why I feel we have to understand, and the government also has to do that to understand, is that the first nations treaty rights has a history, and that history shows that the aboriginal people shared the lands and shared the dreams and aspirations of all the settlers.

In earlier periods, Mr. Speaker, the aboriginal populations and first nations defended Canada against the battle that the Americans . . . that wanted to take Canada over. They call this the iron alliance where all the tribes joined the French and the English in the early years in defending this country.

In 1885 the Riel Rebellion highlighted the alienation that the Metis felt towards the treatment of the federal government. This man, Riel, was hung for treason — for fighting for his people and for his land. From both the first nations and the Metis perspective, historical proof of their loss, Mr. Speaker, and their support for this country cannot be discounted. In essence, they contributed to the protection of the country.

In most recent times, Mr. Speaker, the day I stood up and with all pride saw for myself that the native people continue to contribute to this country is when the northern Quebec Cree once again joined the federalist fight to keep Canada as one. The 80,000 northern Cree once again fought for Canada, even though they have been pushed into the far northern regions of Quebec and even though that they were, you know, threatened with actions against them. And you look at the fact that most of these reserves have been pushed north, pushed on land that is unproductive. And you look at the history of incarceration, of family breakdown, of severe social programs, a lack of health services, a lack of housing, a lack of respect — really wonder, was it worth it for the native people, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, the Quebec Premier, Mr. Bouchard, wanted to break up the country. And what happens to him today. The

native community once again, through the actions of the northern Quebec Cree, has sacrificed for this country, and to top it all off, the Quebec government continues to threaten them to this day.

Mr. Speaker, the question is, why? Why would the aboriginal population continue to support an environment that has not supported them?

We all know in this House, 58 of us, that the aboriginal population is suffering. And day in, I try to explain to you all, the problems my people face, and day out these problems persist. The reasons why the first nations continue to support these treaties is that they wish to honour the past and follow through with the intentions of our forefathers, that they would honour these agreements as long as the grass grew and the sun shone. These were the phrases used, Mr. Speaker.

So in reference to the issue of using politics at the expense of the aboriginal people, we look at these facts, Mr. Speaker. Number one, the first nations do not govern in the same manner as we. It's not a slap in the face of the provincial government when a taxation issue comes up, and we must get that thinking out of our head.

The first nations have their own version of governance, Mr. Speaker. And if the government took time to understand that, they would realize that it's not a slap in the face to this form of government, it's really an assertion of what they believe governing should be for themselves. So really this is a government-to-government issue, Mr. Speaker. And again I stress to you, this is not an issue of them not respecting our tax law; this is really about past agreements and a separate vision of governance.

Number two, the aboriginal population has suffered enough indignation as a result of some of the treatment that they received over a number of years. And the point is I know that they would trade off the 9 per cent PST (provincial sales tax) in exchange for all the social and economic problems that they're encountering. There's no problem there.

And if you take the time to understand, when you see a political party try and advance at the expense of an oppressed people by fighting one small concession in a centuries old agreement, you really wonder and ask out loud what desperation is all about. It doesn't take a rocket scientist to figure that out; the strategy was there. And we all kind of followed through with that.

Again encouraging economic development by Indian bands will ensure jobs, profits, services, and contribution. You look at the north-west, how this government got up and said, the Meadow Lake Tribal Council contributes so many millions of dollars, through their forestry partnership, to the provincial economy.

Well the Meadow Lake Tribal Council is first nations. Look at all the first nations all throughout the province, Mr. Speaker. They're contributors. They're creating jobs. They're creating taxes for this province. They're doing all this extra work and they're — above all else — they're reducing the need for a social safety net.

That, Mr. Speaker, is what Indian self-government is trying to accomplish. They want to become independent. They want to become their own government.

Finally the last point is, we must look at encouraging all the governments to work together. A provincial government must work in cooperation with the first nations government on this matter. And I encourage dialogue and these thoughts would be on both minds when dealing with this issue. And therefore you really have to look at the intent of what is being accomplished here. The intent is not to deal with the matter — really it's about politics and the ignorance of history.

And I again encourage the provincial government to proceed with fair taxation aspirations and negotiations with the first nations. That's what this is all about, Mr. Speaker, and I hope that I encourage all you guys that you look at the situation of why we have to approach the system differently.

I guess the other matter I wish to raise in the north-west, Mr. Speaker, that's of significant interest, is the situation of land. And we have a forest management Act coming up in due time here. And this forest management Act is going to talk about control again, control over the people.

And I urge the government to take their time to go forth and discuss with the northern communities, and discuss with the northern people, what exactly do they want in this new Act. Have you had their input? Have you had their blessing? Have you had their involvement with this thing? Because you're governing them. And if you don't, then what is that saying about this proposed Act? It is saying that it's government driven and the benefits are going to government once again. You flow all situations . . .

The Speaker: — Order, order. I've been listening very carefully for quite some time and at quite length to the hon. member for Athabasca, and I note that the hon. member has not made reference to the motion which is before the Assembly. And in order to be relevant, his debate must link to the motion that we have here. And I'm sure that he'll want to make his debate relevant to the motion and to help the Speaker understand the relevance.

And I'll ask the hon. member to demonstrate the relevance of what he's saying to the motion that is before the Assembly right now.

(2145)

Mr. Belanger: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I guess the relevance to the motion is that when you have Bills, proposed Bills, and you have a general order of government and the conduct of government, the intent here is to serve any people that you're going to have a significant impact on. And this was not done in this fashion. And you can more so see the fact the motion here is not intended to fill out the obligations of meeting the needs of people.

So really in essence, what I'm trying to do is to explain to the Assembly here that we have got to look at listening to people.

That's the whole intent of serving people. Underlining that whole thing is, time and time again, to serve the people. This of course is intended to simply delay the process and to get the session under wraps and really, Mr. Speaker, I would not be doing my job as an MLA if I did not explain to the people here today, while I still live and breathe, some of the problems of northern Saskatchewan people. So really we have to take the time to study these impacts of any Act and every action by government and if we don't do that then we're in deep, deep trouble.

Mr. Speaker, one of the other significant differences in the North that the government did not take the time to go forth and understand is that many of these northern Saskatchewan communities are really in a situation of being not involved. And now I go back to the situation with the forestry industry in general. From what I can gather, is the first nations in the North are part owners of the mills that operate in Meadow Lake. They own part of the system that of course harvests trees and what not.

Now had this government and the former Tory government gone into these communities and instead of going through a motion of this nature to prove a political point, had they taken the time to go in there and said, what can we do to resolve the differences between the Metis communities and the treaty first nations in relation to the land and the resources around . . . now the first nations are saying to most governments is that this is our form of government, we want to do it this way and that's our way of doing things. And we have to respect that.

But on the flip side you have the Metis communities that are given meagre amounts of money and their jurisdictional boundary ends at their airports. How could they develop an economy? Even in spite of social and economic development dollars, they still have to access the land. So when you look at the forestry industry in general, what happened was the old divide-and-conquer routine what was done. They allowed the Indian first nations to come on board with owning part of the industry in Meadow Lake but they excluded the Metis communities and the only reason, in my humble opinion, is the reason why they let the MLTC (Meadow Lake Tribal Council) in was to use them to play off against the Metis communities and because the first nations had money for investment.

Now those were the reasons I feel that had the government taken the time to really understand what this whole thing was about, they would have really understood that the Metis communities had been ignored for many, many years.

Now imagine 5, 6, 7 years ago, Mr. Speaker, that if there was a real, true, concerted effort of getting the Metis communities to become part owners of the forestry industry they would (a) of course, benefit from the profits of this venture and those profits could have made other, further profits. They could have benefited from the decision-making ability in terms of the management of land. The aboriginal people have a lot of allegiance to nature and to the land in general so they would have had . . . their internal system would have told them, protect the land at great lengths.

And then secondly and third, you would have the decision-making power that the northern communities have

been asking for for many years. Now what you have in the North, to understand the dynamics of the North, is you have seven or eight Indian bands own part of the mill that owned the forestry management licence agreement. And then you have 10 or 12 Metis communities that have no say, no ownership, and no benefits from that.

So you add that up and you can see that there is some differences between the Metis and the Indian people, that the Indian people are somewhat involved as small shareholders but the Metis communities are not. However, instead of creating animosity, which was the original intent of government, it has really created an allegiance between the two. They are now talking in terms of how they could get the Metis communities involved. But how could the Metis communities get involved when the government didn't take the time to listen to them? How could the Metis communities get involved when the government did not take the time to give them appropriate financing to invest into this project?

Consider for a moment, Mr. Speaker, if the government had taken the time to govern according to what the people wanted, to really govern according to how you can maximize benefits to the northern people from all the northern resource development, is you allow them to become part owner of this whole system. That's the key thing. Allow the ownership component to enter into the picture, and the government never took the time to do that, Mr. Speaker. It never did.

And when you talk about consultation you don't go and say we're going to develop the forestry industry and you go back and tell the government, well we consulted with them. That's telling, Mr. Speaker. You're telling the people what they can or cannot do. And this is where it's really a crying shame in terms of how many years have been lost because the government did not take the time to get governance done. It ignored one particular segment of people in the north-west and that of course is always a sore point of many of the Metis communities out there.

And imagine for a moment, Mr. Speaker, is after 10, 12 years the communities tell the government, our investments are paying off, we are now able to sustain our economies on our own. We have a social development plan that we put together at our own time, and we are able, from the profits of our companies, are able to ensure that social development happens. We therefore do not need any more of your social welfare dollars.

So again, Mr. Speaker, we look at the whole situation with the Act. You look at the situation with the mill, and the whole intent is to have one thing happen — that the northern communities don't have any influence nor any control of land. The Metis communities simply have their little boundaries and that's it.

And you can talk all day and all night if you want, Mr. Speaker, but there's no way that you can develop any economies, especially with tourism, fishing, and agriculture, if we do not have proper access to land, to good planning, and financial support, along with the social development support system that

is necessary for this thing to process as we all wish.

The key thing here, Mr. Speaker, is you look at the role of government in general, in northern Saskatchewan if you allow the northern communities to be more proactive in the development of all the resource industries, then of course we're going to take on more of the management role.

We see some of the examples of Patuanak and their first nations' policing force, of their justice system. They're starting to develop those systems. And yes, they are in their infancy, but suppose you expand that opportunity to the Metis communities. Could we have Metis conservation authorities? Sure we can. It doesn't have to be the province's job to make sure that the northern people are not fishing out lakes and shooting out moose.

The key thing here, Mr. Speaker, is you give the people the responsibility, they will rise to the occasion. So the whole thing of letting the people become involved with governance and land and certainly involved with the employment opportunity and the development of northern resources, it holds a tremendous amount of opportunity. There's so much that could be accomplished with this thing, Mr. Speaker, especially in northern Saskatchewan.

And this is where the problem that we spoke about of not respecting the system and not looking at involving certain groups, excluding certain groups, it all adds to the frustration of many, many people.

And what I envision when it comes to the northern forestry component and certainly of the responsibility of SERM (Saskatchewan Environment and Resource Management), is that I envision, Mr. Speaker, a community of people that are financially responsible, socially aware, and economically developed to a point where they are able to take a much larger role in not only the development of policy but really in ensuring that land and all the resources are managed properly and fairly.

The most significant point is that you can do all of these things if you would simply do one thing, is to empower people over land and over policy and over revenues that are derived from northern Saskatchewan. And any time that you look at the situation, Mr. Speaker, when you want to talk about stats, northern Saskatchewan covers 252,430 or square kilometres, Mr. Speaker. That's half the province, Mr. Speaker. In half the entire province, just think about the incredible tourist potential, the fishing potential, the wildlife potential, the forestry potential, eco-tourism, agriculture — the whole bit, Mr. Speaker, for 3 per cent of the provincial population.

This is where the government has failed through playing simply motions of this nature, and certainly trying to stall the process. If there is ways and means in which we can change the process quicker and sooner, Mr. Speaker, as government we certainly would. As government, we would do everything in our effort and everything in our power to make sure that we could change those things.

And you look at the situation that we always say, Mr. Speaker.

If you cannot help out 3 per cent of the provincial population that occupies half the land mass of this province, then where are we going wrong?

And the reason we're going wrong, Mr. Speaker, is simply because we don't take the time to govern accordingly. We go through the motions of this nature to try and drag out the system and stall the system for the benefit of the majority. And I feel that the people of the Athabasca constituency have certainly been more than patient with some of these issues.

The road issues are not going to go away. The housing issues are not going to go away. The social and economic problems are not going to go away. And the government hasn't got the responsibility to make those go away. But where the government should be responsible, Mr. Speaker, is they should allow the means, both financially and technically, and certainly over the influence of land and policy, give the authority of that process to the people of the North. Certainly you can trust the land mass with northern native people and certainly with the non-aboriginal populations as well.

So in reference to the forestry Act, Mr. Speaker, I see in the House here we talked more about the effects and impacts on the forestry companies when in essence we should have talked about the impacts and effects on the northern communities. We're cutting huge chunks of land. And yes, the northern communities are involved with forestry development, but we always try, day in and day out, tell the people, what about the communities?

Take the time, government. Take the time to go and talk to the Ile-a-la-Crosses, to the Pinehouses, to the Buffalo Narrows. Go see what they want. Govern according to some of their wishes, because they've been forgotten for so many years. Take the time to really begin to understand why we have reoccurring problems. Because they're not in charge, Mr. Speaker. They've never had any influence; they've never had any control over land. And recently, in some of my equations and my discussions and my tabulations and calculations as a result of estimates here, you know we can really see that there is no significant dollars — no significant dollars — for social development; none whatsoever. There are no significant dollars for economic development.

And I go back to some of the examples of the Pinehouses and the Ile-a-la-Crosses, Mr. Speaker. They got to fund-raise at bingos for economic development dollars. In 1996, we had a fund-raise for economic development dollars through bingos. Now that's the whole problem.

You look at some of the challenges of northern affairs, the social issues — the social issues — Mr. Speaker. Northern Saskatchewan has 21 per cent of all families headed by single parents — 21 per cent. And, Mr. Speaker, the entire province only has 12 per cent. So we're almost double. And yet there's no money to talk about social development.

Saskatchewan has the third-highest number of teen mothers and northern Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker, has three times this high provincial rate of teen moms. Now this is really, really sad

when you walk into the communities of Pinehouse, which I do; and Patuanak which I do; and many of the other communities, which I do. And I have said this before in the House here. Take the time, go travel these communities, and look. When you see the little kids walking around, you know, and they . . . right away the first impression that comes to me in my mind is that child's future has been determined already because of the social and economic oppression that's happened to many of these northern communities. That child has got a severe challenge.

(2200)

And, Mr. Speaker, look at some of these stats on northern Saskatchewan having three times the provincial rate of teen moms and Saskatchewan's the highest in the country, then we know we got to do something differently. We know we got to change the system. And that's the whole point I'm trying to make here, is that there's got to be a new process in place.

The northern leaders have been saying that for years and years and years. Give us revenue sharing, give us control, give us land. And in 1996, there's no revenue sharing, no control, and no land. The treaties have some treaty land entitlement settlement that they're owed and certainly the federal government and the provincial government were obligated to pay that. But in general, the land issue has not been addressed.

So you look at the situation of the northern issues, the social issues, Mr. Speaker. You've got to have a new approach to northern Saskatchewan. You've got to take the time to listen. You've got to take the time to govern according to the needs and the demographics — the demographics of the North. Understand what's going on in these communities. Travel to the communities. Spend a few weeks, a few days, talk to people. Say, what can I do differently? And that's all they're asking for, is respect.

And you look at everything from the social issue, Mr. Speaker, to the education. The educational level of one-third of the population over the age of 15 is functionally illiterate compared to 16 per cent for Saskatchewan as a whole.

So again, you go to the mining companies and you say, well employ so-and-so. Well he needs his sciences. Some of these guys barely completed grade 9 or 10. So you've got to re-educate them and you've got to hopefully get them to fitting in some job that doesn't require sciences.

So you can see why the 50 per cent northern native employment stat is really an effort to try and fill the lower-paying jobs that are labour intensive, you know. And all of a sudden the cream of the crop and all the higher-paying jobs really are held by outside people from the North.

So you look at the social issues, you tie in the educational challenges, and then you look at the fact that we haven't empowered them, we haven't discussed the land issues, and then this goes on for 10, 20, 30 years. Some people look at the North as a big corporate playground. You look at the situation with the lack of economic planning, the lack of social planning, and then you, just for good measure, let's throw in the fact that

you want to charge PST now to the Indians somehow. You know, it goes on and on and on where it's getting more and more insulting.

So really the point, Mr. Speaker, is that, how do you expect the people to really benefit from governance if we're not taking time as government to hear them — if we insist government is this way, and if anybody disagrees with our way of governing, then we're going to do something to discourage you or we're going to get it through anyway.

Mr. Speaker, one of the biggest issues in northern Saskatchewan, of course, is health. Health has been an ongoing problem for many, many years. Some of the mental health and social health issues facing many northern communities, Mr. Speaker, is the most alarming one and the most discouraging one is suicide.

And this is not a situation where just the northern communities suffer from this particular problem, Mr. Speaker. It's all throughout Saskatchewan. But the alarming thing is, on a per capita basis, suicide is very, very high in northern Saskatchewan. And what drives young men and young women to take their own lives, Mr. Speaker, is just a total sense of hopelessness. And there's no support system in place; there's no adequate programs in place; there's just a total lack of commitment. And it goes on and on and on and on and on.

And the point of the matter is, Mr. Speaker, is this didn't come all of a sudden one year ago, or that the government was told this was going to happen. It didn't come 5 years ago; it didn't come 10 years ago. This message was told 20, 25 years ago, that you've got to have proper social development in northern Saskatchewan if you want to have the people, in any way, shape, or form, change the destiny that the government basically has carved out for them — a destiny of hopelessness, a destiny of powerlessness, and a destiny of trying to just destroy our people.

Now as people we get up and we talk and talk and talk and argue and argue and argue. We're doing our job. We're bringing up these issues. We're trying our darnedest here to try and explain to the government what they're doing wrong in northern Saskatchewan. Now if the government turns around and says, okay, we understand what you guys are all about, we want to enter in a brand-new era and change our system — well hold it now. We ask you to consult with us. We didn't ask you to . . . we asked you to talk to us and get our agreement; we didn't ask you to consult with us. There's a whole pile of difference between talking and listening.

Mr. Speaker, family violence, alcoholism, substance abuse — these are some of the things that are really affecting, not only the people in general, but the really bad thing is the young people, the youth. And when you see five or six or seven or eight kids sniffing glue, you know, just to, I don't know, for excitement or to escape their problems or whatever the case is, then it starts to hit home.

You know, gee whiz, you know, these are kids that have a lot of potential. They're much younger than me and you, and they

got some ability inside them to really contribute to this province and we're not recognizing that ability. Every single member in this world, Mr. Speaker, and that includes the NDP (New Democratic Party) Party, does have goodness in them. It's a fact of the matter is, you got to explore it and you got to develop it. And you really have to get it out in the open so it really becomes an asset to you as opposed to a liability.

Some of the issues that are dealing . . . when it comes to northern health and the situation with health, it's hard to deal with these issues in the North primarily because of limited formal mental health services. Now recently mental health problems in the North — you talk about the population — tremendous mental health problems, Mr. Speaker. Tremendous. And did you know that the entire west side, Athabasca constituency, hasn't got one mental health worker. They had a temporary mental health worker several months ago, and due to funding cuts this person is no longer employed.

So you know, you look at the limited . . . it says limited and I basically say non-existent. So really we have to look at the whole issue of governance again, Mr. Speaker.

How many more MLAs and how many more speeches must we go through here to get the government to start serving the people? How many more games? How many more policy sessions? How many more regulations meetings? How many more committee sittings? And how many more appeals must we undertake to get the government to listen?

And this is the fundamental flaw with this motion, Mr. Speaker, is we're not governing or controlling. And this is the reason why northern Saskatchewan for many years have not been heard in this Assembly, and this is why I think it's important for me to do that at this point in time in relation to this motion.

Mr. Speaker, the other problem that deal with the issues in health of course is the widely scattered settlement patterns. What that is of course, being half the land mass, and you see the tremendous travel that has to happen. There it goes again, our situation of local control.

You can't have a regional approach and hope to have . . . to maximize those benefits for health services if all your offices, and all your control, and all your decision making, and all your staff, are located in Saskatoon or Regina or even La Ronge for that fact. You simply cannot do that.

When you don't hand over control of social and economic planning to the local level, what message you're telling the local people is that you're not capable of running your own system. You're not capable of designing a better system than us. You're not capable of governing yourselves and you're certainly not capable of controlling your lives. That is what government is saying when you continually insist on delivering services from a one-stop shop somewhere in the South or even La Ronge.

So with the widely scattered community pattern, the only successful resolution to this process is turning control from the La Ronges and to the Buffalo Narrows and to the Fond-du-Lacs

and to the Stony Rapids and on and on and on.

The second thing is the conflicting jurisdictions, Mr. Speaker, the conflicting jurisdictions between the first nations and the province and the Metis communities and the federal government and on and on and on. There's thousands of stories, Mr. Speaker, of a bus or a taxi cab that can't pick up a first nations person or it can't pick up a Metis person because he's only authorized to pick up treaty Indians or he's only authorized to pick up emergency cases, and this is what we mean by conflicting jurisdictions.

If you're ill, if you're sick, you need medical transportation or medical attention, it doesn't matter if you're Metis, Bill C-31, treaty, status, or non-aboriginal in the North, you should have fair access and good access to health care and health facilities. That is the key thing. The jurisdictional issues must be also addressed and this is certainly going to be a challenge. But how you minimize that challenge, Mr. Speaker, is you clearly have to make sure that you involve the people and you get the people to talk to you as government, as opposed to government consulting with people. We've been consulted long enough. Consultations of a government nature, certainly that doesn't work. We've seen evidence of that for the last 20 years and we certainly hope we're not going to see evidence of that for the next 20 years.

The other factor, of course, is a factor that we all are kind of holding our breath up North when you talk about the issues of the North in terms of health, health services, is the budget restrictions. Like again, you go to the situation of half the land mass and there's 3 per cent of the population scattered out throughout the whole land mass. And that's going to be a tremendous challenge, Mr. Speaker, when you talk about how you're going to, within this particular budget, you know, give services.

If you're going to turn over and hand over control and authority to a local governing board, then you must hand over adequate compensation to fulfil those duties, Mr. Speaker. If governments are looking at doing self-government basically at the expense of the northern aboriginal people, then it's not going to work. It's like me telling you, I'm going to . . . I order you to buy a car. You must buy a car, Mr. Speaker, but here's a hundred bucks to buy that car. You know it's simply not possible to do that so . . . and same thing with health care. If you're going to make sure health care is a success or any effort of self-government is a success, then you must have the corresponding financial support and contribution and backup to that plan if you're going to make sure it succeeds.

Mr. Speaker, we look at some of the proportion of people in age groups in northern Saskatchewan, again still dealing with health. Really the problems in social health are wide-ranging. It affects all age groups. In northern Saskatchewan we have a heavy population of young people. I would go so far as to suggest that 65 per cent of the population has got to be under 25. Just a tremendous amount of young people.

Now you think you have social and economic problems now. Just wait till these children start growing up and start needing

employment, and wait till these children start growing up and start being bored in some of these communities. So in essence we do have five if not ten years to start getting these problems rectified and solutions put on the fast track here.

And the only way we can do this, Mr. Speaker, is to make sure you involve the people. Don't tell them what to do. Don't put restrictions. Don't put burdens and all these problems on them. You commit the same amount of money, if not more because of the challenges, and you ensure that they have final local control over decision making and allocation of dollars. There's nothing that can beat local control. The people of the North, economically, have more sense than any one of us here in terms of what they foresee as an economic opportunity in their community. They have to sell it; they have to do it. And the whole process, Mr. Speaker, is just simply empowerment.

So, Mr. Speaker, continuing on with the situation of children in poverty, and I go with some stats here, Mr. Speaker. Children under 15 make up about 44 per cent of the northern population, 44 per cent. And, Mr. Speaker, look at the housing problems in the North, look at the lack of health services, the lack of family support, the lack of employment. Who pays that price, Mr. Speaker? The family man or the family woman who knows that they're stuck in a system that they can't break out of, a system of dependency that really has an effect on the self-esteem.

But the people that suffer the most, Mr. Speaker, are the children. And again, these children, the children all over, I really marvel at the incredible strength both spiritually and morally that many of these kids have. Their life at this point in time, Mr. Speaker, may be relatively simple, but it's still tough. And they are the ones that end up sleeping in crowded houses and they're the ones that really have a lack of social development, of cultural awareness, of recreational activities, to develop their whole being.

(2215)

And if you don't do it for the politics, Mr. Speaker . . . and that's why the motion here is exactly saying what we all shouldn't say, is that we should govern how we feel. We should govern according to what the people's desires are, Mr. Speaker. And there are many children in northern Saskatchewan that are living in poverty — many, many children. And these are fine, healthy, adorable children, Mr. Speaker. And all they want to do is they want a different answer.

So if a government cannot provide solution and cannot even provide hope for these communities, then what is that saying to us as a society in today, 1996 — is that we're failing our people because of the political system that we operate under. This motion really discourages me. I was really looking forward to trying to raise the awareness, and when we see the type of tactics happening in here, it really discourages me, Mr. Speaker.

And I'm trying to look at the situation in the North, and I made that point often. If there's one point that these guys would ever remember me by is the point is, why is it that we can't help 3 per cent of our provincial population with the tremendous problems that they're having, is because we have lost our

compassion. We have lost the role of governance to the role of politics. Mr. Speaker, we look at some of the situations you talk about in the North in general, and the point that we make here is when you talk about children, this is what this is all about, Mr. Speaker.

We know that the government, the provincial government, is trying to cut the debt by close to \$2 billion by the next election in 1999. We know that's the plan; we see it in the Finance documents. And the real question we've got to ask ourselves — yes, we all agree the debt's got to go, but at what cost, what human cost?

And the other question is, where are you going to see those savings crop up? You're going to see those savings crop up in social programs as social problems. You're going to see those savings crop up in more health cuts. You're going to see them crop up in suicides. You're going to see them crop up in more and more human suffering. And that's the whole point, Mr. Speaker, is if you want to govern, and you want to govern to serve, then why can't we govern and serve and support 3 per cent of the provincial population that is suffering 90 per cent of the grief over the last 20 years — is because you're simply not listening to people, you're not hearing people. What you're doing is you're consulting people. Well consulting people, Mr. Speaker, has a totally different meaning to me as it would to the government.

So the great human cost, Mr. Speaker, in ignoring the people of the North in the pursuit of economic independence of government and the control of government is something that I can't support, Mr. Speaker. And this is why I'm speaking to the motion today. We must take the time to hear and to understand what affects Stony Rapids? What affects Pinehouse? Why are we having these continual social problems?

If any of the MLAs or people within government travel to the North, stop and talk to some of the children. Stop and talk to some of the parents. When you pull into these communities the first thing most visitors used to tell me when they come to Ile-a-la-Crosse is, what's in Ile-a-la-Crosse? What's keeping the people here? And I tell them the land and our way of life is keeping people here. They look at the existence of these northern communities on purely an economic perspective.

And, Mr. Speaker, there's a lot of history to these communities, a lot of hopes for these communities. And all those hopes and the aspirations of the people are the real treasure in some of these communities. And that's what you got to understand when you go to northern communities, is these are Saskatchewan people. These are not northern natives that you can push aside. These are people you must deal with because today's problems will certainly become tomorrow's problems as well.

So what effect and what impact government have from here on in, and comes from northern Saskatchewan communities, will certainly have a bearing on whether we're going to have a successful northern population or not.

The other factor that's really quite scary, Mr. Speaker, is some

of the disincentives that are out there when you talk about northern systems that we live under, and the biggest problem, Mr. Speaker, is housing. We talk about housing in general. How could you for a moment talk about housing when there is no housing in the North in terms of markets.

Now a good example is this young couple occupied a government house in my home community, and the government said — the young man went to work at the mine site and the wife worked at the school — and the government said, for you to live in that house, you have to pay \$900 a month rent. And the guy said, \$900 a month, I can't afford that. You know, I work but I have three kids here or four kids, and I can't afford 900 bucks a month. Well that's too bad because the rules are, it's 25 per cent of your income must be paid as rent. This is low income housing program and if you're working, we're not going to help you. So the guy said, well can I offer you 500? And of course they said no, the policy stays.

So in essence when you talk about governance, Mr. Speaker, we got to rethink how we offer program support like housing to northern Saskatchewan. This guy figured out that for an average-size bungalow in Ile-a-la-Crosse, he would have paid \$235,000 for that house over a 25-year period. No housing market exists in the North, they said, so how could they justify charging a working man 235,000 bucks for a house that isn't worth 20,000 bucks? You simply can't.

So what happened, Mr. Speaker, is that working couple and their three children had to buy a trailer at great cost to them, and they had to try and set it up at great cost to them as well. And they lived through a miserable winter, trying to get this place fixed up for habitation, and they're successful.

But, Mr. Speaker, the big problem that happened was . . . is what's totally beyond me, is a month later the government then moved a family that was on welfare in there, with one child. Now what is beyond me is how could a working couple not afford a house in the North, yet a family on welfare could.

Now the family on welfare needed a house; I'm not penalizing the people on welfare. They certainly see no economic opportunities so they're forced to go to welfare. But what's beyond me is why couldn't the government show flexibility and show innovation in trying to resolve this issue. And even if they took the \$500-a-month rent from this guy, they would gain 500 bucks more. But instead they ended up paying 110 from one social services budget into another housing budget. So in essence, who lost? The Saskatchewan taxpayer lost.

So really, Mr. Speaker, housing in northern Saskatchewan is just harming the working people. They say the housing market in northern Saskatchewan doesn't exist. Well obviously it exists on a convenience basis for the government, that if they want to penalize the working people at will, they can certainly do that. They're not making any concessions whatsoever to try and help the working people find accommodation and to try and keep them in their houses that they have. Because they have children, they should have a house, but because they have a job, a good-paying job, they're being penalized.

And if anybody tells you that you can go to the bank and get financing for a house, well I'm sorry, Mr. Speaker, the bank will not in any way, shape, or form invest in housing in northern Saskatchewan because the housing markets do not exist. So the real estate association says there's no housing markets; the bank says there's no housing markets. How can the government justify charging 200 or 700 or \$800 a month to a working couple? They can't justify it, and they know that housing is hurting the working class of northern Saskatchewan.

So . . . and those are some of the disincentives. You look at the situation with, you know, with the economy in general, everything from housing to training to community-based economies, to control and influence over land. None of those things exist. None of them are relevant to northern Saskatchewan people's wishes. They don't ever want to see governments saying that we're serving them because obviously if they were serving them, these stats I'm speaking about would not continue year after year after year.

I want to say a few words, again, about some of the adults just to show you the contrast, Mr. Speaker — that adults over 65 make up about 4 per cent of the northern population and these adults, Mr. Speaker, those are the strength of the community, these older people. And many a time because of the housing shortage, many elderly people keep their grandchildren. The young population, the young teen mothers — they have no place to keep their kids. Who ends up picking up the slack? Many grandparents, Mr. Speaker. Many parents that . . . grandparents that love their grandchildren, want to support their grandchildren — they end up picking up the slack and doing all the raising of the children with the help of the young mother. But certainly you have these older people living on fixed incomes. They are the saviours of many of these northern people.

Mr. Speaker, we can't keep counting on our old people because they've done so much already. So when you look at the fact that 4 per cent of them are over the age of 65, there's not that many parents or grandparents around. There's many, many more kids. So that's the situation with the elderly people. They're doing their fair share. They're looking after many grandchildren; they live in poor housing on limited fixed incomes and they don't get the support that they so richly deserve.

The other trend that's continuing, Mr. Speaker, is birth rates in the North. They're obviously higher than the South, when you talk about teen mothers, you talk about the young population. And the fertility rate is almost twice that of the province as a whole.

So we know that the problem is constant and consistent, that we're going to have many, many young people for many, many years, so why not plan accordingly. And that's where it all goes to the simple fact, Mr. Speaker, in reference to the motion here, is we must govern according to the demographics, to the aspirations, in the particular circumstances of northern Saskatchewan's people.

Life expectancy for the North, Mr. Speaker, is a lot lower for

males and females in the North. And what's that saying, Mr. Speaker, is that life in northern Saskatchewan is not as special as a life in southern Saskatchewan, and we really have to look at some of these things.

And the high youth dependency ratio in the North, the ratio of those under 15 to those between 15 to 64. So what that's saying is that there's a heck of a pile of young people and if you don't have the corresponding social programs, and the recreational programs, and the proper facilities, then you're just simply saying you're giving up on this particular group of people. And if you give up on them, Mr. Speaker, they're going to find their own way of entertaining themselves. They're going to take matters into their own hands. And we all know if you leave a young bunch of kids unsupervised and with no support, that can only spell trouble.

And in the end, Mr. Speaker, if you do not start doing things differently for the people, then what you're going to end up having is a tremendously constant stream of social programs with a constant number of young people. It's not going to change.

I guess in essence, Mr. Speaker, in the North males outnumber females by a wider margin than other regions in Saskatchewan. There's many more men in the North and this could certainly . . . I know I can support that fact, Mr. Speaker, because I was cut from a hockey team. The competition was quite great and I wasn't all that good of a hockey player, Mr. Speaker, but I thought I had a chance to make it. But the competition was good and fierce and obviously with . . . (inaudible) . . . like this no one can blame me for not making the Colts hockey club.

And I guess the other factor is you look at how the population is distributed, the breakdown of population. In the population of 32,000 people there are 40 recognized permanent communities in northern Saskatchewan. So you divide . . . 40 divided by 32, you can see the tremendous concentration of people and problems in one small section of land.

And you got that much problems and that many challenges, how could you expect local governments to change the system overnight without good, solid provincial government support, Mr. Speaker? You simply cannot and you cannot expect local governments to do that based on the small amount of money that they are granted, and the fact that they have no control, and the fact that there's no innovative government measures. That's why item no. 7, from the proposed motion by Mr. Shillington, I simply cannot support that. And so we had to look at different ways of exciting and innovative governments.

Population density, Mr. Speaker, now we can speak another couple of hours on that. The situation with density is it's .24 per square mile. And the province as a whole, Mr. Speaker, is 4.12 persons per square mile.

Now I want to ensure you guys that once we're done this particular segment we're going to . . . of course being fair, as we always are, we're going to do this in Cree for the Cree audience, so they're able to hear what we have to say about this particular problem.

So we look at the density situation, Mr. Speaker. It's not going to be an easy job to provide regional service. So again, it goes back to our same old philosophy, is give local people local control, and local ability to control the outcome. Then and only then, sir, are you able to really make a difference. They know what needs to be done and only they can determine the best future for themselves and their children, and certainly their community. I guess the other factor, Mr. Speaker, is in terms of what we think needs to happen to support the social health effort, is the social and mental health problems that . . .

The Speaker: — Order.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — It now being 10:30, this House stands adjourned until tomorrow at 1:30 p.m.

The Assembly adjourned at 10:30 p.m.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

EVENING SITTING
ADJOURNED DEBATES
MOTIONS

Extended Hours

Heppner	2115
Belanger	2116