

Industry, Science and Technology

forest fire fighting provisions. I would like the Hon. Member to explain that point a little further.

In a similar connection, he made a general statement that the wealth that is derived from the region is not being returned to the region through development. I am interested in that concept because I think it applies in many other parts of Canada. Could the Hon. Member give us some examples of the kind of development which would not be a hand-out from Ottawa—and I am not trying to suggest that it is, but it is sometimes looked upon that way by unsympathetic people—but a return of some of what was produced by the region to enable the region to develop more strongly.

Mr. Funk: I thank my colleague for his questions. They allow me to expand on a few points that I should have been more explicit about in my speech.

First, with respect to the forest fire situation and forest fire fighting, that obviously is a provincial responsibility. However, Saskatchewan had historically not paid as much attention to the forest sector as perhaps it should. Over the last five years there has been a serious commitment to the renewal of forestry stands, planting, thinning and some forest management practices, and also to bring up to date the technology that is required to fight fires, given the fact that fire hazards arise all the time from more people being in the bush. Certainly, we have had some very dry years.

What happened was that people assumed that these agreements would run for 10 years because the original ERDA framework was a 10-year agreement and this was just the first five years.

Two things happened. One is that a number of significant initiatives, in terms of computer mapping of potential fire areas, detection equipment and response mechanisms were being planned, and in fact were midway in their implementation when the agreement ended.

Second, the agreement brought a significant amount of new expertise and personnel to the Province of Saskatchewan. We were starting to develop a professional sector. It takes a whole sector to cope with some of these major emergencies. What we have seen is that the

equipment and technology that people had expected to be able to develop over a 10-year basis has been cut off in mid stream. A lot of the expertise is now already leaving the province just at the time when we need it most.

The Hon. Member also referred to what kinds of development there might be that could return some of the wealth. There is great wealth produced in my constituency. For example, we have a large uranium mining industry. There are other types of hard rock mining. There are extensive stands of forests that are being exploited. What happens is that those resources leave the area, as they do in many parts of the country, without being processed. There is very little local involvement. I might add, that such involvement will no longer be possible to be required by legislation under the free trade deal where it was at least possible before. What people had hoped, and what in fact happened in the past, is that some of that money came back in infrastructure development.

We cannot have an economy if we do not have roads. We cannot have an economy if we do not have banks. We cannot have an economy if we do not have schools. We cannot have an economy if we do not have access to the types of financial services that other people have. We cannot have a well developed economy if our basic resources are not in our own hands.

What had been happening is that sectoral organizations in wild rice, in fisheries, in forestry and tourism had been developing, whereas communities in the region pooled their resources and their expertise.

The Government essentially played an organizing role to organize those communities to use their resources and to get access to the type of capital that normally is available to all Canadians.

The framework under WDO in this new Department simply does not permit that kind of local organization to take place any more. In my mind, that is a real tragedy because we did have some good things going.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Champagne): Further questions or comments. Questions. The Hon. Member for Moncton.