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With respect to the community service project in LEDA, is there any breakdown of the amounts and when these programs will be coming forward? Will they be extended to status native people? Is there a breakdown between the status and non-status Indians and Metis? What are the successes of these programs with respect to those groups? The challenges in the city centres are the same in many instances for those groups and I would be interested if the minister could give some indication of the success of that program and in what areas most of the native people are taking advantage of that program.

Mr. Axworthy: Mr. Chairman, I wish to thank the hon. member for his very thoughtful statement. He has very well summarized what many of us in western Canada know, regardless of our party or background, that is that if there is any one issue that we must address in the next few years it must be the economic and social situation of the native people.

In dealing with his specific question, in most of the programs we do not make a strong distinction between status and non-status Indians. In the area of community development projects we do, because we have allocated additional funding that would be applied to constituencies where there are reserves. So there is additional funding and we do take it into account there. In the areas of the community service programs, the LEDA programs and the Outreach programs, they are pretty much dependent upon the objectives and the purpose of the program. It has nothing to do with whether someone carries a card designating their status or whether they do not. To give you an example, in the hon. member's own province we spent close to \$600,000 on Outreach programs. This is a service which is basically run by native people themselves to provide information and access on the reserves and in their communities to get information on job requirements and training opportunities.

The hon. member was good enough to give us the benefit of his thoughts, and I would like to return the compliment, if I might. Perhaps there has never been a better opportunity than now to address seriously the problem of native people in the west with respect to economic activity being created in the resource boom. If there has ever been a time when we can break through the enormous wall which has prevented native people in western Canada from obtaining an economic stake in the community, it is now.

One of the real tasks of federal and provincial governments, as well as of the private sector, all of us who are involved in these massive investments in pipelines, construction projects and new mines, is to recognize that if we do not move now we will never be able to do it. The time is now for us to make the effort. We must be careful to eliminate laws, regulations or practices which have prevented native people from entering the work force. As well, we must try to provide the incentives, training and support programs which would enable them to obtain the skills that are necessary. We tried to achieve this through the \$10 million training program which we introduced last spring. We have also employed such programs as LEAP.

I also want to suggest to the hon. member that we are examining some of the options which are available to us under the western initiatives fund, a fund set up using the revenues from the resource base to be recycled back into western Canada. We should be looking at how we can use a substantial portion of those funds for the economic development of native people in the west in order to cut across the boundaries and apply the funds where they are needed. We want to create in their own communities the economic basis, the economic capacity and the economic services that would give them the ability to become self-sufficient in their own right. As chairman of the western cabinet committee which is looking at that prospect, I hope to consult with provincial governments and private groups in the west. I indicate to the hon. member that it is one of the options, one of the initiatives we are considering seriously, to break the back of that centuries-long problem which is a disgrace to all Canadians.

Mr. Schellenberger: I think people from the western provinces will realize it is important that those people who had difficulty in the past take an active part in any large resource development which does take place. We are somewhat hindered at the present time because of the policies between the federal government and the provincial governments. The argument of whether the provinces should use more of their resource wealth to develop those kinds of economic strategy, or take the money from the province and recycle it through the federal government, is something we will discuss for some time. That is not the point I want to make.

My other question is this. Does the minister have a special team which consults with the Department of Employment and Immigration and the Department of Indian Affairs? Is there at the present time an even broader team or intergovernmental group dealing with the question of native unemployment and with developing new strategies for off-reserve native people? In the downtown area of my city there are many native women who require special counselling before they can enter a training program or learn a skill of their particular interest. Is there this kind of intergovernmental group dealing with native unemployment in the future and with new strategies for those people in the cities?

● (1950)

Mr. Axworthy: Mr. Chairman, the secretariat of the social development committee has the responsibility of combining departments which are working in this field. Under that committee a special task force composed of deputy ministers has been organized to negotiate with western provinces on urban and native conditions. This task force is developing recommendations which will be presented through the secretariat to the cabinet committee on social development. So there is an attempt to combine and co-ordinate the various efforts to zero in on that particular situation.

I repeat, through some of our own programs there is a special division in the employment and immigration commis-