

chasing approximately twice as much from that country as it purchases from us.

I was pleased to note that the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources (Mr. Macdonald) recently visited Iran, and I would suggest also that the Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce (Mr. Gillespie) consider a trade mission to Iran in order to capitalize on the trading opportunities with Iran's 32 million people. Last year that country ranked fourth among the world's oil producers and is also interested in our fishing expertise. In order to capitalize on the immense shrimp resources in the Persian Gulf, resources which their Prime Minister told me were more valuable than the oil resources, Iran is desirous of using Canadian expertise and equipment, including ships, to develop our type of civilian coastguard as opposed to the military type used by the United States. I was informed that the value of such an arrangement could be worth more than \$1 billion to Canada over the next seven years. I hope our officials in the Trade Department will get on with the job. This could be another way to ease unemployment in Canada. It is another suggestion from the Conservative party. It is another way to curb our present inflationary spiral.

● (1450)

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Wally Firth (Northwest Territories): Peace, Mr. Speaker. Once again I am happy to be here representing the people of the Northwest Territories and to be making a few remarks in the Throne Speech debate. We, the people in the Northwest Territories, have a strong belief in democracy. In October, 1972, a large number of the people of the Northwest Territories decided they should send a representative to Ottawa who truly represented the north, because in the Northwest Territories two-thirds of the population consists of native people, and one-third non-native. As a result, they decided to send a representative down here who was two-thirds native and one-third white man.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Firth: I am very proud indeed to be representing the people of the Northwest Territories. I am very happy to be a member of the New Democratic Party of Canada, the socialist party of Canada. I was happy to be brought up as a socialist. Many hon. members of the House must know that this was the true Indian and Eskimo way of life in the past, and still is today in many villages and reserves across the country. There, people live and practice this way of life and, as I say, I am very happy to be part of it. Indeed I was fortunate to be brought up in that system.

I will be brief, Mr. Speaker. I should like to mention some very important matters of concern to my constituents, the people of the Northwest Territories, a hardy group of individuals who, under very difficult conditions, in one of the harshest climates in the world, are working hard to develop the north, to make a good life for themselves and their children. Some 35,000 to 40,000 people, as I have mentioned, mostly Indian, Eskimo and Métis, live in a part of this country where we have the highest cost of living, where we have a cold climate, a drastic housing

shortage, very poor health facilities, and an extremely high cost of communications and transportation.

The average cost of communication by phone, if you should have phone service, is at least \$1 a minute. To charter a small aircraft costs in the neighbourhood of one dollar a mile. In many cases we have a complete lack of such services on a regular basis. And to top all this off in this day and age, in 1974, in Canada, we do not have a real democratic government. This is a most deplorable situation. Certainly, we have an administration in the Northwest Territories which is costing \$150 million—at least that is the budget for this year. But a very important question is this: are we, the people of the Northwest Territories, willing and able to accept more governmental responsibility? I suggest that the answer is yes.

Another important question is: can we pay our way? I believe we can. In the Northwest Territories today we have two producing gold mines in the Yellowknife area and you, Mr. Speaker, know the price of gold today. We have a silver mine bringing out almost pure silver at Echo Bay Lake, and a lead and zinc mine at Pine Point. We have gas and oil production facilities at Norman Wells which have been operating for the last 30 years. Now, we have natural gas being produced at Pointed Mountain in the Northwest Territories, and a large tungsten mine at Tungsten. There is a large fur trade industry, commercial fishing, and deposits of other minerals. Our potential is many times what we are producing at present. Just to mention fresh water alone, we have 50 per cent of all the fresh water available in Canada, and up there in the Northwest Territories we keep it pure, clear and cold.

I do not suggest that the north should have to buy or pay for democracy. I do not suggest that we in the Northwest Territories are ready for full provincial status. But what I do say is that I believe we are ready to have, and we would like to have, a lot more say about our destiny, about the way in which the north should be developed, and even about whether the north should be developed. That, in itself, is an interesting question. The present situation with a partly elected and partly appointed council which can be over-ruled by an appointed civil servant, is no longer tolerable. I would suggest it is indeed a dangerous situation.

In January of this year, the Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development (Mr. Chrétien) spoke at Yellowknife and we were led to believe that some great announcement would be made in the Speech from the Throne. He said something to the effect that in a few months there would be amendments introduced to the Yukon Act and to the Northwest Territories Act, and that the powers of the council would be debated. Mr. Speaker, in the Throne Speech there was no mention of the north or of the native peoples of Canada. This saddens me; it saddens me a great deal.

I should like to give an example of some of the things that can happen when you have a situation which might be called a sort of dictatorship within a democracy. Believe it or not we have here in Ottawa something like an embassy for the Northwest Territories. It was set up here in Ottawa almost a year ago—11 months ago to be exact. It is known as the liaison office, or something like that, for the Northwest Territories. It has been in existence for the