

the cash to continue. Many others, who stopped trapping to work on the oil rigs but now find themselves unemployed because oil exploration has ceased, would like to move back to the land but cannot do so without start-up capital.

The Committee believes that aboriginal people should be encouraged in such efforts towards self-reliance. Existing government programs may not always meet specific needs. One example is the Special Agricultural Rural Development Agreement (ARDA).

That was one of our criticisms of the Special ARDA program. It was geared for the western Arctic, not the eastern Arctic. They allow two-thirds of the value of a canoe, up to \$1,000. The canoes used in the eastern Arctic are worth \$3,900 to \$4,300 apiece, so it does not even come close to two-thirds of the value of the canoe. The same with the maximum horsepower on outboard motors. They have it there as 10 horsepower because they are talking about using the boats on lakes. For Hudson Bay and the estuaries of rivers you need a minimum of a 35 horsepower motor. Again you are looking at \$4,000 or \$5,000 for one of those engines. And again they had a maximum of \$1,000.⁽²⁷⁾

As well, social assistance programs are administered in a manner which restricts trappers from purchasing what they need for hunting and trapping. In Ontario, for example, welfare guidelines developed in southern urban centres prohibit the purchase of a boat and motor because they are considered luxuries. But to a hunter and fisherman in Northern Ontario, these items are essential to his day to day life. In some isolated communities in the Northwest Territories, welfare cheques cannot be converted into cash, and can be spent only in a specified store, usually the Bay, for food and clothing. The store has an account for each family, to which the cheque is applied. For a family heavily reliant on welfare, there is no actual cash available with which they can buy hunting equipment or gas.

The Committee believes that social assistance programs should be more flexible, so that start-up funding could be available to those people who wish to adopt or return to a traditional lifestyle based on hunting and trapping.

The Committee recommends that:

- 3. Social Assistance programs become more flexible in order to provide start-up funding for aboriginal people who wish to adopt or return to living off the land but lack the financial means to do so.**

Native people also wish to participate in the secondary aspects of the fur industry. Georges Erasmus has suggested that native people could derive significant economic benefits by branching out from trapping and establishing their own tailoring and marketing outlets.

One way of distinguishing those kinds of products would be to have some kind of label which would talk about the product being a solely indigenously produced product.... It would talk about the quality of the product the same way in which high-quality wool products are talked about.... We see it as a way we could expand the whole area of a larger market, because people who would not buy other fur would be interested in native-designed, native-caught fur products.⁽²⁸⁾

The Metis National Council suggested that economic development initiatives such as the Native Economic Development Program "should be utilized and coordinated to facilitate the establishment of an infrastructure for processing furs in the north and marketing fur garments in Canada and abroad."⁽²⁹⁾

The Committee concurs and feels that where aboriginal people wish to develop fur manufacturing, tailoring, and marketing enterprises, they should be encouraged.