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ment as to what financial support will be provided to them in a timely manner.

Last week I met with a group of members of the Saskatchewan Pool who described the kind of malaise and tremendous concern there is because the government simply will not make up its mind whether it is going to provide any support or not. The night before I was meeting with this group of pool operators and producers, the Premier of Saskatchewan came on the air on province-wide television to plead with the federal government to provide financial support and assistance. That is what makes the whole speech by the Minister of State for Grains and Oilseeds such a joke. The Tory Premier of the province was pleading with the federal government on a province-wide hookup. It is a spectacle that no one would ever imagine. The sad part of it was that it had not come because he had not been able to have a meeting with the Prime Minister, the Minister of Agriculture, or the Minister of State for Grains and Oilseeds. He had had his meeting and struck out. They were turning him down and he was demanding support.

• (1550)

I think we are dealing more with the regional development programs of the country. We can sketch across Atlantic Canada with the tremendous cutbacks it suffered a year ago, the kind of critical situation which exists in the Prairies with the agricultural economy, and the kinds of difficulties we have in transportation all the way across the country.

I want to spend more time on northern Ontario. I hope the Minister of State for Small Businesses and Tourism will respond to my comments. He spoke about the FEDNOR program and the small incentive grants in such glowing terms today, and even though it is a modest program compared to the economic development across the whole country, it has been extremely useful in small communities.

The question hanging over everybody's head is whether the program is a grant or a loan. The Minister of State for Grains and Oilseeds, who is also responsible for the Western Diversification Fund, said that they mostly give loans in western Canada under that program. In FEDNOR, it has been mostly grants. The question is in everyone's mind because of the budget and the minister

did not respond to that this afternoon. Is it because the budget says, with limited exceptions, it will be able to become a loan program? It simply will not be effective as a loan program with the kinds of small projects that we are dealing with in northern Ontario.

The minister is already disparaged with the NODC program. The NODC program is a loans program. When Leo Bernier and the advisory board to FEDNOR sat down to design the FEDNOR grants system, they said the problem in northern Ontario is equity. The loans do not help because there comes a point when one just does not have enough equity to support any loans. Adding another government loan is of no use.

I hope that Mr. Bernier will put great pressure on the Minister of State for Small Businesses and Tourism and use the same arguments that he used when they were setting up the FEDNOR program, that our problem is equity. For these relatively small projects, small by business standards, it is essential that we reinstate or clarify that the grant program, at least under the small rural incentive program of FEDNOR, be maintained as a grant program because it is the equity that is needed.

I cannot emphasize too much to the government its importance to communities like Elliot Lake which have suffered literally hundreds of thousands of job losses. It is not unique just to Elliot Lake. In areas like Timiskaming, as the minister mentioned, we had Corps Addison Mines signal that it was shutting down in June, 1989, with the loss of 360 jobs; another silver mine in Cobalt, 120 jobs; the Adams mine in Kirkland Lake, 350 jobs; and a mine in Temagami with 350 jobs. There are three mines which are going to have massive layoffs in Elliot Lake. We are looking at 1,600 layoffs at the Quirke and Panel mines in the next 12 to 14 months and another 450 at the Denison mines, representing over 50 per cent of the labour force. It is essential that we have a co-ordinating activity and body from the federal government. I would hope that FEDNOR would be the agency to help co-ordinate the federal government response.

We have the Minister of Employment and Immigration saying that her department will provide the assistance for the industrial adjustment activities. That is important for the individual worker, community and so on, but it deals mainly with the relationship between the worker and the mining company to ensure that the