

nence, we could unearth a wealth of economic and cultural opportunities not only among the parts of Canada but also internationally.

I am not talking about a north that is somewhere else, where you were the first part of this week. I am talking about Canada as a northern political entity, Ontario as a northern political entity, as a northern place; Quebec, indeed, all of Canada. These are northern places. No matter what kind of realignment politically happens in this northern part of North America in the future, we will continue to share that common heritage of north.

I am suggesting that Ontario should undertake a pan-northern awareness and development of those ties. They would embrace Quebec and other Canadian provinces and territories and then go international with Greenland, Iceland, Norway, Sweden, Finland and the northern republics of the Soviet Union, as they too are beginning to decide new ways of where the power will lie. We will not call it separation there.

A pan-northern component then in provincial policy, in cultural and economic fields, I think, will reveal some shared interests that we have to the particular point at issue here with Quebec and will also counterbalance some of the dominating influences that come from the United States. As we see Mexican free trade talks on the horizon, we may have more interest in creating this pan-northern identity to counterbalance that.

Looking at the artists again, I have been interested in this idea of north for about 20 years. Robertson Davies has spoken of a peculiar Canadian individuality and he pointed out that our spirit is far more comparable to the Scandinavians and to the Russians than to the United States or to Great Britain.

The northern psyche: You may remember at the Art Gallery of Ontario in Toronto a show of paintings that showed that there was a landscape school evolving in Scandinavia in the first part of this century very similar to our Group of Seven and to our Canadian landscape painting. That psyche of north is very strong and I think political boundaries are well-knit when they are knit around a feeling of commonality.

While not an artist, but in the art of politics, I would mention that Stephen Lewis, when he was ambassador to the United Nations, mentioned that the ambassador to the UN from Norway came to be his closest friend. He said jokingly at a conference in Toronto that at first he thought this was an accident, but he came to believe that it was "geographically genetic." There may be something there.

The idea of north has several determinants, I think, that are common to all of us. North, I think, means great weather variables, from heat wave to snowstorm and cold weather. That is the first determinant.

The second one would be that north means that in some parts of that country there are relatively low population densities, and for significant numbers of people there is the problem of isolation and great distance, and that is a political problem. I think all parts of Canada, certainly Ontario and Quebec, have that problem politically.

The third determinant would mean that there is a shared experience of those great varieties of the length of

DON ALEXANDER

**The Chair:** I call next Don Alexander.

**Mr Alexander:** I live in Owen Sound, about 40 kilometres along Georgian Bay from here. Very often when we begin to look at our future we are criticized for seeing it only in economic terms. I would like to plant a few ideas that begin by looking at it from the role of the artist, the performing artist, the visual artist. Perhaps a new approach to the problems that confront us is that it has always been worth while to look to the artist for new guidelines to where we were going, some hints about our future.

Glenn Gould produced a radio documentary about 20 years ago called *The Idea of North*, and I would like to pick up on that theme. He was interested at that time in the very creative juices that the north provided for him. Initially, it was simply up north at the cottage in Muskoka or Haliburton, but later it came to mean the more arctic parts of our country.

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I think that seeing something special in the idea of north is a way of uncovering many of the things that have pulled us together in this northern part of North America. We can use the idea of north to expand our understanding of a shared future as well, so looking at the past and the future. And if our ideas of north were given more promi-

day: the winter solstice, the short days, and then in the summer the enchantment, if you will, of those long evenings and those long days. In Leningrad, they celebrate the solstice. Perhaps the Legislature could think of another holiday. We could have Quebec do it too and we could have a summer solstice holiday. The tourist industry, which is important in this area, would appreciate that we get a jump-start on summer and maybe lengthen that. We are always talking of shoulder seasons.

The people who are shaped by those three determinants I think have a lot in common, and I think that we hide those commonalities very often as we look to the United States for direction, or to more southern places. Some of the examples: I think that the native nations in the northern part of North America have some shared experiences and tribal structures that have helped them come together in the Assembly of First Nations right across this northern part of North America. I was in Milwaukee at a powwow and was really surprised at the difference of the tribes and the native peoples in the US Midwest, in the more southern climates, in their dwellings and in their tribal structure.

Our severe weather and our isolation of winter, with our heritage of settlement created a tradition of mutual support and co-operation that is evidenced in our support systems that we are more partial to than our neighbours to the south. And I think if we look in the Scandinavian countries, they too have felt this common care for other people and I think that can go back to situations where because of isolation in winter, and I speak of Norwegian valleys that were isolated for three or four months, you had to get along together and share in problem-solving.

Newcomers, even, to this part of North America, I think they share the experience of having learned to wear long underwear or cope with winter and also the shared experience. You will know this from people who have immigrated here from a small country like the Netherlands, the idea that a friend can live 500 and 600 kilometres away, that it is a day's trip, not just a short trip to see a friend. That is just one of the adjustments they have made and I think we all share that in Canada.

Inuit groups, by the way, from Canada, the USSR, from Alaska and from Greenland have for several years now been getting together biannually and they are creating some kind of pan-northern organization. So I believe there are many trade opportunities—to get away from the artists—business opportunities that are made visible if we think of this idea of north.

Ontario and Quebec and other northern governments would share an interest, for example, in the architecture of northern cities. There have been conferences on those, but one conference is not enough. That is an ongoing thing and the housing policies that Ontario will be developing, I think, can be particularly geared to the idea of north.

We have some special needs. In Owen Sound there is a not-for-profit housing development to be built this year. It is being sponsored by the legion. The tendency is for older people, but it has a centre hall plan. It is a single floor, so there are no elevators, but this wide hall allows a person, if he or she cannot cope with those slippery streets, to walk a good city block and walk around and visit. I know people

who use these large, brightly lit centre halls in this architecture to overcome the isolation of winter.

We share an interest in resource management. Certainly timber resource management is something we have in front of us and the Scandinavians are reported in the media to be doing things differently, sometimes with success, sometimes not, but I think that shared interest could be developed.

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The weather and daylight variables in northern places indicate some special considerations for energy and environment, and I think this is very important to us, that we look to this pan-northern community, because our problems of energy, whether heating our houses or the great distances, are going to continue to be very great and may create an additional cost on production, however you measure it. The degradation of things that get into the environment is speeded up in a hotter climate. In a colder climate, those bad things hang around for ever. So we have a common interest with these other northern countries in environmental issues, and if we have an industrial strategy, let us say, that intends to make use of environmental technologies, we have a lot to share in a pan-northern community.

The links that we could look for: I think social democratic governments exist in the Scandinavian countries. There is an international or something that gets together, and I think perhaps a link could be initiated at those meetings with the Scandinavian governments.

Our doorway to the European community: While Quebec I think can have a doorway through its relations with France, I think that Norway and Sweden are likely to join the European community soon, and I think maybe Norway and Sweden would find that despite their membership in the European community, their interests in north are not of interest to the rest of that community. So we may have a relationship there.

So in business, social arrangements and government institutions, we have a lot in common with other areas of Canada because of our idea of north. I think we often hide our northern realities. We get sucked into agendas of more southerly countries, and if as a province Ontario promotes a pan-northern affinity, I think it will expose many of the shared realities between Ontario, Quebec and other regions of Canada and, at the same time, it would provide us with some international opportunities, both culturally and in business.

**The Chair:** Thank you, Mr Alexander, for that fascinating and different approach to some of the issues we are grappling with. I know that your presentation has sparked a lot of interest. We will not be able to go through all of the questions, but we will try to get through at least one or two.

**Mr Mahoney:** I will be brief. It was almost three dimensional as we were feeling the draft from the open door. It was making us think of the idea of north in real terms.

We are having some difficulty I guess as a people thinking in terms of pan-Canadian and that is a little bit of what this committee is about and what many of our deputations are about. Your presentation takes us on to a much