**Editorial: More help needed for homeless**

Penticton Western News, January 5, 2017,

As we endure a seemingly endless cold spell, with temperatures dipping well below zero for days at a time, it's hard not to think about the homeless.

As you complain about having to clear the ice and frost off your car, or having to hold on to a freezing cold steering wheel while your car warms up, can you imagine what it must be like to face an entire night in those temperatures?

How is this still a thing that people in the Western world have to endure this kind of torture?

The fact that more than 2,500 years ago the truism "There will always be poor in the land," was set down in Deuteronomy 15:11 shows that the problem is nothing new.

We live in a world of dichotomies: rich and poor is one of the clearest especially as the world's wealth becomes concentrated in fewer and fewer hands. We don't have any solutions for eliminating poverty, but it is one that society needs to work on.

The bar needs to be raised so that being ranked in the poorest of the poor doesn't mean ending up on the streets. All levels of government, from federal to municipal need to come together to develop housing programs geared to income.

This isn't just a humanitarian crisis. In addition to the misery of living homeless, made worse by severe cold weather, there's a social cost with increased medical services, hospitalization and policing.

It's a problem shared with countries around the world, and there are many solutions being tried, like Finland's experiment in setting a universal basic income.

The poor may always be with us, along with the rich, but being poor shouldn't have to mean freezing (sometimes to death) on our long, cold winter nights. We can do better.