Opening our minds

Rural Alberta has a drug problem. Anyone who has spent any time in a courtroom can see that. In case after case, guilty pleas come along with remarks on drug use and addiction – usually alcohol, meth, fentanyl and other chemicals that wreak havoc on bodies and minds.

Why do people do this?

Despite stereotypes, it’s generally not about people trying to avoid being a productive member of society. Sometimes, people will just do anything to escape themselves. Anyone who has done any kind of drug – whether alcohol, legal painkillers or street drugs — knows that it can be an release, a rush that pulls you away from the horrors of your own mind. For a little while, anyway.

The justice system should not be dealing with the drug problem. It’s our mental health system that needs support, especially in rural areas of the province. And it’s our view of people who use the mental health system. I’ll be honest — I see a counsellor. Once a month, I go discuss what’s going on in my head. I have no problem being open about them, even in my head. I’ll be honest — I see a counsellor. Once a month, I go discuss what’s going on in my head.

I have no problem being open about it. I hope that it will help someone else open about their own issues and seek help rather than using drugs in unhealthy ways.

With Remembrance Day falling as it did this year on a Saturday, and so many other things going on around us, I had kind of forgotten about the special day when we pay tribute to those who have fought and died for the freedoms we (still) have, as well as those who continue to fight for those freedoms.

May we never forget about the sacrifice so many have given for those freedoms.

Sadly, as I sit here at my computer just a couple of days before Remembrance Day, a poppy proudly pinned to my shirt, I wonder about those freedoms they fought for and sadly as we watch many of those freedoms quickly disappearing at the hands of what I feel are quite incompetent governments of today.

Earlier, I had wondered whether our young people would be able to grasp the concept of war and the fact that so many Canadians, along with other nations on both sides of the conflicts, fought for what they felt was right.

Then I head a piece on a radio station that indicates there are quite a number of our youth who do have at least a basic understanding of what Remembrance Day is all about.

Now I am more worried about our governments. Readers of this column already know my feelings about the new provincial education legislation and I know many others share my feelings, so I won’t belabour it further. I will only say we are going down the wrong pathway for sure and this is not something that should be in the hands of government.

Personally, I think it is just one more diversion for our provincial government to try to take our minds off the ever-increasing debt they are building, with no real plan on how to get out of it.

And yes, in other ways, I believe our federal government is doing the same.

So as long as we sit back and allow them to continue, with both governments having a large majority, our opposition can only do so much.

At this point, I have to bite my tongue just a little. I have, in the past, downplayed the role of the Senate as basically a waste of good money. But they are supposed to be the “second sober thought,” and when I heard recently the Senate was questioning the Liberal push to legalize marijuana … well, as I said, I have to bite my tongue. They are on the right path and doing their job.

My colleague Eric Bowling and I share different views on many things, as he said in his column to the left last week. He and I are at different spectrums, but as he grows older and wiser, his thinking may change too.