

not restrict them. On that basis, I certainly can support the bill. It should enable co-operative activity to be extended across provincial boundaries and not hinder the development of the co-operatives which contribute so much to this country. On that basis also, I can support the bill.

There are many things I could say if I wanted to expound at any length on the co-operative movement, as did the hon. member who spoke for the Official Opposition, the hon. member for St. John's East (Mr. McGrath), who so aptly gave us his reading of history. It is the east that has contributed so constructively to the co-operative movement as a result of the challenge of disparity and economic disadvantage. We have had to develop new types of business organizations and new co-operative methods to compete with many of our more affluent neighbours, both in the coal mining industry and in the fishing trade in Nova Scotia. Certainly, the President of the Privy Council (Mr. MacEachen) knows about what can almost be called the Antigonish movement, a movement which has since gone far beyond the boundaries of Nova Scotia. He is aware of the impetus given the Co-operative movement by those in Nova Scotia who were vitally involved in it. My own constituency, the Annapolis Valley riding, has today some of the more basic and progressive branches of agriculture which are vitally involved and integrated with the co-operative movement.

I do not want to take up any more of the time of the House. In fact, perhaps the minister will get the bill through before five o'clock.

Mr. McGrath: There is no chance of that.

Mr. Nowlan: I do not want to elaborate any further, or to give facts and figures to indicate how much the co-operatives mean to my constituents and to the people of Nova Scotia. But certainly we who have pioneered in the co-operative movement in Nova Scotia welcome Bill C-177 in general, and say that perhaps it is long overdue.

Mr. E. F. Whelan (Essex): I want to make one or two short remarks on this bill. After listening to so many members talk about this wonderful bill and how long overdue it is, I wish to add that I heartily agree with them. I do so not for political reasons but as a result of my long association with co-operatives before I became a member of this honourable institution. I learned the fundamentals of democracy through my work with the United Co-operatives of Ontario in my home locality, a work that I enjoyed very much before becoming a member here. This is legislation for which we have asked for a long time. At the time I was director of the United Co-operatives of Ontario and the party of the hon. members who spoke previously was in office, we asked for this legislation, and I am glad to see it finally brought before the House.

I agree with the hon. member for Regina-Lake Centre (Mr. Benjamin) who remarked that he does not know how much the lawyers in the Committee on Justice and Legal Affairs know about co-operatives.

Canada Co-operatives Association Bill

I had hoped that at least we would have been given the opportunity to examine the bill. I just want to say that even if the minister is not persuaded that this legislation should not go before the Committee on Justice and Legal Affairs, those who have some knowledge of co-operatives will be given an opportunity by the chairman of that committee to give their opinions.

Mrs. Grace MacInnis (Vancouver-Kingsway): A number of us have been asking for this legislation for quite a long time and we are very glad to see it now. I, for one, want to congratulate the minister on a piece of legislation which, so far as we can learn, is regarded very favourably by the co-operative movement. That is not to say that they do not find faults or shortcomings in it, but they certainly think it is good basis for a start.

At this stage I would like to add my voice to those of speakers who have urged the minister to send this legislation to another committee. I think that the hon. member for St. John's East (Mr. McGrath) made a good point when he said this is a good argument in favour of establishing a consumer committee which the minister would have all to himself.

Mr. Basford: Hear, hear.

Mrs. MacInnis: The minister is in agreement.

Mr. Basford: I do not set up committees.

Mrs. MacInnis: I do not know how we can proceed unless the minister asks or presses for it. If the minister would suggest the establishment of a consumer committee, he would receive support from many members of the House because such legislation has been referred previously to the Committee on Health, Welfare and Social Affairs which is overloaded with many other matters. Actually, this is a consumer matter more than anything else. Certainly, it should not be a happy hunting ground for legal people. I know they have had many innings already and have probably done very well, but now this legislation should go past the legal people to those who have been concerned with co-operative principles.

The minister said something rather significant in connection with this piece of legislation. He said that the reason the government decided to bring this legislation forward after so many years is that co-operatives have been under the aegis of the Corporations Act for too long and that the Corporations Act has been distorted too often to try to make it cover co-operatives. Perhaps he will correct me if I am wrong, but that is what I thought I heard him say. If that is so, then I really feel that this is a good reason for believing that co-operatives should have an over-all act. The point I am trying to make is that this is not just an addition to ordinary business legislation. This bill is a pioneer piece of legislation in the Canadian Parliament because it is the first federal over-all legislation which aims to deal with co-operatives. Co-operatives are not ordinary business concerns in any sense of the term. They are fundamentally and basically different. Their motivation is different. Their motivation