

Government Orders

One other point I want to make is that the Conference Board of Canada told the finance committee that it sees no competition problems if banks are given the power to buy insurance companies.

I will be voting against both of those amendments.

Mr. Simon de Jong (Regina—Qu'Appelle): Mr. Speaker, I too wish to intervene in the debate on these amendments. Really these amendments go to the heart of what the government is attempting to do and our opposition to what the government is attempting to do.

The amendments of course being debated are the ones that would prevent banks from owning insurance companies. The government wants to collapse the four pillars so that banks can own insurance companies, or trusts can own banks and banks can own trusts and so forth and so on.

Many of the points in terms of our opposition were raised by my colleague, the member for Nickel Belt, and I think he raised them very forcefully and very eloquently.

Perhaps I can start my remarks where in a sense he left off. He said that the notion of beans is not necessarily the way to survive. His thought was that smartness was more important and was a greater asset in terms of surviving than beans. I think he is right on.

We saw the decade of the eighties where huge new corporate entities were formed, levered buy-outs with huge sums of money, billions of dollars. We are finding now that society, especially the American society, is paying a heavy price for it. They created monsters. They were like dinosaurs. There was no intelligence. They were big, they were huge but there was no intelligence. Many of them got into fields that they had no experience in like real estate. They ended up having to start divesting.

We know some of our Canadian boys who went in, the experience of Mr. Campeau. What a tremendous ruin people like that have done to institutions, to businesses that have taken years and years to build up. You would almost think that they were revolutionaries out to destroy the system.

They laid in ruin many once proud and large corporate entities, especially in the United States. Many of these entities, these dinosaurs that were created, have tremen-

dous levels of debt that they cannot service. They are having to sell pieces off. In other words they were like dinosaurs. They were big all right but they had tiny little minds. They were not smart.

It is like our government. It got its majority all right, but it has a tiny little mind because these Tories sometimes move slow. What was the in thing at the beginning of the eighties we have now discovered has become a disaster in many areas. When the Tories launch something it is like launching one of those huge boats, an oil tanker. When they are midway in the Atlantic they have to start slowing down in order to slide into port. Once the Tories launch something, it takes them almost a decade to bring it to legislation. Now we have realized that what they launched in the beginning of the 1980s is no longer appropriate.

• (1610)

If they were really smart and quick they would withdraw this legislation. We on this side of the House suspect that it is a recipe for disaster. Canada will end up with some huge financial institutions and while they will be big, they will not be smart. They will not have the appreciation of the markets and the different businesses they are involved in.

I also think of the many insurance agents who have served Canada well. They have enabled Canadians to choose from a very wide variety of insurance packages and policies. Of course, by allowing the banks to not only own but sell insurance policies, the network that has been built up over the years in Canada will be threatened. The livelihoods of many of these insurance agents will also be threatened.

I do not know what sort of regulations the government is contemplating when the bank gets into the insurance business. Will those insurance policies be allowed to be sold in the bank? What will the regulations be? Will insurance agents also be able to sell those packages along with the other insurance packages they sell? I do not know what the regulations will be.

I understand that this aspect has not really been discussed by the finance committee and that is unfortunate. I submit that at least the finance committee should have spent some time listening to the agents and discussing what possible regulations might be put into