

Government Orders

yesterday were screaming and yelling that they do not want to get into this free trade deal with Mexico.

Why should we be hoodwinked by this government? Why should we even look at the possibility of free trade with Mexico? They are saying: "Look at the European experience. Look at what the European common market has brought to the countries of Europe".

There are differences here. The European experience is something altogether different from the North American experience. In Europe, if you are a citizen of one country and you have a red passport, you can travel and work in another country. However in North America, if you are a citizen of Canada you cannot travel and work in the United States or vice versa.

Yet the President of Mexico said yesterday that if you do not get into this free trade deal, you are going to have millions of young men migrating to Canada and the United States looking for work. Do we have to accept those millions of young men coming up to our shores for work? No, Madam Speaker, we do not have to. However, daily we are losing jobs to south of the border.

While the government has not yet revealed its strategies for these negotiations, it seems clear that foreign countries will demand similar treatment to that received by the Americans under free trade. They will demand similar treatment to the AMEX bank.

We on this side of the House want to state once again that the government might not use the straight negotiations to weaken the competitive position of the Canadian financial institution. Should we participate in these talks? There are some members of this House who say that we should be at the negotiating table.

I talked to over 14,000 of my constituents over last summer. Ninety-two per cent of my constituents said we do not need free trade with Mexico. We do not need to participate in these talks. If we participate we are going to weaken the financial position of our country and our financial commitment to our people. We will be looking very closely at the two bills as they go to the finance committee.

• (1550)

Mr. Dennis Mills (Broadview—Greenwood): Madam Speaker, I appreciate the opportunity to ask my colleague a couple of questions. I appreciate his participation in this debate about changing the Bank Act. His riding, like mine is going through a lot of economic pain

right now. Many of the small and medium sized businesses in his constituency are finding it very difficult.

He spoke a little bit about American Express. We have all talked about American Express when debating this bill at second reading.

I said in this House last Friday that maybe we should give American Express the opportunity to see whether or not it does fulfil the requirement of being a normal chartered bank. Maybe we should invite American Express to come to the committee between second and third reading. It might be interesting to put these questions before them. That is one point I would like to raise with my colleague.

There is a perception in the community right now that the major financial institutions, banks like the Bank of Nova Scotia, TD and the Bank of Montreal are almost like a cartel. We know they are not a cartel, but there is a perceived sense that the banking institutions are a cartel.

I am supporting the amendment to this bill to include insurance companies. It is my belief that this is going to foster more competition. The NDP does not share my view on this but I have yet to be convinced that their view is correct.

Does the member not think it would be a good thing to include the insurance companies in the financial institutions format, where they can lend money to small and medium sized businesses. This would expand the options of opportunity for the smaller guys who tend to be closed down completely if they are turned down at one of the major banks.

I would like to have his thoughts on that.

Mr. Karygiannis: Madam Speaker, I want to thank my colleague from Broadview—Greenwood for sharing his concerns with us. We all have small businesses in our ridings, from the mom and pop operations in the rural ridings to the corner store or Mac's Milk. They are all going through a crunch. They are going to the banks and saying: "Mr. Banker, can you lend me some money so I can go through this six months of recession". The government tells us we are through the recession—

An hon. member: Three years of recession.

Mr. Karygiannis: Well, the government says six more months and we are going to be out of it, hopefully, but I totally disbelieve that. The banks are seeing the numbers and they are saying: "Hold on. So much you owe, so much are liabilities, so much are assets. Forget it". If we were to give this opportunity to other institutions, to the