

Private Members' Business

The other advantage is that it has provided a tremendous opportunity for the emergence of local leadership. Within all of our communities—and this becomes evident to those of us who are politicians at election time—there is a tremendous talent, a reservoir of leadership talent which is not always tapped. Those of us who get elected as a result of volunteers, in essence often coming out of the woodwork, discover there are many people who have talent for leadership which is not always recognized.

That was true in the emergence of the co-operative movement in the past and I continue to believe so now.

When we look today to the role of the co-operative movement and where I see it as being particularly important and where the government recognizes its importance, is in two areas that I would identify, one, of course, being the north, in the area of the Arctic.

Many of the conditions that exist in the Arctic now are not unlike the conditions which existed in western Canada in days gone by. The reason why the co-operative movement is emerging now, as it did then, is because those conditions are very similar. In fact, if I recall correctly, in the last 30 years some 52 new co-ops have emerged in northern Canada, which of course is a testimony to the fact that the needs which were there in the past are there at present.

The government is delighted that as a result of the emergence of the co-operative movement in Arctic Canada, people have economic opportunities they did not have before. For example, in the area of local community development, we see major management training programs being provided in some cases by the Arctic Co-Operatives Limited. In other cases we see sales outlets being developed in southern Canada for product which otherwise might not reach the market with ease.

The federal government has been happy to play a partnership role in that process through the co-operative secretariat which was established in 1987 and by working in close co-operation with provincial governments in some cases and with territorial governments in others.

The establishment of three community development organizations have occurred in the north and some financial assistance has been provided to them. In

addition, looking into the broader area of the co-operative movement today we see the renewal of the co-operative housing program. This, of course, has been important for many of our communities. I have such projects in my constituency of Brandon—Souris and very often it provides a stimulation to the construction industry which is much appreciated and very often much needed. In addition, it often provides a source of stable and affordable housing for those to whom such housing might not have otherwise been available.

The government is pleased to work with the child care co-ops, recognizing that in a changing world there is a recognized need for child care facilities that was not there two and three decades ago. In saying that, I am not suggesting that the need was not there, I am suggesting that the recognition of the need was not there. This provides an excellent opportunity, as I said before, for people to gather together the resources of their own community.

Very often the co-ops are not looking for substantial amounts of federal government assistance. They are to be complimented on that. In fact, what they are basically saying, at least to my understanding, is that they really are not generally seeking anything more than is available to any other institution trying to provide a comparable level of service.

As I say that, I am conscious of the fact that there is some division within the child care community in terms of how services should be provided and who receives what assistance. But I think the generalization which I have issued is reasonably valid.

The other area which I would like to address in a moment is the fact that I believe the co-op movement is extremely important in Atlantic Canada, as it has been in the past.

There are many Atlantic Canada co-operatives that have benefited from some federal assistance. The figures are not huge. In fact, they were talking in terms of, for example, a community development co-operative in Nova Scotia receiving \$25,000 in assistance. I think what is noteworthy about that is perhaps not the fact that they received \$25,000 but the fact that it is only \$25,000 because as we know in this House, we live in a world where now that is not considered to be a huge amount of money.