
Production co-operatives Besides co-operative farms and wood-producers' co-operatives, this group of societies includes grazing, feeder, artificial-insemination and machinery co-operatives. In 1971, the volume of business amounted to \$43 million for 393 production co-operatives with 35,000 members and \$33 million of assets.

Credit unions Credit unions and *caisses populaires* are co-operative societies organized among groups of people to accumulate savings and lend the money to members at reasonable rates of interest. The Rustico Farmer's Bank, chartered in Prince Edward Island in 1864, was a forerunner of these credit organizations.

Alphonse Desjardins organized the first *caisse populaire* at Lévis, Quebec, in 1900. He organized two others in the province before the Co-operative Syndicates Act, which provides the legal basis for this type of organization, was passed in 1906. By 1930 there were many *caisses populaires* in Quebec. Other provinces lacked legislation governing incorporation and supervision of *caisses populaires*, so that only a few were organized and most of these failed.

The *caisse populaire* idea spread to the United States. There it was modified to form credit unions, which met the needs of industrial workers. The *caisse populaire* used the parish, and the industrial credit union used the place of employment, as a basis of association for members.

Interest in credit unions increased during the depression of the 1930s. In Nova Scotia, the organization of credit unions was encouraged with considerable success by extension workers of St. Francis Xavier University. Management of industrial firms across Canada began to see the potential of credit unions in helping their employees. In a few years, appropriate legislation was adopted in all provinces and the organization of both industry and rural community credit unions was encouraged. The finance co-operative movement entered a phase of rapid growth, which still continues. Credit unions and *caisses populaires* now have more members and more assets than all other types of co-operative added together. In 1971 there were 4,444 credit unions and *caisses populaires*, with 5,454,292 members and total assets of \$5.6 billion. The Province of Quebec, still leading, has about 38 per cent of all the finance co-operatives in the country, 56 per cent of the total membership and more than 50 per cent of the assets.

Central credit unions and *caisses populaires* have been formed in all provinces. These act as depositories for the surplus funds of their member locals, and lend money to their members and, in
