

It is not my province to suggest to the committee that perhaps for the purpose of brevity you would like to hear from these representatives of the Credit Union Movement in this country and that questions be asked at the completion because all the presentations are similar in intent and differ only in broad principle.

The CHAIRMAN: The next gentleman who will address us will be Mr. R. J. MacMullin, managing director of the Credit Union League of Antigonish, Nova Scotia.

Mr. MACMULLIN: Mr. Chairman and gentlemen, you all have a copy of the brief that is to be presented on behalf of the Nova Scotia Credit Union League. I am not going to read it, I am merely going to make a few comments upon it. I think you will all recall that credit unions were started in eastern Canada, especially in the maritime provinces, in the early thirties. They were started there as a result of the inauguration of a program which we called a total program for the rehabilitation of the people generally in the maritime provinces. That included our fishermen, our farmers and our industrial workers of various kinds. Shortly after the inauguration of this total program for the rehabilitation of our people one of the basic needs that was first discovered was the need for credit facilities. In talking on this question we are interested primarily in our fishermen. It is safe to say that in no occupational group in the Maritime provinces was there a greater need for credit facilities than among fishermen. Hon. members have pointed out in the House and have stated, and it is a fact, that the primary source of credit to our fishermen was their local fish buyer, or supply company, and after 1932 and 1933 the local credit union which established itself in those fishing communities.

In twenty years these credit unions have been providing to the fishermen a source of credit comparable to the means and ability of the credit unions to supply that need. It is interesting to note that one of the very first credit unions organized in Nova Scotia was in May, 1933, at Canso, from whence it has spread along the coast so that today there are credit unions in practically every fishing community along the shores of our province.

Today we have approximately 220 credit unions and in savings, approximately \$8 million, and they have loaned to themselves about \$40 million.

I think it is important to say that in 90 per cent of the cases those savings were credited by people who ordinarily would not have accumulated any savings. Likewise, in 90 per cent of the cases the \$40 million of loans has been lent out to people who ordinarily would not have had a comparable source of credit, so there has been a significant contribution by the credit unions to our whole economy and especially in our fishing communities.

Of our total credit unions we have approximately sixty which are operating in fishing villages, and more than half of these can be classified as exclusively fishermen's credit unions, and are operated in communities where fishing is the only industry and where everybody in that community depends on fishing for his livelihood. The remainder, probably another 30, would be located in communities where there are various occupations and industries but where fishing nevertheless is an important part of the economy of that community. In all our operations the losses which have been sustained in our credit unions—we have to admit that there are losses the same as in any business—but the losses which have been sustained have been for practical purposes very, very minor. We have written off about \$37,000 on a loan value of something over \$40 million. All of that has not been written off because of dishonesty on the part of the people borrowing. In the intervening years, as you well realize, we had a war, when many young people left our communities