

Every Member who has spoken today has raised some of these grievances. The Member for Mississauga South went on at some length about the grievances which have come to his attention. In fact, he accused the banks of arrogance.

We all know the story of the retired person in Ottawa who needed some change. She went not to her branch, but to her bank, with a \$20 bill. She needed \$10 worth of quarters and the bank charged her \$2 for changing the \$20 bill.

My Leader, the Member for Oshawa (Mr. Broadbent), brought to the attention of the House a pizza parlour in his constituency which was charged way beyond what one would normally expect to be charged for basic bank services. The list goes on and on.

Of course, when we met with the executive officers and presidents of the banks they said that these are not their policies, that these are perhaps the mistakes of their branches. Well, surely the head office is responsible for the branches. However, the banks operate in such a way as to give the branches a lot of manoeuvrability to nickel and dime their customers.

We also discovered from many days of hearings in the Finance Committee that if a person complains loud enough, writes to his or her Member of Parliament or whatever, very often the branch manager will reduce or nullify an unjustified charge. Does that mean that whenever someone is nickel and dimed, 40 cents here or \$1 there, on an invalid charge, he or she should write to their Member of Parliament? You and I know that in most cases people will say "Well, why bother?"

The banks also say that if people are not happy, they can go across the street. However, we have discovered that every branch engages in this nickel and diming. Average depositors realize this, shrug their shoulders, and accept it as the cost of doing banking business in this country. What is required is action by Parliament. What is required is action by the Government. We have known of this situation for a long time. It is simply not good enough for the Minister to promise us legislation. We want legislation. Hopefully our motion today will hasten the Government in that direction.

● (1250)

There are other examples of abuse which the committee has not studied. In fact, a whole other kettle of fish has not been investigated but deserves thorough examination. It is the treatment of small businesses by the banks.

Small businesses which depend on loans are very often captives of the banks which can call in a loan at any time. Therefore, many small businesses are forced to put up with all kinds of ridiculous charges.

One case that was brought to my attention concerns a small cattle auction mart and feed lot in Saskatchewan. They wrote:

We have an operating loan of \$150,000... Occasionally we require an extension. October, November, March and April are our bigger months as more cattle are moving during that time.

Supply

Our local bank has to call Saskatoon to get approval for an extension. Each time they call they charge us \$100. Last year it was \$150 per call. I find this charge outrageous. One long distance call (100 km), someone's consent to a day or so extension and it's another \$100 on top of interest, and overdraft interest.

That is outrageous. Yet the Tories will vote against this motion. The letter goes on to say:

The explanation I receive is that it is not a service charge, it is a handling charge with someone taking the responsibility of the extension. They can call it what they like. It costs us \$100 for a telephone call. Please note the enclosed debit memo to our account for two telephone calls in March.

We have to handle \$10,000 worth of cattle to gross \$200 in commissions.

This feed lot and cattle auction mart will not make much money with a rate of \$100 per telephone call.

It is another example of a bank doing almost anything it wishes to a small business. In this case, it is charging \$100 for what may be a \$2 or \$3 call. The Finance and Economic Affairs Committee will hopefully conduct a thorough study into the treatment of small business by the banks. I believe it will result in an even stronger indictment of the banking practices of the big banks.

We should honour an old British parliamentary practice of dealing with grievances before Supply. However, I do not expect any action from the Tory Government. It may rant and rave and create the impression that it is thoroughly disgusted with these bank charges. The Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs (Mr. Andre) may state to the committee and the House that he is outraged. The Minister of State for Finance (Mr. Hockin) may warn the banks that he will introduce tough legislation. However, let the Canadian public not forget who are the friends of the banks.

Let us consider bank donations to political Parties in 1986. The Bank of Montreal donated \$35,000 to the Tories and \$35,000 to the Liberals. The Bank of Nova Scotia donated \$35,000 to the Tories and \$35,000 to the Liberals. The Royal Bank donated \$35,000 to the Tories in 1986, however, it did not give anything to the Liberals because it is holding the \$5 million to \$6 million debt of the Liberal Party. Perhaps they will make another deal.

The Toronto-Dominion Bank paid some \$35,000 to the Tories and some \$36,000 to the Liberals in 1986. The Bank of Commerce paid \$36,000 to the Tories, and gave the Liberals \$37,000, \$1,000 more. We know who are the friends of the banks. It is no wonder the Liberal spokesperson disagrees with the New Democrats and suggests that we are bank-bashing.

I suspect the sincerity of the Tories when they discuss the unfairness of the banks to their customers. The Government will not take any action. It may introduce legislation, but it will never be enacted before an election is called.

It is also interesting to note the similarity of the contributions made by the banks to both those political Parties. They will probably double in an election year.

Mr. Nunziata: How much did the NDP get?