

JAMES B. REED, called.

*By the Chairman:*

Q. What is your address, Mr. Reed?—A. North Hatley, Quebec.

Q. And your occupation?—A. Farmer.

Mr. IRVINE: On what is Mr. Reed giving evidence?

The CHAIRMAN: The Bank Act, Bill 18.

*By the Chairman:*

Q. Mr. Reed, have you any statement to make to the committee?—A. Gentlemen, I may say, after having listened to such an able speaker as we have just heard, it puts a common dirt farmer in an awkward position to endeavour to talk to men of your calibre. There is one thing about it, however, I will take up only a few minutes of your time, so that perhaps you will be able to stand it.

The CHAIRMAN: You need make no apology, Mr. Reed.

The WITNESS: After reading some of the speeches made by representatives of our leading banks, before this body, our Quebec Branch of the United Farmers of Canada will appreciate taking a few minutes of your time, which we know is valuable, to explain our side of this question, which is important, as it seriously affects the prosperity of our country.

We notice how smooth, kind and cheerful their yarns seem to run, but you have got to deal with them for the past four years in order to get their right number.

They have led the farmers and small dealers around by the nose about long enough, and now have the cheek to tell you their customers come to them pleading for them to "Hold their hands," during this unheard of time of depression. Let me tell you now, in most cases, all the comfort the common people get from these Lords of Creation (as they judge themselves), is to shut up, and pay up. This many have done, but occasionally a farmer pays up, and then speaks up, as he did not dare to before.

We begin to feel encouraged when our representatives call for a wide banking probe and also are in favour of a Central Bank in Canada.

I have done business with the banks and with farmers continuously for nearly forty years, and you can rest assured I would not be here to-day if all was well in dealing with the banks, for so long a time.

We are not getting the same treatment from some banks that we used to get from the old Eastern Townships Bank. Far from it.

We cordially invite one or more of the committee to come down to our section of country and get some first hand information from hundreds of reliable farmers and dealers who have always paid one hundred cents on the dollar. These men are worthy of a little encouragement from our banks, or some other financial institution, in order to put cash into circulation for the benefit of all classes, instead of hoarding the small deposits up, or carrying them away and investing them in large sums in places that have proven, at times, to be not quite so safe as if the money had been loaned to farmers and dealers.

We can show you how differently banks have been treating many of their customers in the past three years as compared with former years.

We cannot believe they are sincere in making the statement that "they prefer to make small loans rather than invest in large deals."

If they really want small loans who is to blame for their not making them? In most cases the same farmers are on the same farms they were on four years ago.

As a general thing farmers are not moving planets but are fixed stars.

The trouble lies in most cases with the branch managers, who get their instructions from head office, from men lacking practical experience and good judgment in handling farmers' accounts in country places.

[Mr. James B. Reed]