

*Government Orders*

That does not happen with a credit union. The credit union knows the tough times and it can respond to the tough times. It can build up those it knows can pay and it can provide help and counselling to those in trouble.

In a province like Saskatchewan it is the credit unions and co-ops that are surviving in those communities in tough times, and there is a good reason for that. It is because they know how those communities operate and they have a commitment to those communities.

**Mr. Dennis Mills (Broadview—Greenwood):** Madam Speaker, I want to begin by congratulating the New Democratic Party member for Prince Albert—Churchill River because I share most of his views toward co-operatives.

I am a member from an urban area where we do not have the real thrust and support of co-operatives in the manner with which rural members, and I think mostly members from western Canada, are familiar. I know that caisses populaires are very strong in the province of Quebec, and of course in Ottawa. However, in Toronto we seem to be surrounded by the five major banks. The basic reality, and I do not think my colleague the member for Mississauga South shares my view on this, that I tend to see, and I listen to my constituents, is that small and medium-sized businesses are constantly telling me that if they are turned down at the Royal Bank, chances are that is all for them. That is the end of the line. I do not just mean to say the Royal. If they are turned down at one of the five big banks, that is the end of the road.

Talking about the co-operatives today will hopefully provide some new competition and some new exposure to the co-operatives in the urban areas.

It is interesting that the member for Prince Albert—Churchill River talked about the sensitivity and the participation of the co-operatives in the community. I tend to share his view. This has happened to me directly. When you go into a local bank, a branch of one of the big five, and ask it to sponsor or participate in a particular event, and I am not talking about a political contribution here but anything from a child's baseball team to a single parents' event, the branch has to go to head office.

There tends to be an impersonal approach in the branches of the five major banks. Possibly, with the advent of this new thrust for co-operatives in the urban

areas, we can get some competition going and those local branches will be given more entrepreneurial power.

It is not that the individual branch manager has the desire to be restrictive in his attitude. It is so often the central bank policy that limits his ability to move and react with the regional or local sensitivities.

Again, I congratulate my colleague from Prince Albert—Churchill River for his comments on the co-operative credit and associations act.

I want to briefly discuss the amendments to the trust and loan companies act. The government is doing a good thing by expanding the mandate and allowing them to have more opportunity to participate fully in the financial institutions' instruments arrangements that go on in our community.

As I said earlier, any legislation that we amend here which will promote a more vibrant competitive spirit among our financial institutions without jeopardizing the financial stability of our over-all financial system at large has to be applauded. Therefore, I commend the government for making these changes.

When I look at the Bank Act portion of this series of bills I get a little nervous because I do not really see anything substantive in this legislation that is really going to rattle the conscience or force a review of the procedures, systems and attitudes of the major banks in this country.

Again, I am going to report to this House the reactions I am getting from my constituents, and they are not just small businessmen. There are some large businesses. They feel that when times are tough and strained as they have been in this country in the last 16 months, our major financial institutions seem to be drawing in on credit lines and seem to be restrictive in their tone, attitude and actions. This is precisely the time when our corporate strength in this country, which is ultimately responsible for our job creation, needs that added support.

I realize the member for Mississauga South has added an amendment for consumer complaints. I think that is a good thing. I wish there was some way we could let the people of Canada know that this new consumer complaints amendment is part of the new Bank Act. It means that if a customer of a bank, whether an individual or a business, believes that he is not receiving proper and fair professional service from a financial institution, he can