

The rural electric systems have long been interested in the total subject of credit. The architects of the program, Senator Norris of Nebraska, and Congressman Sam Rayburn of Texas, realized how important credit would be, not only to the rural electric systems, but to the consumers of those systems when they provided in the bill for the electric systems themselves—the borrowers of REA—to relend some of the money to their consumer members. Some systems do that but not all of them do it. In any case, the various problems of credit do exist in the rural areas.

Today we would like to call your attention to a few of the attitudes of our people, and, Madam Chairman, you are to blame—you are responsible for some of this. We had you, fortunately, at one of our national meetings to speak to some 1,200 of our leading women, and you advised them to become "kitchen politicians" in this area of consumer interest. They have done that. They are doing it and they are organized to do it now in many parts of this Nation. And I must say that they regard you as the great leader in this field, as we do at NRECA among the staff.

Mrs. SULLIVAN. I am happy to hear that I have a little bit of influence. I was delighted to appear at your meeting and talk about consumer issues. The women were wonderful.

Mr. ELLIS. Let's take a look at this language. Our people didn't get excited about this although they were interested in credit, but they didn't get excited about the possibilities of them doing anything until your fine speech to them. It had wide circulation in this country.

In 1967, this year, at our national annual meeting our people passed a resolution containing these two paragraphs:

WHEREAS, widespread misrepresentation of interest rates, vaguely worded credit contracts, unscrupulous repossession methods, trick payment clauses, high pressure door-to-door selling tactics, unconscionably high rates for credit, and other unsavory credit practices work severe hardships on consumers: Now, therefore, be it

*Resolved*, That we reaffirm our support for legislation that helps consumers shop for the best buy in credit by requiring a clear statement of the cost of credit and the annual rate of interest.

In 1966, the year before, our people passed another strong resolution which is contained in the prepared statement. I will read only this one sentence:

*Be it further resolved*, That we support legislation that helps consumers shop for the best buy in credit by requiring a clear statement of costs.

It is the same idea, you see, carried through here.

We of the rural electrics think that the credit partnership of the Federal Government and the rural people throughout the rural electric system is one of the brightest spots in our Nation's history because it has worked and worked well and continues to work. I was one of those farm people who had no electricity. I had no electricity in my home until after I was married. We were excluded people—or part of them—of this country because we lived out where the lights were not and the outhouses were. And our friends in the cities laughed at us, made jokes about us. We just did not belong until electrification came along and gave us a new lease on life.

Now, this was a Federal-private citizen partnership in credit and it of course did, among other things, establish a responsible, respectable