

*Export and Import Permits Act*

over-all powers contained in the act—are vested in the governor in council, not in the minister. Orders made by the governor in council in pursuance of the powers contained in the act are of course subject to tabling in the House of Commons in accordance with the provision of the Regulations Act. For this reason I think they are more appropriately dealt with than would be the case if they were ministerial powers. The powers of the minister under the act are the more detailed powers of the day to day issuing of permits and certificates, and in this respect are very much more appropriate powers for ministerial action.

The hon. member for Eglinton and other hon. members have spoken of the reasons underlying the existence of this act. The hon. member for Eglinton indicated that previous extensions of this act prior to 1950 or 1951 were for one year's duration. I think I should point out to the house that those extensions were in the period before the Korean emergency, and I believe the Korean emergency changed the whole situation materially with respect to the necessity for controls of this kind and also a number of other matters.

The hon. member also indicated that in 1947 the main basis for having an act of this nature arose out of the scarcity of materials that then existed. In a general sense I think that is probably true, but the fact that in 1954 this was no longer one of the main reasons but had been supplanted by another reason, which was the necessity of maintaining control of exports of arms and other strategic materials to the communist bloc, simply shows how fundamentally and rapidly situations of this kind can change. It indicates, I believe, the basic requirement for an act of this kind which is carefully drawn to keep the necessary authority and power within reasonable limits, but still contains the powers that may require to be exercised, sometimes with very little notice, in the national interest and to ensure national security.

The three hon. members who have spoken said they feel this bill should be considered and studied in the committee on banking and commerce. I cannot agree with that suggestion, Mr. Speaker. As has been pointed out, the bill itself is very brief indeed and consists of only one clause. In the opinion of the government there has not been any fundamental change in the situation which gives rise to any justification for considering basic changes in the act, either in terms of extending its provisions to cover additional matters or in terms of reducing the coverage of its sections.

The hon. member for Eglinton suggested there was not as good a case for the retentions of the controls over imports as there was concerning exports.

That is a matter of opinion. When you realize that the control over imports is an absolute and fundamental necessity for the implementation of any price support legislation of the type referred to by the hon. member, you come to the realization that this is a most important power to have in some statute or other for the exercise of support for agricultural and other commodities. Therefore I submit that second reading should be given to this bill, after which it should be studied in the normal manner in committee of the whole.

Motion agreed to, bill read the second time and the house went into committee thereon, Mr. Applewhite in the chair.

On clause 1—*Duration*.

**Mr. Macdonnell:** Mr. Chairman, we are having another experience which we have had so often and which we should be used to; and whatever pain it causes us, it should cause us no surprise.

**Mr. Knowles:** We are used to pain.

**Mr. Macdonnell:** We have here a bill containing powers which if it were possible to detach ourselves from the situation to which in spite of ourselves we have grown accustomed, namely the common use of these almost absolute powers, we would regard as almost incredible. Clause 5, to which the hon. member for Eglinton has referred, gives the minister powers that almost defy description, but the parliamentary assistant says they must retain these powers because they may be required to assure national security. Those words may mean something to the parliamentary assistant, but they mean nothing to me and I submit they mean nothing to the ordinary man of common sense.

The truth of the matter is that when we ask members of the government why these great powers, the answer we get is "Why not." If they were frank I know they would say, "We have had these powers for years, we like them and we are not going to give them up." When it is pointed out by the hon. member for Eglinton that this situation should be considered by a standing committee, when it is pointed out that after 10 years we should have another look-see at it, even that reasonable request is turned down.

I think the truth of the matter is that the government have grown so accustomed to exercising these powers that to them they have become quite normal. I recognize that the abnormal has become the normal, and we have to accept that by force of a large