

Mr. GORDON GRAYDON (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, this resolution embodies a new principle with respect to facilitating imports from Canada to other countries. I think that most members of the house have been anxiously waiting for the skeleton structure of this legislation to be presented to the house so that we may gain some conception of what the real motive underlying the introduction of this type of legislation is. I think that most members of the house will be anxious that whatever can be done by the government to facilitate our export trade should be done. I do not think there will be any disagreement over that either in this house or in the country. We are anxious, of course, to scrutinize the methods which the government proposes to employ to carry out this very laudable end. I think it will be helpful at this stage if the minister would outline in skeleton form just what the government has in mind with respect to its general policy on export trade.

Mr. MacKINNON (Edmonton West): I think the matter could be more profitably discussed when the bill is before us for second reading. At that time I purpose making a statement outlining the objects of the bill. I hope that that will be satisfactory for the time being.

Mr. GRAYDON: I think it will be, provided we have at the appropriate stage a statement from the minister giving full details in connection with the government policy. I quite appreciate that there is no special reason why there should be a duplicate debate, especially at this stage in the session; but perhaps, if the minister will undertake that when second reading is commenced he will give a full statement, that will be satisfactory.

Mr. MacKINNON (Edmonton West): Yes; I shall be glad to do that.

Motion agreed to and the house went into committee, Mr. Bradette in the chair.

Mr. GREEN: I doubt very much if it is wise to have this resolution go through without one or two explanations being given by the minister. I should like to ask him one or two questions in connection with the resolution. The first paragraph reads that it is expedient to introduce a measure—

To incorporate the export credit insurance corporation for the purpose of entering into contracts of insurance with exporters to insure against the risk of loss involved in contracts for the export of Canadian produced goods.

Will the minister tell us what type of insurance contracts are to be entered into?

Mr. MacKINNON (Edmonton West): The explanation I intended to make on the second reading of the bill will fully cover that; I will go into it thoroughly. I will say—and I do not want this to start a general discussion on the bill, but in answer to the hon. member's question—that it is a proposal to insure contracts for the sale of goods by Canadian exporters to residents of other countries.

Mr. GREEN: The reason I ask this question is that I represent a constituency which is vitally interested in export trade. Our harbour is probably the most important feature, in a business way, about the whole of greater Vancouver, and we are very much interested in this measure. It is all very well to make an explanation on second reading, but it does help one a great deal in studying a bill and preparing to make remarks upon it if some preliminary explanation is given on the resolution stage. I think the minister should make at least some explanation at the present time. He says that the Export Credit Insurance Corporation is to have power to enter into contracts of insurance with exporters. Does that mean, contracts with individual firms, contracts of insurance insuring the transactions of individual firms against loss of any kind, or does it mean insuring the carriage of goods overseas? Just what is meant?

Mr. MacKINNON (Edmonton West): I would be very grateful if the hon. member would let this stand until the second reading, when an explanation will be made and an opportunity for discussion given. The explanation I have already made in reply to the hon. member's question answers, I think, the question he just asked. What is proposed is the insurance of an agreement to sell goods by a Canadian exporter or producer or manufacturer to a customer in another country.

Mr. GREEN: I suggest to the minister that he give us his explanation now. It will make it far easier for us to understand the bill when it comes down; and there is not much time now for studying these bills. Certainly it would facilitate the passage of the bill if an explanation were made at this stage.

Mr. MacKINNON (Edmonton West): I am quite ready to go on if it is the wish of the committee that I do so now. I thought it would save double discussion on the points, but if, as the hon. member suggests, it may shorten the later discussion I shall be very glad to make a statement now.

Mr. GRAYDON: I think the minister should do so if any members of the committee desire it.