Mr. Speaker: The hon. member for York-Simcoe has raised a valid point. We are aware of the Air Canada example and of the occasions on which attempts of this sort have been made with respect to a particular statute. However, that does not eliminate the concern that I have about it. I recognize the precedent which the hon. member for York-Simcoe has cited. However, I do want to sound a note of caution with regard to what we are attempting to do. It seems to me that we are regularly attempting to amend the Standing Orders of the House by virtue of an amendment to a statute, and I have some misgiving as to its validity and, in any case, to its procedural regularity. But we can discuss that again when motion No. 5 is reached.

Mr. Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre): Mr. Speaker, like the hon. member for York-Simcoe (Mr. Stevens), I accept the arrangements you have made regarding the six report stage motions, in particular the groupings you have made which seem to be appropriate. I am glad you have left until later a discussion of the procedural admissibility of motion No. 5. I have sent to the Library for the Statutory Instruments Act. It seems to me there is something in that act which says that certain items stand referred automatically to a certain committee. However, we can deal with that when we get to the point later on.

Mr. Speaker: Hon. members will understand that the reason I sounded a note of caution with respect to this motion, despite its similarity with the other two examples that have been cited, and others, is that the trend has already become more severe, and with respect to the other measure there is now a reference not of a report but in fact of the statute, the act itself. It seems to me that has gone one step further, and therefore I am beginning to question the validity of the process, both from the procedural point of view—which is of course my only concern—and because I would like hon. members to re-examine it to see if we are heading in the right direction. In any case, we should now consider motion No. 1, which is in the name of the hon. member for St. John's West, and which should be taken together with motion No. 3 for discussion and for a vote.

Mr. John C. Crosbie (St. John's West) moved:

Motion No. 1.

That Bill C-36, an act to amend the Export Development Act, be amended in clause 3 by striking out line 24 at page 2 and substituting the following therefor:

"equal to six times the authorized capital of"

Motion No. 3.

That Bill C-36, an act to amend the Export Development Act, be amended in clause 4 by striking out line 21 at page 4 and substituting the following therefor:

"equal to six times the authorized capital of"

He said: Mr. Speaker, the two motions that are now being discussed together would have the effect of amending the bill now before us so that the expanded limits which the government is suggesting for the Export Development Corporation to grant credit, to make loans or to give guarantees, would be less than the government has sought.

Motion No. 1 deals with the question of the authority of the EDC to establish a ceiling for its contingent liabilities and corporate account, its own account. Until this legislation passes the House, whenever it does pass the House, the limit on the contingent liability which the EDC can incur is $2.5 billion. The government is suggesting that this be increased to $10 billion, a fourfold increase. My amendment suggests that the limit be set at $6 billion, that is over double what the present limitation is now. We are suggesting an increase from $2.5 billion to $6 billion, which gives enough leeway and discretion to the corporation.

● (1532)

The second motion we are dealing with at this time would have the same effect as the amendment proposed by the government. They want to remove guarantees from the ceiling on loans made by the EDC on its own account at the present time without any legislation or any bill amending the act passed. The limit is $4,250 million. The government is suggesting that the EDC should be given the right to loan up to $10 billion without coming back to this House. We are suggesting that the limit should be set at $6 billion, which would be a considerable advance on the present limit. There are two other motions to the same effect, Mr. Speaker.

Why do we do this? Why are we suggesting this? It is because this is a government agency that has considerable power and is exhibiting the fact that it is not prepared to exercise that power with moderation. We all know that Canada has to have an export financing agency, that we have to assist financially in Canada exports to other countries in the world, that we have to meet the competition. Therefore, an Export Development Corporation is needed. We all know that the United Kingdom has an export credit guarantee department, and France and the other countries of the world have their various export financing agencies. Canada has to have one too. But, Mr. Speaker, there are many reasons why we believe that this agency has to be kept under closer scrutiny by this House of Commons and this parliament.

Some of those reasons were expressed by our leader in a speech on second reading of this bill on April 27. What I want to do is refer to the points made then by the Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Clark) on behalf of the official opposition and show what has happened since to bear out the points made by him when this bill went to a committee of the whole House, and therefore to advance the reasons why we believe these limitations—the limits on lending authority and guarantee authority—should be more restrictive than the government proposes.

Let me just say this that when the Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce (Mr. Horner) was in committee—he is not here today, I suppose he is on other business, but it is a coincidence that he was on other business when second reading of this bill was going ahead and I spoke in the House, and he is not here again this afternoon, I understand he is in Toronto on some other kind of government business, I suppose he will be back before the debate is finished—he said that if this legislation was passed in the form it now is, the EDC will have sufficient lending and guaranteeing authority to operate until