clear that we are permitting the creation by this section of public liabilities.

Let me give you those figures briefly again. Already the commitments to December 31, 1955, amount to $1 billion. The present commitments are coming in at the rate of $600 million a year. The present ceiling of $2 billion will be reached in the ordinary course about the autumn of 1957. If an increase of another $1 billion is permitted, that at the present rate is going to provide for all foreseeable needs until the beginning of 1959, and I see no necessity for adding another $1 billion of possible commitment to that before the government must come back to parliament for review of this matter and to seek, if the conditions then warrant it, the right to increase these commitments.

We are dealing with vast sums of money here, and the right to make huge commitments binding upon the public treasury of this country. Surely we do not need to make a provision of this kind that far into the future. I press the point upon the minister that it is quite adequate and quite in keeping with the generous attitude the house has shown with regard to the provision of funds to assist housing under the various parts of the National Housing Act if we increase the ceiling from $2 billion to $3 billion instead of $4 billion. Will the minister not accept that suggestion?

Mr. Winters: Mr. Chairman, I do not think I can add to what I have said. In the light of the best judgment we could bring to bear upon the matter $4 billion seemed reasonable. I must say I thank the hon. member for his comments, but in our judgment we will stand on the $4 billion in the bill.

Mr. Vincent: Was any consideration given to the possibility of insuring the borrower instead of the lender? At the present time I think the lending institutions are well protected, but on the other hand if the borrower does not make his mortgage payments he can be foreclosed. If the borrower were insured his monthly payments would be insured. Therefore I do not think the fund would require to be as large because the government would not be called upon to pay bulk sums of money. Instead, the government would only be called upon to pay in cases where the borrower could not meet his obligations. It is not to be assumed that the borrower could not meet his obligations indefinitely, because after all we do not assume that the country would be in such a crisis that we would have to pay the monthly instalments for years to come. In other words, if foreclosure should take place, instead of the government having to pay $8,000 or $9,000 on a guaranteed loan, if the insurance were paid by the borrower for the borrower instead of being paid by the borrower for the lending institution we would arrive at a proper solution whereby the borrower would benefit from the insurance premium he has paid and at the same time the lending institution would be protected.

I do not think there is any lending institution in Canada that wishes to take back any property on which it has made a mortgage loan. They are not in the lending field for the purpose of engaging in the administration of property. They do not wish to take back property on which they have lent money. Consequently if we insured the borrower his monthly payments would be insured and at the same time the lending institutions would benefit and would be protected. Therefore we would not arrive at the improper situation where the borrower would have paid his fee and at the same time would face foreclosure after five or six months of non-payment on his part. Should some crisis arise in Canada we would be faced with an unfortunate situation whereby many people would have to vacate their homes after having paid a 2½ per cent insurance fee. The lending institution is protected but the borrower, the home owner, is not protected.

What consideration has been given by the government to this matter in order that the insurance will protect both the borrower and the lender? I think the limit of $4 billion would be sufficiently high, because we would not have to pay out bulk sums of money and put out on the street people who have already paid an insurance fee to protect their homes and mortgages.

Mr. Winters: The hon. member may recall that the former member for Spadina made a good speech in the house several years ago in which he advocated a program of equity insurance. That matter was explored very fully. The question is often asked why we insure the lender and do not insure the borrower. That is followed by a supplementary question as to what the borrower gets for the insurance premium he pays. The obvious answer is that he gets mortgage money which he would not otherwise get, so by paying the insurance premium there is assurance that he will get mortgage money.

That was the only basis on which the banks could come within the provisions of this statute, as my hon. friend is well aware. The other side of the argument has to do with just what is an insurance principle under the operations of this statute. There have been very few cases indeed of foreclosure, certainly not enough to make an equity insurance