

Export Credits Insurance Act

Mr. Hees: It will be the NATO countries.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Hees: According to the Leader of the Opposition and the hon. member for Essex East the United States and other countries that form NATO know nothing about anything. We say the people who are most fit to judge what are strategic materials and what are not strategic materials, as far as Cuba is concerned, are ourselves and our NATO allies, and we are abiding by that decision, not any decision by the Leader of the Opposition, the hon. member for Essex East or any other member of the opposition.

Mr. Pearson: The minister falls back once again on the NATO list. He should know that this NATO list was drawn up long before there was any difficulty with Cuba at all, and long before the Castro revolution in Cuba. The COCOM list was in existence at that time.

Mr. Hees: That is right.

Mr. Pearson: We are talking about a situation which has developed in Cuba and which had nothing whatever to do with the COCOM list, because that situation did not then exist. I therefore ask the minister to forget about NATO for a moment and to come back to Canada and tell this committee who makes the decision whether a permit will be given for the export of dynamite, helicopters or aircraft to Cuba. Who makes the decision whether those materials will be used in a way which will make them dangerous to peace and security in this hemisphere? Who decides that they will be used for peaceful purposes and that therefore it is quite all right to let them go forward? Who makes that decision?

Mr. Hees: The NATO countries committee called COCOM.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Hees: You asked me the question and I gave the answer.

Mr. Martin (Essex East): May I ask the minister this question? He said that the NATO members made the decision. What about the order in council that was amended at Quebec on December 28? Was that decided on by the cabinet? Or did the members of NATO have representatives at the cabinet meeting, and was that amendment not made entirely, as it should have been made, by the members of the government of Canada? Is the minister trying to tell us or trying to suggest to this committee that the government decided that matter or that it was decided for the government of Canada by some group of countries outside?

Mr. Hees: No.

Mr. Martin (Essex East): Surely the government or the minister does not expect the committee to be so credulous as he seems to imply.

Mr. Hees: That decision was made by the government. This government makes its own decisions instead of allowing them to be made by other countries as was the case when hon. gentlemen opposite were in office. I am telling the hon. member for Essex East that the government made that decision. In that list are included three categories, and I will say this over again as the hon. member is extremely dull this afternoon. The three categories are the strategic list as was decided—

Mr. Martin (Essex East): The strategic list.

Mr. Hees: I am telling the hon. member the three categories. He sits there giggling like a gaping ape instead of listening.

Mr. Martin (Essex East): The strategic list.

Mr. Hees: The three categories on the list that my hon. friend asked about are as follows. There is first the COCOM list decided by NATO. Then there are items which we do not want exported at the present time because of their short supply in Canada, and other items which, for one reason or another, we do not think it would be desirable to have shipped to certain parts of the world. Those three categories make up that list.

Mr. Pearson: The minister is only getting himself into greater difficulty in his laudable effort to explain the matter. If the first list he talks about under 3(a) is only the COCOM list—and that is what he calls it—how does he explain the fact that there are 166 items in that list and that there is a much smaller number of items than that on the COCOM list? Then if the COCOM list is the only list that really matters in connection with this matter or is the only list which governs the export of these materials to areas like Cuba—why not restrict this strategic list to the 3(a) list or the COCOM list? Why add all these additional items to it as strategic materials?

Mr. Hees: I have said that there are three categories and that in one of these categories are items which for one reason or another, we do not wish to see exported at this time to certain parts of the world. The items that we do not wish to see exported to Cuba, a certain part of the world, at this time are the items that have been declared by NATO to be strategic, and we are not exporting them. That is the list we do not export to Cuba.