

simple amendment to the Privileges and Immunities (International Organizations) Act.

Mr. G. W. Baldwin (Peace River): Mr. Speaker, we accept the proposition put forward by the Secretary of State for External Affairs (Mr. MacEachen). We do not propose to discuss the bill at length now. We think there will be an opportunity in committee to examine the Secretary of State for External Affairs, or any civil servant whom he might allow to appear before the committee for examination. I made my opinion known yesterday during the debate; and any hon. members who did not hear me, may, if they are interested, read the report of what I said yesterday about the contractual link. I can only say that it is high time the government did something to restore the prestige, influence and status with European nations which it was so profligate in throwing away in earlier days.

Mr. Stanley Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre): Mr. Speaker, I do not know whether what I am about to say will qualify as a second reading speech.

Mr. MacEachen: Welcome to the diplomatic world, Stanley.

Mr. Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre): Mr. Speaker, we agree to the second reading of this bill.

[Translation]

Mr. Adrien Lambert (Bellechasse): Mr. Speaker, hon. members really seem in a happy mood tonight and determined to proceed quickly to pass this piece of legislation. However I should like to point out to the House the importance of Bill S-25. Even though it has only two pages, it is of great importance on account of the privileges granted in the international organizations having relations with this country.

The bill's explanatory note reads thus:

The purpose of this Bill is to allow the Governor in Council to provide, by order, the same privileges and immunities to the European Communities in respect of its organization and officials in Canada as he may provide in respect of other international organizations covered by the Act.

I agree entirely with those provisions but I believe certain reservations should be expressed about the order that may be issued by the Governor in Council to extend the same privileges to the European communities without the matter being referred to the House.

I believe we should trust the Governor in Council in the granting of those privileges but in some cases, those recommendations should be submitted to the House so that parliamentarians may be informed, may be aware of the intentions of those international organizations that wish to obtain the privileges intended in this bill.

● (2040)

[English]

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Penner): Is the House ready for the question?

Some hon. Members: Question.

Explosives Act

Motion agreed to, bill read the second time and referred to the Standing Committee on External Affairs and National Defence.

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EXPLOSIVES ACT

AMENDMENTS TO PROVIDE GREATER CONTROL OVER THE PURCHASE, POSSESSION AND TRANSPORTATION OF EXPLOSIVES

Hon. Mitchell Sharp (for the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources) moved that Bill S-17, to amend the Explosives Act, be read the second time and referred to the Standing Committee on National Resources and Public Works.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Penner): Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the said motion?

Mr. Peters: Mr. Speaker, I would like an explanation of this bill because I am concerned with one aspect which affects cartridges and explosives. If the parliamentary secretary wishes to make a statement before I speak, I will be pleased to hear him.

Mr. Maurice Foster (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources): Mr. Speaker, I welcome the opportunity to make a few brief comments concerning Bill S-17, to amend the Explosives Act. I want to thank the opposition for their courtesy in allowing me to steer this bill through on behalf of the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources (Mr. Macdonald).

The general aims of Bill S-17 are to improve control over the distribution of explosives, to provide authority to regulate over the use of fireworks and certain blasting operations, and to update the act with respect to rapid technological changes in the industry. This is the first amendment to the act in 20 years. The last amendment was in 1954.

The high rate of accidents in the explosives industry in the early 1900's, many involving fatalities, emphasized the need for control over explosives. As a result, the first Explosives Act was drafted and introduced into the House of Commons in 1911, and was assented to be passed in 1914. Proclamation was delayed, by the way, until 1919 when the Department of Mines was assigned responsibility for the administration of the Explosives Act. This statute is primarily concerned with public safety and is designed to control the manufacture, testing, storage, sales and importation of explosives, and their transportation by road.

In the 55 years following proclamation of the act, numerous changes were made to the regulations by order in council. The act itself was amended in 1926, in 1946, and most recently in 1954. The amendment of 1946 brought the sale of explosives under the control of the act, allowed the seizure of unauthorized explosives and of all explosives used to commit an offence under the act. The amendment also authorized the minister to order the seizure and destruction of abandoned or deteriorated explosives which present a danger to the public.