

Vancouver East in suggesting that a smaller select committee be appointed to deal with the matter more effectively.

Hon. COLIN GIBSON (Secretary of State): Mr. Speaker, it has been suggested that this matter should be sent to a small committee, rather than to the public accounts committee, and I may say that that had been my idea in the first place. I realized, however, that there was a certain amount of criticism of that procedure and a feeling amongst the members that it should go to the public accounts committee. If it is felt that that is too large a body the public accounts committee could appoint a subcommittee of itself to go into all the details of the work of the custodian's office. I was very glad to have it go to a committee where it would receive the fullest attention, because I know that the custodian has nothing to hide, although we have heard so much tonight about the iron curtain. Anyone who reflects for a moment will realize that it would have been perfectly absurd during the war to provide the enemy with a list of enemy assets in this country, or assets in this country belonging to residents of occupied countries overseas. It would have put those people in an embarrassing position, when they were prisoners of the Germans, to have the Germans know that they had assets outside the country. Consequently, during war time, no publicity was given, no reports were made as to the activities of the custodian's office or of the assets in his hands. I am very happy to have the public accounts committee go into the business of the custodian's office at the present time. I quite agree that there is no reason why annual reports should not now be filed, and I am quite sure they will be from now on.

The hon. member for Eglinton (Mr. Fleming) suggested that there should be a time limit to the granting of the powers provided by this bill. I may say that the powers will automatically expire when the assets in the hands of the custodian have finally been distributed.

One other point he made was in regard to the amendments provided under section 3 of the act. The only amendments to the regulations that can be made by order in council are those for the purpose of implementing the provisions in any peace treaty executed on behalf of Canada and ratified by parliament. So that the amendments he referred to are not amendments to regulations that would change the character of the act, but amendments that are necessary to comply with any peace treaty approved by this parliament.

Motion (Mr. Gibson, Hamilton West) agreed to, bill read the second time and referred to the committee on public accounts.

## PATENT ACT

### PROVISIONS FOR EXTENSIONS OF TIME—SECURITY— ADJUSTMENT OF TARIFF FEES

Hon. COLIN GIBSON (Secretary of State) moved that the house go into committee to consider Bill No. 16, to amend the Patent Act, 1935.

Motion agreed to and the house went into committee, Mr. Macdonald (Brantford City) in the chair.

On section 1—Short title.

Mr. BOUCHER: Would the minister give the committee some idea of the surpluses which the patent office has each year out of the fees collected from applicants after administrative costs are deducted? My recollection is that each year the patent office of Canada has had a substantial surplus. This being so, I submit that the committee should be given some information, and we should impress upon the minister that now in this time of expanding research, patents which Canadians may secure in the future should be protected. Patenting of inventions should be encouraged and assisted. The minister might very well urge upon the government to give greater attention to the expansion of patent work, the security of patents, and the question of modernizing the whole system of granting patents. Will he give us some information in that regard so that we may know what the government's policy is?

Mr. GIBSON (Hamilton West): I gave that information to the committee some time ago. The patent office has had a surplus, beginning with the year 1936-37 up to 1945-46, from \$233,000 in 1936-37, and always over \$125,000. In 1945-46 it was \$199,000 odd. It is expected that if we can secure the increase in the fees which are provided for in this bill we shall be able to undertake the printing of patents, which would be of great benefit to those who require to make searches in the patent office.

Mr. BOUCHER: Would the minister not say, in view of the substantial surplus that we have had for a great number of years, and seeing that that surplus has accumulated primarily from the collection of fees on patent applications, that the government at this time particularly will expand the services provided in return for those fees and give much more adequate service to patent holders in connection with the issuance of patents? This could