

mittee is the public accounts arising out of the estimates; but in this case there are no accounts, so how can this bill be referred to the public accounts committee?

Mr. FRASER: Dig up the accounts.

Mr. MacINNIS: But the committee does not have the authority to dig them up. I am satisfied that the public accounts committee is also too large a committee to deal with this matter, which on the statements made by the hon. member for Eglinton certainly needs investigating. I am not taking issue at all with anything he said, because I understand he was reading from documents which are authentic; therefore I am not disputing anything that he has said. But I do not believe that the public accounts committee is the proper committee to which to refer this matter. I have seen various matters referred to the public accounts committee on other occasions, but never in my experience in this house can I remember a complete report coming from that committee to this house on what it investigated.

I understand that it was the intention of the minister at one time to refer the bill to a smaller, special committee, and I am satisfied that that is the proper course to follow. Such a committee could get accountants of its own to investigate the custodian's accounts.

The hon. member for Eglinton mentioned that auditors who had gone over the custodian's accounts had stated that they had not examined each account separately and consequently could not say whether all the accounts were entered in the books of the custodian or not. He mentioned that there were approximately 40,000 separate accounts. Obviously it is impossible for the public accounts committee to examine that number of accounts. Consequently I still suggest that the matter should be referred to a smaller special committee with full power of investigation.

I was glad to hear the hon. member for Eglinton refer to the property of persons of the Japanese race. I think it is regrettable that the government of Canada, composed of men for whom I have great respect should have dealt with the property of these people in the way in which it has dealt with it. These persons of the Japanese race in Canada were not enemy aliens. If there is anything definitely on record in regard to these people, it is that. Indeed from the statements of the Prime Minister (Mr. Mackenzie King) in this house, there was never any question of their loyalty. Yet they have been treated all along

[Mr. MacInnis.]

as enemy aliens and even worse than enemy aliens. Every effort was, in my opinion, made to despoil them of their property, so that they would never have an opportunity to come back and find any of their property to which they could lay claim. I regret that. It will be a stain on the record of the Canadian government for all time. However, that is not what I rose to say.

I suggest again that this bill be referred to a smaller committee. If it goes to the public accounts committee I am satisfied that it will be made a political football and that we shall never get anywhere with it.

Mr. H. W. HERRIDGE (Kootenay West): Mr. Speaker, I support heartily the hon. member for Vancouver East (Mr. MacInnis) in suggesting that the bill should go to a smaller special committee to be carefully studied.

I enjoyed very much the analysis of the present situation given by the hon. member for Eglinton (Mr. Fleming). I agree with the great majority of his arguments and I am not going to repeat them. I was amazed when first I heard that this huge business carried on by the custodian of enemy alien property was not reported on annually to parliament. I had taken it for granted in years past that that was done.

I do not know very much about the custodian's administration of enemy alien property generally except what I have heard discussed in the house, but I do know something about the administration of the property of the Japanese who were evacuated from British Columbia. Thousands of them came into my constituency, and great numbers of them came to me with statements from the custodian which showed what their property had sold for, the cost, and the balance left. I am sure that when this matter is referred to the committee they will find plenty of evidence as to the sale and disposition of houses, boats, farms, cars and general effects formerly belonging to Japanese evacuees, which will make any honest Britisher and any honest Canadian hang his head in shame. I do hope that when the committee undertakes its task it will do it thoroughly, because I am sure that plenty of evidence can be presented to the committee to establish that, under the exigencies of war and possibly some maladministration, a great injustice was done to people whose supposed disloyalty to this country was never proven.

In conclusion, I am very glad that the Secretary of State (Mr. Gibson) has proposed that this bill be referred to a committee, but again I would support the hon. member for