

MINUTES OF EVIDENCE

HOUSE OF COMMONS

April 28, 1947.

The Standing Committee on Public Accounts met this day at 11.30 a.m. The Vice-Chairman, Mr. Gordon B. Isnor, presided.

The VICE-CHAIRMAN: Gentlemen, we have here this morning, the Honourable Mr. Gibson, who has some remarks to make to you with respect to bill 22. If it is your pleasure we will now hear Colonel Gibson.

Mr. FLEMING: Mr. Chairman, in your remarks you have mentioned only bill 22. Colonel Gibson can correct me if I am wrong, but my understanding is that along with the bill there was the auditor's report, and the report of Mr. Mathieu, the assistant, or deputy custodian.

The VICE-CHAIRMAN: I think I have a copy of the order of reference in connection with that and it refers to the bill only.

MONDAY, 14th April, 1947.

Ordered—That Bill No. 22, an Act to continue the Revised Regulations respecting Trading with the Enemy (1943), be referred to the said Committee.

ATTEST.

ARTHUR BEAUCHESNE,
Clerk of the House.

I will check on that but perhaps the minister could clear it up.

Hon. Mr. GIBSON: Mr. Fleming is quite right, and I think we would be glad to have the whole matter considered. I would like to say a few words here with regard to this bill. As you know, the powers under which the custodian deals with enemy property were passed under the War Measures Act which expires on the 15th of May. Now I would like the committee to consider the matter as rapidly as possible so that we can get the bill reported or get it passed before that date. Otherwise Mr. Ilsley will have to ask for an extension of the transitional powers that will enable the custodian to control enemy property until such time as permanent legislation is provided. I do not know whether it can be done but I suggest that you examine the regulations at an early date and go into the setup of the custodian's office to whatever extent you feel desirable, and, if necessary, have the reference of this committee extended so that the whole setup of the custodian's office can be thoroughly examined. As you know there has been very little publicity given that office during wartime for obvious reasons but I now have the officials here. I have brought Mr. Shears down from Vancouver. He is in charge of the Vancouver office and I hope it will be possible to examine him at an early date. He has been here about a week now and is an extremely busy man in Vancouver. He is in charge of all the Japanese business out there. I hope therefore, that he can be heard early in your sessions in order that he may go back to Vancouver. Of course, he will stay here until he can be heard. Also, Doctor Coleman, the deputy custodian,