

"Ordered,—That the Standing Committee on Public Accounts be empowered to examine and inquire into all such matters and things as may be referred to them by the House; and to report from time to time their observations and opinions thereon, with power to send for persons, papers and records."

The next Order of Reference is dated March 23, 1949.

"Ordered the Public Accounts of Canada for the fiscal year ending March 31, 1948, and the report of the Auditor General be referred to the Public Accounts Committee.

(Sgd.) A. BEAUCHESNE,
Clerk of the House."

As it stands at the moment we have the Auditor General's report and the public accounts for last year.

The matter of public accounts now before us is quite a vast order and I think it proper to decide now that any motion concerning the order of precedence of the work we are to carry on should be in writing and be referred automatically to the committee on agenda and procedure. That committee will study and report to the main committee on the order of procedure and upon what shall be done or shall not be done.

Mr. MACDONNELL: If I am in order, may I suggest the first thing that should be done is to call the Auditor General himself. It seems to me that there are certain very vital comments which he makes upon which there will be questions and therefore I would move that the Auditor General be asked to appear before the committee to give evidence with respect to certain comments made in his report. I would move that be the first order of business.

The CHAIRMAN: The discussion is open. Are there any other remarks?

I might say that I have already contacted the Auditor General indicating that he might be called before us. This morning he is tied up with the Ottawa Improvement Commission, but he could be at our disposal at any time on Thursday.

Mr. BURTON: I would like to say a word in connection with this matter. I am heartily in accord with Mr. Macdonnell's motion, with the exception of his remarks about the first order of business. If we are to have a committee on agenda and procedure the committee will naturally have to have some say with respect to the order of business. As for as I am concerned I have no objection to the Auditor General's evidence being the first order of business and that should be a recommendation to the subcommittee. Furthermore I have in mind, Mr. Chairman, that as this is our first meeting we should endeavour to obtain from the members as much information as possible about the different subjects upon which they would like discussion, so that the committee on agenda and procedure can arrange the program, and so that the other members of the committee can prepare themselves for taking part in whatever investigations and discussions may occur. While I support the greater part of Mr. Macdonnell's motion I do think that the committee on agenda and procedure should decide what the procedure shall be.

Mr. PROBE: Mr. Chairman, I have a specific matter which I wish to bring before the committee for examination. I support the idea that the Auditor General should be available to us, perhaps throughout the duration of the sittings of the Public Accounts Committee to deal with any specific matters which we desire to refer to him directly, but if I am in order before the vote is taken on Mr. Macdonnell's motion, I would like to move consideration of a matter.

The CHAIRMAN: The suggestion which I made previously is not in the form of a motion but you will recall that it was to the effect that all matters concerning procedure and subjects for discussion should be referred immediately