

## MINUTES OF EVIDENCE

HOUSE OF COMMONS,

May 1, 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, now that we have our quorum we will proceed to business. At our last meeting we had reached section 6, "The Custodian". If I remember rightly, Mr. Fleming wished to speak to that particular section. I might mention that section 1, subsection (k) stood over, and Dr. Coleman has asked me to allow that section to stand for a further period so as to give him an opportunity during the week-end to further consider the matter.

Mr. FLEMING: The point I raise on that section, Mr. Chairman, relates to the second clause. Shall I proceed with that clause or has anyone anything to say with regard to the first clause?

The VICE-CHAIRMAN: Shall clause 6(1) carry?

Carried.

Mr. FLEMING: Now, under clause (2):—

Any power or duty conferred or imposed by or under these regulations upon the Secretary of State or the Custodian may be delegated by him to such person or persons as he thinks proper.

My point is that the language is too broad; there should be some narrower confinement of power or delegation to senior officials of the department. It says, "any power or duty conferred or imposed by or under these regulations upon the Secretary of State" may be delegated by him or the custodian to such person or persons as he thinks proper. Now, actually as I understand it, nearly all of those powers were delegated by the Secretary of State to the Under Secretary of State during the war, and there was some further delegation to the deputy.

### **Dr. E. H. Coleman, C.M.G., K.C., Under Secretary of State and Deputy Custodian of Enemy Property, recalled:**

The WITNESS: Assistant deputy; and limited in specific matters to the director in Vancouver; that is about all. I have discussed the suggestion with the present Secretary of State, and I think he feels that he is responsible. He would deprecate any amendment; but it is a matter of policy upon which he might like to be heard. I might say that I have served under seven custodians and they have been exceedingly jealous of parting with any of their authority.

The VICE-CHAIRMAN: Has the same policy been pursued during the full course of the seven custodians?

The WITNESS: Yes.

The VICE-CHAIRMAN: And you have not run into any obstacles or troubles because of that power?