

in a motion. Or by leaving the matter to the public accounts committee itself. This is too serious a matter, and it is important enough for us to have a statement of government policy. Talk of leaving it to the committee! Well, there has been much said this afternoon about the war expenditures committee, and well we know what happened with that committee. In 1941, when the war expenditures committee was set up for the first time, the Prime Minister (Mr. Mackenzie King) and the Minister of National Defence (Mr. Ralston) told us in the house when the motion was under discussion that the sittings of the committee would be open except where something might come up that would be of help to the enemy. In other words, we understood that secrecy would be the exception rather than the rule. But what happened when the committee sat? I have here the proceedings of that committee and I refer to the eleventh report, dated May 5, 1941. At that time this question of secrecy was considered. There was a debate in the committee and this motion was passed:

That the sittings of subcommittees be in camera except as the subcommittee may otherwise from time to time determine.

Some hon. members speaking to-day have said, "Oh, it was all left to the subcommittees."

Mr. ROSS (Moose Jaw): So it was.

Mr. GREEN: But I suggest that, from the very wording of this resolution, the dice were loaded in favour of secrecy. In other words, secrecy was to be the rule rather than the exception. That was pointed out by members of the opposition on the committee on that very day, May 5, 1941, but we were voted down by a vote of twelve to three.

Then last year, when the committee for 1942 was set up, the same resolution was passed. In other words, for all practical purposes, most of the meetings of the subcommittees were to be held in camera. Therefore we have no grounds for believing that if this matter is left to the public accounts committee they will make a decision which will result in all the questions being discussed and all the facts being brought out.

The report of the war expenditures committee of 1942, which was filed in this house on January 27, 1943, contains, at page 96, a paragraph which I suggest to the Prime Minister should be brought to the attention of the public accounts committee at its first sitting. The hon. member for Bow River (Mr. Johnston) has referred to it. I will read this paragraph to the house:

In its investigations the subcommittee—

That is subcommittee No. 1.

[Mr. Green.]

—found in one instance that an aircraft producing firm agreed to pay a salesman for release of an existing sales contract an amount equal to fifty per cent of its firm capital.

Presumably that money came out of the treasury; undoubtedly the country paid it.

Mr. MACKENZIE KING: Just a minute. I do not wish to interrupt my hon. friend, but I feel very strongly that we ought to seek to get on with the business of the house. I submit that this discussion is entirely out of order. On the order paper there is a resolution which relates in specific terms to the setting-up of—

a select committee . . . to examine the expenditure defrayed out of moneys provided by parliament for the defence services. . . .

—the so-called war expenditures committee. I have not the rules in front of me, but my recollection is that there is a rule of the house that where there is on the order paper a motion which relates to a specific subject, the house cannot anticipate the discussion of that particular matter but must take for its consideration the time that is assigned to it on the order paper. I feel that almost the entire afternoon has been taken up in discussing a matter which ought to be discussed if so desired, on the motion with respect to the setting-up of the committee on war expenditures and not at this time. Unless Your Honour rules to the contrary, it is, I feel, a part of my duty to seek to have the house get on with the business which was fixed for to-day, namely, the debate on the budget, and not to have this discussion now, when without question it will be had all over again when we come to the motion to deal with war expenditures.

Mr. GREEN: Mr. Speaker, on that point, the Prime Minister himself has made this afternoon two somewhat lengthy speeches—perhaps three or four; I have lost count—and this war expenditures committee has been dealt with by at least five or six other hon. members. I propose only to read the remainder of this recommendation, and I suggest to the Prime Minister that in the interests of good government in Canada the discussion be not stopped at this time, because this particular paragraph is of the greatest importance, and I should be allowed to finish reading it.

Mr. MACKENZIE KING: I have not the control of the business of the house.

Mr. GREEN: The right hon. gentleman raised the point of order.