

Mr. DOUGLAS (Weyburn): May I draw the attention of the house to one or two things. First, the memorandum read by the Minister of National War Services (Mr. LaFlèche) does not deal with the question under discussion at all.

Some hon. MEMBERS: Order.

Mr. SPEAKER: Is the hon. gentleman speaking to the point of order?

Mr. DOUGLAS (Weyburn): No. A point of order, I understand, has not yet been raised.

Mr. SPEAKER: The hon. gentleman has already spoken.

Mr. DOUGLAS (Weyburn): I was speaking on the amendment. I did not know that a matter of procedure had been raised.

Mr. SPEAKER: The hon. gentleman moved an amendment and spoke to it. He cannot speak twice unless he is speaking to a point of order. If any hon. gentleman wishes to speak to the point of order I should like to hear him now.

Some hon. MEMBERS: Question.

Mr. COLDWELL: Mr. Speaker, before you give your ruling on the point of order, may I suggest that the amendment is properly an amendment to a motion, that all it does is to suggest that certain words be added to the motion extending the terms of reference. If the procedure is such that hon. members are precluded from amending a motion of this description, drawn in general terms so that general terms can be extended to include something specific, it seems to me that the house is being denied a right which it ought properly to have. The hon. member for Weyburn (Mr. Douglas) endeavoured to place his suggestion before the house by giving the required notice under the standing order providing for forty-eight hours' notice, not knowing that this motion was to be introduced by the government, and he finds that the motion which he filed in the usual way is being relegated to such a position on the order paper that in all probability it cannot be reached this session. If the ruling of the Chair should be that one cannot move an amendment extending the reference to cover a matter which cannot successfully be made the subject of a substantive motion because of the position in which it is placed, under private members' resolutions, on the order paper, I submit that that ruling would deny to this house a right which hon. members should be able to exercise.

[Mr. Mackenzie King.]

Mr. BOUCHER: Speaking further to the point of order taken by the Prime Minister (Mr. Mackenzie King), it seems to me that the attitude of the hon. member for Rosetown-Biggart (Mr. Coldwell) is particularly appropriate when one couples with it the statement I understood the Prime Minister to have made, that to refer a matter of this kind to the public accounts committee, some hon. member should take the responsibility of laying a charge. If that is so; if a member of the House of Commons must lay a charge and accept the responsibility of doing so before a matter can be referred to the public accounts committee, a substantive motion of this kind, enlarging the scope of the terms of reference to the public accounts committee, would apparently be out of order. But on the other hand how could a matter be referred to the public accounts committee unless an individual charge were made? The motion itself seems to imply the reverse of the statement that an individual member must make a charge before the matter is referred to the public accounts committee. One cannot but be forced to that conclusion.

Mr. SPEAKER: The motion is:

That the public accounts and the report of the auditor general for the fiscal year ended March 31, 1942, be referred to the standing committee on public accounts.

To that an amendment is moved by the hon. member for Weyburn (Mr. Douglas), seconded by the hon. member for York South (Mr. Noseworthy):

That the motion be amended by adding the following words:

"and that the committee be empowered to examine accounts up to the end of February, 1943, and to investigate the work being done by the office of the government economy control."

I have listened carefully and given due consideration to the statements made by the hon. member for Weyburn and the hon. member for Rosetown-Biggart (Mr. Coldwell) with regard to an amendment to a motion such as we have before us. The hon. member for Rosetown-Biggart spoke of the extension of the motion and the adding thereto of a period during which these accounts could be examined. The hon. member did not refer to the latter part of the amendment, which states:

". . . and to investigate the work being done by the office of the government economy control."

I am of course concerned with the procedure of the house. In my judgment it would be a dangerous precedent that any motion such as that which is now before the house should be added to and a reference made to an investigation to be made. Such