

rather to those whose legitimate business it is to deal with the article concerned and on a basis that, within the corporation's powers, will ensure reasonable profit to dealer and reasonable price to consumer.

I would take from this that as far as possible they intended to keep out of the business of dealing with the public and were going to deal through private channels of trade. Then I find that on June 12, 1944, the Minister of Munitions and Supply is reported on page 3728 of *Hansard* as saying:

The purpose will be to sell the goods as directly as possible from the government to the ultimate consumer. As a matter of practical administration, there may be commissions given to a group of dealers, but there would be no outright sale to dealers for re-sale at any price the dealer likes to charge to the ultimate consumer. The purpose is to work directly from the government to the ultimate consumer.

There would appear to be a contradiction of policy there. On the one hand, we have the president of the corporation giving an interpretation of policy which we might call the private enterprise interpretation, while on the other hand we have the minister saying that the policy will be to deal with the public through the shortest route. It may be said that was in 1944, but I have here the annual report of War Assets Corporation for the year ended March 31, 1945. I find that there appears to be another contradiction here, and I quote from page 27 as follows:

At all times to make every effort to control the price to the public and to reach the public by the shortest feasible route.

In passing, I may say that I am 100 per cent behind that policy, but the very next paragraph in the report reads:

The corporation has avoided and will continue to avoid, direct sales to the public, excepting in some special cases where direct sales are normal and sound.

In the first few pages of this report we find set out some of the sales which they consider to be sound. I do not want to go into them now, but they are mostly bulk sales in large quantities to big firms. The point I am getting at is this: We are going to follow either one policy or the other, either the policy enunciated by Mr. Carswell, which appears to be the private enterprise policy and which seems to appeal to a certain section of this house, or the policy of selling as directly as possible to the public which has been enunciated by the minister and which I hope will be followed.

We are going to deal with about \$2,000 million worth of surplus war assets, taking the minister's own figure which he gave yesterday. Two billion dollars is a lot of money in anybody's language. As was said yester-

day by the hon. member to my right, this is wealth which has been paid for by the taxpayers of this country. It is wealth which belongs to the people in the sense that it does not belong to any one in particular; it belongs to the general public, and therefore we should try to make that wealth bring back as much as possible into the public treasury and at the same time have it reach the consumer at a reasonable price. I do not know of any other way in which that can be done more fairly than by selling directly to the public.

Yesterday the minister said that it would be difficult to set up retail establishments across the country. When we are dealing with \$2,000 million worth of the kind of goods that the people of this country are asking for to-day, it should not be a hard job to set up some of these service men who have come back from the war in businesses of their own and supply them at wholesale with items from War Assets Corporation. Let them do the retailing to the public and let the corporation have sufficient control to see that the profit is reasonable. It could be done on a consignment basis, so that these men would receive a commission on everything they sold. It is important that we as representatives of the public should watch carefully how the corporation handles these war assets, because on the face of what we have seen so far we are not satisfied. I am concerned about what has been going on. We know that goods have been destroyed; this has been admitted by responsible ministers of the crown in this house, and we do not know how much more will be destroyed. We are not told what the plans of the corporation are. It seems hard to get information about it, and we are afraid that much of the surplus assets paid for by the taxpayers will be either destroyed or sold in bulk at ridiculously low prices to somebody who will profiteer and get away with a lot of money. We want these assets to reach the people at a reasonable price and at the same time to recover as much as possible for the treasury so that the public interest will be safeguarded.

I notice that my hon. friends to the right have often said that the servicemen will not have an opportunity of going into business if we go too far in this country into public enterprises. I am not so sure that public enterprise is the biggest enemy of the servicemen who want to go into business because, when I see what is happening in private enterprise circles, I wonder how much they are really concerned with the servicemen who desire to enter business. In 1943 the Canadian Manufacturers' association pre-