

Q. What I was thinking about was the plan of having trucks sold such as you had in London where you had farmers come in there. They had to be O.K.'d by the Federation of Agriculture and then they would draw. There were more there than there were trucks. There were more requiring trucks than there were trucks.—A. We started an allocation within a priority group.

Q. Unless you had a large amount of trucks and cars for sale you could not very well carry on a system like that all across the country.—A. No.

Q. What I want to know is approximately how many you have sold?—A. I was asked how many trucks we had. Out of that 65 at that specific time there were 39 trucks.

Mr. MACDONNELL: Mr. Berry in answering Mr. Smith's inquiry about priorities and delays said he would be very glad to have a recommendation from this committee for a reduction of the period, and later on he spoke about getting instructions as to some other point. I should like to ask Mr. Berry if he would say to us just how much freedom of action he has. I quite realize he is not a dictator exactly but I was surprised that on a comparatively minor matter such as the question of the timing of priorities apparently he felt he could not act on his own. I should like him to give a general idea of how much scope he has. I should think it would be quite fatal in the business he is in if every time there is something to be done he has to get instructions. Sometimes instructions are somewhat delayed. We are told they are in government departments. Would he say from whom the instructions come and in a general way how much freedom of action he has?

The WITNESS: I do not quite know how to answer that one. I would say as president of War Assets Corporation I have every freedom in the operation of the corporation and its commercial operations. As far as general policy is concerned then I must look to the Department of Reconstruction and Supply for the major overall policies. In addition to that there is in existence the Crown Assets Allocation Committee which is in a position to make recommendations to the Minister of Reconstruction and Supply as to what policies should be adopted in the disposal of surplus.

Mr. MACDONNELL: As the Minister of Reconstruction is here I will not ask you to express your view on it, but I would express my view that it seems to me rather odd that on the matter of these priorities you apparently would not feel free to reduce that time although you apparently agree with Mr. Smith that it is a very reasonable thing to do?

The WITNESS: I would not feel free to reduce the time without consultation with the affected parties. I would look on that as being an arbitrary action on my own part if I did that.

Hon. Mr. HOWE: I might say that the system of priorities was established by the War Assets Allocation Committee which, according to the Act as passed by parliament, advises the minister on policy. It is a committee made up partly of government officials and partly of representatives of the public. I accepted their advice on that and passed it on to the corporation, and while the corporation does not like it, the War Assets Allocation Committee have not seen fit to change their advice on the subject.

Mr. MACDONNELL: Perhaps they will now.

Mr. SMITH: May I ask one short question?

*By Mr. Smith:*

Q. Has the ammonia plant at Calgary been turned over to you yet?—A. No.

*By Mr. Winkler:*

Q. I should like to ask one short question with regard to the sale of bulk materials by War Assets Corporation. For instance, there are matters such as sulphuric acid which I discovered is in large amount in Winnipeg in the