

*Demobilization—Munitions and Supply*

friend gets all worked up with his own eloquence, and I presume these things are unconscious. I withdraw the statement.

Mr. DIEFENBAKER: Everyone is happy now.

The CHAIRMAN: I hope occasions of this kind will not arise in the future, but if they do I think the chairman should be allowed to direct the discussion.

Mr. DIEFENBAKER: Now that we have restored perfect order, and everybody, including the minister and myself, is happy, possibly the minister will give the assurance that as far as War Assets Corporation is concerned it will be instructed that its policy shall be to sell under reasonable circumstances to the highest bidder and that the things it has for sale that can be offered by public auction will be sold at public auction.

Mr. HOWE: I shall be glad to take my hon. friend's suggestion under advisement, but I might point out one difficulty in selling to the highest bidder is that we have price regulations in this country, and I am afraid that if that were done we would all land in gaol.

Mr. DIEFENBAKER: Within the price ceiling then.

Mr. HOWE: However I shall be glad to consider the suggestion.

Mr. COCKERAM: I understand that there are other types of motor boats, 70-footers, that are being sold. What do these boats cost and at what price are they being sold?

Mr. HOWE: I am sure I do not know. I do not think any of them have been offered for sale. There are a great number of boats that have been or are being declared surplus, but there is not the same urgency about selling them, since they are not in icebound ports.

Mr. COCKERAM: I am thinking of 70-footers, a powerful boat, well constructed. What do these boats cost?

Mr. MERRITT: I understand that the minister in answer to the hon. member for Vancouver South said that before these Fairmiles were sold in British Columbia the boat dealers and boat builders—he will correct me if I am wrong—had been notified that these eleven or thirteen craft were up for sale.

Mr. HOWE: I am sorry that I have sent my notes up to *Hansard*. I read a communication that passed between War Assets Corporation and the Fairmile association, which is made up of the builders of Fairmiles, of

[Mr. Howe.]

which there are a goodly number on the Pacific coast. I cannot say of my own knowledge that every member of the Fairmile association had information as to what passed between the association and War Assets, but I certainly assume that they had. Further than that I cannot say.

Mr. MERRITT: The question the hon. member for Vancouver South asked the minister was not about the Fairmile Association but whether boat builders on the Pacific coast had been notified that these craft were for sale before the sales by private agreement took place, and I certainly understood the minister to answer, yes. But what brings me to my feet is that I have in front of me a letter from a boat builder in Vancouver and a newspaper clipping from a Vancouver newspaper of October 12, 1945, and both state definitely that the boat dealers in Vancouver had no knowledge of these boats being up for sale before the private sales were made. Further, the letter states:

Under an agreement made between the War Assets Corporation and the boatbuilder's section of the Canadian Manufacturers' Association, this said section were supposed to be given a refusal of all boats being offered for sale before being offered for public tender. Not only was this refusal not given but the boats also were not offered for public tender.

Did any such agreement exist between War Assets Corporation and the boatbuilder's section of the Canadian Manufacturers' association and, if so, why was it not carried out?

Mr. HOWE: I do not know how often I need repeat this, but in the first place the boats were advertised as being available—

Mr. GREEN: At Sorel.

Mr. HOWE: Yes; notice was given that the boats were available. They were offered to the Fairmile association on consignment; that is, they were asked to accept them and sell them on account of War Assets, but they did not care to undertake that. After that the price was fixed. But all this is out of order, Mr. Chairman. We are discussing a matter that properly comes under the Department of Reconstruction, and, second, a matter with which a committee of this house is dealing. I suggest that we get back to the Department of Munitions and Supply.

Mr. MERRITT: The minister has not answered my question, and we have gone so far on this matter that I think he will agree that it would be better to clear it up now. I did not ask about an agreement with the builders of Fairmiles; I asked whether there was an agreement between War Assets Corporation and the Canadian Manufacturers'