

*Reconstruction and Supply*

the material, it will get the material first. The second priority is that of the province. I may say that the province of which my hon. friend is a shining representative lets very little get past it. After that come the municipalities, and following them come individuals. That is, they come after all three governments have been served.

The matter of priorities is engaging the attention of the committee that is now examining war assets. It is very important, because there is nothing that slows down the sale of war materials and causes so much difficulty to those administering the sale as the system of priorities which is being observed at the present time.

Mr. ROSS (Souris): Just to follow that up, what the minister has said is an absolute contradiction of the answer the minister gave me on the subject last night. I raised the question of priorities for veterans, in connection with automobiles, station wagons, tractors and that sort of thing, and pointed out that they had asked for this very thing. The minister at that time quoted an article from Washington, supporting his statement, which said that priorities would not be allowed to veterans. If this is to be turned over to the veterans department, it will be to their interest if they knew how it is to be handled. Discharged veterans are making these requests every day and the officials of this corporation are telling them that they have no priorities over any civilian. That is happening day in and day out. If anything is being done, these service men should be told about it just as soon as possible. If it is to be handled under the Veterans' Land Act, then the country should be told so immediately because it is now in a turmoil about the matter.

The minister's statement to-night conflicts very much with what he put on *Hansard* last night. He said that if any of us could offer any suggestions as to how the matter could be handled, he would be glad to accept them and give them proper consideration. Auction sales have been held, and some have been held in my part of the country where wagons, automobiles and trucks have been sold and where farmers have been given preference. Someone must vouch that they are bona fide farmers. The price ceiling is respected; bids are made, and then they draw numbers in a lottery to decide who gets the article at that bid. If it is being handled in that way for the farmers, why could it not be handled on the same basis for the veterans? It would mean a great deal to many of these chaps.

I should like to give a concrete example. A chap told me about purchasing a poultry

[Mr. Howe.]

farm in Ontario. This fellow is still going to university. One of these station wagons would mean a great deal to him in getting to and from the university and in looking after his poultry farm. He has been to see the officials of the War Assets set-up and has been told that there is no preference for him. These men need these articles, because they will mean a great deal to them and their dependents in becoming reestablished in civil life.

Mr. NICHOLSON: What provision is being made for appeals from rulings of boards and officers under the supervision of the minister? Let me illustrate my question. At the present time there is a difference of opinion between the department of natural resources of Saskatchewan and the timber controller regarding the ceiling price of pulpwood in the provinces of Manitoba and Saskatchewan. I understand that the ceiling price for Manitoba is \$9 a cord and for Saskatchewan, \$8. The minister is familiar with the territory and he knows there is a large area around The Pas from which pulpwood is obtained. This pulpwood is shipped through Hudson Bay Junction in Saskatchewan and the freight rate there is actually higher than from many points in Saskatchewan. The Saskatchewan department of natural resources is contending that the ceiling price should be based on the freight rate. It seems to me that they have a good argument, but the timber controller argues that the present arrangement has been in existence for several years and that it would hardly be worth while to disturb it. What provision is there for an appeal from a decision made by one of these boards should a provincial government or a corporation wish to take an appeal?

Mr. HOWE: I presume the appeal would be to the minister. As the minister would be very ignorant of the whole subject, probably he would accept the controller's opinion, the controller being a student of the matter and having a greater knowledge of the subject.

Mr. ZAPLITNY: We should have a statement from the minister with reference to War Assets Corporation. I am sure that other hon. members are in the same position as I am. I do not know what the policy of the department is to be in connection with surplus assets. I should like to refer to the *Financial Post* of January 29, 1944, in which the president of the corporation, Mr. Carswell, is reported to have said this:

Since the key job of the corporation is to protect the going economy against impingement of war surpluses, it stands to reason that the corporation should never get into competition with industry, which is another way of saying it should not sell direct to the consumer but