

*By Mr. Fraser:*

Q. Lots of building materials, Mr. Chairman, but at extremely high prices. I just wonder if Mr. Mansur could not say if he did not think the high cost of building materials—perhaps not in this year but in past years—had not been caused to some extent by the buying by Central Mortgage and Housing Corporation—making it so that the stockpile for the individual home builder was pretty small?—A. Mr. Chairman, I do not think that is the case for two reasons. Firstly, the amount that was purchased by Central Mortgage and Housing to complete veterans' houses was extremely small in relation to the whole. Secondly, I do not believe that there were any stockpiles—certainly that is so from the time that Central Mortgage took over the operation of the construction from Wartime Housing Limited, and it is only from that time I can speak. There were no stockpiles in the generally accepted sense of the word.

The only exception to that might be nails where you will remember that when even we were finding materials for veterans' houses difficult we made nails available to other people who needed nails to build a small house. We did that in co-operation with the nail manufacturers and the nail distributors. To that extent I think there was a bit of a stockpile but that stockpile was available not only for the completion of veterans' houses but also to private builders who made requests to us for nails.

Q. Who made direct requests?—A. Yes, we sent a bulletin, Mr. Chairman, to the builders on our list—4,000 of them—saying that if any builder could show he needed nails to complete a house he could buy nails from us at the standard price. We marketed nails from one end of the country to the other in co-operation with the nail manufacturers and the nail distributors.

Q. Even at that they were extremely hard to get? What I mean is it was difficult at that for the small builder to get nails—the individual builder?—A. Mr. Chairman, our experience in that respect was that it had been represented to us that nails were impossible to get.

Q. I was one perhaps in the House of Commons who squawked a great deal about that because we had a shortage. I asked about it in the House of Commons and Mr. Howe said that the pipe line for nails was not running into Peterborough.—A. At the time the nail difficulty occurred the government accepted our suggestion that we should short circuit the shortage by the so-called stockpile held by Central Mortgage. If my recollection is correct we made arrangements with the manufacturers for 30,000 kegs of nails feeling that might help the situation. We secured those nails and put them in regional depots. I can check this but my present recollection is this being done at the very worst of the nail situation resulted in C.M.H.C. distributing around less than 800 kegs of nails. In other words, the nails came out of garages and basements when it became obvious to builders that if they were really up against it nails were forthcoming.

*By Mr. Fleming:*

Q. What proportion of the total output were you taking at that time? Can you give us an approximate figure, Mr. Mansur?—A. I would guess about 1 per cent.

Q. Of the total output at that particular time?—A. At that particular time when we took those 30,000 kegs—but I can check that figure.

The CHAIRMAN: Was any request by any builder turned down?

The WITNESS: No. When I say no, we had some requests that were not completely bona fide that we smoked out, but any bona fide request was of course accepted.