

Mr. REID: I was endeavouring to do that but it is only now you have clarified your question. When you first spoke your question was not as clear as it is now, but since you have clarified your question perhaps I can clarify my answer. I do not know what the procedure is as between War Assets and the officials of the Department of National Defence. When I started to go into it last time my attention was drawn to the fact that we had before us Mr. Berry, and I would have to wait until these officials of the department came before us. I deferred my statement, but the point that I was trying to make to Mr. Berry was that if the principle or practice which was in effect in British Columbia, as I saw it, was that the air force—and I am citing the air force just as an example—had a certain length of time to gather material from various camps and places to one particular airdrome and as the airdrome became filled up they would then in turn turn it over to War Assets and War Assets would then have to take an inventory all over again. I said that would take months and months. That was my argument.

Mr. JACKMAN: I agree with you, but perhaps Mr. Berry can throw some light on it from here on. How did he know it was going to be declared surplus?

Mr. REID: What else are they holding it for? The air force said it was surplus they were gathering. I asked them that.

Mr. JACKMAN: I asked you that before and you said you did not know.

Mr. REID: They would not tell the War Assets official but they told me it was surplus material.

Mr. JACKMAN: That is the point I asked in the first place.

Mr. PROBE: We should know whether or not this was declared surplus after Mr. Reid's conversation with Mr. Berry or if it had been declared surplus some months before, because if it was declared surplus some months before then his officials are at fault definitely. If not, he can wash his hands of it for the time being and say that it was not their fault as the air force did not tell them. I think we should know that.

Mr. GOLDING: Mr. Chairman, actually War Assets does not come into the picture until the surplus is declared and you are notified what the surplus is. Is that not the picture?

Mr. REID: Mr. Chairman, I want to make this statement: if you will read the minutes of this meeting you will find that I did make the statement that when Mr. Berry was away attending this meeting of directors I wanted the officials of the air force and the army to come before the committee. My purpose in bringing that matter up was with a view to expediting our work and getting a closer cooperation between the military authorities, and I do want to have something from the military authorities regarding their position.

The CHAIRMAN: Shall we go on to the next question, gentlemen?

Mr. GOLDING: No, let us clean this up. When does it come into the possession of War Assets?

Mr. REID: When did it come into their possession?

Mr. GOLDING: I mean by that when is anything declared surplus.

The WITNESS: I think to give you the correct answer to that I should quote from the surplus Crown Assets Act.

Mr. GOLDING: That is the point we want to get cleared up.

*By Mr. Jackman:*

Q. Just what is the method?—A. Speaking from memory, I am afraid I haven't got a copy of the Act here and I stand to be corrected on my statement, War Assets Corporation becomes responsible for material when it takes posses-