

Demobilization—Munitions and Supply

radar. In fact, I asked a question along those lines. *Hansard* for October 1 shows at page 628 a question standing in my name, as follows:

Have instructions been given for the destruction of any or all parts of radar equipment at R.E.L. plant in Toronto?

The answer given was a brief and categorical, no. Then there was another question:

Did any of the employees ask permission to buy material which is being destroyed?

The answer to that was, yes. So that obviously material is being destroyed; otherwise why would that answer be given? Perhaps the minister would reconsider his answer; perhaps to-day he has additional information. I think he will agree that for one reason or another radar equipment in that plant was destroyed, and I suggest he would be well advised to admit that such was the case. There may or may not be extenuating circumstances—quite possible there may be—but I do not think this answer should be left in *Hansard* when many of us know that the answer is inaccurate.

We know more about the government's policy—and I refer to the policy of selling the plant. I asked again, as reported at page 604 of *Hansard* for the same day:

Has any part of R.E.L. plant at Toronto been sold to the Corning Glass Company?

The answer to that question was, yes. Then I asked this question:

If so, what was the sale price?

The answer shows that the building was sold for \$150,000. I do not know what the cost was; but I know this much, that it was twice or three times that amount, because it is a magnificent building. Then I asked this question:

What other bids were received, and for what amounts?

The answer to that was that no tenders were called. Apparently it was sold by private arrangement, and was not sold under the direction of War Assets Corporation. It would seem that it was sold under an authority which apparently the minister gets under the Surplus Crown Assets Act, under which the minister may sell, exchange, lease, lend or otherwise dispose of or deal with surplus crown assets, either gratuitously or for consideration. I suggest that this sale came very close to being one of a gratuitous nature. No other tenders were called; it was sold directly to another company. I should like to know if inquiries were made by any other group or

[Mr. Stewart.]

company as to whether this plant was available for purchase. I have heard the statement made that such was the case.

Here we have a plant sold by private arrangement; but when I asked:

Did any of the employees ask permission to buy material which is being destroyed?

The answer was, yes. And the answer goes on:

Research Enterprises Limited, however, has no authority to sell any crown property. When and if such is declared surplus and is transferred to War Assets Corporation for disposal, the rules governing disposal of war materials will apply.

That rule obviously did not apply on every occasion. There is a demand—and I think it is a genuine and legitimate one—that this plant be carried on by the Dominion of Canada, by the government. This demand comes not only from us, but from a quarter which might cause surprise to some hon. members. In this connection I should like to quote a letter from Mr. Blackstock, deputy to the premier of Ontario, addressed to Mr. Conquergood, who is associated with the union in Research Enterprises Limited. The letter states in part:

The Prime Minister subsequently wrote the Hon. J. L. Ilsley, Acting Prime Minister of Canada, expressing concern at the fact that Research Enterprises Ltd. was not to be continued in a substantial way at least, as a government operation, and at the same time expressing his views which coincided closely with those presented in your brief.

The views expressed in the union brief were those having to do with the maintenance of Research Enterprises Limited skilled workers and administrative staff. The brief states:

Failing any satisfactory results in this effort, and if it seems apparent that the federal government is determined to dispose of this property and equipment, we would urge upon you, sir, and the government of this province, to take those steps that may be necessary to bring about the purchase of this plant and equipment so that the people of Ontario and, indeed, Canada, may be assured of the operation of these industries that have such tremendous peacetime possibilities for the welfare and security of every Canadian citizen.

I suggest that the committee is entitled to an answer from the minister as to what is to happen to this plant. It has been inferred that the policy of the federal government will be that of retiring actively from competition with private industry. There are no competing private industries of this kind in Canada. There are private industries outside Canada competing, but as I said they are monopolistic, and are associated with a world cartel.