

Mr. GOLDING: Mr. Chairman, before we proceed with Mr. Berry we ought to again draw the attention of members to the arrangement that was made and agreed on by the members of the committee that anyone requesting information or any details in connection with any of the transactions of the War Assets Corporation should submit their questions to the steering committee. That was agreed upon by all the members of the committee. We can save a lot of controversy here if that policy is followed. I am sure that everybody will get all the information that can be given.

The CHAIRMAN: Thank you, Mr. Fleming.

Mr. FLEMING: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

J. H. BERRY, President, War Assets Corporation, called.

The CHAIRMAN: Gentlemen, if you have your copies of the brief I am now going to call on Mr. J. H. Berry, President of War Assets Corporation to present the same. Before doing so I would like to say that last year I did not extend thanks to Mr. Berry. I feel in view of the very thorough and complete reports which he presented to this committee, along with the criticism that has been offered that information could not be obtained from War Assets Corporation, that it should be known that he, as far as was requested, covered the subjects and questions quite fully. As far as I know he gave us full information on all questions that we asked. I think it is only fair to Mr. Berry to make that statement before asking him to proceed.

The WITNESS: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Chairman, Gentlemen: Last November we presented briefs to a Special Committee on War Expenditures and Economies. The last paragraph of my own brief stated "The Corporation is endeavouring to fulfill what it is called on to do in accordance with the directions it has received. When the present reorganization is complete, I am hopeful that the efficiency of its operations will be materially increased."

As will be seen by the figures I will quote later, I am pleased to be able to say that the Corporation has made very substantial progress. I do not think we are yet at our maximum rate of disposal. Every effort has been made to forecast the time at which we will reach our peak and the volume the peak will represent, but so far it has not been possible to ascertain the surplus that will reach us either as to volume or time.

The organization that is now in existence is capable of being expanded or reduced very quickly, without alteration to its fundamental structure, so that we are in a position to control the size of our organization in accordance with the surplus that reaches us. We are now well on the way to completing standard procedures and policies in written form so that present members of our organization may know what to do in any normal given circumstance, and so that new staff, as they join the Corporation, may play their part with a minimum of apprenticeship. These procedures and policies play a most important part in our organization as we are dependent on them to provide uniformity of treatment in the disposal of the many types of surplus handled through branches scattered across the Dominion. We are asked from time to time to make serious exceptions to our procedures and policies, but except for very few instances, we are not able to agree, due to the size of our organization and the rate at which our operations are currently going.

Last year we experienced difficulty in getting senior men for the Corporation. I am happy to say that this difficulty has been surmounted in the main, but we still experience some difficulty as we are not able to forecast the period over which employment will last.