

On the part of private business the cost of preparing these reports has been colossal in comparison to the benefits derived by the Government, and the task of preparing them has confused and discouraged many private business enterprises engaged in essential war work.

An investigation of the more than 7,000 questionnaires impresses the committee with the importance of protecting the businessmen of the country in the emergency now existing from a continuation of the necessity of diverting thousands of trained men from vital war activity to useless paper work.

The committee is driven to the irresistible conclusion that much of this "paper work" involves an intolerable waste of time and resources not only for the victims of these needless inquisitions but also for the Government itself. The committee also could not escape the conclusion that one of the chief sources of unpopularity, irritation, and resentment in connection with rationing and price controls is the nature and extent of the needless complex "reports" too often required by the Government. While fully recognizing that the war effort unavoidably requires a substantial increase in the "paper work" which our unavoidable war controls entail, the committee believes that this necessity should be serviced with a minimum of "red tape" and a maximum of simplicity; and it condemns the excessive, costly, and often unintelligible quiz-mania which has been too often exemplified in some of these bureaucratic zeals.

The committee commends the action of the Bureau of the Budget in accepting all-over control of questionnaires and reports with a view to reducing this burden.

The committee commends the action of the Treasury Department and the War Production Board in voluntarily abandoning some of the "paper work" and commends this excellent example to other branches of the Government.

The committee is hopeful that its clear exposure of this hazard—a menace which frequently actually threatens the war effort itself through a needless diversion of time and effort—will contribute to curbing substantially these excesses, and that the supervision of the Bureau of the Budget will substantially reduce this "paper output."

RECOMMENDATIONS

The committee recommends that the Budget Bureau, under the power it now has, or with additional power granted by Congress, should such be necessary, exercise full and complete control over the various agencies of the Government that are issuing questionnaires and reports not absolutely essential to the prosecution of the war; that the Budget Bureau endeavor not only to simplify but to eliminate most of these 7,025 reports now being required by the Government, and to coordinate the remainder; that, wherever possible, one annual, semiannual, or quarterly report be sent to the Budget Bureau as a central agency, containing the information required by the various agencies; that such reports be filed with the Budget Bureau and be accessible to the other agencies of government that need the information; that the entire question of these unnecessary reports is of such paramount importance that it be reviewed and simplified by further

planning and coordination on the part of all Government agencies under the central control of the Budget Bureau; that the questionnaire mania be curbed by persuasion, if possible, and, if not, by strong congressional action.

The committee further recommends that the appropriation bills limit definitely the amount available to each agency of the Government issuing forms and questionnaires; that full information as to the number of reports issued, their character and purpose, be made a part of the records of the respective appropriations committees, so that such information will be readily available as to the number printed and distributed, and the cost thereof.

By exercising such careful supervision of that part of the appropriation available for the preparation, analysis, and cost of printing and distributing the reports, the Congress can retain in a very effective measure control over this questionnaire problem in the event proper cooperation of the various agencies affected is not forthcoming.

ADDENDA TO THE REPORT

ANALYSIS OF TESTIMONY AND INFORMATION RECEIVED BY THE COMMITTEE

A survey of 89 companies in 10 war industries revealed that 84 of these units completed 3,479 Government reports in the second quarter of 1942. This is an average of 164 reports per company per year. Industries with the heaviest war production carry the heaviest burden of reports. To complete the forms, the 89 companies require a total of 495,480 man-hours a year. Of this total, 13 percent is for nonrecurring and 87 percent for recurring reports. The machinery group of manufacturers believes that 43 percent of these reports are unnecessary.

In the Worthington Machinery & Pump Corporation, which employs 4,000 people, 6 departments must perforce devote full time to the preparation of 545 reports of 66 different types; in addition, there are 478 reports to 80 State, county, and city governments. Reports vary from 1 to 20 pages in length, and the number of questions varies from 10 to 100. The cost of the Federal reports for this corporation alone is approximately \$90,000 a year.

Manufacturers declare that Federal red tape delays production and lengthens the war. Priorities and allocations involve entirely new sets of routines. Allocations of vital war materials to a plant must frequently wait until all other plants in the same production field have placed their requisitions.

In his testimony, Eric A. Johnston, president of the United States Chamber of Commerce, told our committee that "it requires a Philadelphia lawyer or an Indian crystal gazer to figure out the answers to some Government questionnaires." He said the requirements for necessary and basic information in wartime are bound to place a great burden on individuals and business concerns. "That makes it all the more important," he declared, "that requests for information should be kept at a minimum and be put in such form as to make for practical replies and utilization of their contents."

The War Production Board reports that a large automobile company complained that preparation of Government forms cost \$125,000