

of these committees in their over-enthusiasm actually write themselves into the law.

NEED FOR FOLLOWUP ON SPECIFICS

Senator PERCY. Mr. Chairman, I would like to commend Congressman Mathias for bringing this case to our attention. It is very easy to deal in broad principles. It is much harder to get down to specifics. It is easy for the Congress to condemn the executive branch of Government, and yet when you follow something through it often ends up right in the lap of the Congress again. If we cannot follow through and see progress, something is wrong with the way we are operating.

Chairman PROXMIRE. I share those sentiments very warmly. I think it is a great service you perform for us.

Congressman MATHIAS. Thank you very much.

SLOPPY INVENTORY MANAGEMENT

Chairman PROXMIRE. There is no group that needs this understanding kind of sympathy from the Federal Government more than the dairy farmers.

Mr. Staats, I want to commend you on a most remarkable statement, well-documented and thorough and specific, and in giving us a great number of factual instances.

Because you are a man who believes in fact and deals so much in facts and does not like to use generalities, I realize that you do not want to characterize the overall inventory management we have in the Defense Department with any adjectives, I suppose, but I cannot come to any conclusion except that it seems incredibly sloppy, a clear dereliction of duty in the management of inventory, a cost to the taxpayers of hundreds of millions of dollars, and maybe even billions and billions of dollars.

FACTS—PREREQUISITE TO INVENTORY MANAGEMENT

I understand that former Secretary Forrestal said we cannot possibly manage inventory if we do not know the facts about it. If you do not know what it is, where it is, how much you have, its condition, and so forth, you cannot manage it. It seems that you have documented very thoroughly the failure on the part of the Defense Department to have that kind of information.

You say: "In general, we have found agency management receptive to our suggestions." This is on the list of specific suggestions you give with reference to civil agency construction.

"Actions have been taken or planned in response to most of our recommendations, which, if effectively implemented, should result in significant improvements."

AGENCY COMPLIANCE TO GAO SUGGESTIONS

Can you give us specific agencies that have responded, the agencies that have not, the extent to which they have not responded and the extent to which they have?