

PROGRESS IN ITEM REDUCTION

Representative CURTIS. I want to thank you for opening up this area again as forcefully as you have. This committee has considered this over a period of time, and it is really restating a truth, somewhat like Mr. Gainsbrugh said in his suggestions, that once the Bureau of the Budget establishes certain criteria, it then becomes a question of how do you enforce it.

These principles that you have enunciated here have been established, but believe me I am beginning to wonder how you ever bring about enforcement. It would look like there is some improvement just on the bare figures that we have seen here of the reduction of 5 million items as set forth in that study of 1953, to where, if it is accurate, we have 3.9 million today.

Mr. MARSHALL. That is good.

Representative CURTIS. Particularly since during this period, too, we have undoubtedly increased the number of end items that we use. So maybe there is some progress, but hardly enough progress, and this is what I guess you are really saying.

Mr. MARSHALL. Yes, sir.

Representative CURTIS. Let me restate again in my own words what I think you are saying. I think the important thing here, and it ties in with what Mr. Gainsbrugh was pointing out, is that there is no sense in our duplicating the great distribution system that exists in our society with a military distribution system.

Mr. MARSHALL. Right alongside.

DUPLICATION IN DISTRIBUTION SYSTEMS

Representative CURTIS. I mean there are reasons for setting up a military distribution system where the civilian distribution system cannot function, and these are the areas that we have mentioned here. But so much of what the military uses, whether it is human skills or something else, there has been no coordination, no study, when so much of this has its counterpart in the private sector.

I argued that you may think you are saving by buying, say, 1 million hammers at \$1 at the factory, instead of buying it at \$2.50 in the retail outlet, but if you ever took into effect the cost of warehousing and distribution, then you would realize that you are probably, under that system, paying \$5 a hammer. This is another aspect of what you are saying here, as I see it.

I want to put on the record again what the then General Eisenhower told the Bonner subcommittee when we visited him in Paris before he became President. We were looking into, among other things, the fact that the Air Force was setting up its own supply system for common-use items instead of relying on the Army, which they were supposed to do over in the United States. They said they weren't going to duplicate, but when we got over into Europe, we found that they were. General Eisenhower said:

You know that "responsiveness to command" is the shibboleth that is constantly used by military leaders to avoid these kind of efficiencies.