Well, the fact of the matter is that we went ahead. We have now regular reports on plant and equipment expenditures. They haven't always been exactly on target, but I think it would be agreed that they have been quite useful.

Chairman PROXMIRE. There is no question that the more recent they are, the more active they are likely to be, is there?

Mr. MCCRACKEN. That is exactly right.

Chairman PROXMIRE. There is no question that the situation that we have, we do have a very hard situation in estimating the Vietnamese war, but if we get up-to-date estimates from the most authoritative source, the Pentagon, they are better than just the vague statement that we are going to have to have a supplemental of some indefinite size.

Mr. MCCRACKEN. That is right. Now, I suspect that one of the difficult questions has to do with this problem. What is going to be the framework of these estimates while the administration is still in the process of defending its program and its request for appropriations in the legislative session? Are they supposed to make their guesses as to which of their proposals will be casualties, and which ones will be given appropriations in excess of what was requested? Or does this mean that those quarterly estimates are just about inevitably then going to reflect precisely what is in the budget? In other words, they couldn't concede at that point that things are going to be different.

I don't consider that a conclusive argument, however, against this. I think we ought to give this thing a run for a few years. My guess is that most of these problems would turn out to be less important than they seem in advance. A lot of these things here can be done, if people will just set their minds to doing them.

Mr. HANSEN. Could I make a point, Mr. Chairman?

Chairman PROXMIRE. Yes, indeed; I wish you would, Professor Hansen.

Mr. HANSEN. I have a feeling that the feasibility of quarterly reports would be very much improved if we had long-range plans.

It is, of course, true—the military is a good example—that changes may be so great that long-range plans don't mean anything, but there is a large area where long-range plans can be very significant. If you have long-range plans, it is much easier to make quarterly reports than if you are just going along from year to year.

Chairman PROXMIRE. I welcome that. Incidentally, may I just read the other part of our recommendation. This was in three categories:

A. The budget for each year should be presented in the context of a broader, longer run set of budgetary projections. These projections should probably cover a five-year period.

Mr. HANSEN. Right.

Chairman PROXMIRE (reading):

B. A quarterly basis.

C. Budget accounts should be broken down by calendar quarters, rather than simply being shown as annual totals.

Mr. MCCRACKEN. Mr. Chairman, there are times, you know, when an issue seems more urgent, seems more relevant, perhaps, to the current situation than at others. It seems to me that in the light of the background of our fiscal history of the last 12 to 15 months, that this