

problem I think is more acute in the last couple of years than it was before, although it has always been serious.

Senator SYMINGTON. Mr. Chairman?

Chairman PROXMIRE. Senator Symington.

Senator SYMINGTON. Based upon what Mr. Weitzel said, Mr. Comptroller General, does this mean that they had to search for the 92 items five times in 30 days?

Mr. BAILEY. Yes, sir; this is correct.

Senator SYMINGTON. What happens when that is done? He goes out and says, "I haven't got it," and they say, "Go back and look again," or does he say he does have it and they find out later he is wrong?

What is the chronological procedure of looking five times for one piece in a 30-day period? How can that happen? I just don't understand the way it works.

Mr. STAATS. The sequence of it?

Senator SYMINGTON. Yes.

Mr. BAILEY. Again, if they receive five requisitions for a particular item and went out and counted it and didn't make appropriate adjustments in the inventory records, the next time they receive a requisition they may have to go back and count again in order to find the materiel, or if the location is changed, something of this kind, and it doesn't get into the records with an appropriate indication—

Senator SYMINGTON. I don't want to belabor this, but if you were in private business the man in the shop would try to correct it himself. He wouldn't just say, "It isn't right. Let's go have lunch."

Isn't there some way?

It is hard to visualize missing the same piece five times in that period of time.

Mr. WEITZEL. They have told us for one thing they are trying to develop new overall systems, for another thing concentration of manpower on trying to fill the orders for the buildup in Vietnam has prevented proper attention in some cases to these errors.

It may result simply in their feeling that they can't depend on their inventory records so every time they get a requisition for the item they go out into the warehouse and start looking.

Senator SYMINGTON. That would seem to be the logical answer.

Chairman PROXMIRE. What they need is a dependable system and then they wouldn't have to conduct these special inventories. As long as they don't have it, they have to do it over and over again.

Mr. WEITZEL. It should greatly minimize the necessity for special inventories if regular inventories can be taken at regular times.

Chairman PROXMIRE. This must also be very wasteful in terms of personnel. Special inventories take time.

Mr. WEITZEL. In the long run, it can take more time, as Mr. Staats testified.

In these 900,000 special inventory cases, as an average every item was counted 1.7 times during the 18-month period.

Senator SYMINGTON. I jumped the gun on you a little bit. I read No. 3 on page 7. I believe that is the worst thing I have seen. They ought to give a prize to the fellow who missed the most.

Mr. STAATS. I think the general point Mr. Weitzel was referring to comes out a little bit more in the text.