

wouldn't permit competition. Two times it was decided that it would be impractical to duplicate some other facility by getting a new line set up, I assume, and in one instance it was stated that it was impractical to obtain competition.

Of course, it becomes a matter of choice, I suppose, as to what excepting paragraph to negotiate you select, but nevertheless I don't think if you run 13 times, let's say, for public exigency—and you now say, "In hindsight, we could have done it better"—that it becomes sort of a routine. You don't want to compete the thing. It is easier to buy the thing without competing, especially when one fellow is already in business and doing a good job.

Mr. SHILLITO. I don't know that the present buy is typical throughout this sequence.

Mr. ROBACK. It is not typical in price because in one single buy you lumped in a third of all the procurements you have bought over the years.

Mr. SHILLITO. Excuse me. I shouldn't say the present buy. The pending buy.

But here we are faced with a buy involving roughly \$16 million worth of launchers. That is in the immediate offing. And if we don't go to this particular company we are going to have about a 9-month gap, I would guess, at least, in the availability of launchers.

Mr. ROBACK. We are not making recommendations on that point. We are exploring the problem.

Mr. SHILLITO. I realize that. But I say I don't know it is typical. But it may be similar to some of the kinds of problems we were faced with in the past.

TIME ALLOWED FOR RESPONSE

Mr. RANDALL. On this list that the gentleman gave there, you said you put out six bids or requests for bids, and you enumerated the ones that bid. I think you said four were interested; is that right?

Mr. TASSIN. Two, sir.

Mr. RANDALL. Only two. Now, those who didn't respond, what steps were taken? Was a contract actually made by your people, or just a letter? Or did you take any steps? When you say they didn't respond, what sort of interval was there? Did you try to get them to respond? That is what I am trying to bring out.

Mr. TASSIN. I don't have the information as to the interval involved here. We sent them written information and asked them to respond by a certain date. They did not respond at all.

Mr. RANDALL. What is that date? How long did you give them?

Mr. TASSIN. I don't have that.

Mr. RANDALL. I think it ought to be supplied for the record, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. HOLIFIELD. I am sure it can be.

(The requested information appears at p. 38.)

Mr. RANDALL. We have had a little experience in other committees with this sort of thing. I think the question of the interval is important, and what you do to try to get them to respond.

I would like to ask one more question. What was the reason? Was it this exigency? Was it because of this hurry?

Mr. TASSIN. I will have to get that information supplied.

Mr. RANDALL. Thank you very much.