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January 22, 1944

*Warron
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Mr. Julius H. Amberg
Special Assistant to the Secretary of War
War Department
Washington, D. C.

Dear Mr. Amberg:

The Committee has been informed that recently all contracts with the Vaughan Motor Company for the purchase of fork lift trucks have been cancelled.

As you know, the Committee is in the midst of an investigation of the Army's warehousing methods, a phase of which involves the procurement of fork lift trucks. In this connection, Mr. Edward S. Warron, the designer of the Mobilift Truck, manufactured by the Vaughan Motor Company, has made certain representations and supplied facts to the Committee to the general effect that the Army is failing to take full advantage of the benefits of mechanical materials handling equipment through purchasing more of a heavier type of fork lift truck than is appropriate for the major part of its warehousing operations. Although the investigation is not completed, I have visited a number of depots for the purpose, among other things, of witnessing fork lift truck operations and have certain tentative impressions as a result of such inspections. One is that mechanical materials handling equipment, properly utilized, is an extremely important factor in the speedy, efficient and economical handling of the tremendous volume of material and supplies necessary to support the armed forces and that the Army is to be commended for taking advantage of it in spite of the fact that it had not been fully tried and proved in commercial operations before the war. Another is that the Vaughan Mobilift fork truck, largely because of its lightness and maneuverability, and incidentally its economy, has certain definite advantages, especially in the handling of packaged materials, which seem to constitute a large proportion of the supplies warehoused by the Army.

Because of these impressions and because of the further fact that the Committee was given to understand that the Army had not yet filled its needs for fork lift trucks, this wholesale cancellation of

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contracts with one manufacturer, whose representative had participated in the investigation, was surprising.

It is unthinkable that this cancellation was punitive, even though, unfortunately, personal accusations of incompetence, and even more, seem to have stirred up considerable feeling on the part of some of the individuals involved. The timing of the cancellation may have been fortuitous. On the other hand, it is obvious that the Committee cannot remain unconcerned about a matter which might have the appearance of being designed to interfere with an inquiry it is conducting.

The Committee would, therefore, like to be advised fully concerning the circumstances of this cancellation including a statement as to what other, if any, cancellations were made as to other manufacturers of this type of equipment.

Very truly yours,

George Meader
Assistant Counsel