

Cincinnati, Ohio  
May 22, 1942

Senator Harry S. Truman, Chairman  
Senate Special Committee  
Investigating the National Defense Program  
Washington, D. C.

Dear Sir:

An investigation of the Wire Division in the War Production Board will be very beneficial at this time. Order M-126 issued on May 5, 1942 stopped the production of 400 vital steel items. Among these items is Chain Link fencing, which is a large and important item to the defense program. Already, evidence appears to show that this order is being used to sabotage this industry. One or two large steel producers who have advisers in this division are planning to allocate all of this business to themselves and stop the issuance of priority ratings. This would simply divert all of the Chain Link defense work to these two allocated plants.

We already have proof of this from one of our contractors in Pennsylvania who demand quotations without priority, stating that they were told this business would be allocated and not left to priority. We have further proof of this through our contractors who have orders for fencing at some of the Government camps who were told they will not proceed until given further instructions from Washington because of changes.

The large companies who are directing these moves to their own interest would be much more valuable to the cause if they concentrated on producing large tonnage for which they are capable and leave some of the small fabrication to small manufacturers who can do it just as well. In November, 1940, we came out with a new style of Chain Link fencing, which would have saved thousands of tons of pipe used in defense projects. We presented this to Mr. William Batt, and then to the Engineer Department, the Navy Department, and were told that they were not interested in making the saving. The Washington Counselors then solicited us and promised that they could sell this material if they would pay them a commission for doing so. We refused to do this, although we knew that several of the large companies were paying a commission to secure these contracts.



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In December, 1941, we were finally given approval of our product and told to go out in the field to the different ordnance zones and solicit orders with full Government approval. The enclosed circular gives you the story and the saving offered the Government at this time.

But now that we are meeting some success in the field, and the Ordnance officers and men approve of our fencing and are specifying for it, some one on the War Production Board is able to work a further change and hinder the saving we have offered for two years.

An investigation at this time should stop the secrecy and favoritism aimed to kill all small manufacturers in this field. It would also reveal many excessive profits and contracts awarded for inferior merchandise to the manipulation of changing Government specifications and priority delays.

This investigation should also include the pipe manufacturers who are in on this program and are holding back delivery except to favored accounts. We have evidence in our file to show where we have been denied the privilege of replenishing wire and pipe on Government Chain Link projects because the priority was held up for three months, so that the regular rating on such jobs was no longer effective for obtaining more material.

Sooner or later, some one will lead the way to stop these practices that are sabotaging not only small business but the entire war program. We would like to hear that you will do this.

Yours very truly,

THE H. L. BROWN FENCE & MFG. COMPANY

*John Tredwell, Jr.*  
John Tredwell, Jr., Manager

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Encl.