

X- Donald Nelson

X- Truman Committee Investigating the National Defense Program

X- United Steel Fabricators

COPY

February 5, 1942

Honorable Donald Nelson  
War Production Board  
Washington, D. C.

My dear Mr. Nelson:

With reference to our conversation after the Truman Committee meeting, I want to give you the following information.

Representatives of the United Steel Fabricators, Inc. of Wooster, Ohio, called on General Harris seeking an opportunity to bid on gun mounts in caliber 50 and 37 mm. They were informed that 35,000 were needed and that, inasmuch as this order was too large for them or for any fabricator to manufacture within the time limit, the contract had been let to General Motors. Although it was known that General Motors was unable to do the work, they were being used as a prime contracting agency to subdivide the contract. It seems to me that where large orders of this kind are being let it would pay to divide them into blocks and ask for block bidding from the companies that can actually manufacture. In this way, the contacts of the Procurement Division would be unified and more fabricators would be trained in the method of doing business direct with the procurement agencies.

The above Company has, on two occasions, been requested by the George A. Fuller Company, which apparently is the contracting agency for the Bureau of Navigation at Quonset Point, Rhode Island, to submit bids on notice as short as thirty minutes. Obviously, from the length of time given, all they were after was the convenience bid in order to have the required number of bidders. Under such conditions, it is impossible for a good concern to make a sensible bid. It seems to me somewhat of an unfair practice to the Government as well as to the bidder.

Another matter about which fabricating companies are complaining bitterly is the system, evidently developed by Ordnance and Engineers, of calling on these companies for designs, such as for bulk for pontoon bridges or metallic magazines and machine gun shields and when, at considerable expense, these have been worked out and submitted, the companies later find them manufactured by other companies and in use, having heard nothing further themselves.



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I trust you will pardon my bringing these matters to your attention, but I think it much better to forward complaints directly to you than to take them up in any public manner so that, if the complaints are not justified by the facts they can be eliminated and if they are, corrective action can be taken.

We receive complaints which we are unable to sift out because companies involved fear that retaliatory steps might be taken by the purchasing departments affected. I was unable to give you the above information until I finally got a release from the agent for the company.

Respectfully yours,

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