

I should like to remind each member of the committee that he has the right and the responsibility and the opportunity to probe the causes of high prices and fearlessly to bring to light by his questions anything that may be thought to be a factor in keeping prices above what is fair and reasonable in the circumstances. The eyes of our country are on this committee. Our investigation will bring out the truth, we will trust, about prices; and this information will go in turn to our colleagues in the House of Commons and to our fellow citizens throughout the country. Our findings by helping to arouse awareness can significantly, I think, influence fair price levels, for this inquiry, I judge, will bring witnesses from all parts of Canada to the bar of public opinion.

I suggest that the urgent problems before us require special effort on our part. We will not spare ourselves in sitting long hours and in trying to get at the truth of this prices question. If we work co-operatively together, I know that our inquiry can successfully search out the facts about prices. Where prices are reasonable we shall so report; but where they are not fair it is now our duty to find them out.

Now, in these preliminary observations I have sought to give what I thought should be the chairman's remarks at the opening session of this committee. I can only say that I know I can count on the full co-operation of every member of this committee, and they in turn will expect me to give the kind of co-operation which I have suggested it must be my duty as chairman to give and with these remarks I open this meeting.

Now, gentlemen, it may be desirable, I suggest to the members of the committee, that we select from among our members someone to act as vice-chairman in the event that it should not be possible on different occasions for the chairman to be present. I make that suggestion to you.

Mr. LESAGE: Mr. Chairman, I move, seconded by Mr. Mayhew, that Mr. Maybank be vice-chairman.

Mr. IRVINE: I nominate Mr. Fleming.

The CHAIRMAN: Just a moment, Mr. Irvine; Mr. Lesage has moved that Mr. Maybank be vice-chairman. Has he a seconder?

Mr. LESAGE: Yes, Mr. Mayhew.

Mr. IRVINE: And I move that Mr. Fleming be vice-chairman.

The CHAIRMAN: Have you a seconder?

Mr. IRVINE: Mr. MacInnis seconds that.

Mr. FLEMING: Mr. Chairman—

The CHAIRMAN: Mr. Fleming.

Mr. FLEMING: Mr. Chairman, I appreciate the kindness of Mr. Irvine and Mr. MacInnis placing my name in nomination. However, I think I must decline to stand for this high but onerous office.

Mr. IRVINE: I would have nominated myself if I had known he was going to do that.

The CHAIRMAN: Mr. Fleming says he cannot act. Under the circumstances do you withdraw your motion?

Mr. IRVINE: Absolutely.

The CHAIRMAN: Are there any other nominations? If not I declare Mr. Maybank elected as vice-chairman. In accordance with the practice the clerk of the committee will be good enough to read the order of reference.