

While this methodology has much interest, at the same time an extended enquiry into it is not going to get us much farther forward in determining the causes of the recent rise in the cost of living. It is not going to get us much farther forward in the enquiry as to whether or not some of the price increases have been improper, whether there has been profiteering. It does seem to me we have to keep our eye not on the whole target but on the centre of it. I submit that our questioning should move on, either with this witness or another one, to the main purpose of this committee which is to try to find out the cause of the rise, particularly when there has been anything improper underlying the cause. I believe we can ask questions on methodology from now until doomsday and three or four hours afterwards and not have progressed much farther with the real purpose of this enquiry.

Mr. MACINNIS: Does Mr. Maybank contend the real purpose is to find out if there is anything improper?

Mr. MAYBANK: I admit I used that expression. The real purpose is very well set forth in the A B C of the reference. The first part of it is to enquire into the causes of the recent rise in the cost of living. I submit that an extended enquiry into the methodology of the D. B. S. is not advancing far in that direction.

Mr. HARKNESS: There is one point there. I think, Mr. Maybank, if we are going to base our ultimate conclusion on the cost-of-living statistics which are presented to us by this statistician, we need to have in our own mind a clear understanding as to whether we are accepting these figures as accurately interpreting all the factors which enter into that cost of living.

The CHAIRMAN: Is that not a matter, Mr. Harkness, for argument? We are listening to a witness now, who has given his conclusions, his opinions, as to the all-inclusive-character of the index and of the system by which that is reached. The members of the committee may have their views on the matter, but all we can do at this stage is to take the evidence, and, having gotten it, proceed to the next point.

Mr. HARKNESS: I agree with that, but if we are going to use these figures throughout our enquiry we should have, perhaps, some of these questions to determine to what extent items are included or left out and so forth.

The CHAIRMAN: Yes. It seems to me the point made by Mr. Irvine and later by Mr. Mayhew should be borne in mind at this stage and, if there is a disagreement, that will be a matter for the committee to consider at a later stage. At this time, when we have a witness before us who has stated quite clearly his opinions on this particular issue, I believe we ought to let the matter rest there.

Mr. FLEMING: I think the point has been quite misconceived. I said earlier we did not want to lose time by discussing the scope of the enquiry here. We have had brought before us this morning a mass of statistical information which, according to the conception the committee had, was to form the foundation for the whole of this enquiry. Now, it is not only highly proper, but I think strictly necessary we should seek to understand fully the basis of the compilation of this evidence. It is not, as I thought Mr. Maybank suggested, because we want to find out something of the method of compiling, for its own sake; it is to test the sufficiency of the evidence which has been submitted. Let us get that quite clear. I believe we are going to have to come back to this.

There is another feature of this upon which I desire some information. We are not, as I understand it, asking these questions now because we are simply interested in the methodology; it is because we desire to understand the effect of this evidence which has been put before us. If we are going to accept this as