

it would be legal. There are several points like that which will arise during the debate, about which a legal adviser could enlighten us.

(English)

Mr. PRUD'HOMME: Will we have the right to do that?

The CHAIRMAN: I do not think the Committee will have the power to do this. The witnesses are coming before us voluntarily, and I assume they will discuss cost in their brief.

Mr. WILLOUGHBY: Mr. Chairman, will we be provided with official statements?

The CHAIRMAN: I am sure they will present their annual report and break it down for you.

Mr. FRANCIS: I would like to go back to the point Mr. Whelan raised a little while ago. Will there be any other research assistants from the department available to this Committee?

The CHAIRMAN: What department?

Mr. FRANCIS: I was thinking particularly of the Department of National Health and Welfare to start with, and then any other department that might be concerned. I am particularly thinking, Mr. Chairman, of the possibility of initiating questionnaires on our own account, and undertaking some studies to obtain further cost data if we should feel, after our early questioning of the witnesses before us, that there are any gaps in the information or any areas we want to explore on our own. I know the department has done some continuing studies in this area through the years.

Is it intended that we should second research personnel from the department for the purposes of the committee, or anything like that? I know this was done in connection with the Canada Pension Plan Committee, for example, and very successfully. I wonder whether anything comparable was envisaged in the case of this Committee.

The CHAIRMAN: It has been suggested that we might wish to have a secretary detached from a department, but no action was taken on it. If the Committee wants to discuss that, they may do so.

Mr. FRANCIS: I think an economist might be useful. We never know what the Committee is going to do, and we do not know at this point whether they would use an economist effectively; but if the Committee were to find after they had interviewed half a dozen witnesses that there was something for which they needed staff of the kind not anticipated before, could they go to the Department of National Health and Welfare, or any other department, and ask to have staff detached for work with the Committee?

The CHAIRMAN: You are not suggesting we do this now, but that we may do so if it turns out to be necessary?

Mr. FRANCIS: I am suggesting that we seek authority to do so.

The CHAIRMAN: The authority we have at the moment is fairly general. We may "secure technical and other staff". We could approach any department. You are suggesting that we wait and see if it becomes necessary?

Mr. FRANCIS: We might want to produce a standard questionnaire, for example, to send to companies and producers of individual products. If we wanted to do something like that we would definitely need to have competent technical staff to handle it.