

MINUTES OF EVIDENCE

HOUSE OF COMMONS,

March 8, 1932.

The Select Standing Committee on Banking and Commerce met at 11 o'clock a.m. to consider the following reference:—

That, in the opinion of this house, the price of gasoline to the Canadian consumer has for some time past been too high and that this matter should be referred to the select standing committee on banking and commerce to investigate and report.

The CHAIRMAN: Gentlemen, at the last meeting of the committee—the only meeting we have had this year—you appointed a committee to consider procedure in regard to this inquiry and to secure witnesses. The committee met on Saturday and decided, with your approval, that we should proceed in this way: First of all, the sponsor of the resolution will make his statement and will be given what time he desires to make a complete statement. Following that, Mr. Bothwell, who has been associated with Dr. Donnelly in considering this question, will supplement the statements of Dr. Donnelly and present to the committee such facts as he has as a basis for questions he would like the companies to answer. Following that an invitation will be given to any member of the committee to make statements with regard to questions affecting the inquiry that have not been covered by the previous speakers. Following that the Imperial Oil Company, represented here to-day by Mr. Ross, will reply to the statements in general terms. Then we will know more particularly what line of procedure to take in regard to the inquiry because the outline of the charges—if you call them charges—will have been made. Now, first of all, following this procedure, if the committee approves I will call upon the sponsor of the resolution in the House of Commons, Dr. Donnelly, to make a statement showing the causes that led him to demand an investigation by a committee of the House of Commons. Mr. Campbell suggested that we communicate with the province of Saskatchewan and ask them to be present if they care to come to the hearings of this committee, and we dispatched this letter written by Mr. Fraser, the clerk of the committee:—

March 5, 1932.

HON. A. C. STEWART, Esq.,
Minister of Highways,
Regina, Sask.

Dear Sir:

The House of Commons committee on Banking and Commerce has presently under consideration an inquiry into the price of gasoline to the Canadian consumer. The committee proposes to call the large oil companies operating in Canada to give evidence and produce their books showing the costs throughout their operations, with a view to determining whether the companies are charging a fair price or otherwise.

The committee have engaged a technical expert on gasoline and an auditor.