

10 GEORGE V, A. 1919

Q. When were you appointed Food Controller?—A. The title is Cost of Living Commissioner or something like that, it is nominal, I was appointed as Commissioner under the order in council regarding the cost of living dated May 3rd, 1915.

Q. Previously to that what was your occupation?—A. Previous to that I was in charge of the Internal Board of the Dominion Bureau of Statistics and Chief of the Statistical Division of the Food Board.

Q. You have had offices in Ottawa.—A. I have had three during the last year.

Q. Do you have an office at the present time?—A. Yes, at the present time.

Q. In Ottawa?—A. Yes.

Q. Under what control?—A. In two Departments.

Q. Which two departments?—A. The Departments of Trade and Commerce and of Labour.

*By Mr. Devlin:*

Q. You are at present actively engaged in enquiring into the cost of living?—A. I am.

Q. And have been, I understand, for about two or three months.—A. Well now—Mr. Chairman, it would be as well if I could briefly sketch all my activities, would it not, so that the committee would better understand my position because there has been a great deal of misunderstanding about the work and I feel you gentlemen should be thoroughly advised as to what is going on. As I have already told you up to May 3rd I was holding two positions under the Government, one was as Chief Clerk of the Administrative Division of the Dominion Bureau of Statistics, a division of what was formerly the Census Board, a position which had never existed prior to my appointment on June 20th, 1917, and which we did not know at that time what it would lead to. But it was really useful, as you all know, and I felt on my appointment that the best way to do my work was to get into touch with the various other organizations, so I joined hands with them in the work, so that I am conversant with every branch of this work. Then as you doubtless all know in the spring of 1918 Mr. O'Connor resigned and some weeks after that I was advised that my name was being considered for the position. I was not a candidate for that position but on being asked by the Minister of Labour to undertake certain duties I said I was willing to assume it provided my chief, Mr. Coates, was willing that I should do so. Mr. Crothers, the Minister of Labour at that time, told me he wished me to carry on certain reports which had been previously issued regularly by the former Cost of Living Commissioner, Mr. O'Connor. I was advised that these reports and the work covered mainly the monthly cold storage report, the monthly report on the cost of producing bread, and certain data which were being similarly collected regarding the cost of distribution of coal. In looking that matter over I decided that I might very well carry on that work in addition to my other duties, and on those terms I undertook to do this work. On going further into the work I found that it was very decidedly advisable to go farther than we had previously gone. We must enter into this matter of the ramification of these matters and I might also say this that subsequently to the time of my appointment Mr. Crothers told me that there were some complaints coming to him regarding the price of gasoline, a matter of some kindred scope to the cost of living upon which you gentlemen have been sitting; it may not be of great importance, I would not say it is of a primary importance.

MR. REID: Is the Committee going to take this evidence under oath?

The CLERK read the order of reference.

MR. REID: I think this evidence ought to be taken under oath.

MR. McFALL: I am willing to give it under oath, I might make some suggestions that I could not swear.

MR. HOCKEN: Might it not be well to go on as we have started and let Mr. McFall give his general statement before swearing him?

[Dr. R. J. McFall.]