

Mr. CLEAVER: Are there copies of the statement available for the press?

The CHAIRMAN: There are only twenty copies available at the moment but there will be others made available later. I have this suggestion to make to those who will be coming before us. The members of the press will want to co-operate with the committee and we in turn want to co-operate with the press and I do suggest to those appearing before the committee that they might find it possible when dealing with statements to have enough copies on hand to meet the convenience of the press.

Mr. MACINNIS: Mr. Irvine asked the question as to the purpose of Mr. Marshall's appearance here as the first witness. We went over that at the meeting of the steering committee last night and I think it would be in order for you to point out in a very few words why he was chosen. There was a definite reason for asking Mr. Marshall here as the first witness.

The CHAIRMAN: It was thought that we should ask the Dominion Statistician to give us some statistics showing increases and decreases in price levels so that the committee members would have a background upon which to form judgment as to the kind of evidence they should seek to elicit after we have had the preliminary statements. Mr. Marshall's statement is to form a guide as to what the appropriate steps should be and what subjects should be investigated by this committee.

The WITNESS: Mr. Chairman and gentlemen: In this brief I shall present a general description of the materials available in the Dominion Bureau of Statistics which this committee may find useful as background data for its immediate needs. We have, of course, a great deal more information than I can discuss today, but as the needs of the committee become defined during the course of its activities, we shall be at its service.

In this period following World War II the world is experiencing the phenomenon of rapidly rising prices as it did after World War I. No nation can remain unaffected by this situation. However, our price levels in Canada are lower than in almost all other countries for which figures are available.

The Monthly Bulletin of Statistics issued by the Statistical Office of the United Nations includes the wholesale and cost-of-living indexes of many countries on the base 1937=100. There are cost-of-living series for 56 countries in the December 1947 issue. For 52 countries the index was higher than Canada's. Wholesale price indexes are shown for 37 countries. Only three indexes are lower than Canada's.

In Canada on the pre-war base (1935-1939=100) the cost-of-living index had risen to only 120·1 by December 1945. In January 1948 it had risen to 148·3. Thus while in the whole of the war period and the three months immediately following it only rose 20 points, during the last two years it has risen 28 points. Three of the groups which compose the index are responsible for this recent increase. While the total index rose to 148·3 the food index is 182·2, the clothing index 161·2 and the home-furnishing group 158·4. The principal influences responsible for the rise can be isolated more definitely however. Of the 28·2 point rise since December 1945, 14·9 was due to the rise in the food group. Of the 14·9 rise in this group dairy products (including butter, milk, and cheese) accounted for 7·4 points. Cereals, mainly bread, 1·6 points, meats and fish 3·6 points, and vegetables 1·2 points.

The clothing group accounted for 4·6 points. The home-furnishing and services group accounted for 3·5 points and in this group furniture was responsible for a rise of 1·7 points.

Thus, out of a total rise of 28·2 points, foods, clothing and home furnishings and services accounted for 23·0 points. Rent, fuel and light and miscellaneous items were responsible for only 5·2 points of the rise.