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APPENDICES.

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APPENDIX No. I.

STATEMENT OF EVIDENCE OF MR. A. W. FLUX, C.B., ASSISTANT SECRETARY, STATISTICAL DEPARTMENT, BOARD OF TRADE.

(FIRST DAY—WEDNESDAY, 10TH DECEMBER, 1924.)

1. The Report on the Census of Production in 1907 furnishes a basis for estimating the relative importance of food and other elements in the real income of the United Kingdom at the time to which that enquiry related. The aggregate income of about £2,000,000,000 is there divided as follows:—

	Million £.
Goods consumed	1248 to 1408
Services	350 „ 400
Additions to capital	320 „ 350
Total	1918 „ 2158

2. Of the goods consumed, some passed directly from producer to consumer (e.g., bread), and in some cases the produce was consumed by the producer (e.g., farm and garden produce consumed by the families of the cultivators). A second class of goods, while passing through merchants' hands, was not the subject of retail trade, while, of the goods that passed through merchants' and retailers' hands, it was estimated that the charges of distribution, including cost of transport, amounted to something between one-half and two-thirds of the value of the goods at the place of production or importation.

3. The aggregate value at the place of production or importation of food (including drink and tobacco and also fodder, seeds, plants and flowers, the latter of which affects the aggregate only in a minor degree) shown as produced or imported for direct consumption was £531,900,000, to which a sum of about £63,000,000 should be added in respect of Customs and Excise duties. Thus, the value before distribution was £595,000,000.

4. The total value of food products which appeared in the Census totals at a valuation as delivered to consumers, falling into the first of the three classes specified above, was about £55,000,000, so that about £540,000,000 remains as the value of foods to be passed through the hands of retail distributors after leaving the producer.

5. The total value at place of production or importation of goods of all classes, subject to retail distribution, amounted to about £825,000,000 (£808,000,000 to £843,000,000), so that the food items represented nearly two-thirds of the total. As distributed, the food group may be taken to represent something between £800,000,000 and £950,000,000, or not less than 50 per cent. of the goods and services consumed in the year 1907. Some part of the "services" were rendered in connection with the preparation of food for consumption, and their value is additional to the estimate of the value of the foodstuffs as distributed.

6. The following Statistical Tables and Charts have been prepared for the Commission:—*

Table 1, Chart 1.

Wholesale prices—monthly, 1920-1924.

Averages of food prices compiled by the Board of Trade, the "Economist," the "Statist" and the "Times," expressed as percentages of the respective averages for 1913.

Table 2, Chart 2.

Wholesale prices: Board of Trade index numbers for food and for all articles, 1920-1924.

* The Tables and Charts have subsequently been extended by Mr. Flux to cover the whole of the year 1924, and are printed in their extended form.

Average import values of food, drink and tobacco, 1920-1924.

Retail prices of food: Ministry of Labour index, 1920-1924.

Table 3, Chart 3.

Wholesale prices: Sauerbeck—"Statist" index numbers, 1900-1924, expressed as percentages of the average indices for 1913, (a) food, and (b) all articles. Average retail prices of food (Ministry of Labour index numbers), 1900-1924.

Table 4, Chart 4.

(A) Wholesale prices: Board of Trade index numbers of (a) cereals, and (b) meat and fish, 1920-1924 (1913 = 100).

(B) Average import values for the years 1920-1924 of (a) grain and flour, and (b) meat per cent. of the corresponding average values in 1913.

Table 5, Chart 5.

Monthly prices in 1920-1924 expressed as percentages of the average prices in 1913—

(a) "Gazette Average" prices of English wheat.

(b) Average declared values of wheat imported.

(c) Wholesale prices of flour in London.

(d) Prices of bread in London.

Table 6, Chart 6.

Wholesale and retail prices of tea and of sugar at the beginning of each month, 1920-1924.

7. In Table 1 and Chart 1 comparison is made between the index numbers of wholesale prices, so far as they relate to food products, published by the Board of Trade and by certain other authorities. These do not exhaust the index numbers currently prepared, but they serve to illustrate the results of different bases of calculation. All the indices have, for purposes of comparison, been reduced to percentages of the figures relating to 1913. The original figures of the "Economist" index are based upon average prices over the period of 1901 to 1905, and those of the "Statist" on average prices over the period 1867 to 1877. The calculation of figures for post-War years as percentages of those for the year 1913 may, therefore, yield results differing somewhat from those which would have been obtained if the same prices as those on which the numbers are based were used, and the same methods of combination, but the year 1913 taken as initial date. In the chart only those particulars of the various index numbers which relate to food prices have been represented, and it will be seen that while, during the extreme fluctuations of the year 1920 and part of 1921, there was considerable divergence between the indications of these different index numbers as to the relation between the general level of current food prices and of food prices in the period immediately preceding the War, from about the middle of 1921 divergencies between the different numbers have been relatively small. The Board of Trade index may, accordingly, be used as indicating sufficiently well the general level of wholesale prices of food in the last few years relative to those of 1913.

8. In Table 2 and Chart 2, the Board of Trade index number for food is compared, on the one hand with the general index number for all articles, and, on the other hand, with the index number of price variations obtained by comparing the declared values of imported food with the value which those same imports would have if priced, article by article, at the