

#### SECTION IV.—RETAIL PRICES, HOUSE RENT, AND PURCHASING-POWER OF MONEY.

1. **General.**—In normal circumstances properly computed index-numbers of food and groceries, and house-rent combined, form one of the best possible measures of those variations in the "purchasing-power of money" which affect the cost of living: in short, the variations of the cost of a "composite unit," consisting of appropriate quantities of suitably chosen commodities, and including also house rent, reflect the variations in the cost of living. The main investigations carried out as to retail prices and purchasing-power of money are of a threefold nature and consist of:—

- (i.) Quarterly variations in the purchasing-power of money in thirty towns.
- (ii.) Annual variations in the purchasing-power of money in 150 towns.
- (iii.) Householders' Budget Inquiries.

It is principally with the first of these that this Section deals. In Report No. 2, issued in April 1913, Report No. 5, issued in December 1914, Report No. 6, issued in May 1916, and Report No. 7, issued in June 1917, the results of comprehensive investigations into the subjects of Prices and Price-Indexes for past years were published, and an account was given of the methods used in the collection of the data and the computation of the results. A discussion of the theory upon which the calculation of the index-numbers is based was furnished in Appendixes to Report No. 1, issued in December, 1912.

For the computations of the index-numbers the "aggregate expenditure" method is adopted, i.e., the average price for each commodity included is multiplied by its respective "mass unit." The "mass-unit" represents the relative extent to which each commodity is used or consumed, and is regarded as constant over the period under review. By taking the aggregate expenditure for any one year as base, the index-number for the relative aggregate expenditure for any other year is readily calculated. Certain aspects of this method, not dealt with in previous Reports, are discussed on pages 19 and 20 of Labour Report No. 6.

In order to illustrate clearly the method adopted it will be well to take a simple numerical example. Suppose that in 1901 the average price of butter was 1s. 3d. per lb., of bread was 3d. per 2 lb. loaf, of mutton was 3d. per lb., and of milk was 4d. per quart; and suppose that in 1911 the prices of these four commodities were 1s. 6d. for butter, 4d. for bread, 5d. for mutton, and 5d. for milk. Now the total quantities of each of these commodities consumed in Australia per annum are approximately 90 million lb. of butter, 470 million 2-lb. loaves of bread, 330 million lb. of mutton, and 300 million quarts of milk. Therefore, the actual expenditure of the people of Australia on these commodities in 1901 and 1911 respectively would be as follows:—

**Computation of Index-Numbers: Illustrative Example of Aggregate Expenditure Method.**

Particulars.	Unit.	Quantities consumed. (0,000,000 omitted.)	Prices.		Total Expenditure.	
			1901.	1911.	1901.	1911.
			d.	d.	(0,000,000 omitted.)	(0,000,000 omitted.)
Butter	lb.	9	15	18	135	162
Bread	2lb. loaf	47	3	4	141	188
Mutton	lb.	33	3	5	99	165
Milk	quart	80	4	5	120	150
					495	665

The relative aggregate expenditure was 495 in 1901, and rose to 665 in 1911; in other words, the index-number in 1901, taking the expenditure in 1911 as the base (= 1000) was  $\frac{495}{665} \times 1000 = 744$ , and the index-number in 1911, taking the expenditure in 1901 as the base (= 1000) was  $\frac{665}{495} \times 1000 = 1343$ , which might, of course, have been obtained directly by taking the reciprocal of the result previously obtained. If now, instead of only four commodities, a representative group of fifty or more were treated in this way for a series of years, the numbers thus obtained would furnish a satisfactory index of the variations in price from year to year.

**2. Changes in Cost of Commodities, Standard of Living, and Expenditure on Living.**—A change in the "Cost of Living" may occur either in the *standard of living* or in the *purchasing-power of money*, or in both; both affect the expenditure on living, which expenditure itself depends on three things, viz.:—

- (i.) The *particular commodities* consumed;
- (ii.) The *relative quantities* of the commodities consumed; and
- (iii.) The *price* of these commodities.

To avoid confusion as to the significance of the results given in this section, the conception of what is meant by "cost of living" ought to be clearly apprehended, for evidently a change in any *one* of the above may produce a change in the *expenditure* on living. In order to obtain index-numbers which are independent of (arbitrary) variations of (i) and (ii.) above, and which unequivocally reflect the variations caused by *price* alone, it is necessary that the particular series of commodities selected, and the relative quantities of these remain constant. This phase of the subject is dealt with more fully in Labour Report No. 1, Appendix VIII.; in Labour Report No. 5, pp. 17-18; in Labour Bulletin No. 9, pp. 27 to 46; and in Labour Bulletin No. 14, pp. 127 to 130. In the places indicated it has been shewn that in order to avoid all confusion between "changes in the regimen" (i.e., change in the standard of living) which is at the disposal of the individual, and "changes in prices," which are not at his disposal, it is necessary to adopt the "aggregate expenditure" method; that is, to ascertain the cost of a definite regimen or what may be called the cost of a definite "composite unit." To be of the highest *general* value, the "composite unit" must be one applicable to the *whole* community. It has also been shewn that what has been called the method of "aggregate expenditures," i.e., the estimation of the cost of this composite unit, as the basis of the

method, is, as said, the only unequivocal method, and technically is perfectly satisfactory, while any other method is technically less satisfactory, or introduces some change of regimen. Variations in quantity or in the items of the composite unit introduce ambiguity, for the resulting change in the price of the composite unit is partly due to change of the unit and partly due to change of the prices of its constituent items.

Notwithstanding the very explicit statement of the purpose and scope of these investigations given in the various Labour Reports, evidence is continually coming to hand that misunderstanding in regard thereto is still prevalent. Many persons, having noticed the obvious fact that a different regimen gives a very different aggregate cost, have imagined that deductions as to the "purchasing-power of money" vary enormously with change of regimen. This phase of the matter has been dealt with fully in previous publications of the Labour and Industrial Branch, and in particular in Labour Bulletin No. 14, pp. 127 to 130, published in October, 1916. It is there demonstrated, by basing the deductions upon various widely differing regimens, that the mode of investigating the purchasing-power of money adopted is not vitiated by employing a fixed regimen; on the contrary, it has reached a high degree of precision as compared with any alternative which has been suggested. Again, it should be observed that any proposed change of regimen must be freed from the effect of a change in the standard of living, otherwise the results are confused, that is, they embody two things, viz.: (a) change in price, and (b) change in standard of living. The conclusion therein arrived at may be repeated here, viz.: That once a standard of living, or living wage, has been fixed, the tables published by the Commonwealth Statistician can be legitimately used as shewing the variations in the cost of living. The only appropriate criticism which could be applicable would be that the regimen used as a basis for estimation has ceased to be representative of the usage of the community to such an extent that the calculations founded on it are misleading. If then, under these circumstances a change is made, certain safeguards are necessary which have been indicated in Labour Report No. 1, Appendixes VIII. and IX.

**3. Commodities and Requirements Included.**—The 47 items of expenditure included are divided into four groups, viz., (i.) groceries and bread, (ii.) dairy produce, (iii.) meat, and (iv.) house-rent. These items cover about 60 per cent. of the total expenditure of a normal family. There are very cogent reasons for the restriction of the inquiry to the items mentioned. If the comparisons are to be satisfactory, confusion must not arise between changes in standard of living and changes arising from a variation of the purchasing-power of money. In order to avoid such confusion the items selected are such as are sensibly identical and identifiable in the various localities. The most important group of expenditure which is not included is clothing, the cost of which amounts to about 13 per cent. of the total expenditure. Owing to influences of individual taste, fashion, and the great variety of production, articles included in this group are practically not comparable and not identifiable. As regards fuel and light, the cost of which amounts to about 4 per cent. of total expenditure, while these commodities are comparable and identifiable, the usage or relative consumption in the towns included in the inquiries varies to such an extent that their inclusion on an assumed constant regimen

would tend to produce a fictitious result in so far as relative cost of living is concerned. Thus the prices of clothing and of fuel and light cannot be unequivocally compared.

While it is true that insurance premiums and contributions to benefit societies have probably not increased, it must be borne in mind that the purchasing-power of money-benefits to be derived is reduced in accordance with the general depreciation in the purchasing-power of money, and in order to obtain benefits of the same net value as before, the premiums and contributions would have to be increased *pro rata*.

It will be seen, therefore, that notwithstanding the exclusion of various items of expenditure, the results obtained based on the four groups referred to, can be vitiated only in an abnormal state of affairs, and ordinarily only to a very slight extent. It is to be remembered also that prices of commodities which cannot be included because they do not lend themselves to exact specification, tend, *on the whole*, to move in the same direction as those included, and approximately to the same extent. Thus, as a matter of fact, a more reliable result is obtained than would be the case if the investigation endeavoured to cover the whole of the items of expenditure. In short, this method of measuring the variations in the purchasing-power of money, though *theoretically* subject to obvious limitations, is *practically* the best general measure.

The question of procedure in abnormal circumstances was sufficiently referred to in Report No. 6, pp. 20 to 22.

The following tabular statement gives particulars of the commodities and items included, the units of measurement for which prices are collected, and the mass-units shewing the relative extent to which each item is used or consumed.

**Retail Prices.—Table shewing Commodities, etc., included in Investigation, Units of Measurement, and "Mass-Units."**

Commodity.	Unit.	"Mass Unit."	Commodity.	Unit.	"Mass Unit."
<b>GROUP I.—GROCERIES (INCLUDING BREAD).</b>			<b>GROUP III.—MEAT.</b>		
1. Bread .. .. .	2 lb. loaf	468	26. Beef, sirloin .. .. .	lb.	67
2. Flour, ordinary .. .	25 lb. bags	11	27. " rib .. .. .	"	82
3. Tea .. .. .	lb.	30	28. " flank .. .. .	"	12
4. Coffee .. .. .	"	2	29. " shin .. .. .	"	14
5. Sugar .. .. .	"	460	30. " steak, rump .. .. .	"	24
6. Rice .. .. .	"	50	31. " shoulder .. .. .	"	53
7. Sago .. .. .	"	8	32. " stewing .. .. .	"	53
8. Jam .. .. .	"	73	33. " corned round .. .. .	"	39
9. Oatmeal .. .. .	"	35	34. " brisket, with bone .. .. .	"	11
10. Raisins .. .. .	"	14	35. " without bone .. .. .	"	42
11. Currants .. .. .	"	14	36. Mutton, leg .. .. .	"	92
12. Starch .. .. .	"	1	37. " shoulder .. .. .	"	62
13. Blue .. .. .	doz. sqs.	‡	38. " loin .. .. .	"	30
14. Candles .. .. .	lb.	19	39. " neck .. .. .	"	40
15. Soap .. .. .	"	64	40. " chops, loin .. .. .	"	32
16. Potatoes .. .. .	14 lbs.	64	41. " leg .. .. .	"	16
17. Onions .. .. .	lb.	68	42. " neck .. .. .	"	31
18. Kerosene .. .. .	gallon	17	43. Pork, leg .. .. .	"	9‡
<b>GROUP II.—DAIRY PRODUCTS.</b>			44. " loin .. .. .	"	8‡
19. Milk .. .. .	quart	300	45. " belly .. .. .	"	10‡
20. Butter .. .. .	lb.	95	46. " chops .. .. .	"	8‡
21. Cheese .. .. .	"	15	<b>GROUP IV.—HOUSE RENT.</b>		
22. Eggs .. .. .	dozen	13	47. House Rent. .. .. .	per week	46‡
23. Bacon, middles .. .	lb.	16			
24. " shoulder .. .. .	"	16			
25. Ham .. .. .	"	8			

It may here be pointed out that both in the collection of the data and computation of the results great care is exercised, and that there is reason to believe that the price-indexes are based upon more extensive data than any which have been obtained in similar investigations in other parts of the world.

In order to give some idea of the thorough manner in which the work has been performed, it may be mentioned that with regard to the 46 commodities and house rent included in this inquiry, nearly 10,500 prices and quotations are received and tabulated for the 30 towns dealt with each month. This amounts to 126,000 per annum. The complete scheme in regard to the determination of the price-indexes shewing the purchasing-power of money provides for the collection and analysis of over 140,000 separate prices and quotations each year, but owing to the difficulty in getting in all the returns regularly it was necessary to provide for a larger number of returns than was actually required.

When it is understood that this inquiry goes back for the capital towns as far as 1901, and the wholesale price inquiry (30 commodities) as far as 1871, some idea may be gathered as to the magnitude of the work involved. All the returns received are carefully examined, and in cases where the accuracy of any price or quotation is open to doubt, special inquiries are made from the person furnishing the quotation. Each return as received is compared with the previous return from the same dealer and with all other returns received for the same period. It is believed, therefore, that a high degree of accuracy is obtained in the investigations, and it is evident that personal impressions or results, not based upon an equally systematic and equally extensive inquiry, cannot be allowed weight.

**4. Other Investigations as to Price-Indexes and Cost of Living.**—While this report is concerned principally with variations in price-indexes on the lines indicated in the preceding paragraphs, it will not be out of place to refer briefly to other cognate investigations which have been carried out. These consist, as already indicated, of (i.) Annual Variations in the price index-numbers for 150 Towns, and (ii.) the cost of living according to Householders' Budget Inquiries.

(i.) *Price-Indexes in 150 Towns.*—The investigation as to variation in price-indexes in 100 towns was carried out for the months of November 1913 and November 1914. For subsequent years the number of towns from which returns are collected annually has been increased from 100 to 150. The results of the November 1913 investigation were published in Labour Bulletin No. 5, pp. 26 to 33; of the November 1914 investigation in Labour Bulletin No. 8, pp. 231 to 240; of the November 1915 investigation in Labour Bulletin No. 12, pp. 352 to 361; of the November 1916 investigation in Labour Report No. 7, pp. 393 to 402, and of November 1917 in the present issue, pp. 47 to 57. Prior to 1912 investigations were made concerning the price-indexes in the capital towns only, but during 1912 and subsequent years these investigations have been extended to 30 towns. On page 56 hereinafter comparisons are made to test the accuracy with which the results obtained from these inquiries reflect the conditions obtaining throughout the States and Commonwealth.

It will be seen on examination that the table reveals the fact that there is but little variation in the results obtained from the different sources indicated.

This approximation between the various results indicates that the index-numbers published for the capital towns only, for the years prior to 1912 and for the 30 towns for 1912 and subsequent years, probably reflect, with a substantial degree of accuracy, the variations in the purchasing-power of money, not only in each State separately, but also throughout the Commonwealth as a whole.

(ii.) *Householders' Budget Inquiries.*—The first of these was held in 1910-11, and covered a period of twelve months. The results of that investigation were published in December, 1911.\* A second was held during 1913 for the month of November only. The results of this second investigation are given in a special report, entitled "Labour Report, No. 4, Expenditure on Living in the Commonwealth, November, 1913."

**5. Purchasing-Power of Money, General Results of Investigation in each Metropolitan Town, 1901 to 1917.**—Index-numbers, computed separately for each group of commodities (and for house-rent) included in the investigation, as well as the weighted average for all groups together, are shown for the capital town of each State in the tables given hereinafter. In these tables the weighted aggregate expenditure for the whole of the capital towns in 1911 is taken as base (= 1,000), and the figures for that year (as well as other years) for the individual towns show the relative purchasing-power of money as between the respective towns. The result is that the index-numbers given herein are comparable in all respects, that is to say, they show not only the variations from year to year in each town, but they also furnish comparisons as to the relative cost in the different towns, either in any given year or as between one year and another and one town and another.

**Retail Price Index-Numbers in Metropolitan Towns, 1901 to 1917.†**

It is, of course, obvious that the index-numbers given in the separate parts of the table cannot be compared with each other in order to show the relative cost of (say) house-rent, groceries and food, since the weighted average cost for the six towns taken together in 1911 in each case is made equal to 1000, although the cost is of course not the same.

Town.	1901.	1907.	1908.	1909.	1910.	1911.	1912.	1913.	1914.	1915.	1916.	1917.
GROUP I.—GROCERIES.												
Sydney .. .. .	876	904	1,009	1,015	1,028	1,018	1,151	1,106	1,112	1,281	1,320	1,320
Melbourne .. .. .	897	817	923	895	939	924	1,061	953	990	1,222	1,210	1,188
Brisbane .. .. .	1,011	989	1,045	1,039	1,054	1,087	1,195	1,110	1,076	1,331	1,315	1,323
Adelaide .. .. .	949	903	944	991	972	958	1,138	1,039	1,061	1,310	1,274	1,210
Perth .. .. .	1,006	1,013	1,088	1,038	1,095	1,276	1,136	1,073	1,113	1,351	1,345	1,329
Hobart .. .. .	935	888	960	1,018	1,011	1,003	1,169	1,061	1,070	1,250	1,236	1,263
Weighted Average*	912	885	975	974	997	1,000	1,124	1,043	1,082	1,272	1,279	1,261

† See footnote on next page.

\* See Report on an "Inquiry into the Cost of Living in Australia, 1910-11," by G. H. Knibbs, C.M.G., etc., December, 1911. Owing to the small number of budgets returned, the deductions and tabulations based thereon are necessarily restricted.

Retail Price Index-Numbers in Metropolitan Towns, 1901 to 1917†—continued.

TOWN.	1901.	1907.	1908.	1909.	1910.	1911.	1912.	1913.	1914.	1915.	1916.	1917.
GROUP II.—DAIRY PRODUCE.												
Sydney .. .. .	881	932	1,093	1,038	976	971	1,098	1,095	1,110	1,221	1,291	1,310
Melbourne .. .	969	967	1,066	989	970	959	1,077	1,019	1,075	1,350	1,338	1,271
Brisbane .. .	833	837	953	906	973	983	1,055	1,003	995	1,277	1,287	1,294
Adelaide .. .	975	928	1,068	1,028	1,017	1,103	1,203	1,187	1,194	1,360	1,283	1,228
Perth .. .	1,290	1,200	1,289	1,251	1,238	1,241	1,320	1,262	1,244	1,475	1,434	1,406
Hobart .. .	931	955	1,016	1,017	982	994	1,102	1,109	1,177	1,439	1,334	1,313
Weighted Average*	945	955	1,082	1,023	998	1,000	1,115	1,080	1,108	1,307	1,316	1,295

GROUP III.—MEAT.												
Sydney .. .. .	1,025	994	1,000	982	977	959	1,107	1,213	1,280	1,778	2,091	2,154
Melbourne .. .	1,077	1,067	1,043	998	978	929	1,123	1,149	1,270	1,800	2,027	1,949
Brisbane .. .	1,026	1,024	1,062	967	936	935	991	965	1,169	1,649	1,766	1,667
Adelaide .. .	1,221	1,059	1,060	1,081	1,092	1,037	1,130	1,206	1,502	1,939	2,240	2,079
Perth .. .	1,378	1,511	1,482	1,479	1,535	1,577	1,643	1,607	1,488	1,722	1,997	1,913
Hobart .. .	1,225	1,279	1,262	1,303	1,276	1,221	1,321	1,400	1,493	1,789	2,217	2,274
Weighted Average*	1,101	1,074	1,069	1,040	1,024	1,000	1,144	1,108	1,323	1,781	2,056	2,022

GROUPS I., II., AND III. COMBINED.—GROCERIES AND FOOD.												
Sydney .. .. .	917	936	1,030	1,012	1,000	939	1,124	1,131	1,168	1,396	1,520	1,540
Melbourne .. .	965	925	995	949	960	935	1,082	1,024	1,091	1,411	1,462	1,412
Brisbane .. .	965	947	1,023	983	1,000	1,018	1,102	1,042	1,073	1,373	1,426	1,400
Adelaide .. .	1,028	951	1,010	1,025	1,001	1,020	1,154	1,119	1,215	1,487	1,532	1,445
Perth .. .	1,184	1,197	1,226	1,212	1,251	1,346	1,345	1,267	1,302	1,483	1,542	1,505
Hobart .. .	1,011	1,010	1,055	1,093	1,073	1,058	1,190	1,184	1,212	1,445	1,523	1,544
Weighted Average*	972	955	1,031	1,006	1,005	1,000	1,129	1,095	1,144	1,410	1,495	1,472

GROUP IV.—HOUSE RENT.												
Sydney .. .. .	858	911	922	955	968	1,090	1,183	1,246	1,279	1,220	1,212	1,215
Melbourne .. .	733	804	823	842	916	970	1,016	1,089	1,126	1,085	1,089	1,124
Brisbane .. .	458	575	616	662	700	767	804	863	882	859	847	859
Adelaide .. .	629	812	872	940	1,018	1,112	1,160	1,125	1,040	932	930	959
Perth .. .	801	684	678	667	696	810	880	925	914	848	869	874
Hobart .. .	667	708	727	749	776	805	829	887	914	928	928	951
Weighted Average*	751	816	839	867	919	1,000	1,063	1,118	1,135	1,081	1,081	1,098

ALL GROUPS COMBINED.—GROCERIES, FOOD, AND HOUSE RENT.												
Sydney .. .. .	893	926	986	989	995	1,031	1,148	1,178	1,206	1,323	1,394	1,406
Melbourne .. .	870	875	926	905	942	950	1,055	1,061	1,105	1,277	1,309	1,294
Brisbane .. .	769	794	856	851	877	915	979	969	997	1,162	1,183	1,181
Adelaide .. .	864	894	953	990	1,008	1,058	1,157	1,121	1,143	1,259	1,285	1,245
Perth .. .	1,027	996	1,001	988	1,023	1,126	1,154	1,128	1,143	1,222	1,269	1,246
Hobart .. .	869	886	920	952	951	954	1,042	1,063	1,090	1,233	1,278	1,301
Weighted Average*	880	897	951	948	970	1,000	1,101	1,104	1,140	1,278	1,324	1,318

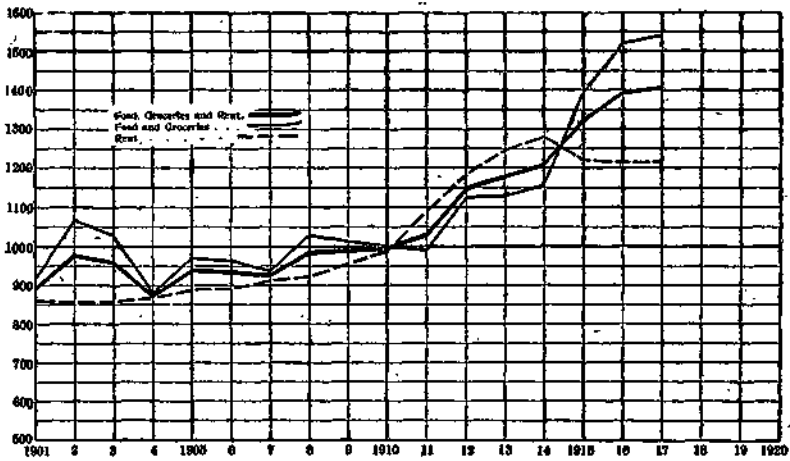
Note.—As to basis of index-numbers, see remarks on previous page.

\* For all capital towns.

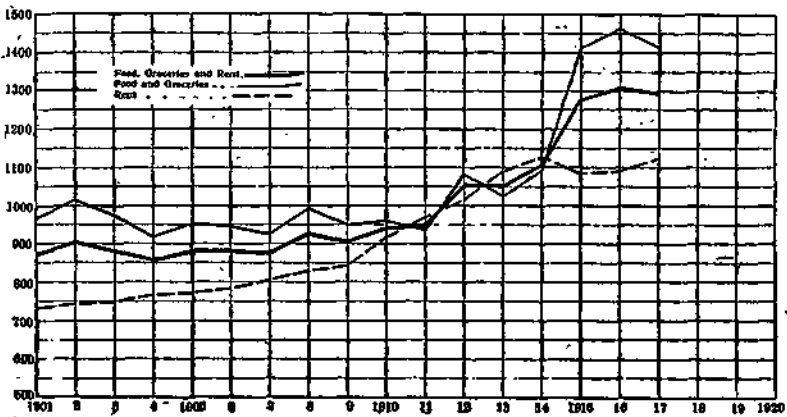
† Index-numbers for years 1902-6 are given in Labour Report No 6, p. 26.

The index-numbers for the last three groups (groceries and food, house rent, and groceries, food, and house rent combined) are shewn for each capital town, together with the weighted average for all six towns combined in the graphs on pages 28 to 30. The paragraphs on pages 30 and 31 briefly indicate the general nature of the variations in each group.

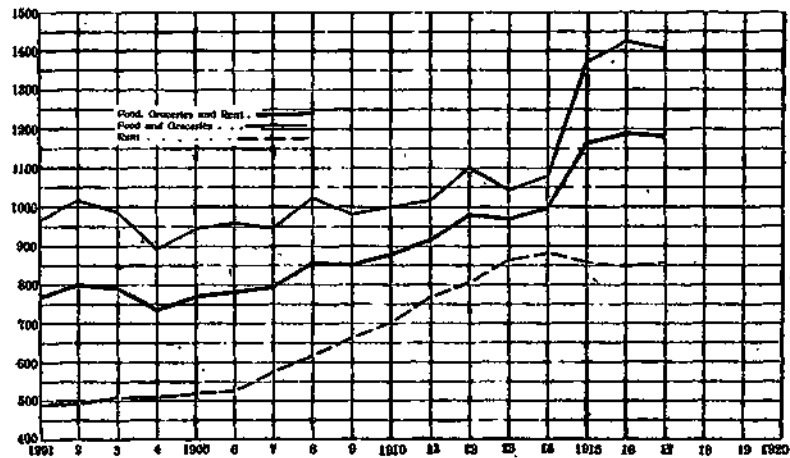
28 RETAIL PRICES, HOUSE RENT, AND PURCHASING-POWER OF MONEY.  
 GRAPHS SHEWING THE PURCHASING-POWER OF MONEY,\* METROPOLITAN  
 TOWNS, 1901 to 1917.  
 SYDNEY.



MELBOURNE.



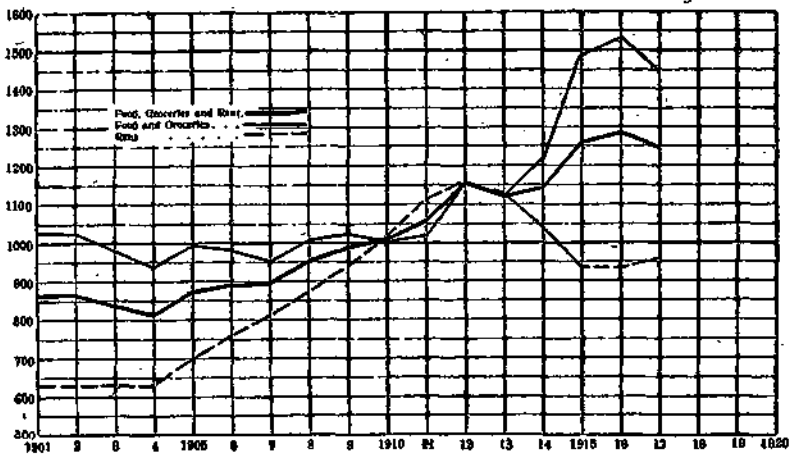
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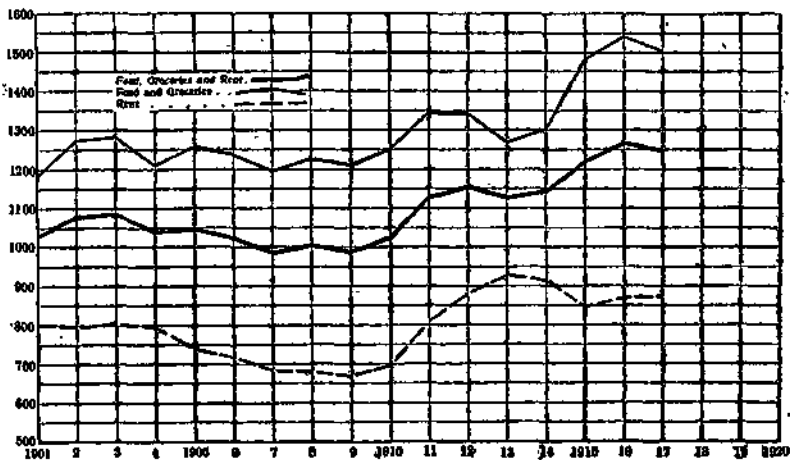
\* Based upon a constant "composite unit."



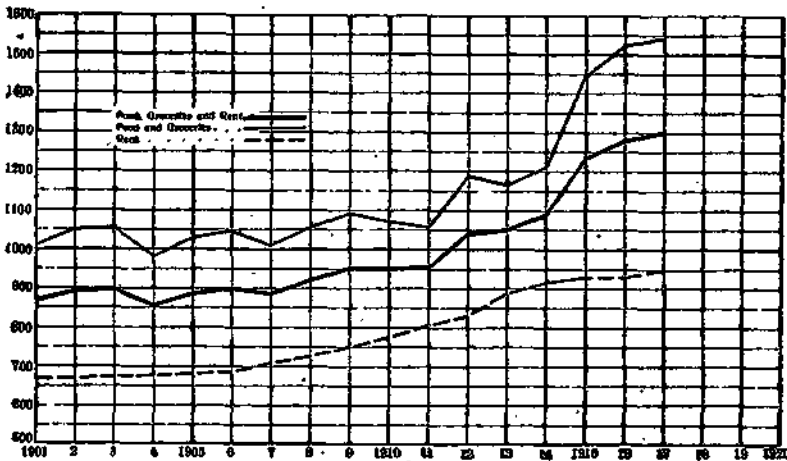
RETAIL PRICES, HOUSE RENT, AND PURCHASING-POWER OF MONEY. 29  
 GRAPHS SHEWING PURCHASING-POWER OF MONEY, METROPOLITAN TOWNS,  
 1901 TO 1917.  
 ADELAIDE.



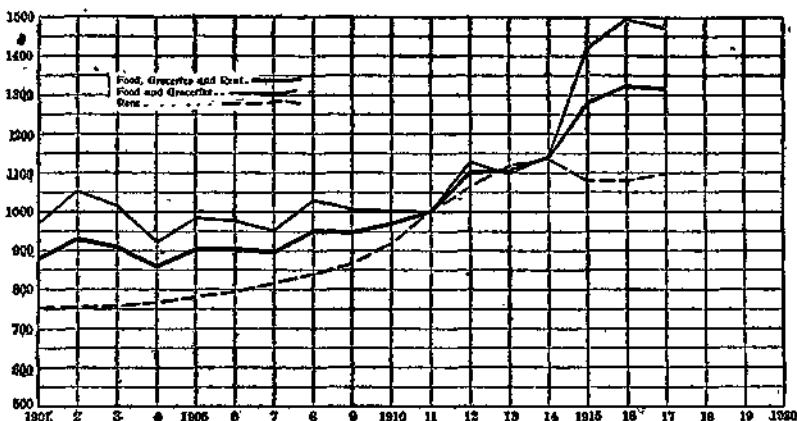
PERTH.



HOBART.



## PURCHASING-POWER OF MONEY.—WEIGHTED-AVERAGE SIX CAPITAL TOWNS, 1901 to 1917.



See footnote p. 28.

(i.) *Groceries (18 Commodities)*.—It may be seen that the index-number for this Group was higher in 1917 than in 1916 in Brisbane and Hobart, and lower in the remaining towns, the aggregate effect upon the weighted average index-number shewing a slight decrease. The increase in the weighted average index-number for all towns in 1917 compared with 1911 amounts to 26.1 per cent., and compared with 1901 to 38.3 per cent. The average cost in 1917 of the commodities included in this group was greatest in Perth and least in Melbourne.

(ii.) *Dairy Produce (7 Commodities)*.—The index-numbers for this group were higher for 1917 than for 1916 in Sydney and Brisbane, and lower in the remaining towns. The weighted average index-number for all towns in 1917 was 1.6 per cent. lower than in 1916, 29.5 per cent. higher than in 1911, and 37.0 per cent. higher than in 1901. The average cost in 1917 of the commodities in this group was highest in Perth and lowest in Adelaide.

(iii.) *Meat (21 Cuts or Joints of Butcher's Meat)*.—The index-numbers for this group were lower in 1917 than in 1916 in all the capital towns except Sydney and Hobart. The weighted average index-number for all towns taken together in 1917 was 1.7 per cent. lower than in 1916; 102.2 per cent. higher than in 1911, and 83.7 per cent. higher than in 1901. The average cost of the commodities included in this group for 1917 was greatest in Hobart and least in Brisbane.

(iv.) *Groceries and Food (Groups I., II., and III. combined)*.—The index-numbers for this combined group shew the aggregate effect upon the purchasing-power-of-money index-numbers of movements in prices of commodities, apart from variations in house rent. There was an increase in 1917 compared with the immediately preceding year in Sydney and Hobart, and a decrease in the remaining towns. During the whole of the period covered by the table on page 27 the index-numbers were higher in Perth than in any other capital town up to and including 1914. The disparity between that town and the remaining towns was greater in the earlier years of the period, and less in the later years, and for 1915 the index-number for Perth, while still

\* That is, the "composite unit" upon which these index-numbers are computed.

higher than for all the towns except Adelaide, shows less divergence from the weighted average than for any other year. In 1916 the index-number for Perth was again higher than for any other town, but in 1917 it was lower in that town than in Sydney or Hobart. Taking the weighted average for all the towns the prices of the 46 items of food and groceries specified on page 24 were 47.2 per cent. higher in 1917 than in 1911. The average cost of these items for 1917 was greatest in Hobart and least in Brisbane.

(v.) *House Rent.*—Except in Adelaide, where rents remained stationary from 1901 to 1904, and declined in 1913, and in Perth, where they decreased from 1903 to 1907, and again in 1908-9 and 1914, there was a uniform increase in each of the metropolitan towns from 1901 to 1914. The abnormal conditions arising out of the war has resulted in entirely changed conditions for the years 1915, 1916, and 1917. It will be seen that for 1915 there was a decrease in the cost of housing accommodation in all the towns except Hobart, where there was a small increase. In 1916 Melbourne and Perth shew slight increases, Sydney, Brisbane and Adelaide slight decreases, while the index-number for Hobart was the same for 1916 as for 1915. In 1917 there was an increase in the average rentals in all the towns. The weighted average index-number for 1917 is 1.6 per cent. higher than for 1916, 9.8 per cent. higher than in 1911, and 46.2 per cent. higher than in 1901. The greatest increase since 1901 has occurred in Brisbane (76.0 per cent.), followed in the order named by Melbourne (53.3 per cent.), Adelaide (52.5 per cent.), Sydney (41.6 per cent.), Hobart (42.6 per cent.), and Perth (9.1 per cent.).

(vi.) *Price Index-numbers for Food, Groceries and House Rent combined.*—The weighted average index-numbers for the combined expenditure upon the 46 items of food and groceries and housing accommodation shew a decrease of 0.5 per cent. in 1917 compared with 1916. Reference to the graph on page 65 will shew that the weighted average price index-number was lower in 1904 than in any other year during the period covered by the investigations. The index-number rose in 1905 and 1906, and fell in 1907. There was a substantial rise in 1908, followed by a slight decline in 1909. Further rises occurred in 1910 and 1911, and again in 1912, when the increase was very considerable (10.1 per cent.). The index-number for 1913 was practically the same as for 1912, but in 1914 there was a rise of 3.2 per cent., in 1915 of 12.1 per cent., and a further rise in 1916 of 3.6 per cent. As has already been stated the index-number for 1917 was slightly lower than for the immediately preceding year.

Compared with 1911, the base year of the period, the weighted average purchasing-power-of-money index-number shews an increase of 31.8 per cent. for 1917. It may further be seen that, except for the year 1909, from 1901 to 1912 inclusive, the index-number for Perth was higher than for any other capital town. In 1913, 1914, 1915, 1916 and 1917 the index-number for Sydney was the highest, and for 1917 the index-number for Perth was lower than for any other town except Brisbane and Adelaide. Attention has already been drawn in the quarterly Labour Bulletins to the fact that the increase in prices of food and groceries during 1915 was considerably less in Perth than in the remaining towns. The result of this is to alter the relative cost of food, groceries, and house-rent combined in the several towns.

**6. Index-numbers Shewing Variations in Cost of Food, Groceries and House-rent, 1912 to 1917.**—In the following tables, index-numbers are given shewing variations in the cost of food and groceries (46 commodities), in thirty of the more important towns throughout the Commonwealth at yearly and quarterly periods from 1912 to 1917. Index-numbers for food and groceries are also given for each month of 1917. In addition index-numbers shewing for these years the quarterly and yearly variations in house rents and in the combined cost of food, groceries and house-rent are given. As explained in pp. 31 and 32 of Labour Report No. 6, these are now computed to the same base as the index-numbers relating to the six capital cities, which go back to the year 1901 :—

**Food and Groceries (46 Commodities), Index-Numbers for Each of Thirty Towns, with Weighted Average of Six Capital Towns in 1911 as Base (= 1000).**

	N.S.W.—INDEX-NUMBERS.						VICTORIA—INDEX-NUMBERS.					
	Sydney.	Newcastle.	Breken Hill.	Coulbura.	Bathurst.	Weighted Average, N.S.W.	Melbourne.	Ballarat.	Bendigo.	Geelong.	Warrnambool.	Weighted Average, Victoria.
1912	1,124	1,134	1,352	1,128	1,083	1,134	1,082	1,110	1,112	1,086	1,057	1,086
1913	1,131	1,127	1,343	1,151	1,053	1,139	1,054	1,028	1,057	1,049	1,043	1,028
1914	1,156	1,142	1,363	1,174	1,094	1,164	1,091	1,038	1,092	1,039	1,074	1,091
1915	1,306	1,389	1,642	1,388	1,336	1,404	1,411	1,443	1,426	1,363	1,425	1,414
1916	1,520	1,508	1,810	1,532	1,466	1,539	1,462	1,466	1,453	1,464	1,466	1,462
1917	1,540	1,537	1,778	1,490	1,483	1,548	1,412	1,401	1,407	1,419	1,429	1,412
1912 1st Qtr.	1,036	1,092	1,295	1,033	995	1,048	988	1,001	998	1,002	976	990
2nd "	1,090	1,099	1,323	1,070	1,056	1,100	1,069	1,056	1,102	1,056	1,042	1,069
3rd "	1,195	1,195	1,373	1,154	1,136	1,201	1,156	1,170	1,176	1,132	1,115	1,157
4th "	1,176	1,180	1,410	1,258	1,144	1,187	1,113	1,211	1,175	1,154	1,097	1,128
1913 1st Qtr.	1,136	1,124	1,329	1,189	1,060	1,143	1,036	1,055	1,101	1,085	1,051	1,043
2nd "	1,158	1,147	1,381	1,189	1,083	1,166	1,040	1,049	1,093	1,072	1,087	1,046
3rd "	1,128	1,124	1,321	1,118	1,036	1,134	1,021	1,013	1,037	1,030	1,087	1,022
4th "	1,104	1,112	1,343	1,100	1,034	1,114	999	996	999	1,009	1,018	999
1914 1st Qtr.	1,150	1,110	1,340	1,134	1,065	1,153	1,028	1,029	1,043	1,038	1,034	1,030
2nd "	1,163	1,153	1,423	1,201	1,131	1,173	1,118	1,090	1,115	1,133	1,073	1,116
3rd "	1,154	1,148	1,393	1,177	1,095	1,163	1,101	1,113	1,109	1,096	1,089	1,102
4th "	1,156	1,154	1,375	1,184	1,092	1,164	1,115	1,113	1,126	1,126	1,100	1,116
1915 1st Qtr.	1,231	1,233	1,488	1,222	1,132	1,241	1,186	1,202	1,201	1,178	1,162	1,187
2nd "	1,266	1,293	1,605	1,299	1,254	1,300	1,382	1,411	1,389	1,348	1,377	1,383
3rd "	1,536	1,506	1,721	1,518	1,463	1,540	1,584	1,627	1,634	1,557	1,628	1,560
4th "	1,530	1,522	1,753	1,512	1,455	1,537	1,401	1,531	1,493	1,489	1,538	1,494
1916 1st Qtr.	1,566	1,582	1,784	1,538	1,454	1,570	1,510	1,503	1,504	1,499	1,502	1,509
2nd "	1,517	1,496	1,827	1,543	1,479	1,528	1,483	1,501	1,479	1,506	1,484	1,485
3rd "	1,510	1,509	1,816	1,393	1,468	1,523	1,448	1,449	1,417	1,440	1,468	1,447
4th "	1,485	1,494	1,817	1,511	1,463	1,500	1,407	1,412	1,411	1,400	1,408	1,407
1917 1st Qtr.	1,499	1,518	1,804	1,522	1,467	1,513	1,395	1,400	1,396	1,405	1,415	1,396
2nd "	1,506	1,523	1,809	1,481	1,471	1,520	1,412	1,403	1,425	1,438	1,435	1,414
3rd "	1,588	1,548	1,743	1,460	1,487	1,667	1,419	1,392	1,415	1,418	1,435	1,417
4th "	1,566	1,555	1,754	1,496	1,506	1,671	1,422	1,408	1,395	1,416	1,430	1,419
1917												
January	1,481	1,512	1,814	1,528	1,468	1,498	1,394	1,401	1,396	1,395	1,399	1,395
February	1,505	1,527	1,804	1,536	1,471	1,519	1,398	1,400	1,398	1,400	1,425	1,399
March	1,510	1,514	1,795	1,508	1,463	1,522	1,393	1,400	1,390	1,413	1,420	1,395
April	1,513	1,527	1,806	1,507	1,461	1,525	1,410	1,401	1,403	1,446	1,431	1,411
May	1,499	1,527	1,814	1,376	1,473	1,514	1,409	1,406	1,432	1,432	1,436	1,412
June	1,507	1,529	1,807	1,458	1,480	1,520	1,418	1,403	1,440	1,434	1,438	1,419
July	1,510	1,535	1,780	1,440	1,481	1,522	1,426	1,398	1,438	1,422	1,437	1,425
August	1,624	1,556	1,733	1,469	1,481	1,619	1,419	1,391	1,412	1,428	1,430	1,417
September	1,629	1,552	1,716	1,471	1,499	1,622	1,414	1,385	1,394	1,399	1,439	1,410
October	1,599	1,563	1,726	1,467	1,509	1,598	1,417	1,401	1,393	1,406	1,417	1,414
November	1,567	1,554	1,755	1,494	1,503	1,572	1,426	1,411	1,396	1,424	1,429	1,423
December	1,533	1,549	1,780	1,527	1,504	1,544	1,423	1,411	1,396	1,417	1,443	1,421

Index-numbers for each of the months of 1912, 1913, 1914 and 1915 are given on p.p 33-5 of Labour Report, No. 6, and for 1917 on pp. 371-3 of Labour Report No. 7.

Food and Groceries (46 Commodities), Index-Numbers for Each of Thirty Towns, with Weighted Average of Six Capital Towns, in 1911 as Base (= 1000)—cont.

	QUEENSLAND—INDEX-NUMBERS.						SOUTH AUSTRALIA—INDEX-NUMBERS.					
	Brisbane.	Toowoomba.	Rock-hampton.	Charter Towers.	Warwick.	Weighted Average, Queensland.	Adelaide.	Kadina.	Port Pirie.	Mt. Gambier.	Petersburg.	Weighted Average, S.A.
1912	1,102	1,100	1,142	1,292	1,144	1,123	1,154	1,154	1,195	1,031	1,160	1,152
1913	1,042	1,045	1,067	1,212	1,073	1,060	1,119	1,139	1,161	1,021	1,108	1,119
1914	1,078	1,088	1,145	1,266	1,088	1,102	1,215	1,210	1,247	1,062	1,268	1,212
1915	1,373	1,405	1,429	1,546	1,372	1,306	1,487	1,506	1,560	1,382	1,504	1,489
1916	1,426	1,432	1,530	1,590	1,422	1,432	1,532	1,583	1,604	1,467	1,593	1,537
1917	1,405	1,390	1,427	1,574	1,413	1,420	1,445	1,535	1,579	1,422	1,552	1,467
1912 1st Qtr.	1,095	1,115	1,166	1,295	1,132	1,122	1,100	1,108	1,162	976	1,125	1,100
2nd "	1,095	1,100	1,148	1,294	1,156	1,119	1,147	1,147	1,202	1,017	1,134	1,145
3rd "	1,105	1,098	1,125	1,238	1,159	1,132	1,192	1,179	1,201	1,063	1,190	1,158
4th "	1,111	1,095	1,132	1,299	1,128	1,128	1,177	1,193	1,213	1,069	1,193	1,176
1913 1st Qtr.	1,036	1,018	1,064	1,233	1,079	1,055	1,123	1,140	1,155	1,018	1,109	1,122
2nd "	1,060	1,047	1,074	1,231	1,116	1,076	1,145	1,161	1,183	1,037	1,118	1,144
3rd "	1,040	1,054	1,052	1,192	1,058	1,056	1,117	1,137	1,162	1,039	1,117	1,118
4th "	1,035	1,038	1,073	1,191	1,041	1,055	1,090	1,119	1,142	989	1,038	1,091
1914 1st Qtr.	1,044	1,078	1,110	1,218	1,090	1,070	1,147	1,146	1,161	1,030	1,166	1,144
2nd "	1,058	1,056	1,125	1,255	1,073	1,082	1,250	1,252	1,255	1,066	1,291	1,246
3rd "	1,085	1,069	1,161	1,252	1,078	1,105	1,229	1,231	1,283	1,067	1,310	1,258
4th "	1,124	1,151	1,186	1,388	1,114	1,151	1,233	1,209	1,289	1,084	1,294	1,231
1915 1st Qtr.	1,193	1,228	1,261	1,423	1,221	1,223	1,315	1,328	1,402	1,189	1,353	1,317
2nd "	1,318	1,360	1,361	1,553	1,360	1,347	1,506	1,522	1,558	1,395	1,515	1,506
3rd "	1,450	1,433	1,466	1,549	1,422	1,483	1,602	1,624	1,673	1,498	1,607	1,603
4th "	1,531	1,549	1,630	1,860	1,484	1,552	1,626	1,652	1,612	1,445	1,540	1,529
1916 1st Qtr.	1,551	1,554	1,663	1,678	1,523	1,572	1,550	1,591	1,648	1,481	1,598	1,556
2nd "	1,456	1,453	1,580	1,645	1,440	1,484	1,574	1,610	1,643	1,512	1,630	1,578
3rd "	1,356	1,383	1,447	1,530	1,373	1,383	1,521	1,579	1,565	1,461	1,584	1,525
4th "	1,341	1,338	1,431	1,539	1,353	1,367	1,469	1,548	1,561	1,426	1,568	1,477
1917 1st Qtr.	1,349	1,308	1,384	1,542	1,335	1,304	1,476	1,564	1,583	1,419	1,560	1,485
2nd "	1,373	1,352	1,409	1,570	1,374	1,391	1,469	1,572	1,605	1,441	1,586	1,482
3rd "	1,419	1,404	1,440	1,575	1,440	1,433	1,402	1,494	1,552	1,408	1,521	1,416
4th "	1,480	1,493	1,473	1,610	1,508	1,492	1,432	1,511	1,573	1,410	1,539	1,444
1917..												
January ..	1,340	1,300	1,369	1,531	1,330	1,355	1,467	1,558	1,573	1,407	1,556	1,477
February ..	1,353	1,311	1,391	1,549	1,332	1,368	1,480	1,566	1,582	1,423	1,560	1,489
March ..	1,355	1,312	1,393	1,545	1,342	1,370	1,480	1,569	1,594	1,426	1,584	1,490
April ..	1,364	1,323	1,400	1,573	1,348	1,381	1,485	1,570	1,600	1,438	1,573	1,495
May ..	1,375	1,360	1,404	1,582	1,369	1,394	1,480	1,573	1,603	1,445	1,584	1,491
June ..	1,380	1,372	1,424	1,555	1,406	1,399	1,441	1,571	1,613	1,441	1,602	1,458
July ..	1,389	1,383	1,420	1,583	1,400	1,408	1,399	1,524	1,565	1,418	1,537	1,416
August ..	1,414	1,380	1,427	1,569	1,409	1,426	1,401	1,486	1,558	1,411	1,617	1,415
September ..	1,453	1,440	1,474	1,572	1,511	1,465	1,407	1,471	1,533	1,396	1,508	1,418
October ..	1,485	1,527	1,474	1,619	1,523	1,500	1,410	1,485	1,551	1,402	1,512	1,430
November ..	1,476	1,519	1,467	1,622	1,507	1,492	1,440	1,497	1,566	1,404	1,542	1,449
December ..	1,480	1,447	1,477	1,587	1,478	1,485	1,437	1,549	1,607	1,452	1,565	1,453

Index-numbers for each of the months of 1912, 1913, 1914 and 1915 are given on p.p 33-5 of Labour Report, No. 6, and for 1917 on pp. 371-3 Labour Report No. 7.

Food and Groceries (46 Commodities), Index-Numbers for Each of Thirty Towns, with Weighted Average of Six Capital Towns in 1911 as Base (= 1000)—cont.

	WESTERN AUSTRALIA—INDEX-NUMBERS.						TASMANIA—INDEX-NUMBERS.						Weighted Average of 6 Capital Towns.	Weighted Average of 30 Towns in W. A.
	Perth.	Kalgoorlie.	Midland Junction and Guildford.	Bunbury.	Geraldton.	Weighted Average, W. A.	Hobart.	Launceston.	Zeehan.	Beaconsfield.	Queenstown.	Weighted Average, Tasmania.		
1912	1,345	1,677	1,370	1,403	1,410	1,418	1,190	1,125	1,302	1,201	1,289	1,182	1,129	1,140
1913	1,267	1,607	1,301	1,352	1,386	1,344	1,164	1,073	1,268	1,181	1,291	1,149	1,149	1,166
1914	1,302	1,654	1,323	1,393	1,453	1,392	1,212	1,130	1,290	1,205	1,305	1,205	1,196	1,155
1915	1,483	1,809	1,516	1,580	1,659	1,559	1,445	1,406	1,571	1,512	1,581	1,450	1,416	1,428
1916	1,542	1,823	1,570	1,666	1,652	1,608	1,523	1,504	1,652	1,611	1,661	1,535	1,495	1,506
1917	1,565	1,790	1,520	1,652	1,626	1,571	1,544	1,510	1,638	1,615	1,647	1,548	1,472	1,481
1912 1st Qtr.	1,301	1,659	1,310	1,365	1,338	1,378	1,093	1,021	1,225	1,082	1,192	1,083	1,049	1,065
2nd "	1,408	1,730	1,435	1,441	1,439	1,477	1,146	1,110	1,276	1,159	1,272	1,149	1,111	1,125
3rd "	1,368	1,671	1,406	1,438	1,435	1,435	1,235	1,171	1,329	1,237	1,341	1,226	1,186	1,194
4th "	1,303	1,650	1,364	1,373	1,429	1,382	1,288	1,189	1,378	1,327	1,352	1,267	1,160	1,176
1913 1st Qtr.	1,275	1,595	1,298	1,349	1,384	1,346	1,158	1,062	1,259	1,182	1,280	1,142	1,100	1,113
2nd "	1,299	1,621	1,334	1,370	1,407	1,372	1,188	1,090	1,287	1,205	1,331	1,171	1,117	1,129
3rd "	1,248	1,622	1,298	1,359	1,387	1,334	1,170	1,096	1,266	1,194	1,289	1,157	1,081	1,101
4th "	1,245	1,580	1,274	1,328	1,368	1,323	1,139	1,051	1,259	1,143	1,262	1,125	1,076	1,082
1914 1st Qtr.	1,245	1,580	1,260	1,330	1,399	1,320	1,162	1,075	1,245	1,140	1,285	1,146	1,104	1,115
2nd "	1,296	1,617	1,315	1,373	1,429	1,368	1,231	1,133	1,280	1,193	1,312	1,206	1,158	1,168
3rd "	1,536	1,693	1,356	1,431	1,482	1,417	1,212	1,143	1,294	1,232	1,311	1,201	1,151	1,163
4th "	1,330	1,727	1,362	1,440	1,503	1,420	1,243	1,170	1,342	1,245	1,311	1,230	1,181	1,174
1915 1st Qtr.	1,420	1,747	1,473	1,483	1,596	1,496	1,293	1,225	1,377	1,302	1,404	1,283	1,235	1,248
2nd "	1,568	1,796	1,581	1,596	1,688	1,576	1,413	1,343	1,510	1,431	1,523	1,405	1,364	1,378
3rd "	1,546	1,822	1,571	1,654	1,711	1,623	1,541	1,528	1,713	1,647	1,679	1,559	1,554	1,563
4th "	1,460	1,812	1,488	1,536	1,641	1,542	1,534	1,523	1,684	1,668	1,717	1,555	1,512	1,524
1916 1st Qtr.	1,504	1,823	1,532	1,610	1,678	1,578	1,593	1,544	1,692	1,628	1,687	1,590	1,540	1,549
2nd "	1,564	1,825	1,557	1,654	1,676	1,623	1,555	1,539	1,690	1,652	1,701	1,569	1,510	1,523
3rd "	1,580	1,851	1,622	1,737	1,856	1,644	1,489	1,475	1,635	1,605	1,654	1,507	1,479	1,482
4th "	1,520	1,794	1,568	1,656	1,598	1,584	1,452	1,456	1,593	1,559	1,600	1,474	1,448	1,459
1917 1st Qtr.	1,500	1,755	1,526	1,648	1,609	1,560	1,493	1,491	1,599	1,567	1,596	1,507	1,448	1,459
2nd "	1,555	1,780	1,572	1,725	1,631	1,609	1,481	1,487	1,610	1,594	1,622	1,503	1,461	1,473
3rd "	1,485	1,790	1,496	1,671	1,620	1,557	1,533	1,503	1,632	1,629	1,622	1,540	1,487	1,493
4th "	1,480	1,834	1,485	1,562	1,643	1,559	1,670	1,560	1,709	1,670	1,708	1,640	1,491	1,500
1917														
January ..	1,494	1,791	1,533	1,637	1,602	1,564	1,527	1,501	1,608	1,560	1,592	1,528	1,440	1,453
February ..	1,500	1,742	1,522	1,653	1,612	1,558	1,482	1,494	1,603	1,564	1,600	1,502	1,452	1,462
March ..	1,505	1,731	1,524	1,655	1,613	1,559	1,471	1,479	1,586	1,568	1,605	1,491	1,452	1,462
April ..	1,535	1,740	1,552	1,677	1,621	1,584	1,476	1,485	1,597	1,580	1,598	1,496	1,462	1,473
May ..	1,586	1,799	1,593	1,753	1,630	1,636	1,471	1,473	1,610	1,587	1,625	1,494	1,460	1,473
June ..	1,543	1,802	1,566	1,745	1,642	1,605	1,497	1,497	1,625	1,615	1,643	1,517	1,460	1,473
July ..	1,510	1,794	1,512	1,727	1,622	1,577	1,609	1,495	1,623	1,610	1,641	1,518	1,458	1,470
August ..	1,478	1,792	1,483	1,665	1,610	1,551	1,533	1,502	1,629	1,606	1,655	1,539	1,499	1,502
September ..	1,467	1,786	1,492	1,620	1,631	1,542	1,566	1,513	1,633	1,670	1,689	1,569	1,504	1,506
October ..	1,483	1,838	1,496	1,569	1,628	1,563	1,620	1,532	1,666	1,635	1,704	1,601	1,500	1,506
November ..	1,480	1,847	1,482	1,567	1,642	1,562	1,696	1,577	1,725	1,689	1,711	1,661	1,494	1,503
December ..	1,477	1,817	1,474	1,550	1,659	1,553	1,694	1,572	1,736	1,665	1,709	1,658	1,480	1,492

Index-numbers for each of the months of 1912, 1913, 1914 and 1915 are given on p. 33-5 of Labour Report, No. 6, and for 1917 on pp. 371-3 of Labour Report No. 7.

House Rents. Index-Numbers for Each of Thirty Towns, with Weighted Average of Six Capital Towns in 1911 as Base (= 1000).

	N.S.W.—INDEX-NUMBERS.						VICTORIA—INDEX-NUMBERS.					
	Sydney.	Newcastle.	Broken Hill.*	Goulburn.	Bathurst.	Weighted Average, N.S.W.	Melbourne.	Ballarat.	Bendigo.	Geelong.	Warrnambool.	Weighted Average, Victoria.
1912 1st Qtr.	1116	970	831	927	939	1050	966	669	645	844	766	932
2nd "	1169	670	948	927	639	1097	1002	677	674	844	766	949
3rd "	1290	714	714	989	708	1188	1081	697	657	858	736	968
4th "	1218	743	782	931	708	1188	1087	582	670	867	709	978
1913 1st Qtr.	1222	773	765	939	755	1156	1069	626	646	859	780	999
2nd "	1244	792	770	1,020	774	1,176	1,086	632	671	859	776	1,014
3rd "	1246	782	796	1,010	836	1,180	1,099	632	675	865	779	1,025
4th "	1275	783	780	1,010	843	1,204	1,105	690	679	869	779	1,030.
1914 1st Qtr.	1273	783	779	1,057	867	1,203	1,130	644	678	859	786	999
2nd "	1286	783	780	1,080	846	1,214	1,144	644	678	864	778	1,041
3rd "	1286	783	741	1,080	834	1,212	1,147	644	678	808	784	1,064
4th "	1271	783	109	1,093	800	1,176	1,093	643	650	905	781	1,021
1915 1st Qtr.	1229	811	238	1,093	772	1,144	1,087	654	679	879	786	1,019
2nd "	1219	811	238	1,098	772	1,140	1,087	638	657	880	789	1,016
3rd "	1219	793	293	1,098	772	1,138	1,079	634	651	880	789	1,016
4th "	1213	786	360	1,161	767	1,136	1,081	634	651	876	757	1,009
1916 1st Qtr.	1208	779	393	1,048	767	1,131	1,088	640	644	902	774	1,016
2nd "	1214	779	424	1,100	768	1,139	1,085	638	644	901	784	1,013
3rd "	1214	784	421	1,115	766	1,140	1,088	638	644	901	788	1,015
4th "	1213	770	658	1,008	768	1,145	1,097	634	653	901	788	1,022
1917 1st Qtr.	1213	771	630	1,107	783	1,144	1,111	628	631	897	794	1,037
2nd "	1213	770	646	1,134	781	1,147	1,111	628	631	897	793	1,035
3rd "	1213	771	660	1,124	782	1,146	1,118	628	630	897	794	1,040
4th "	1223	771	669	1,123	782	1,136	1,143	628	633	897	794	1,064
QUEENSLAND—INDEX-NUMBERS.												
	Brisbane.	Toowoomba.	Rock-hampton.	Charters Towers.	Warwick.	Weighted Average, Queensland.	Adelaide.	Kadina, Moolta and Wallaroo.	Port Pirie.*	Mt. Gambier.	Petersburg.	Weighted Average, S.A.
1912 1st Qtr.	804	580	705	601	503	737	1,180	576	541	650	603	1,024
1913 1st Qtr.	868	731	758	592	570	710	1,125	598	736	678	604	1,034
1914 1st Qtr.	889	753	742	586	468	686	1,040	602	750	679	602	1,024
1915 1st Qtr.	856	734	756	538	429	808	932	612	615	718	846	801
1916 1st Qtr.	847	705	766	584	432	796	980	660	750	731	809	829
1917 1st Qtr.	856	724	788	632	711	845	959	701	824	716	760	929
1912 1st Qtr.	802	839	690	611	502	777	1,185	589	734	641	605	1,091
2nd "	804	829	690	600	497	785	1,172	580	724	641	605	1,087
3rd "	804	781	710	597	512	770	1,180	587	738	641	605	1,086
4th "	802	780	730	597	502	773	1,185	585	737	667	602	1,072
1913 1st Qtr.	840	773	748	587	502	801	1,148	573	728	667	603	1,078
2nd "	840	742	700	594	522	818	1,147	582	712	676	603	1,070
3rd "	840	737	700	585	519	816	1,148	586	708	672	603	1,070
4th "	831	730	703	593	547	830	1,093	599	808	665	603	1,038
1914 1st Qtr.	821	746	757	588	547	824	1,075	579	823	708	606	1,023
2nd "	821	745	748	582	547	821	1,069	574	844	722	610	1,021
3rd "	821	783	749	582	547	838	1,082	584	844	737	613	1,021
4th "	821	783	767	583	547	816	1,082	591	844	736	613	1,021
1915 1st Qtr.	853	758	767	587	627	804	1,042	588	607	713	607	899
2nd "	853	758	766	588	630	814	1,024	583	607	716	605	883
3rd "	853	743	752	585	628	809	1,029	584	607	711	609	883
4th "	853	739	752	588	628	805	931	581	607	722	609	890
1916 1st Qtr.	841	730	752	580	630	793	942	586	607	727	606	892
2nd "	844	700	710	583	630	783	929	601	607	715	605	885
3rd "	845	670	710	583	630	783	929	601	607	715	605	885
4th "	853	719	710	583	630	804	934	609	607	732	609	892
1917 1st Qtr.	855	717	786	620	684	810	958	677	818	760	621	921
2nd "	861	728	786	623	683	816	938	706	820	760	621	921
3rd "	861	758	786	636	714	817	909	708	820	760	621	921
4th "	830	723	780	649	714	817	909	714	820	760	621	921

\* See Remarks re House Rents on p. 41.

House Rents. Index-Numbers for Each of Thirty Towns, with Weighted Average of Six Capital Towns in 1911 as Base (= 1000)—cont.

		WESTERN AUSTRALIA—INDEX-NUMBERS.						TASMANIA—INDEX-NUMBERS.							
		Perth.	Kalgoorlie.	Mids and Junction and Guildford.	Bunbury.	Geraldton.	Weighted Average, W.A.	Hobart.	Launceston.	Zeehan.	Bassonsfield.	Queenstown.	Weighted Average, Tasmania.	Weighted Average of Six Capital Towns.	Weighted Average of 30 Towns, C'wealth.
1912		880	848	757	674	1,033	866	829	819	450	291	557	769	1,063	894
1913		928	786	814	696	1,077	892	857	820	442	264	557	804	1,118	1,042
1914		914	770	790	707	1,117	879	914	847	335	241	614	820	1,135	1,054
1915		848	809	757	641	995	834	828	879	295	244	673	839	1,081	1,006
1916		869	838	732	587	970	851	828	893	296	208	686	843	1,080	1,008
1917		874	836	708	537	953	852	951	895	288	200	627	852	1,098	1,026
1912	1st Qtr.	850	865	721	675	1,009	847	812	821	450	301	562	761	1,025	898
	2nd "	859	865	727	676	1,009	854	817	821	450	301	562	764	1,056	896
	3rd "	900	830	785	670	1,083	879	841	810	450	287	553	772	1,089	1,013
	4th "	913	814	796	677	1,029	884	847	824	451	273	549	779	1,088	1,014
1913	1st Qtr.	814	839	811	682	1,063	891	902	828	461	264	558	809	1,102	1,029
	2nd "	824	773	815	691	1,082	886	888	825	461	264	556	802	1,117	1,041
	3rd "	830	774	815	697	1,080	891	884	827	461	264	552	800	1,120	1,045
	4th "	847	760	814	715	1,084	900	901	828	383	264	563	806	1,135	1,055
1914	1st Qtr.	921	704	795	712	1,130	883	904	834	375	264	560	809	1,135	1,056
	2nd "	923	770	795	724	1,151	886	911	843	348	248	622	817	1,148	1,068
	3rd "	917	770	795	702	1,177	883	919	856	313	245	635	825	1,147	1,067
	4th "	896	770	775	690	1,011	862	924	856	305	244	636	827	1,110	1,027
1915	1st Qtr.	869	806	756	693	1,019	851*	923	856	300	244	636	827	1,068	1,010
	2nd "	843	817	753	658	992	833	929	887	300	244	626	843	1,061	1,006
	3rd "	859	804	759	641	987	826	929	887	300	244	626	843	1,078	1,003
	4th "	842	807	759	572	981	827	931	867	297	244	626	844	1,077	1,003
1916	1st Qtr.	870	838	738	569	978	852	920	892	290	210	626	838	1,077	1,004
	2nd "	869	837	734	569	992	851	924	893	291	210	626	841	1,078	1,006
	3rd "	868	839	736	570	972	851	928	893	301	210	626	843	1,080	1,010
	4th "	868	839	719	559	959	849	940	891	301	210	626	843	1,084	1,014
1917	1st Qtr.	872	835	711	542	959	851	945	892	301	198	623	848	1,092	1,021
	2nd "	872	837	707	542	950	851	951	893	290	199	623	851	1,092	1,021
	3rd "	875	837	707	536	950	852	953*	895	280	199	626	852	1,099	1,027
	4th "	875	837	708	526	952	853	956	899	280	205	626	855	1,109	1,036

Purchasing-Power of Money. (Food, Groceries and House Rent Combined). Index-Numbers for each of Thirty Towns, with Weighted Average for Six Capital Towns in 1911 as Base (= 1000).

		N.S.W.—INDEX-NUMBERS.						VICTORIA—INDEX-NUMBERS.					
		Sydney.	Newcastle.	Broken Hill.*	Goulburn.	Bathurst.	Weighted Average, N.S.W.	Melbourne.	Ballarat.	Bendigo.	Geelong.	Warrnambool.	Weighted Average, Victoria.
1912		1,148	955	1,080	1,042	919	1,125	1,055	914	926	996	935	1,033
1913		1,178	986	1,110	1,087	950	1,155	1,051	865	900	972	924	1,023
1914		1,206	994	1,068	1,130	987	1,179	1,055	904	922	1,012	959	1,073
1915		1,223	1,147	1,085	1,274	1,104	1,205	1,277	1,111	1,110	1,182	1,157	1,249
1916		1,304	1,208	1,282	1,350	1,178	1,370	1,300	1,126	1,118	1,233	1,185	1,270
1917		1,407	1,222	1,315	1,338	1,198	1,383	1,294	1,083	1,093	1,221	1,168	1,282
1912	1st Qtr.	1,069	901	1,022	989	857	1,049	987	865	853	937	890	966
	2nd "	1,123	923	1,049	1,011	893	1,099	1,041	901	922	981	929	1,020
	3rd "	1,209	997	1,102	1,045	950	1,181	1,105	939	962	1,081	959	1,083
	4th "	1,194	1,000	1,140	1,123	965	1,171	1,086	952	968	1,036	963	1,045
1913	1st Qtr.	1,171	980	1,093	1,086	935	1,148	1,049	878	923	992	940	1,026
	2nd "	1,192	1,001	1,130	1,120	956	1,170	1,059	878	920	984	947	1,033
	3rd "	1,176	988	1,108	1,074	954	1,153	1,053	857	886	962	930	1,023
	4th "	1,174	977	1,111	1,069	956	1,151	1,043	846	867	947	920	1,012
1914	1st Qtr.	1,201	976	1,109	1,102	979	1,174	1,066	870	801	952	940	1,034
	2nd "	1,214	1,001	1,158	1,142	1,008	1,190	1,128	907	936	1,040	965	1,095
	3rd "	1,208	998	1,125	1,129	988	1,183	1,120	900	932	1,020	964	1,088
	4th "	1,203	1,001	879	1,146	975	1,169	1,106	920	930	1,035	969	1,077
1915	1st Qtr.	1,229	1,060	968	1,169	1,013	1,201	1,147	970	976	1,055	1,008	1,116
	2nd "	1,259	1,095	1,066	1,217	1,056	1,234	1,261	1,094	1,088	1,155	1,135	1,232
	3rd "	1,406	1,213	1,134	1,346	1,173	1,375	1,377	1,219	1,230	1,278	1,271	1,351
	4th "	1,400	1,219	1,181	1,364	1,172	1,372	1,322	1,162	1,147	1,237	1,214	1,295
1916	1st Qtr.	1,419	1,233	1,212	1,336	1,172	1,389	1,337	1,148	1,151	1,254	1,203	1,306
	2nd "	1,393	1,202	1,263	1,362	1,185	1,368	1,319	1,146	1,136	1,258	1,196	1,291
	3rd "	1,388	1,212	1,325	1,361	1,180	1,368	1,300	1,110	1,095	1,221	1,183	1,289
	4th "	1,374	1,217	1,327	1,341	1,175	1,354	1,230	1,092	1,092	1,195	1,163	1,240
1917	1st Qtr.	1,381	1,211	1,322	1,352	1,178	1,381	1,280	1,083	1,077	1,213	1,159	1,249
	2nd "	1,386	1,217	1,321	1,334	1,183	1,366	1,288	1,084	1,100	1,232	1,171	1,258
	3rd "	1,434	1,229	1,366	1,322	1,197	1,406	1,390	1,078	1,096	1,221	1,172	1,286
	4th "	1,425	1,233	1,308	1,344	1,208	1,400	1,308	1,087	1,098	1,219	1,169	1,273

\* See remarks re House Rent on page 41.





(i.) *Food and Groceries (46 commodities).*—Information as to variations in prices of Group I. (Groceries), Group II. (Dairy Produce), and Group III. (Meat) are collected monthly, and in the tables on pp. 32 to 34 the index-numbers for the combined expenditure on the three groups are given at yearly, quarterly, and monthly intervals.

(ii.) *House Rent.*—Information as to variations in housing accommodation is collected quarterly, and index-numbers at yearly and quarterly periods are given in the tables on pp. 35 and 36.

(iii.) *Food, Groceries, and House Rent combined.*—The tables on pp. 36 and 37 furnish comparisons in the form of index-numbers of the variations in the combined expenditure on the 46 items of food and groceries and housing accommodation at yearly and quarterly periods for 1912 to 1917 inclusive. It should be observed that the index-numbers in these tables are comparable in every respect in so far as they relate to the capital towns with those given on page 27 for the respective groups, and where they relate to the same period are of course identical in both tables. Thus for the years 1912 to 1917 inclusive, the index-numbers for the six capital towns are (as they should be) the same in both sets of tables.

The last columns in each of the above tables refer to the weighted average for the thirty towns. The method of computing these weighted average index-numbers is explained in Report No. 1, page 35. The population weights used in the computations are as follows —

**Population Weights used in Computation of Index-Numbers shewing Cost of Living in different Towns, with weighted average for all Towns as Base (= 1000):**

Town.	Weight.	Town.	Weight.	Town.	Weight.	Town.	Weight.	Town.	Weight.	Town.	Weight.
Sydney	633	Melbourne	590	Brisbane	140	Adelaide	190	Perth, etc.	105	Hobart	42
Newcastle	62	Ballarat	53	T'woomba	20	Kadina, etc.	12	Kalg'lie, etc.	81	Launceston	25
Br'ken Hill	31	Bendigo	44	R'k'hamton	21	Pt. Pirie	11	Mid. J'n., etc.	7	Q'ntown	4
Goulburn	13	Geelong	34	Chrs' Twrs	17	Mt. Gamb'r	7	Bunbury	4	Zeelan	4
Bathurst	9	W'nambo'l	9	Warwick	6	Petersburg	3	Geraldton	4	Beac'nfield	3

(iv.) *Care to Avoid Erroneous Comparisons.*—It is, of course, obvious that the index-numbers given in the separate parts of the table cannot be directly compared with each other, in order to shew the relative cost of (say) house rent and groceries and food, since the weighted average cost in 1911 is in each case made equal to 1000, although the cost is, of course, not the same.

**7. Relative Cost of Food and Groceries and Housing Accommodation in Different Towns, 1917.**—The figures given in the following table shew the relative index-numbers for 1917 in the thirty towns for which particulars are regularly collected. The index-numbers are comparable in all respects, and further, it will be observed that the index-numbers in the last column of the table are identical for each town with

those given in the table on pages 36-7 for the year 1917. The first column gives the relative expenditure on groceries and food. The second, third, fourth, and fifth columns give comparative information with regard to expenditure on house rent for houses of four, five, and six rooms, and for all houses respectively, while the remaining columns give similar information for food and groceries, combined with house rent of each class of house indicated.

1917.—Index-Numbers, shewing Relative Cost in each of Thirty Towns, of Food and Groceries and House Rent (including 4, 5, and 6-roomed Houses, and all Houses), compared with Weighted Average Expenditure on Groceries, Food and Rent (all Houses) in the Six Capital Towns in 1911 as Base (= 1000).

TOWN.	Groceries and Food.	HOUSE RENT.				GROCERIES, FOOD AND RENT, INCLUDING HOUSES HAVING—			
		Four-roomed Houses only.	Five-roomed Houses only.	Six-roomed Houses only.	All Houses Weighted Average.	Four Rooms.	Five Rooms.	Six Rooms.	All Houses Weighted Average.
<b>NEW SOUTH WALES—</b>									
Sydney .. .. .	907	389	470	550	500	1,296	1,377	1,457	1,407
Newcastle .. .. .	906	240	326	404	318	1,146	1,232	1,310	1,222
Broken Hill* .. .. .	1,047	242	322	391	268	1,289	1,369	1,438	1,315
Goulburn .. .. .	878	306	402	545	460	1,184	1,250	1,423	1,338
Bathurst .. .. .	874	215	289	377	319	1,089	1,163	1,251	1,193
Weighted Average ..	912	367	449	523	471	1,279	1,361	1,441	1,383
<b>VICTORIA—</b>									
Melbourne .. .. .	832	330	421	518	462	1,162	1,253	1,350	1,294
Ballarat .. .. .	825	148	217	290	258	968	1,042	1,115	1,083
Bendigo .. .. .	829	172	230	323	264	1,001	1,059	1,158	1,093
Geelong .. .. .	836	226	331	449	385	1,062	1,167	1,285	1,221
Warrnambool .. .. .	842	236	311	369	326	1,078	1,153	1,211	1,168
Weighted Average ..	832	301	388	485	430	1,132	1,220	1,317	1,262
<b>QUEENSLAND—</b>									
Brisbane .. .. .	828	225	293	394	353	1,053	1,121	1,222	1,181
Toowoomba .. .. .	819	180	241	282	287	999	1,060	1,101	1,116
Rockhampton .. .. .	840	204	260	343	323	1,044	1,100	1,183	1,163
Charlton Towers .. .. .	927	207	267	335	260	1,134	1,194	1,262	1,187
Warwick .. .. .	832	156	229	325	292	988	1,061	1,157	1,124
Weighted Average ..	837	215	280	370	335	1,052	1,117	1,207	1,172
<b>SOUTH AUSTRALIA—</b>									
Adelaide .. .. .	851	291	385	486	394	1,142	1,236	1,337	1,245
Moonta, etc. .. .. .	904	194	291	372	289	1,098	1,195	1,276	1,193
Port Pirie* .. .. .	930	299	361	498	339	1,229	1,321	1,338	1,269
Mt. Gambler .. .. .	838	216	283	356	294	1,054	1,101	1,194	1,132
Petersburg .. .. .	914	237	316	369	312	1,151	1,230	1,283	1,226
Weighted Average ..	858	283	374	471	381	1,141	1,232	1,329	1,239
<b>WESTERN AUSTRALIA—</b>									
Perth .. .. .	837	302	374	459	350	1,139	1,261	1,346	1,246
Kalgoorlie, etc. .. .. .	1,054	358	443	528	344	1,412	1,497	1,580	1,398
Mt. Junction .. .. .	895	232	307	366	291	1,127	1,202	1,261	1,186
Bunbury .. .. .	973	217	271	330	220	1,190	1,244	1,303	1,193
Geraldton .. .. .	958	357	450	549	391	1,315	1,408	1,507	1,349
Weighted Average ..	926	310	385	467	349	1,236	1,311	1,393	1,275
<b>TASMANIA—</b>									
Hobart .. .. .	910	307	374	452	391	1,217	1,284	1,362	1,301
Launceston .. .. .	890	256	354	422	368	1,146	1,244	1,312	1,253
Zeehan .. .. .	965	125	161	197	118	1,090	1,126	1,162	1,083
Baconsfield .. .. .	951	66	84	108	83	1,017	1,035	1,059	1,034
Queenstown .. .. .	970	278	323	376	258	1,248	1,293	1,346	1,228
Weighted Average ..	912	271	342	412	349	1,183	1,254	1,324	1,261
Commonwealth Weighted Average ..	873	313	395	483	421	1,136	1,268	1,356	1,294

\* See Remarks on page 41 with reference to house rents.

The weighted average for all houses is obtained separately for each of the thirty towns by "weighting" the rent paid for each class of house by the number of houses in each respective class in each town. If houses of only one particular size are included, different results may be obtained. This is evident, when it is remembered that the distribution of houses according to number of rooms is substantially different in some of the towns; that is to say, there are a greater number of large, and therefore of relatively more expensive, houses in some towns than in others, and *vice versa*, and consequently the weighted average rents in the former class of town refer to a larger size of house than in the latter class. Separate results are accordingly given for the several classes of houses specified in the table.

The figures in the last four columns furnish results for expenditure on groceries and food, combined with expenditure on rent, for each of the three classes of houses indicated, and also for the weighted average for all houses.

Some few words as to the proper interpretation of the preceding table may not be out of place. The total cost of living in each town for food and groceries, as well as the average rental paid, is multiplied by a number representing the population of the town, and a weighted average expenditure for all towns is thus computed. The weights used are given on page 38. The relative expenditure in each town for (a) food and groceries, (b) house rents, and (c) food, groceries, and house rent combined, is shewn, the base of the table being the weighted average expenditure in the six capital towns for 1911 = 1000. Thus in each horizontal line the sum of the index-number for food and groceries and that for rent of houses of each specified size is equal to the index-number for food, groceries, and house rent combined, taking the corresponding house-rent group. The table is comparable in all respects, and in addition shews the proportionate cost of food and groceries and of rent. For example, taking the last line in the table on the preceding page, it may be seen that taking the weighted average expenditure for all the towns on food, groceries, and average rents to be £1294, the expenditure on food and groceries alone is £873 (1st column), and the average rental £421 (5th column), the sum of the two latter amounts being £1294. Again, if it be desired to ascertain the relative expenditure for food and groceries and rent of four-roomed houses, it will be found the figures are £873 and £313, which, together amount to £1186 (6th column). In addition to shewing the relative cost of food and groceries and house rent (for different classes of houses) in each town individually, the table also furnishes comparisons as to the relative cost of these items as between the several towns. Thus taking food and groceries only (1st column), it may be seen that commodities which would cost £907 in Sydney can be purchased for £832 in Melbourne, or £851 in Adelaide. Again, taking the combined expenditure on food, groceries, and house rent for houses of five rooms (7th column), it will be seen that an expenditure of £1253 in Melbourne is equivalent to an expenditure of £1377 in Sydney, £1236 in Adelaide, £1497 in Kalgoorlie, or £1408 in Geraldton.

The index-numbers are reversible, and may be used for comparisons as to purchasing-power of money as between any of the towns included. Thus if it be ascertained that the average rental of five-roomed houses in Melbourne is, say, 16s. weekly, and the average rental of the same class of house in Sydney is required, all that is necessary is to multiply the rental in Melbourne by the index-number for five-roomed houses in Sydney and divide by the index-number for Melbourne (3rd column), 16s. 0d.  $\times \frac{4\frac{1}{2}}{3} = 17s. 10d.$ , which will be found to be the average rental of five-roomed houses in Sydney (see Appendix II.).

(i.) *Food and Groceries.*—As regards food and groceries it may be seen that the weighted average of the five towns was above the weighted average for all towns for 1917 in New South Wales, Western Australia and Tasmania, and lower in the remaining States. The most expensive towns are Kalgoorlie in Western Australia, and Broken Hill in New South Wales, Kalgoorlie being 20.7 per cent., and Broken Hill 19.9 per cent. above the weighted average for all towns.

(ii.) *House Rent.*—It will be seen that taking house-rents of any size of house given, or of the weighted average of all houses, Sydney, Melbourne, Goulburn and Geraldton are the most expensive towns, while Beaconsfield and Zeehan, in Tasmania, are the cheapest.

With reference to house-rents in Broken Hill and Port Pirie, it is necessary to observe that for some time after the outbreak of war a number of houses were occupied at purely nominal or reduced rentals by families of which the wage-earner was out of employment. It was not until the latter half of 1916 that enquiries elicited the fact that normal conditions again obtained. It must be borne in mind, therefore, that for the years 1914, 1915 and 1916 the average rents in these towns have been computed in accordance with special investigations which have been made each quarter.

(iii.) *Food and Groceries and House Rent combined.*—The last column in the foregoing table shews the relative cost according to average prices of the commodities and housing accommodation in each town during 1917. It may be seen that the average cost was greatest in Sydney, followed by Kalgoorlie, Geraldton and Goulburn. The index-number for Sydney was 8.8 per cent., Kalgoorlie 8.0 per cent., Geraldton, 4.2 per cent., and Goulburn 3.4 per cent. above the weighted average cost for all towns. The cost was least in Zeehan and Beaconsfield, 16.3 and 20.1 per cent. respectively below the weighted average cost for all towns.

8. *Purchasing-Power of Money.*—In the following table the average cost for the six capital towns in the year 1911 has again been taken as base. This base has been taken as equal to 20s. instead of 1000 as in the former tables. The figures shew the variations in purchasing-power of money from year to year in each town separately (in the vertical lines), and the relative cost in the several towns in each year (in the horizontal lines): It may be seen, for instance, that 20s. 7d. in Sydney in 1911 was equivalent to 18s. 4d. in Brisbane, or 19s. 1d. in Hobart; or that 25s. 9d. in Melbourne for the second quarter of 1917 was equivalent to 15s. 5d. in Brisbane in 1901, or 22s. 6d. in Perth in 1913.

**Purchasing-Power of Money.**—Amounts necessary on the Average in each Year from 1901 to 1918 (1st Quarter) to purchase in each Capital Town what would have cost on the Average £1 in 1911 in the "Australian Capitals regarded as a whole.\*

Year.	Sydney.		Melb'rne		Brisbane		Adelaide		Perth.		Hobart.		Weighted Average of 6 Capital Towns		
	s.	d.	s.	d.	s.	d.	s.	d.	s.	d.	s.	d.	s.	d.	
1901	17	10	17	5	15	5	17	3	20	6	17	5	17	7	
1902	19	7	18	1	16	0	17	3	21	7	17	10	18	7	
1903	19	2	17	7	15	9	16	9	21	8	17	11	18	2	
1904	17	5	17	1	14	8	16	3	20	10	17	1	17	2	
1905	18	9	17	7	15	5	17	6	20	11	17	9	18	0	
1906	18	8	17	7	15	7	17	10	20	5	18	0	18	0	
1907	18	6	17	6	15	11	17	11	19	9	17	9	17	11	
1908	19	9	18	6	17	1	19	1	20	0	18	5	19	0	
1909	19	9	18	1	17	0	19	10	19	9	19	0	19	0	
1910	19	11	18	10	17	6	20	2	20	6	19	0	19	5	
1911	20	7	19	0	18	4	21	2	22	6	19	1	20	0†	
1912	22	11	21	1	19	7	23	2	23	1	20	10	22	0	
1913	23	7	21	0	19	5	22	5	22	6	21	1	22	1	
1914	24	1	22	1	19	11	22	10	22	10	21	10	22	10	
1915	26	6	25	6	23	3	25	2	24	5	24	8	25	7	
1916	27	10	26	2	23	9	25	8	25	4	25	7	26	6	
1917	28	1	25	11	23	7	24	11	24	11	26	0	26	4	
1912	1st Quarter	21	4	19	9	19	6	22	6	22	4	19	7	20	9
	2nd "	22	5	20	10	19	6	23	2	23	8	20	2	21	9
	3rd "	24	1	22	1	19	8	23	8	23	6	21	5	22	11
	4th "	23	10	21	8	19	8	23	3	22	10	22	2	22	7
1913	1st "	23	5	21	0	19	1	22	8	22	6	21	1	22	0
	2nd "	23	10	21	2	19	7	22	11	22	11	21	3	22	4
	3rd "	23	6	21	1	19	4	22	4	22	4	21	1	22	1
	4th "	23	6	20	10	19	6	21	10	22	5	20	10	21	11
1914	1st "	24	0	21	4	19	7	22	4	22	3	21	1	22	4
	2nd "	24	3	22	7	19	9	23	6	22	10	22	0	23	1
	3rd "	24	2	22	5	20	1	23	2	23	3	21	10	23	0
	4th "	24	1	22	1	20	4	22	5	23	0	22	3	22	10
1915	1st "	24	7	22	11	21	1	23	3	23	10	22	10	23	6
	2nd "	25	2	25	3	22	8	25	4	24	8	24	3	24	11
	3rd "	28	1	27	6	24	2	26	6	25	1	25	10	27	2
	4th "	28	0	26	5	25	1	25	8	24	1	25	9	26	8
1916	1st "	28	4	26	9	25	2	25	11	24	10	26	4	27	0
	2nd "	27	10	26	5	24	1	26	2	25	7	25	11	26	8
	3rd "	27	9	26	0	22	11	25	7	25	9	25	2	26	4
	4th "	27	6	25	7	22	10	25	2	25	1	24	10	26	0
1917	1st "	27	7	25	7	22	11	25	3	24	10	25	4	26	0
	2nd "	27	9	25	9	23	3	25	2	25	6	25	3	26	2
	3rd "	28	8	26	0	23	9	24	5	24	8	25	11	26	7
	4th "	28	6	26	2	24	6	24	10	24	8	27	6	26	8
1918	28	6	26	6	24	4	25	11	24	8	27	3	26	11	

\* These results are based upon the regimen referred to on pp. 20-2 Labour Report No. 6  
† Basis of Table.

(i.) *Groceries and Food only.*—The following table has been computed in the same manner as that indicated above, but relates to *groceries and food* (46 items) only. The average expenditure for the six capital towns in 1911 has again been taken as the basis of the table (=20s.), and the figures are, of course, comparable throughout.

**Purchasing-Power of Money.—Groceries and Food only.—Amount necessary on the Average in each Year from 1901 to 1918 (1st Quarter) to purchase in each Capital Town what would have cost on the Average £1 in 1911 in the Australian Capitals regarded as a whole.\***

Year	Sydney.	Melb'ne.	Brisbane.	Adelaide.	Perth.	Hobart.	Weighted Average of 6 Capital Towns	
	s. d.	s. d.	s. d.	s. d.	s. d.	s. d.	s. d.	
1901 ..	18 4	19 4	19 4	20 7	23 8	20 3	19 4	
1902 ..	21 4	20 4	20 4	20 6	25 6	21 0	21 1	
1903 ..	20 7	19 6	19 9	19 8	25 8	21 1	20 4	
1904 ..	17 6	18 4	17 10	18 10	24 3	19 8	18 5	
1905 ..	19 5	19 1	18 11	19 10	25 2	20 7	19 8	
1906 ..	19 3	18 11	19 2	19 8	24 9	20 11	19 7	
1907 ..	18 9	18 6	18 11	19 0	23 11	20 2	19 1	
1908 ..	20 7	19 11	20 6	20 2	24 6	21 1	20 7	
1909 ..	20 3	19 0	19 8	20 6	24 3	21 10	20 1	
1910 ..	20 0	19 2	20 0	20 0	25 0	21 6	20 1	
1911 ..	19 9	18 8	20 4	20 5	26 11	21 2	20 0†	
1912 ..	22 6	21 8	22 0	23 1	26 11	23 10	22 6	
1913 ..	22 8	20 6	20 10	22 5	25 4	23 3	21 11	
1914 ..	23 1	21 10	21 7	24 4	26 0	24 3	22 11	
1915 ..	27 11	28 3	27 6	29 9	29 8	28 11	28 4	
1916 ..	30 5	29 3	28 6	30 8	30 10	30 5	29 11	
1917 ..	30 10	28 3	28 2	28 11	30 1	30 11	29 5	
1912 {	1st Qtr	20 9	19 9	21 11	22 0	21 10	21 0	
	2nd "	21 10	21 5	21 11	22 11	22 11	22 3	
	3rd "	23 11	23 2	22 1	23 10	27 4	24 8	23 9
	4th "	23 6	22 3	22 3	23 6	26 1	25 9	23 2
1913 {	1st "	22 9	20 9	20 9	22 5	25 6	23 2	22 0
	2nd "	23 2	20 10	21 2	22 11	26 0	23 9	22 4
	3rd "	22 7	20 5	20 10	22 4	25 0	23 5	21 10
	4th "	22 1	20 0	20 8	21 10	24 11	22 9	21 5
1914 {	1st "	23 0	20 7	20 11	22 11	24 11	23 3	22 1
	2nd "	23 3	22 4	21 2	25 0	25 11	24 7	23 2
	3rd "	23 1	22 0	21 8	24 7	26 9	24 3	23 0
	4th "	23 1	22 4	22 6	24 8	26 7	24 10	23 3
1915 {	1st "	24 7	23 9	23 11	26 4	28 5	25 10	24 8
	2nd "	25 9	27 8	26 4	30 2	30 2	28 3	27 3
	3rd "	30 9	31 8	29 0	32 0	30 11	30 10	31 1
	4th "	30 7	29 10	30 8	30 6	29 2	30 8	30 3
1916 {	1st "	31 4	30 2	31 0	31 0	30 1	31 10	30 10
	2nd "	30 4	29 8	29 1	31 6	31 3	31 1	30 2
	3rd "	30 2	29 0	27 1	30 5	31 7	29 9	29 7
	4th "	29 8	28 2	26 10	29 8	30 5	29 1	28 11
1917 {	1st "	30 0	27 11	27 0	29 6	30 0	29 10	28 11
	2nd "	30 1	28 3	27 6	29 4	31 1	29 8	29 3
	3rd "	31 9	28 5	28 5	28 1	29 8	30 8	29 9
	4th "	31 4	28 5	29 7	28 8	29 7	33 5	29 10
1918 1st	31 1	28 11	28 11	30 3	29 7	33 2	30 0	

\* These results are based upon the regimen referred to on pp. 20-2 Labour Report No. 6.

† Basis of Table

(ii.) *House Rent Only.*—The following table gives similar particulars for *house rent only*, the average for the six towns in 1911 being again taken as the basis of the table (= 20s.):—

**Purchasing-Power of Money.—House Rent.**—Amount payable on the Average in each Year from 1901 to 1918 (1st Quarter) for House Rent in each Capital Town, compared with a Rent of £1 in 1911 in the Australian Capitals regarded as a whole.

Year.	Sydney.		Melb'ne.		Brisbane.		Adelaide.		Perth.		Hobart.		Weighted Average of 6 Capital Towns		
	s.	d.	s.	d.	s.	d.	s.	d.	s.	d.	s.	d.	s.	d.	
1901 ..	17	3	14	8	9	9	12	7	16	0	13	4	15	1	
1902 ..	17	3	14	11	9	10	12	7	15	11	13	5	15	2	
1903 ..	17	4	14	11	10	1	12	7	16	0	13	6	15	3	
1904 ..	17	5	15	3	10	2	12	7	16	0	13	6	15	4	
1905 ..	17	10	15	5	10	5	14	0	14	9	13	7	15	8	
1906 ..	17	11	15	8	10	6	15	3	14	4	13	9	15	11	
1907 ..	18	4	16	1	11	6	16	3	13	8	14	2	16	4	
1908 ..	18	7	16	7	12	4	17	5	13	7	14	7	16	10	
1909 ..	19	2	16	10	13	3	18	10	13	4	15	0	17	5	
1910 ..	19	10	18	4	14	0	20	4	13	11	15	6	18	5	
1911 ..	21	10	19	5	15	4	22	3	16	3	16	1	20	0*	
1912 ..	23	8	20	4	16	1	23	2	17	7	16	7	21	3	
1913 ..	24	11	21	10	17	3	22	6	18	7	17	10	22	4	
1914 ..	25	7	22	6	17	8	20	10	18	3	17	3	22	8	
1915 ..	24	5	21	8	17	2	18	8	17	0	18	7	21	7	
1916 ..	24	3	21	9	17	0	18	7	17	4	18	7	21	7	
1917 ..	24	3	22	6	17	5	19	2	17	5	19	0	22	0	
1912 {	1st Qtr	22	4	19	8	16	0	23	3	17	0	16	3	20	6
	2nd "	23	4	20	0	16	1	23	5	17	2	16	4	21	1
	3rd "	24	7	20	7	16	2	23	5	18	0	16	10	21	10
	4th "	24	4	20	11	16	0	22	11	18	3	16	11	21	7
1913 {	1st "	24	5	21	4	16	10	22	11	18	3	18	0	22	0
	2nd "	24	10	21	9	17	2	22	11	18	6	17	9	22	4
	3rd "	24	11	22	0	17	3	22	3	18	7	17	8	22	5
	4th "	25	6	22	1	17	10	21	10	18	11	18	0	22	8
1914 {	1st "	25	6	22	5	17	8	21	6	18	5	18	1	22	8
	2nd "	25	9	22	10	17	10	21	5	18	5	18	3	23	0
	3rd "	25	8	22	11	17	10	21	1	18	4	18	5	22	11
	4th "	25	5	21	10	17	4	19	3	17	11	18	6	22	2
1915 {	1st "	24	7	21	10	17	1	18	10	17	5	18	6	21	9
	2nd "	24	5	21	9	17	4	18	6	16	11	18	7	21	7
	3rd "	24	5	21	7	17	2	18	7	16	10	18	7	21	7
	4th "	24	3	21	7	17	2	18	7	16	10	18	7	21	6
1916 {	1st "	24	2	21	9	16	10	18	7	17	5	18	5	21	6
	2nd "	24	3	21	8	16	11	18	7	17	5	18	6	21	7
	3rd "	24	3	21	9	17	0	18	7	17	4	18	7	21	7
	4th "	24	3	21	11	17	2	18	8	17	4	18	10	21	8
1917 {	1st "	24	3	22	3	17	10	19	1	17	5	18	11	21	10
	2nd "	24	3	22	3	17	3	19	1	17	5	19	0	21	10
	3rd "	24	2	22	7	17	3	19	2	17	6	19	1	22	0
	4th "	24	6	22	10	17	2	19	5	17	6	19	1	22	2
1918 1st "	24	9	23	1	17	8	19	8	17	8	18	10	22	5	

\* Basis of Table.

**9. Monthly Fluctuations in Retail Prices of Food and Groceries, July, 1914, to May, 1918.**—The following table has been prepared in order to shew the variations in retail prices of food and groceries since July, 1914, the last month prior to the outbreak of war. Particulars for each town are given in the form of index-numbers for food and groceries in each of the months specified. In the last column the percentage increase is shewn for each town in May, 1918, compared with July, 1914. It is necessary to observe that the index-numbers given in the following table are computed to the same base as those given in the preceding tables in this section, referring to food and groceries only, viz., the weighted average expenditure in the six capital towns for 1911 is made equal to 1000.



Retail Prices Index-Numbers (Food and Groceries), for each of Thirty Towns for the Months specified, with Weighted Average for Six Capital Towns in 1911 as Base (=1000).†

Particulars.	1914.			1915.			1916.			1917.			1918.			Per cent. increase from July, 1914, to May, 1918.
	July.	April.	May.	April.	May.	April.	May.	April.	May.	April.	May.	April.	May.			
<b>NEW SOUTH WALES—</b>																
Sydney .. .. .	1,153	1,252	1,268	1,512	1,509	1,513	1,499	1,552	1,546	34.1						
Newcastle .. .. .	1,147	1,262	1,235	1,493	1,507	1,527	1,527	1,565	1,576	37.4						
Broken Hill .. .. .	1,498	1,576	1,575	1,820	1,817	1,806	1,814	1,797	1,849	25.9						
Goulburn .. .. .	1,133	1,250	1,312	1,543	1,550	1,507	1,470	1,518	1,523	28.7						
Bathurst .. .. .	1,097	1,221	1,243	1,474	1,479	1,461	1,473	1,512	1,521	38.7						
*Weighted Average ..	1,165	1,265	1,293	1,523	1,522	1,525	1,514	1,562	1,560	33.9						
<b>VICTORIA—</b>																
Melbourne .. .. .	1,106	1,232	1,336	1,484	1,485	1,410	1,409	1,462	1,486	34.4						
Ballaarat .. .. .	1,103	1,307	1,424	1,490	1,506	1,401	1,406	1,435	1,459	32.3						
Bendigo .. .. .	1,107	1,313	1,300	1,475	1,482	1,409	1,432	1,480	1,487	34.3						
Geelong .. .. .	1,089	1,264	1,350	1,500	1,514	1,446	1,432	1,473	1,481	36.0						
Warrnambool .. .. .	1,087	1,278	1,404	1,475	1,493	1,431	1,486	1,492	1,514	39.3						
*Weighted Average ..	1,105	1,285	1,388	1,485	1,488	1,411	1,412	1,462	1,484	34.3						
<b>QUEENSLAND—</b>																
Brisbane .. .. .	1,057	1,239	1,326	1,486	1,491	1,364	1,375	1,472	1,480	40.0						
Toowoomba .. .. .	1,041	1,323	1,371	1,506	1,457	1,323	1,360	1,434	1,440	38.3						
Rockhampton .. .. .	1,156	1,306	1,378	1,642	1,673	1,400	1,404	1,505	1,501	29.9						
Charlton Towers .. .. .	1,246	1,510	1,588	1,650	1,644	1,573	1,582	1,685	1,684	35.2						
Warwick .. .. .	1,083	1,312	1,379	1,467	1,462	1,348	1,369	1,511	1,520	40.4						
*Weighted Average ..	1,082	1,313	1,359	1,517	1,512	1,381	1,394	1,490	1,496	38.3						
<b>SOUTH AUSTRALIA—</b>																
Adelaide .. .. .	1,250	1,427	1,485	1,549	1,584	1,485	1,480	1,537	1,620	29.6						
Kadina, Moonta, Wallaroo ..	1,230	1,446	1,488	1,602	1,612	1,570	1,573	1,568	1,595	29.7						
Port Pirie .. .. .	1,291	1,476	1,530	1,640	1,643	1,600	1,603	1,630	1,657	28.4						
Mt. Gambier .. .. .	1,064	1,315	1,382	1,532	1,504	1,438	1,445	1,477	1,523	43.1						
Petersburg .. .. .	1,340	1,423	1,536	1,621	1,622	1,573	1,584	1,597	1,611	20.2						
*Weighted Average ..	1,247	1,427	1,485	1,557	1,586	1,495	1,491	1,585	1,618	29.8						
<b>WESTERN AUSTRALIA—</b>																
Perth .. .. .	1,340	1,495	1,502	1,513	1,550	1,535	1,586	1,529	1,524	13.7						
Keigoonle and Boulder .. .. .	1,664	1,758	1,806	1,792	1,814	1,740	1,799	1,797	1,791	7.6						
Mid. Junc. & Guildford .. .. .	1,354	1,511	1,532	1,529	1,534	1,552	1,598	1,530	1,524	12.6						
Bunbury .. .. .	1,418	1,575	1,593	1,630	1,608	1,677	1,753	1,633	1,656	16.8						
Geraldton .. .. .	1,446	1,671	1,639	1,663	1,675	1,621	1,630	1,639	1,633	13.0						
*Weighted Average ..	1,412	1,556	1,573	1,578	1,608	1,584	1,630	1,590	1,585	12.3						
<b>TASMANIA—</b>																
Hobart .. .. .	1,211	1,391	1,401	1,588	1,551	1,476	1,471	1,641	1,648	38.1						
Launceston .. .. .	1,144	1,314	1,345	1,564	1,538	1,485	1,478	1,583	1,588	33.8						
Zeehan .. .. .	1,292	1,429	1,531	1,698	1,683	1,597	1,610	1,717	1,758	36.1						
Beaconsfield .. .. .	1,230	1,368	1,436	1,674	1,647	1,580	1,687	1,666	1,617	31.5						
Queenstown .. .. .	1,315	1,467	1,519	1,678	1,697	1,598	1,625	1,704	1,722	31.0						
*Weighted Average ..	1,201	1,372	1,399	1,595	1,566	1,490	1,494	1,632	1,638	36.4						
† Weighted Aver. for Gwth.	1,164	1,318	1,372	1,520	1,524	1,473	1,473	1,528	1,539	32.2						

\* Average for the five towns. † Average for thirty towns.

‡ See remarks on page 31 of Labour Report No. 6 with reference to change of base period.

NOTE.—Corresponding index-numbers for the intervening months are given in Labour Reports Nos. 6 and 7, in Labour Bulletins Nos. 17 and 18, and in the Quarterly Summary of Statistics Nos. 70 and 71.

10. Tables of Prices and House Rents, 1917.—While the summarised results of price-movements are published quarterly, the actual data from which such results are obtained are published in full only annually. In appendixes to Report No. 1, particulars were given of prices and house rents in the metropolitan towns in each year from 1901 to 1911, and in appendixes to Report No. 2, particulars were given of average prices

and house rents in 1912 for each of the thirty towns from which returns are collected. In Appendixes I. and II. of Report No. 5 similar particulars were given for the year 1913; in Appendixes I. and III. to Report No. 6 particulars were given of average prices for 1914 and 1915; in Appendixes II. and IV. of the same Report similar information was given in regard to house rents. In Appendixes Nos. I and II of Report No. 7 and in Appendixes Nos. I. and II. hereof, information is given in regard to average prices and house rents respectively for the year 1916 and 1917.

**11. Increase in Cost of Food and Groceries and House Rent, 1917, compared with previous years.**—The following tables have been prepared in order to shew for each capital town (i.) the total increase (or decrease) in the cost of food, groceries, and house rent combined in 1917 compared with each preceding year since 1901, and (ii.) amount of the percentage increase (or decrease) due to variations (a) in prices of food and groceries, and (b) in house rent. The sum of the percentages for any year and town in the last two parts of the table must, of course, equal the corresponding total percentage in the first part of the table. Thus the total percentage of increase in cost of food, groceries, and house rent in Sydney for 1917 compared with 1904 is 61.2 per cent., of which 44.8 per cent. is due to increased cost of food and groceries, and 16.4 per cent. to increase in house rents. In any case where there has been a decrease (i.e., where the combined cost of food and groceries and house rent, or if either separately was less in 1917 than in preceding years) the fact is indicated by a negative sign.

**Percentage of Increase or Decrease in Purchasing-Power-of-Money Index-numbers in 1917, compared with Previous Years, 1901 to 1916.**

TOWN.	PERCENTAGE OF TOTAL INCREASE OR DECREASE IN 1917, COMPARED WITH—															
	1901.	1902.	1903.	1904.	1905.	1906.	1907.	1908.	1909.	1910.	1911.	1912.	1913.	1914.	1915.	1916.
Sydney	57.5	43.5	46.8	61.2	50.1	50.5	51.0	42.7	42.2	41.3	36.4	22.5	19.3	10.6	6.3	0.9
Melb. . .	48.8	43.2	46.9	51.5	47.4	47.4	47.8	39.6	43.0	37.4	36.3	22.7	23.1	17.1	1.3	-1.1
Brisbane	53.5	47.5	49.5	60.8	53.4	51.3	48.7	37.9	38.8	34.6	29.1	20.6	21.9	18.4	1.6	-0.6
Adelaide	44.1	44.2	48.8	53.3	42.6	39.7	39.2	30.6	25.7	23.5	17.7	7.0	11.0	8.0	-1.1	-3.1
Perth . .	21.3	15.6	14.8	19.6	10.2	21.7	26.3	24.5	26.1	21.7	10.6	8.0	10.4	0.0	1.9	-1.5
Hobart	49.6	45.6	44.9	52.1	46.7	44.7	46.7	41.3	36.6	36.8	36.3	24.8	23.5	19.3	5.5	1.7
Weight'd Average	49.9	41.8.	44.3	53.7	46.3	46.2	47.0	38.7	38.1	36.1	31.8	19.8	19.4	15.6	3.1	-0.5

**PERCENTAGE DUE TO VARIATIONS IN COST OF FOOD AND GROCERIES.**

Sydney	41.1	28.4	31.4	44.8	35.7	36.3	38.4	30.5	31.4	32.0	31.5	21.3	20.4	18.8	6.4	0.8
Melb. . .	30.3	25.9	29.4	34.2	30.9	31.4	32.8	26.5	30.2	28.3	29.6	18.5	21.8	17.0	0.1	-2.2
Brisbane	33.7	28.7	31.2	41.2	35.3	33.7	34.0	26.3	29.3	27.2	25.0	18.3	22.1	19.4	1.6	-1.0
Adelaide	28.4	28.5	32.6	36.6	30.5	30.6	32.5	26.9	26.0	25.9	23.7	14.8	17.1	11.8	-2.0	-4.0
Perth . .	18.4	12.7	12.1	16.7	13.0	15.4	18.4	16.5	17.5	14.6	8.3	8.2	12.4	0.5	1.1	-1.7
Hobart	36.2	32.6	32.2	38.3	34.2	32.6	35.5	31.3	27.9	29.2	30.0	20.0	21.3	18.0	4.7	1.0
Weight'd Average	33.7	26.6	29.4	37.8	31.9	32.3	34.1	27.5	29.1	28.5	27.8	18.5	20.1	16.9	2.6	-1.0

**PERCENTAGE DUE TO VARIATIONS IN HOUSE RENTS.**

Sydney	16.4	15.1	15.4	16.4	14.4	14.2	13.5	12.2	10.8	9.3	4.9	1.2	-1.1	-2.2	-0.1	0.1
Melb. . .	18.5	17.3	17.5	17.3	16.5	16.0	15.0	13.1	12.8	9.1	6.7	4.2	1.3	-0.1	1.3	1.1
Brisbane	19.8	18.3	18.3	19.0	18.1	17.6	14.7	11.6	9.5	7.4	4.1	2.3	-0.2	-1.0	..	0.4
Adelaide	15.7	15.7	16.2	16.7	12.1	9.1	6.7	3.7	0.7	-2.4	-6.0	-7.3	-6.1	-2.9	0.9	0.9
Perth . .	2.9	2.0	2.7	2.9	5.3	6.3	7.9	8.0	8.6	7.1	2.3	-0.2	-2.0	-1.5	0.8	0.2
Hobart	13.4	13.0	12.7	13.3	12.5	12.1	11.3	10.0	8.7	7.6	6.3	4.8	2.2	1.3	0.8	0.7
Weight'd Average	16.2	15.2	15.4	15.9	14.4	13.9	12.9	11.2	10.0	7.6	4.0	1.3	-0.7	-1.3	0.5	0.5

\* The negative sign indicates a decrease.