

## CHAPTER V.—RETAIL PRICES.

1. **General.**—In normal circumstances those changes in the cost of living which are due to price variation, and not to change in standard of living, can best be measured by means of index-numbers representing changes in the retail prices of commodities and in house rent. For such purpose this Bureau has adopted a "composite unit," consisting of appropriate quantities of the commodities which enter into general consumption in Australia, and including housing accommodation. A comparison of the value of this composite unit at the prices ruling at any given date, with the value determined by means of the prices ruling at some basic date furnishes the retail price index-number for the given date, and indicates the proportionate increase or decrease in the amount of money necessary to purchase such a composite unit. This method of computation is usually known as the "aggregate expenditure method." There are numerous other methods of computing index-numbers, but there is probably none which so satisfactorily combines simplicity of procedure with accuracy of result. Investigations concerning retail prices are made by this Bureau in respect of the following matters:—

- (i.) Monthly variation in the cost of food and groceries in thirty towns.
- (ii.) Quarterly variations in retail prices and house rent in thirty towns.
- (iii.) Annual variations in retail prices and house rent in 150 towns.
- (iv.) Intermittent Householders' Budget Inquiries.

In previous Reports of this Bureau the results of comprehensive investigations into the subjects of Prices and Price-Indexes for past years have been published, and an account has been 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. In Appendix 1, to Report No. 9, an endeavour was made to set forth the essentials of the problem and of its solution.

For further particulars concerning the "Aggregate Expenditure" method of index-numbers reference may be made to Report No. 6, pages 19 and 20, and to Report No. 12, pages 22 and 23.

2. **Cost of Commodities, Standard of Living, and Expenditure on Living.**—A change in the "Cost of Living" may be due to a change in the *standard of living* or in the *purchasing-power of money*, or in both; the expenditure on living depends on three factors, viz.:—

- (i.) The nature of the *commodities* consumed;
- (ii.) The *quantities* of the commodities consumed; and
- (iii.) The *prices* of these commodities.

A change in any *one* of these may produce a change in the *expenditure* on living. In order to obtain index-numbers that will satisfactorily measure price-variation, 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 ; in Labour Bulletin No. 14, pp. 127 to 130 ; and in Part II. of Appendix I. of Labour Report No. 9. In the places indicated it has been shown that in order to avoid all confusion between " changes in the regimen" (*i.e.*, changes in the standard of living) which are at the disposal of the individual, and " changes in prices," which are not at his disposal, it is convenient 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 shown that the method of " aggregate expenditures," is, technically, the most satisfactory method. Variations in quantity or in the items of the composite unit would introduce ambiguity, for the resulting change in the price of the composite unit would be partly due to change of the unit and partly 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, misunderstanding in regard thereto is still prevalent. Many persons, having noticed that a different regimen gives a very different aggregate cost, have thought that the computed price-indexes must vary considerably with change of regimen. This phase of the matter has been dealt with fully in previous publications of this Bureau, and in particular in Labour Bulletin No. 14, pp. 127 to 130, published in October, 1916. It is there shown, by making calculations based upon various widely differing regimens, that the mode of investigating the purchasing-power of money adopted is not vitiated by employing a fixed regimen. Once a standard of living, or living wage, has been fixed, the tables published by the Commonwealth Statistician can be legitimately used as showing the variations in the cost of living until such time as the regimen used as a basis for estimation has ceased to be fairly representative of the usage of the community. When, under these circumstances a change is necessary, certain safeguards which have been indicated in Labour Report No. 1, Appendixes VIII. and IX., and further dealt with in Appendix I. of Labour Report No. 9 must be applied.

**3. The Composite Unit.**—The 47 items making up the " composite unit" may be divided into four groups, viz., (i.) groceries and bread, (ii.) dairy produce, (iii.) meat, and (iv.) housing. The cost of these items covers about 60 per cent. of the total expenditure of a normal family.

Special investigations have been made with reference to variations in the cost of the items and services included in the balance of expenditure, and the results are given in Chapter VII. hereof.

The index-numbers computed on the basis of food, groceries and housing in the past can be accepted as a fair reflection of the variation in the whole ordinary household expenditure in normal times. The question of procedure in abnormal circumstances was referred to in Labour Report No 6, pp. 20 to 22.

The constitution of the " composite unit" employed by this Bureau is shown hereunder.

## Retail Prices.—Composite Unit.

Commodity or Service	Unit of Quantity.	" Mass Unit."	Commodity or Service	Unit of Quantity.	" Mass Unit."
<b>GROUP I.—GROCBRIES (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 .. .. .	"	30
9. Oatmeal .. .. .	"	35	34. " brisket, with bone .. .. .	"	11
10. Raisins .. .. .	"	14	35. " " without bone .. .. .	"	32
11. Currants .. .. .	"	14	36. Mutton, leg .. .. .	"	92
12. Starch .. .. .	"	1	37. " " shoulder .. .. .	"	62
13. Blue .. .. .	doz. sqs.	1	38. " loin .. .. .	"	30
14. Candles .. .. .	lb.	16	39. " neck .. .. .	"	40
15. Soap .. .. .	"	64	40. " chops, loin .. .. .	"	62
16. Potatoes .. .. .	14 lbs.	64	41. " " leg .. .. .	"	15
17. Onions .. .. .	lb.	68	42. " " neck .. .. .	"	31
18. Kerosene .. .. .	gallon	17	43. Pork, leg .. .. .	"	9½
<b>GROUP II.—DAIRY PRODUCTS.</b>			44. " loin .. .. .	"	8½
19. Milk .. .. .	quart	300	45. " belly .. .. .	"	10½
20. Butter .. .. .	lb.	95	46. " chops .. .. .	"	8½
21. Cheese .. .. .	"	15	<b>GROUP IV.—HOUSING.</b>		
22. Eggs .. .. .	dozen	18	47. House Accommodation .. .. .	week	46½
23. Bacon, middles .. .. .	lb.	16			
24. " shoulder .. .. .	"	16			
25. Ham .. .. .	"	8			

With regard to the 47 commodities and services included in this inquiry, nearly 16,000 prices and quotations are received and tabulated for the 30 towns dealt with each month. The complete scheme in regard to the determination of retail price-indexes provides for the collection and analysis of over 150,000 separate prices and quotations each year.

This inquiry goes back for the capital towns as far as 1901. 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. As each return when received is compared with the previous return from the same dealer, and with all other returns received for the same period, it is believed that a high degree of accuracy is obtained in the investigations.

4. **Other Investigations.**—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, as already indicated, are concerned with (i.) Annual Variations in the price index-numbers for 150 Towns, (ii.) the cost of living according to Householders' Budget Inquiries, (iii.) special inquiries as to the cost of food, groceries and house rent in various towns and localities in the several States, and (iv.) the investigation by the Royal Commission on the Basic Wage.

(i.) *Price-Indexes for 150 Towns.*—An investigation as to variation in price-indexes for 100 Australian 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 investigations for November of each year from 1913 to 1921 are published in various issues of this

Report. Prior to 1912 investigations were made concerning the price-indexes in the capital towns only, but for 1912 and subsequent years these inquiries have been extended to 30 towns. On page 49 herein-after comparisons are made which show 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, reflect, with substantial accuracy, the variations in the cost of food, groceries and housing, not only in each State separately, but also throughout Australia.

(ii.) *Householders' Budget Inquiries.*—The first of these was made in 1910-11, covering a period of twelve months, and the results were published in December, 1911.\* A second was made during 1913 for the month of November only, and results are given in a special report, entitled "Labour Report, No. 4, Expenditure on Living in the Commonwealth, November, 1913." In September 1917 the Government of Western Australia appointed a Royal Commission of Inquiry into the cost of the necessaries of life in that State. Under the authority of this Commission steps were taken to obtain from householders budgets showing their weekly expenditure in detail. The Commonwealth Statistician undertook the necessary analysis of the returns, and the report, when completed, was forwarded to the Western Australian Government, at whose request it was published in Labour Report No. 9, pp. 63-71.

(iii.) *Special Investigations.*—During recent years the question of the cost of living in certain country towns and districts in the several States, as compared with the cost in the towns ordinarily covered by the investigations of the Bureau, has arisen in connection with Arbitration Court proceedings. In order to furnish reliable information special inquiries as to the cost of food, groceries and housing have been made. Forms have been issued direct from this Bureau to retailers and house agents situated in more than 100 towns and localities throughout the Commonwealth. From the data collected, index-numbers have been computed, and the results submitted to the tribunals concerned.

(iv.) *Investigations by the Royal Commission on the Basic Wage.*—In December 1919 the Commonwealth Government appointed a Commission consisting of three representatives of employers' organisations, and three representatives of the Federated Trade Unions, with an independent chairman, to enquire into—

1. The actual cost of living at the present time according to reasonable standards of comfort, including all matters comprised in the ordinary expenditure of a household, for a man with a wife and three children under fourteen years of age, and the several items and amounts which make up that cost.
2. The actual cost of living during each of the last five years.
3. How the basic wage may be automatically adjusted to the rise and fall from time to time of the purchasing-power of money.

---

\* See Report on an "Inquiry into the Cost of Living in Australia, 1910-11," by G. H. Knibbs C.M.G., etc., December, 1911.

This Commission issued two reports; the first in November 1920, and the second in April 1921.

These reports show that according to the standard assumed by the Commission the cost of living as at the 1st of November 1920 for a family, consisting of man, wife and three children under fourteen years of age, was as follows :—

Particulars.	Melbourne.	Sydney.	Brisbane.	Adelaide.	Perth.	Hobart.
	£ s. d.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.
Rent ..	1 0 6	1 2 0	0 17 0	0 19 6	0 19 0	0 19 0
Food ..	2 6 2	2 6 9	2 3 1	2 7 2	2 4 11	2 8 11
Clothing	1 9 0	1 7 0	1 6 0	1 8 3	1 7 9	1 9 2
Miscellaneous	1 0 10	1 1 4	1 0 1	1 1 2	1 2 3	0 19 10
Total	5 16 6	5 17 1	5 6 2	5 16 1	5 13 11	5 16 11

The corresponding cost of the commodities and services included (which are all fully set out in the first report) for the years 1914 to 1920 are as follows :—

Years.	Melbourne	Sydney.	Brisbane.	Adelaide.	Perth.	Hobart.
	£ s. d.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.
1914 ..	3 7 9	3 12 11	3 4 0	3 11 2	3 12 9	3 6 9
1915 ..	3 16 9	4 1 6	3 11 3	3 19 0	3 17 1	3 15 1
1916 ..	3 17 5	4 4 6	3 13 10	3 19 7	4 1 2	3 15 6
1917 ..	4 2 2	4 9 8	3 19 3	4 3 2	4 4 2	4 4 10
1918 ..	4 8 10	4 14 8	4 6 0	4 10 11	4 9 2	4 8 6
1919 ..	4 18 5	5 5 3	4 15 10	5 2 6	5 0 9	5 0 4
1920 ..	5 16 6	5 17 1	5 6 2	5 16 1	5 13 11	5 16 11

The results of an investigation into the variation in the cost of living according to this standard since 1920 are given in Chapter VII. hereof.

5. **Retail Prices. Capital Towns, 1901 to 1922.**—Index-numbers, computed separately for each group of commodities and services 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 below. In these tables the weighted aggregate expenditure for the whole of the capital towns in 1911 for each group or combination is taken as base (= 1,000), and the figures for the individual towns show the relative cost of the regimen. These index-numbers are comparable in all respects within the limits of a group or combination, that is to say, within such limits 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 for the same year or for different years :—

## Retail Price Index-Numbers\*\* in Capital Towns, 1901 to 1922.†

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) housing, and food and groceries, since the weighted average cost for the six towns taken together in 1911 in each group or combination is made equal to 1000.

TOWN.	1901.	1907.	1911.	1913.	1914.	1915.	1916.	1917.	1918.	1919.	1920.	1921.	1922.
GROUP I.—GROCERIES.													
Sydney ..	876	904	1,018	1,106	1,112	1,291	1,329	1,320	1,393	1,710	2,130	1,970	1,837
Melbourne ..	897	817	924	953	990	1,222	1,210	1,188	1,283	1,526	1,926	1,897	1,705
Brisbane ..	1,011	969	1,087	1,110	1,076	1,331	1,315	1,323	1,406	1,795	2,155	1,958	1,841
Adelaide ..	949	903	958	1,039	1,061	1,310	1,274	1,210	1,344	1,592	2,030	1,907	1,760
Perth ..	1,006	1,013	1,276	1,073	1,113	1,351	1,345	1,329	1,394	1,618	2,008	1,955	1,729
Hobart ..	935	898	1,003	1,061	1,070	1,250	1,236	1,263	1,341	1,582	1,995	1,927	1,758
Weighted Average*	912	885	1,000	1,043	1,062	1,272	1,279	1,261	1,342	1,631	2,039	1,937	1,774
GROUP II.—DAIRY PRODUCE.													
Sydney ..	891	932	971	1,095	1,110	1,221	1,291	1,319	1,358	1,578	1,957	1,826	1,676
Melbourne ..	969	967	959	1,019	1,075	1,350	1,338	1,271	1,325	1,454	1,929	1,840	1,595
Brisbane ..	833	837	983	1,008	995	1,277	1,287	1,294	1,334	1,573	1,816	1,664	1,562
Adelaide ..	975	928	1,103	1,167	1,194	1,360	1,283	1,228	1,315	1,497	1,827	1,723	1,578
Perth ..	1,290	1,290	1,241	1,262	1,244	1,475	1,434	1,406	1,427	1,617	1,954	1,951	1,730
Hobart ..	931	955	994	1,109	1,177	1,439	1,394	1,318	1,365	1,540	1,976	1,848	1,539
Weighted Average*	945	955	1,000	1,080	1,108	1,307	1,316	1,295	1,345	1,526	1,928	1,815	1,627
GROUP III.—MEAT.													
Sydney ..	1,025	994	959	1,213	1,280	1,778	2,091	2,154	2,020	2,125	2,368	1,898	1,499
Melbourne ..	1,077	1,087	929	1,149	1,270	1,800	2,027	1,949	1,983	1,956	2,414	1,972	1,691
Brisbane ..	1,026	1,024	935	965	1,169	1,549	1,766	1,667	1,819	1,905	2,128	1,719	1,256
Adelaide ..	1,221	1,059	1,037	1,202	1,502	1,930	2,240	2,079	2,169	2,187	2,567	2,097	1,815
Perth ..	1,378	1,511	1,577	1,607	1,683	1,722	1,997	1,913	1,708	2,200	2,224	2,113	1,904
Hobart ..	1,225	1,279	1,221	1,400	1,493	1,789	2,217	2,274	2,427	2,256	2,645	2,382	2,128
Weighted Average*	1,101	1,074	1,000	1,198	1,323	1,781	2,056	2,022	1,992	2,063	2,390	1,934	1,587
GROUPS I., II., AND III. COMBINED.—FOOD AND GROCERIES.													
Sydney ..	917	936	989	1,131	1,156	1,396	1,520	1,540	1,549	1,783	2,148	1,898	1,703
Melbourne ..	965	925	935	1,024	1,091	1,411	1,462	1,412	1,446	1,620	2,056	1,901	1,644
Brisbane ..	965	947	1,018	1,042	1,073	1,373	1,423	1,406	1,495	1,762	2,052	1,812	1,608
Adelaide ..	1,028	951	1,020	1,119	1,215	1,467	1,532	1,445	1,554	1,719	2,132	1,906	1,723
Perth ..	1,184	1,197	1,346	1,267	1,302	1,463	1,642	1,505	1,486	1,772	2,050	1,996	1,770
Hobart ..	1,011	1,010	1,053	1,164	1,212	1,446	1,523	1,544	1,635	1,748	2,162	2,025	1,794
Weighted Average*	972	955	1,000	1,095	1,144	1,410	1,495	1,472	1,514	1,716	2,101	1,902	1,634
GROUP IV.—HOUSING.													
Sydney ..	858	911	1,090	1,246	1,279	1,220	1,212	1,215	1,252	1,289	1,415	1,474	1,535
Melbourne ..	733	804	970	1,089	1,126	1,085	1,089	1,124	1,180	1,233	1,405	1,502	1,697
Brisbane ..	488	575	767	863	882	859	847	859	905	983	1,061	1,070	1,206
Adelaide ..	629	812	1,112	1,125	1,040	932	930	959	1,022	1,108	1,216	1,289	1,360
Perth ..	801	684	810	925	914	848	869	874	885	916	996	1,055	1,092
Hobart ..	667	708	805	887	914	928	928	951	956	1,134	1,373	1,440	1,445
Weighted Average*	751	816	1,000	1,118	1,135	1,081	1,081	1,098	1,143	1,215	1,333	1,404	1,480
ALL GROUPS COMBINED.—FOOD, GROCERIES, AND HOUSING.													
Sydney ..	893	926	1,031	1,178	1,206	1,323	1,394	1,406	1,427	1,530	1,847	1,724	1,634
Melbourne ..	870	875	950	1,051	1,105	1,277	1,309	1,294	1,349	1,481	1,785	1,737	1,625
Brisbane ..	769	794	915	969	997	1,162	1,168	1,181	1,252	1,442	1,616	1,511	1,442
Adelaide ..	864	894	1,058	1,121	1,143	1,259	1,285	1,246	1,335	1,468	1,750	1,653	1,574
Perth ..	1,027	986	1,126	1,123	1,143	1,222	1,266	1,246	1,239	1,420	1,617	1,609	1,495
Hobart ..	869	886	954	1,053	1,090	1,233	1,278	1,301	1,356	1,496	1,837	1,785	1,651
Weighted Average*	880	897	1,000	1,104	1,140	1,278	1,324	1,318	1,332	1,510	1,785	1,697	1,600

Note.—As to basis of index-numbers, see remarks on pages 29 to 31

\* For all capital towns.

† Index-numbers for years 1902-12 are given in Labour Report No 6, p. 29.

\*\* Increase in price index-number denotes decrease in purchasing-power of money.

(i.) *Groceries (18 Commodities)*.—The index-number for this Group was lower in 1922 than in 1921 in all the capital towns. The decrease in the weighted average index-number for all towns in 1922 compared with 1921 amounts to 8.4 per cent. ; compared with 1911 there has been an increase of 77.4 per cent. ; and compared with 1901 an increase of 94.5 per cent. The average cost in 1922 of the commodities included in this group was greatest in Brisbane and least in Melbourne.

(ii.) *Dairy Produce (7 Commodities)*.—The index-numbers for this group were lower for 1922 than for 1921 in all the capital towns. The weighted average index-number for all towns in 1922 was 10.4 per cent. lower than in 1921, 62.7 per cent. higher than in 1911, and 72.2 per cent. higher than in 1901. The average cost in 1922 of the commodities in this group was highest in Perth and least in Hobart.

(iii.) *Meat (21 Cuts or Joints of Butcher's Meat)*.—The index-numbers for this group were lower in 1922 than in 1921 in all the capital towns. The weighted average index-number for all towns taken together in 1922 was 17.9 per cent. lower than in 1921 ; 58.7 per cent. higher than in 1911, and 44.1 per cent. higher than in 1901. The average cost for 1922 of the commodities included in this group was greatest in Hobart and least in Brisbane.

(iv.) *Food and Groceries (Groups I., II., and III. combined)*.—The index-numbers for this combined group show the aggregate effect of movements in prices of commodities, apart from variations in house rent. There was a decrease in 1922 compared with the immediately preceding year in all the towns. Taking the weighted average for all the towns, the prices of the 46 items of food and groceries specified on page 31 were 11.5 per cent. lower in 1922 than in 1921, 68.4 per cent. higher than in 1911, and 73.3 per cent. higher than in 1901. The average cost of these items for 1922 was greatest in Hobart and least in Brisbane.

(v.) *Housing*.—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 house rents in each of the metropolitan towns from 1901 to 1914. The abnormal situation arising out of the war has resulted in entirely changed conditions for the years 1915 to 1922. 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 show slight increases, Sydney, Brisbane and Adelaide slight decreases, while the index-number for Hobart was the same for 1916 as for 1915. From 1917 to 1922, there was an increase in the average rentals in all the towns. The weighted average index-number for 1922 is 5.4 per cent. higher than for 1921, 48.0 per cent. higher than in 1911,

and 97.1 per cent. higher than in 1901. The greatest increase since 1901 has occurred in Brisbane (147.1 per cent.), followed in the order named by Melbourne (117.9 per cent.), Hobart (116.6 per cent.), Adelaide (116.2 per cent.), Sydney (78.9 per cent.), and Perth (36.3 per cent.).

(vi.) *Food, Groceries, and Housing combined.*—The weighted average index-numbers for the combined expenditure upon food and groceries and housing show a decrease of 5.7 per cent. in 1922 compared with 1921, an increase of 60.0 per cent. compared with 1911, and 81.8 per cent. compared with 1901. The weighted average price index-number was lower in 1904 than in any other year during the period covered by these investigations. This 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. The index-number for 1917 was 0.5 per cent. lower than for 1916, but in 1918 there was a rise of 3.3 per cent. The index-number for 1919 shows a rise of 10.9 per cent., and there was a further sharp rise of 18.2 per cent. for 1920, which is the highest recorded. The index-number for 1921 shows a decline of 4.9 per cent. compared with 1920, and that for 1922 is 5.7 per cent. less than the index-number for 1921.

Compared with 1911, the base-year of the period, the weighted average price index-number shows an increase of 60.0 per cent. for 1922. From 1901 to 1912 inclusive, the index-number for Perth was higher than for any other capital town, except for the year 1909. From 1913 to 1920 the index-number for Sydney was the highest, and for 1921 and 1922 the index-number for Hobart was higher than for any other capital town.

6. **Retail Prices, Thirty Towns, 1918 to 1922.**—In the following tables index-numbers are given showing variations in the cost of food and groceries (46 commodities), in thirty of the more important towns throughout Australia at yearly, quarterly and monthly periods for the years specified. In addition, index-numbers showing for the years specified the quarterly and yearly variations in house rents and in the combined cost of food, groceries and housing are given. As explained on 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.



**Retail Price Index-Numbers 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.	Ballaarat.	Bendigo.	Geelong.	Warrnambool.	Weighted Average, Victoria.
<b>FOOD AND GROCERIES—46 COMMODITIES.</b>												
1918	1,549	1,564	1,752	1,526	1,504	1,557	1,466	1,441	1,443	1,445	1,493	1,463
1919	1,783	1,803	1,900	1,781	1,681	1,788	1,620	1,587	1,558	1,588	1,604	1,612
1920	2,148	2,146	2,300	2,185	2,113	2,158	2,056	2,080	2,009	1,995	2,035	2,052
1921	1,808	1,836	2,128	1,921	1,884	1,911	1,901	1,912	1,880	1,932	1,920	1,902
1922	1,703	1,706	1,776	1,691	1,632	1,705	1,644	1,654	1,649	1,642	1,591	1,644
1921 1st Qtr.	2,122	2,163	2,495	2,170	2,124	2,141	2,166	2,176	2,112	2,171	2,188	2,164
2nd "	1,917	1,963	2,345	1,975	1,930	1,940	1,965	1,968	1,952	2,037	1,955	1,967
3rd "	1,834	1,882	1,962	1,819	1,821	1,843	1,819	1,833	1,807	1,839	1,836	1,821
4th "	1,719	1,734	1,711	1,711	1,661	1,719	1,654	1,670	1,647	1,680	1,701	1,667
1922 1st Qtr.	1,644	1,653	1,705	1,674	1,603	1,647	1,577	1,695	1,585	1,688	1,531	1,570
2nd "	1,673	1,632	1,793	1,688	1,621	1,678	1,650	1,657	1,645	1,660	1,598	1,650
3rd "	1,756	1,753	1,803	1,697	1,657	1,755	1,699	1,694	1,702	1,689	1,644	1,698
4th "	1,739	1,735	1,801	1,707	1,644	1,739	1,650	1,657	1,665	1,630	1,501	1,650
<b>1922.</b>												
January ..	1,677	1,678	1,690	1,710	1,653	1,678	1,590	1,615	1,579	1,584	1,540	1,591
February ..	1,620	1,633	1,698	1,669	1,595	1,625	1,565	1,593	1,570	1,582	1,514	1,568
March ..	1,634	1,647	1,730	1,636	1,574	1,638	1,575	1,607	1,607	1,599	1,538	1,580
April ..	1,650	1,654	1,758	1,630	1,607	1,660	1,611	1,623	1,605	1,640	1,553	1,612
May ..	1,686	1,690	1,819	1,712	1,627	1,691	1,673	1,680	1,670	1,679	1,619	1,673
June ..	1,678	1,702	1,800	1,672	1,628	1,684	1,666	1,669	1,661	1,663	1,622	1,665
July ..	1,722	1,728	1,796	1,688	1,642	1,724	1,702	1,702	1,704	1,700	1,654	1,701
August ..	1,765	1,747	1,805	1,696	1,665	1,762	1,694	1,693	1,692	1,675	1,630	1,693
September ..	1,780	1,783	1,809	1,707	1,664	1,770	1,702	1,689	1,709	1,693	1,642	1,701
October ..	1,725	1,773	1,806	1,696	1,638	1,731	1,658	1,679	1,690	1,636	1,617	1,660
November ..	1,756	1,711	1,782	1,675	1,597	1,750	1,642	1,657	1,658	1,629	1,582	1,643
December ..	1,735	1,721	1,815	1,762	1,697	1,737	1,649	1,634	1,658	1,627	1,573	1,647

**HOUSING—(ALL HOUSES).**

1918	1,252	846	703	1,125	788	1,187	1,180	625	703	920	788	1,005
1919	1,289	1,048	731	1,156	833	1,218	1,283	640	723	1,002	891	1,185
1920	1,415	1,221	731	1,337	901	1,363	1,405	810	856	1,090	1,073	1,310
1921	1,474	1,296	731	1,399	933	1,419	1,502	914	935	1,155	1,151	1,405
1922	1,535	1,315	731	1,398	949	1,474	1,597	979	1,002	1,232	1,207	1,494
1921 1st Qtr.	1,460	1,286	731	1,372	933	1,408	1,464	912	907	1,134	1,121	1,371
2nd "	1,402	1,286	731	1,371	933	1,409	1,473	914	912	1,154	1,144	1,380
3rd "	1,431	1,286	731	1,361	933	1,425	1,523	914	961	1,154	1,167	1,424
4th "	1,491	1,286	731	1,371	933	1,434	1,647	916	961	1,177	1,171	1,444
1922 1st Qtr.	1,511	1,300	731	1,375	949	1,453	1,553	954	975	1,206	1,191	1,454
2nd "	1,534	1,309	731	1,385	940	1,473	1,594	961	935	1,210	1,207	1,489
3rd "	1,544	1,320	731	1,405	949	1,482	1,606	1,016	991	1,214	1,215	1,502
4th "	1,550	1,331	731	1,425	940	1,489	1,633	984	1,053	1,298	1,216	1,531

**FOOD, GROCERIES, AND HOUSING.**

1918	1,427	1,269	1,321	1,362	1,210	1,406	1,349	1,107	1,139	1,233	1,203	1,311
1919	1,580	1,493	1,419	1,524	1,340	1,562	1,481	1,198	1,215	1,347	1,311	1,436
1920	1,847	1,766	1,712	1,836	1,615	1,831	1,788	1,558	1,535	1,623	1,640	1,747
1921	1,724	1,660	1,554	1,694	1,493	1,799	1,737	1,502	1,492	1,612	1,604	1,693
1922	1,634	1,545	1,346	1,571	1,352	1,610	1,625	1,376	1,384	1,474	1,433	1,583
1921 1st Qtr.	1,850	1,803	1,770	1,847	1,634	1,840	1,878	1,656	1,617	1,745	1,750	1,838
2nd "	1,730	1,685	1,682	1,727	1,520	1,722	1,763	1,535	1,525	1,674	1,622	1,726
3rd "	1,689	1,637	1,456	1,631	1,456	1,671	1,698	1,455	1,459	1,557	1,561	1,657
4th "	1,625	1,550	1,308	1,571	1,362	1,602	1,610	1,360	1,365	1,473	1,483	1,569
1922 1st Qtr.	1,589	1,508	1,305	1,551	1,337	1,567	1,567	1,337	1,334	1,431	1,391	1,523
2nd "	1,616	1,529	1,356	1,563	1,345	1,594	1,627	1,371	1,374	1,475	1,437	1,584
3rd "	1,609	1,575	1,362	1,577	1,366	1,643	1,661	1,416	1,410	1,494	1,468	1,613
4th "	1,661	1,569	1,361	1,592	1,358	1,636	1,643	1,380	1,416	1,494	1,437	1,601

**Retail Price Index-Numbers 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.	Charters Towers.	Warwick.	Weighted Average, Queensland.	Adelaide.	Kadina, Moonta and Wallaroo.	Port Pirie.	Mt. Gambier.	Peterborough.	Weighted Average, S.A.
1918	1,495	1,496	1,523	1,700	1,683	1,517	1,553	1,569	1,628	1,487	1,590	1,556
1919	1,762	1,800	1,827	1,999	1,807	1,792	1,719	1,706	1,744	1,580	1,731	1,716
1920	2,052	1,999	2,067	2,193	2,045	2,065	2,132	2,068	2,096	1,976	2,092	2,123
1921	1,812	1,714	1,834	1,901	1,817	1,812	1,906	1,913	1,960	1,892	1,954	1,909
1922	1,608	1,539	1,616	1,698	1,578	1,609	1,723	1,710	1,725	1,628	1,762	1,720
1921 1st Qtr.	1,960	1,831	1,971	2,095	1,970	1,960	2,144	2,139	2,185	2,078	2,121	2,143
2nd "	1,832	1,737	1,881	1,931	1,848	1,837	1,988	2,018	2,053	1,981	2,035	1,993
3rd "	1,763	1,684	1,776	1,801	1,751	1,759	1,814	1,806	1,808	1,810	1,871	1,817
4th "	1,604	1,602	1,707	1,778	1,701	1,693	1,678	1,686	1,733	1,600	1,790	1,692
1922 1st Qtr.	1,611	1,516	1,622	1,713	1,578	1,610	1,670	1,663	1,729	1,584	1,747	1,671
2nd "	1,597	1,494	1,600	1,674	1,564	1,592	1,777	1,749	1,777	1,651	1,785	1,772
3rd "	1,613	1,561	1,627	1,689	1,598	1,615	1,750	1,739	1,724	1,648	1,768	1,750
4th "	1,610	1,555	1,617	1,716	1,574	1,616	1,690	1,692	1,671	1,621	1,748	1,698
1922												
January	1,646	1,548	1,666	1,753	1,614	1,646	1,643	1,664	1,715	1,565	1,752	1,647
February	1,600	1,608	1,605	1,708	1,568	1,599	1,669	1,647	1,732	1,584	1,747	1,670
March	1,588	1,494	1,595	1,677	1,552	1,586	1,697	1,677	1,730	1,694	1,742	1,696
April	1,591	1,472	1,578	1,670	1,553	1,584	1,738	1,708	1,764	1,640	1,770	1,735
May	1,598	1,503	1,594	1,681	1,507	1,595	1,812	1,742	1,795	1,654	1,800	1,803
June	1,600	1,598	1,627	1,663	1,572	1,598	1,782	1,796	1,774	1,662	1,785	1,779
July	1,601	1,528	1,638	1,670	1,584	1,603	1,790	1,772	1,754	1,646	1,780	1,782
August	1,616	1,562	1,614	1,703	1,601	1,617	1,747	1,754	1,744	1,646	1,757	1,744
September	1,621	1,592	1,629	1,695	1,611	1,625	1,730	1,690	1,673	1,651	1,767	1,723
October	1,589	1,585	1,625	1,697	1,592	1,602	1,701	1,674	1,654	1,636	1,749	1,696
November	1,600	1,574	1,605	1,685	1,560	1,604	1,676	1,681	1,600	1,612	1,720	1,674
December	1,642	1,595	1,620	1,765	1,571	1,643	1,693	1,721	1,698	1,615	1,775	1,693

**FOOD AND GROCERIES (46 COMMODITIES).**

**HOUSING (ALL HOUSES).**

1918	905	795	796	670	777	859	1,022	746	878	729	771	987
1919	983	831	897	701	811	921	1,108	791	966	708	851	1,068
1920	1,001	969	826	731	854	995	1,216	820	961	740	911	1,163
1921	1,079	1,028	835	736	960	937	1,289	847	902	753	937	1,225
1922	1,206	997	879	758	954	1,107	1,360	833	936	769	924	1,297
1921 1st Qtr.	1,077	1,020	833	782	901	1,015	1,283	853	936	753	938	1,222
2nd "	1,073	1,029	830	729	932	1,014	1,280	828	903	753	938	1,221
3rd "	1,079	1,029	836	720	962	1,016	1,286	849	981	753	937	1,221
4th "	1,085	1,034	836	704	950	1,024	1,301	870	988	753	937	1,225
1922 1st Qtr.	1,166	989	857	761	950	1,077	1,340	871	931	759	937	1,271
2nd "	1,204	990	866	761	950	1,103	1,351	854	937	759	937	1,280
3rd "	1,222	995	892	763	960	1,120	1,362	847	939	759	937	1,280
4th "	1,231	1,015	900	761	957	1,128	1,356	840	939	759	937	1,308

**FOOD, GROCERIES AND HOUSING.**

1918	1,252	1,208	1,221	1,277	1,240	1,247	1,335	1,231	1,320	1,176	1,253	1,323
1919	1,442	1,402	1,403	1,454	1,398	1,434	1,468	1,330	1,424	1,222	1,309	1,419
1920	1,645	1,576	1,557	1,557	1,568	1,610	1,756	1,671	1,690	1,435	1,607	1,728
1921	1,511	1,432	1,424	1,423	1,468	1,486	1,653	1,476	1,425	1,418	1,536	1,623
1922	1,442	1,317	1,313	1,312	1,322	1,403	1,574	1,358	1,401	1,270	1,418	1,543
1921 1st Qtr.	1,507	1,498	1,503	1,535	1,568	1,572	1,700	1,611	1,672	1,574	1,635	1,764
2nd "	1,321	1,446	1,452	1,437	1,484	1,499	1,700	1,529	1,580	1,376	1,583	1,676
3rd "	1,482	1,415	1,390	1,357	1,427	1,454	1,597	1,413	1,462	1,375	1,487	1,572
4th "	1,444	1,360	1,349	1,361	1,392	1,418	1,523	1,351	1,386	1,287	1,430	1,499
1922 1st Qtr.	1,428	1,300	1,307	1,322	1,320	1,391	1,534	1,337	1,401	1,245	1,414	1,507
2nd "	1,435	1,287	1,298	1,295	1,312	1,301	1,602	1,381	1,432	1,284	1,437	1,570
3rd "	1,452	1,328	1,326	1,303	1,336	1,412	1,594	1,372	1,401	1,282	1,427	1,561
4th "	1,454	1,351	1,322	1,303	1,320	1,416	1,595	1,342	1,370	1,267	1,344	1,532

Retail Price Index-Numbers 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 30 Towns, C. Weight.
	Perth.	Kalgoorlie.	Midland and Junction.	Budbury.	Gardenton.	Weighted Average, W.A.	Hobart.	Lanceston.	Zeehan.	Heasonfield.	Queenstown.	Weighted Average, Tasmania.	

FOOD AND GROCERIES (16 COMMODITIES).

1918	1,486	1,784	1,479	1,592	1,598	1,553	1,635	1,575	1,732	1,625	1,729	1,626	1,514	1,523
1919	1,772	2,039	1,737	1,851	1,761	1,837	1,747	1,708	1,855	1,782	1,883	1,749	1,716	1,730
1920	2,050	2,302	2,060	2,055	2,071	2,103	2,107	2,102	2,108	2,062	2,149	2,146	2,101	2,104
1921	1,995	2,207	2,037	2,029	2,017	2,042	2,025	1,934	2,134	1,929	2,058	2,000	1,902	1,911
1922	1,778	1,985	1,858	1,858	1,840	1,823	1,794	1,769	1,950	1,842	1,842	1,774	1,684	1,686
1921 1st Qtr.	2,100	2,372	2,171	2,100	2,124	2,202	2,221	2,141	2,301	2,072	2,178	2,191	2,131	2,128
2nd "	2,105	2,309	2,120	2,134	2,092	2,150	2,075	1,989	2,163	1,953	2,065	2,047	1,950	1,964
3rd "	1,917	2,133	1,976	1,946	2,005	1,969	1,930	1,883	2,093	1,918	2,037	1,956	1,830	1,838
4th "	1,795	2,014	1,881	1,879	1,844	1,848	1,826	1,724	1,981	1,778	1,950	1,808	1,687	1,704
1922 1st Qtr.	1,738	1,935	1,813	1,842	1,777	1,786	1,793	1,684	1,927	1,675	1,818	1,792	1,630	1,637
2nd "	1,829	2,054	1,808	1,895	1,806	1,875	1,819	1,719	1,977	1,697	1,846	1,764	1,684	1,688
3rd "	1,813	2,048	1,907	1,878	1,880	1,869	1,808	1,718	1,971	1,704	1,849	1,786	1,729	1,731
4th "	1,723	1,972	1,791	1,807	1,838	1,782	1,756	1,716	1,925	1,695	1,852	1,755	1,691	1,695
1922.	1,712	1,907	1,795	1,827	1,755	1,760	1,791	1,670	1,920	1,680	1,823	1,757	1,648	1,651
January	1,740	1,936	1,810	1,839	1,776	1,787	1,796	1,680	1,926	1,677	1,808	1,764	1,617	1,624
February	1,760	1,963	1,833	1,861	1,801	1,809	1,791	1,696	1,927	1,660	1,821	1,765	1,625	1,636
March	1,764	1,952	1,840	1,882	1,819	1,819	1,814	1,701	1,951	1,674	1,853	1,781	1,655	1,660
April	1,838	2,051	1,919	1,806	1,882	1,884	1,738	1,863	1,984	1,781	1,858	1,808	1,701	1,705
May	1,884	2,059	1,938	1,895	1,893	1,899	1,718	1,984	1,994	1,705	1,858	1,789	1,695	1,700
June	1,896	2,052	1,922	1,883	1,887	1,887	1,820	1,715	1,995	1,695	1,844	1,793	1,723	1,726
July	1,813	2,054	1,808	1,874	1,879	1,870	1,707	1,705	1,955	1,695	1,844	1,786	1,730	1,731
August	1,789	2,047	1,801	1,875	1,874	1,868	1,736	1,731	1,962	1,718	1,845	1,786	1,736	1,737
September	1,789	2,019	1,806	1,867	1,872	1,850	1,760	1,723	1,947	1,720	1,845	1,763	1,686	1,699
October	1,694	1,959	1,755	1,776	1,808	1,767	1,720	1,709	1,895	1,689	1,864	1,732	1,680	1,691
November	1,694	1,959	1,755	1,776	1,808	1,767	1,720	1,709	1,895	1,689	1,864	1,732	1,680	1,691
December	1,694	1,938	1,753	1,777	1,834	1,753	1,798	1,670	1,932	1,669	1,849	1,771	1,680	1,695

HOUSING (ALL HOUSES).

1918	885	843	706	502	929	857	956	930	803	202	617	865	1,143	1,069
1919	916	856	795	533	944	891	1,134	981	813	205	619	875	1,215	1,137
1920	996	851	782	619	976	944	1,373	1,096	874	197	619	1,143	1,335	1,251
1921	1,053	843	860	710	962	902	1,440	1,140	406	301	632	1,198	1,404	1,317
1922	1,052	826	908	826	966	1,020	1,445	1,296	381	232	622	1,248	1,430	1,385
1921 1st Qtr.	1,041	830	872	670	931	960	1,430	1,137	424	300	622	1,189	1,384	1,300
2nd "	1,080	847	877	783	939	1,015	1,415	1,227	377	234	622	1,208	1,449	1,368
3rd "	1,063	865	875	812	943	1,023	1,461	1,127	424	202	622	1,197	1,356	1,303
4th "	1,073	849	862	840	912	1,019	1,482	1,109	492	302	622	1,205	1,414	1,326
1922 1st Qtr.	1,080	847	877	783	939	1,015	1,430	1,137	424	300	622	1,189	1,384	1,300
2nd "	1,063	865	875	812	943	1,023	1,461	1,127	424	202	622	1,197	1,356	1,303
3rd "	1,073	849	862	840	912	1,019	1,482	1,109	492	302	622	1,205	1,414	1,326
4th "	1,052	806	902	860	909	1,023	1,463	1,175	376	200	622	1,200	1,429	1,338

FOOD, GROCERIES AND HOUSING.

1918	1,230	1,393	1,161	1,144	1,323	1,267	1,358	1,310	1,145	1,040	1,272	1,313	1,362	1,336
1919	1,220	1,545	1,313	1,209	1,425	1,438	1,498	1,409	1,222	1,105	1,327	1,313	1,410	1,431
1920	1,617	1,706	1,525	1,405	1,621	1,637	1,837	1,692	1,493	1,300	1,458	1,481	1,785	1,753
1921	1,609	1,647	1,501	1,487	1,596	1,611	1,785	1,612	1,424	1,219	1,468	1,671	1,697	1,668
1922	1,495	1,515	1,459	1,432	1,485	1,496	1,538	1,538	1,405	1,092	1,341	1,557	1,600	1,564
1921 1st Qtr.	1,700	1,742	1,637	1,516	1,654	1,700	1,898	1,724	1,529	1,308	1,590	1,770	1,824	1,799
2nd "	1,670	1,705	1,608	1,551	1,635	1,670	1,818	1,654	1,448	1,233	1,473	1,698	1,719	1,692
3rd "	1,567	1,605	1,526	1,478	1,585	1,571	1,759	1,589	1,398	1,130	1,456	1,647	1,659	1,627
4th "	1,498	1,584	1,474	1,402	1,508	1,502	1,604	1,498	1,321	1,130	1,401	1,568	1,587	1,554
1922 1st Qtr.	1,467	1,488	1,468	1,407	1,433	1,460	1,637	1,496	1,290	1,083	1,326	1,535	1,556	1,522
2nd "	1,526	1,580	1,519	1,451	1,487	1,525	1,667	1,526	1,320	1,095	1,345	1,563	1,589	1,562
3rd "	1,517	1,519	1,451	1,482	1,482	1,520	1,607	1,567	1,316	1,090	1,345	1,570	1,530	1,502
4th "	1,468	1,469	1,450	1,421	1,456	1,470	1,646	1,577	1,205	1,094	1,317	1,561	1,501	1,478

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 34 for the respective groups, and where they relate to the same period are identical in both tables.

The index-numbers given in the separate parts of the table cannot be directly compared with each other in order to show the relative cost of (say) housing and food and groceries, since the weighted average cost in 1911 is in each case made equal to 1000.

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 for Different Towns.

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	Kalgoorlie, etc	31	Launceston	25
Br'ken Hill	31	Bendigo	44	R'k'hamton	21	Pt. Pirie	11	Mid. Ja., etc	7	Q'ns'town	5
Goulburn	13	Geelong	34	Ch'rs Twrs	17	Mt. Gamb'r	7	Bunbury	4	Zeehan	4
Bathurst	9	W'nambo'1	9	Warwick	6	Peterbor'gh	3	Geraldton	4	Beac'n'sfield	3

As the results of the Census taken on 4th April, 1921, are now available, these weights are being revised. The new weights will be used for the tabulations commencing with January 1923.

#### 7. Retail Prices, Thirty Towns, with Houses of Various Sizes, 1922,—

The figures given in the following table show the relative index-numbers for 1922 in the thirty towns for which particulars are regularly collected, and indicate the different results obtained by taking into account houses of various sizes. These index-numbers are comparable in all respects. 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 housing 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 housing of each class indicated.

# ROYAL SOCIETY OF TASMANIA

## RETAIL PRICES.

41

1922.—Index-Numbers, Thirty Towns, Food and Groceries and Housing compared with Weighted Average Expenditure on Food, Groceries and Rent (all Houses) in the Six Capital Towns in 1911 as Base (= 1000).

TOWN.	Food and Groceries.	HOUSING.				FOOD, GROCERIES AND HOUSING.			
		Four-roomed Houses.	Five-roomed Houses.	Six-roomed Houses.	All Houses.	Four-roomed Houses.	Five-roomed Houses.	Six-roomed Houses.	All Houses.
<b>NEW SOUTH WALES—</b>									
Sydney .. .. .	1,003	513	592	684	631	1,516	1,595	1,687	1,634
Newcastle .. .. .	1,005	400	558	690	540	1,405	1,563	1,695	1,545
Broken Hill* .. .	1,046	281	352	438	300	1,327	1,398	1,484	1,346
Goulburn .. .. .	996	403	520	637	575	1,399	1,516	1,633	1,571
Bathurst .. .. .	962	247	368	460	390	1,209	1,330	1,422	1,362
Weighted Average ..	1,004	489	576	671	606	1,403	1,580	1,675	1,610
<b>VICTORIA—</b>									
Melbourne .. .. .	969	457	589	771	656	1,426	1,558	1,740	1,625
Ballarat .. .. .	974	229	339	444	402	1,203	1,313	1,418	1,376
Bendigo .. .. .	872	289	378	500	412	1,261	1,350	1,472	1,384
Geelong .. .. .	967	353	454	588	507	1,320	1,421	1,565	1,474
Warrnambool .. .	937	341	495	594	496	1,278	1,432	1,531	1,433
Weighted Average ..	969	424	550	720	614	1,303	1,519	1,639	1,583
<b>QUEENSLAND—</b>									
Brisbane .. .. .	947	324	429	562	495	1,271	1,376	1,509	1,442
Toowoomba .. .. .	907	256	330	428	410	1,163	1,237	1,335	1,317
Rockhampton .. .	952	243	286	394	361	1,105	1,238	1,346	1,313
Charlers Towers ..	1,000	254	319	406	312	1,254	1,319	1,406	1,312
Warwick .. .. .	930	264	325	434	392	1,194	1,255	1,364	1,322
Weighted Average ..	948	301	392	515	455	1,249	1,340	1,463	1,403
<b>SOUTH AUSTRALIA—</b>									
Adelaide .. .. .	1,015	417	553	685	559	1,432	1,568	1,700	1,574
Moonata, etc. .. .	1,008	269	363	427	350	1,276	1,371	1,436	1,368
Port Pirie* .. .	1,016	318	413	486	385	1,334	1,429	1,512	1,401
Mt. Gambler .. .	958	235	303	377	312	1,193	1,261	1,335	1,270
Peterborough .. .	1,038	292	384	446	380	1,320	1,422	1,484	1,418
Weighted Average ..	1,013	397	526	649	530	1,410	1,539	1,662	1,543
<b>WESTERN AUSTRALIA—</b>									
Perth, etc. .. .. .	1,046	386	483	568	449	1,432	1,529	1,614	1,495
Kalgoorlie, etc. ..	1,175	347	417	487	340	1,522	1,592	1,662	1,615
Mid. Junction, etc..	1,091	337	423	518	398	1,428	1,514	1,609	1,489
Bunbury .. .. .	1,093	340	439	505	339	1,433	1,532	1,598	1,432
Geraldton .. .. .	1,084	400	490	577	381	1,484	1,574	1,661	1,465
Weighted Average ..	1,077	375	465	547	419	1,452	1,542	1,624	1,496
<b>TASMANIA—</b>									
Hobart .. .. .	1,057	397	586	711	594	1,454	1,643	1,768	1,651
Launceston .. .. .	1,007	352	502	635	532	1,359	1,509	1,642	1,539
Zeehan .. .. .	1,149	157	201	271	156	1,306	1,350	1,420	1,305
Beaconsfield .. .	997	75	97	138	95	1,072	1,094	1,135	1,092
Queenstown .. .. .	1,055	263	342	369	256	1,348	1,427	1,454	1,341
Weighted Average ..	1,045	350	506	621	512	1,395	1,551	1,660	1,567
<b>Commonwealth</b>									
Weighted Average 30 Towns ..	994	428	534	660	570	1,420	1,528	1,654	1,564

\* See Remarks on page 43 with reference to house rents.

The rent 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. When houses of only one particular size are included, different results are obtained.

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

A few words as to the proper interpretation of the preceding table may not be out of place. The total expenditure in each town for food, groceries, and housing is multiplied by a number representing the population of the town, and a weighted result for all towns is thus computed. The weights used are given on page 40. The relative expenditure in each town for (a) food and groceries, (b) housing, and (c) food, groceries, and housing combined, is shown, 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 the prices of food and groceries and that for rent of houses of each specified size is equal to the index-number for food, groceries, and housing combined, taking the corresponding house-rent group. The items in the table are comparable in all respects, and in addition show the proportionate cost of food and groceries and of housing. For example, taking the last line in the table, the weighted average expenditure for all the towns on food, groceries, and housing being £1564, the expenditure on food and groceries alone is £994 (1st column), and the average rental £570 (5th column), the sum of the two latter amounts being £1564. Again, if it be desired to ascertain the relative expenditure for food and groceries and rent of four-roomed houses, it will be found that the figures are £994 and £426, which, together, amount to £1420 (6th column). In addition to showing 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 £1003 in Sydney can be purchased for £969 in Melbourne, or £1015 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 £1558 in Melbourne is equivalent to an expenditure of £1595 in Sydney, £1568 in Adelaide, £1592 in Kalgoorlie, or £1574 in Geraldton.

The index-numbers are reversible, and may be used for comparisons between any of the towns included. Thus if it be ascertained that the average rental of five-roomed houses in Melbourne is, say, 22s. 4d. weekly, and the average rental of the same class of house in Bendigo is required,

all that is necessary is to multiply the rental in Melbourne by the index-number for five-roomed houses in Bendigo and divide by the index-number for Melbourne (3rd column), 22s. 4d.  $\times \frac{37\frac{3}{8}}{5\frac{3}{8}} = 14s. 4d.$ , which will be found to be the average rental of five-roomed houses in Bendigo (see Appendix II.).

(i.) *Food and Groceries.*—As regards food and groceries, the weighted average of the five towns was below the weighted average for all towns for 1922 in Victoria and Queensland, and higher in the remaining States. The most expensive towns are Kalgoorlie, in Western Australia; and Zeehan, in Tasmania; Kalgoorlie being 18.2 per cent., and Zeehan 15.6 per cent. above the weighted average for all towns.

(ii.) *Housing.*—It will be seen that for four-roomed houses, Sydney, Melbourne, and Adelaide are the most expensive towns. For five-roomed houses, Sydney, Melbourne and Hobart are dearest, while six-roomed houses are dearest in Melbourne, Hobart and Newcastle. Taking all houses, Melbourne, Sydney and Hobart are the most expensive towns, while Beaconsfield and Zeehan, in Tasmania, are the cheapest.

With reference to housing 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 normal conditions again obtained. In 1919, 1920 and 1921 industrial troubles in Broken Hill caused similar conditions to obtain as in 1914-15. In some years, therefore, 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 Housing combined.*—The last column in the foregoing table shows the relative cost according to average prices of the commodities and housing accommodation for all houses in each town during 1922. It may be seen that the average cost was greatest in Hobart, followed by Sydney and Melbourne. The index-number for Hobart was 5.6 per cent., Sydney 4.5 per cent., and Melbourne, 3.9 per cent., above the weighted average cost for all towns. The cost was least in Beaconsfield.

8. **Retail Price Index-numbers in Terms of Currency.**—In the following table the average cost for the six capital cities 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 furnish a measure of the variations in the cost of the regimen referred to on page from year to year in each city separately (in the vertical lines), and the relative cost in the several cities 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 32s. 10d. in Melbourne for the last quarter of 1922 was equivalent to 15s. 5d. in Brisbane in 1901, or 22s. 6d. in Perth in 1911.

Retail Prices—Amounts necessary on the Average in each Year from 1901 to 1923 (1st Quarter) to purchase in each Capital City what would 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 Cities.	
<b>FOOD AND GROCERIES (46 COMMODITIES).</b>								
	s.	d.	s.	d.	s.	d.	s.	d.
1901 .. .. .	18	4	19	4	19	4	20	7
1907 .. .. .	18	9	18	6	18	11	19	0
1911 .. .. .	19	9	18	8	20	4	20	5
1918 .. .. .	31	0	20	4	20	11	31	1
1919 .. .. .	35	8	32	5	35	3	34	5
1920 .. .. .	43	0	41	1	41	1	42	8
1921 .. .. .	38	0	38	0	36	3	38	1
1922 .. .. .	34	1	32	11	32	2	34	6
1922 { 1st Quarter	32	10	31	6	32	3	33	5
1922 { 2nd "	33	6	33	0	31	11	35	7
1922 { 3rd "	35	1	34	0	32	3	35	1
1922 { 4th "	34	9	33	0	32	2	33	10
1923 1st "	34	2	32	9	32	4	34	1
	s.	d.	s.	d.	s.	d.	s.	d.
1901 .. .. .	17	3	14	8	9	9	12	7
1907 .. .. .	18	4	16	1	11	6	16	3
1911 .. .. .	21	10	19	5	15	4	22	3
1918 .. .. .	25	0	23	7	18	1	20	5
1919 .. .. .	25	9	25	8	19	8	22	2
1920 .. .. .	23	4	28	1	21	3	24	4
1921 .. .. .	29	6	30	0	21	7	25	0
1922 .. .. .	30	8	31	11	24	1	27	2
1922 { 1st Quarter	30	8	31	1	23	4	26	10
1922 { 2nd "	30	8	31	11	24	1	27	0
1922 { 3rd "	30	11	32	2	24	5	27	3
1922 { 4th "	31	0	32	8	24	7	27	0
1923 1st "	31	8	32	9	24	11	28	6
	s.	d.	s.	d.	s.	d.	s.	d.
1901 .. .. .	17	10	17	5	15	5	17	3
1907 .. .. .	18	6	17	6	15	11	17	11
1911 .. .. .	20	7	19	0	18	4	21	2
1918 .. .. .	23	6	27	0	25	1	26	8
1919 .. .. .	31	7	29	7	23	10	29	4
1920 .. .. .	36	11	35	9	32	11	35	1
1921 .. .. .	34	6	34	10	30	3	33	1
1922 .. .. .	32	8	32	6	23	10	31	6
1922 { 1st Quarter	31	9	31	4	28	7	30	8
1922 { 2nd "	32	4	32	7	25	8	32	1
1922 { 3rd "	35	4	33	2	29	1	31	11
1922 { 4th "	33	3	32	10	29	1	31	4
1923 1st "	35	2	32	9	20	2	31	10
	s.	d.	s.	d.	s.	d.	s.	d.
1901 .. .. .	17	3	14	8	9	9	12	7
1907 .. .. .	18	4	16	1	11	6	16	3
1911 .. .. .	21	10	19	5	15	4	22	3
1918 .. .. .	25	0	23	7	18	1	20	5
1919 .. .. .	25	9	25	8	19	8	22	2
1920 .. .. .	23	4	28	1	21	3	24	4
1921 .. .. .	29	6	30	0	21	7	25	0
1922 .. .. .	30	8	31	11	24	1	27	2
1922 { 1st Quarter	30	8	31	1	23	4	26	10
1922 { 2nd "	30	8	31	11	24	1	27	0
1922 { 3rd "	30	11	32	2	24	5	27	3
1922 { 4th "	31	0	32	8	24	7	27	0
1923 1st "	31	8	32	9	24	11	28	6
	s.	d.	s.	d.	s.	d.	s.	d.
1901 .. .. .	17	3	14	8	9	9	12	7
1907 .. .. .	18	4	16	1	11	6	16	3
1911 .. .. .	21	10	19	5	15	4	22	3
1918 .. .. .	25	0	23	7	18	1	20	5
1919 .. .. .	25	9	25	8	19	8	22	2
1920 .. .. .	23	4	28	1	21	3	24	4
1921 .. .. .	29	6	30	0	21	7	25	0
1922 .. .. .	30	8	31	11	24	1	27	2
1922 { 1st Quarter	30	8	31	1	23	4	26	10
1922 { 2nd "	30	8	31	11	24	1	27	0
1922 { 3rd "	30	11	32	2	24	5	27	3
1922 { 4th "	31	0	32	8	24	7	27	0
1923 1st "	31	8	32	9	24	11	28	6

9. Price Details, 1922.—While the summarised results of price-movements are published quarterly, the actual data from which such results are obtained are only published in full 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, similar particulars were given of prices and house rents in 1912 for each of the thirty towns from which returns are collected.

Corresponding data for subsequent years were given as follows:—1913, Report No. 5; 1914 and 1915, No. 6; 1916, No. 7; 1917, No. 8; 1918, No. 9; 1919, No. 10; 1920, No. 11; 1921, No. 12; and 1922, in this Report.



10. **Year 1922 Compared with Previous Years.**—The following tables show for each capital town (i.) the total variation per cent. in the cost of food, groceries, and housing combined in 1922 compared with preceding years, and (ii.), the amount of such variation due to (a) prices of food and groceries, and (b) house rent. The sum of the percentages for any year and town in the second and third sections of the table is equal to 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 1922 compared with 1907 is 76.4 per cent., of which percentage 48.8 is due to increased cost of food and groceries, and 27.6 to increase in house rents.

**Variation per cent. in Price Index-Numbers in 1922 compared with previous Years.**

Year	Sydney.	Melbourne.	Brisbane	Adelaide.	Perth.	Hobart.	Weighted Average for 6 Capital Towns.
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
1901 .. ..	82.9	86.8	87.5	82.1	45.5	89.8	82.0
1907 .. ..	76.4	85.6	81.6	76.0	51.5	86.2	78.4
1914 .. ..	35.4	47.0	44.6	37.7	30.8	51.4	40.3
1915 .. ..	23.5	27.2	24.1	25.0	22.3	33.9	25.2
1916 .. ..	17.2	24.1	21.4	22.5	18.1	29.1	20.8
1917 .. ..	16.2	25.5	22.2	26.4	20.0	26.9	21.4
1918 .. ..	14.5	20.5	15.2	17.9	20.6	21.7	17.5
1919 .. ..	3.4	9.7	0.1	7.2	5.2	10.3	6.0
1920 .. ..	-11.5	-9.2	-12.3	-10.3	-7.6	-10.2	-10.4
1921 .. ..	-5.2	-6.5	-4.5	-4.7	-7.1	-7.5	-5.7

**VARIATION DUE TO PRICES OF FOOD AND GROCERIES.**

	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
1901 .. ..	51.8	46.0	49.2	47.4	33.9	53.1	47.9
1907 .. ..	48.8	48.4	49.0	50.9	34.5	52.1	48.0
1914 .. ..	26.7	29.5	31.3	26.2	24.4	31.4	27.9
1915 .. ..	13.7	10.8	11.9	11.0	14.1	16.7	12.4
1916 .. ..	7.7	8.2	9.0	8.8	10.9	12.5	8.4
1917 .. ..	6.9	10.5	10.1	13.2	12.8	11.3	9.5
1918 .. ..	6.3	7.8	5.3	7.5	13.8	6.9	7.3
1919 .. ..	-3.0	1.0	-6.3	0.2	0.1	1.8	-1.2
1920 .. ..	-14.2	-13.6	-15.9	-13.7	-10.0	-11.8	-13.8
1921 .. ..	-6.7	-8.7	-8.0	-6.5	-8.1	-7.6	-7.6

**VARIATION DUE TO HOUSE RENTS.**

1901 .. ..	31.1	40.8	38.3	34.7	11.6	36.7	34.1
1907 .. ..	27.6	37.2	32.6	25.1	17.0	34.1	30.4
1914 .. ..	8.7	17.5	13.3	11.5	6.4	20.0	12.4
1915 .. ..	9.8	16.4	12.2	14.0	8.2	17.2	12.8
1916 .. ..	9.5	15.9	12.4	13.7	7.2	16.6	12.4
1917 .. ..	9.3	15.0	12.1	13.2	7.2	15.6	11.9
1918 .. ..	8.2	12.7	9.9	10.4	6.8	14.8	10.2
1919 .. ..	6.4	8.7	6.4	7.0	5.1	8.5	7.2
1920 .. ..	2.7	4.4	3.6	3.4	2.4	1.6	3.4
1921 .. ..	1.5	2.2	3.5	1.8	1.0	0.1	1.9

NOTE:—Variations not preceded by a sign represent increases, those preceded by a minus sign (—) represent decreases.