

The index-numbers in the first line of each section of the above table refer to 100 towns for November, 1913, and to 150 towns for November, 1916 to 1922. The general closeness of the results shown in these two tables is remarkable, and indicates that the index-numbers published for the capital cities only for the years prior to 1912, and for the thirty towns for 1912 and subsequent years, reflect with a substantial degree of accuracy the variations in the retail price index-numbers. During the period November 1913, to November 1922, the average cost of food and groceries throughout Australia increased 55.8 per cent.; house rents increased 34.7 per cent.; the aggregate result showing an increase of approximately 47.8 per cent.

## CHAPTER VII.—INCLUSION OF CLOTHING AND MISCELLANEOUS REQUIREMENTS.

1. **Introduction.**—The Royal Commission on the Basic Wage was appointed to inquire into and report upon the following matters :—

- (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 corresponding 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.

Reference was made to the findings of the Commission in Report No. 11, pp. 28 and 29. In answer to the third clause of the enquiry, the Commission recommended that "a Bureau of Labour should be organized from existing members of the Public Service, which should ascertain from time to time the rise and fall in the purchasing power of money in relation to the reasonable standard of comfort for the typical family (*i.e.*, such a family as is described in Clause 1)." This suggestion was adopted by the Government, and the Commonwealth Statistician was consulted as to the methods to be followed in this connexion. The duty of carrying out the recommendation was entrusted to this Bureau. As the result of investigations and inquiry as to methods adopted in other countries, the methods hereafter described have been adopted for the purpose of measuring variations in the cost of the commodities and services which comprise the total expenditure on living.

2. **Methods Adopted.**—The Commission was concerned principally with ascertaining variations in the cost of the regimen which its members adopted, and which is described in the Indicator Lists published

in the Report. It appeared, however, that to confine the investigations by this Bureau in the way suggested by the Commission, would limit their usefulness. It has therefore been decided to apply to the extended investigation the method of index-numbers already used in the investigations into variations in the cost of food, groceries and housing. As will be shown later, the index-numbers may be used to measure accurately from time to time the rise and fall in prices in relation to the reasonable standard of comfort for the typical family as outlined by the Commission, as well as for the determination of variations in any standard fixed by previous investigators or which may be fixed in the future.

The ordinary expenditure of a household may be conveniently divided under four main heads—(1) Food and Groceries ; (2) Housing ; (3) Clothing ; (4) Other Requirements.

In the following computations these four groups have been adopted, and index-numbers are given showing variations in each of the groups separately, and in all groups combined.

After careful investigation it was decided to adopt for food, groceries and house rent the commodities, method, and weighting already in use for the investigations which have been and are being made by this Bureau. The commodities and quantities adopted for food and groceries conform very closely to those given in the Indicator Lists of the Commission. With regard to housing, the Commission adopted a certain type of five-roomed house as its standard for determining the amount allowed for house rent. The investigations made by this Bureau, while not confined to any particular type can with safety be used to show variations in the rent being paid for the type of house described by the Commission.

The investigations of this Bureau having hitherto been confined to food, groceries and housing, it became necessary, to make investigations into the cost of clothing and miscellaneous expenditure. With regard to clothing, the Basic Wage Commission collected a great deal of information as to prices and duration of articles, and these have been utilised in computing the index-numbers given in the following tables. Forms were sent out to retailers on which the prices of the articles at November, 1920, were given, these prices, so far as the Capital Cities are concerned, being in general the prices quoted by the firms to whom the forms were sent ; they were the predominant prices, *i.e.*, the price of the grade of the articles which is most in demand. The retailers were asked to quote for November, 1921, and for May, 1922, the prices of the same articles. In order to ascertain the change in expenditure, the quantities and duration as given in the Indicator Lists of the Basic Wage Commission were used for "weighting" purposes, to arrive at a weekly expenditure on clothing. This weekly expenditure is then multiplied by weights in the same manner as is the weekly expenditure on rent, in order to arrive at an aggregate expenditure comparable with the aggregate expenditure on food and groceries and on rent.

With regard to Miscellaneous Expenditure, which covers a very wide field, inquiries have been made as to variations in cost of fuel and light,

household utensils, drapery, crockery, etc., and also with regard to other items included in the Indicator Lists for Miscellaneous Expenditure, and the aggregate expenditure on these items has been computed in the same manner as that for clothing.

The item Groceries (not Food) has been omitted from Miscellaneous Expenditure, though it was so described by the Commission, as the index-numbers already published by this Bureau cover the items allowed for in this amount, such as soap, starch, blue, &c.

**3. Base Period.**—For the purpose of making comparisons, it is necessary to fix some period as the base period with which all other periods are compared. In the case of index-numbers for food, groceries, and housing, already published, the base period is the year 1911. For the new index-numbers, covering all the items of household expenditure, November, 1914, has been adopted. This has been necessary because of the difficulty of securing information with regard to prices of clothing and miscellaneous items for years prior to 1914. While the index-numbers for 1914 in the following tables relate to the month of November, they may be accepted as typical of immediately pre-war conditions. As in the case of the base period, 1911, the weighted average cost for the six capital cities has been taken, and the aggregate expenditure in November, 1914, made equal to 1000.

**4. Variations in the Thirty Towns.**—The investigations have been extended to the thirty towns for the months of November, 1921, and May, August and November, 1922. It has not been considered necessary to undertake the difficult task of securing the information as to prices of clothing and miscellaneous expenditure in towns other than the capitals, for previous years. So far as the capitals are concerned, the information was already available in the Report of the Royal Commission on the Basic Wage. In future the information will be collected quarterly for all the towns, and quarterly index-numbers will be computed.

**5. Variations in Cost, November, 1914, to November, 1922.**—The following tables furnish index-numbers shewing the variations during the period covered, in the cost of—(a) Food and Groceries; (b) Housing; (c) Food, Groceries and Housing Combined; (d) Clothing; (e) Miscellaneous Requirements; (f) Food and Groceries, Housing, Clothing and Miscellaneous Requirements combined.

Food and Groceries (46 Commodities) Index-Numbers for each of Thirty Towns, with Weighted Average of Six Capital Cities in November, 1914, as base (= 1000).

Period.	N.S.W.—INDEX-NUMBERS						VICTORIA—INDEX-NUMBERS.					
	Sydney.	Newcastle	Broken Hill.	Goulburn.	Bathurst.	Weighted Average, N.S.W.	Melbourne.	Batharat	Bendigo.	Geelong.	Warrnambool.	Weighted Average, Victoria.
Nov. 1914	995						960					
" 1915	1,316						1,304					
" 1916	1,299						1,233					
" 1917	1,367						1,244					
" 1918	1,368						1,315					
" 1919	1,674						1,521					
" 1920	1,911						1,903					
" 1921	1,503	1,524	1,515	1,482	1,450	1,504	1,439	1,447	1,434	1,467	1,470	1,441
May 1922	1,471	1,474	1,587	1,493	1,419	1,475	1,459	1,406	1,457	1,405	1,412	1,450
Aug. "	1,539	1,524	1,574	1,480	1,452	1,537	1,478	1,477	1,476	1,461	1,427	1,477
Nov. "	1,531	1,403	1,554	1,461	1,393	1,526	1,432	1,453	1,446	1,421	1,380	1,438

  

Period.	QUEENSLAND—INDEX-NUMBERS						SOUTH AUSTRALIA—INDEX-NUMBERS.					
	Brisbane.	Toowoomba.	Rockhampton.	Charters Towers.	Warwick.	Weighted Average, Queensland.	Adelaide.	Kadina, Moonta and Wallaroo.	Port Pirie.	Mt. Gambier.	Pete borough	Weighted Average, S.A.
Nov. 1914	957						1,068					
" 1915	1,341						1,339					
" 1916	1,166						1,302					
" 1917	1,287						1,256					
" 1918	1,876						1,344					
" 1919	1,667						1,579					
" 1920	1,742						1,911					
" 1921	1,490	1,395	1,480	1,531	1,460	1,482	1,463	1,474	1,510	1,440	1,554	1,471
May 1922	1,394	1,311	1,391	1,467	1,367	1,391	1,581	1,519	1,566	1,442	1,570	1,572
Aug. "	1,410	1,363	1,408	1,486	1,396	1,411	1,524	1,530	1,521	1,436	1,533	1,521
Nov. "	1,306	1,373	1,400	1,470	1,393	1,399	1,462	1,466	1,448	1,406	1,500	1,460

  

Period	WESTERN AUSTRALIA—INDEX-NUMBERS.						TASMANIA—INDEX-NUMBERS.						Weighted Average of 30 Towns, Australia.
	Perth.	Kalgoorlie.	Midland Junction and Gullford.	Bunbury.	Geraldton.	Weighted Average, W.A.	Hobart.	Launceston.	Zeehan.	Beaconsfield.	Queenstown.	Weighted Average, Tasmania.	
Nov. 1914	1,164						1,072						1,000*
" 1915	1,277						1,339						1,314
" 1916	1,332						1,259						1,267
" 1917	1,291						1,480						1,363
" 1918	1,272						1,432						1,343
" 1919	1,639						1,624						1,600
" 1920	1,736						2,017						1,886
" 1921	1,567	1,746	1,644	1,636	1,603	1,610	1,601	1,495	1,728	1,553	1,680	1,577	1,487
May 1922	1,603	1,763	1,674	1,654	1,640	1,642	1,600	1,516	1,734	1,493	1,621	1,577	1,484
Aug. "	1,582	1,732	1,656	1,635	1,639	1,631	1,586	1,489	1,705	1,478	1,608	1,558	1,509
Nov. "	1,478	1,709	1,531	1,549	1,577	1,532	1,500	1,491	1,453	1,473	1,618	1,511	1,474

\* Basis of Table.

Housing.—Index-Numbers for each of Thirty Towns, with Weighted Average of Six Capital Cities in November, 1914, as base (= 1000).

Period	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.
Nov. 1914	1,440	1,200	698	1,255	865	1,342	1,472	887	953	1,170	1,090	1,880
" 1915	1,094	1,150	658	1,236	841	1,268	1,394	826	860	1,061	1,055	1,801
" 1916	1,094	1,179	668	1,248	855	1,327	1,436	806	868	1,091	1,088	1,842
" 1917	1,103	1,160	676	1,269	866	1,336	1,448	940	893	1,094	1,095	1,855
" 1918	1,137	1,200	698	1,285	865	1,342	1,472	887	953	1,170	1,090	1,880
" 1919	1,137	1,200	698	1,285	865	1,342	1,472	887	953	1,170	1,090	1,880
" 1920	1,137	1,200	698	1,285	865	1,342	1,472	887	953	1,170	1,090	1,880
" 1921	1,137	1,200	698	1,285	865	1,342	1,472	887	953	1,170	1,090	1,880
May 1922	1,344	1,244	684	1,244	864	1,344	1,444	884	954	1,174	1,094	1,884
Aug. " "	1,363	1,263	693	1,263	863	1,363	1,463	893	963	1,183	1,103	1,893
Nov. " "	1,397	1,297	727	1,297	897	1,397	1,497	927	997	1,217	1,137	1,927

  

Period	QUEENSLAND—INDEX-NUMBERS.						SOUTH AUSTRALIA—INDEX-NUMBERS.						
	Brisbane.	Toowoomba.	Rockhampton.	Charters Towers.	Warwick.	Weighted Average, Queensland.	Adelaide.	Rathfriland.	Moorilla and Wallaroo.	Port Pirie.	Mt. Gambier.	Peterborough.	Weighted Average, S.A.
Nov. 1914	780	915	812	686	862	1,017	1,249	757	784	846	684	800	1,170
" 1915	774	909	806	680	856	923	1,136	784	800	678	844	844	1,113
" 1916	769	894	797	673	850	904	1,217	770	844	684	844	844	1,163
" 1917	774	909	806	680	856	923	1,136	784	800	678	844	844	1,163
" 1918	774	909	806	680	856	923	1,136	784	800	678	844	844	1,163
" 1919	831	966	862	744	885	1,069	1,225	764	846	684	844	844	1,163
" 1920	977	1,102	812	686	862	1,017	1,249	757	846	684	800	800	1,170
" 1921	977	1,102	812	686	862	1,017	1,249	757	846	684	800	800	1,170
May 1922	1,085	893	780	677	856	904	1,217	770	844	684	844	844	1,163
Aug. " "	1,102	897	804	686	865	1,009	1,225	764	846	684	844	844	1,163
Nov. " "	1,100	915	812	686	862	1,017	1,249	757	846	684	800	800	1,170

  

Period.	WESTERN AUSTRALIA—INDEX-NUMBERS.						TASMANIA—INDEX-NUMBERS.						
	Perth.	Kalgoorlie.	Midland Junction and Guildford.	Bunbury.	Geraldton.	Weighted Average, W.A.	Hobart.	Launceston.	Zeehan.	Beaconsfield.	Queensstown.	Weighted Average, Tasmania.	Weighted Average 30 Towns, Australia.
Nov. 1914	808	727	867	733	810	922	1,310	1,243	354	208	561	1,157	1,270
" 1915	798	727	867	733	810	922	1,310	1,243	354	208	561	1,157	1,270
" 1916	782	727	867	733	810	922	1,310	1,243	354	208	561	1,157	1,270
" 1917	782	727	867	733	810	922	1,310	1,243	354	208	561	1,157	1,270
" 1918	782	727	867	733	810	922	1,310	1,243	354	208	561	1,157	1,270
" 1919	782	727	867	733	810	922	1,310	1,243	354	208	561	1,157	1,270
" 1920	895	804	867	733	810	922	1,310	1,243	354	208	561	1,157	1,270
" 1921	895	804	867	733	810	922	1,310	1,243	354	208	561	1,157	1,270
May 1922	885	754	867	733	810	922	1,309	1,196	340	503	561	1,136	1,245
Aug. " "	896	784	867	733	810	922	1,309	1,196	340	503	561	1,136	1,245
Nov. " "	893	727	867	733	810	922	1,310	1,243	354	208	561	1,157	1,270

\* Basis of Table.

Food, Groceries and Housing Combined.—Index-Numbers for each of Thirty Towns, with Weighted Average of Six Capital Cities in November, 1914, as base (=1000.)

Period.	N.S.W.—INDEX-NUMBERS.						VICTORIA—INDEX-NUMBERS.					
	Sydney.	Newcastle.	Broken Hill.	Goulburn.	Bathurst.	Weighted Average, N.S.W.	Melbourne.	Ballarat.	Bendigo.	Geelong.	Warramb-bool.	Weighted Average, Victoria.
Nov. 1914	1,056	..	..	..	..	..	970	..	..	..	..	..
" 1915	1,226	..	..	..	..	..	1,169	..	..	..	..	..
" 1916	1,217	..	..	..	..	..	1,135	..	..	..	..	..
" 1917	1,260	..	..	..	..	..	1,153	..	..	..	..	..
" 1918	1,275	..	..	..	..	..	1,232	..	..	..	..	..
" 1919	1,477	..	..	..	..	..	1,390	..	..	..	..	..
" 1920	1,671	..	..	..	..	..	1,068	..	..	..	..	..
" 1921	1,439	1,377	1,170	1,333	1,210	1,419	1,421	1,196	1,205	1,303	1,308	1,385
May 1922	1,435	1,355	1,213	1,395	1,192	1,416	1,450	1,324	1,323	1,314	1,282	1,412
Aug. "	1,480	1,389	1,205	1,394	1,212	1,456	1,466	1,351	1,341	1,313	1,293	1,427
Nov. "	1,477	1,375	1,193	1,390	1,176	1,452	1,443	1,320	1,248	1,320	1,266	1,411

  

Period.	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. Gambler.	Peterborough.	Weighted Average, S.A.
Nov. 1914	886	..	..	..	..	..	986	..	..	..	..	..
" 1915	1,112	..	..	..	..	..	1,137	..	..	..	..	..
" 1916	1,006	..	..	..	..	..	1,117	..	..	..	..	..
" 1917	1,080	..	..	..	..	..	1,102	..	..	..	..	..
" 1918	1,158	..	..	..	..	..	1,185	..	..	..	..	..
" 1919	1,371	..	..	..	..	..	1,350	..	..	..	..	..
" 1920	1,434	..	..	..	..	..	1,590	..	..	..	..	..
" 1921	1,284	1,209	1,157	1,191	1,217	1,257	1,349	1,196	1,224	1,193	1,268	1,327
May 1922	1,270	1,142	1,145	1,145	1,161	1,230	1,434	1,217	1,275	1,137	1,278	1,403
Aug. "	1,285	1,175	1,164	1,163	1,182	1,249	1,403	1,321	1,249	1,193	1,255	1,376
Nov. "	1,280	1,189	1,163	1,164	1,160	1,245	1,376	1,180	1,206	1,116	1,218	1,347

  

Period.	WESTERN AUSTRALIA—INDEX-NUMBERS.						TASMANIA—INDEX-NUMBERS.						Weighted Average 6 Capital Cities.	Weighted Average 30 Towns, Australia.
	Perth.	Kalgoorlie.	Midland Junction and Guildford.	Bunbury.	Geraldton.	Weighted Average, W.A.	Hobart.	Launceston.	Zeehan.	Beaconsfield.	Queenstown.	Weighted Average, Tasmania.		
Nov. 1914	1,020	..	..	..	..	..	970	..	..	..	..	..	1,000	..
" 1915	1,068	..	..	..	..	..	1,137	..	..	..	..	..	1,175	..
" 1916	1,110	..	..	..	..	..	1,093	..	..	..	..	..	1,150	..
" 1917	1,089	..	..	..	..	..	1,231	..	..	..	..	..	1,191	..
" 1918	1,082	..	..	..	..	..	1,208	..	..	..	..	..	1,227	..
" 1919	1,255	..	..	..	..	..	1,416	..	..	..	..	..	1,438	..
" 1920	1,406	..	..	..	..	..	1,720	..	..	..	..	..	1,627	..
" 1921	1,326	1,350	1,305	1,237	1,333	1,327	1,476	1,319	1,168	1,000	1,229	1,377	1,404	1,374
May 1922	1,354	1,356	1,334	1,282	1,322	1,352	1,482	1,359	1,172	975	1,193	1,390	1,423	1,339
Aug. "	1,342	1,365	1,338	1,281	1,310	1,344	1,474	1,371	1,155	966	1,186	1,388	1,442	1,406
Nov. "	1,282	1,313	1,263	1,241	1,271	1,286	1,427	1,391	1,129	963	1,192	1,368	1,426	1,392

\* Basis of Table.

Clothing—Index-Numbers for each of Thirty Towns, with Weighted Average of Six Capital Cities in November, 1914, as base (= 1000).

Period.	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.		
Nov. 1914	1,002	1,002	1,002	1,002	1,002	1,002	1,035	1,035	1,035	1,035	1,035	1,035		
" 1915	1,007	1,007	1,007	1,007	1,007	1,007	1,036	1,036	1,036	1,036	1,036	1,036		
" 1916	1,397	1,397	1,397	1,397	1,397	1,397	1,464	1,464	1,464	1,464	1,464	1,464		
" 1917	1,387	1,387	1,387	1,387	1,387	1,387	1,484	1,484	1,484	1,484	1,484	1,484		
" 1918	1,402	1,402	1,402	1,402	1,402	1,402	1,408	1,408	1,408	1,408	1,408	1,408		
" 1919	1,494	1,494	1,494	1,494	1,494	1,494	1,886	1,886	1,886	1,886	1,886	1,886		
" 1920	1,684	1,684	1,684	1,684	1,684	1,684	1,980	1,980	1,980	1,980	1,980	1,980		
Nov. 1921	1,688	1,700	1,688	1,688	1,688	1,688	1,983	2,120	2,082	1,640	2,138	1,718		
May 1922	1,440	1,476	1,440	1,440	1,440	1,440	1,882	1,869	1,735	1,881	1,627	1,642		
Aug. 1922	1,440	1,476	1,440	1,440	1,440	1,440	1,847	1,847	1,731	1,784	1,686	1,490		
Nov. " "	1,394	1,412	1,418	1,377	1,458	1,401	1,424	1,812	1,588	1,729	1,597	1,479		
QUEENSLAND—INDEX-NUMBERS.														
Period.	WESTERN AUSTRALIA—INDEX-NUMBERS.						TASMANIA—INDEX-NUMBERS.							
	Brisbane.	Toowoomba.	Rockhampton.	Charters Towers.	Warwick.	Weighted Average, Queensland.	Adelaide.	Kadina, Moonta and Wallaroo.	Port Pirie.	Mt. Gambier.	Peterborough.	Weighted Average, S.A.		
Nov. 1914	872	915	915	915	915	915	1,002	1,002	1,002	1,002	1,002	1,002		
" 1915	916	916	916	916	916	916	1,088	1,088	1,088	1,088	1,088	1,088		
" 1916	1,084	1,084	1,084	1,084	1,084	1,084	1,318	1,318	1,318	1,318	1,318	1,318		
" 1917	1,192	1,192	1,192	1,192	1,192	1,192	1,392	1,392	1,392	1,392	1,392	1,392		
" 1918	1,359	1,359	1,359	1,359	1,359	1,359	1,414	1,414	1,414	1,414	1,414	1,414		
" 1919	1,581	1,581	1,581	1,581	1,581	1,581	1,728	1,728	1,728	1,728	1,728	1,728		
" 1920	1,698	1,698	1,698	1,698	1,698	1,698	1,836	1,836	1,836	1,836	1,836	1,836		
Nov. 1921	1,492	1,687	1,492	1,492	1,492	1,492	1,908	1,908	1,908	2,251	1,665	1,641		
May 1922	1,297	1,630	1,297	1,297	1,297	1,297	1,460	1,577	1,578	1,786	1,527	1,480		
Aug. 1922	1,308	1,411	1,308	1,308	1,308	1,308	1,374	1,420	1,546	1,713	1,526	1,424		
Nov. " "	1,235	1,313	1,554	1,831	1,647	1,538	1,566	1,564	1,496	1,643	1,194	1,378		
Period.	PERTH.						HOBART.						Weighted Average 6 Capital Cities.	Weighted Average 30 Towns, Australia.
Nov. 1914	926	926	926	926	926	926	1,004	1,004	1,004	1,004	1,004	1,004	1,004	
" 1915	1,007	1,007	1,007	1,007	1,007	1,007	1,106	1,106	1,106	1,106	1,106	1,106	1,106	
" 1916	1,126	1,126	1,126	1,126	1,126	1,126	1,249	1,249	1,249	1,249	1,249	1,249	1,249	
" 1917	1,200	1,200	1,200	1,200	1,200	1,200	1,380	1,380	1,380	1,380	1,380	1,380	1,380	
" 1918	1,203	1,203	1,203	1,203	1,203	1,203	1,592	1,592	1,592	1,592	1,592	1,592	1,592	
" 1919	1,402	1,402	1,402	1,402	1,402	1,402	1,782	1,782	1,782	1,782	1,782	1,782	1,782	
" 1920	1,502	1,502	1,502	1,502	1,502	1,502	1,896	1,896	1,896	1,896	1,896	1,896	1,896	
Nov. 1921	1,484	1,682	1,484	1,484	1,484	1,484	1,892	2,022	1,863	1,994	2,006	1,683	1,719	
May 1922	1,484	1,505	1,484	1,484	1,484	1,484	1,798	1,711	1,544	1,825	1,796	1,478	1,517	
Aug. 1922	1,346	1,438	1,346	1,346	1,346	1,346	1,748	1,712	1,473	1,726	1,730	1,491	1,486	
Nov. " "	1,316	1,429	1,571	1,624	1,361	1,359	1,606	1,672	1,498	1,612	1,653	1,395	1,488	

\* Basis of Table.

Miscellaneous Requirements.—Index-Numbers for each of Thirty Towns, with Weighted Average of Six Capital Cities in November, 1914, as base (=1000).

Period.	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
Nov. 1914	1,022						971					
" 1915	1,066						1,023					
" 1916	1,079						1,047					
" 1917	1,180						1,174					
" 1918	1,319						1,268					
" 1919	1,414						1,357					
" 1920	1,615						1,577					
" 1921	1,348	1,328	1,471	1,270	1,321	1,350	1,364	1,277	1,352	1,379	1,175	1,355
May 1922	1,364	1,288	1,445	1,230	1,296	1,358	1,332	1,235	1,326	1,362	1,156	1,324
Aug. "	1,386	1,277	1,443	1,230	1,280	1,375	1,308	1,225	1,320	1,305	1,146	1,303
Nov. "	1,381	1,273	1,439	1,222	1,270	1,371	1,306	1,225	1,317	1,347	1,137	1,300

  

Period.	QUEENSLAND—INDEX-NUMBERS.					SOUTH AUSTRALIA—INDEX-NUMBERS.						
	Brisbane.	Toowoomba.	Rockhampton.	Charters Towers.	Warwick.	Weighted Average, Queensland.	Adelaide.	Kadina, Moonta and Whyalla.	Port Pirie.	Mt. Gambier.	Peterborough	Weighted Average, S.A.
Nov. 1914	971						1,028					
" 1915	1,009						1,073					
" 1916	1,022						1,111					
" 1917	1,117						1,180					
" 1918	1,243						1,319					
" 1919	1,293						1,382					
" 1920	1,620						1,603					
" 1921	1,261	1,273	1,333	1,347	1,320	1,279	1,379	1,423	1,422	1,378	1,336	1,383
May 1922	1,236	1,268	1,293	1,302	1,275	1,252	1,356	1,371	1,300	1,344	1,319	1,358
Aug. "	1,235	1,245	1,278	1,283	1,296	1,245	1,301	1,354	1,332	1,310	1,312	1,359
Nov. "	1,232	1,244	1,275	1,231	1,250	1,238	1,355	1,345	1,360	1,310	1,306	1,353

  

Period.	WESTERN AUSTRALIA—INDEX-NUMBERS.					TASMANIA—INDEX-NUMBERS.						Weighted Average of Six Capital Cities.	Weighted Average of 20 Towns, Australia.
	Perth.	Kalgoorlie.	Midland Junction and Guildford.	Bunbury.	Geraldton.	Weighted Average, W.A.	Hobart.	Launceston.	Zeehan.	Beaconsfield.	Queenstown.		
Nov. 1914	1,041						934						1,000*
" 1915	1,098						1,028						1,050
" 1916	1,161						1,041						1,071
" 1917	1,230						1,155						1,178
" 1918	1,382						1,262						1,265
" 1919	1,405						1,344						1,283
" 1920	1,685						1,501						1,394
" 1921	1,374	1,375	1,357	1,304	1,471	1,374	1,245	1,315	1,257	1,282	1,280	1,271	1,349
May 1922	1,352	1,345	1,322	1,272	1,401	1,348	1,246	1,274	1,228	1,242	1,262	1,255	1,338
Aug. "	1,347	1,343	1,310	1,258	1,426	1,345	1,243	1,248	1,222	1,205	1,237	1,242	1,333
Nov. "	1,339	1,333	1,306	1,231	1,422	1,338	1,243	1,234	1,222	1,205	1,232	1,237	1,322

\* Basis of Table.



Total Household Expenditure—(Food, Groceries, Housing, Clothing and Miscellaneous Requirements combined).—Index-Numbers for each of Thirty Towns with Weighted Average of Six Capital Cities in November, 1914, as Base (=1000).

Period.	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.
Nov. 1914	1,037						986					
" 1915	1,159						1,117					
" 1916	1,187						1,124					
" 1917	1,266						1,194					
" 1918	1,323						1,294					
" 1919	1,505						1,437					
" 1920	1,681						1,704					
" 1921	1,477	1,401	1,348	1,460	1,342	1,469	1,475	1,435	1,444	1,471	1,436	1,470
May 1922	1,438	1,388	1,310	1,441	1,283	1,427	1,435	1,351	1,375	1,453	1,391	1,428
Aug. "	1,454	1,390	1,304	1,423	1,275	1,430	1,427	1,391	1,372	1,430	1,365	1,421
Nov. "	1,440	1,366	1,290	1,405	1,261	1,425	1,417	1,365	1,344	1,424	1,323	1,406

  

Period	QUEENSLAND—INDEX-NUMBERS.						SOUTH AUSTRALIA—INDEX-NUMBERS.					
	Brisbane.	Toowoomba.	Rockhampton.	Charters Towers.	Warwick.	Weighted Average, Queensland.	Adelaide.	Kadina, Moonta and Wallaroo.	Port Pirie.	Mt. Gambier.	Peterborough.	Weighted Average, S.A.
Nov. 1914	898						997					
" 1915	1,046						1,114					
" 1916	1,016						1,140					
" 1917	1,114						1,186					
" 1918	1,222						1,205					
" 1919	1,408						1,447					
" 1920	1,511						1,657					
" 1921	1,330	1,380	1,393	1,434	1,423	1,353	1,411	1,408	1,438	1,448	1,352	1,413
May 1922	1,270	1,293	1,334	1,299	1,315	1,281	1,427	1,332	1,369	1,331	1,290	1,414
Aug. "	1,281	1,245	1,256	1,276	1,325	1,279	1,398	1,293	1,345	1,305	1,256	1,385
Nov. "	1,275	1,220	1,238	1,213	1,294	1,266	1,370	1,254	1,305	1,273	1,238	1,356

  

Period	WESTERN AUSTRALIA—INDEX-NUMBERS						TASMANIA—INDEX-NUMBERS.							
	Perth.	Kalgoorlie.	Midland Junction and Guildford.	Bunbury.	Geraldton.	Weighted Average, W.A.	Hobart.	Launceston.	Zeehan.	Beaconsfield.	Queenstown.	Weighted Average, Tasmania.	Weighted Average 6 Capital Cities.	Weighted Average 30 Towns, Australia.
Nov. 1914	1,001						997						1,000	
" 1915	1,059						1,110						1,123	
" 1916	1,123						1,121						1,140	
" 1917	1,166						1,253						1,213	
" 1918	1,238						1,311						1,295	
" 1919	1,404						1,489						1,461	
" 1920	1,552						1,724						1,665	
" 1921	1,409	1,470	1,442	1,417	1,450	1,424	1,536	1,535	1,391	1,259	1,423	1,511	1,454	1,451
May 1922	1,360	1,391	1,420	1,364	1,392	1,385	1,515	1,460	1,313	1,161	1,360	1,464	1,420	1,410
Aug. "	1,348	1,379	1,413	1,366	1,353	1,355	1,490	1,437	1,302	1,132	1,326	1,445	1,418	1,406
Nov. "	1,301	1,343	1,346	1,332	1,318	1,313	1,452	1,431	1,272	1,119	1,301	1,414	1,402	1,388

\* Basis of Table.

6. Application of Index-Numbers.—The following table has been prepared to shew the manner in which the index-numbers in the preceding tables may be applied to the Commission's findings :—

**Basic Wage Commission's Findings.—Relative Cost at November, 1914, 1920, 1921 and 1922.**

Town.	November, 1914.		November, 1920.		November, 1921.		November, 1922.	
	Index-Number.	Relative Cost.	Actual Finding.	Index-Number.	Index-Number.	Relative Cost.	Index-Number.	Relative Cost.
		£ s. d.	£ s. d.			£ s. d.		£ s. d.
Sydney ..	1,037	3 12 3	5 17 1	1,081	1,477	5 2 10	1,440	5 0 4
Melbourne ..	986	3 7 5	5 16 6	1,704	1,475	5 0 10	1,417	4 16 11
Brisbane ..	898	3 3 1	5 6 2	1,511	1,330	4 13 5	1,275	4 9 7
Adelaide ..	997	3 9 10	5 16 1	1,657	1,411	4 18 10	1,370	4 16 0
Perth ..	1,001	3 13 6	5 13 11	1,552	1,409	5 3 5	1,301	4 15 5
Hobart ..	997	3 7 7	5 16 11	1,724	1,536	5 4 2	1,452	4 18 5
Wt. Aver. ..	1,000	3 0 7	5 15 8	1,665	1,454	5 1 0	1,402	4 17 4

The above table shows, in the first place, the amount determined by the Basic Wage Commission as the actual cost of living according to the standard fixed by the Commission in November, 1920. The index-numbers from the table on the preceding page are given in the next column. Applying the index-numbers for November, 1921, and November, 1922, the relative costs of the Commission's standard for those two months are obtained. In order to check the applicability of the index-numbers for the determination of variations in the Basic Wage Commission's finding, the relative costs of the standard fixed for November, 1914, have been computed in the same manner, and are given in the above table. While they do not correspond exactly with the amounts as given in the supplementary Report of the Commission, they are sufficiently near to show that the method adopted by this Bureau for measuring the variations, gives results which closely approximate in accuracy to those adopted by the Commission. The actual amounts for November, 1914, as found by the Commission, are given on page 33 of this Report. The greatest difference between the two results is shown for Hobart, and amounts to only 1s. 6d. per week, while for Melbourne the difference is only 4d. per week.

These index-numbers for the period from November, 1914 onwards may be readily used in conjunction with those for an earlier period relating to a somewhat different standard. For instance, the index-number for food, groceries and housing for the 4th Quarter of 1914 in Melbourne was 1106. If it be desired to ascertain the equivalent of the Harvester Wage in November, 1922, the following calculations can be made. The index-number for Melbourne in 1907 was 875, and the Harvester Wage in that year £2 2s. The equivalent of that amount in the 4th Quarter of 1914 can be determined as follows:—

$$\frac{£2\ 2s. \times 1106}{875} = £2\ 13s. 1d.$$

Then, taking the index-numbers for all commodities in Melbourne for November, 1914 as being equivalent to the amount of £2 13s. 1d., the equivalent for November, 1922, will be:—

$$\frac{£2\ 13s. 1d. \times 1417}{986} = £3\ 16s. 3d.$$

Similarly it will be found that the Harvester Basis equivalent for Melbourne in November, 1920, based upon the increase shown in the cost of all commodities from 1914, was £4 11s. 9d.

In such a computation as the above the assumption is made that for the period from 1907 to 1914 the variations in prices of clothing and of miscellaneous requirements combined were identical over all with the variation in food, groceries and housing.

## CHAPTER VIII.—WHOLESALE PRICES.

1. **General.**—The results of an investigation into wholesale prices in Melbourne from 1861 to 1921 were given in some detail in previous Reports. In this Section results are included for the year 1922.

The data upon which the investigation is based were obtained mainly from reports of Melbourne market prices published in the ordinary press and in special trade reviews. In any case of doubt as to the reliability of the figures, the records thus obtained were verified by reference to well-known and important business firms dealing in the articles in question. Every care was taken to ensure that the prices quoted for each article refer to a uniform quality, and, in cases where more than one source of information was utilised for obtaining prices of single commodities, special precautions were taken to ensure substantial continuity of quality or grade. In most cases, monthly prices were obtained (but where daily or weekly quotations were available, these were adopted), and arithmetic averages for the several years were computed. In regard, however, to a few commodities, such as coal, tea, cotton and wool, since monthly prices were not available for back years, yearly averages, based in each case on reliable data, were secured.

It was at first intended to obtain records on the lines indicated for a uniform list of commodities for the capital city in each State. Owing, however, to the large amount of work involved, and to the difficulty experienced in obtaining regularly the prices of anything like a uniform representative list of commodities from the information published in some of these cities, this idea has for the present been abandoned.

2. **Basis.**—Retail prices have the advantage that a comparatively small list of commodities suffices to represent a large proportion of the average expenditure. They are, however, subject to the difficulty that their variations depend largely upon local conditions, and it is therefore, necessary to collect the data over a wide area. Wholesale prices, on the other hand, are fixed usually at one or two centres, but a much larger list of commodities must be covered.

The index-numbers up to the year 1911 are based on the prices of eighty commodities, but since that year the number has been increased to ninety-two.\* The methods followed for the computation of the wholesale price index-numbers are the same as those adopted in regard to retail prices. The commodities included, the units of measurements for which the prices are taken, and the mass-units, indicating the relative extent to which each commodity, in the units of measurement specified, is used or consumed, are shown in the following statement.

\* In the computation of the index-numbers for years prior to 1911, the aggregate expenditure on 80 commodities in 1911 is taken as base (= 100), while for later years the aggregate expenditure on 92 commodities in 1911 is taken.