

CHAPTER XI.

COMPARISON OF RATES OF WAGE IN AUSTRALIA AND OTHER COUNTRIES.

1. **General.**—In an endeavour to secure comparable information with regard to rates of wage in various countries, copies of a statement showing the rates payable in a number of occupations in Australia have been forwarded twice yearly to the most important countries of the world.

At the same time a request was made that similar information as to rates payable in those countries should be forwarded to this Bureau. The response to this request has not been sufficiently complete to enable comparisons to be made for all the countries. The reasons given for inability to comply with the request are generally that such statistics are not readily available. Under these circumstances, therefore, for the present the comparison has been confined to Canada and New Zealand, from which countries information has been received in a form which allows of such comparison being made.

2. **Relative Rates of Wage—Australia, New Zealand and Canada.**—So far as these countries are concerned, it has been possible to secure comparable information with regard to 45 of the principal occupations. In the following table these have been divided into various industrial classifications, and the average wage of the occupations in each class computed. The table shows, therefore, the relative rate of wage in each class for each of the countries specified for 1914, 1921 and 1922. In order to arrive at the weighted average of all occupations, given in the last column, the weights mentioned in paragraph 1, Chap. X. of this Report have been used. It is, of course, possible that the relative importance of the various classes may vary in the countries named, but it is unlikely that they would vary to such an extent as to alter materially the results arrived at in this way.

Nominal Wages—Comparative Rates per week for Adult Males in Australia, New Zealand, and Canada in 1914, 1921 and 1922.

Country	Date.	I. Wood, Furniture, etc.		II. Engineering, Metal Works, etc.		III. Food, Drink, etc.		IV. Clothing, Boots, etc.		V. Books, Printing, etc.		VII. Building		IX. Railway and Tramway.		X. Other Land Transport.		XIV. Miscellaneous.		All Groups.*	
		s.	d.	s.	d.	s.	d.	s.	d.	s.	d.	s.	d.	s.	d.	s.	d.	s.	d.		
Australia (Sydney)	1914 (July)	82	10	66	8	58	9	55	3	74	11	67	0	54	0	50	0	58	3	60	4
	1921 (Dec.)	103	0	102	7	96	3	91	3	109	10	104	11	91	0	87	6	96	7	98	0
	1922 (Dec.)	96	11	98	6	92	3	89	3	105	3	100	0	87	0	83	6	95	9	95	2
(New Zealand) (Auckland)	1914 (Mar)	54	11	64	0	48	0	53	11	66	6	60	10	48	0	48	0	56	7	56	0
	1921 (Dec)	100	6	103	0	97	0	90	9	102	11	97	2	64	0	85	0	94	5	93	6
	1922 (Dec.)	90	2	95	10	89	0	83	11	95	9	89	2	86	0	77	0	86	5	88	1
Canada (Montreal)	1914 (Sept)	72	10	69	0	69	0	56	10	79	8	86	9	53	7	84	0	58	5	65	9
	1921 (Sept)	137	10	138	0	151	10	149	2	180	9	140	2	127	1	99	1	120	11	131	11
	1922 (Sept.)	142	6	142	7	131	3	130	3	165	6	128	7	119	0	81	2	110	11	122	10

* Weighted Average.

In Appendix VI. the actual rates upon which the averages in this table have been computed are given, and also the prevailing hours of labour constituting a week's work. The rates are in all countries those fixed by wage-fixing tribunals. In the case of Canada, the rates are, of course, quoted in the original in the Canadian currency, but have been converted to the Australian currency at the ruling rates of exchange for the periods to which they relate.

3. **Wage Index-numbers, Nominal and Effective, Australia, Canada and New Zealand, with 1914 as base.**—The following tables have been prepared to show the increases in rates of wage which have occurred in the countries specified in 1921 and 1922, compared with those ruling in 1914. In order to show the effective wage variations, the retail price index-numbers are given, and by applying these to the wage index-numbers in the manner described on page 85, the relative effective wage index-numbers are computed and are given in the last column of the table :—

Nominal Wage, Retail Prices and Effective Wage Index-Numbers, with 1914 (=1,000) as base in each case,

Country	Year.	Nominal Wage Index-Numbe.	Retail Prices Index-Numbers	Effective Wage Index-Numbers
Australia	1914	1,000	1,000	1,000
	1921	1,625	1,345	1,208
	1922	1,527	1,375	1,147
New Zealand	1914	1,000	1,000	1,000
	1921	1,669	1,523	1,096
	1922	1,573	1,426	1,103
Canada	1914	1,000	1,000	1,000
	1921	2,006	1,561	1,285
	1922	1,867	1,458	1,281

The retail price index-numbers used in the above table are not exactly comparable as the commodities are not identical, but in each of the countries they include the principal articles of food and also housing accommodation.

The index-numbers are not comparable vertically, that is to say, they cannot be used to compare either the wages paid or the cost of living in these countries. They show first, the increases in wages, second, the increase in the retail prices, and third the increase in effective wages in each country separately for the years specified compared with 1914.

In each of the countries specified, wages decreased during 1922, compared with 1921, but were still considerably higher than in 1914. There was a decrease in the retail prices index-numbers in 1922 compared with the preceding year in New Zealand and Canada, but an increase in Australia. In all the countries the effective wage was higher both in 1921 and in 1922 than in 1914.