

average prices for the year 1922 as base. Corresponding figures for purchasing-power of money (retail prices of food, groceries and of house rent) have been included for comparative purposes.

Melbourne Wholesale and Retail Prices—Quarterly Index-Numbers, 1922.

Particulars.	Jan. to March.	April to June.	July to Sept.	Oct. to Dec.	Whole Year.
Wholesale Price Index-Numbers with 1911 as base (= 1,000)	1,871	1,743	1,726	1,831	1,758
Wholesale Price Index-Numbers with average for 1922 as base (= 1,000)	951	991	1,018	1,042	1,000
Retail Price (Food, Groceries, and House Rent) Index-Numbers, with average for 1922 as base (= 1,000)	964	1,001	1,022	1,011	1,000

In both wholesale and retail prices there was a considerable decrease during the year 1922 as compared with the year 1921.

7. **Prices, 1921 and 1922.**—In Appendix III. particulars are given as to the average prices of the particular brands of commodities used in computing the index-numbers in the years 1921 and 1922. Corresponding information for previous years, as far back as 1871 was given in the Appendixes to previous Reports.

CHAPTER IX.—IMPORT AND EXPORT PRICE INDEX-NUMBERS

1. **General.**—The list of commodities included in the investigation into import and export prices for the year 1921-1922, as well as the mass units, units of measurement, and sources of information, are the same as those in the previous investigations for the years 1901 to 1913, particulars of which are given on pages 66 to 68 of Report No. 1 on "Prices, Price Indexes and Cost of Living in Australia," and in Report No. 5, pp. 41 to 43. These index-numbers are computed annually, the data being obtained from the returns of imports and exports.

2. **Import and Export Price Index-Numbers, 1901-1921-22.**—Owing to the change in the system of collecting the statistics of imports and exports in Australia, by which the figures are made up to the end of the financial year at 30th June instead of at 31st December, as heretofore, the index-numbers in the last line of the following table represent the import and export values for the twelve months ending 30th June, 1922. The index-number for import and export prices in Australia for 1921-22 was 1608, compared with 2307 for 1920-21. This shews a decrease of 30.3 per cent. during the twelve months. The index-numbers for previous years for the various groups and for all groups combined are shown in the following table :—

Australian Import and Export Values. Index-Numbers for each Group, and all Groups combined, 1901 to 1921-22 (Base 1911 = 1000).

Particulars.	I. Metals and Coal.	II. Textiles.	III. Agricul- tural Produce.	IV. Meat, Dairy Produce, etc.	V. Grocer- ies, etc.	VI. Miscel- laneous.	All Groups.*
No. of Commodities.	5	4	7	7	7	14	44
1901	1,046	730	884	978	994	979	911
1906	962	947	951	888	889	906	921
1911	1,000	1,000	1,000	1,000	1,000	1,000	1,000
1912	1,061	980	1,238	1,038	1,030	1,044	1,067
1913	1,086	934	1,126	1,043	1,018	1,110	1,045
1914-15† ..	1,001	966	1,239	1,253	1,154	1,087	1,141
1915-16† ..	1,138	1,019	1,522	1,475	1,308	1,072	1,298
1916-17† ..	1,340	1,537	1,066	1,562	1,494	1,339	1,443
1917-18† ..	1,780	1,823	1,322	1,590	1,521	1,574	1,594
1918-19† ..	1,817	1,973	1,473	1,683	1,714	2,012	1,755
1919-20† ..	1,998	2,310	2,103	1,775	2,822	2,492	2,149
1920-21† ..	2,326	1,854	2,125	2,204	3,503	2,644	2,307
1921-22† ..	1,904	1,523	1,477	1,526	1,953	1,748	1,608

* Weighted Average. † The year ending 30th of June.

3. **Variations in Price Levels of Commodity Groups.**—Of the six groups into which the 44 commodities are classified, the index-numbers for all the groups were lower in 1921-22 than in the preceding year. The decreases were :—Group I. (Metals and Coal), 18.1 per cent. ; Group II. (Textiles), 22.0 per cent. ; Group III. (Agricultural Produce), 30.5 per cent. ; Group IV. (Meat, Dairy Produce, etc.), 30.8 per cent. ; Group V. (Groceries), 44.2 per cent. ; and Group VI. (Miscellaneous), 33.9 per cent.

4. **Comparison of Index-Numbers.**—In the following table particulars are given of the purchasing-power of money (retail prices and house rent), wholesale and import and export index-numbers from 1901 to 1921-22, inclusive :—

Retail Prices, Wholesale Price and Import and Export Prices Index-Numbers, 1901 to 1921-22.

YEAR	INDEX-NUMBERS.		
	Food, Groceries, and Housing (Weighted Aver- age for 6 Capital Towns).	Wholesale Prices (Melbourne).	Import and Export Prices (Australia).
1901	880	974	911
1906	902	948	921
1911	1,000	1,000	1,000
1912	1,101	1,170	1,067
1913	1,104	1,088	1,045
1914-15* ..	1,164	1,273	1,141
1915-16* ..	1,344	1,590	1,298
1916-17* ..	1,307	1,533	1,443
1917-18* ..	1,343	1,834	1,594
1918-19* ..	1,420	1,952	1,755
1919-20* ..	1,624	2,312	2,149
1920-21* ..	1,845	2,253	2,307
1921-22* ..	1,591	1,730	1,608

* Year ending 30th June.

The index-number for import and export prices in Australia for 1921-22 was 1608, compared with 2307 for 1920-21, a decrease

of 30.3 per cent. The retail prices index-number for the twelve months ending June 1922 was 1845, as compared with 1591 for 1921-22, the percentage decrease being 13.8, while the wholesale price index-number decreased by 23.2 per cent., from 2253 to 1730.

In making comparisons between these three sets of index-numbers, it is to be borne in mind that the figures do not, of course, indicate the relation between the different prices themselves, that is, between retail and wholesale prices, etc., for the reason that the weighted average prices are in each case made equal to 1000 for the year 1911. The figures show the relative increase or decrease in each set of price-indexes.

CHAPTER X.—RATES OF WAGE AND HOURS OF LABOUR.

1. **General.**—The collection of data respecting the nominal rates of wage payable in different callings and in occupations in various industries carried on in each State was first undertaken by this Bureau in the early part of the year 1913. Owing to the difficulty of ascertaining reliable particulars of the numbers of apprentices, improvers and other juvenile workers to whom progressive rates of wage fixed or otherwise according to increasing age or experience are payable from year to year, the inquiry was confined to the rates of wage payable to adult workers only, and was further limited generally to those industries in operation within the metropolitan area of the capital city in each State. However, in order to make the inquiry a comprehensive one, it was necessary to include certain industries which obviously are not carried on in the capital cities, *e.g.*, Mining, Shipping, Agricultural, and Pastoral. The particulars acquired were obtained primarily from awards, determinations, and industrial agreements under Commonwealth and State Acts, and related to the minimum wage prescribed. In cases where no award, determination or agreement was in force, the ruling union or predominant rate of wage being paid was ascertained from employers and secretaries of trade unions. For convenience of comparison, weekly rates of wage were adopted, though in many instances the wages were actually based on daily or hourly rates as specified in awards, determinations, or agreements, in view of the fact that it is often in those industries and occupations in which employment is of an exceptionally casual or intermittent nature that wages are fixed and paid at a daily or hourly rate. Hence the average weekly earnings in such occupations will probably fall considerably short of the computed weekly rates. The information thus obtained referred to the weekly rate of wage in upwards of 400 industries, and related to 1569 male occupations or callings. These particulars furnished the necessary data for the computation of average rates of wage in various industrial groups,* and in

* The following industrial classification of industries was adopted :—

Classification of Industries and Occupations.

I.	Wood, Furniture, Sawmill, Timber-works, &c.	VIII.	Mining, &c.
II.	Engineering, Metal Works, &c.	IX.	Railway and Tramway Services.
III.	Food, Drink, and Tobacco, &c., Manufacture and Distribution.	X.	Other Land Transport.
IV.	Clothing, Hats, Boots, Textiles, &c.	XI.	Shipping, Wharf Labour, &c.
V.	Books, Printing, Bookbinding, &c.	XII.	Pastoral, Agricultural, Rural, Horticultural, &c.
VI.	Other Manufacturing.	XIII.	Domestic, Hotels, etc.
VII.	Building.	XIV.	Miscellaneous.