

## CHAPTER VI—RETAIL PRICE INDEX-NUMBERS, 200 TOWNS.

1. **General.**—To supplement the information collected monthly for the 30 towns specified in the preceding chapter, a special investigation was undertaken in November, 1913, into prices in 70 additional towns. This investigation was repeated in November, 1914, and again in November 1915, when the number of additional towns was increased to 120. In November, 1923, the number was further increased to 170. Information of this nature will be obtained annually in November, and will thus relate to 200 towns. The results of the first investigation were published in Labour Bulletin No. 5 (Section IV, pages 26 to 33), where some description was given of the methods adopted in making the investigation and in computing the index-numbers. The results of succeeding investigations have appeared in the Labour Bulletins and Reports of this Bureau.

2. **Results—1921 to 1923.**—The results of the investigation in November, 1923, are set out in the tables on pages 42 to 45. (See end of last column, on page 45). Aggregate expenditure on food and groceries separately is shown in the form of index-numbers for each year in column A. In columns B and C the corresponding aggregate expenditure on food, groceries, and rent of 4-rooms; and food, groceries, and rent of 5-rooms are shown for each year for each town. The index-number 1,642 (see page 45) represents the weighted average expenditure in 200 towns on food, groceries, and rent of 5-roomed houses; 1,526 represents the average weighted expenditure on food, groceries, and rent of 4-roomed houses in November, 1923. Similarly, in column A, the index-number 1,083 represents the relative weighted average expenditure on food and groceries only for November, 1923. The figures given in the table are comparable throughout. Thus, taking the average weighted expenditure for the 200 towns on food, groceries, and rent of 5-roomed houses as equal to 1,642, the expenditure on the same items in Melbourne is 1,689, while if 4-roomed houses were substituted for 5-roomed the expenditure in Melbourne would be represented by 1,547 compared with an expenditure of 1,526 on the average for 200 towns.

The change made in Report No. 13 in the basis on which the index-numbers were computed is continued in this issue. Previously the weighted average expenditure on food, groceries and rent of 5-roomed houses for the 150 towns in each year was taken as base. In the tables on the following pages the same base is taken as in the tables referring to 30 towns and 6 capital cities given in the preceding chapter, i.e., the weighted average expenditure on food, groceries, and housing in the 6 capital cities in 1911 is made equal to 1,000.

Index-Numbers—Cost of Food, Groceries and Housing in 200 Towns for November, 1921, 1922, and 1923, compared with the Weighted Average Cost of Food, Groceries, and Rent for all houses in the Six Capital Cities in 1911 as base (= 1,000).

State and Town.	1921. November.			1922. November			1923. November		
	Food and Groceries only.	Food, Groceries and Rent of 4-Roomed Houses.	Food, Groceries and Rent of 5-Roomed Houses.	Food and Groceries only.	Food, Groceries and Rent of 4-Roomed Houses.	Food, Groceries and Rent of 5-Roomed Houses.	Food and Groceries only.	Food, Groceries and Rent of 4-Roomed Houses.	Food, Groceries and Rent of 5-Roomed Houses.
	A	B	C	A	B	C	A	B	C
<b>New South Wales—</b>									
Sydney .. .. .	1,015	1,506	1,580	1,034	1,553	1,041	1,087	1,608	1,705
Newcastle .. .. .	1,029	1,408	1,574	1,008	1,410	1,074	1,120	1,531	1,676
Broken Hill .. .. .	1,023	1,305	1,376	1,050	1,331	1,402	1,227	1,510	1,587
Goulburn .. .. .	1,001	1,373	1,400	986	1,400	1,527	1,005	1,570	1,601
Bathurst .. .. .	985	1,232	1,328	940	1,187	1,309	1,045	1,325	1,414
Albury .. .. .	1,003	1,431	1,521	986	1,519	1,594	1,060	1,636	1,764
Armidale .. .. .	1,031	1,314	1,411	974	1,332	1,404	1,073	1,424	1,536
Ballina .. .. .	.. .. .	.. .. .	.. .. .	.. .. .	.. .. .	.. .. .	1,169	1,511	1,604
Bega .. .. .	1,073	1,300	1,393	983	1,259	1,358	1,132	1,408	1,530
Berry .. .. .	.. .. .	.. .. .	.. .. .	.. .. .	.. .. .	.. .. .	1,117	1,413	1,542
Blackheath .. .. .	.. .. .	.. .. .	.. .. .	.. .. .	.. .. .	.. .. .	1,199	1,633	1,725
Bourke .. .. .	1,066	1,211	1,277	1,055	1,232	1,285	1,228	1,426	1,505
Bowral .. .. .	1,060	1,461	1,524	1,061	1,495	1,594	1,141	1,701	1,760
Casino .. .. .	1,080	1,431	1,516	1,011	1,373	1,439	1,133	1,641	1,643
Cessnock .. .. .	.. .. .	.. .. .	.. .. .	.. .. .	.. .. .	.. .. .	1,111	1,576	1,650
Cobar .. .. .	1,133	1,232	1,265	1,043	1,141	1,174	1,162	1,251	1,284
Cooma .. .. .	1,101	1,393	1,509	1,006	1,292	1,390	1,220	1,611	1,709
Coonamble .. .. .	1,049	1,365	1,474	1,045	1,352	1,435	1,142	1,405	1,475
Cootamundra .. .. .	1,053	1,472	1,562	921	1,337	1,440	1,098	1,558	1,600
Cornwall .. .. .	1,052	1,328	1,387	1,013	1,309	1,381	1,106	1,435	1,527
Cowra .. .. .	967	1,312	1,434	974	1,372	1,484	1,074	1,505	1,599
Cronulla .. .. .	.. .. .	.. .. .	.. .. .	.. .. .	.. .. .	.. .. .	1,155	1,748	1,879
Cudgegong .. .. .	.. .. .	.. .. .	.. .. .	.. .. .	.. .. .	.. .. .	1,167	1,364	1,403
Deniliquin .. .. .	997	1,298	1,367	1,008	1,309	1,378	1,087	1,405	1,474
Dubbo .. .. .	945	1,426	1,567	1,018	1,445	1,542	1,204	1,657	1,791
Forbes .. .. .	1,016	1,385	1,477	1,014	1,398	1,569	1,105	1,559	1,737
Gilgandra .. .. .	.. .. .	.. .. .	.. .. .	.. .. .	.. .. .	.. .. .	1,136	1,426	1,605
Glen Innes .. .. .	958	1,285	1,384	957	1,296	1,400	1,015	1,320	1,423
Grafton .. .. .	1,070	1,390	1,455	1,006	1,359	1,478	1,149	1,544	1,643
Grenfell .. .. .	1,014	1,422	1,580	977	1,444	1,569	1,179	1,641	1,771
Griffiths .. .. .	.. .. .	.. .. .	.. .. .	.. .. .	.. .. .	.. .. .	1,214	1,872	2,004
Gulgong .. .. .	.. .. .	.. .. .	.. .. .	.. .. .	.. .. .	.. .. .	1,092	1,368	1,451
Gunnedah .. .. .	1,024	1,320	1,432	990	1,296	1,358	1,039	1,434	1,506
Hay .. .. .	1,066	1,342	1,476	1,004	1,280	1,405	.. .. .	.. .. .	.. .. .
Inverell .. .. .	1,044	1,395	1,463	1,001	1,363	1,407	1,102	1,452	1,621
Junee .. .. .	1,042	1,453	1,555	961	1,418	1,517	1,117	1,561	1,676
Katoomba .. .. .	1,110	1,631	1,752	1,090	1,584	1,371	1,205	1,723	1,859
Kempsey .. .. .	1,042	1,421	1,519	961	1,290	1,427	1,021	1,350	1,383
Kurri Kurri .. .. .	.. .. .	.. .. .	.. .. .	.. .. .	.. .. .	.. .. .	1,181	1,477	1,630
Leeton .. .. .	.. .. .	.. .. .	.. .. .	.. .. .	.. .. .	.. .. .	1,190	1,614	1,649
Lismore .. .. .	1,110	1,453	1,574	1,047	1,402	1,563	1,162	1,517	1,678
Lithgow .. .. .	1,035	1,416	1,486	1,018	1,355	1,473	1,160	1,547	1,655
Maitland .. .. .	1,001	1,349	1,415	994	1,350	1,402	1,086	1,554	1,590
Moree .. .. .	1,073	1,395	1,481	1,070	1,487	1,605	1,288	1,802	1,797
Moree Vale .. .. .	1,028	1,470	1,569	990	1,394	1,559	1,112	1,622	1,704
Moss Vale .. .. .	1,031	1,411	1,483	995	1,414	1,504	1,115	1,515	1,611
Mudgee .. .. .	1,036	1,370	1,442	992	1,292	1,395	1,109	1,427	1,563
Narrabri .. .. .	.. .. .	.. .. .	.. .. .	.. .. .	.. .. .	.. .. .	1,187	1,621	1,746
Narrandera .. .. .	.. .. .	.. .. .	.. .. .	.. .. .	.. .. .	.. .. .	1,181	1,621	1,746
Nowra .. .. .	1,073	1,462	1,468	1,052	1,578	1,657	1,164	1,550	1,717
Orange .. .. .	991	1,318	1,411	955	1,307	1,410	1,032	1,432	1,535
Parkes .. .. .	1,019	1,420	1,503	1,000	1,434	1,559	1,120	1,604	1,690
Penrith .. .. .	.. .. .	.. .. .	.. .. .	.. .. .	.. .. .	.. .. .	1,083	1,440	1,557
Port Kembla .. .. .	.. .. .	.. .. .	.. .. .	.. .. .	.. .. .	.. .. .	1,145	1,497	1,540
Portland .. .. .	.. .. .	.. .. .	.. .. .	.. .. .	.. .. .	.. .. .	1,106	1,402	1,494
Queanbeyan .. .. .	1,044	1,343	1,395	1,014	1,376	1,458	1,172	1,577	1,676
Quirindal .. .. .	.. .. .	.. .. .	.. .. .	.. .. .	.. .. .	.. .. .	1,129	1,437	1,562
Richmond .. .. .	.. .. .	.. .. .	.. .. .	.. .. .	.. .. .	.. .. .	1,121	1,492	1,588
Scone .. .. .	.. .. .	.. .. .	.. .. .	.. .. .	.. .. .	.. .. .	1,028	1,462	1,587
Singleton .. .. .	.. .. .	.. .. .	.. .. .	.. .. .	.. .. .	.. .. .	1,117	1,479	1,548
Tamworth .. .. .	952	1,383	1,468	921	1,330	1,407	1,065	1,427	1,582
Taree .. .. .	.. .. .	.. .. .	.. .. .	.. .. .	.. .. .	.. .. .	1,088	1,598	1,697
Temora .. .. .	1,062	1,424	1,523	1,006	1,467	1,532	1,099	1,555	1,697
Tenterfield .. .. .	.. .. .	.. .. .	.. .. .	.. .. .	.. .. .	.. .. .	1,137	1,499	1,565
Tumut .. .. .	.. .. .	.. .. .	.. .. .	.. .. .	.. .. .	.. .. .	1,149	1,511	1,643
Ulmara .. .. .	.. .. .	.. .. .	.. .. .	.. .. .	.. .. .	.. .. .	1,163	1,671	1,623
Wagga Wagga .. .. .	986	1,385	1,447	951	1,350	1,477	1,132	1,856	1,988
Walcha .. .. .	.. .. .	.. .. .	.. .. .	.. .. .	.. .. .	.. .. .	1,000	1,305	1,436
Wellington .. .. .	1,032	1,319	1,412	944	1,220	1,313	1,129	1,414	1,500

Index-Numbers—Cost of Food, Groceries, and Housing in 200 Towns, etc.—continued.

State and Town.	1921. November			1922. November.			1923. November.		
	Food and Groceries only.	Food, Groceries and Rent of 4-Roomed Houses.	Food, Groceries and Rent of 5-Roomed Houses.	Food and Groceries only.	Food, Groceries and Rent of 4-Roomed Houses.	Food, Groceries and Rent of 5-Roomed Houses.	Food and Groceries only.	Food, Groceries and Rent of 4-Roomed Houses.	Food, Groceries and Rent of 5-Roomed Houses.
<b>New South Wales—contd.</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>B</b>	<b>C</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>B</b>	<b>C</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>B</b>	<b>C</b>
Weston .. .. .	..	..	..	..	..	..	1,193	1,487	1,527
Windsor .. .. .	..	..	..	..	..	..	1,108	1,483	1,634
Wollongong .. ..	1,051	1,387	1,449	1,018	1,399	1,465	1,137	1,566	1,652
Wyalong .. .. .	1,170	1,389	1,472	983	1,329	1,445	1,143	1,595	1,681
Yass .. .. .	1,093	1,411	1,483	1,069	1,385	1,449	1,249	1,567	1,648
Young .. .. .	1,014	1,310	1,387	950	1,306	1,408	1,014	1,412	1,511
Weighted Average for State .. .. .	1,020	1,463	1,553	1,024	1,493	1,589	1,099	1,585	1,686
<b>Victoria—</b>									
Melbourne .. ..	972	1,418	1,543	907	1,431	1,570	1,002	1,547	1,680
Ballarat .. .. .	977	1,178	1,284	976	1,217	1,320	1,080	1,356	1,463
Bendigo .. .. .	968	1,710	1,315	977	1,284	1,361	1,075	1,375	1,473
Geelong .. .. .	991	1,330	1,432	959	1,322	1,430	1,054	1,427	1,556
Warrnambool ..	990	1,335	1,484	932	1,273	1,431	1,067	1,443	1,578
Ararat .. .. .	1,084	1,327	1,426	1,002	1,303	1,395	1,150	1,472	1,640
Bacchus Marsh ..	..	..	..	..	..	..	1,081	1,480	1,640
Bairnsdale .. ..	1,048	1,377	1,504	1,009	1,371	1,494	1,166	1,528	1,692
Beechworth .. ..	970	1,196	1,262	996	1,223	1,275	1,114	1,304	1,433
Benalla .. .. .	1,004	1,304	1,406	947	1,270	1,385	1,081	1,413	1,489
Camperdown .. .	982	1,324	1,426	963	1,339	1,539	1,055	1,450	1,681
Casterton .. ..	..	..	..	..	..	..	1,073	1,345	1,446
Castlemaine .. .	1,001	1,241	1,360	997	1,280	1,376	1,069	1,358	1,454
Colac .. .. .	1,028	1,489	1,604	973	1,500	1,582	1,135	1,675	1,793
Creswick .. .. .	970	1,076	1,121	921	1,053	1,092	1,035	1,154	1,200
Daylesford .. ..	1,018	1,221	1,329	995	1,247	1,329	1,080	1,370	1,458
Dunolly .. .. .	939	1,058	1,097	934	1,092	1,131	1,067	1,212	1,238
Echuca .. .. .	1,020	1,260	1,365	973	1,235	1,327	1,069	1,304	1,464
Euroa .. .. .	982	1,226	1,259	1,011	1,243	1,296	1,131	1,414	1,470
Hamilton .. .. .	1,050	1,395	1,487	1,018	1,402	1,534	1,140	1,567	1,667
Healesville .. ..	..	..	..	..	..	..	1,147	1,588	1,700
Horsesham .. ..	1,053	1,458	1,623	987	1,417	1,536	1,103	1,673	1,827
Kerang .. .. .	..	..	..	..	..	..	1,126	1,652	1,784
Koroit .. .. .	..	..	..	..	..	..	1,096	1,372	1,458
Korumburra .. .	1,013	1,338	1,362	939	1,273	1,376	1,124	1,387	1,519
Kyneton .. .. .	1,012	1,271	1,381	951	1,273	1,331	1,064	1,380	1,450
Lilydale .. .. .	..	..	..	..	..	..	1,127	1,555	1,653
Maffra .. .. .	..	..	..	..	..	..	1,146	1,738	1,870
Maldon .. .. .	972	1,110	1,133	950	1,093	1,137	1,086	1,242	1,279
Maryborough .. .	1,022	1,200	1,302	977	1,154	1,270	1,108	1,315	1,407
Mildura .. .. .	1,155	1,711	1,856	1,102	1,757	1,829	1,163	1,769	1,920
Morwell .. .. .	..	..	..	..	..	..	1,108	1,733	1,832
Nhill .. .. .	1,078	1,341	1,405	1,000	1,348	1,400	1,140	1,518	1,639
Orbost .. .. .	1,042	1,371	1,437	1,020	1,415	1,547	1,104	1,433	1,499
Portland .. .. .	1,057	1,374	1,480	1,023	1,346	1,467	1,097	1,412	1,525
Port Fairy .. ..	..	..	..	..	..	..	1,090	1,358	1,424
St. Arnaud .. ..	1,046	1,335	1,457	976	1,344	1,325	1,122	1,451	1,591
Sile .. .. .	972	1,233	1,335	936	1,252	1,360	1,072	1,437	1,643
Seymour .. .. .	..	..	..	..	..	..	1,090	1,370	1,462
Shepparton .. ..	1,040	1,405	1,617	1,010	1,454	1,569	1,092	1,487	1,566
Seawell .. .. .	1,067	1,307	1,425	1,070	1,331	1,423	1,130	1,452	1,548
Swan Hill .. ..	1,008	1,436	1,507	982	1,574	1,730	1,086	1,612	1,777
Terang .. .. .	..	..	..	..	..	..	1,105	1,447	1,562
Taratong .. .. .	..	..	..	..	..	..	1,067	1,426	1,518
Wangaratta .. ..	1,031	1,351	1,445	1,014	1,350	1,431	1,166	1,618	1,680
Warracknabeal ..	998	1,298	1,367	973	1,335	1,400	1,065	1,512	1,634
Warragul .. .. .	..	..	..	..	..	..	1,099	1,595	1,735
Wonthaggi .. ..	996	1,360	1,435	1,000	1,439	1,527	1,204	1,674	1,761
Weighted Average for State .. .. .	980	1,376	1,493	971	1,389	1,517	1,060	1,525	1,660
<b>Queensland—</b>									
Brisbane .. .. .	1,006	1,298	1,385	942	1,275	1,385	1,039	1,376	1,487
Toowoomba .. ..	942	1,199	1,285	927	1,183	1,262	1,049	1,339	1,423
Rockhampton .. .	1,009	1,225	1,270	946	1,194	1,239	1,085	1,329	1,375
Charlton Towers ..	1,034	1,400	1,353	903	1,243	1,312	1,132	1,390	1,474
Warwick .. .. .	986	1,253	1,315	919	1,175	1,230	1,023	1,296	1,404
AYR .. .. .	..	..	..	..	..	..	1,196	1,611	1,732

## Index-Numbers—Cost of Food, Groceries, and Housing in 200 Towns, etc.—continued.

State and Town.	1921. November.			1922. November.			1923. November.		
	Food and Groceries only.	Food, Groceries and Rent of 4-Roomed Houses.	Food, Groceries and Rent of 3-Roomed Houses.	Food and Groceries only.	Food, Groceries and Rent of 4-Roomed Houses.	Food, Groceries and Rent of 3-Roomed Houses.	Food and Groceries only.	Food, Groceries and Rent of 4-Roomed Houses.	Food, Groceries and Rent of 3-Roomed Houses.
	A	B	C	A	B	C	A	B	C
<b>Queensland—continued.</b>									
Barcaldine .. .. .	..	..	..	..	..	..	1,237	1,582	1,681
Bowen .. .. .	..	..	..	..	..	..	1,103	1,408	1,597
Bundaberg .. .. .	953	1,170	1,263	940	1,192	1,278	959	1,211	1,293
Cairns .. .. .	1,127	1,474	1,544	1,044	1,452	1,538	1,163	1,402	1,738
Charleville .. .. .	1,138	1,565	1,697	1,072	1,460	1,624	1,145	1,573	1,671
Chillagoe .. .. .	1,230	1,494	1,625	1,050	1,313	1,379	1,188	1,467	1,533
Cloncurry .. .. .	1,169	1,572	1,680	1,115	1,488	1,585	1,174	1,510	1,653
Cooktown .. .. .	1,224	1,325	1,360	1,128	1,233	1,270	..	..	..
Cumamulla .. .. .	1,102	1,312	1,391	1,047	1,303	1,441	1,155	1,484	1,550
Dalby .. .. .	..	..	..	..	..	..	1,031	1,268	1,321
Gayndah .. .. .	..	..	..	..	..	..	1,031	1,360	1,426
Gladstone .. .. .	..	..	..	..	..	..	1,040	1,303	1,435
Goondiwindi .. .. .	997	1,234	1,326	1,016	1,271	1,367	1,145	1,428	1,540
Gympie .. .. .	1,036	1,247	1,313	998	1,251	1,336	1,054	1,305	1,405
Hughenden .. .. .	1,172	1,666	1,797	1,092	1,586	1,750	1,194	1,638	1,770
Innisfail .. .. .	..	..	..	..	..	..	1,300	1,814	1,923
Ipswich .. .. .	1,048	1,361	1,458	951	1,241	1,326	1,003	1,400	1,458
Longreach .. .. .	1,094	1,375	1,452	1,098	1,335	1,487	1,221	1,552	1,647
Mackay .. .. .	1,106	1,453	1,567	962	1,327	1,436	1,060	1,448	1,571
Maryborough .. .. .	1,006	1,245	1,364	962	1,231	1,303	998	1,251	1,363
Mount Morgan .. .. .	1,000	1,211	1,250	965	1,183	1,222	1,127	1,357	1,484
Nambour .. .. .	..	..	..	..	..	..	1,054	1,400	1,408
Roma .. .. .	1,058	1,420	1,535	1,009	1,371	1,450	1,132	1,484	1,534
Stanthorpe .. .. .	..	..	..	..	..	..	1,134	1,503	1,576
Townsville .. .. .	1,138	1,529	1,663	1,070	1,493	1,632	1,140	1,603	1,731
Winton .. .. .	1,168	1,607	1,738	1,090	1,551	1,715	1,235	1,735	1,834
Weighted Average for State .. .. .	1,010	1,303	1,386	963	1,272	1,363	1,063	1,393	1,492
<b>South Australia—</b>									
Adelaide .. .. .	991	1,381	1,527	937	1,418	1,548	1,072	1,518	1,667
Kadina, etc. .. .. .	996	1,248	1,344	990	1,245	1,351	1,059	1,334	1,435
Port Pirie .. .. .	1,020	1,346	1,418	978	1,297	1,391	1,110	1,433	1,530
Mount Gambier .. .. .	972	1,498	1,259	960	1,186	1,252	1,051	1,280	1,354
Peterborough .. .. .	1,050	1,343	1,442	1,013	1,303	1,373	1,079	1,395	1,470
Freeling .. .. .	..	..	..	..	..	..	1,006	1,269	1,375
Gawler .. .. .	1,003	1,266	1,329	955	1,204	1,389	1,014	1,320	1,400
Kapunda .. .. .	985	1,157	1,249	947	1,184	1,290	1,041	1,304	1,403
Koranga .. .. .	..	..	..	..	..	..	1,110	1,505	1,571
Millicent .. .. .	..	..	..	..	..	..	1,099	1,428	1,520
Murray Bridge .. .. .	988	1,361	1,457	947	1,348	1,416	1,079	1,524	1,623
Port Augusta .. .. .	1,049	1,376	1,465	1,023	1,348	1,451	1,112	1,437	1,540
Quora .. .. .	..	..	..	..	..	..	1,065	1,529	1,651
Victor Harbour .. .. .	991	1,340	1,451	975	1,502	1,633	1,031	1,580	1,711
Renmark .. .. .	1,104	1,617	1,740	1,059	1,652	1,783	1,166	1,640	1,759
Weighted Average for State .. .. .	995	1,364	1,493	936	1,392	1,515	1,073	1,498	1,630
<b>Western Australia—</b>									
Perth and Fremantle .. .. .	1,058	1,440	1,530	998	1,389	1,577	1,046	1,446	1,538
Kalgoorlie and Boulder .. .. .	1,179	1,535	1,611	1,154	1,493	1,557	1,233	1,580	1,645
Northam .. .. .	1,164	1,420	1,553	1,031	1,432	1,542	1,154	1,510	1,610
Narbury .. .. .	1,105	1,422	1,485	1,046	1,367	1,497	1,056	1,420	1,525
Geraldton .. .. .	1,086	1,488	1,570	1,065	1,462	1,548	1,131	1,570	1,654
Albany .. .. .	1,153	1,461	1,547	1,099	1,395	1,467	1,172	1,468	1,567
Beverley .. .. .	..	..	..	..	..	..	1,072	1,281	1,360
Bridgetown .. .. .	..	..	..	..	..	..	1,149	1,560	1,626
Broome .. .. .	1,402	..	..	1,308	1,966	2,098	1,306	1,964	2,030
Carnarvon .. .. .	1,207	1,659	1,745	1,237	1,730	1,779	1,249	1,743	1,847
Collic .. .. .	..	..	..	..	..	..	1,106	1,467	1,533
Greenbushes .. .. .	..	..	..	..	..	..	1,193	1,378	1,404
Katanning .. .. .	1,019	1,397	1,470	1,000	1,338	1,549	1,009	1,404	1,467
Leonora and Gwalia .. .. .	1,267	1,399	1,405	1,269	1,427	1,467	1,055	1,543	1,582
Meekatharra .. .. .	..	..	..	..	..	..	1,162	1,425	1,491
Narrogin .. .. .	..	..	..	..	..	..	1,136	1,636	1,704
Wagin .. .. .	..	..	..	..	..	..	1,104	1,338	1,453
York .. .. .	..	..	..	..	..	..	1,125	1,487	1,560
Weighted Average for State .. .. .	1,095	1,453	1,540	1,045	1,410	1,506	1,078	1,466	1,555

**Index-Numbers—Cost of Food, Groceries, and Housing in 200 Towns, etc.—continued.**

State and Town.	1921. November.			1922. November.			1923. November.		
	Food and Groceries only.	Food, Groceries and Rent of 4-Roomed Houses.	Food, Groceries and Rent of 5-Roomed Houses.	Food and Groceries only.	Food, Groceries and Rent of 4-Roomed Houses.	Food, Groceries and Rent of 5-Roomed Houses.	Food and Groceries only.	Food, Groceries and Rent of 4-Roomed Houses.	Food, Groceries and Rent of 5-Roomed Houses.
	A	B	C	A	B	C	A	B	C
<b>Tasmania—</b>									
Hobart .. .. .	1,081	1,520	1,631	1,013	1,416	1,592	1,114	1,574	1,762
Launceston .. .. .	1,069	1,331	1,475	1,007	1,374	1,536	1,112	1,490	1,657
Burnie .. .. .	1,017	1,379	1,464	1,023	1,454	1,586	1,176	1,568	1,746
Devonport .. .. .	1,074	1,434	1,518	1,010	1,424	1,490	1,146	1,566	1,683
Queenstown .. .. .	1,134	1,397	1,473	1,002	1,356	1,435	1,214	1,478	1,556
Beaconsfield .. .. .	1,049	1,110	1,113	905	1,069	1,091	1,113	1,205	1,225
Campbelltown .. .. .	1,066	1,206	1,277	979	1,129	1,182	1,052	1,230	1,308
Dekoning .. .. .							1,019	1,197	1,457
Franklin .. .. .	1,088	1,335	1,398	1,024	1,257	1,327	1,043	1,372	1,465
New Norfolk .. .. .	998	1,261	1,327	1,051	1,315	1,380	1,129	1,302	1,458
Scottsdale .. .. .							1,128	1,450	1,558
Ulverstone .. .. .							1,251	1,415	1,468
Zeehan .. .. .	1,167	1,325	1,358	1,116	1,281	1,327			
Weighted Average for State .. .. .	1,063	1,416	1,525	1,020	1,375	1,519	1,120	1,526	1,689
<b>Weighted Average for Australia .. .. .</b>	<b>1,011</b>	<b>1,403</b>	<b>1,507</b>	<b>998</b>	<b>1,415</b>	<b>1,525</b>	<b>1,033</b>	<b>1,526</b>	<b>1,642</b>

\* Figures not available for 1923.

By deducting the index-number in column A from those in columns B and C, the relative aggregate expenditure on housing is ascertained. Thus for November, 1923, the index-number for food and groceries in Melbourne (column A) is 1,062. Subtracting this from 1,517 (column B) gives a difference of 455, which is the relative cost of house rent for houses of 4 rooms, and from 1,689 (column C) gives a difference of 627, which is the relative cost of house rent for houses of 5 rooms. The relative cost of housing can be ascertained similarly for each of the towns included.

**3. Comparisons with Quarterly Results.**—To determine the accuracy of the figures relating to variations in prices prior to 1912 for the capital cities only, and those since the beginning of 1912 for the 30 towns, the comparisons of the results have been made annually.

In the following table, the first line in each division shows the index-numbers derived from the special inquiry covering 200 towns, the second line gives the results obtained from the returns received for the month of November, 1923, for the five towns in each State from which regular monthly returns are received; and the last line gives the results obtained from the November returns for the capital cities only. The capital cities are, of course,

included in each of the other two investigations, and the five towns in each State are included in the investigation for "all towns":—

**Retail Price Index-Numbers—States, 1923.**

Particulars.	N.S.W.	Vic.	Q'land.	S.A.	W.A.	Tas.	Weighted Average.
<b>FOOD AND GROCERIES.</b>							
All Towns* ..	1,015	987	982	991	995	1,034	<b>1,000</b>
Five Towns in each State ..	1,016	988	973	997	994	1,042	<b>1,000</b>
Capital Cities only ..	1,015	991	970	1001	977	1,040	<b>1,000</b>
<b>RENT, 5-ROOMED HOUSES</b>							
All Towns* ..	1,050	1,057	767	1,013	853	1,018	<b>1,000</b>
Five Towns in each State ..	1,052	1,052	737	998	841	1,045	<b>1,000</b>
Capital Cities only ..	1,037	1,052	752	998	826	1,087	<b>1,000</b>
<b>FOOD AND GROCERIES AND RENT.</b>							
All Towns* ..	1,026	1,011	908	998	947	1,029	<b>1,000</b>
Five Towns in each State ..	1,028	1,010	891	998	941	1,043	<b>1,000</b>
Capital Cities only ..	1,023	1,013	892	1,000	923	1,057	<b>1,000</b>

\* For list of towns included, see Tables on pages 42 to 45.

The index-numbers for November, 1917 to 1923, computed from the three sets of data mentioned above with 1913 as base (=1,000), are shown in the following table:—

**Retail Price Index-Numbers—Australia, 1917 to 1923.**

Particulars.	1913.	1917.	1918.	1919.	1920.	1921.	1922.	1923.
<b>FOOD AND GROCERIES.</b>								
All Towns* ..	<b>1,000</b>	1,395	1,435	1,706	2,002	1,578	1,558	1,689
Five Towns in each State ..	<b>1,000</b>	1,390	1,430	1,701	2,007	1,577	1,564	1,688
Capital Cities only ..	<b>1,000</b>	1,397	1,440	1,715	2,021	1,588	1,580	1,699
<b>RENT OF 5-ROOMED HOUSES.</b>								
All Towns* ..	<b>1,000</b>	981	1,031	1,103	1,228	1,268	1,347	1,433
Five Towns in each State ..	<b>1,000</b>	987	1,039	1,110	1,235	1,271	1,347	1,421
Capital Cities only ..	<b>1,000</b>	980	1,033	1,099	1,225	1,261	1,336	1,374
<b>FOOD, GROCERIES, AND RENT.</b>								
All Towns* ..	<b>1,000</b>	1,233	1,282	1,477	1,709	1,461	1,478	1,592
Five Towns in each State ..	<b>1,000</b>	1,234	1,278	1,471	1,706	1,458	1,480	1,584
Capital Cities only ..	<b>1,000</b>	1,227	1,274	1,464	1,697	1,455	1,480	1,566

The figures in the vertical columns show merely the increase or decrease in cost in November of each year compared with November, 1913, for "All Towns," "Five Towns in each State," and "Capital Cities only" respectively.

\* See note to preceding table.

The index-numbers in the first line of each division of the table just given refer to 100 towns for November, 1913; to 150 towns for November, 1916 to 1922; and to 200 towns for November, 1923. The general closeness of the results is remarkable, and indicates that the index-numbers for the capital cities only for the years prior to 1912, and for the 30 towns for 1912 and subsequent years were substantially accurate. During the period November, 1913, to November, 1923, the average cost of food and groceries throughout Australia increased 68.9 per cent.; house rents increased 43.3 per cent.; the aggregate result showing an increase of approximately 59.2 per cent.

## CHAPTER VII.—CLOTHING AND MISCELLANEOUS.

1. **General.**—The Royal Commission on the Basic Wage, which met in 1919–1920, was appointed to inquire into and report upon the following matters :—

- (i) 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.
- (ii) The actual corresponding cost of living during each of the last five years.
- (iii) 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 this Commission in Report No. 11, pp. 28 and 29. In answer to the third clause of the inquiry, 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, the Commonwealth Statistician was consulted as to methods, and the duty of carrying out the recommendation was entrusted to the Bureau of Census and Statistics.

2. **Methods Adopted.**—The Commission was concerned principally with ascertaining variations in the cost of the regimen adopted, which is described in the "Indicator List" published in the Report. It appeared, however, that the usefulness of the investigations by this Bureau would have been somewhat limited if confined in the way suggested by the Commission, and it was decided, therefore, to apply to a more detailed inquiry 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 investigations or which may be fixed in future.