

inasmuch as they are reached by averaging all the commodities on an equal basis whereas some of the most notable advances of the past year were in foods, fuel and other articles of great importance in domestic consumption.

Advance of Retail Prices.

A calculation which assigns to the various groups their approximate relative weight from this standpoint shows the rise in 1912 to have been well over 9 per cent. In retail prices the advance was approximately 5.8 per cent. For the years prior to 1890, no comparable data have been assembled; in 1882-84 prices were high in Canada, but it would be necessary probably to go back to the first quarter of the decade 1870-79, when the level was very high both in Europe and America, to find conditions to parallel those of 1912. Within the period for which definite information has been collected (1890-1912) it may be repeated that at no time have prices approached the level of 1911-12, save perhaps in 1907, when, however, the highest point was considerably below that of 1911-12. From 1890 to 1897, the movement was consistently downward, since when, as has been many times pointed out, the tendency has been very rapidly upward, and with interruption of a serious nature only in 1907-8—the whole constituting the movement which has been the subject of such incessant and general discussion in recent years as the "high cost of living." The past year accordingly appears, speaking broadly, as a further and still longer step in the upward progress. Just how high is the point now reached may be gathered from the statement that a simple average of the prices of the articles covered in the department's investigation shows the general level to be approximately 40 per cent. higher in 1912 than in 1897, while if allowance be made for the greater importance of certain groups of articles in trade the rise approaches 60 per cent.

Prices Still Rising.

The latest monthly index number of the Department is for May, 1913. The index number for wholesale prices in Canada for that month compares as follows:—

May, 1913137.0
April, 1913136.3
May, 1912136.3

The numbers, it will be understood, are percentages in each case of the average price level prevailing during the decade 1890-99, the period selected by the Department as the standard of comparison throughout its investigation into wholesale prices. Some 272 articles, carefully selected to represent Canadian production and consumption, are included in the calculation.

The chief increases during May, 1913, occurred in animals and meats, fish, fruits and vegetables, with a considerable decrease in dairy products and fuel. Compared with

the same month of last year the chief increases appear in the following groups:—Animals and meats, fish, textiles, hides, leathers, boots and shoes, metals and implements, fuel and lighting, building materials, furnishings, furs and sundries. Important decreases appear in grains and fodder, dairy products, fruits and vegetables, liquors and tobacco.

Although, as we have seen, commodity prices have for several years shown a tendency to increase in no indefinite way, that tendency does not by any means account for the remarkable gain in the volume of bank clearings since 1908. Other statistics prove that the gain is chiefly due to an increase in actual business.

Canada's Clearing Houses.

Three bank clearing houses were established in 1910, one each at Brandon, Lethbridge and Saskatoon. Three, Moose Jaw, Brantford and Fort William, were established in 1911, and two, New Westminster and Medicine Hat, have been opened this year. There are now twenty-two clearing houses in Canada, twelve of which are in western Canada and ten in the east.

The following is a list of the clearing houses:—

Clearing House.	Commenced Business.
Halifax	1886, 1 July.
Montreal	1889, 7 January.
Hamilton	1891, 15 June.
Toronto	1891, 21 July.
Winnipeg	1893, 4 December.
Vancouver	1898, October.
Victoria	1898, 2 November.
Quebec	1901, 1 May.
Ottawa	1901, 9 September.
London	1902, 1 June.
St. John	1896, 1 May.
Calgary	1906, 18 April.
Edmonton	1906, 11 July.
Regina	1909, 1 October.
Brandon	1910, 1 April.
Lethbridge	1910, 1 September.
Saskatoon	1910, 15 October.
Moose Jaw	1911, 9 February.
Brantford	1911, 1 January.
Fort William	1911, 19 October.
New Westminster	1913, 2 January.
Medicine Hat	1913, 1 May.

As the tabulations of *The Monetary Times* show the bank clearings for the first half of 1913 are nearly \$200,000,000 ahead of the corresponding period of 1912. It will be unusually interesting to watch the course of the bank clearings for the remainder of the year and also during 1914.

Bank clearings	1908	1909	1910	1911	1912	1913 (six months)
Ontario	\$1,450,474,915	\$1,757,779,723	\$1,956,049,935	\$2,298,228,008	\$2,728,432,820	\$1,353,048,158
Quebec	1,579,127,582	1,985,452,773	2,212,268,621	2,501,810,415	3,003,128,011	1,474,334,037
Manitoba	614,111,801	770,649,322	973,694,051	1,202,192,416	1,571,114,599	734,902,021
British Columbia	238,439,459	358,235,823	546,555,892	678,414,170	827,663,115	416,242,371
Alberta	103,411,732	139,315,401	231,690,244	368,939,005	529,704,867	244,739,029
New Brunswick	66,435,636	72,404,500	77,843,546	77,328,182	88,969,218	40,700,798
Nova Scotia	90,232,245	95,278,463	95,855,316	87,994,038	100,467,672	49,540,252
Saskatchewan	†14,153,244	59,743,982	*176,461,973	294,716,462	144,379,445
Total	4,142,233,379	5,203,269,249	6,153,701,587	7,391,368,207	9,143,196,764	4,457,886,111

†Regina started 1st October, 1909. *Moose Jaw started February, 1911 and the total clearings for the 11 months were \$39,988,342. †Fort William started October, 1911 and the total clearings for three months were \$7,865,923. Medicine Hat started in May, 1913.

GUARANTEE COMPANY OF NORTH AMERICA

THESE COMPANIES ENTER ONTARIO

The Guarantee Company of North America's eighty-first semi-annual statement, for the six months ending June 30th, 1913, shows assets of \$1,793,539.25, which include \$1,488,059.00 of bonds and stocks at their present market value, and a surplus to policyholders of \$1,615,462.00, which, notwithstanding the writing down of the value of its securities, is over \$27,500 in excess of its surplus at December 31st, 1912, and an increase of more than \$115,000 over that of a year ago.

The business of the Guarantee Company is that of issuing bonds of suretyship, which it was the pioneer company in introducing on this continent in 1872.

The following companies have received a license to do business in Ontario: McKinnon Dash Company, New Jersey, U.S.A., to use in Ontario \$115,000 capital; McKinnon Chain Company, New York, U.S.A., \$100,000; Dominion Chain Company, Limited (Dominion charter), \$40,000; Mplassine Company of Canada, Limited (Dominion charter), \$40,000; the A. Macdonald Company, Limited (Dominion charter), \$250,000; the National Cash Register Company, Ohio, U.S.A., \$500,000; the Kendal & Naylor Company, Michigan, U.S.A., \$10,000; the Acme Grain Company, Limited, Manitoba, \$50,000; the Bayer Company, Inc., New York, U.S.A., \$40,000.

"We have reached our agreement with the exception of one thing," announced Mayor Hocken, referring to his conference with Sir William Mackenzie regarding the requisition for the purchase of the Toronto Railway and Toronto Electric Light Companies.

The Canadian Pacific Railway department of natural resources has placed hail insurance on its ready-made farms in the Cavin Hills Southeast and Coaldale districts, and the department has also requested all farmers in the district to take out similar insurance.