

Consumer price movements

The Consumer Price Index for Canada (1961=100) rose 0.7 per cent to 143.3 in December from 142.3 in November. This latest increase was identical to that which occurred between these two months last year but exceeded the November-to-December advances of other recent years. Food prices rose 1.4 per cent, while the level of prices for all items other than food increased 0.4 per cent, mainly as a result of advances of 0.5 per cent in housing and 1.3 per cent in the tobacco-and-alcohol component. The transportation index rose 0.2 per cent and the clothing, the health-and-personal care and the recreation-and-reading components edged up 0.1 per cent. From December 1971 to December 1972, the all-items index registered a 5.1 percent advance.

The *food index* rose 1.4 per cent to 147.1 in December from 145.1 in November. This latest advance, though smaller than that which occurred between these two months last year, exceeded all other November-to-December increases of recent years. The food index advanced 8.6 percent above its level of 12 months ago with the price of food consumed at home increasing 8.8 per cent and that for restaurant meals 7.0 per cent.

The *housing index* advanced 0.5 per cent to 146.8 in December from 146.1 in November as a result of a 0.7 per cent increase in the shelter component, which was chiefly attributable to a 1.1 per cent increase in the home-ownership element. In contrast, rents rose 0.2 per cent. No change was recorded in the household-operation component.

Between December 1971 and December 1972, the housing index advanced 5.0 per cent.

The *clothing index* rose 0.1 per cent to 135.1 in December from 134.9 in November. The clothing-services component advanced 1.1 per cent as generally higher charges were registered for laundry, dry cleaning and shoe repairs.

Between December 1971 and December 1972, the clothing index rose 3.1 per cent.

The *transportation index* rose 0.2 per cent to 133.4 in December from 133.1 in November as a result of a 0.2 per cent increase in the automobile-operation component, together with a

seasonal advance in train fares. The automobile-operation rise was chiefly attributable to scattered price advances for new cars. On the other hand, gasoline prices declined in a number of cities, mainly in Quebec and Ontario, bringing the gasoline index 0.5 percent below its level of 12 months earlier. Between December 1971 and December 1972, the transportation index rose 1.4 per cent.

The *health-and-personal-care index* rose 0.1 per cent to 151.8 in December from 151.6 in November and in the 12 months to December 1972, it increased 3.9 per cent.

The *recreation-and-reading index* rose 0.1 per cent to 141.4 in December from 141.3 in November as a result of increases of 0.1 per cent and 0.2 per cent in the recreation-and-reading components, respectively. In December 1972, the recreation-and-reading index stood 3.7 percent above its level in December 1971.

The *tobacco-and-alcohol index* advanced 1.3 per cent to 134.7 in December from 133.0 in November, mainly as a result of widespread increases in cigarette prices. Between December 1971 and December 1972 it increased 3.9 per cent.

Commodities and services

Consumer price index items, when classified by commodities and services, offer another view of the incidence of the change in prices. In December, the services index rose 0.5 per cent, mainly because of higher charges for shelter services, automobile lubrication, dry cleaning, laundry and shoe repairs. The total commodities index advanced 0.8 per cent, chiefly as a result of the 1.4 per cent increase in food prices. Prices of non-durable commodities other than food rose 0.3 per cent as increased quotations for tobacco, liquor, footwear, magazines, toys and motor oil outweighed reductions for textiles, household-cleaning supplies and gasoline. A 0.2 per cent rise in durables' prices resulted from higher prices for new cars, floor coverings, and stereo combinations outweighing lower quotations for television sets and furniture. Between December 1971 and December 1972, the index for services advanced 5.6 per cent, while that for commodities increased 4.9 per cent.

Canada Council art bank in business

According to a recent announcement by the Canada Council 1,128 works by 194 Canadian professional artists have been purchased for the Council's Art Bank.

The works, which will be rented to departments and agencies of the Federal Government for public display, are worth \$669,500 — about two-thirds of the \$1 million to be spent for the Art Bank in 1972-73. A total of \$5 million has been allocated for the purchase program over a five-year period.

They were chosen on the recommendations of advisory committees composed of curators, gallery directors, artists and art scholars. Members are appointed on an *ad hoc* basis, a procedure that permits artists to place their work before a different committee each time. The committees have inspected more than 5,000 works in various parts of Canada. Return visits to cities throughout the country and tours of areas not previously visited will be made in the near future. Artists can also submit slides of their works to the Council in Ottawa.

The purpose of the Art Bank is to assist professional artists by purchasing their work and, by displaying it in public buildings, to give the public the opportunity to enjoy contemporary Canadian art.

Wheat sale to India

The sale of 400,000 tons of wheat by the Canadian Wheat Board to the Government of India has been announced by Otto Lang, the Minister responsible for the Board.

About 15 million bushels are already being shipped from both Pacific and Atlantic ports. The grades are Nos. 1, 2 and 3 Canada Red Spring Wheat; shipment will be completed by the end of March.

"This purchase by India reflects an urgent requirement by that country resulting from drought conditions which affected the recent autumn crops and will help offset a shortfall in food supplies before harvesting of the winter crops in March and April," Mr. Lang stated.