

knows better than the hon. members of the Progressive party—fortunately for this country the prices of agricultural produce have gone up within the last year. Fortunately in the level of prices, so far as the products of the industry of agriculture are concerned, we approach now a level of comparison more nearly in accord, by comparison, with the level existing in relation to manufacturing prices prior to the war. The position of agriculture towards manufacturing in this regard has been considerably improved. It is due to the fact that prices of agricultural products have increased as they have that there has been on the whole this larger increase in wholesale prices. Grains, fruit, vegetables and their products in 1923, as compared with the figures of 1913, average wholesale prices for that year being taken as 100, came to 144.2 in 1923, and rose to 153.8 in 1924. All the other groups of commodities were on a lower index number:

Cost of Living 1923-4. Average Wholesale Prices of
1913=100

	1923	1924
Grains, Fruit, Vegetables and their products.. . . .	144.2	153.8
Animals and their products.. . . .	134.1	129.4
Fibres, textiles and textile products.. . . .	200.9	202.5
Wood, wood products and paper.. . . .	176.8	165.8
Iron and its products.. . . .	168.0	161.0
Non-ferrous metals and their products.. . . .	96.8	96.3
Non-metallic minerals and their products.. . . .	183.8	183.4
Chemicals and allied products.. . . .	164.8	161.8
Total.. . . .	153.0	155.2

The official index number of wholesale prices, 236 commodities rose from 153 in 1923 to 155.2 in 1924, but it should be noted that this rise was chiefly due to higher grain prices. The index number of six out of eight main groups declined. The rise in the textile group was due to the world-wide increase in wool prices.

What I wish to draw to the attention of the House is that while this is the showing of a schedule with respect to wholesale prices, when it comes to fixing the cost of living by the prices that determine the cost of living, namely retail prices, one finds that the cost of living has substantially decreased in this country during the last three years. I wish to give the House the particulars based on the retail prices, which are the prices to be considered in that connection. These facts and figures have been supplied officially by the Internal Trade Branch of our Bureau of Statistics. The cost of living in Canada, as reflected by retail prices of staple articles of domestic consumption, has been fairly steady for the last three years with a tendency towards lower levels. The average cost of a

[Mr. Mackenzie King.]

weekly food budget for a family of five from 1921 to 1924 was as follows:

1921	\$12.10
1922	10.39
1923	10.52
1924	10.31

The average cost of a similar budget including food, fuel and light, and rent was as follows:

1921	\$22.71
1922	20.88
1923	21.07
1924	20.80

The records show that the Dominion average retail price of the following foods declined from April to May 1924: Salt pork, bacon, biscuits, raspberry jam and canned peaches. The influence of reductions in the sales tax may also be traced in the official wholesale price records. Examples are: Biscuits, linseed oil, white lead, turpentine, black iron sheets, galvanized sheets, some lines of boots, binder twine, agricultural implements, etc. The result of tariff reductions on boots and shoes, cotton and woollen goods is difficult to trace. A number of influences have been affecting the prices of these commodities and it is difficult to isolate the result of any one of them. Index numbers of wholesale prices of boots based upon the year 1913 as 100 may be of interest.

	1921	1922	1923	1924
Boots (4 lines)	165.5	146.4	141.9	133.2

As to prices of agricultural implements, a representative list of agricultural implements, consisting of plough drill, hay rake, binder, mower, drag harrow, disc harrow, wagon, and sleigh sold in Ontario for \$953.50 before the 1924 budget and afterwards for \$905.50. A slightly larger list sold in the Regina territory before the budget for \$1,358 and afterwards for \$1,291.

I will not take up further time quoting from comparative statistics as between the United States and Canada, but I think it would be of advantage to members of the House and of advantage to the country to have placed on the record comparative tables of the cost of food in a Canadian budget in Canadian cities contrasted with the cost of a similar food budget in the United States in certain of their cities. This table has been prepared at my request by the Internal Trade Branch of the Bureau of Statistics. I have asked to be supplied with a comparative statement showing the difference in the cost of commodities in daily use in the principal cities of Canada and the United States, and with the permission of the House I will insert these tables on the record: