

prices. This increase in the cost of living has not been confined to any one class, rich and poor alike have had some experience of it, but it has had a very serious effect upon men of limited incomes, upon the wage-earning classes, upon those whose salaries are fixed and those who do not receive much in the way of remuneration. To one family after another it has meant curtailment of enjoyment, the foregoing of opportunities of education or recreation, a neglect of future needs, and the claims of others for future support, the giving up of insurance policies; to many it has meant a mode of living less congenial or beneficial to that previously enjoyed, to some, downright privation and hardship; to all sacrifices of one kind or another. That it could not be otherwise, where incomes or wages have not proportionately increased, actual statistics must make apparent enough. It is this question of the cost of living which has helped to make the question of combines, monopolies, trusts and mergers and the possible effect they may have on prices, so important. In the popular mind there has come to be a gradual association between these two phenomena. In the first place, people have experienced the rise in prices, and in the second place, they have observed the formation in increasing numbers of these large aggregations of capital, and they have got it into their minds that these two phenomena are associated one with the other. I think there may be some reason for that in particular cases, but I believe there are other explanations which will account for the rise in prices than the formation of combines and trusts. Similarly while combines and trusts may have had the effect in some cases of increasing prices, they have not always had that effect, but sometimes an effect entirely different, and I would like the House to understand that in introducing this legislation no attempt is being made to legislate against combines, mergers, and trusts as such; the whole intention is to place some restraint on these large aggregations of capital so that the advantages which may come from large combinations of wealth may in some measure be secured to the public, who have helped to make possible these large combinations.

It may be interesting to the House to have an idea of how the cost of living has increased in the last few years. I have here a series of charts being prepared at the present time by the Department of Labour. These show in statistical and graphic form the increase that has taken place in the last twenty years for the different classes of commodities in this country. Just taking a casual glance at them one observes that in the past 20 years

prices have, broadly speaking, increased something like from 30 per cent to 40 per cent in most of the commodities which are in the nature of the produce of the farm and the field. Manufactured articles have not increased to the same extent, but there has been a very perceptible upward lift during the last ten years over what was the average rate between 1890 and 1900. As a matter of fact prices were at their lowest ebb in 1896 and 1897. Since that time allowing for the temporary depression of 1907, they have gone up steadily, and if we look at the movement from 1896 to the present time, we will see that in some commodities prices have increased as much as nearly 70 per cent or 80 per cent over what was the average in the years 1890-1900. It would take too long to explain at any length the details, but I would like to indicate what has been the nature of increase that has taken place. These tables have been prepared by Mr. Coats, the associate editor of the 'Labour Gazette.' Mr. Coats has done very excellent and indefatigable work in the preparation of these tables. The statistics have been gathered for a period of over 20 years past and have been gathered from leading trade journals, market quotations and reliable sources in different parts of the Dominion, and I believe that when the report is prepared we will have one of the best reports on prices ever produced on this continent.

Two or three years ago an investigation was made in connection with the Royal Commission appointed to inquire into conditions in the Civil Service and in connection with that investigation a memorial was presented to the commission. Referring to this memorial one finds that as the result of an investigation at that time the statement is made that it would be safe to say that for families living in Ottawa on incomes varying from \$600 to \$900 the rate of advance in the decade from 1897 to 1907 was between 30 per cent and 35 per cent. Of course, the rate of increase in the cost of living will be more considerable to people on smaller incomes. The rates were:

Amount of Income.	Rate of Interest.
\$ 300	34%
1,200	30%
2,000	35%

These figures might be supplemented from a large variety of sources.

Taking the result of the investigation in the Department of Labour to which I have made reference, one finds the following increases in wholesale prices by groups of commodities compared with the average rate for the decade 1890 to 1899 and compared with 1896:

TABLE showing increases in wholesale prices by groups of commodities.

Group of Commodities.	PERCENTAGE OF INCREASE IN PRICES, 1900.	
	Compared with decade, 1890-1899.	Compared with 1896.
	per cent.	per cent.
Grains and fodder (13 commodities).....	50.0	76.0
Animals and meats (14 commodities).....	48.6	80.0
Dairy produce (5 commodities).....	33.6	48.0
Fish (9 commodities).....	34.0	31.0
Other foods (37 commodities).....	7.6	23.0
Hides, tallow, leather, boots and shoes (11 commodities).....	35.4	45.0
Implements (10 commodities).....	2.4	4.0
Fuel and lighting (9 commodities).....	4.0	5.0
Building material—		
a. Lumber (12 commodities).....	54.6	60.0
b. Paints, oil, and glass (14 commodities).....	35.2	40.0
House furnishings (15 commodities).....	10.4	14.0
Drugs and chemicals (16 commodities).....	4.0	5.0
Miscellaneous—		
a. Furs (4 commodities).....	127.2	180.0
b. Liquors and tobaccos (4 commodities).....	17.5	20.0
All 173 commodities.....	26.0	40.0

It will be seen that on certain classes of commodities, the classes on which the masses of the people mainly depend, grain, foders, animals, and meats, dairy produce, and foods, hides, leathers, boots and shoes, and the like, the increase has been very much higher than the average, it has ranged anywhere from 30 per cent to 50 per cent.

These figures are borne out by investigations made in other countries. Recently the Department of Labour of the United States made an investigation into wholesale prices for the years from 1890 to 1907. The Department of Labour there found that for the year 1907 the highest recorded level of prices was reached since 1890. The rise from 1897, the low point as worked out by the department is 44.4 per cent.

Mr. LENNOX. The hon. minister has mentioned that although combines generally had a tendency to enhance prices, there were instances in which they had not that effect. Would he mention an instance?

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Mr. KING. I am not aware of having said that combines generally increased prices. I said that in some cases I thought that they had, and in others, I did not think they had.

Mr. LENNOX. Will the hon. minister mention an instance in which they had not that effect?

Mr. KING. I am coming to that point a little later on. Recently the House at Washington ordered a special investigation into the causes of the increased cost of food, and other products. I have here a report from the Secretary of the Department of Commerce and Labour, transmitting tables giving percentages of the increase in prices of food and other products. This investigation corroborates in many details that made by the Canadian Department of Labour, showing that prices have increased during the last decade from 25 up to 50 and 70 per cent in the different classes of commodities in the United States. A comparison between the movement of prices in this country and the United States and Great Britain would go to show that, in all three countries, they have risen materially, but that the rise has been more considerable in the United States than in Canada, and in Canada than in Great Britain.

Mr. EDWARDS. How does the rise in prices of agricultural products in Canada compare with their rise in the United States?

Mr. KING. It would take considerable time to go through the figures in individual cases, but I shall be very glad at any time to give information on those points later. In the discussion in committee we can take up the individual subjects. I would ask hon. gentlemen to allow me to make a general statement in the first place.

Mr. R. L. BORDEN. The best course would be to take a note of any information desired and endeavour to give that in committee.

Mr. KING. Referring to another source, a record of prices on 96 commodities compiled by Bradstreets on January 1, 1910, shows that prices in the United States, on that date had reached an absolutely high record mark. The increase is 61 per cent over the figures of July, 1896, which was the lowest price touched by Bradstreets calculations. Mr. Blue, the Census Commissioner for the Dominion, prepared a statement two or three years ago regarding the increase in the cost of living in this country, and he found that there had been, during the fifteen years from 1892 to 1896, an increase in the prices of food products, ranging from 15 to 20 per cent. In 1906, there had been a rise which