

LARGEST INCREASES

Dentists' fees had the highest average annual rate of increase among health-care items over the nine-year span, at 5.5 per cent. Optical care had an average rise of 4.6 per cent. Doctors' fees rose at an average annual rate of 3.7 per cent. Pharmaceuticals showed a slight average annual decrease - 0.3 per cent. The report points out, however, that the effects of prices of newly-introduced prescription drugs are not measured in the index.

Hospital rates have been excluded from the consumer price index since 1961, when public hospital insurance plans had come into operation in all provinces. Hospital costs a patient-day over the period 1961 to 1968 increased by an average of 10.0 per cent a year.

REAL DOMESTIC PRODUCT

Canada's index of real domestic product, seasonally-adjusted, increased by 0.4 per cent in July. The increase resulted from a 1.1 percent gain in output of the service-producing group of industries, as output of the goods-producing group declined by 0.5 per cent.

No clear pattern has been established by movements of RDP and its components during recent months. The index shows increases in January and February (continuing the upward trend of the latter part of 1969); a significant drop in March; a moderate rise in April; declines in May and June and the small increase in July - which brought the index back to its level of December 1969.

As a group, the service-producing industries more than recovered in July from losses in June. Trade rose strongly, with wholesale merchants overcoming their sharp drop in June (which followed large increases in April and May). Retail trade also reversed its June decline, but still remained below the output levels reached at the beginning of the year.

TRANSPORTATION

The output of transportation, storage and communication (largely dominated by transportation) continued its increase in July. Air transport maintained its almost unbroken advance. Railway transport increased only slightly, far from recovering from sharp drops earlier in the year. Water transport also rose in July (the British Columbia towboat strike had been settled), but most other types of transport decreased. Storage was also up noticeably, owing to large increases in receipts and shipments of grain. In the communication component, the postal industry, affected by the labour dispute, continued to decline.

The group of goods-producing industries experienced its third consecutive monthly decline in July, but the combinations of individual industries which accounted for the declines were different in each month. In May, the setback was caused mainly

by substantial declines in manufacturing, construction and forestry, which outweighed a gain in agriculture. The drop in June came chiefly from the continued decline in construction and forestry and a drop in agriculture. In July, agriculture and manufacturing were the only major goods-producing industries that declined. As a result of the May, June and July decreases, the index of output for the goods-producing industries was back at its strike-affected levels of July and August of 1969.

The July decrease in manufacturing came entirely from a drop in output of durables. This, in turn, was accounted for mostly by declines in the primary metal, metal-fabricating and machinery industries.

In agriculture, the July drop was due mostly to decreases in poultry, cattle and calf production.

CONSTRUCTION

After significant drops in May and June, the index for construction increased in July - only the second increase in eight months. This new strength came almost entirely from residential construction, as output movements in other types of construction were largely offsetting. The estimate of multiple-housing units put in place sharply reversed its downward movement of May and June (reflecting the increase in low-income housing starts financed by CMHC), while output of single housing units increased slightly.

Forestry output was up in July, reflecting chiefly a recovery from the towboat strike in British Columbia, which affected output in May and June. However, the level of production in this industry was still much lower than during the first four months of the year.

ONTARIO MAY HAVE UNDERWATER PARK

Canada's first underwater park may soon be established in Ontario, according to an announcement by the province's Lands and Forests Minister René Brunelle. "Attention has been focused on the upper Bruce Peninsula area, where there are many attractions for such a park," said Mr. Brunelle. Among the attractions of the region, he noted, was its central location on the Great Lakes, the largest group of freshwater lakes in the world, all bordered by Ontario. The area has already attracted many divers, who find the clear waters of great interest for the unique geological formations and variety of flora and fauna they reveal. In addition, there are numerous shipwrecks round the many shoals and islands at the tip of the Bruce Peninsula.

The idea of an underwater park was first conceived in 1935, when the Fort Jefferson National Monument was established in Florida. Other underwater parks are now found off the Florida Keys, in Hawaii, the Marshall Islands, the Philippines, Australia, the Virgin Islands and off the coast of California. An underwater park in Ontario would be the first in North American inland waters.