

RISE IN PRICES AND LIVING COSTS SHOWN BY DEPARTMENTAL REPORT

How Index Number of Prices and Cost of Family Budget have Mounted Steadily for past five years.

TENDENCY STILL UPWARD

That the index number of foods showing the rise in food prices, rose from 132.2 in 1911, to 230.3 in 1917, that compared with the decade, 1890-1899, the percentage of increase shown by prices of all commodities in 1917 was 137 per cent; and that raw furs showed the greatest increase, 311.6 per cent, and among textiles there was an increase of only 17.3 per cent in the price of silk during that time, while the price of woollens increased 213.5 per cent; and that among foods, animals and meats led all others in the upward movement, increasing 188.1 per cent, are among the facts contained in the ninth report on Wholesale Prices in Canada, recently issued by the Department of Labour.

The departmental index number based on the quotations of prices of commodities, was up to 212.7 by January, 1917, as compared with 172.1 a year before, 138.9 in 1915, and 136.5 in 1914, it is stated in the report.

GENERAL PRICE ADVANCES.

"The period of the war in Canada," explains the report, "had been marked by successive general advances in prices with very little recession except the reaction in September, 1914. The second half of 1914 was marked by a rise in prices in some materials, but a fall in most materials. The year 1915 was marked by a recovery in materials, particularly in metals, though not so pronounced in iron and steel. This continued during 1916, extending to more classes of goods, but in the first half of the year, food prices were comparatively steady and showed tendencies to decline. In the latter half of the year, however, there was a steeply upward movement in food prices as well as in prices of materials. In 1917, the upward movement became still steeper and extended to more lines as the goods manufactured from higher raw materials and with dearer labour, were marketed. The only decrease occurred in the group Hides, Leather, Boots and Shoes, where lower prices for hides and some leathers, brought down the average. The greatest increase occurred in textiles where not only woollens and cottons were up steeply, but flax products and jutes more than doubled during the year, and were from four to six times as dear as before the war. Grains advanced very steeply until May and then eased off until November. Live stock and meats rose until May but were easier after July and did not advance greatly again until November and December. Dairy products were higher throughout than the year before. Fish rose considerably toward the end of the year. Fruits and vegetables were very high at the beginning of the year and rose steadily until June, but were down considerably by October, being then much above the level of a year before, and advanced during the rest of the year. Miscellaneous foods advanced steadily, flour, etc., being up the most in the early part of the year, but other items later. Textiles rose steadily, the scarcity in every line becoming greater as the year advanced. Hides and some leathers eased off in December, 1916, and continued to ease off until the end of 1917 as the demand for certain lines was weak. The demand for heavy lines, however, was good and maintained prices to a great extent. Metal prices continued to rise until August, when the United States Government set lower prices for many lines and steadied the market. Implements were affected by the high prices of metals and materials, and the cost of manufacture. Fuel rose considerably but the upward tendency was affected by the fixing of prices in the United States at lower levels in the autumn. Lumber advanced owing to the cost of labour, the shortage of supplies, and the main-

DIVISION OF HOUSING LOAN IN PROVINCES.

As shown by a statement made in a publication of the Commission of Conservation, the \$25,000,000 Dominion Government loan for the purpose of erecting houses for the working classes in Canada, will be approximately distributed among the provinces as follows:—

Prince Edward Island..	\$ 326,000
Nova Scotia	1,716,000
New Brunswick	1,225,000
Quebec	6,980,000
Ontario	8,721,000
Manitoba	1,586,000
Saskatchewan	1,716,000
Alberta	1,304,000
British Columbia	1,336,000

tenance of a fair demand. Other building materials rose with the cost of raw materials. House furnishings were considerably affected by the high cost of labour and of some materials. Drugs and chemicals had eased off but rose again as some lines became scarce and difficult to replace. Raw furs continued to rise. Liquors and tobaccos were affected by the prices of farm products, barley, hops, raw leaf tobacco, etc. Paper, rope and binder twine were particularly high. Raw rubber continued to be the only commodity cheaper than before the war."

SUMMARY OF 1917.

In a general summary of the situation in 1917, the report says:—

"Prices moved steeply upward during the first part of the year, and less steeply thereafter. In Canada the index number of wholesale prices based on the average prices of 272 commodities in 1890-1899 rose from 212.7 in January to 257.1 in December, having advanced continuously from January to July, when it reached 248.7. In August, September, and October there were slight recessions, bringing it down to 244.7 in October, but in November and December the movement was steeply upward again. The index number at the end of the year had therefore more than doubled since 1910, when the figure was 124.2, or in 1917, when it had reached 126.2. In Great Britain the index number of 'The Economist' was up to 265.7 in December, double that of January, 1914; while the Sauerbeck index number, published by 'The Statist', was up to 185.1, as compared with 159.3 in January, 1917; 119.0 in January, 1914; and 78.0 in 1910. In the United States, Dun's index number reached 220.172 in December, as compared with 169.562 in January, 124.528 in January, 1914, and 119.17 in January, 1910. In France the index number of the General Statistical Office reached 288.2 in December, as compared with 217.0 in the first quarter of the year and 120.3 in the third quarter of 1914."

As supplementary to the wholesale price statistics which are the subject proper of the report, tables of weekly family budgets for a workingman's family of five, showing the changes in the cost of staple foods, fuel, lighting, and rent for the Dominion and for each province, are given. These tables show that the cost per week of the budgets, in terms of the average prices in sixty cities in Canada, rose from \$7.73 in January, 1914, to \$12.24 in December, 1917. It is shown that from 1900 to 1905 the average cost of food advanced from \$5.48 per week to \$5.96, less than 50 cents, but by 1910 had reached \$6.95 per week; that is, an advance of \$1 during the five years. By 1912, \$7.34 was reached, and the average for 1913 was the same. The cost of this budget in September, 1912, was \$7.68, and in December, 1913, \$7.75. Before the war, December and January were usually the months of highest prices. From January to July, 1914, there was a slight decrease (from \$7.73 to \$7.42), but the prices rose considerably until mid-winter. The food crops of 1915 tended, the report states, and there was a decrease from March, 1915, to October, followed by the usual winter advance. During 1916 the rise was not great until the autumn, when a steeply upward movement set in and continued.

AVERAGE VALUE OF FARMING LANDS PER ACRE HAS INCREASED

It was \$38 in 1914 and is now \$46 per acre according to Bulletin issued by Bureau of Statistics.

STOCK VALUES HIGHER

The Dominion Bureau of Statistics publishes its annual report on average farm values for the year 1918, consisting of estimates of (1) the values of farm land; (2) of the wages paid for farm help; and (3) the value of farm live stock and of wool. These estimates have been compiled from the returns of a numerous corps of crop correspondents throughout Canada.

VALUES OF FARM LAND.

According to the returns received, the average value of farm land for the Dominion, including both improved and unimproved land, together with dwelling houses, barns, stables and other farm buildings, is \$46 per acre, as compared with \$44 in 1917, \$41 in 1916, \$40 in 1915 and \$38 in 1914. By provinces, the value is highest in British Columbia, viz. \$149, this being exactly the same figure as in 1917. The higher value per acre in this province is due to orcharding and fruit-growing. Quebec and Ontario have the same average value per acre, viz., \$57, the average for 1917 in Quebec being, however, \$53, whilst in Ontario it was \$55. In Prince Edward Island the value is \$44 as in 1917; in Nova Scotia it is \$36 against \$34; in New Brunswick \$35 against \$29; in Manitoba \$32 against \$31; in Saskatchewan \$29 against \$26 and in Alberta \$28 against \$27.

WAGES OF FARM HELP.

The average wages paid for farm help in 1918 show a substantial increase as compared with the previous year, and are again the highest on record. For the whole of Canada, the average wages per month of farm help during the summer, inclusive of board, are for males \$70 as compared with \$64 in 1917, and for females \$38 as compared with \$34. For the complete year, including board the wages averaged for males \$617 and for females \$416, as compared with \$611 and \$364, respectively in 1917. The average value of board per month is \$21 for males and \$17 for females, as against \$19 and \$15 in 1917. Compared by provinces, the average wages per month for male and female help, respectively, in the summer season, including board, were in 1918 in order of value as follows: British Columbia \$89 and \$57; Alberta \$86 and \$50; Saskatchewan \$86 and \$49; Manitoba \$78 and \$45; New Brunswick \$69 and \$31; Quebec \$65 and \$33; Ontario \$62 and \$35; Nova Scotia \$60 and \$30; Prince Edward Island \$46 and \$25.

VALUES OF FARM LIVE STOCK.

Horses show little difference in value as compared with 1917; but the value of all descriptions of horned cattle has again increased. The prices of sheep are also higher, but swine are somewhat less. For the Dominion as a whole, horses under one year average in price \$56 as against \$57 in 1917, for horses one year to under three years the average is \$112 against \$116, and for horses three years and over the value is \$162 against \$167. Milch cows are \$87 against \$84, cattle under one year are \$25 against \$24, cattle from one year to under three years old are \$57 against \$52 and cattle three years old and over are \$88 against \$77. Sheep average \$16 against \$15 and swine per 100 lb. live weight are \$16 against \$17. The average value of wool per lb. is 62 cents for unwashed, as compared with 59 cents and for washed 80 cents as compared with 75 cents. Correspondents were requested to report as nearly as possible the average value per head of each description of farm animal, and the averages compiled from the returns received have been used for the calculation of total values according to the number of farm animals as returned last June. The resulting total values for the Dom-

inion are as follows, the totals for 1918 being given in brackets for comparison: Horses \$459,155,000 (\$429,123,000); milch cows \$307,244,000 (\$274,081,000); other cattle \$398,814,000 (\$270,595,000); total cattle \$706,058,000 (\$544,676,000); sheep \$48,802,000 (\$35,576,000); swine \$112,751,000 (\$92,886,000). The total value of farm live stock in Canada for 1918 is therefore estimated to be \$1,326,766,000 as compared with \$1,102,261,000 in 1917. It should be noted, however, that the comparison with 1917 is effected by the change in the method of collecting agricultural statistics, which went into operation last year, the increase in numbers being greater probably than that which was due to actual growth.

GRAIN IN STORE AT ELEVATORS ON PRAIRIE

Wheat Inspected on Railroads in West since September 1.

There was in store at the Government interior elevators on February 21 at Moosejaw, 1,771,128 bushels; Saskatoon, 1,654,679 bushels; Calgary, 2,175,292 bushels of grain, according to a report from the office of the Commissioner of Immigration at Winnipeg.

There was in store at the C.P. interior elevators 11,774,540 bushels; 1917, 9,823,530 bushels.

There was in store at all elevators at lake front, 34,315,695 bushels.

There has been inspected on all railroads since September 1, 1918:—

Wheat. Other grains. Total.
1918—101,511,600 27,953,250 129,464,850
1917—122,196,000 46,780,200 168,976,200

The average number of bushels of various kinds of grain per car as shown by out-turns at elevators on C.P. tracks, Fort William, during the week was:—

	1918.	1917.
Wheat.....	1,308	1,322
Oats.....	1,936	1,909
Barley.....	1,860	1,361
Flax.....	1,414	1,240
Rye.....	1,166	956

The report for the week ending March 1 was:—

Grain loaded since September 1, 1918, on the C.P.R., 67,830,285 bushels; 1917, 103,236,100 bushels.

In store at Government interior elevators: Moosejaw, 1,686,462 bushels; Saskatoon, 1,654,546 bushels; Calgary, 2,026,337 bushels.

In store C.P. interior elevators: 1919, 11,626,900 bushels; 1918, 9,718,430 bushels.

In store all elevators at lake front, 35,843,531 bushels.

Inspected on all railroads since September 1, 1918:—

Wheat. Other grains. Total.
1918—102,294,000 28,471,000 130,765,000
1917—124,224,000 48,668,600 172,892,600

WATER POWER RESOURCES OF BRITISH COLUMBIA

As shown by the report of the Commission of Conservation on the water-powers of British Columbia, which will be issued shortly, the investigation of the water-powers of that province by the Commission has disclosed the existence of two great water-power centres, namely, Nelson, with 400,000 h.p. within a radius of 50 miles, and Vancouver, with 300,000 h.p. within the same distance. The report states that, based on experience at Toronto, these quantities would suffice for a population of 1,700,000 at Nelson, or for ten manufacturing cities of 170,000 each. The power in the vicinity of Vancouver would be sufficient for one manufacturing city of 1,250,000 population, or for ten cities of 125,000 each. There are 12 water-power sites in British Columbia of 50,000 h.p. each and upwards, 29 power sites of between 10,000 and 20,000 capacity, and 585 of less than 10,000 h.p., according to the report.

Every Victory bondholder should be a War Savings Stamp collector.