

seemed to feel it was necessary and desirable to create the impression that the cost of living was greater to-day than in previous years; and he produced a chart, which he said he got from the Department of Labour, I think it was, showing the change in the cost of living by months from 1913 to 1923. It was extended, I believe to include 1924. My right hon. friend will tell me perhaps, if I have not got hold of the same chart. At any rate it was issued in a special report by the Department of Labour in January of this year. My right hon. friend stated that that chart showed a rise in the cost of living, during the past year. Perhaps my right hon. friend will loan me his chart, the one of which he himself made use.

Mr. MEIGHEN: Certainly.

Mr. MACKENZIE KING: Now that I hold in my hand my right hon. friend's chart he certainly will not be able to dispute what I am about to say. If he will look at this chart, he will see that in the year 1924 for the first time since the year 1918, the cost of living mark dropped below the 150 line. Will my right hon. friend dispute that?

Mr. MEIGHEN: That was just before the policy of the right hon. gentleman of last spring came into effect.

Mr. MACKENZIE KING: No, it was not just before. My right hon. friend is seriously astray in making that statement, it was just after as a matter of fact. The point I should like hon. members to observe is the method my right hon. friend adopts of quoting from public documents so as to serve his particular purpose at the moment.

Mr. MEIGHEN: The chart shows the figures just as I stated. The Prime Minister can give the whole of the chart if he wishes it.

Mr. MACKENZIE KING: I want my right hon. friend to tell the whole truth. If he had given the whole truth he would have made the statement to which I am now drawing the attention of the House, namely, that last year for the first time in seven years the cost of living living line dropped below 150, the average prices in 1913 being taken as equivalent to 100. There is no denying that fact. I will return the chart to my right hon. friend and he may verify my statement.

May I draw the attention of the House to this further fact: Everyone knows that the cost of living varies according to the seasons. One does not contrast the cost of living in the month of December with the cost in the months of June and July. In the first named month there is coal to be bought and

additional clothing to be worn and additional food to be consumed. My right hon. friend, if he had been fair to the House and to the country would have taken from this report by corresponding months in the respective years figures dealing with the changes in the cost of living from 1913 to 1924. And what would he have found? He would have found that while for the month of December in the year 1913 the index number was 100 in December 1921 the index number was 156. In December 1922 it was 153. In December 1923 it was 154; and in December 1924 it was 152, the lowest it has been since the days when my right hon. friend was in office. It was 156 in December 1921 at the time this government came into office and his government went out. To-day it stands, according to the records of the Department of Labour, or rather it stood in December 1924 as 152, showing clearly that the cost of living has been going down steadily in this country during the intervening period.

Before I leave the subject I shall touch upon the index figures of the United States. If my right hon. friend were to carry his comparisons to that country, he would find that the figures show a relatively higher cost of living in the United States than we have in Canada, that is contrasting the principal cities in the adjoining republic with the principal cities in Canada, thus verifying further what I said a moment ago about the relatively better conditions in Canada. My right hon. friend quoted from some report, which he said was one of the government reports and therefore should be correct, a list of prices on which he based his remarks respecting the cost of living. Because these prices showed an increase on the whole, he said the cost of living had gone up. There are two points which I would like to make in this connection. First, the cost of living estimate is not based on wholesale prices. It is based on retail prices. The second point is, it is based on the grouping of commodities in accordance with average quantities which the average family consumes. In making up cost of living schedules you do not put down to the consumption of the family equal amounts for grain, preserves, biscuits, boots and the like; but you take for the average family the quantities that would be consumed or used on the average. When my right hon. friend was dealing with figures on the cost of living he was quoting wholesale prices, indices based on some 200 commodities not corresponding in selection or weighting to their importance to the consumer. The wholesale prices, on this basis, on the whole show a slight increase. But, as my right hon. friend knows—and no one