

## How much more is it costing You to Live?

The chart on the opposite page represents the latest answer to this question — a Canadian answer, and thoroughly authoritative,—the answer of a Canadian Government Department.

It is the chart which represents the final summing up of the results of an extended investigation by the Department of Labour into the course of wholesale prices in Canada during the past twenty years. The line is compounded of the quotations of 230 articles, the basis of comparison (denoted by the level of 100 in the chart) being the decade 1890-1899.

For some time past, and especially since the beginning of the present century, one of the most important features of the general economic situation in Canada has been a rapid and continuous advance in prices and the cost of living. At the present time it is safe to say no economic question equals in public interest that of the recent rise and the existing high level of prices.

In selecting the articles included in the Labour Department's investigation the aim was to reflect the general trade and production as well as the consumption of the country. For example, under the heading "fish" the more important products of the three great divisions of the Canadian fisheries, namely the fisheries of the Maritime Provinces, the fisheries of the great lakes of the interior and the fisheries of the Pacific coast, are included. Under textiles, quotations of woollens, cottons, silks, jutes, and oil-cloths are given. Similarly with metals, meat products, leathers and the rest. For each commodity an effort was made to secure a reliable price quotation in a primary or representative market for the opening week day of each month in each year back to 1890. To illustrate the results of the investigation a series of 114 charts, printed in colours on heavy paper, is employed.

The chart shows that prices in Canada were falling at an almost precipitate rate from 1890 to 1895—years of panic depression and political unrest both in the United States and the Dominion. Steadying themselves for a year, they rose even more quickly than they had fallen from 1897 to 1900. There was again a year's breathing space, after which the advance was resumed, but somewhat more slowly, until 1905, when the extreme buoyancy of 1900 again set in and held full sway until 1907. A slump in 1907-8 and a partial recovery in 1909 which was continued into 1910, and is probably by this time completed, concludes the tale. From 1900 to 1907 the rise was at least 37 per cent.; and it would be conservative to infer that at the present time also prices in Canada are fully that much above the level of thirteen years ago.

A valuable feature of the report is the appendix, which contains an exhaustive review of the more celebrated index numbers of the world with charts and diagrams illustrating their most important findings.

The report also contains a full analysis of the changes occurring in the leading branches of consumption. For example, the fact that in food products the rise has occurred almost entirely in the case of foods grown in Canada, while imported foods have in many cases declined, is pointed out in detail. A discussion of the causes of price changes concludes the report.

A limited number of the Reports are available for distribution to interested persons.