

RETAIL PRICES OF COMMODITIES.

From the tables and diagrams it will be seen that high as was the general level reached in 1911 by wholesale prices in Canada—the highest probably within the present generation—a still further and progressive advance took place during 1912. The level indicated by the index number of 127.4 in 1911 rose to 134.4 in 1912, a gain of seven points. Within the period covered by the inquiry (1890-1912) prices have at no time reached the level of 1911-12 save perhaps in 1907, when, however, the highest point was still considerably below that of 1911-12.

From 1890 to 1897 the movement, as shown by the larger diagram on page 350, was consistently downward. Since 1897 the tendency has been very rapidly upward, with interruption of a serious nature only in 1907-8,—the whole constituting the movement which has been the subject of such incessant and general discussion in recent years as the "high cost of living." The year 1912 appears as a further and still longer step in this upward progress. Just how high is the point reached may be gathered from the statement that a simple average of the prices of the articles covered in the investigation shows the general level to be approximately 46 p.c. higher in 1912 than in 1897, while if allowance be made for the greater importance of certain groups of articles in trade the rise approaches 60 p.c.

Retail Prices of Commodities.—Returns showing the current retail prices of commodities have been collected by the Department of Labour for the years 1910, 1911 and 1912, and from these have been calculated typical weekly average expenditures for a family of five with an income of \$800 per annum. The results are shown in Table 3.

3.—Typical Weekly Expenditure for a family of five persons with an income of \$800 per annum.

Year.	Food.		Rent.		Fuel, lighting, etc.		Total.	
	\$	c.	\$	c.	\$	c.	\$	c.
1910.	6	749	3	810	1	682	12	241
1911.	7	009	4	120	1	765	12	894
1912.	7	407	4	372	1	859	13	638

Thus a weekly budget which would have cost \$12.24 in 1910 cost \$12.89 in 1911 and \$13.64 in 1912. The increase in 1911 over 1910 was 6.1 and in 1912 over 1911 5.8 p.c., amounting to 65 cents in 1911 and to 74 cents in 1912, while the increase of 1912 over 1910 was 11.4 p.c., or \$1.40.