

WHOLESALE AND RETAIL PRICES.

month to month in 1913. The diagrams on page 504 show the course of prices by index numbers in graphic form for the 24 years and the monthly fluctuation during the year 1913.

Wholesale Prices.—From the tables and diagrams it will be seen that high as was the general level reached in 1912 by wholesale prices in Canada—highest probably in the present generation—a further advance took place during 1913. The level indicated by the index number of 134.4 in 1912 rose to 135.1 in 1913, a gain of 0.7. Within the period covered by the inquiry (1890-1913) prices have at no time reached the level of 1912-1913 save perhaps in 1907, when, however, the highest point was still considerably below that of 1912-1913.

From 1890 to 1897 the movement, as shown by the larger diagram, was consistently downward. Since 1897 the tendency has been very rapidly upward, with interruption of a serious nature only in 1907-1908—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 1913 appears as a further 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 46.5 per cent. higher in 1913 than in 1897.

Retail Prices.—Returns showing the current retail prices of commodities have been collected by the Department of Labour for the years 1910, 1911, 1912 and 1913, 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 5.

4.—Typical Weekly Expenditure for a family of five persons with an income of \$800 per annum at the close of each year.

Year.	Food.	Rent.	Fuel, lighting, etc.	Total
	\$	\$	\$	\$
1909.....	6.875	2.999	1.786	11.660
1910.....	7.127	3.397	1.827	12.351
1911.....	7.481	3.315	1.766	12.562
1912.....	7.823	3.897	1.941	13.661
1913.....	7.702	4.077	2.025	13.804

The increase at the end of 1913 as compared with the cost at the beginning of 1910 was for food, 12 per cent., for rent, 35.9 per cent., for fuel, lighting, etc., 13.4 per cent.; and for total expenditure, 18.4 per cent.