

## 1.—Wholesale Prices of Commodities.

The Dominion Bureau of Statistics issues monthly in a press letter, entitled "Prices and Price Indexes," the official index number of wholesale prices in Canada. This index, while constructed with a view to giving continuity with that issued from 1910 to 1917 by the Department of Labour, has been improved by the adoption of several ideas developed in the science of index number-making since the old index was first computed, and by the substitution of new commodities or price series for those which have ceased to be representative as a result of the passage of time. A description of the method used in making this index number will be found on pp. 712-714 of the 1924 edition of the Canada Year Book.

**The Price Movement, 1924.**—The general level of prices continued to move upward in 1924, being 2.2 points above the index for 1923, which was 153.0. The rise was due to the upward movement in two out of eight main groups, the other six showing declines. Grains, fruits and other vegetable products and the textile group were the two which experienced the movement to higher levels, but it was in the main the influence of the former which caused the general index number to rise above that for 1923.

During January and February the general index was 156.9 and 156.8 respectively, showing a rise from December 1923, when it was 153.5. Commencing with March there was a decided downward movement, which reached 150.6 in May. This decline was coincident with a general slowing up of business in most industrial nations. In June, however, the movement was upward and continued, except for a slight set-back in September, to rise steadily until 160.9 had been attained in December. The chief influences which account for the rise in the latter half of the year were higher grain prices and the acceptance and operation of the Dawes plan, bringing a more hopeful outlook in Europe, stabilization of currencies and of political conditions.

**Summary of Important Price Changes during 1924.**—The rise in grain prices was the most important event in the prices field during 1924. Commencing the year with an average of 96½c. per bushel, No. 1 Manitoba Northern cash wheat, Fort William-Port Arthur basis, rose to 99¾c. in February, fell to 98c. in March and then rose practically continuously to December, when it was \$1.72¾ per bushel. This phenomenal rise was due to smaller world crops, not only of grains, but also of other foodstuffs such as potatoes. The shortage was accompanied by an increased demand, which had been caused by good grain crops and low prices. The prices of other grains and of milled products followed those of wheat. Sugar prices declined considerably during the year, due to a record Cuban crop and an increased production of beet-sugar. Coffee and tea prices were higher because of strong demand and, in the case of coffee, short supplies.

Most live stock prices were lower in 1924 than in 1923. Hog prices, however, owing to heavy demands from Great Britain for bacon and indirectly to high corn prices in the United States, improved considerably during the latter part of the year. Hogs, thick smooth, weighed off cars at Toronto, were \$7.87 per cwt. in April and \$10.86 in November. An exceptionally large salmon pack brought down the price of sockeye from \$4.66½ per dozen one pound tins to \$3.88. Beef-hides improved in price in the last half of the year, due to brisker demand. City beef-hides at Toronto were 9½ to 10c. per lb. in January and 13 to 13½c. in December. Butter was cheaper in 1924, due to increased production; finest creamery at Montreal was 38½c. in 1923 and 37½c. in 1924.