

Labour Gazette since 1915 and annually since 1911; in addition, figures are included for clothing and sundry items and further data for fuel, light, and rent. The Labour Department aims, by this method, to have a basis for computation that can be readily applied to the data for any given locality or district at any time, or for any class of labour—for instance, coal miners, who usually do not live in cities. Index numbers of retail prices and costs of living issued by the Bureau are constructed from a more general point of view, having for their object the measurement of the general movement of such prices and costs in the Dominion as a whole, and being so calculated as to make comparisons possible with other general index numbers constructed on similar principles, for example, the index of wholesale prices. Calculated, as they are, on the aggregative principle, *i.e.*, the total consumption of each commodity, the Bureau's index numbers afford an excellent measurement of changes in the average cost of living in the Dominion as distinguished from that of any particular class or section.

In the Bureau's index, 1926 is taken as the base year and is represented by 100 to bring it into conformity with other series of index numbers shown in this chapter. A description of the system of weighting of individual items, sub-groups and groups, and of the method of construction of this index number was given at pp. 812-818 of the 1931 Year Book. The Labour Department uses 1913 as 100 for both cost of living and wages index numbers. As will be seen from Table 7, the general cost of living index moved up from 79.1 in 1935 to 80.6 in 1936, continuing the upward trend apparent after July 1933. Higher prices for foods, rentals, and clothing were chiefly responsible for the advance. Fuel declined from 86.8 to 86.6. The monthly index for living costs fluctuated during 1936 between 79.6 and 81.7. January and December group indexes were as follows: foods, 73.9 and 75.3; fuel, 87.2 and 86.7; rent, 82.6 and 84.9; clothing, 69.9 and 71.6; sundries, 91.9 and 92.3.

7.—Index Numbers of Retail Prices, Rents and Costs of Services (on the 1926 Base), 1913-36.
(1926=100.)

Year.	Food Index.	Fuel Index.	Rent Index.	Clothing Index.	Sundries Index.	Total Index.
1913.....	66.2	65.8	64.1	63.3	66.2	65.4
1914.....	68.9	64.5	62.2	63.9	66.2	66.0
1915.....	69.5	63.2	60.3	69.6	66.9	67.3
1916.....	77.5	64.5	60.9	79.7	70.2	72.5
1917.....	100.0	71.7	65.4	93.7	76.8	85.6
1918.....	114.6	78.9	69.2	109.5	86.1	97.4
1919.....	122.5	86.2	75.6	125.9	95.4	107.2
1920.....	141.1	102.6	86.5	153.2	104.0	124.2
1921.....	107.9	109.2	94.2	124.7	106.0	109.2
1922.....	91.4	104.6	98.1	105.7	106.0	100.0
1923.....	92.1	104.6	100.6	104.4	105.3	100.0
1924.....	90.7	102.0	101.3	101.9	103.3	98.0
1925.....	94.7	100.0	101.3	101.9	101.3	99.3
1926.....	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
1927.....	98.0	97.9	98.8	97.5	99.1	98.4
1928.....	98.6	96.9	101.2	97.4	98.8	98.9
1929.....	101.0	96.4	103.3	96.9	99.0	99.9
1930.....	98.6	95.7	105.9	93.9	99.4	99.2
1931.....	77.3	94.2	103.0	82.2	97.4	89.6
1932.....	64.3	91.4	94.7	72.3 ²	94.6	81.4
1933.....	63.7	87.7	85.1	67.1 ²	92.6	77.5 ²
1934.....	69.4	87.7	80.1	69.7 ²	92.1	78.6 ²
1935.....	70.4	86.8	81.3	69.9 ²	92.2 ²	79.1 ²
1936 ¹	73.4	86.6	83.7	70.5	92.1	80.6

¹ Subject to revision.

² Revised since the publication of the 1936 Year Book.