

at the total index level, rose from 109.3 in May 1956 to 121.9 by September 1957. Shelter continued to advance steadily, although at a slightly moderating rate, as did other commodities and services, particularly the service elements. In contrast, clothing prices remained practically unchanged and household operation, continuing to reflect the easy price situation of major household appliances, rose only 2.8 p.c.

The most recent period of upward movement in the consumer price index which began in mid-1956 and continued throughout 1957, persisted in 1958 but with some evidence of moderating. Over the year 1958, consumer prices averaged 2.6 p.c. above the previous year, while 1957 prices were 3.2 p.c. above 1956. In the fourth quarter of 1958 consumer prices averaged 2.4 p.c. higher than in the same period a year earlier, while the fourth quarter of 1957 saw prices 2.6 p.c. above the fourth quarter of 1956.

The consumer price index rose during the first four months of 1958 from 123.4 in January to 125.2 in April. Declines in the succeeding three months brought the index back to 124.7 in July. Further increases in the second half of 1958 took the index to a high of 126.3 in November from which point it eased slightly. All five major component groups were higher in 1958 than in 1957. The largest increase, 3.9 p.c., occurred in the other commodities and services group which includes such diverse items as medical care, new passenger cars, haircuts, and theatre admissions. Food prices in 1958 averaged 3.0 p.c. above 1957 prices compared with a rise of 4.6 p.c. in 1957 over 1956. Shelter, continuing its long uninterrupted advance, was up a further 2.6 p.c. The clothing and household operation groups were both about 1.0 p.c. higher.

