

the children more than 2s. 3d. a year. In Standards V and VI the books cost the children ten years ago at least 12s. per pupil. Now they cost them about 5s. 3d. That is to say, there has been a reduction of over 50 per cent. to the parents in the cost of educating their children. Of the reading-books I am taking into consideration only those they pay for. Any one at school ten years ago used only one reading-book, but the Government now supplies about five free reading-books for Standards V and VI. If you consider the increased number of books they read at the present time you might say that the cost has been reduced from 70 to 80 per cent.

“190. What about secondary education in the district high schools?—The education at those schools, leaving out the books, costs the parents nothing. In many of the district high schools they are getting as good an education as in the high or secondary schools—in some of them an education superior to that which they would get in some of the so-called high schools.

“191. Would you say that the books in high schools would cost about 35s. a year?—Something like that. They used to cost more than that, but we are getting every year a supply of better and cheaper books.

“192. For that expenditure of 35s. people are getting education which they could not have got at all some years ago?—Yes. At one time they had to pay three or four guineas a quarter for what they now get for nothing.”

This, of course, refers to the direct cost, with which alone the Commission is concerned.

CHAPTER III.—COMPARISON WITH OTHER COUNTRIES.

Question 2: Has the increase in the cost of living, if any, been more marked in New Zealand than in other English-speaking countries?

1. A direct comparison of the increase in the cost of living in New Zealand and other countries is impossible, as the necessary income-and-expenditure budgets do not exist in New Zealand for the period in question. Your Commission is therefore limited to a comparison of the tentative results obtained in Chapter I with the changes shown by the most reliable investigations abroad. We have had the advantage of the inquiries made by Hooker,* the United States Bureau of Labour, the British Board of Trade, Sauerbeck, and the Canadian Department of Labour.

Direct comparison impossible.

2. The first table shows how general wholesale prices have changed in New Zealand compared with seven other countries:—

Wholesale prices.

TABLE 13.—INDEX NUMBERS OF GENERAL PRICES, 1890 TO 1911.

(The price for each year is expressed as a percentage of the average annual price for the ten years 1890–99.)

Country.	1890.	1891.	1892.	1893.	1894.	1895.	1896.	1897.	1898.	1899.	1900.	1901.	1902.	1903.	1904.	1905.	1906.	1907.	1908.	1909.	1910.	1911.	1912.
United Kingdom—																							
Sauerbeck ..	109	109	103	103	95	94	92	94	97	103	114	106	105	105	106	109	117	121	111	112	118	121	..
<i>Economist</i> ..	110	108	103	103	100	94	96	94	93	96	107	101	97	101	106	105	115	125	110	109	116	..	..
Board of Trade ..	108	112	106	104	98	95	92	94	97	96	104	101	100	101	102	101	104	110	107	108	113	114†	..
United States America—																							
Labour Bureau ..	113	112	106	106	96	94	90	90	93	102	110	109	113	114	113	116	123	129	123	127	132	..	..
Canada—																							
Coats ..	110	108	103	102	97	96	92	92	96	100	108	107	109	111	111	114	120	126	121	121	124	127	..
France—																							
Réforme Economique	109	109	103	107	98	92	90	91	96	105	112	105	103	105	104	105	115	122	111	112	118	..	..
Belgium—																							
Waxweiler ..	101	102	102	95	98	97	96	100	101	102	108	110	112	113	114	114	121	122	126	124	122	..	..
Germany—																							
Hooker ..	110	111	104	101	94	92	91	94	99	104	111	107	103	109	111	114	123	133	120	124	128	..	..
Italy—																							
Export values ..	111	104	104	103	98	99	94	92	94	103	117	108	104	106	107	108	114	119	115	116	..	..	..
New Zealand—																							
McIlraith ..	107	108	104	100	98	93	96	97	97	98	101	98	100	100	95	98	101	107	104	101	103	107	109
																						110†	112‡

* *Statistical Journal*, December, 1911.

† Highest since 1884.

‡ Including timber.