

6. The movement in food-prices abroad as compared with that in New Zealand Food-prices. is shown in the following table :—

TABLE 16.—INDEX NUMBERS OF FOOD PRICES, 1890 TO 1911.
(Base 1890-99 = 100.)

Country.	1890.	1891.	1892.	1893.	1894.	1895.	1896.	1897.	1898.	1899.	1900.	1901.	1902.	1903.	1904.	1905.	1906.	1907.	1908.	1909.	1910.	1911.	
United Kingdom—																							
Board of Trade	105	112	107	105	99	96	90	94	98	94	96	97	98	97	97	97	97	101	102	105	105	..	
Sauerbeck	107	112	107	105	96	93	91	95	99	95	101	98	98	96	99	101	101	105	105	107	108	110	
United States America—																							
Labour Bureau	110	116	104	110	98	94	83	90	96	100	106	109	117	111	114	114	116	124	125	130	134	..	
Canada—																							
Coats	115	115	104	105	96	96	88	88	96	97	100	104	107	106	108	110	114	124	123	127	128	..	
France—																							
Hooker	106	111	103	104	99	92	88	95	103	97	98	95	94	92	93	95	96	104	97	98	101	..	
Germany—																							
Hooker	107	116	110	106	98	91	86	91	99	97	100	101	98	105	105	110	112	117	110	122	125	..	
Trieste—																							
Alberti	96	102	101	98	95	95	91	108	110	103	99	99	103	101	107	115	112	119	123	124	131	..	
New Zealand—																							
McIlraith	102	102	104	100	99	92	97	100	103	97	99	100	108	108	101	106	106	111	116	107	109	115	

Our course of food-prices has lagged behind that of all the other countries except the United Kingdom and France, but has shown some abrupt movements during the last ten years, due partly to tariff changes. A noticeable feature of the table is the comparatively small rise in France; no complete explanation of this fact has come under the notice of the Commission, though it has been suggested that it is associated causally with the prevalence of peasant properties in France and the greater percentage of the people who grow their own food. Both France and Germany are protective countries, so that we must look for some explanation of the difference elsewhere than to their fiscal policies. It would appear that in so far as the cost of living is measured by changes in the wholesale prices of food, the New Zealand cost has not increased to the same extent as the cost in America, Canada, Germany, and Trieste.

The Official Year-book of New South Wales for 1911, pages 705-7, gives average wholesale prices at Sydney of certain foodstuffs since 1904. The Commission has expressed these as index numbers in the following table :—

TABLE 17.—WHOLESALE PRICES IN NEW SOUTH WALES COMPARED WITH 1904 TAKEN AS 100.

—	1904.	1905.	1906.	1907.	1908.	1909	1910.
Farm and Dairy Produce—							
Wheat	100	106*	101*	120	133*	149	119*
Flour	100	80*	76*	88*	96*	111*	98*
Potatoes	100	214*	218*	94*	167*	170	196*
Butter	100	125	125	122*	153*	125	144*
Cheese	100	137*	126*	142*	168*	147*	132*
Bacon	100	86*	100	118*	125	121*	107*
Pastoral—							
Beef	100	123*	108*	123*	123*	154*	154*
Mutton	100	87*	105*	84*	84*	90*	105*
Wool	100	102*	111*	118	94*	88*	91

* Nearest whole number.

The general trend is upward, the food-prices showing an increase of 28 per cent., or, without potatoes, 17. A notable feature is the high rise in the price of beef.

7. The following table compares the level of food-prices for 1910 and 1911 with the level for each of the two previous decades in six countries :—

Decade averages.