

This table includes only food and rent, and shows an increase of 20 per cent. in the cost of these, as against an increase of about 34 per cent. for the same items in Professor Segar's budget for Auckland. The Auckland budget shows an increase in food only of about 25 per cent., that for Christchurch about 21 per cent. These figures confirm the general belief that the cost of living, as measured by rent and food, has increased at a more rapid rate during the last fifteen years in Auckland than in Christchurch.

As to Wellington, Mr. F. P. Wilson took out from the Official Year-books the prices for that city of some representative articles of consumption.

TABLE 8.—INDEX NUMBERS OF WELLINGTON RETAIL FOOD-PRICES BETWEEN 1893-95 AND 1908-10.

	1893-95.	1908-10.
Bread	100	113
Flour	100	116
Beef	100	125
Mutton	100	138
Butter	100	127
Cheese	100	122
Potatoes	100	166
All	100	130
Rent (for same style of house)	100	114
Rent (for improved style of house, including tram fares)	100	130-135

13. Your Commission also carefully analysed the evidence provided in the quotations given by consumers and business men, and combined it with the estimates that have appeared in some of the preceding tables. The work has presented immense difficulties, and the result, owing to the incomplete nature of the data, the unsatisfactory methods of obtaining it, and the long period over which the different individual quotations and opinions range, can be regarded as only tentative and roughly approximative. The various items have been weighted in order to allow for their relative importance, according to the proportional consumption shown by the recent inquiry of the Labour Department. The general result is an increased "cost of living" of at least 16 per cent. between the middle and later nineties and the present day. It is to be remembered, of course, that as far as possible allowance has been made for the change in the quality of the articles chosen, especially house-room, and that the "living" whose cost is measured is living at a uniform standard throughout the period and without taking into account changes in the standard of comfort. The influence of the rise in the scale of living is discussed in Chapter V. It may be mentioned, however, that the decrease in the size of the average family since the beginning of the period and the higher average income of the people must have tended to diminish the proportion which food is of their total expenditure, and therefore to reduce the rise of 16 per cent. at which we have arrived.

TABLE 9.—ESTIMATED INCREASE IN THE COST OF LIVING IN NEW ZEALAND BETWEEN 1894-98 AND 1911.

Summarized from evidence tendered to the Commission.

(Average weighted according to present relative consumption as shown in Labour Department's inquiry, 1910-11.)

	1894-98.*	1911.
Bread	100	122
Butter and cheese	100	149
Boots and clothing	100	119
Sundry foods	100	104
Fuel and light	100	97
Meat	100	125
Milk	100	100
Vegetables (omitting potatoes)	100	100
Rent	100	120
Sugar	100	88
Tea, coffee, and cocoa	100	100
All (weighted)	100	116

* Some of the prices accepted are for years outside this quinquennial period.

The changes in the prices of other commodities of importance to the ordinary consumer are described in the next chapter.