

cheapest country, followed in the order named by Belgium, New Zealand, Denmark, Italy, Australia, Canada, Germany, the United States, and Holland, with France the most expensive.

It must, of course, be understood that these results are subject to the limitations already indicated, and that, on taking into account household and other items of expenditure, and also decided differences of regimen and in habits of the people of the several countries, a quite different result might be obtained, such as would, for example, be deduced from analyses of actual income and expenditure budgets.

VIII.—CHANGE IN STANDARD OF LIVING IN AUSTRALIA.

1. **General.**—It has already been pointed out that it is not proposed in connection with this Report to investigate the question of change in the *standard* of living, or in the “regimen,” as it has been termed. The results of certain inquiries which have recently been made in this Bureau, however, point to the fact that some improvement in this standard has undoubtedly taken place during the past few years, and it has been thought desirable to include here some brief reference to these results. They concern, firstly, the consumption of commodities per head of population, and, secondly, certain facts relating to depositors in Savings Banks.

2. **Increased Consumption of Commodities per Head, 1903 to 1911.**—The following table shews for a number of commodities in common use:—(i.) The average annual consumption per head of the population in each successive five-yearly period from 1903-7 to 1907-11, as well as in the year 1911 alone; and (ii.) the ratios for the average annual consumption per head in each such period, compared with the average in 1911 alone (consumption in 1911 = 1000). To avoid minor fluctuations due to changes in stocks held, etc., it has been thought desirable to refer the results to the quinquennial averages indicated. The commodities included in the table are not identical with those comprised in that part of this Report which relates to Retail Prices and Cost of Living, but, so far as possible, they have been arranged so as to show under which of the Retail Price groups they should be properly classed. Articles which do not come within any of these groups are here classed as “Miscellaneous.” In order to shew the general effect of the change in the consumption of all commodities taken together, index-numbers have been computed, for each period and for the year 1911 alone, by weighting the average annual consumption by numbers representing the relative average price during the whole period. The sum of the weights multiplied by the corresponding average annual consumptions in each period and in the year 1911 alone, divided by the sum of the weights, represents the relative expenditure in each period. The index-numbers have then been computed by taking the relative expenditure in 1911 as base (= 1000). These index-numbers are shewn in the last line of the table.

**Australia, Change in Standard of Living, Average Annual Consumption per Head
of Population of certain Articles in common use, 1903 to 1911.**

PARTICULARS.	Weight*	Unit.	1903-7.	1904-8.	1905-9.	1906-10.	1907-11.	1911 (Single Year).
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AVERAGE ANNUAL CONSUMPTION PER HEAD OF POPULATION.

Group I.								
Tea	15	lb.	6.9261	7.0991	7.0947	7.3275	7.4058	7.3091
Coffee	18	"	.4505	.4625	.5065	.5184	.5290	.5505
Jams and Jellies	4	"	17.0922	17.0522	16.9836	17.1390	17.5552	18.3258
Dried Fruit	8	"	5.7118	5.7568	5.8845	6.0496	6.0576	6.1813
Confectionery, Cocoa and Chocolate	18	"	6.1049	6.2238	6.5840	6.8861	7.1518	7.7740
Pickles and Sauces	12	pint	1.9601	2.0465	2.2293	2.5265	2.6933	3.0497
Sugar	3	lb.	102.3680	104.1600	104.8320	106.8480	106.8480	111.3230
Soap	2½	"	13.9645	14.0466	13.9825	14.1301	14.3653	15.0325
Group II.								
Bacon and Hams	10	lb.	9.5179	9.9855	9.9204	9.8082	9.9261	11.3714
Butter	14	"	20.2348	21.1188	21.9008	22.5036	23.3006	24.7589
Cheese	10	"	3.4090	3.4004	3.5125	3.5731	3.5125	3.3709
Miscellaneous.								
Spirits	420	gal.	.7816	.7753	.7756	.7849	.8023	.8494
Beer	36	"	10.7397	10.8295	10.9466	11.2440	11.5615	12.8650
Tobacco	84	lb.	2.2594	2.2576	2.2754	2.2828	2.2747	2.2646
Cigars	180	"	.1436	.1434	.1448	.1485	.1522	.1676
Cigarettes	168	"	.8182	.8366	.8538	.8842	.9223	.9577

**RATIOS OF AVERAGE ANNUAL CONSUMPTION PER HEAD (CONSUMPTION IN
1911 = 1,000).**

Group I.								
Tea .. ..	..	..	947	971	970	1,002	1,013	1,000
Coffee .. ..	..	..	818	840	920	942	961	1,000
Jams and Jellies .. ..	..	..	933	930	926	935	958	1,000
Dried Fruit .. ..	..	..	924	931	952	979	980	1,000
Confectionery, Cocoa and Chocolate .. ..	..	..	785	801	847	886	920	1,000
Pickles and Sauces .. ..	..	..	643	671	731	828	883	1,000
Sugar .. ..	..	..	919	936	942	960	960	1,000
Soap .. ..	..	..	929	934	927	940	956	1,000
Group II.								
Bacon and Hams .. ..	..	..	887	878	872	863	873	1,000
Butter .. ..	..	..	817	853	884	909	941	1,000
Cheese .. ..	..	..	1,011	1,009	1,042	1,060	1,042	1,000
Miscellaneous.								
Spirits .. ..	..	..	920	913	913	924	944	1,000
Beer .. ..	..	..	869	876	885	909	935	1,000
Tobacco .. ..	..	..	998	997	1,005	1,008	1,005	1,000
Cigars .. ..	..	..	857	856	864	886	908	1,000
Cigarettes .. ..	..	..	627	651	697	757	832	1,000
Index Numbers for all Articles together			876	889	903	924	943	1,000

* Representing relative average price per unit.

The above table shows that, in the case of all commodities specified, except cheese, there has been yearly an increase in the quinquennial average quantity consumed per head of the population since 1903. The increase is particularly marked in the case of cigarettes, pickles and sauces, and confectionery, all of which, it is presumed, may be classed as luxuries.

The index-numbers in the last line of this table shew that, for the various articles specified, taking the consumption in 1911 as 1000, it was, on the average, only 876 in the five years 1903 to 1907, 889 in 1904 to 1908, and so on.

3. Increase in Saving Banks Deposits.—The figures given in the preceding paragraph show that, in spite of the increase in prices and cost of living in recent years, the average consumption of certain articles of common use has increased. This points to the inference that the purchasing power of the community has tended to increase at a greater rate than the increase in prices. This inference is corroborated by returns regarding depositors in Savings Banks.

The following table shews for each successive quinquennial period from 1903-7 to 1907-11, and for the year 1911 alone—(i.) the average number of savings bank depositors per 1000 of the population, the average amount of deposit, and the average amount of deposit per head of population, and (ii.) the ratios of each of these averages for each quinquennial period, taking the averages in 1911 as base (= 1000).

Australia, Increase in Average Number of Savings Banks Depositors and Amount of Deposit, 1903 to 1912.

Particulars.	1903-7.	1904-8.	1905-9.	1906-10	1907-11.	1911. (Single Year).
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AVERAGE NO. OF DEPOSITORS AND AMOUNT DEPOSITED.

Depositors per 1000 of Population	No.	286	296	306	317	330	362*
Average Amount of Deposit	£	32.130	32.660	33.413	34.380	35.320	37.122*
Deposits per Head of Population	£	9.196	9.603	10.228	10.880	11.646	13.420*

RATIO OF AVERAGE ANNUAL INCREASE (AVERAGES FOR 1911 = 1,000).

Depositors per 1,000 of Population	No.	790	818	845	876	912	1,000
Average Amount of Deposit	..	865	880	900	925	951	1,000
Deposits per Head of Population	..	685	720	762	811	868	1,000

* On the 30th June, 1912, the corresponding figures were:—Depositors per 1,000 of Population, 377; Average Amount of Deposit, 38.893; Deposits per Head of Population, 14.46.

Although the necessary statistical data are not available for demonstration, the undoubted increase during recent years in the number of places of amusement, accompanied by increased prices and sustained attendance at the metropolitan theatres, confirms the evidence provided by the figures in the preceding tables of the increased purchasing power and higher standard of living enjoyed by the people.