

ROYAL SOCIETY OF TASMANIA



COMMONWEALTH BUREAU OF CENSUS AND STATISTICS,  
MELBOURNE, AUSTRALIA.

---

LABOUR REPORT, 1926.

No. 17.

---

Prepared under Instructions from the  
MINISTER OF STATE FOR HOME AND TERRITORIES

by

CHAS. H. WICKENS, F.I.A., F.S.S.,

Hon. M.S.S. (Paris),

Commonwealth Statistician  
and Actuary.

---

SEPTEMBER,

---



By Authority:

H. J. GREEN, GOVERNMENT PRINTER, MELBOURNE.

[C.S. No. 508.]—C.10442. ?



## PREFACE.

The first Labour Report of the Commonwealth Bureau of Census and Statistics was published in 1912, and the present is the seventeenth issue. The matter has been divided into four main Chapters covering information on Prices, Wages, Employment and Associations respectively. This arrangement will facilitate ready comparison of cognate matters. Thus all information dealing with comparisons of price levels is now gathered together in the one chapter instead of being given in various separated parts of the Report.

International comparisons appear in the Chapter dealing with Wages, in which effective or real wages in various countries are compared, while in Section VI. of the Appendix a table is given showing rates of wages and hours of labour in Sydney, Auckland, and Montreal at July 1914, December 1925, and December 1926. In view of the interest now being manifested in the kindred questions of the Basic Wage and Child Endowment in Australia, a short article has been included in Chapter II., dealing with these subjects.

For the purpose of tabulating the results of the investigations which have been made in regard to labour organizations, employers' associations, unemployment, rates of wage, industrial disputes, etc., the following classification of trades and occupations has been adopted:—

### Classification of Industries and Occupations.

I.	Wood, Furniture, Sawmill, Timberworks, &c.	VIII.	Mining, Quarries, &c.
II.	Engineering, Metal Works, &c.	IX.	Railway and Tramway Services.
III.	Food, Drink, and Tobacco Manufacture and Distribution.	X.	Other Land Transport.
IV.	Clothing, Hats, Boots, Textiles, &c.	XI.	Shipping, Wharf Labour, &c.
V.	Books, Printing, Bookbinding, &c.	XII.	Pastoral, Agricultural, Rural, Horticultural, &c.
VI.	Other Manufacturing.	XIII.	Domestic, Hotels, &c.
VII.	Building.	XIV.	Miscellaneous.

In previous issues attention has been drawn to the great variety of sources of the data upon which this Report is based.

It is gratifying to record that secretaries of trade unions and of employers' associations, officials of State and Commonwealth Departments, private employers, retail dealers, house agents and others have readily responded to the somewhat heavy demands made upon them.

Without the help so rendered, the investigations contained herein would have been impossible, and I take this opportunity of expressing my cordial thanks to all who have thus assisted.

During the progress of this Report through the press, Mr. Jas. T. Sutcliffe, Supervisor of Labour Statistics in the Bureau, resigned his position. Mr. Sutcliffe has been associated with the Branch since its inception in 1911, and I desire to express my appreciation of the marked ability and zeal displayed by him in the performance of the complex duties attaching to his position.

To the staff of the Branch generally, I wish to express my thanks for the ready and capable assistance rendered by them at all times.

CHAS. H. WICKENS,

*Commonwealth Statistician and Actuary.*

Commonwealth Bureau of Census and Statistics,

*Melbourne, 2nd September, 1927.*

## SYNOPSIS.

	Page
<b>CHAPTER I.—PRICES.</b>	
§ 1. Wholesale Prices.	
1. General .. .. .	9
2. Bases .. .. .	9
3. Index-numbers, 1861 to 1926 ..	10
4. Quarterly Variations in Price Levels .. .. .	11
5. Variations since Outbreak of War	12
6. Seasonal Fluctuations .. .. .	13
7. Prices—1925 and 1926 .. .. .	13
§ 2. Retail Prices—Food, Groceries and Rent.	
1. General .. .. .	13
2. Cost of Commodities, Standard of Living and Expenditure on Living .. .. .	14
3. The Composite Unit .. .. .	15
4. Other Investigations .. .. .	16
5. Retail Prices, Capital Cities, 1907 to 1926 .. .. .	16
6. Change of Basis for Rent Constituent .. .. .	19
7. Retail Prices, 30 Towns, 1922 to 1926 .. .. .	19
Population Weights .. .. .	23
8. Relative Retail Prices, 30 Towns Food, Groceries and Housing ..	23
9. Retail Price Index-numbers in Terms of Currency .. .. .	25
10. Price Details, 1926 .. .. .	26
11. Comparisons with Previous Years	27
§ 3. Food, &c., Clothing and Miscellaneous.	
1. General .. .. .	28
2. Methods Adopted .. .. .	29
3. Base .. .. .	30
4. Variations, 30 Towns .. .. .	30
5. Variations, November, 1914, to 4th Quarter, 1920 .. .. .	30
6. Application of Index-numbers ..	37
§ 4. Retail Price Index-numbers, 200 Towns.	
1. General .. .. .	37
2. Results, 1924 to 1926 .. .. .	38
3. Comparisons with Quarterly Results .. .. .	42

	Page
<b>Chapter I.—Prices—continued.</b>	
§ 5. International Comparison of Price Index-numbers.	
1. Wholesale Prices—Australia and other Countries] .. .. .	44
2. Retail Prices—Australia and Other Countries .. .. .	44
<b>CHAPTER II.—WAGES.</b>	
§ 1. Operations under Arbitration and Wages Board Acts.	
1. General .. .. .	46
2. Awards and Determinations and Industrial Agreements Filed ..	47
3. Awards, Determinations and Agreements in Force, Boards Authorized and Constituted	48
§ 2. Changes in Rates of Wage.	
1. General .. .. .	57
2. Effect of Changes in 1926 .. .. .	59
3. Effect of Changes, Australia, 1922 and 1926 .. .. .	50
4. Changes in each State, 1922 to 1926 .. .. .	60
5. Changes in Industrial Groups, 1926 .. .. .	60
6. Changes in Industrial Groups, 1924 to 1926 .. .. .	62
7. Changes according to Sex of Employees, 1922 to 1926 .. .. .	63
8. Methods by which Changes were effected .. .. .	64
(i) 1926—States.	
(ii) 1922 to 1926—Australia.	
§ 3. Rates of Wage and Hours of Labour.	
1. General .. .. .	66
2. Adult Male Weekly Wages—States, 1914 to 1926 .. .. .	68
3. Adult Male Weekly Wages—Industrial Groups, 1914 to 1926	69
4. Adult Female Weekly Wages—States, 1914 to 1926 .. .. .	71
5. Adult Female Weekly Wages—Industrial Groups, 1914 to 1926	72
6. Hours of Labour and Hourly Rates of Wage, 31st December, 1926 .. .. .	73

	Page
<b>Chapter II.—Wages—continued.</b>	
§ 3. Rates of Wage and Hours of Labour—continued.	
7. Hours of Labour and Hourly Rates of Wage, 1914 to 1926 ..	75
8. Weighted Average Nominal Hours of Labour ..	77
9. Average Nominal Weekly Wage—States, 1891 to 1926 ..	79
10. Average Nominal Weekly Wage—Industrial Groups, 1891 to 1926 ..	79
11. Nominal Wage Index-numbers—States, 1901 to 1926 ..	80
12. Nominal Wage Index-numbers—Industrial Groups, 1901 to 1926 ..	80
13. Nominal Wages and Effective Wages ..	81
14. Variations in Effective Wages, 1901 to 1926 ..	81
15. Effective Wages and Standard of Comfort, 1901 to 1926 ..	82
16. Relative Productive Activity and Effective Wages, 1871 to 1926 ..	84
§ 4. International Comparison of Real Wages.	
1. General ..	85
2. Real or Effective Wages in various Capital Cities ..	86
§ 5. The Basic Wage and Child Endowment in Australia.	
1. The Basic Wage ..	87
2. Child Endowment ..	89

### CHAPTER III.—EMPLOYMENT.

§ 1. Industrial Disputes.	
1. General ..	91
2. Collection of Information ..	91
3. Methods of Tabulation ..	91
4. Definitions of Terms ..	92
5. Other Particulars ..	93
6. Industrial Disputes in Industrial Groups, 1926 ..	93
7. Particulars of Principal Disputes in 1926 ..	95
8. Industrial Disputes, 1922 to 1926 ..	98
9. Duration of Disputes ..	100
10. Causes of Industrial Disputes ..	104
11. Results of Industrial Disputes ..	109
12. Methods of Settlement ..	111
13. Interstate Disputes ..	115
§ 2. Fluctuations in Employment.	
1. General ..	118
2. Unemployment, 1926, and 1891 to 1927 ..	118
3. Employment Index-numbers ..	119
4. Unemployment by Industries ..	120
5. Unemployment—States ..	120
6. Causes of Unemployment, 1922 to 1926 ..	121

	Page
<b>Chapter III.—Employment—continued.</b>	
§ 3. State Free Employment Bureaux.	
1. General ..	122
2. Applications and Positions Filled ..	122
3. Details for each State ..	122
4. Details in Industrial Groups ..	123
5. Details by Sexes ..	124
§ 4. Assisted Immigration.	
1. General ..	125
2. Immigrants to each State ..	125
3. Immigrants in Industrial Groups ..	125
§ 5. Industrial Accidents.	
1. Scope of Inquiry ..	126
2. Number of Accidents Reported ..	126
3. Accidents in Industrial Groups ..	127
4. Mining Accidents ..	127
<b>CHAPTER IV.—ASSOCIATIONS.</b>	
§ 1. Labour Organizations.	
1. General ..	129
2. Trade Unions and Branches—Number and Membership, 1922 to 1926 ..	129
3. Trade Unions—Industrial Groups, 1922 to 1926 ..	130
4. Trade Unions—Numbers and Percentages of Male and Female Members ..	131
5. Trade Unions—Classification according to Number of Members, 1922 to 1926 ..	132
6. Interstate or Federated Trade Unions ..	133
7. Central Labour Organizations ..	133
8. Unions registered under Commonwealth Conciliation and Arbitration Act ..	134
§ 2. Employers' Associations.	
1. General ..	134
2. Employers' Associations in each State, 1922 to 1926 ..	135
3. Employers' Associations in Industrial Groups, 1925 and 1926 ..	135
4. Employers' Associations in Membership Groups, 1922 to 1926 ..	136
6. Federations of Employers' Associations ..	136

Chapter IV.—Associations— <i>continued.</i>		Page
§ 3. International Comparisons.		
1. The International Labour Conference, 1926	.. ..	137
2. Unemployment	.. ..	138
3. Trade Unionism in other Countries	.. ..	139
4. Employers' Associations in Great Britain	.. ..	139

---

**APPENDIX.**

Section 1. Wholesale Prices, 1925 and 1926		
.. 2. Retail Prices, 1926	.. ..	140
.. 3. House Rents, 1922 to 1926	.. ..	145

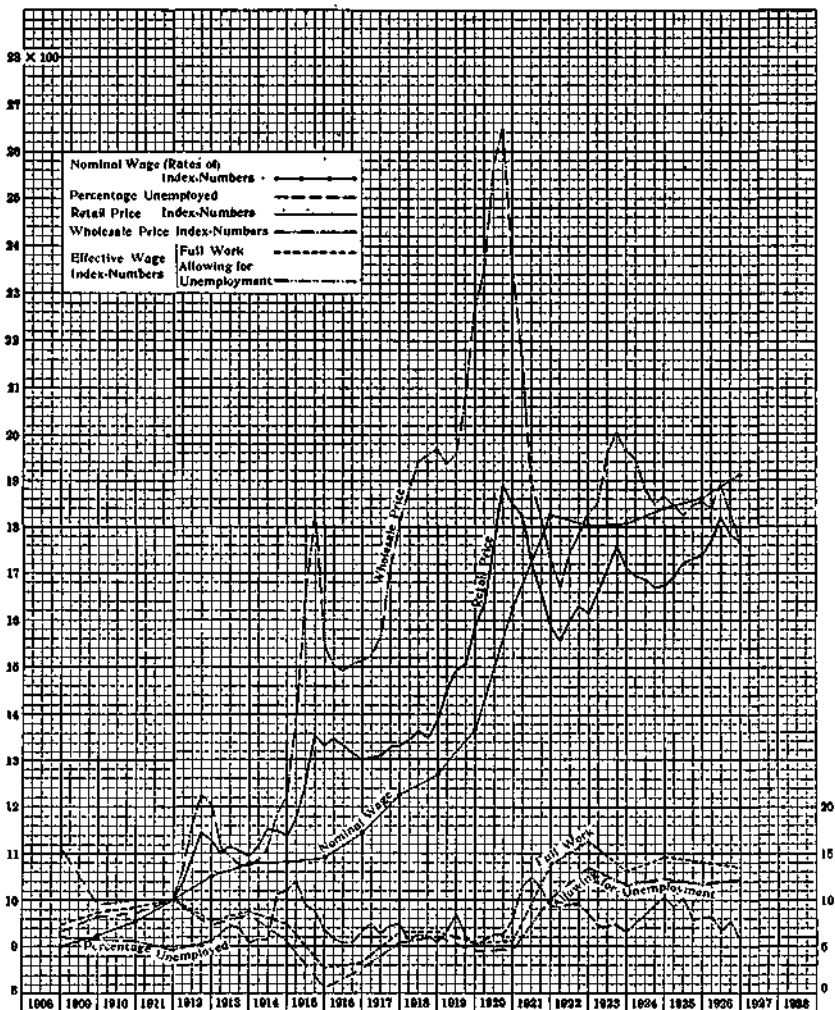
Appendix— <i>continued.</i>		Page
Section 4. Minimum Rates of Wage and Hours of Labour for Adult Male Workers, 31st December, 1926		146
.. 5. Minimum Rates of Wage and Hours of Labour for Adult Female Workers, 31st December, 1926	.. ..	168
.. 6. Rates of Wage and Hours of Labour, Australia, New Zealand, and Canada	.. ..	171

---

**GRAPHS.**

1. Retail Prices, Wholesale Prices and Nominal and Effective Wage Index-numbers and Percentage of Unemployed	.. ..	8
2. Industrial Disputes—Working Days lost in Industrial Groups, 1913 to 1926		103

### Retail and Wholesale Prices and Nominal and Effective Wage Index-Numbers, and Percentage of Unemployed 1908 to 1926.



NOTE.—The figures on the right represent the scale for the percentage unemployed according to trade-union returns. The figures on the left represent the scale for the several index-numbers, the year 1911 being taken in each case as base (= 1000). Since the end of the year 1911, the Retail Price Index-numbers (weighted average cost of food, groceries, and house rent for the six capital cities), and the Wholesale Price Index-number (Melbourne) are shown in each quarter, while unemployment percentages are shown quarterly since the end of the year 1912 only. The other index-numbers since 1913 refer to the average for the whole year, but for purposes of convenience are plotted on the graph as at the end, not the middle, of the year. Retail Price and Wholesale Price Index-numbers show the average level during the whole of each quarter, and they also for convenience are plotted at the end, and not the middle, of each quarter.