

MISCELLANEOUS GROUP

The miscellaneous group comprises 78 items arranged in the following nine sub-groups: fares; crockery; furniture; household cleaning; ironmongery and hardware; papers, periodicals, and school stationery; toilet and personal services; postages and telegrams; and tobacco. The group thus covers a wide range of sundry items commonly entering into the expenditure of an average household, and for which reliable and comparative price-quotations can be secured. Items such as medical and dental fees, insurance, charity contributions, recreation, &c., were expressly excluded on the grounds that no satisfactory representative measure of the cost of these items could be obtained. Direct taxation is also excluded, as an anomalous position would arise were the Court required to increase wages and other forms of remuneration consequent upon increases in rates of taxation levied for the purposes of the State.

The miscellaneous group covers substantially the same sub-groups as in the Government Statistician's retail index, but is wider in range of items within most sub-groups. The method of computing the indexes is also different, the Government Statistician employing principally the unweighted geometric mean of price ratios. This method is used in the Wartime Prices Index only in one or two cases where satisfactory consumption data were not available, otherwise the aggregate expenditure method is followed.

Details of the various sub-groups are given below:

Fares. This sub-group comprises rail and tram fares, the Government Statistician's quarterly collection of cost data being utilized. For rail fares the unit cost per mile of the following nine classes of fare is measured, equal weight being given to each class:—

	Weight.
Second return suburban fare for 8 miles (equal to 16 miles)	1
Second single ordinary fare, 8 miles	1
Suburban weekly, 8 miles (equal to 96 miles)	1
Suburban six-trip bearer ticket, 8 miles	1
Weekly twelve-trip ticket, 8 miles (equal to 96 miles)	1
Monthly season ticket (suburban lines, 2nd class, 8 miles—461 miles)	1
Twelve-trip bearer ticket, 8 miles (equal to 96 miles 2nd class)	1
Suburban	1
Ordinary	1
Second single ordinary fare, 40 miles	1

The aggregate cost of the nine classes is totalled and expressed as an index with the corresponding aggregate cost at the base date as base (= 1000).

For tram fares the cost per 100 chains for ordinary cash and concession tickets in the four main centres is measured, weighted as under:—

Section.	Weights.			
	Auckland.	Wellington.	Christchurch.	Dunedin.
First—Cash	157	22	25	81
Concession	70	27	25	39
Second—Cash	118	21	80	47
Concession	64	8	38	9
Third—Cash	47	4	25	11
Concession	40	9	11	12
Fourth—Cash	17	2	4	..
Concession	10	5	2	..
Fifth—Cash	9	0·6	3	..
Concession	1	1·4	2	..
Sixth—Cash	7	..	2	..
Concession	..	..	4	..
Seventh—Cash	..	..	1	..
Concession	..	..	..	..
Eighth—Cash	..	..	..	..
Concession	..	..	..	..

For each centre application of the appropriate weights gives an aggregate cost which is expressed as an index with the corresponding aggregate cost at the base date as base (= 1000), thus giving an index for tram fares for each centre.

A combined rail and tram fare index is then computed for each centre by taking the arithmetic mean of the rail and tram fare indexes. The arithmetic mean of these four indexes is then taken to give the fares index for the Dominion, which is considered as covering suburban bus fares also, though data for these are not collected.

Crockery.—Standard lines of crockery were selected, based on wartime availability. Price-quotations are collected as at the 15th of the month for which the return is made from about sixteen representative shops by officers of the Price Tribunal, the geographical coverage being the four main centres. The arithmetic mean of the prices for the four centres is taken to give an average price for all four centres combined for each article.

The commodity weight applied to the price of each item represents the Index Committee's estimate of the annual household consumption of the item after allowing for durability and replacement rate. The sub-group index is arrived at by applying the commodity weights to the prices, adding the products, and expressing the resulting aggregate cost for the sub-group as an index with the corresponding aggregate cost at the base date as base (= 1000).

Furniture. A representative range of standard furniture was selected in collaboration with expert officers of the Price Tribunal, of good average type and design suitable for either a "modern" or "bungalow" type of home.