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PREFACE.

The first Labour Report of the Commonwealth Bureau of Census and Statistics was published in 1912. This Annual Report is the nineteenth issued by the Bureau, and deals chiefly with the year 1928; but data are also included for earlier years, in most cases back to 1924, and in others back to 1891. The subject-matter in the Report has been divided into four main Chapters, covering information on Prices (Wholesale, Retail, and International Comparisons), Wages (Nominal, Effective, and International Comparisons), Employment (Unemployment and Industrial Disputes), and Associations (Trade Unions and Employers' Associations). This arrangement is to facilitate ready comparison of cognate matters.

Particulars regarding operations under the Commonwealth Arbitration Acts and the various State Acts for the regulation of wages, hours, and conditions of labour, and concerning also industrial legislation introduced during 1928, are given in the Chapter relating to Wages. Other matters of interest included in the Report are those relating to the Basic Wage and Child Endowment in Australia; Seasonal Employment in Australia, and information relating to the scope and functions of State Free Employment Bureaux.

In Appendix IV. a comprehensive table is given showing the minimum rates of wage for adult male workers in the capital cities of the Commonwealth, while similar information is given in Appendix V. for adult female workers. Rates of wage and hours of labour for adult male workers in Sydney, Australia; London, England; Auckland, New Zealand; and Montreal, Canada, are given in Appendix VI.

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

Classification of Industries and Occupations.

I.	Wood, Furniture, Sawmill, Timber-works, &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.

PREFACE.

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.

The valuable assistance rendered to the Bureau by the Statistical Offices in the various States, especially in regard to the collection of retail prices, is acknowledged, and to the officers concerned I desire to express my sincere thanks.

I am specially indebted to Mr. H. J. Petrie, the officer in charge of Labour Statistics, for the care and attention which he has bestowed on the compilation of this Report and in seeing the matter through the press, also to the staff under his control for their cordial co-operation and valuable services.

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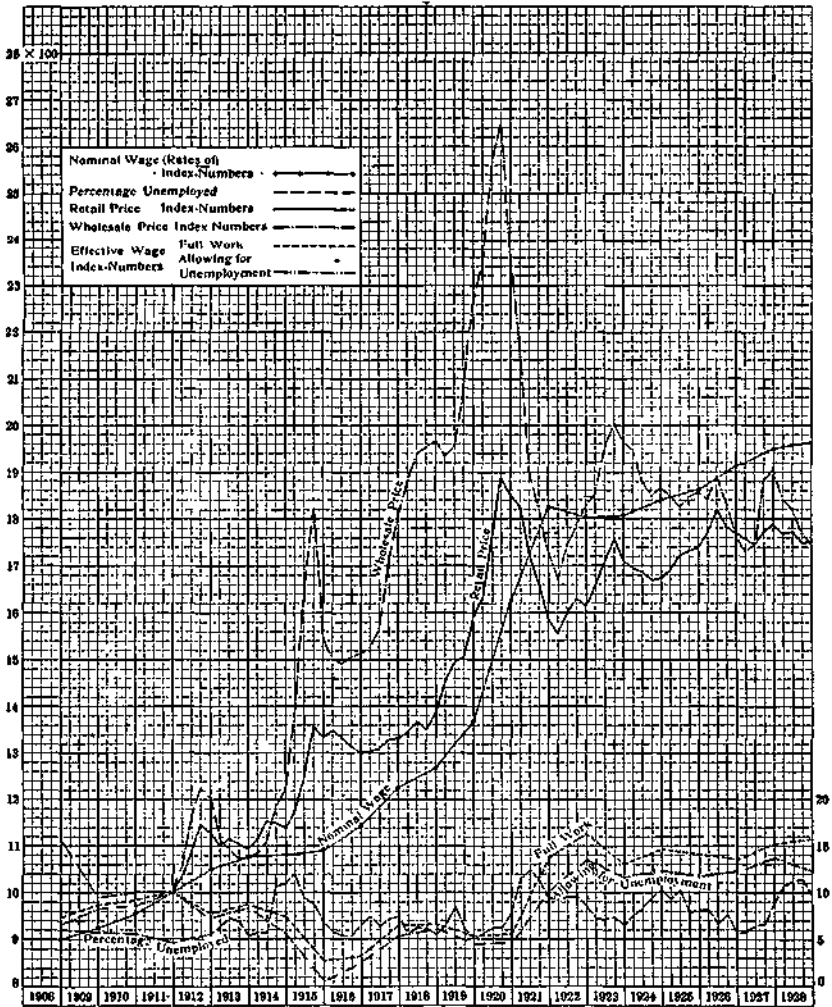
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**Retail and Wholesale Prices and Nominal and Effective Wage Index-Numbers,
and Percentage of Unemployed 1908 to 1928.**



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.