

Food Cuts Living Costs In August

By WILLIAM NEVILLE
OTTAWA (CP)—The summer food harvest has reached the Canadian market place, bringing at least a temporary halt to nine months of spiralling living costs.

The bureau of statistics Tuesday reported the consumer price index for August at 139.4 compared with 139.5 in July. It was the first month-to-month decline in the index since last October when it stood at 137.6. Since then it has undergone nine consecutive increases, most of them set off by rising food costs.

Food was the key factor this time, too, except in the other direction. As predicted previously by officials, food costs dropped significantly during August. Much of the decline was attributed to lower prices for fresh fruits and vegetables, reflecting the fact that the 1965 crop now has been processed and it having its effect on the consumer market.

DROP EXPECTED
One official said that on the basis of past experience, food more monthly decline before prices will undergo at least one levelling off. In the past two years, for example, the food index has dropped off in both September and October.

Despite the break in the nine-month spiral, the consumer price index, the country's main gauge of living costs, remained well above 1964 levels. The index, based on 1949 prices and representing a price sampling of goods and services purchased by urban families, stood at 136.1 in August a year ago. In contrast, latest available figures on industrial wages and salaries show a continued rise in pay cheques.

The industrial wage index, also based on 1949 levels, stood at 211.2 in June, up from 210.9 in May and 201.6 a year earlier. The index represents an average of total wages paid by firms employing more than 15 people in a wide range of industries.

CLOTHING IS CHEAPER
While food was the key factor, lower clothing costs also contributed to the July-to-August decline in the consumer price index. Most other components were up fractionally during the month.

The food index fell to 137.8 from 139.0 a month earlier with lower prices reported for most fresh vegetables, fruits such as grapes, bananas and oranges and such sundry items as sugar, tea, corn flakes, cookies, ice-cream, round steak, blade roasts and liver. Most meat prices continued their upward trend and higher prices also were recorded for eggs, fish, poultry, cheese, and most canned fruits and vegetables.

The traditional August sales of summer apparel and footwear pushed the clothing index to its lowest point since March. It was 120.7 in August compared with July's 121.1.

TRANSPORTATION UP
On the other side of the scale, higher prices for auto insurance gasoline and some bus and taxi fares sent the transportation component to 49 from 47. The housing index climbed to 142.2 from 141.1 on the strength of higher rents and home ownership costs along with price increases for household supplies, coal, kitchen furniture and household insurance.

Increased prices for some personal care items and men's haircuts produced an increase to 175.8 from 175.4 in July in the health and personal care component. The alcohol and liquor rose to 122.6 from 122.5 as higher liquor prices were reported in the Atlantic provinces. The recreation and reading component was unchanged in the month at 154.6.

BALTIC

Mary E. Cairns, Souris, West is a patient in the city hospital, Charlottetown. Miss Cairns taught school in the Red Point district several years ago.

Rev. Robert Baker, minister of the First Christian Church, West Mansfield, Mass., was a guest speaker Sunday evening at the East Point Baptist Church Kingsboro. Mr. and Mrs. Baker spent two weeks visiting with Mr. Baker's relatives in the eastern districts of P.E.I. and also enjoyed their stay at the Red Point Beach. They were accompanied by their four sons and Mrs. Baker's parents.

Mr. and Mrs. Stavert Heustis, Wilnot Valley, spent the weekend with Mrs. Heustis' parents, Mr. and Mrs. Harold MacGregor, East Baltic, they were also guests at the Coffin and Ching wedding Saturday afternoon at the Bay Fortune United Church.

Waldo MacDonald is now convalescing at his home at Bothwell from his illness in the city hospital, Charlottetown.

Charlie MacPhee, Little Harbour recently suffered a heart attack and is now a patient in the Souris Hospital.

USE WEED FOR DRUGS

The cocklebur weed is picked by the hundreds of barrels in Oklahoma, for medicine used in treating allergies.

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