

Comparison with other Budgets

The Labour Gazette, published monthly by the Department of Labour at Ottawa, gives the budget for a family of five each month. For the month of January, 1926, the Labour Gazette's yearly budget works out as follows:

Food	\$ 604 76	
Fuel and Light	178 88	
Rent	240 00	
		\$1,023 64

The Labour Gazette, however, gives no figures for clothing, water, etc., but indicates that the three items listed will be found to be about 65 per cent of the necessary expenditure of the average family.

Therefore, if this \$1,023.64 is 65 per cent of the total, the annual expenditure will be \$1,574.80 or \$131.23 per month, which in terms of wages means a required wage of 58 cents per hour, 9 hours per day, 300 days in the year, as against a required wage of 41 cents an hour, 9 hours per day, 300 days a year, to produce our minimum of \$1,101.76 per annum.

We do not suggest that the Labour Gazette is wrong, or that we are right, but merely wish to call attention to the discrepancy, to show that if we have erred, it has been on the side of underestimating rather than overestimating the cost of a working class family budget. The rate per hour required to produce the given totals has been worked out on a 9 hour day, and not on the regulation 8 hour day accepted at the Geneva convention by the after-war conference, because as will be shown later, the nine hour day is more common in Montreal than the eight hour day. The 300 day year will be recognized as a very generous estimate of the number of days' work during which the average day worker is employed.

The Study of Wages

The returns to date on wages paid, made by social agencies, have been small in number, and of little significance, and we feel that that is not the right way to go about this part of our study.

We want to be quite open and frank with the employers of labour in this matter. We commenced the study with the authority of the Executive Committee of the Council because we questioned in our minds as to whether all the problems of sickness, poverty, and delinquency were not in part, at least, attributable to insufficiency of income.

We believe we have made a study of the cost of living for a family of five, which is ultra-conservative in its estimates, and which any employer who gives it careful consideration will readily agree is ultra-conservative, and represents a scale below which no family could maintain its industrial efficiency or social normality.

Yet we should point out that even this conservative estimate is higher than the scale of relief given to its dependent families by the Family Welfare Association. Is it higher or lower than the incomes of thousands of working class married men? The employers of labour can most accurately and quickly answer this question.

We urge the Executive Committee of the Council to take steps at once to approach the Board of Trade, or the Manufacturers Association, laying this report before them, and asking them to give us the facts as to wages paid.

Some indication of the answer which may be expected will be found in these facts.