

# THE CIVILIAN

Devoted to the interests of the Civil Service  
of Canada.

Subscription \$1.00 a year ;  
Single copies 5 cents.

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THE EDITORS,

THE CIVILIAN,

P. O. Box 484, Ottawa

Communications on any subject of interest to  
the Civil Service are invited and will re-  
ceive careful consideration.

**Ottawa, June 28, 1912**

## COST OF LIVING—A SOLUTION.

The cost of living will make us mad. The sooner we get mad the better.

The Index Number of the Labour Department has jumped ten points in the past twelve months, from 126 in June, 1911, to 136 in May, 1912. We might inflict upon our readers all the horrible details, but perhaps they have suffered enough without rubbing it in. The predominating note of the report accompanying the chart of the department is the increase in the price of the common potato, quoted as 50% in advance of the price twelve months ago. There is a more homely index number than that of the Labour Department, to wit, a man's purse strings, or his wife's apron strings as the case may be. By wireless apron string on Saturday last, an editor of *The Civilian*

heard that Keiller's orange marmalade had gone up in price from 75c to 90c. This may be a small item of expense, but it represents an advance of 20% in a single day. The daily papers give editorial treatment to the subject, always protesting but unable to solve. Economic theorists justify the increase on the grounds of the over-production of gold, the relation of note issue to its redemption basis, or give abstruse definitions and stand pat. The economical practitioner, however, will try to find a way.

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The Executive of the Ottawa Association is giving a lead. The bulletin of the association published in this number contains the following item:—

"A resolution was passed instructing the Committee on Salaries and Promotion to prepare a report upon the cost of living in relation to the present scale of salaries and submit such recommendations as they may deem wise to the Executive with a view to the consideration of the advisability of approaching the Government with a request for a re-adjustment of salaries."

This is what other bodies of salaried men are doing. Past experience, however, teaches us that a movement of this kind in the service is fraught with possibilities of protracted delays and hampered by the certainties of political exigency. What is to be done in the meantime? The cold storage system is blamed for the high cost of butter and eggs. It is well known that the refrigerator car system of the United States became in the hands of millionaires and middlemen a voracious cormorant. Last summer a delegation of U. S. farmers visited New York and claimed that they received but 40% of the amount paid by the consumer. They claimed restraint of trade, but they should have charged "*restraint of living*." Is there light in the darkness? Is there no practical solution? We reply, THERE IS.

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There is in the permanent employment of the government of Canada,