

How Does This Correspond To Conditions In St. John?

Toronto Alderman Finds That \$23 a Week is a Minimum Living Wage—Food Prices Have Advanced Fifty-six Per Cent Since Beginning of War—His Figures

(Toronto Star Weekly)

What can fairly be considered a minimum living wage in Toronto? We all know, to our cost, how the cost of living has increased in this city by leaps and bounds in recent years, and particularly since the outbreak of the war. It has increased in every direction, with the possible exception of rent, since August, 1914. The "cost of living" is, of course, a very comprehensive term. It means much more than the mere cost of food. It means clothing of all kinds. It means rent. It means fuel. And it means a whole lot of other things besides. Today it is common knowledge that Toronto is one of the most expensive—if not actually the most expensive—cities in the world wherein to live. And this fact has naturally an important bearing on the question of what can be considered a minimum living wage.

One hears widely-different views expressed as to the rate of increase that has taken place in the cost of living in the last three years. But as regards food (or rather those classes of food, including meat, eggs and butter, which is ordinarily purchasable at a provision store) The Star Weekly has had the advantage of information from a source so competent as to be considered quite authoritative. From this information it appears that food is 55 per cent dearer in this present year of grace, 1917, than it was last year. It is 56 per cent dearer than it was in 1915. It is 56 per cent dearer than it was in 1914, the first year of the war. But even in 1914 food was very far from cheap. Food in that year was two per cent dearer than in 1913, and 14 per cent dearer than in 1912. Thus food today is 70 per cent dearer than in 1912.

The increase in the price of food is the greatest, as it is the most widely and deeply felt of all the increases in the cost of living. For the cost of food is by far the most serious single item in the ordinary working-class household budget. The cost of food is responsible for the expenditure of more than a third of the weekly wages in most of them for the expenditure of pretty nearly half of those hard-earned wages which go such a terribly short distance. Footwear has increased 50 per cent in price since 1912, and probably the price of clothing generally has increased in a not very much smaller ratio.

Minimum of \$23.

What then should be the minimum wage paid to a wage-earner in Toronto with its prices in every direction so high? Well, Alderman W. D. Robbins, who has given a great amount of attention to this subject, takes the view that a married man with a wife and three children dependent on him—that is to say, a family of five, which is the number of which the personnel of so many working-class households consist—cannot support a family of that size, at present Toronto prices, on much less than \$1200 a year. His actual figures come to \$1193.17.

Now that works out as nearly as possible at \$23 a week. How many of Toronto's manual workers make that much? The Star Weekly put that question to Mr. Robbins. Do 50 per cent of them earn such a wage? He replied with a vigorous negative. Do forty per cent of them? The negative was also a vigorous one. Do thirty per cent of them? The negative was less vigorous, but still a negative. Do twenty per cent of them? Perhaps, but not more than that.

"I do not contend," said Alderman Robbins, "that a family of five cannot live on less than the sum I have named. That would be plainly absurd, in view of the fact that the large majority of wage-earners do not get as much. Don't let me be misunderstood here. Many wage-earners do earn \$23 a week, and more at some seasons of the year. The bricklayers, for instance, get more in the summer, but there is so much lost time with them in the winter, that it is difficult for a man to average \$23 a week. The same thing is true in all the building trades, such as carpentering. But what I want to make clear is that while a man can support a family of five on less than \$23 a week, he ought not to have to do so. Nor can he do so and maintain himself and his family on a certain level of decent living and with that comparative ease of circumstances and ease of mind which are essential if a man is to do his best work."

The Family Budget

The alderman then verified his estimate by giving The Star Weekly the actual details of the cost of living for a family of five for one year at present prices in Toronto. Here it is:

Household Budget

Coal, 5 tons, at \$9.50	\$47.50
1 cord light wood, \$8	8.00
Light and gas for cooking at \$2	24.00
Clothing for man—	
1 suit per year	\$20.00
1 hat per year	2.50
4 shirts per year	8.00
4 pairs socks per year	1.60
Collars and ties, per year	4.00
Underwear, per year	5.00
	\$61.10
An equal amount for his wife—	\$61.10
3 children, clothing at \$20	60.00
Boots and shoes—	
8 children, 3 pairs, at \$2.25	\$18.00
2 pairs men's boots at \$4	8.00
1 pair men's overshoes or rubbers	2.00
1 pair ladies' rubbers	1.50
2 pairs ladies' boots at \$8	16.00
Repairs for family	3.00
	\$47.50
Furniture and utensils—	
8 brooms at 60c	\$4.80
Brushes	1.50
Gas mantels or electric (provision store)	2.00
Stove polish	25
Shoe polish	75
Renewal of furniture	25.00
	\$31.00
Bread, 1 large loaf per day, 30c	\$78.00
Cakes per day, 6c	21.90
Milk, 1 qt. per day, at 12c	\$43.90
Meat, at 50c per day	\$182.50
Potatoes, 8 bags per year at \$1.50	12.00
Sugar, 4 lbs. per week, at 25c	26.00
Tea, 1/2 lb. per week, at 25c	13.00
Coffee, 4 lbs. per year, at 40c	1.60
Breakfast foods and cereals, at 25c per week	13.00
Vegetables per year—Lettuce, onions, carrots, etc.	15.00
Fruits—Raspberries, strawberries, peaches, plums, apples, etc.	15.00
	\$690.45
Produce—	
Butter, 8 lbs. per week, at 40c	\$60.80
Lard, 1/2 lb. per week at 15c	7.80
Eggs, 1 1/2 doz. a week, at 30c	23.40
Cheese, 1 1/2 lbs. per week, at 82c	8.92
	\$102.92
Flour, 35-lb. bag a month at \$1.50	19.20
Canned goods, per year—Fish, corn, peas, pickles	20.00
Insurance, per year	20.00
Union dues, including free doctor and medicine	18.00
Street carfare, 75c per week	\$39.00
Sundries—Pepper, salt, mustard, matches, vinegar, soap, etc., etc.	5.00
Extras for Christmas	20.00
Evening paper, at 50c per month	6.00
Rent for 6-roomed house at \$20	240.00
Doctor and medicine for family	18.00
Donations to church	10.00
	\$1,193.17

Can't Eliminate Much.

Now the Star Weekly has gone through this budget, item by item, with some care, and it is quite surprising how few of the items therein it can be said that either they should be eliminated or their amount reduced. No doubt, it is not the sort of budget which those who think that the working class household should be stunted or half-starved would whole-heartedly commend. But can any one say that it represents more than a skilled workman, in the plenitude of health and efficiency, has a right to expect for himself and his family?

The fuel, light, and clothing are certainly not put at too high a figure, with prices as they are. Nor is the rent. Here and there it is possible to get a six-roomed house for a kind under \$20 a month. But such houses are not plentiful, nor are they generally very satisfactory. A good working-class house of six rooms lets for \$20 a month right enough. The footwear, perhaps, seems rather too dear. Men's rubbers are surely obtainable at less than \$2 a pair—\$1.25 was what the writer of these lines paid last fall—and ladies' rubbers need not cost \$1.50. \$1 will buy a pair of the best. Under the heading "furniture and utensils" there seems nothing to be eliminated. The baker's bill is not excessive, although, seeing that a liberal amount is allowed for flour, it should scarcely be necessary to spend \$21.90 a year in cakes. The other food items do not seem immoderate, although, in view of the fact that all the provisions are on a fairly liberal scale, three pounds of butter a week is, perhaps, too much. But, on the whole, there is little reason to "kick" if one recognizes the principle that the workman and his family are entitled to a sufficiency.

HUNS ARE HIT HARD ALL ALONG THE BATTLE LINE

Italians, British and French All Victorious

CANADIANS SCORE AGAIN

Cadorna's Troops Winning Their Greatest Fight—Another Smashing French Blow in Verdun Sector—British Advance Once More

Rome, Aug. 26.—The Italian troops on the Isonzo front are marching to complete victory in Austrian territory.

At Udine, Salvatore Barzila, civil governor of the Austrian territory occupied by the Italian army, when informed of the complete victory of the Italians, exclaimed:

"At last our soldiers have achieved this magnificent thing; they have freed our soil from the ancient enemy."

The final success of the Italians in winning their greatest battle in this war is thrilling the country as never before. Both the army and the civilians now see the result of two years suffering and economic hardships. The victory came unexpectedly, notwithstanding the encouraging bulletins of the last fortnight. It is General Cadorna's rule never to announce an event until certain that his troops are able to hold new positions. More than 25,000 prisoners have been captured.

Paris, Aug. 26.—Another smashing blow by the French today on the right bank of the Meuse, in the Verdun sector, netted a gain of about two-thirds of a mile on a front of two miles and a half, giving the French possession of the Fosses and Beaumont woods, and bringing them to the outskirts of the village of Beaumont.

The official report from the war office tonight also records artillery fighting of great violence around Hill 304, on the left bank of the Meuse.

Canadian Headquarters in France, via London, Aug. 25.—Another carefully planned military operation by the Alberta battalion, which holds that part of the line east of St. Thodore in the region known by our men as "Crucifix Hill" on account of its fitness, gave us possession of 250 yards of German front line with light casualties today.

The attack was made at 2 o'clock this morning, and the enemy resistance was weak, compared with former efforts in this sector. The trench captured and a communication trench nearby were found to contain a large number of dead Germans, many of them killed in bomb fighting two days ago, when we failed to drive them out. At that time the enemy parties appeared in such unexpected quarters that it was believed that the dugouts in the trench were connected by underground passage with the Main German positions in the heart of Lens.

To make sure that the enemy would not again use these dugouts as a means of pushing reinforcements in behind our advanced positions, they were all blown in before the work of incorporating the newly occupied trench into our line was begun.

The gain this morning, being due west of the heart of the city, has straightened out our line and the point of the German offensive wedge has been broken off.

London, Aug. 26.—British troops today made an advance of half a mile along a mile front east of Marignac (near St. Quentin), storming and capturing strong points at Cologne and Malakoff Farms, according to the official report from British headquarters in France to-night.

IMPORTANT SPEECH BY RUSSIAN PREMIER

Definitely Warns Trouble Makers as to What They May Expect

Moscow, Aug. 26.—The state council, which promises important results in the national life of Russia, opened at 9 o'clock this morning in the Grand Opera House with that solemnity and old Russian pomp especially characteristic of Moscow. The theatre district was crowded with sight-seers, and interspersed among the members of the council were to be seen characteristic Russian types including Tartars in peaked caps, while robed Mullahs from the Volga, Georgians robed in cloth of gold cassocks, and dignitaries of the Greek Orthodox church who had arrived for the Ecumenical church congress, which begins Tuesday.

The proceedings began with a speech by Premier Kerensky, lasting an hour and a half, pronounced in a nervous, impressive voice, which aroused tremendous applause, mainly from that part of the theatre occupied by the Democratic organizations and members of the cabinet, but the Duma members and the Moscow industrial deputies also at times participated. Kerensky spoke resolutely emphasizing the role he had played in recent events, and his determination to guide events in the future.

The premier was greeted with wild applause, when, early in his speech, speaking of the dangers from the extreme left, he declared: "All attempts with armed force against the people's power will be crushed with blood and iron."

Still more applause greeted him when, hinting at a counter-revolutionary military conspiracy, he exclaimed: "Let them be warned who think the time has come when, relying on the bayonet, they can overthrow our revolution." The audience rose and cheered this expression for five minutes.

Kerensky rebuked the Finlanders and other seceding nationalities, his words evoking enthusiasm, and there was a menacing note in his voice when he declared that these pretensions threatened the success of the revolution.

The premier's speech indicated that the government expects further attacks tomorrow by the military duma and the Moscow deputies, which he denounced in advance.

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"Bob" Bartlett, who headed a relief expedition to rescue Prof. MacMillan and his party.

Contrary to expectations, Prof. MacMillan did not discover Crocker Land. They made their headquarters at Etah and from there traveled 1,400 miles north by dog team surmounting almost impossible difficulties and the result was that Peary's Crocker Land has been proven a myth. Prof. MacMillan explains it as a mirage which sometimes are as clear as a reality in the north country.

Prior to embarking on the journey, Professor MacMillan entered into a contract with the New York Tribune to withhold for that paper his first descriptive interview of the expedition, their experiences, and the discoveries following their surveys and investigations, consequently the professor was very reticent and refused to give out any definite information or statement regarding the result of his four years of research.

MACMILLAN BACK TO CIVILIZATION AGAIN

Sydney, N. S. W., Aug. 26.—The MacMillan expedition which left from Sydney more than three years ago to locate and explore the place of territory which Commander Peary thought he discovered when he made his notable journey to the North Pole, and which he named Crocker Land, arrived at North Sydney yesterday on the Neptune, commanded by Captain

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Mutt and Jeff—Hoover Has Nothing on Jeff as Food Price Controller

By "Bud" Fisher

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ALL RIGHT, BOSS!

HOW MUCH ARE YOUR CHICKENS TODAY?

ONE DOLLAR EACH, LADY. AND BELIEVE ME, THEY'RE SOME BIRDS. I'LL SHOW YOU ONE!

FINE! THAT'S THE IDEAL!

ONE DOLLAR SEEMS A TRIFLE HIGH! DID YOU RAISE THEM YOURSELF?

WHY—YES!

GREAT, TEE HEE!

THEY WERE EIGHTY-NINE CENTS YESTERDAY AND WE RAISED THEM TO A DOLLAR TODAY!