

Where the Shoe Pinches Worst.

On the authority of the government itself, viz., the official record of prices maintained in the Department of Labour, the pressure of the enhanced cost of living was never so great and so universal as at the present time. The last Annual Report on Prices issued by that Department in March, 1912, in which conditions during the calendar year 1911 were dealt with, opens with the following statement:

"Wholesale prices in Canada reached during 1911 a general level higher probably than in any previous year within the present generation. The detailed statistical record of the Department of Labour on the subject goes back to 1890; within that period prices have only once approached a high point comparable with that of the past year, viz., in 1907. . . . It is safe to say that prices have been higher in Canada in the year just past than at any time since 1882-4, or possibly since 1872-3."

It is since the publication of this statement, however, that the most extraordinary conditions have arisen. The Department's index number for 1911, the period under review above, was 127.2, compared with 124.0 in 1910, these numbers being percentages of average prices prevailing during the decade of 1890-9. An examination by months, however, is still more significant. In June, 1911, the index number stood at 126.1. From that point it rose to 129.4 in December, from which it climbed steadily during the first half of the present year to 136.9 in June, 1912. There has been a recession of about three points since, but no signs of a decided break, and it is probably safe to say that the general level of wholesale prices is at the present moment much higher than in the previous history of the Dominion. When retail prices are considered, the same results are shown; in fact, during 1911, retail prices, which are a most accurate index of the cost of living, advanced approximately 7%, though wholesale prices advanced only about 3%.

It remains to be added that in the opinion of the most competent economists the present high level of prices will not only be maintained but will be intensified, being due to causes that are permanent in their influence. Professor Irving Fisher, of the University of Yale, ends an elaborate investigation and analysis of the present prices situation in the September, 1912, issue of "The American Economic Review," with the following words: "Whatever the mutual adjustments of prices levels between countries by international trade and the redistribution of the stocks of gold, I believe the world as a whole is destined to see for many years to come a rapidly rising tide of prices."

Apart, however, from the future, the situation at present demands that the government follow the example of almost every important employer of labour throughout the Dominion during the past three years, and adjust the general scale of remuneration to conditions which are so important in their bearing on the welfare and efficiency of their servants.

VACANCIES IN CIVIL SERVICE.

The Canada Gazette contains notice of a number of vacancies in the civil service. They include positions for six temporary male clerks for the special census staff, at a salary of \$75 per month. Five of these clerks are re-

quired for operating, sorting and tabulating machines. They should be intelligent men, possessed of a good education, capable of sorting and verifying cards with accuracy and rapidity, and of noting immediately when a machine is not working correctly. The sixth clerk, in addition