

be ordered by telephone in small quantities from day to day, and promptly delivered at his door done up daintily in small packages. In this connection may be mentioned the "Shank plan" of lowering prices. Mayor Samuel L. Shank, of Indianapolis, has created a great deal of talk by importing farm produce into his city to be sold to consumers at bare cost and expenses. He sold potatoes at 75 cents a bushel when the people had been paying \$2 a bushel. Fruits and other articles were treated in the same way. Mayor Shank declares that he is opposing not the middleman but the combine that keeps producer and consumer apart and makes undue profits out of the operation. The Denver Republican says that the Shank plan can reduce prices only by virtually re-establishing the old market and cutting out the whole system of middlemen in the goods handled. It means "forcing the consumer to come to the market and carry his purchases away."

Says the Weekly Report of the Department of Trade and Commerce: "The increased cost of the ordinary foodstuffs in Paris and throughout northern France has become the most generally absorbing topic of public interest. Partly by reason of the long, hot, dry summer, which affected disastrously grass, clover, potatoes and garden vegetables—practically everything except grapes and hops—the prices of meats and produce of all kinds advanced during the month of September to figures unprecedented in the markets of Paris."

The best scientific means we have in Canada of judging the trend of prices is the summary made by the Labour Department. This relates to wholesale prices only. Its great advantage is that an "index number" has been worked out by comparison of a wide range of prices covering the ten years from 1890 to 1899. Taking this average at 100, the prices of October of last year

were 127.4, an increase of 2.74 per cent. And the tendency is still upward, for the average for September of this year was 128.5 and that for October of this year 130.3, an increase of 1.9 points in a month. This is based on a comparison of the prices of 214 different commodities made up in thirteen general classes. There were decreases since last year in eight classes of meats, the greatest and most noteworthy being a fall of 1.93 points in animals and meats. But there was an increase of 2.95 points in grains and of 1.02 points in miscellaneous foods. As to retail prices, there also are followed by the *Labour Gazette* with great care, but without the advantage of the "index number." There was a general fall in the prices of potatoes as compared with the previous month, but the rise in prices of milk, butter and eggs which marks the autumn season seems to have been greater than usual. The rise in the price of sugar continued.

The *Toronto Star* is carrying on a very notable investigation into the question of the cost of living. A commission consisting of Mrs. L. A. Gurnett, President of the Household Economic Association; Mr. James Watt, representing the Toronto Trades and Labor Council, and Mr. H. S. Howard, one of the leading writers on the staff of the *Star*, has been investigating in detail the prices of articles of general consumption in Toronto and in Buffalo. At the present writing the comparison has been made only as between these cities, but more will be said later of the prices of today as compared with those of former years. In a recent issue, the commissioners say:

"Canned goods have risen steadily in price for some reason unsatisfactorily explained by the canners. This phenomenon has been a feature of wonder in the lives of Canadian housekeepers for several years. Your commissioners find the same wonderment exists in the United States. In