

MONTREAL COUNCIL OF SOCIAL AGENCIES

The Dependency and Delinquency Division of the Montreal Council of Social Agencies herewith present an interim report of the special committee appointed to study the cost of living and wages in Montreal.

The report submitted covers at the present time only the part of the Committee's work which has to do with the cost of living. Later on certain suggestions are made in respect to the question of wages, which we hope will receive the serious consideration and co-operation of the Executive Committee of the Council.

1. *Personnel of the Committee*

Mrs. James Eccles, Mrs. Andrew Fleming, Mrs. H. M. Jaquays, Miss Grace Towers, George B. Clarke, Esq., Chairman.

2. *Method pursued*

Mrs. H. M. Jaquays, Miss Grace Towers and Mrs. Andrew Fleming undertook, as a sub-committee, to study a food and clothing budget. The results were arrived at by the most careful estimating of quantities, qualities, varieties and prices of food and clothing. Nothing was done by guess work, experimentation and actual pricing being carried out in every instance. Corner store prices for food were listed, as the majority of families must do their shopping in the district where they live. It is recognized that the amount for clothing represents an absolute minimum.

3. *Results criticized*

The original report of this sub-committee was submitted to the most expert criticism of dietitians, and to the criticism of members of all divisions of the Council. The full report in its finally amended form is attached as Schedule A.

4. *Comments on Schedule A*

The minimum figure is \$1,101.76 per annum, or \$91.81 per month. However, it must be noted that this total is only arrived at by deliberately excluding from the budget all provision for the following items:

- (a) *Health Expenditures*, i.e., examination of teeth, medical examination, or the alternative provision for
- (b) *Doctors' or dentists' fees*, medicines, etc. The Committee went on the assumption that the family was an independent working class family, which was not expected to have to depend on charitable service of any kind, but elimination of all health or sickness allowance would force it to seek the service of charitable agencies, particularly in the event of a birth or death in the family.
- (c) *Higher Life Expenditure*, i.e. Life insurance, Christmas or birthday gifts to members of the family, union dues, church and charity, books and magazines, postage and stationery.
- (d) *Luxuries*. Amusements of any kind at all, tobacco, candy.
- (e) *Household utensils*. The original budget included a nominal sum for this purpose, but it was considered by experts to be so inadequate that it was thought better to leave it out altogether, merely calling attention to the fact that there was absolutely no provision in the budget for the replacement of china, tinware, towels or bedding.

[Mr. Howard T. Falk.]