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The 'Longshoremen's Demands.

Employers State Reasons for Refusing Them.

Editor Evening Telegram
Dear Sir—I am instructed by the Employers' Protective Association to forward you a copy of a letter which has been addressed to-day to the Longshoremen's Protective Union.

Yours truly,
ROBERT B. JOB,
Secretary,
Employers' Protective Assoc.

(COPY)
April 15th, 1920.
Mr. Joseph Flavin,
Vice President,
'Longshoremen's Protective Union
City.

Dear Sir—The employers Protective Association has given careful consideration to the demand recently put before them by your Union for an increase in the current rates of wages to meet the alleged increase in the

cost of living. As a similar demand has been made annually about this time of year for several years past, it is possible to make a comparison of successive years on a fairly satisfactory basis; and the figures have been compiled for the consideration of the Employers showing approximately the increase in the cost of living and in wages during the past few years. Some of these figures have already been handed to the L.S.P.U. and have found their way into the papers in a somewhat inadequate and misleading form. The Employers think, therefore, that it is proper to place their calculations before the L.S.P.U. in a more extended form, and also to send a copy of this letter to the daily papers.

The wages per hour paid for the principal classes of labour during the last few winters (October to April) have been as follows:—

	1916-17	1917-18	1918-19	1919-20	Demand
General Labour	16c.	20c.	24c.	29c.	42c.
Special Labour: e.g., barrowing fish, packing, screwing, handling salt, loading vessels, etc.	18c.	25c.	30c.	35c.	52c.

The following figures are put forward as the basis on which the offered increase of 15% was arrived at; and they show the employers' reason

for believing that the alleged increase of 40 to 50 per cent. in cost of living has not taken place.

COST OF FOOD, LIGHT, FUEL AND RENT.

The following estimate of cost under the above heads for a family of six was put forward by Mr. T. M. White, President of the Newfoundland Industrial Workers Association, and published in the papers in May, 1919.

His estimate has been accepted and prices for four years have been added, which have been corrected by a provision dealer in daily touch with the trade, while the estimate of rent has been had from a gentleman in close touch with the subject:—

	1917	1918	1919	1919	1920
Flour, 3 stone	3.30	3.60	3.60	3.60	4.20
Pork, 6 lbs.	1.80	1.80	1.80	1.62	1.50
Butter, 3 lbs.	1.14	1.26	1.26	1.35	1.47
Tea, ¼ lb.	30	30	30	25	30
Molasses, 1 gal.	70	1.20	1.20	1.20	1.60
Potatoes, 4 gals.	80	80	1.00	1.00	1.00
Cabbage, 4 lbs.	48	48	80	48	80
Fish, 4 lbs.	32	36	56	48	56
Milk, 7 pts.	42	56	70	70	84
Kero. Oil, 3 qts.	33	30	30	30	33
Coal, 1-8 ton	1.75	2.00	2.25	2.25	2.90
Rent	80	85	1.00	1.00	1.00
	12.14	13.51	14.77	(14.23)	16.85
Or say	\$12.20	13.50	14.80		16.90

Therefore if we take last year as the standard, and call it 100%, the four years will compare as follows:—

	1916-17	1917-18	1918-19	1919-20
	82.4%	91.2%	100%	114.2%

It may be said that this list is scant and does not cover everything a family needs. It is not claimed that it does so—it is merely claimed that it is quite sufficient to show the approximate percentage of increase in cost.

This is about correct as shown by an estimate for a family of eight furnished to the employers this year by an officer of the L.S.P.U., which is as follows:—

House Rent	1.20
Butter, 2½ lbs.	1.00
Flour, 2 stone	2.40
Sugar, 8 lbs.	1.60

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Makers of "LA DIVA" & "GODDESS" Corsets.

Tea, ¼ lb.	52
Milk, 7 pints	84
Bread, 7 loaves	1.05
Kero. Oil, 1 gal.	45
Pans, 2 lbs.	50
bal 1-8 ton	3.00
Fish, 4 lbs.	3.00
Meat, fresh, 4 lbs.	1.20
Meat, salt, 4 lbs.	1.00
Milk, 1 tin	21
Kindling	21
Church Fees	40
Union Fees	06
Pepper	05
Yeast Cake	05
Matches	05
Salt	05
Potatoes, 3 gallons	75
Turnips	15
Soap	21
Washing Soda	05
	\$17.40

The L. S. P. U.'s list, which is for a family of eight, puts in all the details, and is probably a better list. It must be remembered that the average number of children under 15 per family in St. John's District is not eight or six, but under two, according to the Census. This may be shown thus:—

St. John's East and West, Total Population, 45,700.	
No. of married persons	15,159
Divide this by 2 and we have married couples, about	7,580
Add widows and widowers, who are possibly heads of families	2,408
	9,988

Therefore the average number per family, if the whole population lived in families, would be 45,700 divided by 9,980, which gives about 4½ per-

sons per family, regardless of age. But there are less than two children under 15 per family as can be shown thus:—

No. of heads of families about 9,988
No. of children under 15 years of age, according to Census, 15,680,
which gives an average of about 1½ children under 15 per family. Therefore if we reckon workmen's families at four persons on the average, we are allowing liberally. No doubt there are families with five or six children, but there are bachelors, etc., and families with more than one person earning, all of which brings down the average number of dependents.

It is quite possible that Longshoremen as a class may have on the average a larger number of children per family than the other classes, but they cannot greatly exceed the average. If there are 5,000 labouring men in town and they averaged 3 children each, they would have all the children under 15 years that are according to the Census, leaving none whatever for any other class of people, which, of course, is absurd, and cannot be true.

The average family then consists of two parents and two children, and for these, on the L. S. P. U. scale, the above expenses would not come to more than \$12.00 to \$13.00 per week, allowing the parents to cost more than twice as much per week as the children. (If all cost the same, the weekly cost would of course, be less) and allowing for coal, rent and light being the same. A great many families have more than one wage-earner, and many labourers get something extra in the way of special bonuses, extra overtime, or fishing in the Summer, which adds to their incomes.

COST OF CLOTHING.

The following figures have been supplied by a reliable dry goods firm:—

	Mar. 1917	Mar. 1918	Mar. 1919	1920
Suit factory made	13.50	16.50	20.50	26.00
Underwear, suit of	2.00	2.40	1.90	3.20
Flannel, 10 yds.	15.00	17.50	17.50	15.00
Calico, 10 yds.	4.00	4.50	3.50	5.00
Boots, men's pair	7.50	7.50	7.50	9.00
	42.00	48.50	50.90	50.20
Equal to	82.5%	95.3%	100%	114.3%

This does not appear, however, to be quite a fair calculation, and per-

haps the estimate might be made better in this form:—

	1916-17	1917-18	1918-19	1919-20
MAN:				
Suit	13.50	16.50	20.50	26.00
Underwear, suit of	2.00	2.40	1.90	3.20
Boots	7.50	7.50	7.50	7.50
WOMAN:				
Flannel, 10 yds.	15.00	17.50	17.50	15.00
Calico, 10 yds.	4.00	4.50	3.50	5.00
Boots	5.00	5.00	5.00	6.00
2 CHILDREN:				
Boy's Suit	10.00	13.00	15.00	21.00
Underclothes	2.00	2.00	1.50	2.50
Flannel 5 yds.	7.50	8.75	8.75	7.50
Calico, 5 yds.	2.00	2.50	1.75	2.50
Boots, 2 pair	10.00	10.00	10.00	12.00
	78.50	89.40	92.90	109.45
which is equivalent in p.c. to	85.5%	96.2%	100%	117.8%

It is to be noticed again that this list does not claim to be complete. It only claims to contain enough articles

to show the approximate percentage of increase in cost.

COMBINED COST OF FOOD, HEAT, RENT AND CLOTHING.

Now heat, light, food and house about 1-5, certainly not more. Amalgamating our percentages on this basis we get the following results:—

Food, heat, light, rent, %	100% x 4	400	114.3% x 4	456.8
Clothing, %	100% x 1	100	117.8% x 1	117.8
		500		574.6
		100%		114.9%

While this does not pretend to be absolutely accurate, it is probably close enough for all practical purposes. It

appears therefore that the workingman's cost of living has advanced approximately 15%.

INCREASE IN WAGES.

The rates of wages for the past four years are given at the beginning of this memorandum. In order to see how they actually work out, there have been taken the actual pay records of six steady men on a Water Street premises, receiving the regular

pay of unskilled labour at the above rates. The same men have been followed right through, with the exception that in 1919-20 one man drops out and is replaced by another.

The wages have been taken for the Winter, half-year, October to March 27 weeks.

Winter's Average	Weekly Average	Percentage
Per man	9.55	
Winter of 1916-17	248.35	80.0%
Winter of 1917-18	285.36	91.16%
Winter of 1918-19	312.35	100.0%
Winter of 1919-20	430.98	133.3%

As a matter of fact, however, 1918-19 was a season when winter work was rather slack; and as a result the increase between that winter and the past winter is probably too large. If

it had been a normal winter the wages would probably have been about \$340.00, making the jump this year about 26% instead of 33.3%.

SUMMARY.

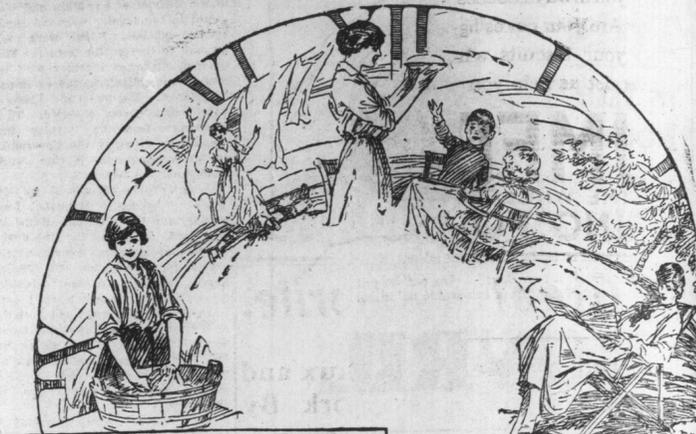
Taking last season, the winter of 1918-19, as the standard with which to compare, and calling it 100 per

Cost of Living	82.8%	92.8%	100%	114.9%
Average Wages	80.0%	91.6%	100%	133.3%
				(or 126.0%)

From these it will be seen that wages last year increased much more than the cost of living. It may be said that in spite of this increase the wages are still insufficient to enable workmen to live; but the above figures show that workmen's wages have increased faster than the cost of living; and therefore if it is true, as they

say, that they can only just live now it must be the case that they could not live at all four years ago. But that is not the case; for it is known to everyone that workmen were no worse off in 1917 than they are now, and made no more complaint about wages than they do now.

The above figures of wages apply to



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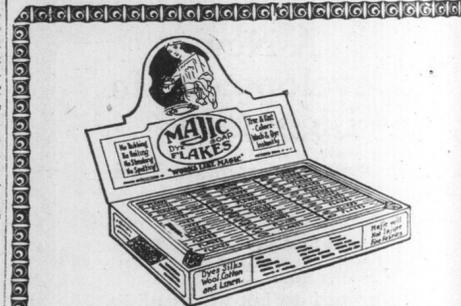
men in steady unskilled work on a fish premises. It is hardly possible to calculate the wage of men employed mainly on steamer work, on account of the irregular nature of their employment and the large amount of night work overtime, etc. They are likely to make larger wages when many steamers are coming to the port and to find themselves hard pressed when steamers are few. However, the above figures apply to them in a general way, as the increases in their wages have been proportional to those in other classes of labour.

With regard to men employed in discharging coal steamers, it is to be noted that they earn excellent wages, largely on account of the heavy and dirty work of labour, and the working of a great deal of overtime in order to enable steamers to get away promptly; and they earn these wages in a comparatively small number of days.

Figures have been compiled showing the earnings of eight men employed on a coal premises between January 1st, 1919, and December 31st, 1919. These men averaged earnings of \$972.38 in an average of 171 days, leaving them about 130 days in the year on which they could engage in any other work if it was available and they felt like doing so. On days when they are in full work discharging steamers these men can make about \$800 per day, while the average amount of work done per man has substantially diminished during the past few years as is shown by the reduced speed of discharging, notwithstanding that Union rules requires a larger number of men in each batch of a coal steamer than they formerly did.

It is estimated that if the increase in wages at present demanded is granted, it will mean an increase in the cost of coal to the public of approximately 75% per ton on soft coal and \$1.00 per ton on anthracite to cover the actual increase in wages alone.

This is an illustration of our argument in another part of this letter, that the increase in wages necessarily falls upon the public. But the mischief does not end there, for many other classes immediately feel the pinch and an increase in the wages of one class or union is generally followed by demands for similar increases from others which in turn are reflected in the cost of living. It is appreciated that this is a difficulty which it is very hard to avoid; but of course if an increase of wages out of proportion to the increased cost of living is granted at any particular time to any considerable class of people, it necessarily does a great deal to accelerate that rise in expenses which constitutes so serious a problem at the present time.



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DISTRIBUTOR FOR NEWFOUNDLAND.

It was stated by one of the L. S. P. U. delegates at the meeting between Employers and L. S. P. U. that the stevedores were well satisfied with the advance given to them last year, and that, but for the increased cost of living no new demand for any advance would now be made, or in other words that they asked only for a sufficient increase to offset the increase in cost of living since last settlement of labour rates.

Now the figures given in this letter must not be misinterpreted. As soon as these figures are published, a certain sort of people will immediately try to use them to show that the Employers desire to grind the labourers down to the lowest figure they can keep them alive upon. This is not the case. The Employers are merely in this position that they have it put to them that wages must go up about 45 per cent. because the cost of living has gone up that much, and they produce these figures to show that it has not gone up 45 per cent., but about 15 per cent. at increase, which they are prepared to meet.

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