

THE COST OF LIVING

The data presented in this report has been compiled on the same basis as was the data in Report No. 35, dealing with this subject a year ago. The two reports are therefore comparable. The cost of every item which goes to make up the total family budgets has been secured by personal interview with representative dealers in each town, with the exception that the clothing estimate for female and junior members of the family has been taken from a report by the New York City Bureau of Standards and the New York City Bureau of Personal Service. This source was used for the estimate in the previous report, and the same percentage of increase which applies to the wage earners' clothing cost has been applied to this estimate.

The annual expenditures shown apply to a family of five people, consisting of a wage earner, his wife, and three children of school age, none of whom contribute to the family support. In point of food consumption, this family is considered equivalent to 3.7 adult males.

We subdivide the family budget as follows:

1. Food
2. Clothing
3. Rent, Fuel, Light, Etc.

In addition to the above is a sundry list covering items which are essential, but for which no definite estimate can be made. This includes: Health, Insurance, Recreation, Reading Material, Home Maintenance, Charity, Stamps, Soap, Etc. In the previous report, the cost of these sundry items was placed at \$100.00.

In the investigations of the Railroad Wage Commission, the increase in these items was found to be 35% from January 1, 1916 to January 1, 1918. This increase is probably greater than during the period July 1917 to July 1918, but 25% should be a conservative estimate for this period. \$125.00 will therefore be used as the cost of sundry items in this report.

As the annual requirements of clothing shown do not cover even the barest necessities, an additional sum must be allowed for this item. The requirements shown are also taken from the New York report and were said to be sufficient only because the families investigated depended upon the charities for many articles that would otherwise have to be purchased. In last year's report, \$25.00 additional was allowed for the clothing estimate. Our increase in clothing costs this year amounts to about 25%. We will therefore allow \$31.25 for the additional requirements.

The food estimate is an absolute minimum, and does not provide for any canned goods, macaroni, crackers, prunes, onions, beans, or raisins. In the report of a year ago, \$25.00 was allowed to cover these items. The increase in food costs during the year amounts to 11.83%. We will therefore allow \$28.00 on this year's budgets for these extra items.