

PARLIAMENTARY COMMITTEE,
TRADE UNION CONGRESS.

FINAL REPORT
ON THE
COST OF LIVING

Parliamentary Committee, Trades Union Congress.

Joint Committee on the Cost of Living.

FINAL REPORT
ON THE
COST OF LIVING

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Publications of the Committee.

Interim Report—Money and Prices	Price 9d.	<i>Postage extra.</i>
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TO BE OBTAINED FROM—

The Secretary, Offices of the Parliamentary Committee, Trades Union Congress, 32, Eccleston Square, London, S.W. 1.

APPENDICES.



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APPENDIX III.—Predominant Retail Prices of Foodstuffs, 1914-1920.

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APPENDIX I.

THE PROBLEM OF THE EXCHANGES.

Under the guise of meeting competition arising out of the depreciated exchanges the Government proposes to impose protective tariffs. As will be shown in this memorandum, this device will do nothing to remedy the collapsed exchanges. The international financial situation to-day is the result of the ineptitude and tardiness of the Allied Governments in dealing with the post-war problem. The Government's proposal ignores the essentials of exchanges question, and no policy can be successful which does not grapple with the realities of the present-day situation. It would appear that the Government has not taken into consideration the discussion which took place at the International Finance Conference held at Brussels six months ago, nor the series of very valuable memoranda prepared by experts for the Conference.

The following table gives the mint par of exchange between this and certain other countries (round which rates of exchange fluctuated within narrow limits before the war) and the rates of exchange on March 30th, 1921:—

	PAR.	MARCH 30th, 1921.
New York... ..	\$86.00	3'93-3'94
Paris	fr.25'22	33'85-59'35
Brussels.....	fr.25'22	55'60-54'00
Italy	lire25.22	94'00-96'50
Berne	fr.25'22	22'60-22'70
Berlin	m.20'48	246-230
Vienna	kr.24'02	1400-1600
Warsaw	m.20'44	3100-3400

It will be observed that the exchanges with Paris, Brussels, Italy, Berlin, Vienna, and Warsaw show very considerable deviations from the normal.

Our valuation of a foreign money depends essentially on the relative purchasing power of the currencies of this country and of the particular country under consideration. Apart from minor fluctuations, the rate of exchange between the countries will remain stable if the purchasing power of the two currencies remains unaltered (and provided there is normal freedom of trade between the two countries). But it will be violently disturbed if there are great alterations in the purchasing power of money in either country. The deviation from the pre-war normal exchanges has been due in part to restrictions on international trade during and since the war, and partly to large currency changes. Except in a few cases there is nothing corresponding to the "mint par of exchange," as the gold standard has vanished. The only parity which can be said to exist is a purchasing power parity. If the purchasing power of a unit of money in England is twice as great as the purchasing power of a unit of money in France, a unit of English money will be worth two units of French money, as it will need two units of the latter currency to purchase the same amount of goods as a unit of the former. Wherever the purchasing power of money is relatively low we get it reflected in the exchanges (e.g., Germany, France, Italy, etc.). As Professor Cassel has said, "during the war the buying capacity of the different monetary standards has, owing to the over-abundant supply of means of payment, been much reduced, though in very different proportions.

Consequently the purchasing power parities have undergone very important alterations, and are now quite different from the parities which were in force before the war. There is no reason to believe that exchanges ever will be restored generally to their old parities. These old parities have, in fact, lost their old significance, and can no longer in any respect be regarded as normal. The constant references still made to them are a most serious hindrance against a clear understanding of what has really happened to the world's monetary standards."*

It will become clear later in this memorandum that the prime problem is the establishment of rates of exchange comparable with real purchasing power parities.

It has been suggested above that restrictions on international trade have an important influence on rates of exchange. They cause deviations from the purchasing power parity. If country A restricts imports from country B, the value of money in B will fall below the purchasing power parity, because the rate of exchange is but "an expression of the valuation of a means of securing the supply of foreign commodities." If this supply is made difficult, the actual value of the B money must fall in proportion.

We here see the essential defect of the proposed 33½ tariff for dealing with collapsed exchanges. It will tend to depress the purchasing power of foreign currencies and accentuate the present evil.

But it is argued that, as a result of depreciated exchanges of many foreign countries, this country is subject to severe and unfair competition, and that the virtual exclusion of foreign products is the only way of safeguarding home industries. The following extract from Professor Cassel's memorandum, already quoted, throws light on this contention:—

"Every alteration in the purchasing power parity of the exchange between two countries naturally must have a disturbing influence on their mutual trade. But as soon as this parity has been stabilised at a certain level it is of no importance whether this level is high or low. Thus the export trade of a country is not hampered by low quotations of the foreign exchanges as long as these quotations only correspond to a high level of prices in foreign countries or a low level at home; nor is it specially stimulated by high quotations of the foreign exchanges as long as these only correspond to the relative purchasing power of the monetary standards quoted. Likewise, low prices on foreign currencies do not mean an encouragement of imports from them or a handicap for the home producer, provided these exchanges are a true expression for the purchasing power of the foreign money; on the same condition high prices of foreign currencies do not in any way hamper the import from them. In fact, the terms 'high' or 'low' exchanges have no sense in themselves; if they are to be used they must obviously refer to the normal rates of exchange, i.e., to the purchasing power parities. But when used, as is generally the case, in reference to old parities which have lost all real significance, they are in the highest degree misleading."

It is clear that what is necessary is the establishment of rates of exchange in the neighbourhood of the purchasing power parities. Exchanges disturb foreign trade only in so far as they deviate from these purchasing power parities. The disturbance created is obviously adverse to the countries whose currency is relatively under-valued. On the other hand;

* Memorandum on the World's Monetary Problems, by G. Cassel (International Financial Conference, Brussels, 1920).

countries whose currency is over-valued are exposed to reckless dumping and the restriction of their export trade. The reason for dumping from Germany lies not in what are called "collapsed" exchanges (which are "collapsed" as regards pre-war exchanges) but in the fact that the present exchange does not really represent the purchasing power parity. In an interview, published in the "Times" of April 1st, 1921, Mr. G. E. Pearson, General Manager of Messrs. Burroughs, Wellcome & Co., unintentionally supported this point of view. He said that "the German workman in the fine chemical trade is paid 75 marks per week, which, if the exchanges were at par, would place the two countries almost on an equal footing as regards wages, costs. But at the present depreciated rate of exchange the German wages are equivalent to only 6s. 3d. per week, which makes it quite impossible for the British manufacturer to compete." According to Mr. Pearson, the fine chemical trade hoped for a duty of "at least 50 per cent., and whether the 33½ per cent. duty proposed "would be high enough to meet the needs of the case, only experience could show." Obviously, this trade is of opinion that a tariff in the region of 33½ per cent. to 50 per cent. would be sufficient. But it is clear that if the present situation were covered by the deviation of the exchange from the old mint par, an *ad valorem* duty of this amount would be hopelessly inadequate. What the manufacturers are asking for is a duty to counteract the effects of the discrepancy between the rate of exchange and the purchasing power parity.

The problem which confronts the Government is that of the stability of the exchanges.* This involves two things (1) a new equilibrium, and (2) minimising deviations from it.

When we come to deal with these two aspects of the question of the exchanges, we are faced by the utter failure of the Allied Governments to attack the great economic and financial problems left by the war. Any comprehensive plan must follow the lines laid down by the Labour Party in its international policy, and by the Cost of Living Committee in its First Interim Report on "Money and Prices." There is no short cut to the re-establishment of normal conditions of international trade. The peoples of Europe must pay the price of two and a quarter years of delay in handling the colossal problems arising out of the war.

As regards the establishment of a new equilibrium, it must be recognised that the new normal rates of exchange will differ widely from the pre-war rates. But this is not of great importance. The new equilibrium must be at the purchasing power parity of the countries of the world. Such an equilibrium can be attained only when the purchasing power of the different countries has become relatively stable. In this connection, the vital step is to stop further inflation. This is clearly a matter for each country to deal with, but it is nevertheless one in which there should be an international understanding.

It is stated in one of the resolutions unanimously passed at the Brussels International Financial Conference, that "the chief cause in most countries is that the governments, finding themselves unable to meet their expenditure out of revenue, have been tempted to resort to the artificial creation of fresh purchasing power, either by the direct issue of additional legal tender money, or more frequently by obtaining—especially from the Bank of Issue, which in some cases are unable, and in others unwilling to refuse them—credits which must themselves be satisfied in legal tender money."

* The International Financial Conference expressed the conviction that the "instability of the exchanges constitutes a great hindrance to the resumption of normal international trade."

Obviously, it is essential that these practices should cease. Continental states must make their income and expenditure balance. In this connection, it is worth while referring to one of the chief items of national expenditure—viz., armaments. "The statements presented to the Conference," says the Report of the International Financial Conference "show that, on an average, some 20 per cent. of the national expenditure is still being devoted to the maintenance of armaments, and to preparations for war. The Conference recommended to the Council of the League of Nations "the desirability of conferring at once with the several governments concerned, with a view to securing a general and agreed reduction of the crushing burden which, on their existing scale, armaments still impose on the impoverished peoples of the world, sapping their resources, imperilling their recovery from the ravages of war.

The bearing of the burden of armaments on the exchange problem is very direct. Without this crushing expenditure continental countries would be more able to avoid the necessity for further inflation to make both ends meet, and the root cause of instability of purchasing power would be removed, and with it the chief obstacle to the establishment of a new equilibrium.

Every nation should, under international agreement, take every possible step to deal with its financial position. In some cases external assistance will be necessary, but whatever measures are necessary, the accounts of European nations must be made to balance, for the stabilisation of the internal value of value, i.e., of its buying capacity against commodities, is from the point of view of the exchanges, the most urgent of all problems. When two countries have reached this end, a new normal rate of exchange

The second question is the prevention of abnormal deviations from the purchasing power parity. This is an important problem because it is from such deviations that we are suffering to-day.

One of the first measures must be "to relieve the exchanges of several forms of unfunded international credits, and especially of the large amounts of paper money which some countries have exported into foreign countries. These amounts of paper money not only disturb the exchanges, but form at the same time a menace to internal stability as an influx into the issuing country is at any time possible."* Or to put it into the words of Professor Cassel, "when a country, as is the case with Germany, has a large floating debt abroad, in the form of bank rates or other notes, or debts on current accounts of the banks, a preliminary measure must be to exchange this debt against a funded loan. For as long as a floating debt of such a character is allowed to exist, it tends to depreciate the money of the country on the international exchanges beneath its purchasing power parity, and this pernicious effect will then lead the country to extraordinary measures for protection of its international market against an overwhelming buying capacity. A great consolidation loan for the redemption of the outstanding means of payment in German marks is therefore a first step necessary in order to bring the German exchange problem into a normal condition. The loan should, of course, chiefly be subscribed by the present holders of German marks, who would have an inducement to do that in the probable rise of the German exchanges which would follow."†

It is suggested that one means of obtaining stability of the exchanges and preventing abnormal fluctuations is for Germany and other countries with outstanding external floating debts to fund these debts.

* Dr. G. W. J. Bruins in a memorandum prepared for the International Financial Conference at Brussels; p. 15.

† Memorandum by Professor Cassel, page 32.

Apart from such special measures " the problem of preventing abnormal deviations of the rates of exchanges," says Professor Cassel, " becomes essentially a problem of restoring freedom and equality in international trade." Dr. Bruins, in his memorandum, regards " the restoration of free exchange of commodities " as an " essential condition."

- The International Financial Conference endorsed the declaration of the Supreme Council of March 8th, 1920, " that the States which have been created or enlarged as a result of the war should at once re-establish full and friendly co-operation, and arrange for the unrestricted interchange of commodities in order that the essential unity of European economic life may not be impaired by the erection of artificial economic barriers." The British Government's proposals are directed to increasing the existing restrictions on trade. Not only is it intended to protect certain key industries and erect a tariff barrier against the " dumping " of foreign goods, but the Government actually proposes to impose a tariff in order to deal with the evil arising from depreciated exchanges. The need is for less restrictions on trade rather than more, and the British Government, instead of pursuing a policy of restriction should take the initiative in convening through the League of Nations an International Conference, with a view to ensuring the utmost freedom and equality in international trade.

The measures herein suggested are simple and sufficient. If they were adopted the problem of the exchanges would be solved, and normal international trade would be resumed. Whether when this happens conditions will be such as to provide a case for fiscal protection on ordinary lines is another and quite separate question.

The argument and policy outlined in this memorandum may be summarised as follows :—

1. The exchanges with many countries are not likely to return to the pre-war level.
2. The new normal rate of exchange between two countries must be based on the purchasing power parity.
3. The problem of the exchanges is one of stabilisation. It has two sides:—
 - (a) The establishment of a new equilibrium.
 - (b) The prevention of wide fluctuations.
4. As regards (a) the great need is by international agreement to stop the inflation of national currencies, and to balance national budgets. In this connection the reduction of national expenditure on armaments is important.
5. As regards (b) it is necessary :
 - (i.) That foreign floating loans should be funded, and
 - (ii.) That artificial restrictions on international trade should, by international agreement, be abolished or reduced to a minimum.
6. The policy of the British Government is condemned, because it will aggravate the disease. A tariff will do nothing to deal with the causes of depreciated exchanges. On the contrary, it will tend to create further depreciation, and foster wide fluctuations of the exchanges.

APPENDIX II.

Form of Return used by the Committee in its Investigation.

Parliamentary Committee, Trades Union Congress.

COST OF LIVING ENQUIRY.

Joint Committee representing

The Parliamentary Committee, Trades Union Congress.
 The Labour Party.
 The Co-operative Union Limited.
 The Triple Alliance.
 The Federation of Engineering and Shipbuilding Trades.
 The National Federation of General Workers.
 The National Federation of Building Trades Operatives.

FORM OF RETURN OF WEEKLY FAMILY EXPENDITURE.

The object of the Committee in attempting to secure a considerable number of carefully kept weekly family budgets is threefold:—

- (a) To ascertain the real extent of the rise in the cost of living.
- (b) To obtain particulars from which the burden of indirect taxation can be calculated.
- (c) To obtain particulars which can be used to work out a new basis for the calculation of a cost of living index number, which will be a more accurate reflection of the cost of living than the present index number of the Ministry of Labour.

INSTRUCTIONS.

1. If you will kindly answer the questions asked in this form, you will greatly assist the Joint Committee in its enquiry. You are asked to give the quantities and kinds of all foods consumed by your household in four consecutive weeks, and in addition to state your usual weekly expenditure on foods and other household necessaries, and your annual expenditure on Clothing, Household Renewals, etc.

2. Please fill in the form for the first complete week after you receive it and for the three following weeks. If, however, you are away from home for the whole or any part of one of these weeks, omit that week and give particulars for a later week.

3. If you are able to supply any similar figures for an earlier period and particularly for 1914, please do so, even if they are incomplete, as they would be of great value to the Joint Committee.

4. Your answers will be treated as strictly secret and confidential.

5. You are asked to be good enough to return this form not later than Monday, September 20th. If by this date you are not able to give four weekly budgets, please return the form filled in for as many complete weeks as time allows.

6. The completed forms should be returned to—

ARTHUR GREENWOOD,

Cost of Living Committee,

32, Eccleston Square, London, S. W. 1.

PARTA.—HOUSEHOLD.

MEMBERS OF HOUSEHOLD. Give names or relationship to head of household. (Husband, wife, son, daughter, etc.)	SEX. Male or Female. M. F.	AGE. (If under 18 years.)	OCCUPATION. Give full description.
Wage Earners:			
Non-wage Earners:			Is the head of the household working away from home?

PART B.—EXPENSES OTHER THAN FOOD.

Quantity usually bought and amount spent per week.

NOTE.—If Coal is purchased by the ton please state annual consumption and cost; also if Gas or Electricity is paid for other than in weekly payments give annual consumption and cost.

1. FUEL & LIGHTING.	Quantity.				Amount Spent.			
	1 Week ending	2 Week ending	3 Week ending	4 Week ending	1 Week ending	2 Week ending	3 Week ending	4 Week ending
<i>*Please fill in date.</i>								
Coal Cwts., per week...					s. d.	s. d.	s. d.	s. d.
Coke " " " ...								
Oil Pints, " " ...								
Gas..... Cubic feet, " " ...								
Electricity ... Units, " " ...								
Matches..... Boxes, " " ...								
Firewood and Fire-lighters " " ...								
2. CLEANING MATERIALS.								
Soap lbs., per week...								
Soap Powders, etc. " " ...								
Other Cleaning Materials, such as Blacklead, Furniture and Metal and Floor Polish, Boot Polish, etc.								
<i>(Please give particulars.)</i>								

3. OTHER EXPENDITURE.	Amount Spent.			
	1 Week ending	2 Week ending	3 Week ending	4 Week ending
	s. d.	s. d.	s. d.	s. d.
Laundry Charges .....per week				
Window Cleaners..... " "				
Rent " "				
Rates ... " "				
Boot Repairing..... " "				
Medicines " "				
Tram, 'bus or Railway Fares " "				
Newspapers and Literature " "				
Insurance (National Health and Un-employment) " "				
Other Insurance Payments " "				
Friendly Society and Trade Union Subscriptions " "				
Church, Chapel and Club Subscriptions and Payments " "				
Other Payments <i>(please specify)</i> " "				
.....				
.....				
TOTALS.....				

II. HOME OR ALLOTMENT PRODUCE.

	*Estimated Value.							
	1 Week ending		2 Week ending		3 Week ending		4 Week ending	
	s.	d.	s.	d.	s.	d.	s.	d.
Eggs .....per week, No.								
Other Produce (<i>specify kinds</i>) per week :								
.....								
.....								
.....								
TOTAL								

III. MEALS BOUGHT AND EATEN AWAY FROM HOME, SUCH AS AT CANTEENS OR REFRESHMENT HOUSES, MEALS IN SCHOOL, etc.

	No. of Meals in each Week.				Total Cost in each Week.			
	1 Week ending	2 Week ending	3 Week ending	4 Week ending	1 Week ending	2 Week ending	3 Week ending	4 Week ending
	s.	d.	s.	d.	s.	d.	s.	d.
Husband								
Wife								
Children under 18								
Other members of household								
Beer, Stout and Spirits								
TOTALS								

PART D.—CLOTHING.

Please state as accurately as possible the total amount spent during the past year on all kinds of clothing for the whole family. £.....s.....d.....

If possible, please state the amount spent during the past year on each of the following items:—

	Number or Quantity.	Amount.
Boots and Shoes.....Men's (over 18)		
" "Women's (" 18)		
" "Boys' (under 18)		
" "Girls' (" 18)		
Costumes .....Women's (over 18)		
"Girls' (under 18)		
Dresses .....Women's (over 18)		
"Girls' (under 18)		
Bouses .....Women's (over 18)		
"Girls' (under 18)		
Suits .....Men's (over 18)		
"Boys' (under 18)		
Working Overalls, Aprons, etc.		
Socks and Stockings .....Men's and Boys' ...		
"Women's and Girls'		
Caps .....Men's (over 18)		
"Boys' (under 18)		
Hats .....Men's (over 18)		
"Boys' (under 18)		
"Women's (over 18)		
"Girls' (under 18)		
Collars .....Men's (over 18)		
"Boys' (under 18)		
Under-clothing .....Men's (over 18)		
"Boys' (under 18)		
"Women's (over 18)		
"Girls' (under 18)		
Overcoats, Raincoats, etc. Men's (over 18)		
"Boys' (under 18)		
"Women's (over 18)		
"Girls' (under 18)		
Other articles of Dress (<i>specify kinds</i>):		
.....		
.....		
TOTALS		

PART E.—HOUSEHOLD RENEWALS.

Please state as accurately as possible the total amount spent in household renewals during the past year.

	AMOUNT SPENT.		AMOUNT SPENT.
	£ s. d.		£ s. d.
Crockery, Pots, Dishes, etc.....		Blankets	
Pans, Kettles, Buckets, etc.....		Floor Coverings (Oilcloth, Carpets, etc.)	
Cutlery, Knives, Forks, Spoons, etc.		Furniture (including Bedsteads, etc.)	
Brooms, etc.....		(<i>Please specify</i>)	
Blinds and Curtains	
Bed-sheets.....		
Tablecloths	
Towels		Mailcoats, Perambulators, etc...	
(<i>Please specify</i>)		Other expenditure (Tools, etc.)	
.....		(<i>Please specify</i>)	
.....		

Date.....

Signed.....

Address

.....

APPENDIX III.

PREDOMINANT RETAIL PRICES OF FOODSTUFFS, 1914-1920.

(From information supplied by Co-operative Union, Ltd.)

FOOD—	Commodities.	Quantity.	Price January, 1914.	Price September, 1920.
Bread.....		4 lbs.	5½d. & 6d.	1/-, 1/1, 1/4
Flour, G.R.		Stone	1/8, 1/9, 2/-	3/10, 5/-
„ Best		„	1/10, 2/-	5/-
„ Common		„	1/6, 1/8, 1/10	—
Oatmeal or Quaker Oats ...		per lb.	—	—
Bacon, Irish Roll		„	1/-	3/4, 3/10
„ Danish Side		„	1/-	2/6, 3/-
„ American		„	10d., 11d.	2/4, 2/6, 3/-
Mutton		„	9d., 10d.	2/-, 2/6
Beef		„	10d.	2/-, 2/4
Butter, Danish		„	1/4	3/4
„ English		„	1/3	4/6
Cheese, Cheshire		„	10d.	1/10, 2/-, 2/4
„ Lancashire		„	9d., 10d.	2/2
„ American		„	8d., 9d.	1/8
Milk		Pint	1½d. & 2d.	4d., 4½d., 5d.
Margarine		per lb.	6d., 8d.	1/2, 1/8
Lard		„	7d., 8d.	1/8
Dripping		„	6d.	1/6
Suet		„	8d.	1/6, 2/-
Currants		„	4d. & 5d.	1/-, 1/2
Jam		„	4d., 5d. & 6d.	1/6, 1/8, 2/-
Sugar, White Cube		„	2½d.	1/2½
„ Granulated.....		„	2½d.	1/2
„ Brown.....		„	—	1/-, 1/1
Tea		„	1/4, 2/-, 2/4	2/-, 2/8, 3/6
Coffee		„	1/-, 1/4, 1/8	2/2, 2/4, 2/6, 3/-
Cocoa		„	1/6	3/2
Salt		—	—	—
Eggs.....		each	1d.	5d.
Marmalade.....		per lb.	4d., 4½d.	1/3
Golden Syrup		„	3d., 3½d.	1/-
Treacle		„	2d.	6d., 8d., 10d.
Condensed Milk		per tin	6d., 6½d.	1/4½
Potatoes		per lb.	½d.	1½d., 2d.
Rice and Tapioca		„	2d., 3d. & 4d.	6d., 8d., 10d.

APPENDIX IV.

RESULTS OF AN INQUIRY BY THE IRISH LABOUR PARTY AND TRADE UNION CONGRESS INTO THE INCREASE IN FOOD PRICES IN IRELAND.

IRISH LABOUR PARTY AND TRADE UNION CONGRESS
NATIONAL EXECUTIVE.

32, Lower Abbey Street, Dublin.

June 9th, 1921.

TO THE SECRETARY OF EACH AFFILIATED SOCIETY.

A CHARA:

I have been inquiring into food prices in Irish towns, comparing 1914 with 1921.

I have obtained detailed particulars from different towns in all parts of the country. The inquiry was based upon the food ration of a third-class officer in the Belfast Union, pre-war, as sanctioned by the Local Government Board. This ration, it may be assumed, was such a one as was considered requisite by the Board of Guardians on the one hand and the Local Government Board on the other, for the proper sustenance of an adult worker in the institution, and may therefore be taken as a fair basis of what should constitute a fair sustenance for the average adult worker. The ration comprises in different quantities and weights: Bread, butter, milk, tea, sugar, beef, mutton, potatoes, eggs, bacon, flour, raisins, sago, fish and buttermilk.

The method adopted was to present a form of invoice for these articles in their stipulated quantities to grocers and provision dealers throughout the country, with the request that they should, after reference to their books for 1914, fill in the cost of this ration at that date and also fill in the cost of the same ration at the present date. Having collected these various invoices, an average over the whole country was taken, and this is the result:—

	s.	d.
In March, 1914, the average price for the ration in question		
was	7	8
In March, 1921, the average price for the same ration was	22	0
(or 167 per cent. above pre-war).		
In May, 1921, the average price for the same ration was	21	4
(or 178 per cent. above pre-war).		

The Board of Trade figures of comparative food prices over the same period show an increase of only 149 per cent. for March and of 132 per cent. for May, over the average food cost for the working class family in July, 1914. The Board of Trade figures relate more particularly to Great Britain. It is doubtful whether any Irish figures are taken into account at all, but

if they are, they will have little effect on the average which is almost entirely based on British terms.

The latest returns from the Board of Trade show a decline from March to May this year of 17 per cent., or 132 per cent. above the July, 1914, basis, for food alone

It is worthy of your notice that in the Labour Gazette for May the official estimate on April 30th of the level of retail prices of clothing, quality for quality, taking goods of the kind purchased by the working classes, shows an average of 210 per cent. higher than July, 1914. It should be borne in mind that in Ireland, at any rate, fully three-quarters of the income of the worker is expended for food and clothing. It is also probable that prices for clothing have risen higher in Ireland than in Great Britain, just as prices of food have risen higher. We may therefore take it as conclusive that while the official Labour Gazette reports the cost of living on May 1st (all items included) as being 128 per cent. above pre-war level, **the cost of living in Ireland is still about 175 per cent. above pre-war level.**

It may be adduced in contravention of this statement, that as wages have not increased to anything like this extent throughout industry as a whole, the figures quoted are obviously fallacious. It must be remembered, however, that the basis of these calculations is a standard ration, considered by the Poor Law authorities at the time it was compiled to be necessary to maintain a healthy body. Unfortunately, the people have been compelled to **lower their standard** by buying inferior qualities and stinting their supplies.

In any discussions or conferences respecting wages the above facts should be borne in mind

Yours fraternally,

THOMAS JOHNSON, Secretary.

APPENDIX V.

APPENDIX TO THE REPORT OF THE HIGH PRICES COMMITTEE OF THE SCOTTISH COUNCIL OF THE LABOUR PARTY.

STATEMENT OF COAL PRICES.

CO-OPERATIVE :—	Pit Head.	Depot.	Sold at per cwt.
	s. d.	s. d.	s. d.
1914	13 0	15 3	1 2½
1920	37 0	41 10	2 10½

NOTE.—Railway charges have increased 100 per cent. plus 6d. per wagon.
Wages have increased—Carters from 34s. to 89s. Carriers and Hillmen 26s. to 31s., with a shorter working week.

RELATIVE PRICES OF COAL IN 1914-1920.

CHEAP, OR GRADE 3 COAL.

	1914.		1920.
	Per ton.		Per ton.
	s. d.		s. d.
Pit Head price at, or about	12 0	.....	35 5
Sold by Merchants at Depot (including Railway rates) ...	15 10	.....	45 6
	Per cwt.		Per cwt.
Sold on Street by Dealers at.....	1 0	.....	2 9½

GRADE 2 COAL.

	1914.		1920.
	Per ton.		Per ton.
	s. d.		s. d.
Pit Head price at, or about	15 7	.....	37 1
Sold by Merchants at Depot (price includes Railway rates)	20 0	.....	47 2
	Per cwt.		Per cwt.
Sold on Street by Dealers at.....	1 2½	.....	2 10½

The above figures are open to criticism owing to the variation of Pit Head prices and difference of Railway dues to certain depots, but the recognised rate for coal dealers on the streets of Glasgow in 1914 was 2½d. per hundredweight of profit.

CLOTH PRICES.

SCOTCH CHEVIOT :—	1914.	1920.	Advance.
	per yard.	per yard.	per cent.
	s. d.	s. d.	
Net Cost	4 2½	13 1½	212
Manufacturers' price to Merchant ...	5 0	16 0	220
Profit to Manufacturer	0 9½	2 10½	263
Merchants' price to Tailor	6 8	21 4	220
Tailors' price to Customer	7 9	25 0	227

SAXONY :—

Net Cost	5 0	17 9½	256
Manufacturers' price to Merchant ...	6 0	22 6	258
Profit to Manufacturer	1 0	4 8½	371
Merchants' price to Tailor	8 0	30 0	275
Tailors' price to Customer	9 6	35 0	268

DRAPERY PRICES.

	1914	1914	1920	1920
	Wholesale.	Retail.	Wholesale.	Retail.
	s. d.	s. d.	s. d.	s. d.
Flannel	0 8½	0 11½	3 3	3 11½
Grandrill Shirting	0 5½	0 7½	1 11½	2 6
Alloa Yarn	0 5½	0 6	2 6½	3 0
Ladies' Cash Hose	0 9	0 11½	2 9	3 5½
Ladies' Gloves	0 8½	0 11½	2 6	3 5½
Coloured Sateen	0 4½	0 6½	1 9	2 6
Grey Cotton	0 1½	0 2	0 10	1 0
Corsets	1 7	1 10½	3 6	4 6
Flannelettes	0 4½	0 6½	1 0	1 3½

APPENDIX VI.

THE TRAGEDY OF HIGH PRICES.

(Being Extracts from the Budget Returns.)

The following quotations taken from the budget forms sent to the Committee are published for the insight they give into the conditions of life amongst large sections of the working class:—

(a) Inadequacy of Wages.

“ You will notice that there are lots of commodities missing that we are in need of, but are unable to afford. To be fed and clothed as we have a right to would at least demand another £2 a week. My wages are £4.”—J. E.

“ We have not kept a detailed list of pre-war expenditure, but a food allowance of 30s. per week, gave us a much higher standard than 70s. now, and an expenditure of £25 per annum on clothing did procure a far better quality than the £100, for besides being 300 per cent. (woollens) and 400 per cent. (coltons) dearer, they are very much inferior in quality.”—G. T.

“ I find it a puzzle to explain to you how we have to manage, for I have to work from daylight to dark to make ends meet anyhow. Mother and father have to go without, as I have five children, all under 13 years of age.”—C. T.

“ You will notice my husband and myself are total abstainers, also that my husband is a non-smoker, but it costs considerably more than his weekly wage of £4, exclusive of allotment produce.”—M. E. E.

“ We just have to do without what we cannot afford. There are many things I have not mentioned, as you will see, but it is simply a case of insufficient income to cover the cost of these. It is an awful worry to people with children, like us, and just one worker to meet all expenses.”—A. McG.

“ I beg to inform you that I have a delicate husband who needs more nourishment, but, as it is, I am obliged to work to help maintain the family. His earnings would never keep us, and I should be grateful if you could do anything in the way of reducing the cost of living.”—M. J.

“ If it would be of any value to you, I would point out that while the cost of living has risen to 158 per cent. above pre-war rates, our ordinary district rate has not reached the equivalent. Our pre-war rate was 37s. per week. It should now reach £4 15s. 6d. approximately to keep pace with the rise in prices, so we are still 10s. 6d. behind.”—M. W.

“ When getting boots and clothes we have to go short of food. Many weeks without meat.”—E. H.

“ I receive £3 6s. per week, and it is impossible to live on this amount properly at the present time.”—W. B. F.

“ Eggs are out of the question. Where we used to get a costume once a year and a suit once a year, we have to be satisfied with one every two or three years. There are many things we working people could do

with and can't get; they are above our pockets, and so we have to go without."—F. R. D.

"When some articles of clothing are purchased, some of the foodstuffs have to be curtailed."—T. D.

"The expenditure in clothing is totally inadequate, but had to keep within income, and only possible because of good stocks—also applies to renewals, etc."—T. B.

"On the form I have given an accurate account of money spent, but owing to the high cost of living we are denied many articles which are a necessity to keep us in health. Then, again, household requirements are entirely left out as it is impossible to buy any at the present prices. Everything in the house is going to rack and ruin, and how they are going to be replaced, I cannot say. I am a railway platelayer. For illustration, if the cost of living goes up five per cent., according to the Board of Trade figures, I receive 1s. advance, but the advance is above 5s. per week to me and family, and as a consequence we have to suffer."—E. L.

"For miners on the minimum it is impossible to live on the present prices. My husband is three parts of the year on the minimum, and it is a struggle with the help of the boy's wages, and my taking in a little plain sewing."—E. A. W.

"Other requirements, household utensils, bed linen, etc., unable to replace."—A. G. A.

"This wage of £3 16s. must be continuous the whole year without holidays to give us an existence, so you will know we can't live very well."—W. R.

"Household renewals: income inadequate; these items have to be done without as far as possible."—S. B.

"I could spend a great deal more on household renewals, but my husband's wages will only permit me to buy what is absolutely necessary."—A. C. G.

"Sorry to say we have no renewals in furniture, etc., simple reason we have not been able to reach them."—G. W.

(b) Overtime, Allotments, and Extra Work.

"The amount for clothing is raised by extra work—cultivation of allotment and sale of produce—absolutely impossible out of weekly wages; also luxuries and holidays are altogether barred."—F. S. M.

"I am prevented from earning sufficient wages in six days to maintain the standard of living, and it is only by strict economy (and low rent) that I am able to give the figures attached hereto. I am only enabled to maintain this standard of living by working seven days per week alternately, my wages thereby being averaged accordingly. A six-day week is payable at 71s. 6d., Sunday off, making a difference of 11s. 2d. on wages."—G. A. M.

"My wages amount to £3 15s. per week, and I have to depend on overtime and assistance from my parents to buy clothing for myself and family, having nothing left for recreation for myself and family."—M. G.

"Have to depend on any little overtime earned occasionally to buy clothes, etc."—P. M. F.

"I should like to remark that owing to my wages being low, and six in family, we have to curtail our expenditure and make things go as far as possible. There are many things really necessary but which I am unable

to obtain, and we have, in consequence, to go without. Further, I have to do other jobs to enable me to eke out a living."—D. A. H.

"These figures are much in excess of plumber's wages, and income is made up by season visitors and wife's exertions."—A.

"If it wasn't for an occasional Sunday shift, the expenditure would require to be a great deal less."—I. A. M.

"Personally, I could not afford a budget like this on the wages paid unless I worked overtime, and did other work, so the eight hours, as far as I am concerned, is a myth, the same as a living wage. Even then, my wife has to do more than usual to help us to live. You will notice in spite of this that the usual so-called luxuries, and some necessities of life are omitted. Music, amusements of any description, holidays, and even haircutting, etc., are non est."—T. B.

"Clothing and household renewals purchased by savings from allotments and by loans from club."—H. T.

"If it was not for letting a room, and working overtime occasionally, we should have all starved by now."—R. H. N.

"I find that my greatest difficulty is to provide for the following: short time or lock-out, which is about three weeks per year. Renewal of all household goods and cooking utensils. Extra provision for sickness, as I only get 50 per cent. of my wages on the sick list, estimating two weeks per year. A week's holiday per year should be a necessity. This item would amount in my case to £20, but of course I cannot afford it. My spare time is occupied with cultivating a 50 pole allotment, doing all painting, paper-hanging, chair and couch mending, etc., in the house, keeping the youngsters' boots soled and heeled when I can do it, and doing a bit of buying and selling in motor cycles and their repair to earn enough money to supplement my wages. The clothing for wife and four youngest children is allowed at 10s. per week; this, although small, has to do, and often the money allowed for clothes and shoes has to be taken for other purposes, such as a sudden call out by rail, the eldest girl out of employment, the children breaking things, etc."—W. N.

"My wages are £4 0s. 6d. per week, and although I get 12s. per week extra when on night duty every third week, and average working one Sunday in every three, you will find the whole of my income is swallowed up in purchasing the bare necessities of life, and oftentimes we find we cannot do that to keep the children as we would like to see them."—W. S.

(c) Drawing on Savings to Maintain the Standard of Life.

"Should like to point out the great sum that has to be spent on clothing, and the small amount one gets for it; for a working man who has a family one is never done buying in this line, and I have had to spend what little I brought from the army after the war to keep up to a decent standard. Although every working man would like his children well educated, you will see that he must take them away against his wish sooner than he would do, to help the family exchequer."—J. O.

"I need hardly tell you I find it very difficult to try and manage with £2 2s., as it is all spent on food and rent. As a member of the Co-op. stores, I get a little dividend on the money I spend, which enables me to get a few things for the house."—M. C.

"In many cases I have been drawing on my stock and not been able to replace. Few renewals in the household have been made, only those

absolutely indispensable have taken place, and also, when the present season tickets expire, 50 per cent. is to be added."—M. I. D.

"Certain items will now have to be cut out and others greatly reduced, with the consequence that the children will be the greatest sufferers. Small items, such as buttons, cottons, mending worsteds, salt, pepper, mustard, sick nursing and feeding of nurses, holidays and saving, pocket money, etc., are not included, as I have had to draw on and use *all* my savings because my salary has not covered my expenses."—G. W.

"The total expenditure does not represent my income. I wish it did. This year I have had to spend my savings and draw upon my wife's Co-op. account. It will be closer paring next year."—L. S.

"Excess of expenditure over income partly covered by small disability allowance, ex-army."—W. S. D.

"I regret it is impossible to fill up the clothing list, because we have had to make do with all our old clothes renovated and turned inside out, for a very long time, and when such things as boots, etc., have to be bought, we have to use our dividend and bonus. Our wages are only £3 a week. The strain of living, or making both ends meet, is ruining the health of hundreds of mothers; they think first of the children and therefore suffer themselves. I am now waiting for the rise, which is promised in October, to pay my rent, etc.; I am not complaining, but giving facts which I think may be helpful. The part I have filled in is as accurate as I can do it. You will notice my luxury is my daily paper and 'Co-operative News,' 'Woman's Outlook.'"—M. T.

"You will observe that our expenditure exceeds the wages of myself and two children; the other income is derived from my wife's business."—C. W. B.

(d) External Assistance.

"I may state that my income does not pay for everything from week to week, as you know that a postman's wages are not of the best, and that if it was not for a few of our relations giving us garments for the children, we couldn't do as we do."—A. B.

"Referring to clothing, we have had several things presented to us, so this makes this item much smaller. If everything we required was bought, it would cost us at least double."—G. M. R.

"I may tell you that we are living up to the top notch of my income, and were it not for the fact that I have a small income from an army pension, Heaven knows how much poorer we would be off. The standard is exceedingly low already. Nothing but the very necessaries of life can be purchased, and for renewals we are dipping deeply into our small reserve. You will notice that we have little variety, but I can assure you these figures have been carefully compiled from our books."—W. O.

"I wish to draw your attention to the fact that these expenses, cut as fine as possible, are not covered by the ordinary rate of carpenters' wages here. I have an allowance from my father for housekeeping, which covers the difference in expenditure over income."—E. F. McD.

(e) Examples of Rigid Economy.

"Cannot estimate girls' clothing as I have made up all available scraps and half-worn skirts and coats, also father's cast-off clothes for little boy."—L. W.

"We are living very economically, and clothes would have cost more had we not been well provided with them and boots previous to the high prices. Quality of wearing apparel not so good as pre-war."—A. E.

"Wife had one costume in 1914. Myself one suit in 1915. Price £1 16s. Children have had no new clothes; coats, suits, etc., made up by wife out of old clothes are all the clothes they have had, except under-clothing."—M. L. J.

"So far as Part (c)^o—Renewals—is concerned, there have scarcely been any renewals simply because we have no funds available for them, although badly wanted, especially by way of floor coverings and bed coverings, etc., but for the latter we have to utilise old railway coats or dresses torn in strips and knitted up to form coverings. Want a pram for the new arrival, but it will be a case of having to want."—W. G. T.

"It must be taken into consideration that we are a very careful family. I neither smoke nor drink; my wife does a good deal of home dressmaking and knitting. I mend most of the boots and clogs. I must say this has been essential if we were to save anything."—G. C.

(f) General Remarks.

"I enclose you cost of living return made up from our records. The clothing items, although they appear large, are actual, and due to great increase in woollen and cotton goods. Of course my suit and lady's dress will have to last more than 12 months, but, on the other hand, articles which do not figure this year will have to do so next."

"This is not a total expenditure, as it is so very difficult to put in the items in detail, but it is certainly on the low side and is at your disposal, public or otherwise, as it can be proved."—V. R.

"1s. a week mentioned under other payments is for lists and appeals, etc., for women who have lost their husbands through death or have been incapacitated for a length of time, etc. Many articles are made at home, such as women and girls' under-clothing, stockings, boys' knickers, etc., which are of great value which yet cannot be estimated."—H. R.