

been prepared from the accounts of one household, but is an average based on the accounts of more than a dozen householders :—

Household Expenses for a Week for a Man, Wife, and Three Children under Seven Years of Age.

	£	s.	d.
Rent of a four-roomed house (usually without conveniences) ...	0	12	6
Meat and fish	0	5	0
Bread	0	2	0
Groceries, including eggs, butter, rice, sago, salt, pepper, baking-powder, flour, oatmeal, sultanas, soaps, all materials for polishing stoves, boots, floors, &c.	0	8	3
Milk	0	2	3
Coal, wood, kerosene, and candles	0	3	6
Boots and clothing for the family, replenishing house-linen, and utensils, crockery, brooms, brushes, &c.	0	10	0
Vegetables and fruit	0	3	9
Newspaper	0	0	6
Union, lodge, or insurance	0	2	0
	£2	9	9

Nothing is allowed for tram fares for the wage-earner, school-books for the children, reading-matter or entertainment for the family, and no tobacco. No sickness has been allowed for, not even the expenses incidental to the wife's confinements, though we know what these expenses are incurred.

5. *The Chairman.*] The cost of these things amounts to £2 9s. 9d. Supposing, as in the case of a bootmaker, the general wage is £2 6s. 6d., how would those expenses be met: would he get into debt, or would he have to shorten down on some items?—He would have to buy second-rate materials. Of course, in the list I have given there are some second-rate materials. He would certainly have to go in for cheaper commodities of every sort: that is to say, in some articles of food there must be a loss of nutrition.

6. You consider that the cost of these articles is greater now than five years ago?—The cost of some of them.

7. Which are the articles which have specially increased in price?—The difficulty is this, that some of these commodities are seasonable, such as potatoes, butter, eggs, and fish.

8. Have you noticed any diminution in the price of dried fruits, such as currants, &c., during the last two years?—Yes, currants are cheaper, but sultanas are dearer. Dates and raisins—most of them are cheaper. Most vegetables and fruit are dearer. I am referring specially in the way of fruit to plums, pears, and apples—the most necessary fruits.

9. Do you consider that the fact of working-men having to go further away from the centre of the town to live tends to increase the cost of living to them?—Yes, it must, I suppose.

10. By adding the cost of transportation?—The family must come into town sometimes, and it makes it dearer, certainly.

11. Have you any knowledge of the existence of a combine or ring which has tended to increase the cost of living by keeping up the prices of certain articles?—Only from hearsay.

12. Has there been any increase in the price of fish in Christchurch during the last five years?—I do not know.

13. *Mr. Veitch.*] Do you find that the different shops sell at more even prices, especially in regard to particular goods, than they used to do?—We notice that they may sometimes go down to a certain point, but do not go below it.

14. Does that give you the impression that they understand each other in that respect?—Yes, I suppose so.

15. *Dr. Hight.*] Would you mind telling us how the budget which you have read was obtained?—The figures were obtained from records of the accounts of different families. I got a good many housekeepers to give me the result of their accounts, and I averaged them over a period. I have not given you any special woman's account, but several of the persons from whom I got information are really very careful housekeepers—so careful indeed that it would be a trial to most people to be as careful as they are. The average which I have given has been carefully prepared, and is a very reasonable one.

16. Of course, the cost of living is relative to the income received? Have you any objection to state what the average income was of the household from which you composed that budget of expenditure?—The average wage was under £3 a week. There were only two where the wages were over that. The others were well underneath that amount, but still they were not the lowest working-man's wage.

17. *The Chairman.*] Not below £2 5s.?—No.

18. *Mr. Macdonald.*] What was the object for which the budget was obtained?—The information was collected for the British Commissioner who was making inquiries for the British Wages Board.

19. The duty was taken off certain articles in every-day use some years ago—tea, for instance. Could you tell us whether, in your opinion, the consumer benefited by the reduction then made in the tariff? Has tea come down in price to the general public?—I can only say this: a few years ago it seemed to me that tea came down for a while, but it is not as cheap now as it was ten or fourteen years ago—at least, some of it.